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Does It Take a Village? Policing Strategies and Fear of Crime in Latin America

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ABSTRACT

How can policymakers reduce public fear of crime in Latin America? This study compares the effectiveness of "zero tolerance" and community-based policing strategies in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. At the micro level, it assesses the links between fear of crime and social identity characteristics, contextual factors, the media, community participation, and other insecurities. It finds that citizens' economic, political, and social insecurities are the main determinants of their fear of crime. At the macro level, the study compares levels of public insecurity and finds that cities that employ community-based strategies to fight crime register lower levels of public fear of crime.

C rime is currently at the top of the political agenda throughout Latin America. Indeed, fear of crime dominates public discourse in most Latin American countries. In Mexico and Peru, massive demonstrations have protested against perceived government ineffectiveness in fighting crime. In Bolivia, Argentina, and Venezuela, public outrage over violence and disorder played a pivotal role in the ousters (or attempted ousters) of presidents. Fear of crime increasingly drives public policy, as citizens' feelings of insecurity make their way to the ballot box and the ears of public officials. Scholars have noted the potential ramifications of escalating rates of public insecurity, particularly on citizens' support for democracy (Azpuru 2000; Cruz 2000). Cruz, for example, finds that more respondents (55 percent) will justify a military coup because of their fear of crime than for any other reason, outranking other issues such as high unemployment (28 percent).

Given these potent implications, officials have searched for policies to calm a fearful public. Not surprisingly, many of the proposed solutions center on police reform, as most Latin American police forces are notorious for poor training, corruption, and inefficiency. Police reforms vary dramatically in terms of scope and implementation, however. Some countries have employed the architects of New York's "zero tolerance" measures as crime-fighting consultants, attempting to copy that model. At the other extreme are community-based policing strategies. For many people concerned with civil rights and liberties, the community-based approach represents the best way to fight crime in Latin America, as it has proven effective in reducing fear of crime in some communities in the United States and does not have the same potential to jeopardize civil liberties through police misconduct.¹

To the authors' knowledge, no study has tested the ability of these two approaches to reduce public fear of crime in Latin America. The present study examines these strategies in three countries: Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. It relies primarily on survey data gathered by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2001 in the principal cities of each country. Although this survey was designed to analyze topics related to the situation of workers, it also included numerous questions related to victimization, trust in political institutions, and fear of crime.²

While none of these three countries relies exclusively on zero tolerance or community policing, each certainly emphasizes one approach over the other, with varying degrees of success in implementation. In Argentina, zero tolerance governs most cities, as politicians have advocated "get tough" policies to address rising crime rates. A notable exception is the city of Córdoba, which overhauled its police system in 1996 and initiated a series of community-oriented measures to include the public in its fight against crime. The Brazilian case is quite similar. In Recife and Rio de Janeiro, policing strategies have relied almost exclusively on zero tolerance. In cities like São Paulo, some limited efforts have been made to complement these strategies with those that focus on community outreach and prevention, but the attempts have been largely ineffective.

Chile stands in marked contrast to its counterparts. While Chilean policy has not disregarded the importance of sanctions, it has tempered this approach with an acknowledgment of the important role citizens can play in reducing crime in their communities. In recent years, Chilean national policy has emphasized the community-based approach, viewing crime prevention policies based on community participation as a viable means both to fight crime and to reduce public fear of crime without resorting strictly to zero tolerance policies. With their diverse approaches to fighting crime, these three cases provide social scientists with a unique opportunity to assess how the two different policies comparatively reduce citizens' feelings of insecurity.

It is important to note that the focus here is on the relationship between policing strategies and fear of crime, not objective crime rates. Although public fear of crime is related to actual crime rates, these two phenomena are not identical. Existing research indicates that fear of crime is not the sole byproduct of objective crime rates; instead, it reflects other individual-level characteristics, such as socioeconomic status, victimization, trust in law enforcement, media exposure, community participation, and economic and political insecurities (Dammert and Malone 2003; Pain 2000; Walklate 2001). This investigation focuses on fear of crime because ultimately, this is what drives citizens' political attitudes and behaviors. Citizens' support for democracy, voting preferences, and participation in public demonstrations are products of their subjective perceptions, or fear of crime. Given the complexities of public fear of crime, it is beyond the scope of this article to examine the relationship between policing strategies and both fear of crime and objective crime rates. Therefore the analysis is limited strictly to fear of crime.

While the impact of policing strategies on reducing the actual occurrence of crime has been assessed elsewhere (Frühling 2003), to the best of our knowledge, scholars have not linked policing strategies to public fear of crime in Latin America (Kahn 2000). It is unclear how effective each of these policing strategies is in reducing public fear of crime, or if the efficacy of each is contingent on additional factors.

Before we can examine the linkages between policing strategies and public fear of crime, we must parcel out the variance attributable to individual-level factors that predict public fear of crime. Consequently, we test the micro-level variables noted in the literature. This portion of the analysis also tests the ability of an underexamined variable to predict fear of crime, assessing the impact of "other insecurities." We argue that at the individual level, fear of crime is highly linked to citizens' other fears, or insecurities rooted in economic, social, and political arenas. Thus, fear of crime is intricately linked to the other insecurities that citizens face on a daily basis, particularly in contemporary Latin America.

The second part of the analysis turns to the macro level and assesses the relationship between policing strategies and fear of crime. It examines the relationships between these policing strategies and levels of public insecurity. Specifically, this discussion aims to test whether cities that employ community-based policing strategies register lower levels of fear of crime than those that rely on zero tolerance measures.

EXPLAINING FEAR OF CRIME IN LATIN AMERICA

The social science literature offers four primary perspectives that aim to explain public fear of crime. Some scholars focus on social identity characteristics, such as age and gender (Pain 2000; Walklate 2001). A second approach centers on contextual factors, such as the physical layout of cities and urbanization (Caldeira 2000; SUR 2000). A third group of scholars emphasizes the importance of the media (Chiricos et al. 2000; O'Connell 1999), while yet another argues that informal control networks are key to generating more trust in communities and reducing fear of crime (Crawford 1998).

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These four approaches have arisen primarily from studies of the United States; however, recent work based on Latin American cases has noted that these perspectives do not fully explain public insecurity in the region. In particular, recent research has stressed the need to examine the role that "other" insecurities play in increasing citizens' fear of crime (Dammert and Malone 2003; UNDP 1998). That is, fear of crime is not the direct result of criminal acts per se but a manifestation of a wide range of daily insecurities, including those related to economic, political, and social issues.³

The Role of "Other" Insecurities

According to this perspective, fear of crime should not be studied solely as it relates to victimization and criminalization, but also in the context of a series of other insecurities featuring prominently in most Latin American countries today, such as those generated by high rates of unemployment and poverty. Most notably, the United Nations Program for Development in Chile (UNDP) has stressed that fear of crime is the product of a wide array of other economic, social, and political insecurities. The UNDP describes seven dimensions of human security that are threatened by the current model of development: economic, alimentary, health, environmental, personal, societal, and political (UNDP 1998).⁴ Crime becomes a convenient scapegoat for citizens because they can channel all their insecurities into fear of crime, which is more tangible than these other economic, political, and social insecurities.

This study aims to substantiate empirically the notion that much of the current preoccupation with crime in Latin America today is rooted in those other insecurities. To measure the other insecurities, the study relies on survey items that tap into the dimensions outlined by the UNDP. The ILO survey asked respondents, "Do you and your family feel secure or insecure in terms of employment?" This question was then repeated for each of the following items: educational opportunities for children, possibility of maintaining the quality of life, economic stability, political stability, and human rights. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of security for each of these items as (1) very secure, (2) secure, (3) neither secure nor insecure, (4) insecure, (5) very insecure. Due to their high degree of intercorrelation, the six items were combined into an insecurity scale.⁵ This follows a common practice in survey research, and merges the six insecurity questions into an insecurity scale ranging from 1 (very secure) through 5 (very insecure).

This measure of other economic, political, and social insecurities was used to test the hypothesis that fear of crime is linked to other insecurities. Although this is hypothesized to be the primary factor driving public insecurity, the efficacy of the other approaches featured in the literature was also tested. These additional factors are therefore discussed in order to control for their effects in multivariate models predicting fear of crime.

Socioeconomic Indicators. Particularly in the field of psychology, scholars have noted that socioeconomic characteristics, or social identity characteristics, relate strongly to fear of crime (Pantazis 2000; Tulloch 2000; Mesch 2000; Hraba et al. 1998; Saldívar et al. 1998). The relationship between fear of crime and social identity characteristics is explored in an important vet contradictory body of literature.⁶ While women, the elderly, and the poor are found to be more fearful, scholars have not yet explained conclusively why they are more fearful. The conclusions of those studies have clearly stated, moreover, that those indicators should be included in a wider research design that includes other micro- and macro-level variables. Even though it is not clear why social identity characteristics influence fear, the empirical evidence is impossible to ignore. Thus, this study follows the well-established tradition of survey research and includes these factors in the analysis, with control variables for sex, age, education, and income.⁷ By doing so, it demonstrates that the results are equally valid for men and women of all ages, at all levels of income and education.

Victimization. The study also controls for the impact of personal victimization on fear of crime. Intuitively, it seems logical to expect that personal experiences of victimization would make citizens more fearful of crime. This intuitive finding has been quantitatively demonstrated in the literature (Mesch 2000; Hraba et al. 1998; Myers and Chung 1998), with studies reporting that the experience of victimization leads citizens to fear crime more.⁸

Trust in the Press. Traditionally, no study of fear of crime is complete without controlling for media exposure. Extant literature has found that the media overemphasize the problem of crime, leading the public to perceive crime rates as much higher than they actually are. Not surprisingly, scholars have identified media exposure as a key explanatory variable of public fear of crime (Chiricos et al 2000; O'Connell 1999; Altheide 1997; Chiricos et al. 1997; Ramos-Lira et al. 1995). This disproportionate focus on violent crime, epitomized by the media adage "if it bleeds, it leads," has led the public to become more fearful of violent crime and to advocate harsh anticrime measures, even as objective crime rates have decreased.

While the data set does not allow testing for media exposure per se, it does contain a suitable proxy: trust in the press. Respondents who trust the press will be arguably more fearful of crime, given that the media stress and sensationalize the occurrence of crime, as well as police misconduct. While this measure differs from the indicators of media exposure traditionally utilized in fear of crime studies, recent work suggests that it is adequate. In a seminal study, Miller and Krosnick (2000) find that trust in the media, not media exposure, has a greater impact on citizens' evaluations. The authors find that when people consider the media to be a trustworthy, credible source of information, they place greater emphasis on the issues prominent in media discourse.

Therefore, this study maintains that respondents who consider the media to be trustworthy will lend greater credence to the media's portrayal of crime, leading them to become more fearful of crime when the media portray crime as pervasive and threatening. Trust in the media is operationalized through the following item: "Which of these institutions do you consider trustworthy . . . the press? (1) trustworthy; (0) untrustworthy." Although this measure is limited, it does allow for a superficial control for the effects of media on public fear of crime.

Trust in Police. Recent work has focused on the linkage between trust in government and fear of crime (Burianek 1997; Chanley et al. 2000; Dammert and Malone 2002; Vlassis 2000). When explaining public fear of crime, scholars have argued that one must look not only at the objective phenomenon of crime but also at the efficacy of formal crime-fighting institutions; namely, the police. According to this logic, it is not merely the objective phenomenon of crime per se that is driving fear of crime, but also the failure of the police to garner the citizens' trust. If citizens cannot trust the institution responsible for protecting them from crime, they will fear crime more. Here, trust in police is measured with the following survey item: "Which of these institutions do you consider trustworthy . . . the police? (1) trustworthy; (0) untrustworthy."

Community Participation. The importance of community participation is firmly based in social capital theory. Community participation, along with its theoretical counterpart, interpersonal trust, has been found to be significantly correlated with fear of crime: the more individuals trust others in their neighborhood, the less they fear crime (Ross and Jang 2000). Following this theory, individuals who participate in their neighborhoods should have higher levels of interpersonal trust, and thus should fear crime less. Furthermore, when citizens extend such community involvement to participate specifically in community-based security programs, both interpersonal trust and trust in law enforcement could increase.

While theoretically there is strong reason to link community participation to fear of crime, this relationship is problematic. It is not empirically clear that interpersonal trust precedes fear of crime.⁹ That is, we know that there is a statistical correlation between fear of crime and interpersonal trust, but empirically, scholars have not untangled which is the cause and which the effect. The argument could also be made from the other direction: people who are more fearful of crime are less likely to trust their neighbors.

We measure community participation through respondents' selfreported participation. Respondents were asked if they participated in any of the following organizations: religious, environmental, neighborhood, parental, student, philanthropic, NGOs, or "other." If respondents participated in at least one activity, they were coded as 1; respondents who did not participate in any of these activities were coded as 0.

Measuring the Fear of Crime

The definition of fear of crime is a topic of substantial academic debate (Pain 2000; Roundtree 1998; Roundtree and Land 1996; Williams et al. 2000). The survey data in this study allow for two operationalizations of fear of crime: fear of general violence and fear of assault or robbery.¹⁰ With these operationalizations, the study focuses on insecurities caused by generalized violence, as well as those caused specifically by assault or robbery. Given that some crimes may generate more fears than others, however (Williams et al. 2000), the ideal would be a more detailed measurement, in which respondents reported their levels of insecurity due to burglary or other types of less violent property crime. While the measurement here is not as complete as we would like, the crimes included do account for a substantial number of all reported crimes, and have an immense public exposure by the media in these three countries.¹¹

To examine the impact of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable, fear of crime, the authors conducted multivariate OLS regressions in each country for each measure of the dependent variable. Table 1 lists the results for fear of assault or robbery, and table 2 those for fear of violence.

As table 1 illustrates, most of the socioeconomic indicators had weak effects on fear of assault or robbery. Age was insignificant across the three models, and education was significant only for Brazil. Women were more fearful than men in both Argentina and Brazil; but in Chile, this variable was insignificant. In contrast, income did consistently affect fear of assault or robbery, as wealthier respondents reported higher levels of fear than the poor, holding all other factors constant.

Personal victimization also exerted a strong impact across the three models. In each country, respondents who had personally been victimized by crime registered significantly higher levels of fear than those who had not. Although victimization is significantly linked to fear of assault or robbery, the magnitude of its effect is relatively small. When compared to nonvictims, crime victims were .104 more fearful in Argentina, .131 more fearful in Brazil, and .366 more fearful in Chile. Considering that the dependent variable ranges from 1 through 5, victimization has a small but significant impact.

Trust in the press, trust in the police, and community participation each performed inconsistently across the three cases. Trust in the press was significant only in Chile, where respondents who trusted the press

Independent Variables	Argentina	Brazil	Chile
Constant	2.488***	1.992***	1.4301***
	(.137)	(.092)	(.227)
Education	013	.018*	.011
	(.015)	(.009)	(.025)
Sex	074*	048*	049
	(.039)	(.027)	(.066)
Age	.001	001	001
	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)
Income	.035*	.074***	.119**
	(.020)	(.014)	(.041)
Victimization	.104**	.131***	.366***
	(.042)	(.028)	(.070)
Trust in the press	056	018	.184**
	(.040)	(.030)	(.078)
Community participation	124*	103***	074
	(.060)	(.031)	(.068)
Trust in the police	124*	.070*	.048
	(.055)	(.034)	(.071)
Other insecurities	.435***	.506***	.506***
	(.026)	(.019)	(.045)
Adjusted R-squared	.171	.211	.166
Ν	1,662	3,068	814

Table 1: Predicting Fear of Crime (Assault or Robbery)

Notes to tables 1–3: Coefficients are unstandardized, with standard errors in parentheses. An F test indicated that these three models are significant at the .001 level. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 for a one-tailed t test

reported levels of fear of assault or robbery .184 higher than those who did not. In Argentina and Brazil, trust in the press was not significantly related to the dependent variable. However, these results must be interpreted with caution, as the measurement is less than ideal. Perhaps if actual media exposure were included instead of or in addition to trust in the press, the media would be significantly linked to fear of assault or robbery. Given these limitations, this study's conclusions concerning the effects of media are tentative.

Community participation was significant in the Argentine and Brazilian models, yet not in Chile. In both Argentina and Brazil, respondents who participated in at least one community organization were .124 and .103 less fearful, respectively, than those who did not participate at all. While this variable was significant in two of the three cases, its impact is quite small. Still, it is important to note that this measure of community participation measures citizens' involvement with any type of community activity. If we were to measure the impact of citizens' participation in community-oriented security programs, such as neighborhood watch groups, it is possible that such a measurement would yield different results.

Trust in police conformed to theoretical expectations only in the case of Argentina. In Argentina, trust in police is negatively associated with fear of assault or robbery; respondents who trusted the police were .124 less fearful than those who did not. In Brazil this variable emerges as significant, yet its sign is positive instead of the hypothesized negative direction. This result is quite counterintuitive; we cannot think of a logical reason to explain why more trust in police would be associated with more fear of crime in the case of Brazil. We regard this result as a statistical anomaly. Considering this counterintuitive result in Brazil and the lack of significance in Chile, we do not find much support for the hypothesis concerning trust in police.

By far the most powerful predictor of fear of assault or robbery is the variable measuring other insecurities. In each case, this variable is highly significant. In Argentina, for every one-unit increase in these other insecurities, fear of assault or robbery increases by .435. As this variable ranges from 1 through 5, those who report the lowest levels of insecurity are 1.74 less fearful than those at the highest level of insecurity, holding all other factors constant. In Brazil and Chile, the difference between these two extremes is even slightly higher, at 2.024. Thus, even controlling for more traditional determinants of fear of crime, these other insecurities are by far the most powerful predictors of respondents' fear of assault or robbery.

When we measure fear of crime through respondents' fear of more generalized violence, we find similar patterns. As table 2 indicates, the significance and signs of the socioeconomic variables do not change. Likewise, the effects of victimization and trust in the press remain consistent. The variables of community participation and trust in police do exhibit different results when we alter the measurement of this dependent variable, however. In table 2, community participation is significant only in Brazil; however, it is close to attaining statistical significance in the case of Argentina, where it is significant at the .07 level. Trust in police is significant only in Argentina, where it has a small, negative impact on the dependent variable. While this variable displayed quite puzzling results for Brazil in table 1, with its significant yet positive impact, in table 2, trust in police has the anticipated negative sign, yet does not reach statistical significance.

In table 2, other insecurities are by far the most powerful determinants of fear of violence. These other political, economic, and social

Independent Variables	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	
Constant	2.199***	1.951***	1.217***	
	(.141)	(.092)	(.232)	
Education	015	.023**	.000	
	(.016)	(.009)	(.026)	
Sex	075*	080**	071	
	(.040)	(.027)	(.067)	
Age	.001	.001	.002	
	(.001)	(.001)	(.003)	
Income	.048*	.067***	.117**	
	(.021)	(.014)	(.042)	
Victimization	.090*	.113***	.383***	
	(.043)	(.028)	(.071)	
Trust in the press	060	.030	.233**	
	(.042)	(.030)	(.080)	
Community participation	089	053*	090	
	(.061)	(.031)	(.069)	
Trust in the police	137**	009	.035	
	(.057)	(.034)	(.072)	
Other insecurities	.477***	.512***	.531**	
	(.027)	(.019)	(.046)	

Table 2: Predicting Fear of Crime (Violence)

insecurities are consistently significant and positive; as they rise, so does respondents' fear of violence. Again, the magnitude of other insecurities is quite notable. Holding all other variables constant, those who are least secure register levels of fear of violence at least 1.908 higher than those who are very secure in these other political, economic, and social arenas. In both tables 1 and 2, we find very strong support for our hypothesis concerning these other insecurities.

1661

.188

.217

3065

.177

813

This first portion of the analysis has identified the key micro-level determinants of public fear of crime in each of the three cases, utilizing two measurements for the dependent variable. Some of the results support conventional wisdom in the fear of crime literature, yet others do not. Of the socioeconomic indicators tested here, only income exerts a clear, consistent impact on fear of crime. Across these models, wealthier respondents report higher levels of fear of crime, even though crime dispropor-

Ν

Adjusted R-squared

tionately affects the poor in the three countries. Still, personal experience with victimization is very important, as those who have been victimized by crime firsthand are significantly more fearful in each of the models.

The evidence concerning community participation, trust in the press, and trust in the police is mixed. These variables are significant in several of the models, yet fall short of confirming theoretical expectations in every case. To understand fully how these variables affect fear of crime in Latin America, a more thorough exploration of these variables is necessary. As such an exploration is outside the scope of this paper, we make the tentative conclusion that these variables can exert an impact on the fear of crime, yet their import is most likely to be contingent on contextual factors specific to each country.

Most important for this study, the most powerful predictors of fear of crime in each of the models are other economic, political, and social insecurities. This variable consistently attains the highest level of statistical significance and exerts the largest impact on both measures of the dependent variable. Democratization has coincided with increased economic and social upheaval, which understandably could lead citizens to feel more insecure in these areas. Given the powerful effect of other insecurities on fear of crime, it appears that officials must employ broad strategies in calming public insecurity, addressing not only the problem of crime itself, but the economic, social, and political uncertainties that play a large role in the lives of many Latin American citizens. In light of these findings, lowering crime rates alone will not be sufficient to reduce public fear; officials must address these other sources of insecurity in order to reduce public fear of crime.

POLICING STRATEGIES

To understand policing strategies in Latin America, it is helpful to think of a continuum. On one end of the spectrum are zero tolerance strategies, which stress comprehensive, aggressive law enforcement with "no holds barred." In the United States, such law enforcement strategies are envisioned as part of a package carefully designed to combat crime in a specific location. When such strategies have been exported to Latin America, however, numerous problems have developed. Often, this aggressive policing approach has been warped into *mano dura* or "iron fist" strategies.

Latin American police departments frequently lack adequate funding and resources to implement comprehensive zero tolerance strategies; consequently, this aggressive policing can quickly deteriorate into a repressive, militarized system of fighting crime. Indeed, scholars have noted the potential for zero tolerance policies to degenerate into police abuses of power and racial profiling (Arroyo 2003). *Mano dura* strategies have been tied to extralegal detention and punishment for minor offenses, including a military-style occupation and collective punishment of entire neighborhoods. The community is involved only in terms of recruiting informants and collaborators. Thus, while in theory many Latin American governments have sought to implement zero tolerance approaches to fight crime, in practice, such policing strategies go far beyond the U.S. "tough on crime" policy framework, mainly because that framework was adopted without accompanying police reforms or the infrastructure present in U.S. police departments.

Community-based approaches to fighting crime lie at the other end of the spectrum. In simple terms, community approaches are based on the view that it takes a whole village, or a neighborhood, to fight crime. All community policing programs have several common elements. They focus on preventive action in a clearly defined area (that is, a specific neighborhood or several neighborhoods) and emphasize the importance of police-community relationships in that area. The community is involved in designing initiatives to prevent crime, and the police conduct analyses to identify the risk factors, as well as the measures needed to control even the smallest of crimes (Frühling 2003). Thus the community-based approach aims to fight crime primarily through prevention and community participation. Officials usually make public declarations regarding the importance of citizens in controlling crime, and underscore those pronouncements with community prevention programs and civil society outreach initiatives.

Advocates of both zero tolerance and community-based approaches recognize the importance of police reform. Both acknowledge the many inadequacies facing Latin American police systems, and attempt to fight crime by increasing the effectiveness of crime fighters. Such reform includes increasing police funding, hiring more police officers, and providing better training. In some cases, reforms have divided the functions of the police into preventive and investigative divisions, incorporated under the executive and judicial branches of government, respectively.

The two different approaches, however, target police training and investment in very different ways. Under zero tolerance strategies, policy implementation is top-down: the police will enforce penalties more stringently than in other approaches, and politicians frequently will press for harsher sanctions from the courts. In contrast, communitybased strategies ask residents to identify the current deficiencies of policing, recommend ways to reform such deficiencies, and assist in the final stage of targeting reforms where they are most needed.

Theoretically, it is helpful to draw distinctions between these two types of policing strategies. In practice, however, officials tend to draw from both schools of thought in designing crime control policy. For example, many policymakers have argued in favor of a "broken windows" policing strategy, which can combine elements of both zero tolerance and community-based approaches. According to the broken windows theory, defined by Kelling and Wilson (1982), crime will flourish in neighborhoods where disorderly behavior goes unchecked. If a window in a building is broken and left in disrepair, people will perceive that no one cares about the state of the building, and soon all the other windows in the building will be broken. Applying this analogy to the level of the community, neighborhoods that become run-down will be more prone to public crime, as ordinary people will feel that they have lost control over their public space. As a result, they will withdraw from active involvement in their communities and become more reluctant to regulate public behavior through informal controls.

The focus of the broken windows policing strategy is to address community anxiety about public safety. Broken windows advocates argue that the role of the police is fundamentally to maintain public order. The target is the space, which needs to be controlled by both the police and the community. Thus, while broken windows focuses on police maintenance of order and the prosecution even of small crimes, there is also an important role for the community. The community can participate in the provision of security, investigation, and conflict resolution services initiated or facilitated by the police.

Although the broken windows example illustrates how both zero tolerance and community-based strategies can be employed together, in the cases examined in this study, policymakers have tended to favor one strategy over the other. This is not to say that these cases have used zero tolerance or community based strategies exclusively, but that the process of implementation tends to rely on more elements of one approach than the other. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile have all experienced sharp increases in crime from the inception of democracy to the present, but they have employed different strategies to address this crime wave.

Some of these variations can be attributed to differences in the political structures of the three countries. As a unitary state, Chile's policing strategies fall under the auspices of the national government, which has designed a uniform national policy putting one police institution in charge of crime prevention and control. In contrast, the federalist states of Argentina and Brazil display a great deal of subnational variation, as state and local governments are free to design policy in their own jurisdictions.¹² Although the national governments provide some direction and financing, policing strategies are primarily local affairs. The police and criminal justice systems are free to adjust national policy to fit officials' perceptions of state and local problems.

The subnational variation is further complicated by serious problems in implementing policing strategies, as many implementations have been inconclusive, partial, and of limited duration (Rico and Chinchilla 2002). Although it cannot be said definitively that each case relied exclusively on *mano dura* or community-based approaches, most certainly these cases have tended to favor one approach over the other.

Argentina

Before the 1990s, Argentina was widely considered to be one of the safest countries in Latin America. Not surprisingly, public security fluctuated with the economy, until both collapsed at the end of 2001. Between 1990 and 2001, Argentina witnessed an 83 percent increase in overall crime. The city of Buenos Aires faced a 23 percent increase in the same period, while the Province of Buenos Aires recorded a total increase of 115 percent in the number of crimes (DNPC 2002). Meanwhile, police capacity to control crime has deteriorated. For example, in 1997 Argentina had a homicide rate of 4.59 per 100,000 inhabitants, and police reported having solved 79 percent of these cases (Interpol 1997). In contrast, by 2001, the homicide rate had risen to 8.24 per 100,000 inhabitants, and the police clearance rate had eroded to 43 percent (Interpol 2001).

Overall in Argentina, zero tolerance has dominated the policing agenda, to the extent that some refer to this practice as penal populism (Bottoms 1995). This approach divides the population into two bands in the crime "war": the "good" people and the "others," who should be either incarcerated or severely punished. It is not surprising that Argentina has turned to zero tolerance policies; zero tolerance specialists, such as former New York police commissioner William Bratton, have served as consultants to the Ministry of Justice in devising policing strategies. During the 1990s, President Carlos Menem implemented policies that not only hardened laws for offenders but also included a provision to involve the armed forces to help control crime in the cities.

While the zero tolerance turned *mano dura* approach predominates, some policies designed and implemented at the provincial level have tried to involve the community in the fight against crime, mainly in the areas of primary and secondary prevention, as well as situational prevention. In the province of Córdoba, officials have focused on a series of crime prevention policies at the local level since 1990 (Gobierno de Córdoba 1999). For example, from 1999 through 2001, the province created a system of two hundred citizens' security councils. These councils aimed to organize community leaders and citizens in crime prevention initiatives, which varied from neighborhood watch groups to public space-building and youth violence prevention programs. Although the program garnered much attention, not all of it was positive. Many citizens doubted that such community-based initiatives would succeed in curbing rising crime rates (Dammert 2003). To assuage citizens' doubts, in 2001 politicians began to incorporate *mano dura* discourse into their rhetoric, emphasizing harsher laws and an increased police presence.

Brazil

The case of Brazil shares some similarities with that of Argentina. Brazil's federal structure, like that of Argentina, gives state officials much autonomy in developing and implementing policing strategies. While there is some subnational variation in Brazil, overall policing strategies have one common characteristic: the police frequently rely on excessive force to fight crime, resulting in an extreme form of *mano dura* policing. Indeed, according to a 2001 U.S. Department of State human rights report, Brazil has had some of the worst cases of police brutality in the region.

Brazil has long had high rates of violent crime, but the 1990s witnessed an alarming further increase. In São Paulo, for example, the homicide rate rose from 41.6 in 1988 to 50.2 in 1993 for every 100,000 inhabitants (Pinheiro 2002). To counteract this trend, the Brazilian police have used excessive force against suspects, particularly the poor and members of minority groups. State police forces commit extrajudicial killings and arbitrarily arrest and detain persons suspected of criminal activity (U.S. Department of State 2002). Most of these uses of excessive force are not investigated or prosecuted. Separate police tribunals theoretically should prosecute such misconduct and abuses of power, but in practice, these tribunals serve to protect police officers. Their case dockets are overloaded, and many cases of police abuse reach them only after the statute of limitations has expired (U.S. Department of State 2002).

Thus, police forces often fight crime with an extreme extension of *mano dura*: suspected criminals are severely sanctioned, sometimes extrajudicially (Caldeira 2000). For example, the U.S. State Department report notes that in São Paulo in 1999, police officers killed 664 people, of whom only 31 percent were committing crimes at the time they were shot. Furthermore, 56 percent of these individuals had no previous criminal record, and 51 percent were shot in the back (U.S. Department of State 2002). Similar reports abound for Rio de Janeiro. The State Department estimates indicate that as much as 64 percent of individuals killed by police in Rio in the 1990s were shot in the back (U.S. Department of State 2002).

Brazilian officials have attempted to tackle these problems of excessive force. Since the transition from authoritarianism to democracy in the 1980s, police reform has been high on Brazil's agenda (Mesquita Neto 2003). However, despite the importance given to the issue in public rhetoric, in practice police reforms have not addressed key problems, such as authoritarian behavior, poor relationships with local communities, and high levels of corruption. While most cities have employed an extreme or warped version of the zero tolerance model, there have been some exceptions. One of the most notable cases is the creation in 1985 of the *Conselhos da Segurança* (Security Councils) in São Paulo. These organizations represent the first sign of the state's interest in crime prevention and community participation (Frühling 2003). While these councils managed to remain in the public eye and implement a variety of community-based crimefighting initiatives, their efforts have been hampered by a lack of public support, which has debilitated many council initiatives and reduced their role to primarily symbolic (Dammert 2003).

São Paulo also launched several private-public ventures to involve business leaders in crime-fighting initiatives. While such initiatives succeeded in improving relationships between police and business leaders, they also had negative consequences. In some cases, the police did become more responsive to the needs of business owners and managers but did not improve ties with the general public. Consequently, the police became more responsive to the rich than to the poor (Mesquita Neto 2003).

While São Paulo has attempted to temper its *mano dura* approach with some community-based crime-fighting initiatives, officials have not been able to maintain effective links to community groups (Frühling 2003). Overall, the trend has been toward an extreme version of *mano dura* policy, with pockets of isolated community-oriented initiatives that are largely ineffective. Indeed, police violence (as measured by the number of people killed by the police) has increased even with the implementation of such community-based measures (Frühling 2003).

Chile

Although Chile enjoys one of the lowest victimization rates in Latin America, fear of crime prevails in much of its population (Dammert and Malone 2003; Dockendorff et al. 2000).¹³ This attitude can be traced to the beginning of the 1990s, years that also marked the return to democracy. Paradoxically, after 17 years of dictatorship and the continuous use of force against the population, the return to democracy meant the consolidation of public perception of criminal insecurity (UNDP 1998; Oviedo and Rodríguez 1999). The persistent fear of crime can also be attributed to the media's role in portraying acts that were not part of the news during the previous regime (Oviedo 2000).

The Chilean case has two characteristics that strikingly distinguish it from neighboring countries: public trust in police forces (Frühling 2001; Sandoval 2001) and community prevention programs (Dammert 2003). Although the police were involved in the previous military government (1973–90), the general public regards them as well-trained, efficient, and not corrupt. This situation is unique, in that Latin American police forces are typically considered corrupt and abusive, particularly in countries such as Argentina and Brazil (Dammert and Malone 2001).

In addition to higher levels of trust in police, the Chilean case is also notably distinct in its crime-fighting policies. The government has made a clear decision to assuage the public's insecurity through policies of community participation in crime prevention (Dammert 2003), as well as through alterations of police operational strategies (Ward 2001). In 2000, the Chilean government started a new program called *Comuna Segura Compromiso 100* (Plan for Safer Cities 100), which focuses squarely on the community. Community groups diagnose crime-related problems in their immediate area and then develop a local agenda to prioritize the most pressing issues. Once the major crime issues have been identified, these groups design crime-fighting initiatives, which the government finances.

During the second half of the 1990s, the police also developed a new strategy called *Plan Cuadrante* (Zone Plan). Although this is not a community policing strategy per se, it shares many principles with that approach, particularly in improving community-police relationships. To this end, each police area is organized into *cuadrantes*, or zones, which have appointed personnel entrusted with thoroughly personalizing themselves with the area and the community. Both *Comuna Segura Compromiso 100* and *Plan Cuadrante* are designed to diminish public fear of crime in the short run through community participation, while also (one would hope) lowering the rates of victimization. In the Chilean case, the community is seen as a vital resource, as community inputs help to direct policing strategies. The job of the community is to collaborate with the police, keeping them abreast of local problems and critical areas.

Policing Strategies and Public Fear of Crime

Considering that the three country cases rely on very different policing strategies, the next step is to examine the relationship between these distinct strategies and fear of crime. To do so, this study pooled the data from each country and incorporated dummy variables for each city into the previous micro-level models. This allows control for the micro-level factors linked to fear of crime while comparing the levels of public insecurity in each city.

In the comparisons of city policing strategies, the city of Santiago de Chile was the reference category. Santiago was chosen because it is a large metropolitan city, yet it has relied extensively on community-based approaches to policing. Table 3 reports the results of the OLS regression analyses.

Independent Variables	Fear of Violence	Fear of Assault or Robbery
Constant	1.723*** (.085)	1.919*** (.084)
Education	.015* (.008)	.013* (.008)
Sex	074*** (.021)	054** (.021)
Age	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)
Income	.062*** (.011)	.060*** (.011)
Victimization	.137*** (.022)	.149*** (.022)
Trust in press	.032 (.023)	.003 (.023)
Community participation	059* (.026)	094*** (.026)
Trust in police	010 (.027)	.033 (.027)
Other insecurities	.493*** (.015)	.473*** (.015)
São Paulo dummy	.330*** (.051)	.251*** (.050)
Recife dummy	.298*** (.055)	.208*** (.055)
Rio de Janeiro dummy	.317*** (.053)	.171*** (.052)
Capital Federal dummy	.183** (.062)	.228**** (.062)
Gran Buenos Aires dummy	.293*** (.054)	.301*** (.054)
Rosario dummy	.151* (.067)	.170*** (.066)
Córdoba dummy	.028 (.063)	.088 (.063)

Table 3: Policing Strategies and Fear of Crime

Independent Variables	Fear of Violence	Fear of Assault or Robbery
Valparaíso dummy	.001 (.067)	023 (.066)
Concepción dummy	503*** (.066)	424*** (.066)
Adjusted R-squared	.283	.255
Ν	5,541	5,546

Table 3 (continued)

As table 3 indicates, levels of public insecurity differ significantly among the cities, even when controlling for micro-level factors. The three Brazilian cities of São Paulo, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro all exhibit levels of public insecurity significantly higher than those of Santiago. Public insecurity is greatest in São Paulo, registering .330 higher than in Santiago in terms of fear of violence and .251 higher in terms of fear of assault or robbery. This finding is quite interesting, as São Paulo is the Brazilian city that attempted to temper its *mano dura* approach with limited efforts at community outreach, albeit largely restricted to business owners. Recife and Rio de Janeiro follow not far behind São Paulo in terms of public insecurity. Again, these cities have utilized extreme forms of *mano dura* policing strategies. When compared to Santiago, which has relied more extensively on community-based strategies, these *mano dura* cities maintain higher levels of fear of crime.

A similar pattern appears when comparing Santiago to the Argentine cities. The *Capital Federal*, Gran Buenos Aires, and Rosario have all relied more heavily on zero tolerance policing strategies, and all register significantly higher levels of public insecurity than Santiago. The only exception to this trend is the city of Córdoba. Córdoba has employed mixed strategies to address public insecurity. Policing strategies initially were community-based, but gradually Córdoba began to incorporate some zero tolerance rhetoric into its public policy agenda. The analysis finds that levels of public insecurity in Córdoba are statistically no different from those of Santiago. Thus, the one Argentine city that has utilized the community-based approach has no more or less fear of crime than its community-based Chilean counterpart.

Elsewhere in Chile, we find that Valparaíso also has levels of public insecurity that are statistically indistinguishable from Santiago, and Concepción registers levels of fear of crime that are significantly lower than those of Santiago. While all three of these cities rely more extensively on community-based approaches to fight crime, it is not surprising that

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Concepción's average levels of public insecurity are significantly lower. Concepción is a much smaller metropolitan area, and consequently would be expected to have lower levels of public insecurity than a large metropolitan area such as Santiago.

While these city-level comparisons illustrate the differences among cities that employ distinct policing strategies, it is important not to overstate the comparisons. We have found that those cities that rely more on community-based policing strategies tend to have lower levels of public fear of crime, holding all other variables constant. This is consistent with the hypothesis that community-based approaches are more successful in calming public insecurity, but it does not substantiate the hypothesis, as it indicates only a correlation and cannot substantiate causation. Still, these preliminary comparisons are quite insightful. It can be argued that these findings justify the examination of this hypothesis in greater detail in future research.

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis has aimed to identify the micro-level determinants of public fear of crime, as well as to examine the relationship between fear of crime and macro-level policing strategies. Although its findings concerning policing strategies should not be overstated, the city-level comparisons are compatible with the hypothesis that community involvement in policing strategies is linked to lower levels of public insecurity. More research on this relationship is needed; but this analysis does indicate that the community could be a valuable resource in reducing public fear of crime. This is particularly important in Latin America today, since fear of crime has fostered the popularity of "tough on crime" politicians with dubious human rights offenders have proven to be quite popular with the electorate, in large part due to their pledges to fight crime at all costs (Seligson 2003).

The inclusion of the community would also foster police reform. In Argentina and Brazil, police forces still have poor records on human rights protection. Crime-fighting zeal has overshadowed respect for constitutional procedures as civil liberties have taken a back seat to crime control. There is reason to suspect that community involvement would lessen the occurrence of human rights abuses and encourage reform in policing practices.

These results also underscore the intricate link between fear of crime and broader societal factors. Citizens' feelings of economic, political, and social insecurity feature prominently in determining their fear of crime. To reduce public insecurity, officials must address the myriad causes of these insecurities. Fear of crime cannot be isolated from the other fears citizens face in their daily lives.

NOTES

1. While community-based approaches do not lend themselves as easily to police misuses of power, it is important to note that such policies could also have negative ramifications. In some countries, such as El Salvador, Mexico, and Peru, communities have banded together to circumvent legal apprehension and prosecution of suspects and have participated in vigilante lynching. Such activities obviously do jeopardize the civil liberties and political rights of alleged criminals.

2. The ILO conducted this survey in four cities in Argentina and three cities each in Brazil and Chile. Sample sizes varied according to city. In Argentina, the cities (and their respective sample sizes) included were Capital Federal (592), Gran Buenos Aires (1,313), Rosario (508), and Córdoba (507). In Brazil, the survey was administered in São Paulo (2000), Recife (800), and Rio de Janeiro (1200). In Chile, the cities surveyed were Santiago (423), Concepción (385), and Valparaíso (380).

3. A variation of this theory has also figured prominently in the literature on the United States. Studies have documented that individuals threatened by social and economic insecurities register higher levels of support for punitive policies (Doty et al. 1991; Jorgenson 1975; McCann and Stewin 1984, 1987; Padgett and Jorgenson 1982). For example, Sales (1973) identified several indicators to measure the presence of economic and social insecurities, such as high unemployment, low disposable income, inflation, civil disorder, and strikes. He linked these indicators with higher support for punitive policy preferences, such as support for executions and longer sentences. Although this research associates economic and social insecurities with support for punitive policies, it is nonetheless similar in focus to the argument here that insecurities in these other arenas can lead to public insecurity over crime.

4. This report also developed a Human Security Index that includes variables of each type of security.

5. The insecurity scale was constructed according to a means formula, by which respondents' mean score on these six items was recorded as their level of insecurity. Respondents who answered a minimum of four of these six questions were included in the analysis. If respondents did not answer two of the questions in this series, their insecurity value was based on their answers to the remaining four questions. The Cronbach alpha for this scale is .85.

6. Studies have ranged from the central question of who is more afraid and who is most likely to be victimized to explaining the "irrationality" of some people's fear. For example, women, the elderly, and lower-income people are seen as fearful and passive. Nevertheless, there is a growing literature that recognizes the need for more and better exploration of such relationships (Walk-late 2001; Pain 2000).

All these variables are measured by respondents' self-reporting. The variable for sex has been coded so that a value of 1 represents men and 0 women. Age is measured by respondents' age in years. Education is categorically measured, as (1) no formal education, (2) primary incomplete, (3) primary complete, (4) secondary incomplete, (5) secondary complete, (6) tertiary incomplete, (7) tertiary complete, (8) postgraduate studies. Income is measured on a range of 1 (low income) to 4 (high income).

8. Victims of crime in the past year were coded as 1, nonvictims as 0.

9. For a more thorough review of the relationship between crime and social capital, see Kawachi 1999; Rosenfeld et al. 2001; Wilkinson et al. 1998.

10. The ILO survey asked respondents, "Do you and your family feel secure or insecure in terms of violence?" This question was then repeated, asking respondents to gauge their level of insecurity in terms of assault or robbery as well. Responses were coded as (1) very secure, (2) secure, (3) neither secure nor insecure, (4) insecure, (5) very insecure.

11. Although the ILO survey is a rich data source, it does have one key limitation. It allows only for an affective measure of fear of crime, rather than a cognitive one. Scholars have found that affective measures, such as the one employed here, tend to invoke a sense of dread, or an emotional response. Some recent literature (Chiricos et al. 1997; Ferraro and LaGrange 1987) highlights affective fear as a better gauge of fear of crime because it measures the emotional reactions to a situation that is not necessarily related to the probability of victimization. Other studies, however, have found that cognitive measures gauging fear of future victimization are more valid measures of respondents' actual fear that crime will touch their lives directly (Muraca 2001). While this study can test only the hypothesis also on cognitive measures of fear of crime when such data become available.

12. One exception to this trend is in the Federal Capital of Argentina, where federal police maintain jurisdiction. The rest of the province of Buenos Aires, however, falls under the jurisdiction of the provincial police.

13. In 2001, Chile's Interior Ministry reported that the homicide rate was 1.94 per 100,000 inhabitants.

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