Georgetown UNIVERSITY est. 1789

GEORGETOWN-UNDP
Project on Democratic Conflict Prevention and Early Warning
in Latin America

# ANALYZING CONFLICT, DEMOCRACY AND VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA


Georgetown University
Department of Government
Center for Latin American Studies

United Nations Development Programme
Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Marc Chernick,
Project Director

Research Team:

Alvaro Camacho
Mauricio Garcia Villegas
Gary Hoskin
Astrid Martínez Ortiz
John Bailey
Nora Segura
Rodrigo Upimny
Miguel Garcia
Alejandro Reyes


2005

PNUD

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo

The analysis and policy recommendations contained in this Report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), its Executive Board or its member States. The Report is an independent publication prepared at the request of UNDP. It is the results of collaboration between a group of experts and practitioners in the field.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CUADROS Y GRÁFICOS

## ÍNDICE DE MAPAS

## *PRESENTATION*

This study represents the culmination of several years of work developing a methodology of conflict prevention and early warning for Latin America. The methodology was designed as an instrument to assess the impact of multiple forms of violent conflict and political crisis on democratic governance, and alternatively, to assess the impact of democratic governance on violence, crime and social unrest.

Since the wave of transitions from authoritarian rule throughout Latin America to more accountable and plural governments headed by elected civilian leaders, beginning in Ecuador in 1979, political crisis and institutional instability have become less predictable but no less frequent than in earlier decades. Today, the nature of crisis is multidimensional and the early warning signs are more difficult to interpret systematically. Traditional approaches towards early warning and conflict prevention distinguish situations of open armed conflict, as in Colombia, with situations of post-conflict, as in Central America and Peru, or with escalating pre-conflict stages characterized by institutional weakness and growing challenges to governability, as is the case in most of the other nations of the region.

Yet such a three-tiered approach ignores the fact that today the symptoms of crisis transcend such clear classifications. Issues such as rising levels of violent crime, faltering judicial systems, rising impunity, electoral fraud, institutional instability, weak presidentialism, growing gaps between rich and poor, rising transnational organized crime, illicit narcotics production, continued violations of human rights, unclear or unenforceable rules for governance and alternation of power, faltering participation, and diminished representativeness of the political system transcend variables of open armed conflict or post-conflict situations. To varying degrees and in multiple combinations, these symptoms of crisis are found across the region.

Faced with such a difficult, fluid and changing political environment, the challenge for international organizations is to develop a coherent and systematic methodology to identify, assess, prioritize and address key elements of political crisis and violent conflict in individual nations throughout the region --preferably before the national situation erupts into a full-blown crisis, or, lacking such early warning, to find ways to ameliorate the crisis and address fundamental causes of conflict.

To meet this need, UNDP-RLAC and Georgetown University developed a broad methodology to assess democratic governance and violent conflict and understand the relationships between the two. The Georgetown-UNDP methodology is designed to be applied to each country in the region using similar standards and interpretive frameworks. The methodology identifies a country's historical legacies; state capacities; political and economic arenas; and the dimensions of violent conflict ranging from unorganized criminal violence to organized crime and armed conflict among political contenders.

Having developed a first draft of the methodology, the project then applied the approach to the case of Colombia, both to test the methods and then to use the lessons learned to further develop and refine the methodology. It was hoped that this first case would also prove useful in analyzing from a comparative perspective one of the most complex countries and stubbornly-protracted armed conflicts in the region. To this end, we wish to share the experiences derived from this first application with Colombian analysts and policymakers and international officials involved with the country. The introductory chapter outlines some of the basic components of the methodology and then discusses some of the conclusions found in the subsequent chapters of this case study. The concluding chapter brings the separate sector analyses together and indicates policy areas that warrant special attention in light of the findings.

Anticipating these conclusions, the study found that the protracted political violence has roots in state weakness, unconsolidated democratic institutions (despite widespread belief to the contrary and despite a remarkable degree of resiliency to the vicissitudes of political violence), reigning impunity, and deeply-rooted and deteriorating social conflicts. As several United Nations institutions have already noted, the crisis rises to the level of a humanitarian emergency. This emergency must be addressed at the institutional and structural levels. Immediately, it requires assistance and attention to the needs of victims and potential victims, including internally displaced persons and targets of human rights and international humanitarian law violations. As the study clearly demonstrates, the structural conditions of crisis and violence are all exacerbated by the strategic decisions of armed actors to contest territory and power through the forced and violent coercion of local populations. As such, the resolution of the conflict requires not only humanitarian assistance and structural reforms at the social and economic and political levels; it also requires a political solution to the protracted war, even though, following the collapse of the peace process that endured from 1998 to 2002, positions hardened and public support for peacemaking waned. Nonetheless, it is imperative that national and international actors attempt to address the critical humanitarian needs, address institutional and social issues identified in this report, and try to prepare the ground, to the greatest extent possible and despite the obvious constraints, for some form of a political settlement in the future.

-Marc Chernick, Washington, D.C.

# I.

# INTRODUCTION:

## Applying a Methodology for Analyzing Democracy and Conflict to the Case of Colombia

Marc Chernick and John Bailey

The Georgetown-UNDP methodology was developed to confront the needs and challenges of a specific world region: Latin America and the Caribbean.[1] The general literature on democratization covers a wide range of cases from Europe, Latin America, the former Soviet Union, Asia and Africa. Latin America, particularly the cases of Brazil and the Southern Cone countries, has been a key source of theorizing and understanding on democratic transition and democratic consolidation. Central America and to a lesser extent Colombia have contributed to the literature on peacemaking. However Latin America as a region has played a less prominent role in the work on conflict prevention and early warning; indeed this literature is inordinately skewed to situations of "failed states" and national and ethnic conflicts in parts of Africa, Asia and the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Nonetheless, the issues of conflict prevention and democratization can be brought together in the Western Hemisphere in ways that would be more problematic in other parts of the world. Practically all the nations in the region have accepted some form of democratic government as the most legitimate type of political regime. Even during 1960s and 70s, when few democratic governments remained standing, the authoritarian regimes presented themselves as interim regimes –even if, as one author insightfully put it, in some cases the "Braumerian moment" turned into "Braumerian decades."[2] Moreover, since the wave of democratic transitions beginning with

Ecuador in 1979, the thirty-four member nations of the Organization of American States have systematically advanced a common democratic agenda, reaching key milestones with the passing of the Santiago Commitment to Democracy in 1991, the Protocol of Washington in 1993, and the Democratic Charter in 2002, calling for the suspension of states whose "democratically-elected governments have been overthrown."

Further, the Central America peace process based on a peace plan presented by Costa Rican president Oscar Arias and ratified by the Central American nations in Esquipulas, Guatemala in 1987, distinctly linked the end of the armed internal conflicts in the region to a commitment by all parties to democratization and democratic transition. The Central American experience pioneered the concept of peace-making as an instrument of democratization. For all its perceived faults and shortcomings, the most enduring aspect of the Central American peace processes has been the broad acceptance of democratic rules of the game for political competition.

Yet, the subsequent Central American experience confounded many analysts. Esquipulas led to an end to the armed conflicts and insurgencies, yet social and criminal violence increased in the post-conflict periods, most spectacularly in El Salvador and Guatemala. South Africa experienced a similar phenomenon, which leads one to ask about the nature of the transition from war to peace and the impact of high levels of criminal violence on the nascent democratic institutions. Alternatively, Colombia has experienced dramatic decreases in criminal violence in certain cities, most notably Bogotá, even as the armed conflict intensified and further atomized, suggesting that good governance can impact greatly on certain forms of social violence.

For Latin America and the Caribbean, then, there is an opportunity to link more directly the specific assessment tools and policy instruments that have been developed by international actors

and scholars to confront the challenges of democratic consolidation, on the one hand, and political crisis and violent social and civil conflict, on the other.

The Georgetown-UNDP methodology was constructed with a few basic premises. First, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are sufficiently distinct from other areas of the world that they merit a regionally-focused methodology (see Table 1). Such a regionally-tailored approach can more accurately and insightfully assess key political dynamics, evaluate the strengths and limits of state capacity, as well as provide an understanding of the challenge represented by varying forms of social, criminal and political violence. Nonetheless, although the methodology was developed to be applied to Latin America and the Caribbean, many of the core analyses will likely prove relevant to other world regions, such as parts of Asia and Africa. However, the kind of adjustments that may be needed for a broader application have not been examined conceptually or empirically.

Second, democracy is most usefully conceptualized by isolating a few core variables that can be measured and evaluated. For this, we employ the concept of polyarchy, a term coined by political scientist Robert Dahl, in which varieties of forms of organizations interact within rules that are enforced by the state.[3] From this minimalist definition, it is then possible to extend the reach of the concepts into broader economic and social arenas that may impede democratic governance.

Third, state capacity refers to the ability of the government to carry out basic functions, such as administer justice, maintain public order and manage the economy. State institutions can be considered as permanent administrative and legal institutions that interact with the policies and personnel of elected governments and broader societal forms of organization that are subject to democratic change and alternation.

Fourth, violent conflict takes many different forms and interacts in a variety of ways with the polity and state. We have developed ways of identifying these forms of conflict and their interactions with both the polity and state. This will be discussed further below.

**Table 1.1: Distinctiveness of the Region**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Political** | •Coherent states – not failed states<br>•Lengthy independence since early 19th century<br>•Early/middle stages democratic transition |
| **Economic** | •Middle income GDP's<br>•Extreme inequality<br>•Low to mid rates of growth<br>•Severe, concentrated poverty<br>•High underemployment |
| **Socio-Cultural** | •Majority Catholic<br>•Moderate ethnic division<br>•Majority urban<br>•Mid to late stages of democratic transition |
| **International** | •U.S. sphere of influence<br>•Active in trade blocs<br>•Relatively secure borders |

## POLYARCHY AS A STARTING POINT

We use polyarchy in order to do two things. First, we avoid the heavy normative baggage of "democracy," which connotes many different things to different people. Second, we recognize that society is made up of many different types of organizations, most of which are hierarchical. Thus, polyarchy means multiple, interacting hierarchies with strong ties to a broad social base. Key to polyarchy is the state's guarantee of basic civil rights. Polyarchy's main components are:

- **Participation**

The central question here is, "Who participates and how?" At the most basic

level, the key concept is citizenship: individuals with rights and duties. A key expression of citizenship is voting. In addition, we examine higher intensity participation, such as bringing a claim to a government authority, as well as broader forms of participation such as involvement in civic organizations, sectoral associations, social movements, and party activities.

- **Contestation**

A core foundation for the idea of representative democracy is the presence of competition. This is generally measured through the presence of parties within institutionalized party systems: single party, two-party, multiparty systems. There is also a question of stability of the political parties themselves, expressed through the decline of long dominant parties in many Latin American countries and their replacement by loose and personalistic vehicles that often lack organizational coherence or continuity. As such, parties and party systems need to be examined in detail.

However, democracy is more than electoral competition. It is also about the tolerance for competition of ideas and even ideologies and beliefs that takes place in a wide array of forums that permeate the state, political society (electoral arena, representative bodies) and civil society. Media is a key instrument in promoting or impeding diversity and competition.

- **Political and civil rights**

There is a need to understand the formal-legal and constitutional framework with respect to basic rights – speech, assembly, press, protests, strikes, voting -- as well as how they are respected in practice. The evolving discussion on human rights needs to be more fully integrated with established ideas of civil rights, and data should be collected in each of these areas – nationally, locally, and, where appropriate, by sector. Again, what needs to be determined are the formal institutional arrangements and guarantees versus their application in practice. We need to

characterize how power is exercised through an amalgam of formal and informal relations and institutions.

The advantage of Dahl's approach is to posit reasonably clear criteria to differentiate between democratic and non-democratic systems. Among the several shortcomings is the relative neglect of issues that are especially significant in the Latin American and Caribbean contexts: quality of democracy, socioeconomic inequality, and dependency (degree to which internal politics are shaped by external powers).[4] Even so, the sense among many scholars is that the Dahlian limitations are preferable to the conflict and confusion brought by including additional criteria in the notion of democracy.

The prevailing approach, however, neglects to take into account the ways in which elite and mass publics in the region perceive democracy. Recent scholarship has employed public opinion surveys to probe perceptions in Mexico, Costa Rica and Chile.[5] Further, data are presented on attitudes expressed by Hispanic migrants to the United States. One of the themes emphasized is that only Costa Rica approximates the view dominant in the United States that emphasizes liberty and freedom as central to democracy; in Chile and Mexico, contrary to a Dahlian perspective, the values of equality and economic development are given top priority. Citizens also placed great weight on the governments' effectiveness in dealing with crime and violence. These findings reveal that citizens attach importance to policy and to what governments do. This work suggests that a methodology of conflict prevention needs a diagnostic tool that uses techniques to identify and measure attitudes about democracy and conflicts.

We therefore added an additional dimension to Dahl's framework: In addition to competition, participation and rights, we include:

- **A core legitimacy expressed in citizen attitudes and acceptance of democratic institutions**

This latter dimension can be measured by taking advantage of existing sources such as the World Bank, the World Survey of Values and the Latinbarometer. In some cases it may be necessary to conduct independent surveys.

To situate analytically and historically the dynamic of democratization, we have drawn from the literature on democratic consolidation. Andreas Schedler usefully proposed a straightforward continuum that incorporates an evolving set of regime arrangements, noting the different political tasks implied by " . . . where we stand (our empirical viewpoints) and where we aim to reach (our normative horizons)."[6] His continuum proceeds from an authoritarian regime: *authoritarianism* (clearly non-democratic forms of rule), *electoral democracy* (one that meets Dahl's minimum criteria but lacks widespread civil liberties and effective rule of law), *liberal democracy* (one in which institutional checks operate more effectively to constrain executive power and that more effectively protect civil liberties), and *advanced democracy* (basically, the wealthy Western democracies that enjoy higher quality civil liberties and the full menu of social welfare benefits). The two middle categories, electoral and liberal democracy, represent the arena of debate on consolidation. Authoritarianism is the regime to be avoided and advanced democracy is the long-term goal. In a teleological sense the goal is to advance from electoral democracy, which comprises the majority of the Latin American and Caribbean cases (and which O'Donnell 1994, labeled "delegative democracy"[7]) toward liberal democracy. By implication, those who worry about regression toward authoritarianism tend to support "negative" notions of democracy consolidation,

whereas those who focus on progressing toward liberal or advanced democracy support "positive" notions of consolidation.

Following this logic, the "negative" perspective is concerned with keeping democracy alive; that is, preventing an overt "quick death" or a more subtle "slow death." The implication of quick death, i.e., breakdown and regression to authoritarianism, is to focus on disloyal, anti-system players, especially "the professionals of state violence" (army, police) but including a broad array of actors such as the business class, *guerrillas*, organized crime, violent social movements, and the like. Identifying and neutralizing (or converting) disloyal actors is the primary task in preventing "quick death."

"Slow death," on the other hand, takes place when electoral democracies fail to advance, or what O'Donnell described as " . . . a progressive diminution of existing spaces for the exercise of civilian power and the effectiveness of the classic guarantees of liberal constitutionalism." The notion here is threats and actions that weaken the rule of law, e.g., state violence against citizens, pervasive corruption, decay of electoral rules and institutions, abuse of media, and the like. For our purposes, slow death may be less relevant to overt conflict than to more subtle forms of extortion and coercion. In terms of the methodology, a necessary first step is historical, comparative analysis to identify the relative point on the consolidation continuum described by Schedler. The risk of "quick death" remains less likely in most cases (for a variety of reasons) than that of "slow death – though enduring and sometimes cyclical political crises and mounting instability in several nations does not rule out authoritarian alternatives despite the Inter-American democratic consensus."

Shifting to "positive" notions of consolidation, i.e., advancing toward liberal and advanced democracies, the agenda of tasks often depends in part on the transition path. That is, in cases where the transition was negotiated by the outgoing regime, priority goes to eliminating

authoritarian legacies (e.g., special powers exercised by the military, or constitutional rules that privilege conservative interests). Another path concerns hegemonic or dominant parties (the former cases of Mexico or Paraguay, for example), where the priority is to strengthen rules of fairness or to level the playing field in electoral terms. But more significant by far is the problem of defective rule of law, due to corruption, inefficiency, insufficient resources, entrenched interests, or systematic state abuse. From this perspective, the key tasks are state reform (an extensive agenda of administrative and policy reforms) and judicial reform. In short, the focus is institution building**.**

The literature on consolidation thus puts much emphasis on institutionalization, that is, the building of habits of democratic governance. In a classic formulation, "Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability."[8] (Huntington 1968:12). An important application of this concept is offered by O'Donnell, who notes that institutions refer to valued, recurring behavior, and can take the form of unwritten, informal practices, such as separation of church and state, or the form of highly bureaucratized organizations, such as political parties, judiciaries or armies. The fundamental problem with many new polyarchies, according to O'Donnell, is not that they lack strong institutions, but rather that an important set of institutions is actually anti-democratic. On the one hand, the new polyarchies usually have effective electoral institutions that operate periodically and thus satisfy the Dahlian minima, but on the other hand they also have " . . . an extremely influential, informal, and sometimes concealed institution: clientelism and, more generally, particularism" (O'Donnell 1997:46). Clientelism, the webs of interpersonal alliances among unequals in which goods and services are exchanged for loyalty and support, is a major factor that blurs the all-important distinction between the public and private spheres of life. The most fundamental effect of clientelism is to undermine the rule of law. Further, clientelism is one of several forces promoting corruption, and clientelism and corruption are forces that

undermine governmental effectiveness. One of the important implications is that while conflict in public arenas may actually be muted by corruption, the broader effects are to weaken government performance and to displace conflict into forms of state violence against civil society and into forms of interpersonal violence in civil society, such as the multitude of types of violent crime and domestic violence.

Beginning with this core definition of polyarchy and situating it within a dynamic process of democratization and consolidation, in the methodology we begin by simply locating the key institutions and actors within a polyarchy along two axes: y) the scope of organization, and x) the degree of politicization.

The vertical axis, "Degree of Organization," refers to the numbers of individuals involved, from "low" (one, two or a very few) to "high" (groups ranging from a dozen or so to conceivably hundreds or even thousands). It also refers to the relative complexity of organization, from unorganized to relatively sophisticated organization.

The horizontal axis refers to "Degree of Politicization." Here we might think of a progression of political institutions and public actions, beginning with "low" (relatively non-political) and proceeding through attempts to influence policies, to change the incumbents, to change the government (see Table 1.2).

## Table 1.2 POLYARCHY

| LOW →→ Politicization →→ HIGH | | |
|---|---|---|
| ↓ ↓ Organization ↓ ↓ HI | **I.**<br><br>**- Individual Citizens**<br>**- Family**<br>**- Friends** | **III.**<br><br>**-Soup kitchens**<br>**-Neighborhood associations**<br>**-Voting**<br>• **Official petition**<br>• **Legal demand**<br>• ***Tutela*** **(Colombia)**<br>• **Civic candidates**<br>• **Civic protest** |
| | **II.**<br><br>**Economic and Social Organizations**<br><br>-Professional<br>-Educational<br>-Religious | **IV.**<br><br>**Civil Society Organizations**<br>– Guilds, Labor Unions, Students<br>– Peasants and indigenous<br>– Urban population<br>– NGOs, Churches<br><br>-- POLITICAL PARTIES<br><br>**• ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAUCRACY**<br>**• LOCAL GOVERNMENT**<br>**• POLICE, ARMED FORCES**<br>**• EXECUTIVE– LEGISLATIVE – JUDICIAL SYSTEM** |

Thus in Quadrant I –low organization, low politicization -- we find the basic members of society: individual citizens, families and friends.

Quadrant II reveals higher degree of organization but still low levels of politicization: economic, social and religious organizations.

Quadrant III shows higher degree of politicization but still relatively low levels of organization: neighborhood associations and soup kitchens exercising certain political rights, not necessarily in an organized manner: voting, protest, legal demands, standing for office as a citizen candidate.

Quadrant IV (high organization, high politicization) shows organized political actors: labor unions, peasant movements, NGOs and, moving beyond civil society into political society, political parties.

Here in Quadrant IV, somewhat provocatively, we place the basic institutions of the state, recognizing that state institutions are not just organized political actors but should be conceived as part of the permanent legitimate legal and administrative institutions that are accepted by all within a national territory. This is a deviation from standard notions of polyarchy grounded in classical democratic theory. We do this because in the empirical reality in most Latin American cases the state usually lacks overall, unchallenged legitimacy. By placing these institutions here, we are recognizing that in many Latin American nations, state institutions often act as one more organized political actor and not the chief embodiment of justice and order. In our depiction, we locate state actors among the many different varieties of social actors. It is one of many actors that compete to assert influence over the citizenry. This is especially the case outside the modernized sectors of urban areas, in what O'Donnell referred to as "brown areas" where the state has only a limited or weak presence. This too, will become quite evident when we look more carefully at the Colombian case.

For the methodology, the two by two polyarchy table can be used conceptually as a way to identify actors and political processes as part of a broader "mapping" of the political system.[9] We conceptualize the formal constitutional and political system in relation to varieties of real and potential groups, which can take on various forms (e.g., interest associations, legislative assemblies, political parties). Such a process helps us connect specific issue areas – economic, political, social, distributional -- with a clearer conceptualization of institutional arenas (formal and informal) as well

as identify types of actors (from state, political society or civil society) and forms of contestation (illegal and illegal, armed or unarmed, confrontational or consensus oriented, mass mobilizational or more limited and targeted). [10]

The methodology also examines directly the issue of state capacity, analyzing carefully the instititutions listed at the bottom of Quadrant IV. Here the key areas that are measured and assessed are:

- Rule of Law -- access, coverage, impunity
- Public order/ citizen security
- Human rights violations
- State allocation of resources
- Economic development/ Employment/ Poverty
- Citizen attitudes towards the state

From this perspective, state capacity refers to the ability of the government, in its most general sense, to carry out its functions of enforcing the law, providing minimal social programs, and fomenting economic growth. The state, ideally, should provide the boundaries within which the political regime functions.

## INTERNAL VIOLENCE AND ADAPTING THE CONCEPT OF CONFICT PREVENTION TO THE REALITIES OF LATIN AMERICA

Having created a framework to understand polyarchy and state capacity, the methodology than develops a framework for understanding violent conflict. Before proceeding it is necessary to underscore a central point about democracy and conflict. Conflict should not be viewed as anti-democratic. Indeed the methodology attempts to expand the very concept of polyarchy to encapsulate the notion of conflict in the context of democratic transition and consolidation. Conflict, the clash of opinions, verbal attacks and counter-attacks, strikes and protest are the very stuff that make democratic processes function properly. Conflict communicates individual and

group demands. In his classic book, Coser elaborates the various functions of conflict in, for example, reinforcing group solidarity and strengthening individual and group identity.[11]

But democratic conflict needs to be differentiated from violent conflict. The literature on democratic transition and consolidation clarify this by focusing on the idea of regime stability. Conflict prevention is not about stifling protest, dissent and civil opposition.

**Violent Conflict and Conflict Prevention**

Since the end of the cold war, there has been a growing concern with the spread of *internal conflict*, defined by Michael Brown as "violent or potentially violent political disputes whose origins can be traced primarily to domestic rather than systemic factors, and where armed violence takes place or threatens to take place primarily within the borders of a single state."[12] In this context, the emerging emphasis on conflict prevention by the United Nations, World Bank and others is defined as a set of constructive actions taken by third parties to avoid the likely threat, use or diffusion of armed force by primary parties in an internal conflict. The United Nations distinguishes between *operational prevention strategies*, which involves four fundamental activities -- early warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and early humanitarian action -- and *structural prevention strategies* which include preventive disarmament, development and peace-building. Structural prevention, according to the Carnegie Commission's Report on Deadly Conflict, comprises strategies to address the root cause of deadly conflict, so as to ensure that crises do not arise in the first place, or that, if they do, they do not recur. Operational prevention, by contrast, is defined as those strategies that are best deployed when violence is imminent.

The challenge faced when developing a methodology of conflict prevention and early warning for Latin America is that the type of violent conflicts that we are dealing with are not,

primarily, internal armed conflicts and civil wars. At the outset of the 21st century, armed conflict was only central to the politics of one Latin American country: Colombia. Yet many countries faced serious challenges from multiple forms of internal violence, from rising homicide rates to organized crime.

One way to understand the difficulty of creating a regionally-specific methodology is to look at traditional models of the phases of conflict and conflict prevention that have been developed in other regional and sub-regional contexts and then to ask how would these models be applied to most Latin American nations.

The early warning/conflict prevention work is generally guided by a typology of conflict phases. In general, there are three stages in the development of a crisis: pre-conflict, conflict escalation, and full-brown conflict. From this starting point, several efforts have been made to create more comprehensive models/frameworks for conflict prevention work, with greater attention given to the refinement of phases of conflict and their implications for preventive strategy. The two models in Table 1.3 reflect slight variations on what appears to be a general consensus on ideal-type stages of conflict escalation.

The major distinction drawn in the literature and manuals is between *structural causes*, which are the deeply-rooted underlying causes of conflict, and *mobilizing factors* that more directly precipitate the outbreak of war. Several different categorizations exist, with some models drawing a further distinction between mobilizing factors into those which accelerate conflict and those which actually trigger the outbreak of violence (Harff 1998). There is agreement that change, especially rapid change such as a transition of political power, can intensify the effects of structural/permissive/pivotal factors thus leading to conflict. Naturally, it is widely asserted that

conflict results from the interaction of multiple factors across time and that different tactics are necessary to address different causal factors.

**Table 1.3**
**Two Models of Stages of Conflict**

**MODEL ONE:**
**(**Interdisciplinary Research Program on Root Causes of Human Rights Violations PIOOM).

Five Stages of Conflict and Two Crisis Thresholds

Stage 1: Peaceful Stable Situation – high degree of political stability and regime legitimacy

Stage 2: Political Tension Situation – growing levels of systemic strain and increasing social and political cleavages, often along factional lines

*THRESHOLD 1*: POLITICAL CRISIS

Stage 3: Violent Political Conflict – erosion of political legitimacy of national government and/or rising acceptance of violent factional politics

Stage 4: Low-Intensity Conflict – open hostility and armed conflict among factional groups, regime repression, and insurgency

*THRESHOLD 2*: HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Stage 5: High-Intensity Conflict – open warfare among rival groups and/or mass destruction and displacement of sectors of civilian populations.

**MODEL TWO:**
**(**International Peace Academy)

Five Phases of Conflict

1. Potential conflict: a variety of sources of stress may be identified that may provoke conflict at the very beginning of the conflict life cycle; indeed, before the potential for such a cycle to exist has become manifest.

2. Gestation of conflict: at this phase mobilizing factors and flashes of low-intensity violence and/or repression may become increasingly apparent

3. Trigger/mobilization of conflict: high degree of tension and confrontation between conflicting parties, with some force or threat of force being deployed

4. Conflict/escalation: significant armed violence and/or its spread, engendering direct casualties, human rights abuses, humanitarian crises, refugees, and internally displaced persons.

5. Post-conflict: cessation of hostilities, with a high risk of conflict flaring anew

The scholarly literature on internal conflict has identified four major clusters of factors that render some societies more prone to the outbreak of violence than others.

1. Structural factors: weak states, intrastate security concerns, and ethnic geography.
2. Political factors: discriminatory political institutions, exclusionary national ideologies, inter-group politics, and elite politics.
3. Economic/Social factors: economic problems, discriminatory economic systems, and challenges stemming from economic development and modernization.
4. Cultural/Perceptual factors: discrimination against minorities, group histories and group perceptions.[13]

To address these phases and triggering factors, practitioners and analysts have developed a typology of phases of *prevention* to match the needs of different phases of conflict.[14] This type of approach has been useful for the United Nations because the UN system conceptualizes prevention in terms of sequential, dissociated phases, and the UN often initiates different preventive measures according to an agency/department-specific understanding of the conflict life cycle. Additionally, there is an underlying assumption that phases of conflict can best be addressed by particular strategies formulated by either "development" or "security" actors.

According to this logic, *potential conflict* is to be addressed by structural prevention efforts that seek to address root causes, while during the *trigger/mobilization of conflict phase,* crisis management and preventative diplomacy tactics ought to be deployed, and, finally, during the *post-conflict phase,* efforts should focus consolidating peace, strengthening state capacity and stabilizing the society.

Yet there is little evidence to demonstrate exactly how particular phases and strategies relate to each other. Conventional wisdom states that development strategies (poverty alleviation, democracy building, security sector reform) are most effective where there is a potential for conflict

but where the violence threshold has not been crossed or, after a conflict has begun to subside, while security strategies are best placed to address a conflict that has already turned violent. However, "it may in fact be the case that strategies falling under both rubrics are effective at all points in the conflict cycle, albeit to varying degrees."[15] Given the complex nature of modern, intrastate wars, the distinction between security and development issues has become increasingly blurred.

Further, s*tructural prevention*, defined as strategies which aim to address the root causes of deadly conflict, is widely seen as an 'early' preventive tool and one that should be used over the 'long-term.' Yet the notion of timing is questionable; if structural prevention is indeed meant to be deployed 'early' in the conflict, it is unlikely to be effective – since it is precisely when conflict is still "potential" that such strategies are most needed but least likely to be acted upon (because signs of conflict are still hidden). By the same token, *operational prevention*, defined as those strategies which are most effective when violence is imminent, such as preventive diplomacy, economic sanctions, observer missions, or military deployments, may in fact have relevance at 'early' stages of a conflict.

The commonly accepted logic also assumes that development actors should play a role either at the beginning or end of the conflict life-cycle, while security actors should engage during the mobilization, peak, and immediate aftermath of the conflict. Yet such ideas may serve merely to constrain efforts to adopt a more integrated and effective approach to conflict prevention and recommends, at the very least, further inquiry into the topic. Development and security actors should operate more in tandem throughout the conflict cycle.

It is evident that UNDP and the World Bank's Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit (renamed from Post-Conflict Re-construction Unit) are increasingly moving in the direction of earlier intervention in conflicts. In Colombia, both the World Bank and UNDP have supported

regional initiatives, such as the Program for Peace and Development in Magdalena Medio, that are expressly designed to foster development and create the conditions for conflict resolution before the end or diminution of the violence. However this approach is still inchoate and not systematically developed.

The International Peace Academy outlines five main strategies of conflict prevention and tentatively attempts to match different strategies to successive phases of conflict. These are:

1. Structural prevention: addresses structural roots of conflict.

2. Conflict management/prevention: may be most appropriate in gestation phase. This includes low-level strategies such as human rights advocacy, institution-building, quiet diplomacy, and other attempts to channel conflict into institutionally manageable venues.

3. Crisis management/preventive diplomacy: employed once violence appears imminent. Prevention should emphasize the immediate diffusion of the crisis or prevention of escalation of conflict.

4. Crisis/conflict management and termination: employed once conflict has broken out. At this point, international actors should seek to defuse the conflict, prevent it from escalating, terminate conflict and limit effects that may complicate peacebuilding, through: mediation and negotiation, positive and negative incentives, humanitarian relief and human rights protection measures, arms embargoes and demilitarized zones.

5. Post-conflict peacebuilding: employed following the cessation of hostilities. The aim here is to stabilize society to avoid resentments, revenge and new flare-ups. It may include political institution building and democratization process, demobilization (police and military reform), economic reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, social reconciliation and justice.

It is within the literature on *early warning systems* that one finds the most developed models linking causes of conflict to prevention strategies. The most advanced Early Warning Systems have been developed around specialized needs relating to human rights violations, refugee crises, environmentally-caused crises, forced migration conflicts, famine and food shortages, and minorities at risk.

The goal of early warning is the "proactive engagement in the earlier stages of potential conflicts or crises to prevent or at least alleviate their more destructive expressions"[16] It involves the gathering of time sensitive information and the use of models/tools of analysis for interpreting relevant information and developing recommendations for preventive action. Some projects focus on structural indicators and on gathering massive amounts of quantitative data to build country profiles; others gather events-based information (or dynamic data) through real-time news sources and other forms of on-the-ground monitoring.

Where the early warning efforts are lacking, as are the overall models of conflict prevention, is in the articulation of a framework that can address the types of political, social and institutional conflicts that are so prevalent in Latin America but which might not escalate into a full-blown humanitarian crises or open armed conflict. They tell us little about the effectiveness of the rule of law, the representativeness of political parties and the party system, or the corrosive impact of corruption on democratic institutions. For the UNDP-RLAC and many other internatioanal organizations and NGO's, an early warning system must detect more than the stages of crisis that might escalate into war or regime breakdown. It must also be able to identify the impact of "lower-order" institutional conflict and corruption as well as the more atomized but extremely high levels of social and criminal violence that is burgeoning in almost areas of the region.

These "newer" conflicts pose a threat to democratic stability throughout the region and they cut across all regions and even across phases of conflict: they can be found in the post-conflict societies of Central America, the post-authoritarian polyarchies in Brazil and the Southern Cone, and even in the one nation experiencing a full-blown armed conflict with organized armed actors, Colombia.

With this in mind, we developed a more complex framework for understanding violent conflict. Using the same two axes that were used for polyarchy, degree of organization and degree of politicization, we developed a table that provides a typology of violent conflict, generating four basic categories:

- *low organized, low political forms of violence*, such as general homicides and robberies;
- *high organized, low political forms of violence*, such as transnational organized crime and – depending on the case --drug dealing networks;
- *low organized, high political forms of violence*, such as isolated assassinations, individual acts of terrorism, and rogue state actors taking the law into their own hands.
- *high organized, high political forms of violence*, such as guerrilla insurgency, and paramilitary groups, and on a lesser scale of organization, vigilante and social cleansing groups.

These are presented in Table 1.4.

**Table 1.4 VIOLENT CONFLICT**

| LOW →→ Politicization →→ HIGH | | |
|---|---|---|
| ↓ Organization ↓ HI | **V.**<br>• Assault<br>• Rape<br>• Theft / Robbery<br>• Homicide<br>• Extortion | **VII.**<br>• Isolated assassination<br>• Isolated terrorism<br>• Rogue state actors<br>• Social cleansing |
| | **VI.**<br>• Kidnapping<br>• Cargo theft<br>• Auto theft<br>• Arms trafficking<br>• Migrant trafficking<br>• Drug dealing | **VIII.**<br>• National & transnational terrorism<br>• Guerrilla violence<br>• Paramilitary violence<br>• Armed confrontations (State vs. Illegal actors)<br>• Illegal violence by state actors<br>• Violent manifestations of social conflicts |

The typology outlined in Table 1.4 leads to two additional steps in the methodology:

- **analyze tendencies and relationships among different forms of violent conflict by exploring a set of hypotheses that attempt to understand the relationship between the different quadrants, such as how prolonged periods of political violence impact on rates of violent crime (and vice versa), or how *organized* crime impacts on political violence (and vice versa).**

Then:

- **analyze how the difference quadrants of violence impact on polyarchy and state capacity**

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG QUADRANTS OF VIOLENCE

The Georgetown-UNDP methodology (see Appendix) develops a series of initial Hypotheses to be tested in individual cases on how one form of violence impacted on another. Three examples of initial hypotheses that were tested in Colombia are listed below and diagramed in Table 1.5.

***<u>Hypothesis 1</u> (Quadrants 1 and 2): When perceived as increasing or chronically high, the types of conflicts found in Quadrant 1 (low organization, low political such as homicide, assault, etc.) can facilitate more organized forms of crime at the local-regional level.***

Quadrant 1 level violence:

a) Increases public's tolerance for crime and violence;
b) Can divert law enforcement resources to street crime away from Local Organized Crime (LOC) -- depending on public perceptions and demands;
c) Contributes to development of criminal skills, and networks;
d) Reduces the perceived cost of crime, and thus lowers barriers to entry into LOC and costs of continuing LOC operations.

<u>Rationale</u>: As diffuse, violent crime, such as intentional homicide, assault, and armed robbery, rises sharply (and is thus perceived by the public), the public becomes more inured to rising levels of public insecurity. Generally, public opinion is more focused on personal safety in public spaces

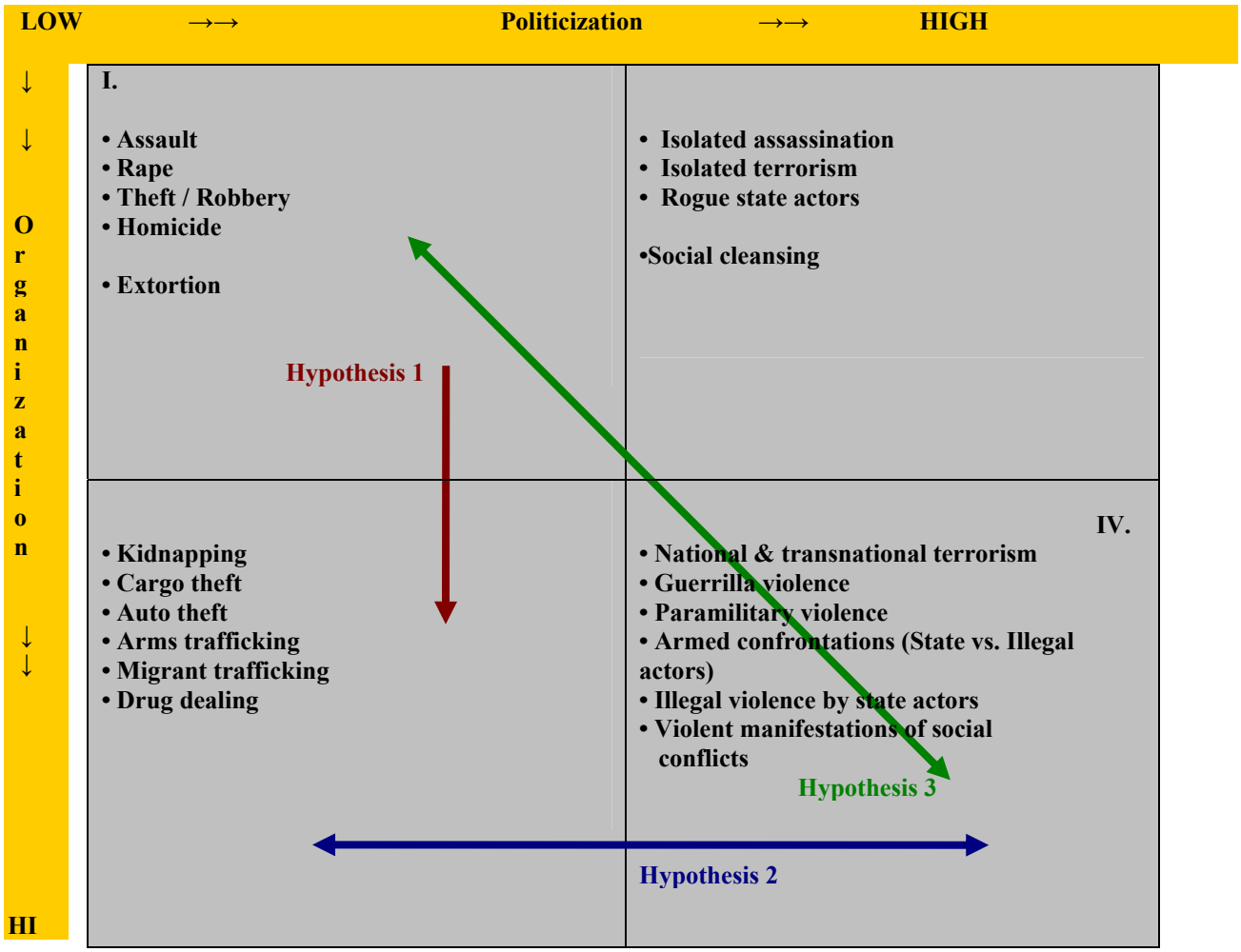
than on problems of organized crime, which are generally perceived as more distant and whose violent acts are considered to be more rationally targeted and less arbitrary than those committed by Q1-type criminals. Where this is the case, the public demand is for more law enforcement resources to be invested in street safety. This diversion of resources facilitates local-regional organized crime (i.e., ongoing criminal groups operating at the neighborhood-to-municipal levels). When levels of crime are perceived to be rising (and in the absence of effective law enforcement counter-measures) the costs of criminal activity are seen to decline; risk-taking increases and more complex (and profitable) forms of crime are more readily attempted.

***Hypothesis 2: The types of conflict found in Q2 and Q4 can be mutually reinforcing.***

a) Q4 actors (e.g., guerrillas or paramilitaries) use criminal methods and develop relations with organized criminal groups to obtain resources and achieve objectives.
b) Certain activities, such as kidnapping, can be used for criminal or political ends.
c) The operations of politically-organized armed actors lead to a weakening of state capacity to maintain public order or administer justice
d) Both Q2 and Q4 groups have an interest in maintaining access to a highly profitable, illegal economy with limited or no state intervention.

Rationale: A constant challenge for organized, highly political, illegal armed actors, such as guerrillas or paramilitaries, is how to raise the large sums of money necessary to finance their activities. Some opportunities can be found directly, e.g., by taxing local groups through forms of direct extortion, or by resorting to local-regional or even transnational types of criminal activities, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, drug trafficking or arms dealing. Q4 actors may carry out these activities directly, they might target criminal groups for "taxation," or they might form alliances with Q2 actors. Many of these activities occur in zones characterized by weak or negligible state presence. The combined effects of the interactions of Q2 and Q4 groups is to further weaken and undermine state authority.

**Table 1.5**
**RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE**




***Hypothesis 3: The types of conflict found in Q4 and Q1 are mutually reinforcing.***

a) High and chronic levels of political violence stimulate criminal violence by weakening state capacity to maintain order and administer justice, thus leading to privatization of justice and of conflict mediation.

b) High and chronic levels of political violence stimulate criminal violence by increasing the number of arms in a society.

c) Unsupervised political actors can become criminal actors.

d) In a post-conflict situation, armed political actors can become criminal actors.

e) Political actors engaged in criminal activities for political ends may break away (or groups may disintegrate) and become criminals.

f) High and chronic levels of low political, low organized conflict stimulate political violence by creating propitious conditions for Q4 actors – such as a weak and limited state and increased access to criminal resources.

g) High and chronic levels of low political, low organized conflict stimulate political violence by providing justification for extra-legal action by Q4 actors.

Rationale: There are direct and indirect connections between diffuse, non-political conflict and its extreme opposite: organized, highly-political armed conflict. The connections occur, in part, when state resources are inadequate to deal with both sets of problems. One social response is to stimulate forms of individual and collective self-defense groups that employ illegal violence.

Under these conditions, weapons are increasingly available and violence levels can escalate. Individuals that may at one time have mobilized around political objectives may remain organized to some degree but turn to criminal activities. As violence expands, guerrilla, paramilitary and vigilante groups increasingly point to their ability to impose order (even if only in specific zones) as a justification for their activities.

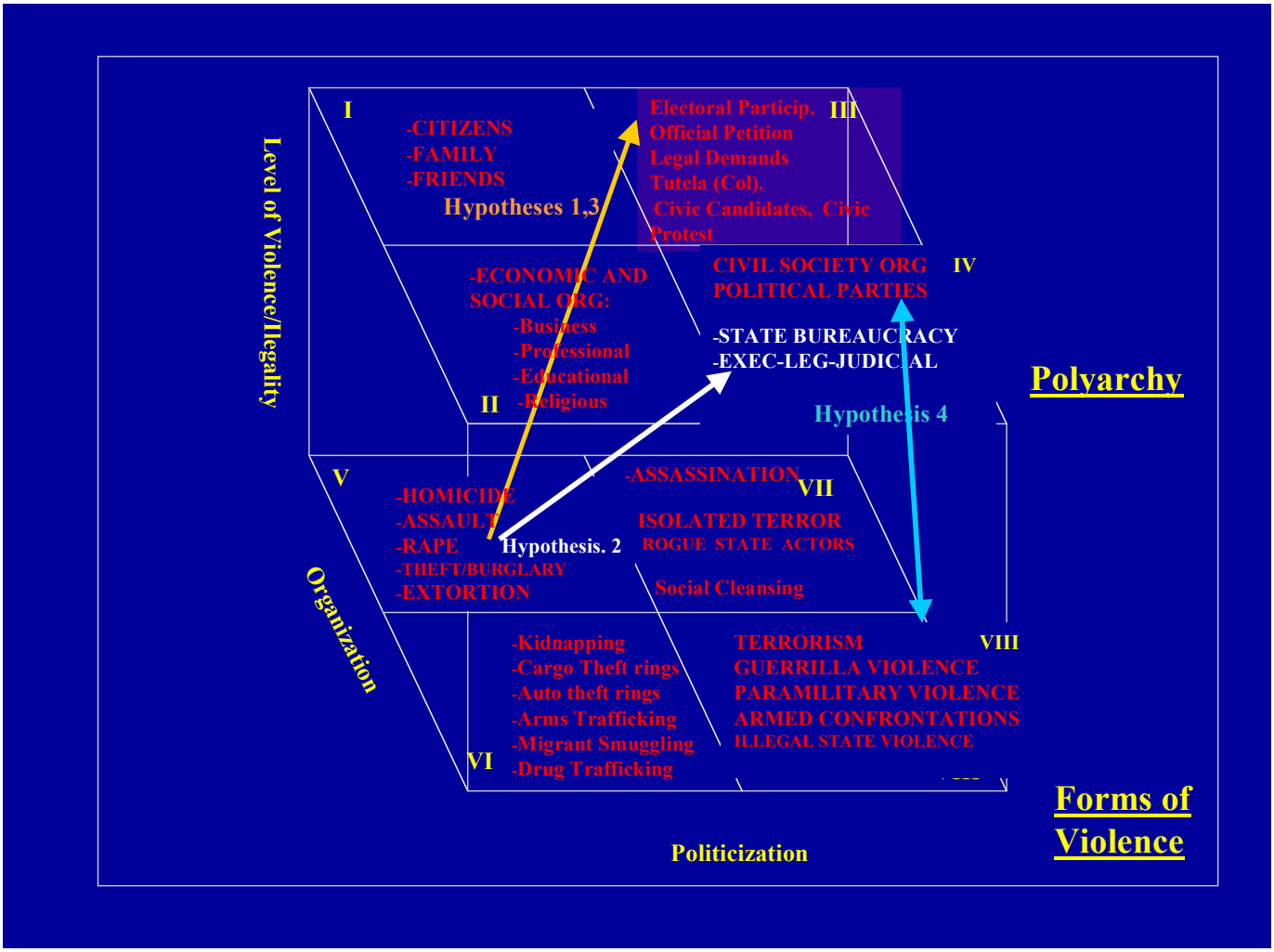
## RELATING QUADRANTS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT TO POLYARCHY AND STATE CAPACITY

The next step of the methodology is to examine the impact of different forms of violent conflict on polyarchy and state capacity. Table 1.6 presents a three dimensional graph that links the table on Polyarchy with the table on Violent Conflict. The table also diagrams some of the Hypotheses that were developed to understand the relationship between quadrants of violent conflict and the quadrants of different actors and processes of polyarchy.

**Table 1.6**

**Assessing the Impact of Violent Conflict**

**on Polyarchy and State Capacity and vice versa**




**Selected hypotheses developed in the methodology:**

**Hypothesis 1 (Q5→Q3):** violent crime (Quadrant V -- non-political, unorganized ) erodes social capital, trust, and community.

**Hypothesis 2**: (**Q5 →Q4)** violent crime undermines citizen confidence in the ability of government to maintain order and protect life and property.

**Hypothesis 3: (Q5→Q3)** As a result of Hypotheses 1 and 2, violent conflict leads to lower levels of regime and state legitimacy and lower levels of electoral participation.

**Hypothesis 4**: **(Q8↔Q4)** High political and highly-organized violent conflict (Q8) can distort and undermine civic protest and civil society participation, creating an undemocratic tension and alienation between civil society and state authority.

a1) Legitimate protest/participation is often mistakenly criminalized by the state in times of war, thus closing channels for legal civilian opposition and strengthening illegal forms.

a2) Guerrilla groups penetrate peasant, labor, student and civic groups, changing their nature and mission.

b1) Paramilitaries penetrate vigilante, business/landed civic groups.

b2) Paramilitaries target legitimate protest leaders thus closing channels for legal civic opposition.

c1) Vigilante groups target perceived criminals and social "undesirables" and exercise "private justice."

## The Colombian Case

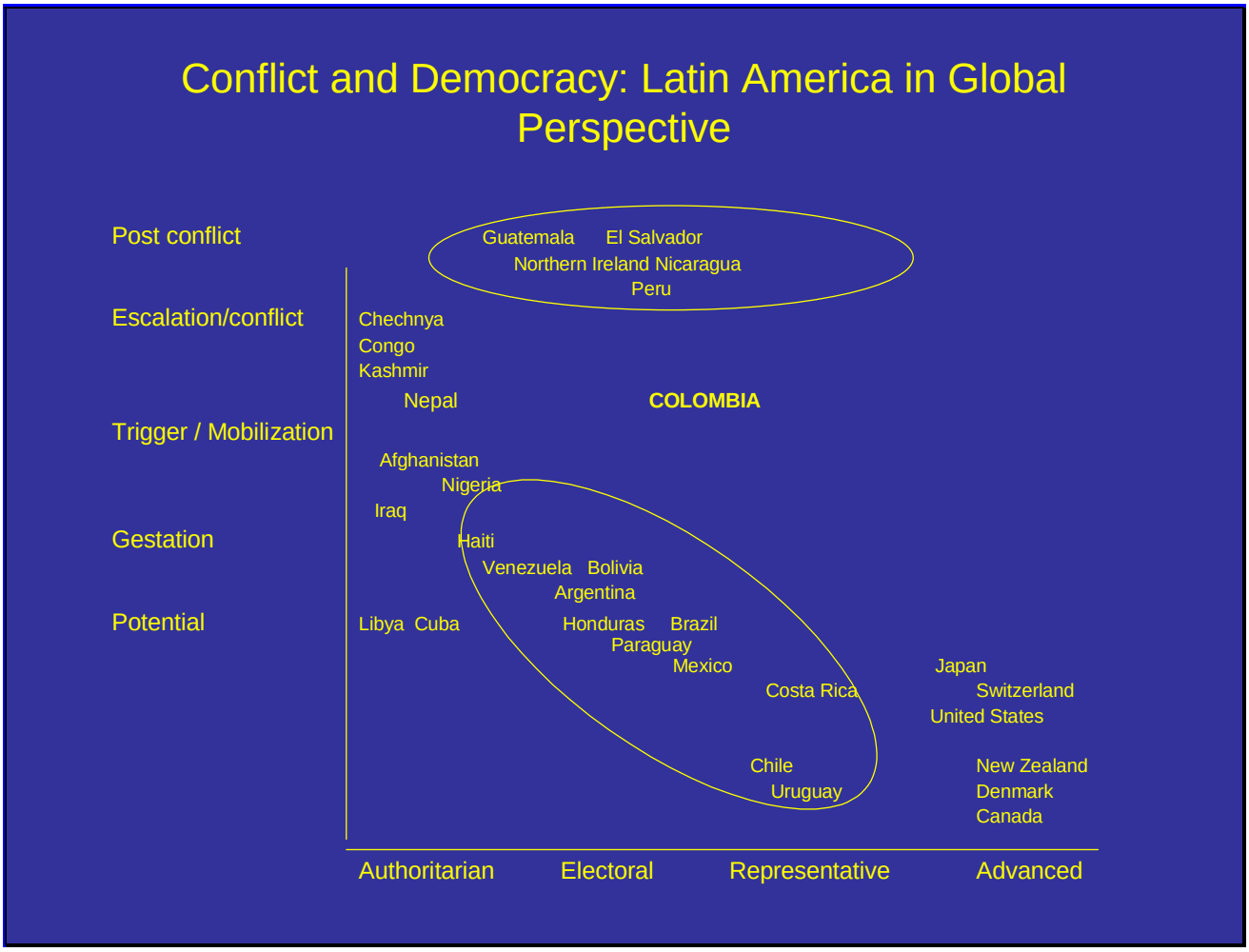
The Colombian case study was the first attempt to apply this multidimensional approach analyzing both democratic governance (polyarchy) and violent conflict. There are other assessment tools that have been developed by governmental and international agencies designed to analyze separately violent conflict or democracy; however, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that these two objectives have been brought together within one methodological framework.

Why test the methodology in Colombia first? After all, Colombia is an atypical case. It has experienced a protracted conflict with multiple armed actors that has endured for decades; unlike the other internal wars that raged in the 1980s and early 1990s, such as in Central America and Peru, Colombia's armed civil conflict has not ended.

If we create a simple graph where the "x" axis indicates type of political regime ranging from authoritarian (low) to advanced democracy (high) and the "y" axis indicates level of conflict ranging from no conflict (low) to post-conflict (high) -- passing through potential, gestation, trigger/ mobilization, and escalation) -- most of Latin America is clustered around the potential and gestation stages or is in the post-conflict stage. Colombia alone is in the trigger/ mobilization – escalation phase. Yet on the democracy axis, Colombia appears not dissimilar in its forms of democratic governance in the region, though it is quite exceptional in the historical longevity and continuity of its constitutional and democratic practices (see Table 1.6).

There are several reasons, however, that led us to begin in Colombia: First, Colombia is the only case where each of the four quadrants of conflict currently has an impact on the quality and quantity of democratic governance. Second, Colombia has undoubtedly the best and most complete data in the region on different forms of violence drawn from governmental, academic, NGOs and international sources. Third, Colombia has an exceptionally strong tradition in the social sciences in the study of violence. Colombian social scientists have been pioneers in shaping our understanding of protracted forms of armed conflict as well as our understanding of the possibilities and pitfalls of peace processes and negotiations.

**Table 1.7**


Conflict and Democracy: Latin America in Global Perspective
Post conflict
Escalation/conflict
Trigger / Mobilization
Gestation
Potential
Guatemala
El Salvador
Northern Ireland
Nicaragua
Peru
Chechnya
Congo
Kashmir
Nepal
COLOMBIA
Afghanistan
Nigeria
Iraq
Haiti
Venezuela
Bolivia
Argentina
Libya
Cuba
Honduras
Brazil
Paraguay
Mexico
Costa Rica
Chile
Uruguay
Japan
Switzerland
United States
New Zealand
Denmark
Canada
Authoritarian
Electoral
Representative
Advanced

Indeed, having completed the case study, these assumptions were confirmed. Colombia proved to be a gold mine of data, and the high quality of existing Colombian social science research made this study singularly possible. More importantly, the unique and complex dimensions of Colombia's multifaceted violent conflict call out for greater international cooperation and assistance. This study represents a cooperative research undertaking among national and international researchers; it is designed to better assist not just the international community but also the Colombian government, civil society, academics, and interested citizens.

The study follows the component parts of the methodology. The intent was to examine each of the relevant areas of regime functioning and violent conflict and to explore some of the hypotheses developed in the methodology. The research revealed some interesting findings. Polyarchy in Colombia, despite showing a certain degree of resilience, has been seriously undermined by the country's protracted violence. Core areas of competition, participation and rights in many cases reveal serious shortcomings that belie the minimum standards of democratic governance. The study by Hoskin and Garcia, both professors of political science at the University of Los Andes, demonstrates that despite the growing independence of the electorate and the weakening of identification with the traditional parties, third parties have not been able to consolidate their presence within the political system at the national level. With a few exceptions, third parties have proven ephemeral at the local level as well. Between 1988 and 2000, although third forces won 51.9% of mayoral elections, only 22.6% have won more than one time, and only two, the Unión Patriotica and the Alianza Social Indígena, have done so within the same municipality.

The electoral system continues to be characterized by high levels of abstention, and, not surprisingly, there is a significant correlation between the highest areas of violence and the highest

areas of abstention. Participation is also seriously undermined by assassinations of journalists, indigenous peoples, labor leaders, activists, candidates, elected officials and others. In several of these categories, particularly elected officials, journalists and labor leaders, Colombia regularly leads the world in international surveys, undermining participation and revealing a deficit in political rights and a crisis in human rights. The procedures of polyarchy in such a context begin to distance themselves from the fundamental promises of democracy. Not surprisingly, by 2002, just before the election of Alvaro Uribe, only 39% of Colombians agreed with the assertion "Democracy is preferable to all other forms of government."[17] This was the second lowest in Latin America and, when compared to a similar 1996 survey, showed the largest decline in the region.

Mauricio García and Rodrigo Uprimny in their study on justice in Colombia, place some of the findings on polyarchy in a conceptually insightful context. Polyarchy, in the classic sense, is bounded by the institutions of the permanent legal and administrative structures of the state. The state sets the boundaries and the rules. In Colombia, however, there are large areas where the state is not present. Garcia and Uprimny, professors of law at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, find that in 2002, almost 200 municipalities had no police presence and almost half of all municipalities had only a symbolic presence. They also found vast stretches of the country without any effective judicial presence, either through a lack of a permanent state infrastructure or due to political violence against judges and judicial officials. Between 1979 y 1991, 290 officials working in the justice sector were assassinated The Uribe government has addressed the issue of police coverage, restoring for the first time at least a symbolic presence in every municipality. Still, UNDP reported in late 2003 that 209 municipalities or 20% of all municipalities remained vulnerable.[18] In a complementary manner, the authors provide a careful analysis on the methodology of calculating impunity. They examine carefully the different studies that have appeared in Colombia, note their

strengths and weaknesses, and then conclude that the most reliable and accurate indicator of impunity is the number of murders that have been solved. In Colombia, 96% of all murders go unpunished.

Even in those areas where there is a state presence of some sort, state actors and institutions do not function as the controlling and legitimate authority. Rather they often operate as one more participant in the political arena. Garcia and Uprimny thus go on to re-conceptualize the political and geographic space of the country. They depict three categories: 1) those areas where the state has a viable presence – what Guillermo O'Donnell calls the "legal state"; 2) those areas – gray zones -- where the state is present but does not wield decisive authority or legitimacy; and 3) hose areas – *zonas salvajes* – where the state is absent, or effectively absent, and private authorities predominate. Such a re-conceptualization of state authority and the rule of law provides an incisive and insightful framework to examine the effectiveness of security, judicial, welfare and development policies designed to expand state presence. Implemented in piecemeal fashion, these authors conclude, state policies may exacerbate local conflicts and provide insufficient legitimate authority or oversight of local powerholders, whether armed or unarmed.

Astrid Martínez, a professor of economics at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia also presents a balance of state capacity that reveals that the country experienced significant gains in social, economic and human development indicators through 1997, yet then underwent a precipitous reversal since then. For her, the economic deterioration of the 1990s has been devastating for Colombia. It has meant a significant reduction in human capital in terms, most critically in education and employment. The country has witnessed in this period striking increases in poverty and an increase in inequality, already among the worst in Latin America. Bucking regional trends, the percentage of persons below the poverty line in Colombia rose from 53.8% in 1990 to 60% in

2000. Outside of urban centers, the poverty rate – which Martinez discusses at length in terms of methodology and accuracy – rose to 82.6%. Indeed, all the gains steadily achieved over decades through 1997 were undone in just three years.

Martínez suggests, as others have, that the poorest regions do not necessarily correlate with the most violent areas; however her research leaves the door open for a greater correlation then most people think. Her data also give credence to the growing consensus that there is a strong relationship between violence and inequality.

For Martínez, the state has not been able to promote growth or social justice despite the dramatic increase in the size of state spending (from 27.43% of GDP in 1990 to 44.48% in 1999). Moreover, the state is facing a significant fiscal crisis at a time when demands for increased spending on security and social services are rising. Her work, then, calls into serious question the ability of the current structure of state revenues and expenditures to address the multiple needs of the humanitarian and economic crisis facing the country.

The studies of violence and social protest reveal other disturbing trends and force us to view the relationships between violent conflict and democracy in a different light. Not all of the proposed hypotheses outlined in the methodology stood up, at least not in Colombia. Segura y Camacho indicate that not all crime has risen over the last several decades as has been the case throughout the region. The number of overall crimes leveled off in the mid 1980s. The figure that grew astronomically was the homicide rate, peaking at 79.2 per 100,000 in 1991. It fell to 64.6 per 100,000 in the year 2001, still among the highest in the world. By 2003, the rate had fallen to 51.8 and in 2004 to 44.2 per 100,000.[19]

The authors then disaggregate the homicde rates to distinguish between politically-motivated homicides and ordinary homicide, and attempt analyze to analyze the relationship between the two.

In contrast to a common assumption among Colombian social scientists – and weakening one of our basic hypotheses (page 32) -- there does not appear to be a causal relationship between political and criminal violence. It is possible for political violence to increase while criminal violence decreases. Indeed even as national homcide rates declined precipitously during 2003 and 2004, the percentage of homicdes specifically related to the political violence – from deaths in combat, extra-judical killings, or massacres – actually increased from about 3000 to 4000 annual deaths.[20]
Their study finds that the single greatest factor determining the presence or absence of violent political conflict in a particular region is the strategic choice made by armed actors. Political violence is dynamic and mobile. It moves from high crime areas to lesser crime areas, from rural to, increasingly, urban areas. In the last few years, political violence has been increasing even as ordinary violence has been declining, in some cases, dramatically as in Bogotá.

The study also examines familial and social violence such as rape and domestic violence and draws a link between the world of private and public violence. When the methodology was first developed, the question was raised as to whether the focus on conflict should be limited to public conflicts among individuals and groups (presumably "political" and "civil" conflict) or should be expanded to include conflicts within families and against women and children – that is to say in private spaces which are also the site of serious violent conflict. Segura and Camacho find a causal link between private and pubic violence, one that has substantial support in the literature and one which may help explain both positive and negative developments that have been found recently in Colombia.

Alejandro Reyes, one of Colombia's leading sociologists, provides a systematic analysis detailing the rise and geographical expansion of illegal armed groups from the 1960s to the present. In his chapter, he assesses the impact of the rise of the drug trade on the burgeoning armed conflict.

His cartographic studies identify nine distinct sub-regions where political violence has been concentrated. These are:

1. Córdoba – Urabá – Occidente de Antioquia – Chocó
2. Sucre and the regions of Montes de María in Bolívar
3. Bajo Cauca antioqueño – Magdalena Medio
4. Ocaña – Catatumbo en Norte de Santander
5. Cesar – Magdalena – Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
6. Nororiente de Boyacá – Arauca – Casanare
7. Meta – Guaviare
8. Caquetá – Putumayo
9. Cauca – sur del Huila – sur del Valle del Cauca – Nariño

What is striking is that in eight of these regions, there is a correlation between the purchase of lands by drug-traffickers and a strong rise in political violence. Or, to place this finding within the Quadrants of violence in Table 1.3, there is a relationship between Q2 and Q4 types of conflict (see page 30). There is also a correlation with the rise and spread of paramilitary forces. In the ninth region, Arauca, the presence of narco-wealth is substituted by state and multinational oil investments, and, since 2002, the presence of U.S. troops. (And since 2003, Arauca has also emerged as major area of illicit crop as well). Yet petroleum investment seems to be as central to the conflict in this and other regions as is narco-investments and land conflicts in the others. According to these maps, there is a geographical core to the country's political violence that comprises about a 100 mostly rural municipalities. From there, the tentacles spread out into a wider humanitarian crisis as populations are displaced into medium and large cities and as the illegal armed actors make strategic decisions to open corridors and project their power into the burgeoning shantytowns of the nation's cities.

This concentrated political violence in rural areas has had a devastating impact on social movements, protest and political participation. Chernick, a political scientist from Georgetown University, found certain forms of peasant protest have virtually disappeared. This trend, however,

is not reflected in urban areas where labor protests grew in the 1990s, likely as a reaction to economic opening, adjustments and crisis. Since 2000, though, with a significant rise in violence against labor leaders, this form of protest, too, has been declining. These findings further confirm the general hypothesis that the nation's political violence has weakened social capital and undermined political participation. Yet, interestingly, as the political arena has become increasingly violent and militarized, there has been a distinct increase in political demonstrations and marches in favor of human rights, peace, anti-kidnapping and de-militarization. Even as violence chokes off some forms of participation, it has promoted increased mobilization and political action across civil society in favor of ending the violence.

Collectively, then, the studies produced in this first application of the Georgetown-United Nation's methodology reveal a democracy under great stress from multiple forms of violence and a state with limited capacity to regulate the boundaries of the political, the economic and the social. An adequate response to all forms of violence will entail strengthening and expanding the "legal state" and the reduction and elimination "gray areas" and "savage areas." This expansion of the legal state must be accompanied by the deepening of the quality and scope of polyarchy – particularly in the area of safeguarding human and civil rights.

International assistance programs, then, must be geared towards multiple levels of the conflict: the humanitarian emergency; the root causes of conflict – even before the violence ends; and the process of conflict resolution.

Confronting the Humanitarian emergency: National and international policymakers will need to first address the most dramatic symptoms of this crisis, particularly the nation's internally displaced population and the epidemic level of human rights violations and abridgment international humanitarian law. The United Nations and other international organizations and NGOs are already

involved. Their work must be made an absolute priority.

Addressing root causes and preparing the terrain for an eventual post-conflict period: Ultimately, security rests on democratic development. The key structural areas, identified in this study, that promote and sustain Colombian violence relate to: inequality, poverty, land conflicts, social and economic exclusion, unrestrained human rights abuses, impunity, illicit economies, political marginalization, and private spheres of criminal and domestic violence. These areas require a range of expertise and, in many cases, a broad spectrum of international assistance. Moreover, they need to be addressed even before the conflict ends. Yet progress in these areas will facilitate the process of peacemaking and will better ensure that any peaceful settlement endures over time. International organizations have already begun to recognize the importance of initiating key structural development programs amid the violence –even in zones of conflict. Such programs are often risky and perilous; yet these issues cannot wait until the full maturation of the post-conflict period.

Conflict resolution: The legal state, grounded in social justice, legitimate authority and democratic governance, will not be able to take hold across the national territory without a political settlement to the violence. Without a comprehensive peace that restores the legitimate monopoly on violence to the legally-constituted state, the country at best will be divided into archipelagos of relative peace and democracy, on the one side, and broad swaths of the national territory held hostage to the changing dynamics of the violence, on the other. If the conditions for a political settlement do not exist, policies still need to be designed to help facilitate the emergence of those conditions. The international community must be ready and prepared when the conditions are – to borrow a phrase from conflict theorist William Zartman -- "ripe" for a settlement.

These ideas will be discussed further in the final chapter.

[1] See *A Methodology for Democratic Conflict Prevention and Early Warning in Latin America* **(**Georgetown University & United Nations Development Programme – Latin American and Caribbean Bureau: June 2005).
[2] See Alfred Stepan, *Authoritarian Brazil.* The reference is to Bonapartism and the Eighteenth Braumaire. In certain historical moments, an authoritarian state can operate independent of established societal interests and political processes, even those normally controlled by the traditional political class.
[3] Dahl, Robert. 1970. *Polyarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
[4] See, e.g., Meyer 1995; Lievesley 1999; Chalmers, et al., 1997. The most pioneering and theoretically-innovative effort to incorporate socio-economic factors into basic defintions of democratic governance and democracy was only recently published and was based specifically on the experience of Latin America: See: *La democracia en América Latina: Hacia una dmeocracia de ciuadanos y ciudadanos* (New York: PNUD, 2004). This work should be viewed as complementary to our own, and helps strengthen the foundation from which to reconceptualize issues of conflict and conflict prevention in the region.
[5] Roderic Ai. Camp, ed., *Citizen Views of Democracy in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).
[6]Andreas Schedler (1998), "What is Democratic Consolidation?" *Journal of Democracy*, 9:2, 91-107.
[7]Guillermo O'Donnell, Guillermo (1994), "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* (5:1), 55-69.
[8] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 1968.
[9] The broadest notions we have in this regard are the static equilibrium models introduced by David Easton and elaborated by Gabriel Almond et al. (2000) in their complicated structural-functional approach to comparative politics. These are useful in that they provide a commonly understood mental picture and vocabulary (no small benefit) but they remain rather abstract. See David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (1965) and Gabriel Almond et al., *Comparative politics today : a world view* (New York : Longman, 2000).
[10] A clearer idea of the concept of "mapping" to identify issue area and arenas of contestation can be found in Philippe C. Schmitter, "Civil Society East and West," in Larry Diamond, et al., eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 239-62.
[11] Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York: The Free Press, 1956).
[12] Michael E. Brown, *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1996).
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] Chandra Lekha Sriram & Karin Wermester, eds., *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN Capabilities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict* (International Peace Academy and Lynne Reinner, 2003).
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] John L. Davies and Ted Robert Gurr, eds. 1998. *Preventive Measures and Crisis Early Warning Systems*. (Lanham, Md and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers).
[17]Latinobarómetro 2002.
[18] PNUD, *El Conflicto, callejón con salida: Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano Colombia 2003* (Bogotá: PNUD, 2003), Anexo D, pp. 488-496.
[19] Departamento Nacional De Planeación, Dirección de Justicia y Seguridad, *Cifras de violencia 2004*. Númereo 8, enero a diciembre 2004, Bogotá.
[20] Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, *Colombia: En contravía de las recomendaciones internacionales sobre derechos humanos: Balance de la política de la seguridad democrática y la situación de derechos humanos y derecho humanitario –agosto 2002 a agosto de 2004.* Bogotá, 2004.