

**A METHODOLOGY FOR DEMOCRATIC CONFLICT CONVENTION AND  
EARLY WARNING IN LATIN AMERICA**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION: A Seven Step Methodology**

This methodology is designed to analyze violent conflict, assess democratic governance and understand the relationships between the two. It has been developed principally as a tool of analysis to study the nature and quality of democracy in relation to current and future conflicts in a specific world region: Latin America.

The methodology is built on 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). The distinctiveness includes the widespread formal acceptance of democratic institutions as the primary regime type. It also includes a range of conflict situations that, in most cases, fall short of outright civil war, state collapse or inter-state war. Even the few cases of countries emerging from periods of violent armed conflict, such as El Salvador, Guatemala or Peru, tend to be facing challenges of rising crime and other types of violent challenges comparable to other nations in the region. As such, conventional notions of pre-conflict and post-conflict have less probative or explanatory value than is generally thought to be the case in other regional contexts.

These special conditions justify a regional methodology of conflict prevention specifically designed for the conditions of Latin America and the Caribbean. In so doing, we are not asserting that the methodology is not applicable to other world regions facing similar sets of challenges. Indeed, we believe that it is. However, a regionally tailored approach can more accurately and insightfully assess the key political dynamics found across Latin America, evaluate the strengths and limits of state capacity in the region, and

provide an understanding of the challenge represented by specific forms of social, criminal and political violence. In this respect, the approach taken here is consistent with the UNDP's Project for Democratic Development in Latin America (PRODDAL).<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: Distinctiveness of the Region**

<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coherent states-not failed states</li> <li>• Lengthy independence since early 19<sup>th</sup> century</li> <li>• Mid-to-late stages of democratic transition</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle income GDP's</li> <li>• Extreme Inequality</li> <li>• Low to mid rates of growth</li> <li>• Severe, concentrated poverty</li> <li>• High underemployment</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority Catholic</li> <li>• Moderate ethnic division</li> <li>• Majority urban</li> <li>• Relative linguistic homogeneity</li> </ul>
<b>International</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S sphere of influence</li> <li>• Active in trade blocs</li> <li>• Relatively secure borders</li> </ul>

This methodology is designed to assist UNDP-RLAC and other international organizations and actors develop their programming, policy interventions and other activities by providing a common theoretical framework. The methodology identifies forms of conflict that are protracted and corrosive to democratic institutions and civic participation over time. It also alerts international and national authorities to potential points of rupture, political crisis, escalated violence and humanitarian crises. By identifying both protracted conflict and potential crisis points, this methodology can serve

<sup>1</sup> See *Informe sobre la democracia en América Latina: Hacia una democracia de ciudadanas y ciudadanos* (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2004).

as an innovative kind of early warning system for United Nations and other international and national officials. These assessments can be used to help lay the groundwork for policies and programs to address current crises, prevent the further escalation of violence, and head off violent crises in the future.

Our guiding metaphor, drawn from the seminal work by Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter in the 1980s, is a variant on the multi-level chessboard. The bottom level consists of varieties of violent conflict; the top level represents democracy functioning within a coherent state and legal framework. Between these is an intermediate level that depicts politically oriented acts that threaten or actually employ extra-legal violence. This metaphor will be developed conceptually and operationalized as we go through the steps of the methodology.

The methodology is divided into several sections that are designed to guide the analysis. These steps should be used as a general guide and adapted to the conditions of each country.

**STEP 1: Analyze violent conflict using an approach that measures violent conflict**

***along two axes: unorganized-organized and non-political-political.*** Such a typology generates four basic categories:

- *low organized, low political forms of violence*, such as homicides and assaults;
- *high organized, low political forms of violence*, such as transnational organized crime and drug trafficking networks;
- *low organized, high political forms of violence*, such as isolated assassinations and individual acts of terrorism;
- *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.

Within each category, specific conflicts will be identified and data will be collected cross-nationally, nationally, locally and sectorally.

**STEP 2: *Having identified and measured violent conflict within each of the above categories, the next step is to identify and analyze tendencies and relationships among different forms of violent conflict***, for example, the relationship between high rates of individual crime and levels of organized crime or organized political violence. To do this, a set of hypotheses is suggested. By identifying and testing these trends, we can better understand how different forms of violent conflict can stimulate wider circles of violence, can undermine democratic governance, and, under certain conditions, can escalate into deeper political, social and economic crises.

**STEP 3: *Once the nature of conflict has been outlined, proceed to assess democratic institutions and state capacity***. In this section, the methodology examines key elements of **regime functioning**, specifically:

- Participation
- Contestation
- Rights
- Citizen attitudes towards democracy

It also examines key areas of **state capacity** including state presence throughout national territory and social access to state benefits, services and protections. Here the analysis should focus on:

- 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

**STEP 4: *Examine the impacts of different forms of violent conflict on democratic institutions and state capacity***, that is, the interactions between the “bottom-level game” of violence on the “top-level game” of democracy. Also in this step the interactions between the bottom- and top-level games with the intermediate level (semi-loyal, semi-institutionalized, semi-legal actions with potential for violence) should be examined as well. Again, a set of hypotheses is offered for this purpose; these will need to be tested. By identifying and testing these trends, we can determine how violent conflict (including protracted violent conflict) specifically affects democratic governance short of regime breakdown.

**STEP 5: *This step provides general guidelines to develop policy interventions best suited to strengthen democracy, expand state capacity and ameliorate the most threatening and destabilizing areas of violent conflict.***

**STEP 6:** *At this point, the findings should be checked.* This will be done by convening:

- 1) a series of focus groups in a few well-selected conflict areas to discuss the findings and proposed policy recommendations
- 2) a panel of national experts to discuss the research data and findings
- 3) interviews of political and social leaders

**STEP 7:** Having identified critical policy needs and areas of assistance, a filter needs to be applied that asks such questions as: What are other donors doing? What are the host government's priorities? How can UNDP and other UN agencies [or the international organization applying the methodology] best address these issues? Based on this filter, the organization should then proceed and develop a set of policy recommendations to guide its own programming and to share with the host government.

## **II. APPLYING THE METHODOLOGY (Steps 1-4)**

### **Preliminary Step:**

Before undertaking the conflict assessment, the assessment team should first prepare a short study using existing sources to place the country's political situation in historical perspective, focusing on:

- regime changes and variables of democracy (participation, contestation, rights);



- state capacity (the legal state, economic development, public order, etc.);
- violent conflict; and
- international involvement in the political, administrative and conflict arenas.

<b>STEP 1:      Assessing Conflict</b>
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Internal or intra-state conflict can be understood as disputes among actors that can be violent or nonviolent in nature and have either positive or negative impacts on democracy. Democratic politics promotes peaceful resolution of disagreements within processes that ensure widespread participation, accepted rules of decision-making (or contestation), and the virtually universal guarantee of basic rights (e.g., suffrage, assembly, access to information, and the like). In this sense, the resolution of conflicts peacefully among rule-abiding actors is the very stuff of democratic politics. Also, most democracies can tolerate low levels of violent conflict, especially when this takes place within generally understood boundaries. For example, student demonstrations may occasionally employ violent gestures (e.g., rock-throwing, occupation of buildings), as might protests by farmers (e.g., blocking streets, dumping produce in public spaces). Peaceful conflict and low-level symbolic violence are the forces that drive problem-solving in healthy democracies.

On the other hand, violent conflict that exceeds or threatens to exceed democratically-accepted boundaries can undermine democratic governance. This is clearly the case with large-scale, violent, anti-system movements such as guerrillas,

paramilitary groups or disloyal military forces. It is also the case of smaller scale terrorist acts or isolated acts against political targets, as seen in certain types of assassinations.

In a similar vein, less prominent forms of violence, under given circumstances, can undermine democratic governance in significant ways that are not readily apparent. This is the case especially of criminal violence, whose connections with democracy are significant but have been largely unexplored. In this approach, we include criminal violence by individuals acting alone as well as in groups with varying levels of organization. We also include state agents, such as police officers or military personnel when these employ violence extra-legally.

What is needed, then, is a way to characterize various types of violent conflict in order to understand the relationships among them. With this understanding we can proceed to analyze the impacts of violent conflict on democratic governance. With a clearer grasp of the sources and impacts of violent conflict, better understanding of conflict-prevention becomes possible, along with the specific types of policies that might be employed to deter conflict.

Table 2, “Quadrants of Conflict” portrays types of violent conflict in a simplified way and represents the bottom level of the “chessboard.” 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 objects, or

**Table 2 Quadrants of Violent Conflict**

<b>Degree of Politicization</b>	
Low	High
<p><b>I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assault</li> <li>• Rape</li> <li>• Theft/Robbery</li> <li>• Homicide</li> <li>• Extortion</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>III</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolated assassination</li> <li>• Isolated terrorism</li> <li>• Rogue State actors</li> <li>• Social Cleansing</li> </ul>
<p><b>II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kidnapping</li> <li>• Cargo theft</li> <li>• Auto theft</li> <li>• Arms trafficking</li> <li>• Migrant trafficking</li> <li>• Drug trafficking</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>IV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National &amp; Transnational terrorism</li> <li>• Guerrilla violence</li> <li>• Armed confrontations (State vs. Illegal actors)</li> <li>• Violent manifestation of social conflicts</li> </ul>
High	
<b>Degree of Organization</b>	

“targets,” beginning with “low” (relatively non-political) and proceeding through attempts to influence policies, to change the incumbents, to change the government, to “high” (change the regime—or type of political system).

Although continua or gradations might be more accurate, in order to simplify the exposition we use Quadrants to refer to broad types of conflict. Thus, Quadrant I refers to diffuse acts of relatively non-political criminal violence carried out largely by individuals acting alone or in small, ad hoc groups. Quadrant II refers to forms of non-political crime that are carried out by organized groups. Within Quadrant II it is useful to distinguish between organized criminal groups that operate largely at the local level (neighborhoods, *municipios*) from groups operating at the extended regional (various cities and provinces) and transnational levels. Note also that we include state repressive agents (police and military personnel or units of varying size), acting outside the law. Quadrant III depicts loosely organized but highly political, violent acts by individuals or small groups. And Quadrant IV depicts highly political, violent acts by larger, better organized groups. Conceivably, disloyal national armed forces would fit here in a scenario of a *golpe de estado*. A category that is less organized, although it may be highly political, includes vigilantes, who act outside the law against individuals or groups perceived to be “criminal” or “anti-social.”

The various Quadrants and their interrelationships generate a series of hypotheses that facilitate exploration of the origins and dynamics of types of conflict.

## STEP 2: Analyzing the Relationship among Different Forms of Violent Conflict

In this step, several hypotheses are proposed to explain relationships among the four quadrants of conflict. Rather than hypothesizing patterns of causality, the purpose is to search for tendencies and patterns of relationships among actors and types of conflicts as illustrated in Table 4. The hypotheses and their rationales are:

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

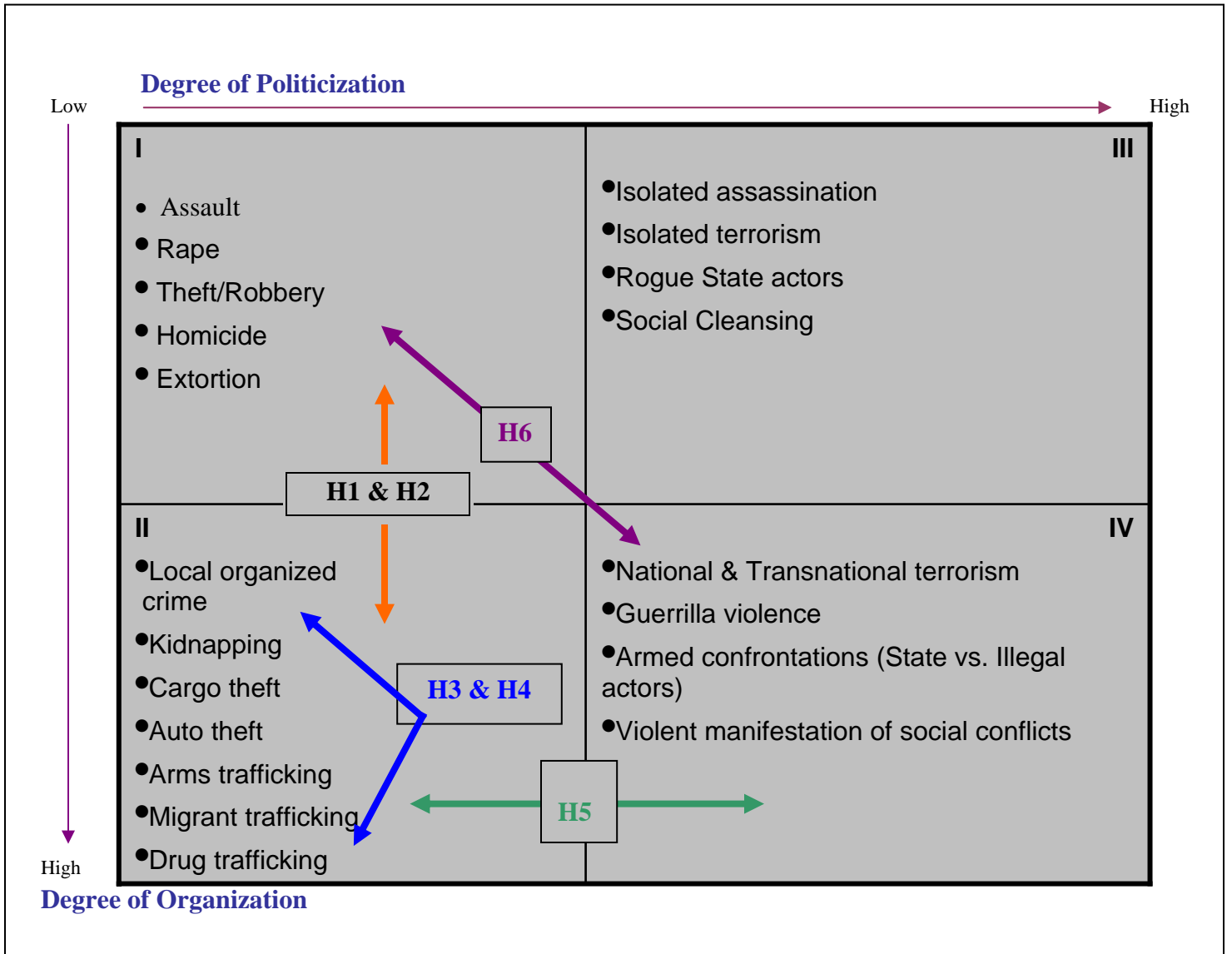
- a) Increases public's tolerance for crime and violence;
- b) Can divert law enforcement resources to street crime away from Local Organized Crime (LOC) -- depending on public perceptions and demands;
- c) Contributes to development of criminal skills, and networks;
- d) Reduces the perceived cost of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

Rationale: 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.

Testing the Hypothesis: Q1 data from the U.N. Survey on Crime Trends provide cross-national comparisons for intentional homicides, assaults, robberies and rapes, for period 1990-1997. Checks on reported cases can be made with victimization surveys. These data can be complemented at the cross-national level with sub-national data (for instance in Colombia case, see Juan Carlos Etcheverri and Zeinab Partow, *Corruption, crimen y justicia*) on the same categories of crime. Q2 local-regional organized crime data are generally available at the sub-national level on youth gangs, drug possession, drug trafficking and drug abuse, and on kidnapping (e.g., Etcheverri and Partow). These data should be complemented by content analysis of a national newspaper and one or more local newspapers for coverage of kidnapping, organized crime activity such as cargo theft, bank robberies, etc. Another possibility is to sample the newspapers for 50 days per year for 1990, 1995, 2000. Court records by city or department will provide supplementary data. Human rights reports at national and regional levels usually are useful indicators of extra-legal violence by official forces. Interviews at local and regional levels with leadership of business associations; present and former law enforcement officials; defense attorneys; felons with convictions connected to individual and organized criminal activity. The test is whether criminal activities take place in parallel and complementary fashion; whether they are parallel and inversely related (i.e., Q1 violence rises while local organized crime falls); or whether trends in criminal violence in the two Quadrants are unconnected.

**Table 3 Relations among Quadrants of Violent Conflict**



**Hypothesis 2: *When perceived as increasing or high, Local and Regional Organized Crime (Q2) contributes to an increase in general crime patterns found in Q1. Local and regional organized crime:***

- a1) Corrupts local police and judiciary;
- a2) Can promote privatization of police and judicial functions as individuals resort to self-protection;
- b1) Raises violence levels (competition among criminal groups, increased availability of weapons); OR
- b2) Can inhibit violence levels (when dominance is achieved by a criminal group or a pact among groups in specific territories).

Rationale: Forms of local-regional organized crime (e.g., groups engaged in extortion, robbery and theft) generally seek out alliances with local police forces (either corrupt individuals or units, or entire local forces). Corrupted police are generally less effective in creating positive relations with neighborhoods and communities. With less effective police and law enforcement, neighborhoods and communities develop forms of self-protection. These can assume relatively non-violent forms, such as citizen neighborhood patrols, or they can become violent, as is the case of vigilante groups. Competition among local organized criminal groups can increase overall insecurity at the local level as more weapons and more violent methods are employed. Alternatively, an organized criminal group (or a pact among groups) may contribute to reduce diffuse criminal violence in specific neighborhoods or zones for some time periods as it establishes local power.

Testing the Hypothesis: Data on trends and relationships gathered for H1 and the test for relationships serve for H2 as well.



***Hypothesis 3: Local Organized Crime facilitates Transnational Organized Crime***

- a) LOC can become a component of existing Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) networks, or create new networks;
- b) LOC lowers the cost of local-level operations of transnational crime (e.g., corrupted police and military).

Rationale: Local-regional organized crime groups (as discussed above) may, under certain circumstances, come into contact with transnational organized crime groups. The latter tend to traffic in weapons, migrants, vehicles, drugs and general contraband (e.g., goods that face substantial tariffs or taxes, such as cigarettes). Local criminal groups typically connect with transnational groups due to complementary activities. For example, local groups are those that steal vehicles or that target women or children for forced prostitution. Local groups operating in national border zones are best suited to facilitate cross-border smuggling. Also, local organized crime groups are most familiar with networks of corrupted police and regional local officials and can thus offer useful connections for transnational criminal groups.

Testing the Hypothesis: Qualitative data gathered for H2 on local-regional organized crime (e.g., newspaper analysis, interviews with experts) should include material on connections with transnational organized crime. The additional data needed here are for transnational organized crime activity. Cross national data on auto trafficking are available from the United Nations in publications such as *Illicit Trafficking in Vehicles*. The International Organization for Migration provides data for several years on trends in migrant trafficking. The U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy produces annual reports that provide cross-national data on production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs. Here again the test is whether criminal activities take place in parallel and

complementary fashion; whether they are parallel and inversely related (e.g., local organized crime declines while transnational organized crime rises); or whether trends in criminal violence in the two forms of organized crime are unconnected.

***Hypothesis 4: Transnational Organized Crime promotes Local Organized Crime.  
Transnational Organized Crime:***

- a) Adds to availability of weapons, technology, and expertise; and
- b) Expands scope of corruption (e.g., provides additional resources for corruption, permits recruitment of wider sectors of society such as elites in business, banking, farming, etc.).

Rationale: Transnational criminal groups typically specialize in more profitable commodities and services. They also tend to be better organized, financed and equipped and to employ more sophisticated services, e.g., law, communications, business and accounting. As transnational groups interact with local organized crime, the transmission of knowledge and weapons tends to accelerate. Also, transnational groups, in seeking out investment opportunities for illicit profits, tend to expand the scope of corruption to include local elites in business, banking, agriculture, industry, and the like.

Testing the Hypothesis: The data on relationships and trends gathered for H3 apply to H4 as well. The test is similar as well.

***Hypothesis 5: 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 ally with organized criminal groups to get resources and achieve objectives.
- b) The operations of politically-organized armed actors lead to a weakening of state capacity to maintain public order or administer justice
- c) Both groups have an interest in maintaining access to a highly profitable, illegal economy with limited or no state intervention.

Rationale: A constant challenge to the better organized, highly political 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 type criminal activities, such as armed robbery or kidnapping. Q4 actors may carry out these activities directly, or they might target criminal groups for “taxation.” Similarly, Q4 actors may be well positioned to “tax” transnational criminal groups for their use of local-regional zones for operations, since these are typically zones of weak or negligible state presence. The combined effects of the interactions of Q2 and Q4 groups is to weaken state authority. In most cases, the interactions among both types of groups will help advance the activities and objectives of both, even if ideological and commercial rivalries can fuel localized violence. In general, the interactions help sustain or augment overall levels of violence in the society.

Testing the Hypotheses: The data on relationships and trends gathered for Hypothesis 3 and the test of relationships used for H3 serve here as well. Additional data are needed to explore conflict associated with guerrilla, paramilitary and vigilante activity. Some of these materials can be gathered through newspaper analysis (as in Hypothesis 3). There are numerous cross-national sources that track trends in extra-legal violence by security forces as well as by guerrilla and paramilitary groups. These studies can provide historical background as a point of departure. Greater reliance will be need to be placed on national and sub-national sources. These include varieties of specialized studies by NGOs and government agencies, including the National Police and human rights

organizations. In Colombia, for example, two leading sources of data on political violence are the Human Rights Observatory of the Office of the Vice President and the data base on political violence, *Noche y niebla*, organized by CINEP (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular). Qualitative data from interviews with experts (e.g., present and former military officers, law enforcement officials, human rights groups) serve as well. The goal is to determine whether significant relationships hold among the types of conflict in the different Quadrants and whether patterns of influence can be ascertained.

***Hypothesis 6: 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: The connections between diffuse, non-political, individual violence and its extreme opposite, organized, highly-political conflict, is often observable in times and places of armed conflict. In such situations, state resources are often inadequate to deal with both sets of problems. One response from sectors of both civil society and the state in such situations is to organize individual and collective forms of self-defense, or

individual or local-collective forms of criminal activity to take advantage of the absence of the rule of law. Weapons are increasingly available and violence levels can escalate. Groups 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.

Testing the Hypothesis: Quantitative data gathered for H1 and H5 serve to determine whether the relationships hold and what patterns of interaction can be ascertained.

### **STEP 3: Assessing Democratic Governance**

Methodologically, this framework focuses both on core areas of democracy generally associated with the concept of *polyarchy* -- participation, contestation, civil and political rights – and on key areas of state capacity which are vital to a democratic state and society (though these are not always considered in formal assessments of polyarchy). This approach parallels that of the UNDP-PRODDAL.

Participation, contestation, civil and political rights are all essential for the consolidation of a democratic regime. Most democratic political regimes continue to face multiple obstacles stemming from past authoritarian legacies, weak or absent state institutions, and concentrations of economic, social and political power that exist outside of the formal institutional arrangements. As such, this methodology will attempt to focus on both the core areas of polyarchy at the national level as well as in selected local areas, and also on the link between polyarchy and state capacity through an analysis of those

areas within or outside government institutions that Guillermo O'Donnell has called the "brown areas." These are areas where state capacity is limited and where private authorities, elite social actors and secondary public officials shape and control the core functions of governance in arbitrary and personalistic ways. This methodology, then, can assess both formal and institutional arrangements of democracy as well as critical areas of state capacity or its absence that support or weaken the consolidation of a democratic regime and society. It can be applied at the national and/or regional and local levels. Indeed it would be highly useful to apply the methodology to selected regions undergoing high levels of violence once a national-level assessment has been conducted. Table 5 portrays polyarchy in ways that are useful for our analysis of the interactions between conflict and democracy. The table constitutes the top level of the "chessboard" and emphasizes participation (although contestation and state capacity can be analyzed as well). Consistent with our discussion of conflict, the vertical axis refers to the numbers of persons involved, ranging from low (individuals, families, small groups) to high (varieties of types of organizations with greater numbers of persons involved). The horizontal axis refers to "Degree of Politicization." Again, we refer to a progression of political objects, or "targets," beginning with "low" (relatively non-political) and proceeding through attempts to influence policies, individual officials, the overall government, to the regime itself. Note that we locate (in bold) regime institutions (legislature, judiciary and executive), local government and the state bureaucracy in Quadrant VIII, along with political parties and civil society organizations. This is because regime and state actors should be central to the analysis of conflict and democracy.

**Table 4: Polyarchy**

<b>Degree of Politicization</b>	
Low	High
<p><b>I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Citizenship</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Friends</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>III</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Electoral participation             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Voting</li> <li>-Working for a candidate or issue</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Legal demands</li> <li>• Tutela (Colombia)</li> <li>• Civic Protest</li> <li>• Neighborhood associations</li> </ul>
<p><b>II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Economic and social organizations             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Professional</li> <li>-Commercial</li> <li>-Educational</li> <li>-Religious</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>IV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political parties</li> <li>• Civic Society Organizations             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Labor, students</li> <li>-Peasants, indigenous</li> <li>-Urban poor, NGOs, churches</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>STATE BUREAUCRACY</b></li> <li>• <b>LOCAL GOVERNMENTS</b></li> <li>• <b>EXECUTIVE- LEGIS.- JUDICIARY</b></li> </ul>
High	
<b>Degree of Organization</b>	

## **Assessing Democracy**

### **a. Participation**

The central question here is, “Who participates and how?”. At the most basic level, a key indicator is voting. However, we need also to examine broader forms of participation such as involvement in civic organizations, sectoral associations, social movements, and party activities.

In addition, we should examine participation regionally and in relation to particular sectors, such as ethnic groups, social classes and gender, in both urban and rural areas. Are there groups that legally possess rights but that remain excluded from the political arena and thus fall short of the full rights of citizenship? Are there groups that face formal barriers to participation? Are there barriers placed by extra-official actors in those areas of the country where regime and state institutions are weak? How is power constructed? Who exercises it? How do these affect citizenship?

### **b. 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.

**c. 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.

**Indicators of State Capacity**

This assessment is also designed to collect data on key areas of state capacity that are critical to consolidating a democratic regime. These are: administration of justice (and mapping the presence or absence of the judicial system and rule of law across the national territory); maintenance of public order; collection of revenues; promotion of economic development, including equitable exploitation of natural resources; achievement of conditions for full employment; alleviation of poverty and inequality; and allocation of scarce resources, such as land.

**a. Administration of Justice**

O'Donnell contrasted the "*pays legal*" to the "*pays real*" to emphasize that the institutions of justice and rule of law are not uniformly present throughout the national territory or with respect to all social classes and ethnic groups. A key measure to identify is the presence and absence of the legal state. Central here is the general effectiveness of the judicial system. This refers especially to the problem of impunity.

An index of impunity can be calculated by a series of relationships. What percentage of violent crimes is reported (victimization surveys versus formal complaints)? What percentage of those violent crimes that are reported enters the judicial system? What percent of these is prosecuted? How many lead to a conviction? In many countries, the ratio between all crimes committed and actual convictions (the impunity index) is very low, without even raising the question of how many convictions represent justice. A "map" of impunity would help outline the contours of the legal state in a specific country.

**b. Maintenance of Public Order**

The police are generally responsible for maintaining domestic order and citizen security. What are the institutional arrangements in a specific country? Are police national? Local? Are they part of the Ministry of Defense? Ministry of Interior? How effective are they in maintaining order? Are there other public institutions responsible for security? Which ones? How does citizen security vary across the national territory? In what ways are civil society groups involved in security arrangements? Are these

regulated? How do private security groups – i.e., bodyguards and private security firms – contribute to security or insecurity? Data can be collected on all these functions.

**c. Promotion of Economic Development, Alleviation of Poverty and Inequality**

It will be necessary to examine general state policies (and international assistance policies) toward alleviating poverty and inequality. Data should be collected in these areas cross-nationally, nationally, locally and by sector (See Section III).

**d. Allocation of scarce resources**

What are the key state policies toward land and natural resources that have generated conflict? Which regions and which resources have generated the most conflict, as measured by land invasions, peasant mobilizations and strikes? What interests are in play locally, nationally and, in some cases, internationally? Again data should be collected on these issues. In some cases, a key case study on a particular region and or/resources might be warranted.

Collectively, these key state indicators will reveal not just state capacity, but also the institutional and social framework within which polyarchy functions. Many of the barriers to democratic consolidation will be found in those arenas that may exist and even flourish on the margins of state power, in the vacuum of state power or with the acquiescence of a weak, undemocratic, unrepresentative or disinterested state.

#### **STEP 4: Analyzing the Relationship Between Democracy and Conflict**

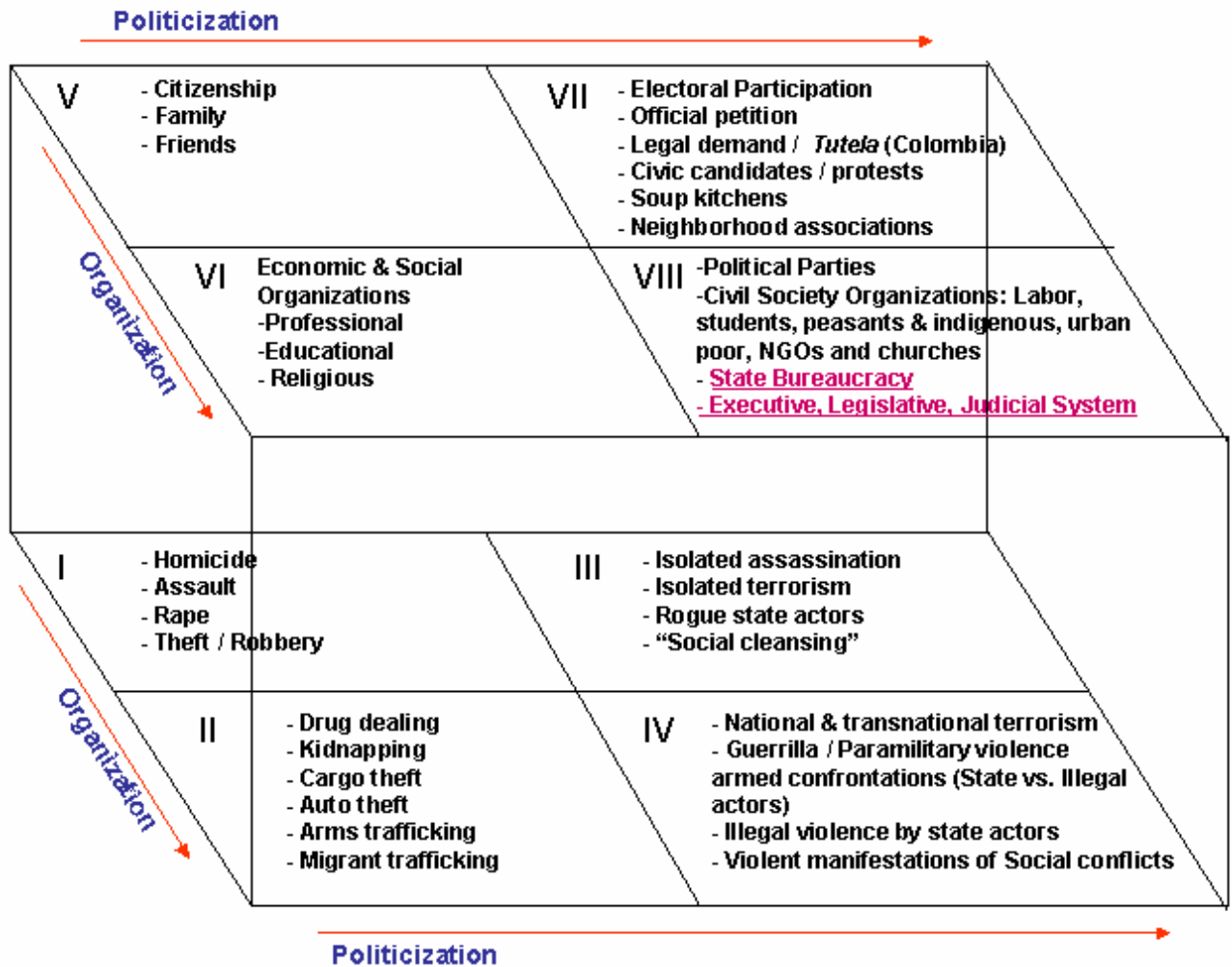
At this point we begin to examine the interactions between the bottom and top levels of the “chess game.” The multiple forms of conflict outlined in Step 2 negatively affect democracy, state capacity and citizen’s attitudes towards both. Below is listed a series of hypotheses, together with their rationale and suggestions on how to test their validity. The hypotheses will be discussed with reference to Table 5, which depicts the conflict and polyarchy levels with the quadrants aligned and numbered.

***Hypothesis 1: When the types of diffuse violent crime delineated in Q1 (low organization, non-political) are chronic and high in intensity, they will undermine core components of democracy and state capacity (Q7 & 8).***

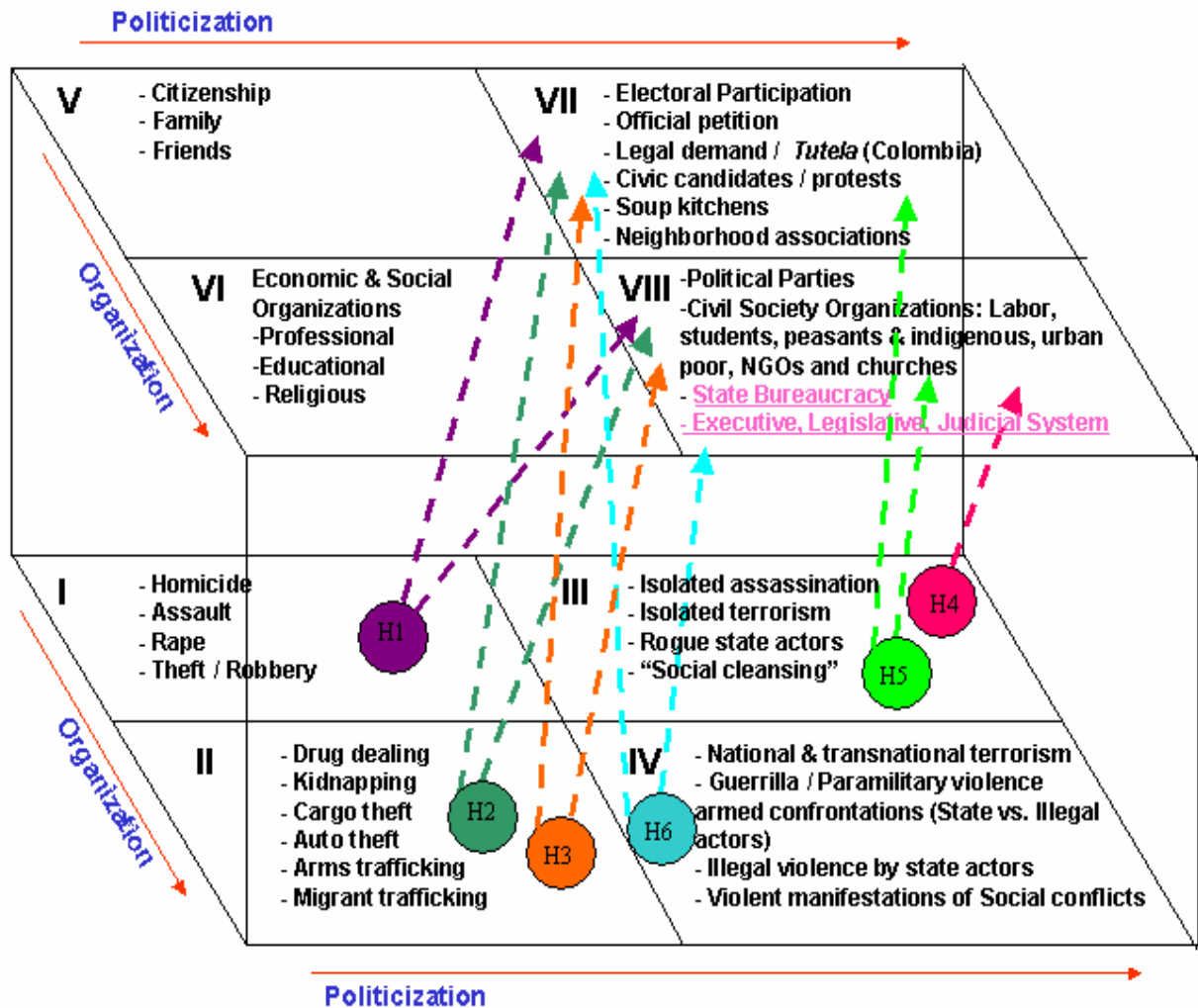
- Democracy (Polyarchy):
  - a. High levels of criminal violence reduce citizen participation (voting, community activities, etc.).
  - b. High levels of criminal and social violence reduce citizen support for democracy (which public opinion surveys reveal is correlated with public order and economic growth).
- State capacity
  - a. High levels of criminal and social violence weaken state capacity to protect citizens and administer justice.
  - b. High levels of criminal and social violence reduce citizen support for state institutions, thus reducing state legitimacy.

Rationale: Participation is one of the central elements of democracy, particularly within the essentialist framework offered by Dahl in his concept of Polyarchy. When public order and crime rates are perceived to be high or increasing, citizens become atomized and disconnected from political and civic life. Forms of democratic participation from voting to involvement in community organizations will decline. At the same time, high and chronic levels of violent crime are symptoms of reduced state capacity. Such a

**Table 5: 3-DIMENSIONAL CHESS: Quadrants of Violent Conflict (I-IV) and Quadrants of Polyarchy (V-VIII)**



**TABLE 6: Relations among Quadrants of Violent Conflict and Quadrants of Polyarchy**



condition underscores the inability of the state to protect its citizens or bring criminals to justice, perpetuating a general sense of lawlessness and vulnerability. Citizens grant and withdraw their support for the regime everyday. When a state's policies are perceived as poorly designed and ineffective, the state loses legitimacy.

Testing the hypothesis: The democracy hypothesis can be tested by collecting data on crime rates in specific areas over time and then correlating them with voting records and collected data on community groups, civic actions, protests, political party activities and other expressions of participation. The state capacity hypothesis can be explored by examining the reach of the judicial system in specific areas – particularly using the impunity indices developed in the democracy assessment, and through survey research on citizen's attitudes. See general data discussion in Section III.

***Hypothesis 2: The types of conflict delineated in Q2 (high organization, low political, i.e. organized crime ) undermine core components of democracy and state capacity (Q7&8)***

- Democracy
  - a. High levels of organized crime reduce political competition by limiting free and open access to power.
  - b. High levels of organized crime reduce political competition by corrupting political parties and political activities.
  - c. High levels of organized crime reduce political competition by targeting political and civil society leaders for intimidation and assassination.
  - d. High levels of organized crime reduce political competition by corrupting media and distorting information.
- State capacity:
  - a. High levels of organized crime corrupts and/or threatens police, civil, judicial and often military authority.

Rationale: Another core tenet of democracy (polyarchy) is contestation. Q2 types of violence tend to reduce or distort political competition in the ways hypothesized. An

illegal economic group, such as drug trafficking cartel, with access to high levels of financial resources can severely limit the contestation element of democracy, by illegally funding campaigns or corrupting officials, and as hypothesized in Step 2, can stimulate other forms of social and political violence.

Testing the Hypothesis: The study needs to identify the key organized crime groups in a specific country. This can be done through primary interviews, intelligence analyses, secondary sources. What needs to be determined is the interaction between the illegal criminal group and the political arena. The study should look for quantitative and qualitative data (Section III) on:

- political violence attributed to these groups
- political agendas
- types of intervention in the political arena, such as drug cartel pressure on the state in Colombia over the issue of extradition in the 1980s
- Methods of action, for example violent versus non-violent, bribery versus assassination

***Hypothesis 3: State repression of Local and Transnational Organized Crime may generate broader social and economic conflict.***

Rationale: Transnational criminal groups frequently develop extensive linkages to local economies and thus, by extension, to local social groups. Government efforts to repress transnational, national and local criminal activity may activate resistance by local groups, e.g., repression of smuggling of illegal merchandise may activate resistance by groups allied with informal-illegal markets or the repression of drug trafficking can mobilize



resistance by farmers who have an economic interest in the cultivation of crops used to produce illegal drugs. In Bolivia, the drug wars stimulated the emergence of a powerful federation of coca growers which has worked both inside and outside the democratic political arena and has had a substantial impact on the shaping of the national political arena.

Testing the Hypothesis: The data on trends and patterns gathered for H6, and the suggested tests, serve here as well.

***Hypothesis 4: Political assassinations or isolated terrorism, delineated in Q3 (high political, low organization, i.e. isolated assassinations) are less predictable but can, given the right circumstances, promote political crises and serious challenges to the regime.***

- Political assassinations or isolated terrorism can channel discontent, uncertainty and political instability, testing rules of succession and emergency powers
- Political assassinations or isolated terrorism can trigger international intervention (unilateral or treaty-bounded)

Rationale: Isolated incidents of terrorism can severely challenge any political regime.

They unexpectedly introduce great uncertainty and can either harness broad sympathy or channel wider discontent. If the institutional structure is solid, with clear rules of the game for succession and other challenges of continuity, then such incidents can be overcome. However, if the institutional rules and relationships are less clearly defined, isolated acts of violence can lead to power struggles, or a series of weak governments, short-term leaders, and even regime change.

In Latin America, there are few examples of political assassination of heads of state. However there are multiple examples of the assassination of presidential

candidates, cabinet officers and other elected officials at the national and lower levels. In Colombia, the assassination of Liberal Party leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948 led to over a decade of high-intensity violence between the two traditional parties. Yet in Mexico in 1994, the assassination of Luís Donaldo Colossio in 1994 helped expose corruption in the ruling party PRI and contributed to the eventual transition to democracy.

Testing the Hypothesis: The history of political assassination and of isolated acts of terrorism at the national and local levels in the country where the assessment is being conducted should be researched. Data should be collected on the number of national-level and local political leaders have been assassinated during the past decade, including the circumstance and consequences of major political assassinations. Questions that should be asked are: If there are enough cases, do patterns of instability or continuity emerge at national and local levels? Have conditions changed sufficiently to expect different reactions to future assassinations or isolated acts of terrorism?

***Hypothesis 5: More troubling, threatening and generally recurring within Q3 violence (high political, low organization) are rogue state actors perpetrating violence against “political enemies” or conducting “social cleansing” of unwanted groups such as prostitutes, homosexuals, petty thieves and street urchins. Such unauthorized violence severely undermines the rule of law and regime legitimacy and weakens the very foundation of polyarchy.***

Rationale: This type of Q3 violence can represent an insidious-form of social and political violence that is generally left unacknowledged or denied because it is not state-directed but conducted by rogue elements. Yet its practice appears to have increased

throughout the region, particularly as crime levels have risen or as certain social minorities have begun to express themselves more openly.

Testing the Hypothesis: This type of data is best collected through human rights reports and qualitative interviews with police, politicians, NGO's and law-enforcement officials.

***Hypothesis 6: Highly political and highly organized conflict (Q4) interacts with civil society organizations and political parties in complex ways that tend to undermine democratic institutions.***

- a) Guerrilla groups may penetrate peasant, labor, student and civic groups.
- b) Legitimate protest/participation may be mistakenly criminalized by the state, thus closing channels for legal civilian opposition and strengthening illegal forms.
- c) Paramilitaries may penetrate vigilante, business/landed civic groups.
- d) Paramilitaries or guerrillas can target legitimate protest leaders thus closing channels for legal civic opposition.
- e) Guerrilla and paramilitary groups can penetrate political parties and influence the outcomes of election through targeted violence, financing or intimidation and mobilization.

Rationale: Groups with political objectives, guerrillas and paramilitaries, operate directly through armed violence as well as through sympathetic, law-abiding organizations. The latter may be willing partners, even "fronts," or they may be unwilling partners.

Conceivably, groups may even be unaware that they are penetrated and influenced by violent organizations. Government officials may perceive (accurately or mistakenly) the presence of Q4 influence among civil society actors and may repress the latter groups.

Government repression may have the effect of closing channels for legitimate contestation, which will undermine democratic politics and possibly strengthen the appeal of violent actors. In a parallel fashion, illegal armed groups can attempt to

influence the electoral, democratic and institutional political arenas, distorting the functioning of polyarchy and universal enfranchisement through violent intimidation.

Testing the Hypothesis: These are among the most subtle and complex forms of conflict to identify and interpret; analysts should proceed carefully. Official repression of civil and political organizations falsely accused of collaboration with violent groups can be as chilling as the actual penetration of civil society organizations or political parties by illegal armed groups. Here qualitative data is most significant: interviews with former and current leaders of key civic groups; with former and current regional-local political leaders; with former and current law enforcement officers and human rights activists. The goal is not to label organizations or individuals but to ascertain patterns of interaction between organized armed groups and the democratic political arena over time.

***Hypothesis 7: The presence of organized armed actors and prolonged periods of political violence can fundamentally erode democratic governance***

Rationale: Democracies co-exist uneasily with internal armed conflict. The tendency is to resort to emergency powers, curtail civil liberties and human rights and allocate scarce resources to the insurgency or war effort. When the conflict is protracted these policies tend to become institutionalized. The core elements of polyarchy – participation and contestation – can be greatly curtailed and subordinated to the broader counter-insurgency effort. Insurgencies and paramilitary forces also weaken critical areas of state capacity and often promote parallel systems of private justice and political order, further fragmenting the state.

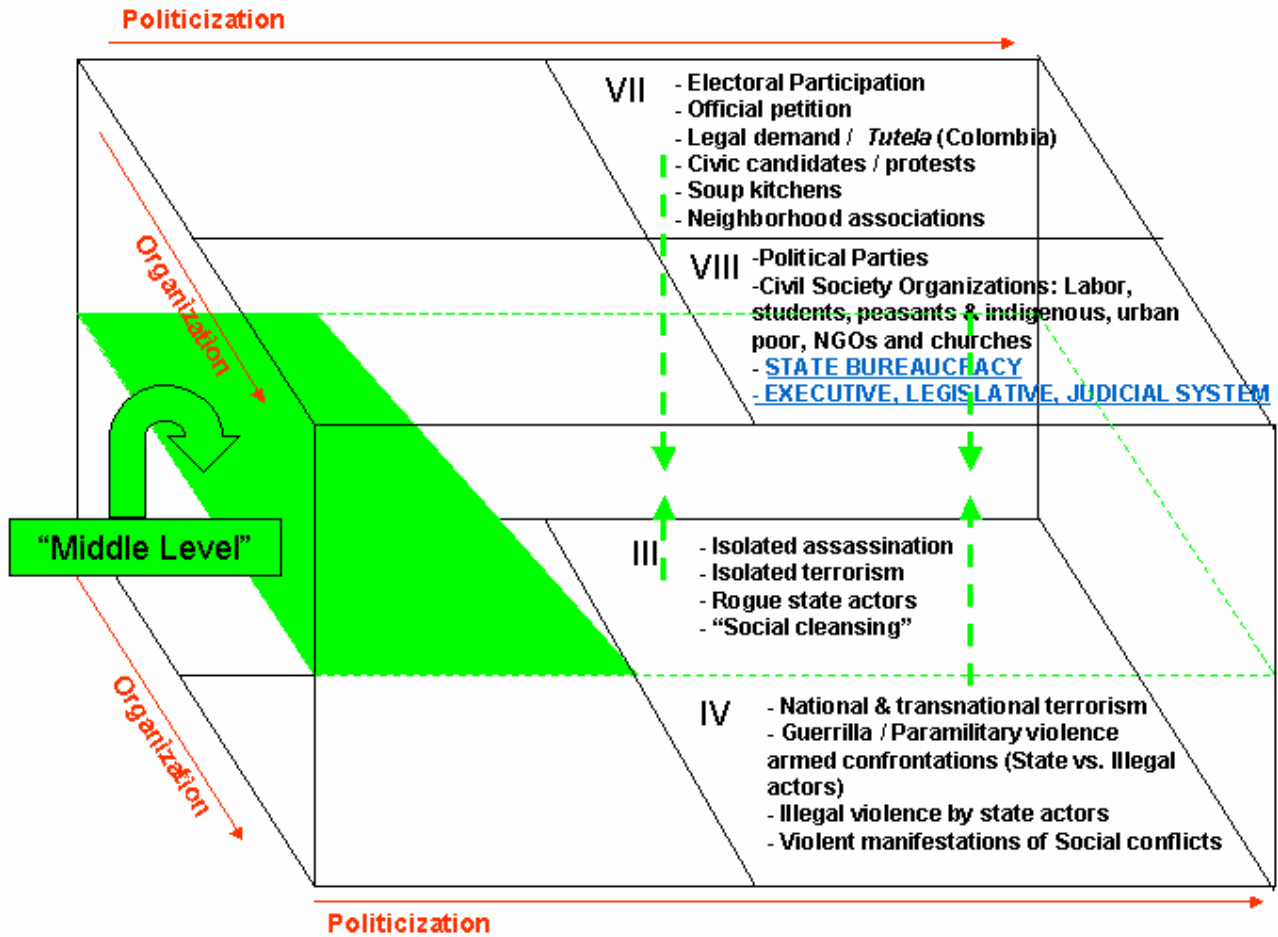
Testing the Hypothesis: In countries experiencing protracted armed conflict or civil war, these relationships should be revealed, modified, or disconfirmed directly by conducting a democracy assessment, as outlined in Step 3.

## **INTRODUCING THE “MIDDLE-LEVEL” BETWEEN POLYARCHY AND CONFLICT**

At this point in Step 4 we introduce the important notion of the “middle level” of the multi-level chess game. This level (shown in Table 7) captures the sorts of acts that are political in nature such as protests and actions against policies, officials or governments and which may escalate in intensity and violate the state’s formal laws and which may threaten or actually employ violence in ways that exceed the accepted rules of the game. This might be considered a partial board in the chess game because the most significant acts are carried out by interest groups and social movements acting separately or in varieties of alliances. The acts are technically illegal but are not criminal in the sense of “bottom-level” acts. This level is especially important in democracies that are weakly consolidated and lack deep roots of legitimacy. For example, labor unions, frustrated in their attempts to negotiate wage increases, might instigate a riot, which might be joined by unemployed workers or students. Peasant groups may forcibly seize land. The interactions of the bottom and middle levels are especially important, as discussed in the following hypotheses.

**Table 7. The “Southeast Quadrant” of the Middle Level**

— Between Polyarchy and Violent Conflict



***Hypothesis 8: The types of conflict illustrated in the “middle plane” between the “conflict” and “polyarchy” planes can represent the strongest immediate challenge to the regime and potentially represent strong indicators of crisis.***

- Labor, peasant, student and civic conflict can be healthy or threatening within a polyarchy:
  - a. The nature of the impact will depend on the group’s use of violence and on how civil and state authorities respond
  - b. The nature of the impact will depend on the groups themselves. Do they represent their own legitimate interests, are they penetrated by others, or some combination of the two?
  - c. Sectoral protest can quickly be transformed into a national challenge gathering broad supporters and multi-sectoral allies.
- Environmental conflicts test the regime’s ability to balance interests and allocate scarce and often non-renewable resources.
- Ethnic conflict can pose a special challenge to traditional democratic institutions and practices. Calls by ethnic groups for the recognition of collective rights over individual liberties, and for a re-conceptualization of the state as pluri-ethnic and multi-cultural can lead to a redefinition of democratic governance.

Rationale: Labor, peasant and civic protest can erupt over specialized issues (e.g., wages) or can be directed beyond policies and officials and aimed more generally at the government and regime. They can be triggered by broader regime weaknesses and actions, such as economic devaluation, corruption scandals, and illegal use of state repressive force. How the government, state and international community response will determine whether the conflict will escalate into a broader challenge to government and regime, or will be addressed through democratic means.

Environmental conflicts often emerge at the intersection of peasant, land and labor strife. They, too, can erupt into broader mobilizations and international actions depending on how the regime responds.

The history of ethnic conflict has played itself out differently in Latin America than in other parts of the world. Although many groups seek some form of autonomy, they have in most cases not called for independence. Rather they have generally demanded a recognition of group rights within a state that has been re-conceived as pluri-ethnic and multi-cultural. Group rights are a step beyond polyarchy but are not inconsistent with democratic governance in Latin America. Indeed in many countries the recognition of group rights and the creation of special mechanisms for political and democratic participation can strengthen democratic governance

Testing the Hypotheses: These types of conflict are a bell-weather for regime stability or potential instability. Data should be collected on the number and frequency of different forms of protest. Based on the data, a determination needs to be made on their principal causes and on how they were resolved (through repression, through negotiations, peacefully, etc.) One also needs to measure the degree of violence. These data will indicate whether these types of conflict are destabilizing, have minimal impact or represent wider avenues of political participation.

### **III: A NOTE ON COLLECTING DATA ON DEMOCRACY, STATE CAPACITY AND CONFLICT**

Data will be collected in three broad areas: 1) polyarchy –contestation, participation, and rights; 2) state capacity; and 3) conflict. Data should be collected at the cross-national, national, local and sectoral levels, and should encompass both quantitative and qualitative variables at both the institutional and attitudinal levels. Cross-national



data collection provides a good starting point. It provides broad regional (and global) comparisons and perspectives. However, it is also evident cross-national data often present weaknesses and may not give a complete or accurate picture of the particular countries or sub-regions, which are levels where policy intervention fits. Thus, emphasis should be placed on national and sub-national data

In addition to the institutional level, the attitudinal dimension of the components of democracy and of state capacity need to be considered. Public opinion, as measured through survey data or focus groups, often perceives issues of democratic governance differently from the perspectives of social theorists.

Measuring polyarchy: . The Electoral Democracy Index developed by the UNDP-PRODDAL is a useful tool with which to measure electoral participation. Table 8 provides broad indicators for the core components of polyarchy. To measure contestation, for example, quantitative variables might include: at the cross-national level, the number of political parties relative to other countries; at the national level, analysis of the number of peaceful demonstrations that have taken place over the previous fifty years; and at the local level, the rate of incumbent turnover in the local state assembly. Qualitative measures of contestation might include: at the cross-national level, historical comparisons with the development of contestation in other comparable nations in the region; at the national level, national histories and overall legal structures; and at the local level, interviews with local political leaders, both in office and in opposition. Table 8 offers a general overview of the categories of data, as well as an overview of a few of the many potential measures of the three categories of polyarchy data.

**Table 8: Examples of some potential data measures on Democracy**

	<b>Cross-national</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Local/Sectoral</b>
Contestation: Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Percent of people who have taken part in lawful demonstration as compared with other countries (World Values Survey);</li> <li>◆ Cross-country analysis of political voice (World Bank)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Percentage of lower house held by largest party;</li> <li>◆ Number of parties represented in legislature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number of challengers in local elections;</li> <li>◆ Incumbency turnover rates</li> </ul>
Contestation: Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reports by human rights, international organizations (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Historical assessments of democratic development;</li> <li>◆ Surveys of quality of democracy, satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Interviews with local political leaders, journalists, social scientists;</li> <li>◆ Historical assessment of local participation trends;</li> <li>◆ Evaluation of changing demographic trends</li> </ul>
Participation: Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Relative openness of party system (ACLP data set);</li> <li>◆ Percent of people who take part in political activity, as compared with other countries (World Values Survey)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number of elections;</li> <li>◆ Number of peaceful demonstrations</li> <li>◆ Surveys of trust in other citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Incumbency turnover rates;</li> <li>◆ Voter turnout rates;</li> </ul>
Participation: Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cross national studies of democracies (i.e., Lijphart, regional studies)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assessment of rights of participation by international organizations, journalists</li> <li>◆ Historical record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Observation of polling stations, electoral campaigns;</li> <li>◆ Interviews with journalists, politicians, voters</li> </ul>
Rights: Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cross national indices of civil and political rights (i.e., Freedom House, Gastil)</li> <li>◆ Numerical indices of the rule of law (World Bank)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ National assessments by other countries, human rights organizations, government ministries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Numbers of those jailed for political reasons;</li> <li>◆ Number of demonstrations permitted over historical record</li> </ul>
Rights: Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Historical comparison with comparable countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Journalistic assessment of rule of law;</li> <li>◆ Applicability of law to all citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assessments of freedom of press, freedom of association;</li> <li>◆ Interviews on the availability of rights to all.</li> </ul>

The collection of data on state capacity should focus on effectiveness, efficiency, and the prioritization of policies. Table 9 offers a general overview of the suggested data types. While the most easily available data may tend to be quantitative – especially fiscal data and macroeconomic indicators – qualitative measures should be equally sought. Patterns of change in state capacity may be revealed by interviews, by survey data of perceptions, and by case studies at the local level.

**Table 9: Examples of some potential data measures on State Capacity**

	Cross-national	National	Local/Sectoral
Effectiveness and efficiency: Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cross national measures of effectiveness such as World Bank governmental effectiveness index; UNDP Human Development index</li> <li>◆ Country risk ratings by international rating firms (ICRG, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Macroeconomic variables, such as GDP growth, inflation, etc.</li> <li>◆ Indices of perceptions of corruption,</li> <li>◆ Number of press reports of corruption, graft.</li> <li>◆ Country surveys on confidence in government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Historical measures of education, health indices;</li> <li>◆ Data on relative government spending, staffing.</li> </ul>
Effectiveness and efficiency: Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Country reports by international observers (EIU, U.S. State Dept.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Survey assessments by national business or consumer associations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Survey assessments; interviews of local citizens and citizen groups.</li> </ul>
Prioritization: Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Relative spending levels on policies (UNDP, World Bank)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Polling data on attitudes toward government and government priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Spending levels on various policies, as % of GDP;</li> <li>◆ Content analysis of local press coverage of local problems</li> </ul>
Prioritization: Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Regional assessments by international organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Government policy reports;</li> <li>◆ Governmental strategic plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Local political platforms; speeches</li> </ul>

The collection of data on conflict should focus on the four quadrants presented earlier. Within these quadrants, three elements must be kept in mind: degree of political relevance; degree of organization; degree of severity. The first category, degree of

political relevance, is measured in terms of the changes conflict has on incumbents, policies, governments, and regimes. The second category, degree of organization, is measured in terms of the number of people involved, the degree of complexity, and the amount of organization of any given act or ongoing set of conflictual acts. The final category, degree of severity, is measured in terms of both the intensity of conflict and its duration. Table 10 offers suggestions

**Table 10: Examples of some potential data measures of Conflict**

	Cross-national	National	Local/Sectoral
Quadrant I: Quantitative	♦ Comparison with cross national average homicide rate (World Bank) or victimization rates from international organizations (ICVS)	♦ National homicide rates as collected by national ministry of health	♦ Homicide rates as collected by police and courts
Quadrant I: Qualitative	♦ Assessments of international business conditions by risk agencies (ICRG, EIU)	♦ Local business organization surveys of costs of crime	♦ Interviews with residents on the level of crime; ♦ Historical analysis of crime rates
Quadrant II: Quantitative	♦ International organization assessment of drug source and target countries (UN ODCCP)	♦ Number of private security forces, ♦ Levels of cargo or car theft reported to insurers	♦ Content analysis of press reports on kidnapping ♦ Recorded homicides by state actors as percent of total homicides
Quadrant II: Qualitative	♦ Interviews with international police organizations, intelligence officials (Interpol, etc.)	♦ Interviews with police, national security agencies	♦ Interviews with victims, police ♦ Interviews with hospital directors on rates and patterns of drug-related admissions
Quadrant III: Quantitative	♦ Banks 1994, and other indices of violent assassinations	♦ Number of assassinations in historical record	♦ Content analysis of press reports or interviews on brutality, other forms of political intimidation
Quadrant III: Qualitative	♦ Country reports prepared by human rights groups	♦ Historical record of labor mobilization	♦ Interviews with local leaders in the political, labor, business worlds

	(Amnesty International, etc.)		
Quadrant IV: Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assessments by external military observers of the strength of forces (Jane's, UNDP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number of men and women under arms</li> <li>◆ Estimated weapons imports per capita;</li> <li>◆ Percentage of all homicides that are political</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number of armed conflicts in given territory</li> </ul>
Quadrant IV: Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Comparison of relative levels of central government authority from international risk rating agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Intelligence assessments of role of paramilitaries; guerrillas; vigilante groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Interviews with policy makers and journalists to assess strength, appeal of individual paramilitary leaders, guerrillas.</li> </ul>

In all of the data collection described above, there are five general types of source data: first, external assessment by international governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the World Bank, Transparency International, Human Rights Watch, or diplomatic observers; second, national and local assessment of particular trends by journalists, business associations, academics and other experts; third, historical comparison by both external and domestic observers across distinct periods in time; fourth, indirect observation of specific patterns of behavior, such as voting behavior and participation rates, or of the appearance of key secondary sources, as in content analysis; and finally, local level analysis of individual perceptions, either through interviews, focus groups, or broader surveys of individual beliefs.

#### **IV. APPLYING THE METHODOLOGY (Steps 5-7)**

##### **Step 5: Developing and prioritizing policy interventions**

This project begins with two normatively based priorities. The first is to address conflict so that it does not escalate or contribute to worsening conflict in other arenas. The second is to address questions of governability and democracy so as to more fully tackle conflict before it weakens democracy in the region.

The ultimate goal of this project is to address both of these normative priorities. To develop policies that will help in addressing this goal, a strategic approach encompassing four separate steps will be followed:

1. Prioritization: On the basis of in-country research, this step prioritizes which areas of the assessment merit the greatest attention, in each of the three areas of interest –governance, democracy, and conflict – as well as in the interaction of the three areas. For governance, this includes the assessment described in the previous section, of effectiveness, efficiency, and prioritization. Under democracy, contestation, participation, and rights are the key elements. Finally, with regard to conflict, the issue is the placement of the country in question on each of the four quadrants of conflict.
2. Assessment: Using the previous data collection, this step assesses the situation in the country in question in terms of the component elements of each of the three areas of interest. The goal is to focus on the key strengths and weaknesses in each country and determine which are most in need of urgent policy intervention.
3. Policy choices: On the basis of the strengths and weaknesses determined for the country in question, this step analyzes which resources are most easily mobilized

to address these problems; how best to target these resources; and which policy interventions are most likely to be effective, given this allocation of resources.

This analysis takes into account the particular strengths and limitations of UNDP – and of the UN system in general [or appropriate international organization] --, capacities in the field for the definition of the actions to be pursued, as well as the recommendations that can be suggested to host governments. Identified policy options will be tested against the judgments of experts and practitioners to clarify recommendations.

4. Evaluation: Finally, once some policies have been implemented in particular cases, as the project develops, they must be evaluated and revised to incorporate best practices, lessons learned on the ground, and evolving global, national, and local situations.

### **Step 6: Checking the Preliminary Results**

This assessment tool will collect empirical evidence to show that the sorts of conflict identified impact in particular ways on democracy, and alternatively, strengthening democratic governance can help ameliorate violent conflicts. To date, there has not been much prior work in this area. These assessments, then, will contribute to a better understanding of multiple forms of conflict and establish new standards and measures for democratic prevention. In so doing, they will recommend specific policy interventions, which will then be subjected to a systematic review by experts, citizens and some of the principal actors themselves.

The review process would consist of three processes:

1. Focus groups
2. Convening an expert panel
3. Interviews

### Focus groups

This technique allows us to obtain in-depth knowledge about the specific issues discussed with the participants. Focus groups can be useful to test the plausibility of the main hypotheses and policy recommendations against the intuitive perceptions of the citizens affected by the problems under study. The extent of agreement or disagreement among various types of groups can illustrate important information about types of policies proposed, the levels of social awareness, and the social distributions of the costs and risks of conflict situations. It can show, for example, the social viability of policy proposals and help identify additional aspects and variables to take into consideration to sharpen recommended strategies.

However, focus groups are costly and require a high level of expertise to be utilized successfully. Despite these limitations, the use of this technique permits a more developed assessment of potential policy interventions.

It would be advisable to conduct a limited number of focus groups, selecting groups by region and other criteria that might emerge from the data collection.

### Expert panels

The presentation of preliminary results to a group of local experts provides additional perspectives on the results obtained from the study and the possible policy interventions. The organization of panels should rely on both academic experts and



practitioners (public servants, social activists, UNDP field representatives, public opinion leaders) to assess the various dimensions of policy choice.

Divergent interpretations may be a source of fresh ideas and observations, as well as a means of discovering omitted but locally important variables or catching unnoticed trends. Expertise may also reveal policy alternatives and make explicit the complexity and challenges of their implementation in the local arena. Panels can help to clarify and refine the hypothesis and the argument and to perceive gray areas. Another benefit of expert panels is the possibility they offer to develop specific policy guidelines to solve implementation problems. However, it should be noted that such expert panels may also complicate the findings and diminish the clarity of the model.

### Interviews

Elite interviews are a special form of personal interview. Perceptions of political and social leaders are very important as a tool for comparing the preliminary results with the ongoing understanding of these problems by those who face them on a daily basis. They are also a valuable source of practical knowledge from policy insiders.

Selection of interviewees is a delicate issue and selected persons are not always easily accessible. Further, talking about delicate issues or problematic situations sometimes raises problems regarding confidentiality. For these reasons, the ground rules about what is said in the interviews should be made clear at the start and kept consistent for the whole set of interviews. A preliminary list of potential interviewees must be flexible enough to admit additions once in the field, since access to prominent interviewees can be difficult.

Elite interviewing is difficult work. Preparation of a standardized questionnaire, which is cross-nationally comparable and flexible enough to grasp the particularities of the cases, is a crucial and demanding task. Establishing the meaningfulness and validity of the data collected through interviewing is very important. Examining their plausibility, checking for internal consistency, and corroborating them with other interviewees may also determine the validity of an interviewee's statements. Those statements should also be cross-checked against available sources of public information.

Despite its difficulty, elite interviewing often provides a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the phenomena than other forms of data collection, and offers a rich variety of perspectives. It helps sharpen the insights and recommendations that result from the research.

**Step 7: Applying the Filter: How Can UNDP-RLAC [or Other International Organizations] Best Support Democracy and Prevent Conflict**

Having identified the relationships and formulated a set of ideal policy responses, the next step is to ask the question: What are the comparative advantages of UNDP-RLAC, as well as of other U.N. institutions, in preventing the further degradation of conflict and in strengthening democracy and governance? To do this, UNDP might ask a series of questions:

- What is the history of U.N.D.P. activities in the country?
- What other U.N. agencies are involved in these issues?
- What are other donors doing? How can UNDP policies be coordinated with other donors?

- What are the interests of the host government?
- Are there policy instruments that only the United Nations can provide?
- What is the tolerance for failure?
- What resources can be brought to bear?

Using these criteria, the final document resulting from the methodology should re-visit the policy responses already developed and adopt those most appropriate for UNDP involvement in the country.