

Barolsky, V.



More Violence, Less Development: A Preliminary Assessment of Armed Violence and MDG Achievement

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Introduction

Poor countries are not necessarily more dangerous countries. Nevertheless, there is a widely held belief that countries with comparatively lower levels of development are disproportionately affected by armed conflict and criminal violence. The reverse is also commonly held to be true – that armed violence obstructs development. Notwithstanding repetition in policy reports and research², there is comparatively little published evidence backing many of these claims.

This report presents an exploratory statistical assessment of the relationships between armed violence and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It finds that poverty does not make a country more or less dangerous.³ Nevertheless, it finds that countries registering lower levels of human development and higher levels of income inequality experience proportionately higher levels of homicidal violence. The lower the level of human development⁴ and the wider the levels of income inequality, the higher the level of violence measured.

¹ Katherine Aguirre, Mayra Iglesias, Caterine Laverde, Jorge A. Restrepo (CERAC - Conflict Analysis Resource Centre), Chris Fields (University of Halifax), Vanessa Barolsky and Prescilla Wamucii (Human Sciences Research Council), Julie Abbass (consultant), and Keith Krause, Robert Muggah, Philipp Stucki, and Achim Wennmann (Small Arms Survey). Background papers are acknowledged individually.

² See, for example, UNGA Resolution A/RES/63/23 of November 2008: 'Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence'; Report of the Secretary-General 'Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence' 5 August 2009 (A/64/228); and Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2008) Global Burden of Armed Violence. Geneva: Geneva Declaration.

³ This paper measures poverty by the percentage of population below an income equivalent to one USD per day, at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) which means adjusting income by different purchasing power of currencies in each country.

⁴ 'Human development' refers to a development paradigm that is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. Human development values achievements such as greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political



The report is divided into three parts. It first presents initial findings from a statistical analysis of key indicators. The study then considers the extent to which key claims are supported in the scientific literature. The report closes with a brief examination of related associations between armed violence and under-development drawing on the cases of South Africa and Burundi. The report reflects preliminary statistical assessments and will be refined in subsequent iterations.

Examining the statistics⁵

It is possible to undertake a statistical assessment of the relationship between homicidal violence with MDG progress. Although data quality and coverage varies across time and space, this study pooled homicide and 24 development indicators during the period 1990-2008, for all countries for which information was found. The resulting database included information for 134 countries on average for the 24 indicators.⁶ This information was subsequently used to determine the existence and strength of a relationship between homicide rates and each development indicator.

The report does not consider the association or a direction of causation between conflict deaths and MDG indicators, nor does it consider the size of the population of each country in the analysis, though this may be examined in future assessments by the Geneva Declaration Secretariat and the Small Arms Survey.

Countries with high levels of poverty are not necessarily more or less violent than countries with low levels of poverty. Poverty does not necessarily by itself correlate with violence.⁷ Nevertheless, data examined from 2000 to 2008 reveals that countries with higher levels of poverty do concentrate higher levels of risk of homicide.

and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. See UNDP (2010) *The Human Development Concept*, available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/>.

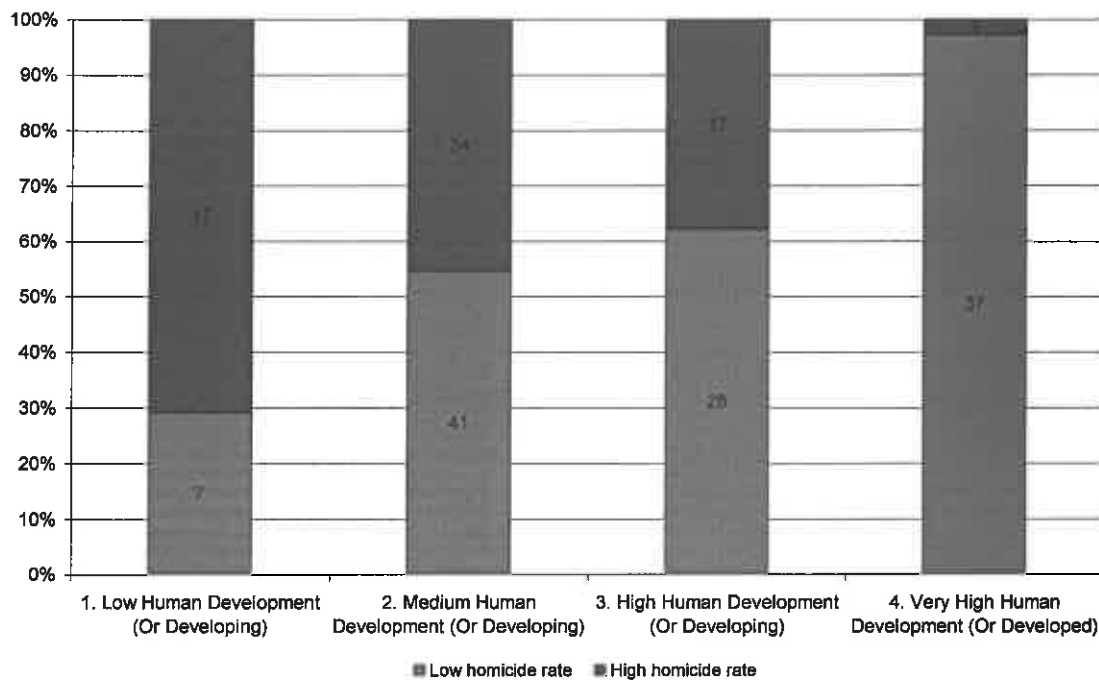
⁵ Based on Katherine Aguirre, Mayra Iglesias, Caterine Laverde, Jorge A. Restrepo (2010) *Armed Violence and Development: An Initial Exploration*. Background Paper. Chris Fields (2010): *Statistical Report on MDG and Violence Indicators*. Background Paper.

⁶ The development indicator that registered the highest number of data points was the level of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita with 173 countries with information and 1573 yearly data points. In comparison, the ratio of girls to boys in primary education provided information for 52 countries and 822 data points.

⁷ Fields (2010) demonstrates that there is no positive or negative relationship between higher homicide rates and the average percentage of the population below PPP of one USD per day.



Graph 1. Number of countries separated by level of HDI and homicide rate⁸



Countries with lower levels of human development are, in proportional terms, more violent.⁹ Graph 1 shows that roughly 70 per cent of low human development countries (first bar) and about 50 per cent of medium human development countries (second bar) exhibit homicide rates above the average global homicide rate of 7.24 per 100,000. It also shows that virtually every single high human development country features low levels of homicidal violence (fourth bar).¹⁰ Put another way, countries with lower overall levels of human development experience higher levels of homicidal violence.

⁸ Graph 1 shows in total 24 low, 75 medium, 45 high, and 38 very high human development countries for which data is available. It shows the proportion within each category of countries that experience homicide rates that are above (red) or below (blue) the global average (7.24 per 100,000) and the number of countries falling in each category inside each bar.

⁹ Homicide rates were classified as low, high, and very high considering the distribution of all available yearly observations of homicide rates at country level, and taking as reference points the average global homicide rate of 7.24 and a standard deviation of 11.52. A *low* level of homicidal violence is said to exist if the homicide rate for the latest year available is below 7.24. A *high* level of homicidal violence exists if the homicide rate for the latest year available is above 7.24. A *very high* level of homicidal violence exists if the homicide rate for the latest year available is above 18.0, equivalent to one standard deviation above the mean of the distribution. The classification of countries according to HDI is available in http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDI_trends_components_2009_rev.xls.

¹⁰ An exception in this regard is Barbados.



Although overcoming poverty and improving development does not guarantee reduced levels of violence, low levels of development are in most cases correlated with violence.

When high homicidal violence itself is disaggregated into 'high' (above 7.24 per 100,000) and 'very high' (above 18.0 per 100,000), findings suggest that **countries with low human development have a higher proportion of very high homicidal violence**. More than 30 percent of the countries with low human development have very high homicide rates, a figure that decreases to about 18 and 12 percent in medium and high human development countries respectively. Very high human development countries do not exhibit very high levels of homicidal violence at the national level.

It is possible to map out the relationship between levels of human development and armed violence according to countries with high homicide rates and those affected by armed conflict (see Map 1). **Countries with high homicide rates appear to be located mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia**. Active conflict countries are mainly concentrated in Africa, although conflicts are also present in other regions.

Unsurprisingly, virtually **all conflict-affected countries also exhibit high homicide rates**. An analysis at the regional level suggests a statistically significant inverse correlation between higher human development and homicide rates in America, Asia and Europe. In these regions high homicide rates correlate with comparatively lower levels of human development.

Nearly half of those countries reporting low human development are also experiencing an ongoing armed conflict. The higher the level of human development the less likely the country is affected by an ongoing armed conflict. Only two countries reporting very high human development are affected by an ongoing armed conflict (Spain and Israel). What is more, only four countries with high human development are also conflict countries (Colombia, Russia, Macedonia and Turkey).

When shifting the focus from human development to classifications based on income¹¹, the analysis finds that **low income countries experience higher levels of homicidal violence** (Graph 2). These findings should be approached with caution. With the exception of high income countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which report in all cases low rates of armed violence, there are also countries experiencing very high homicide rates at various levels of income.

¹¹ The classification of countries by income group from the World Bank <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:20420458~menuPK:64133156~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html>



Map 1. Human development in countries with homicidal and conflict violence¹²



Countries with greater income inequality report a higher incidence of armed violence. There is a robust relationship between countries with high income inequality (expressed by the share of income held by the poorest fifth of the population) and high levels of homicide (Graph 3).¹³ Data from 2000 to 2008 indicate that countries where the poor have a disproportionately low share in total national income exhibit higher homicide rates. In addition, countries experiencing less extreme inequality appear to display much

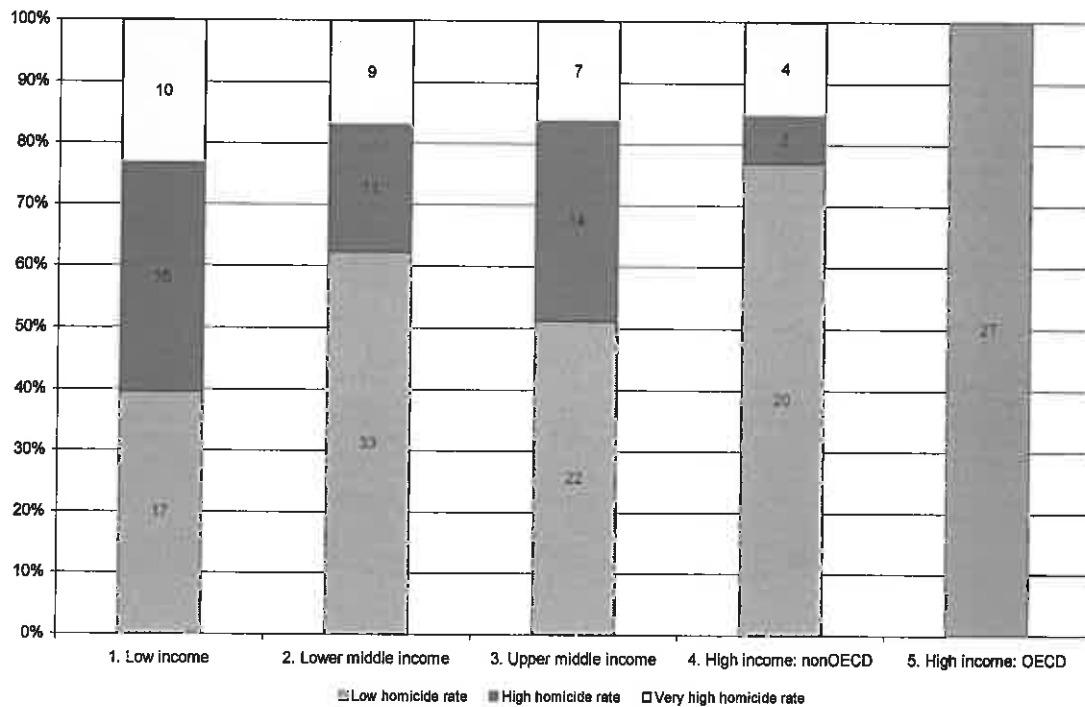
¹² Homicidal violence is measured in terms of homicide rates per 100,000 population. Conflict violence is measured in terms of direct conflict death (DCD) with more than 25 DCD making a country a conflict country. The map reflects data for 2004. Violence data are based on UNODC sources and the Geneva Declaration Secretariat Direct Conflict Death and Homicide database.

¹³ Fields (2010) detects a significant negative relationship between an increase in homicide rates and the 'poorest quintile's share in national income or consumption, percentage'.



lower levels of homicidal violence. Put succinctly, societies with less extreme inequality appear to report much lower levels of homicidal violence.¹⁴

Graph 2. Country classification by income and violence¹⁵



Countries with low unemployment of young males tend to report lower levels of armed violence. The lower a country's male unemployment rate the stronger the likelihood of a lower homicide rate. Although lower levels of unemployment for young males do not guarantee lower homicide rates, there is nevertheless a relationship between the two variables. When this indicator was decomposed by gender, the correlation between unemployed young females and homicide levels is also high, thus highlighting that the correlations are the same for both males and females.

Countries with higher teenage birth rates report higher levels of armed violence. Adolescent birth rates (birth per 1,000 adolescent females) appear to be strongly

¹⁴ This finding is based on a strong and significant correlation. The analysis measured inequality by the share in total national income of those that make up the 20 percent of the population with the lowest income levels.

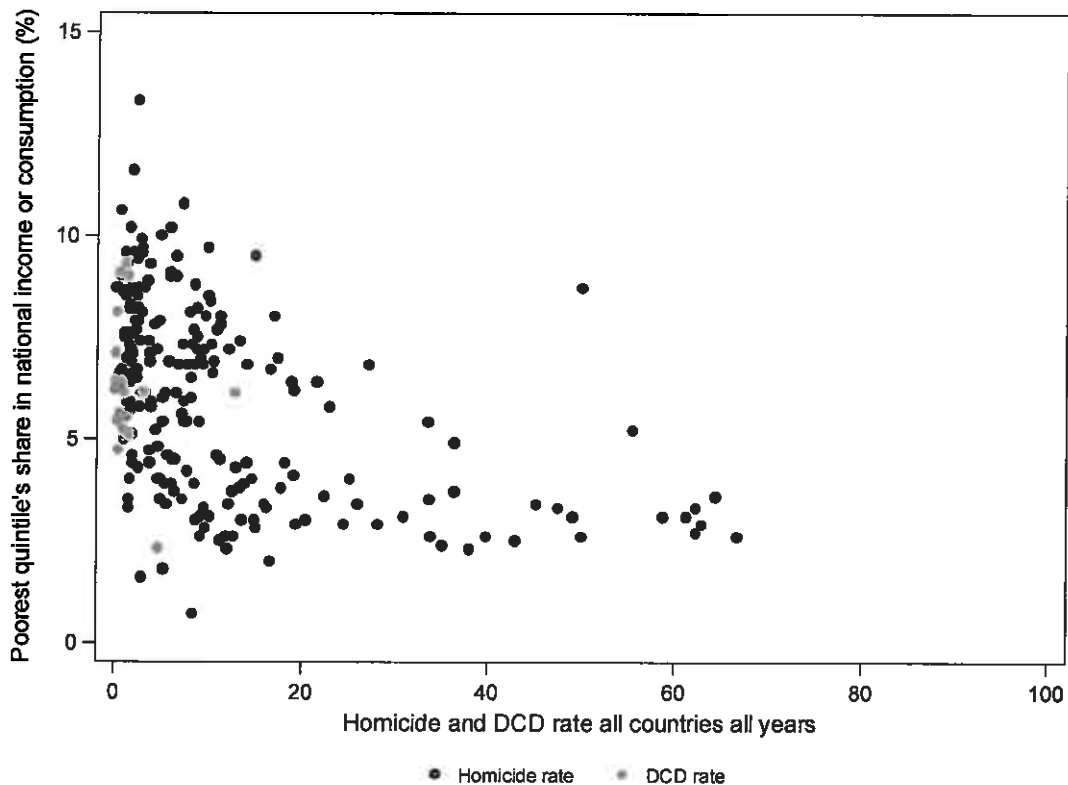
¹⁵ Graph 2 depicts a total of 192 countries according to different income levels. The blue part of the first bar represents the proportion of countries with low homicide rate (with the number of countries inside the bar, red is a high homicide rate, white a very high homicide rate. For cut off points for homicide rates see footnote 9.



correlated with higher incidence of homicidal violence. A high adolescent birth rate is linked itself to lower development standards and a higher likelihood of poverty traps within societies. A review of data from 2000 to 2008 confirms a robust positive relationship between above-average adolescent birth rates and higher rates of homicide.

Countries with a high percentage of people living with HIV (15-49 years old) tend to also experience high homicide rates. Although based on limited data, there is a strong, positive correlation of the HIV rates and homicides. This positive correlation is especially significant among certain countries in Africa, the Americas and Asia.

Graph 3. Percentage share of poorest quintile in income or consumption and armed violence indicators¹⁶



¹⁶ Graph 3 shows a scatter plot that highlights the combinations for every country and year of levels of homicide rate and the participation of the poorest 20 percent of the population on national income. The negative correlation between the two variables is evident by visual inspection and is confirmed by statistical tests.



Reviewing the scientific literature¹⁷

While the above mentioned findings feature new and original data, a number of the claims are also supported in the scientific literature. **The basic claim that high rates of armed violence tend to have negative effects across most MDG indicators is not disputed**, and is the subject of other analysis such as the Global Burden of Armed Violence (2008) and the World Bank's World Development Report (forthcoming 2011).¹⁸ The OECD's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) recognizes that 'external and internal risk factors, alongside the continuum of conflict, armed violence and insecurity makes the MDGs more difficult to achieve'.¹⁹

The costs and consequences of armed violence are also similarly wide ranging.

They include direct visible impacts such as death, injury and damage to assets and property as well as indirect effects such as the increased recurrent costs of law enforcement and justice delivery, disruption of social services, economic opportunities and the undermining of governance more generally. **It is widely recognized that security is necessary for development, and that underdevelopment can lead to insecurity.**²⁰

¹⁷ Based on Philipp Stucki (2010) Literature review: Armed Violence and MDG achievement. Background Paper.

¹⁸ For example, initial findings from the MDG Monitor suggest that no fragile state has achieved a single MDG. Indeed, just 10 per cent of fragile states are expected to achieve the goal of halving poverty and hunger, while just over 40 per cent of other developing countries have either reached that goal or are expected to reach it. Preliminary research also suggests that while fragile states and those recovering from fragility account for just over one third of the population of developing countries (excluding India, China and Russia), they account for well over half of total poverty and more than two thirds of infant deaths and under five deaths in the developing world. See World Bank (2011-forthcoming).

¹⁹ External risk factors include economic crises, cross-border trafficking, external interference; internal risk factors include rising inequality, marginalized youth, gender based discrimination, legacies of violence, presence of armed groups, availability of weapons and trauma. OECD/DCD/DAC/INCAF (2010) Accelerating Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals in Countries Affected by Conflict, Violence and Insecurity. Document JT03281230, 2 April. Paris: OECD, p. 4. Available at: [http://www.oilis.oecd.org/oilis/2010doc.nsf/ENGDATCORPLOOK/NT0000102A/\\$FILE/JT03281230.PDF](http://www.oilis.oecd.org/oilis/2010doc.nsf/ENGDATCORPLOOK/NT0000102A/$FILE/JT03281230.PDF).

²⁰ For a review on the interrelationship between security and development see for example Sambanis, N (2004) 'Poverty and the Organization of Political Violence'. In Brookings Institution, ed. *Brookings Trade Forum 2004*, pp. 165-221. Justino, P. (2006) *On the Links between Violent Conflict and Chronic Poverty: How Much Do We Really Know?* Household in Conflict Network Working Papers 18. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. Zoellick, R. B. (2008) 'Fragile States: Securing Development'. *Survival*, Vol.50, No. 6, pp. 67-84.



The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and scholarly contributions recognize that **armed violence represent a major obstacle to development and the achievement of the MDGs.**²¹ These obstacles can take a variety of forms. For example, with support from the UK Department for International Development, the Centre for International Cooperation and Security (CICS) administered qualitative research in 2004 and 2005 that highlighted the effects of different types of armed violence on development (Table 1).²² Contribution on the inverse relationship – i.e. between development and armed violence – is much less consistent in the scholarly literature.²³

Table 1. Findings from selected CICS case studies

Case	Type of violence	Effects of armed violence
Southern Sudan	Armed conflict	Impoverishment of IDP, decrease in per capita GDP
Somalia	Armed conflict	Loss of lives, IDPs fight over scarce resources
Sierra Leone	Armed conflict	Destruction/disruption of governmental infrastructure and services, and industries
Northeast India	Armed conflict	General climate of fear, capital flight
Northern Kenya	Violent organized crime & social disorder	Decline in pastoralism reduced income, armed violence reduces mobility of livestock
Nairobi	Violent organized crime & social disorder	Fear of violence among population, reduced tourism revenues
Rio de Janeiro	Violent organized crime & social disorder	Social exclusion of inhabitants of favelas, reduced access to basic education
El Salvador	Violent organized crime & social disorder	Post-war availability of SALW leads to sharp increase in violent crime, loss of social capital due to distrust among population

²¹ For scholarly contributions see Steward, F. (2003) 'Conflict and the Millennium Development Goals.' *Journal of Human Development*. Vol. 4., No. 3, pp. 325-351. Fukuda-Parr, S. (2007) *Rethinking the Policy Objectives of Development Aid: From Economic Growth to Conflict Prevention*. Research Paper No. 2007/32. Helsinki: United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research. Asiedo, K. (2008) In Pursuit of the MDGs in Conflict-Affected Countries in Africa: An Uphill Challenge and Policy Lessons. Paper presented at International Conference and Peace and Security in Africa, Addis Ababa, 20-23 February 2008.

²² CICS. 2005. *The Impact of Armed Violence on Poverty and Development*. Bradford: University of Bradford.

²³ For instance, the relationship between changes in unemployment or income inequality to criminal violence is disputed and inconclusive. See Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A. (2004) *Murder by Numbers: Socio-Economic Determinants of Homicide and Civil War*. *CSAE Working Papers*, 2004-10. Gates, S. (2002) *Empirically Assessing the Causes of Civil War*, paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, New Orleans.



Much of the evidence supporting the negative relationships between armed violence and development is drawn from individual case studies. For example, the case of **Mozambique is illustrative of how conflict-related violence compromised educational services**. The civil war during the 1980s destroyed an estimated 45 per cent of the primary school network including physical infrastructure and the killing, psychological trauma and displacement of teachers.²⁴

Debates over **income inequality** and the onset or severity of armed conflict tend to revolve around whether it is a *cause* or not. Some conflict specialists contend that it is strongly correlated while others claim that the relationship is insignificant.²⁵ There are also opposing claims made in the literature: for example, some scholars have made reference to the way wealth is redistributed during wartime, even if this does not necessarily generate still more inequality.²⁶

Likewise, a large number of studies investigating the **linkages between inequality and violent crime** tend to identify a robust causal correlation. For example, comparative and cross-national research has examined positive associations between income inequality and homicide rates.²⁷ Likewise, it has been detected how income inequality and lower growth rates leads to increases in violent crime across countries.²⁸ Drawing on panel data for almost 40 countries, another study observed a link between increases in economic inequality and low growth rates with homicide and robbery.²⁹ However, these findings are

²⁴ It is worth noting, however, that not all children were affected in the same way by the war. Those living in refugee camps administrated by international relief organizations had a better access to educational services than during peacetime. In contrast, internally displaced or handicapped children were completely cut off from any schooling. Hanemann, U. (2006) *Literacy in conflict situations. Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006*. Hamburg, UNESCO Institute for Education.

²⁵ Nafziger, E. W., Stewart, F. and Varynen, R. (2000) *War, Hunger, and Displacement: The Origin of Humanitarian Emergencies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A. (2000) Greed and Grievance in Civil War. *The World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355*. Washington, The World Bank.

²⁶ Some of these issues are examined in the academic literature on war and conflict. See, for example, Stewart F. (2001), Horizontal Inequality: a Neglected Dimension of Development, wider annual lecture, Helsinki; Gates, S. and Murshed, S.M. (2005), Spatial-Horizontal Inequality and the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal, *Review of Development Economics*, Vol.9, No.1, pp.121-134; and Cramer C. (2003) 'Does Inequality Cause Conflict', *Journal of International Development* 15: 397-412.

²⁷ Neapolitan, J.L. (1999). A comparative analysis of nations with low and high levels of violent crime. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 27(3). A similarly robust result has been found between inequality and health. See WHO (2008) *Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity though Action on the Social Determinants of Health*. Geneva: WHO.

²⁸ Lederman, D., Loayza, N. and Menendez, A.M. (2002). 'Violent crime: Does social capital matter?' *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 50(3).

²⁹ Fajnzylber et al., 2001 cited in Demombynes, G. and Ozler, B. (2002). *Crime and local inequality in South Africa, Policy Research Working Paper, 2925*. The World Bank



contested by the claim that inequality is not a statistically significant determinant for violent crime.³⁰

There is also a growing literature highlighting the **relationships between unemployment and the incidence and severity of armed violence**. For example, private firms are frequently reluctant to invest and to create new jobs due to high crime rates, even though attitude towards armed violence depends on the different characteristics of firms.³¹ The UNODC and the World Bank, together with scholars such as Bourguignon, highlight how high rates of homicide can in turn hamper GDP growth creating knock-on effects in relation to unemployment.³² The negative effects of armed conflict on the employment ratio through the destruction of industries and infrastructure, as well as through the displacement of people are intuitive and uncontested.

Far more ambivalent is the reverse causality, namely the effect of unemployment on armed violence. With regard to armed conflict, the opportunity costs for joining an armed group are an important determinant for conflict onset.³³ Therefore, one should assume that high numbers of unemployed males are strongly associated with armed conflict. Specifically **young unemployed university graduates are an important pool of recruitment for rebellions**.³⁴ Less consistent is the effect of unemployment on crime. While property crimes seem to be strongly affected by the unemployment rate, no such relation could be established for violent crimes.³⁵

Finally, amongst the most robust findings in the literature relates to **adolescent fertility rates**. The 'direction of causality' is not clear, however, since riskier behavior in situations

Development Research Group, Poverty Team, November 2002, p. 10-11

³⁰ Neumayer, E. (2005) Inequality and Violent Crime: Evidence from Data on Robbery and Violent Theft. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 101-112.

³¹ Krkoska, L. and Robeck, K. (2006) The Impact of Crime on the Enterprise Sector: Transition versus Nontransition Countries. *Working Paper No. 97*. London, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Mihalache, A. (2008) 'Gambling on Conflict: Profiling Investments in Conflict Countries.' Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 66th Convention. Chicago.

³² UNODC and World Bank (2007) Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean. Washington and Vienna: World Bank and UNODC.

Bourguignon, F. (1999) Crime, Violence, and Inequitable Development. In Pleskovic, B. and Stiglitz, J. (Eds.) *Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics*. Washington, The World Bank.

³³ Collier, P. and Hoeffner, A. (1998) On Economic Causes of Civil War. *Oxford Economic Papers* Vol. 50.

³⁴ Goldstone, J. (2002) *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, Historical, and Historical Studies*. Fort Worth: Wadsworth.

³⁵ Raphael, S. and Winter-Ebmer, R. (2001) Identifying the Effect of Unemployment on Crime. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 44, 159-283.



of scarcity or deprivation is also common. Nevertheless, the effect is strongest if the homicide rate has an effect on overall life expectancy.³⁶

South Africa: income inequality and unemployment³⁷

South Africa is characterized by high levels of economic inequality and unemployment (especially among the youth) as well as high levels of violent crime.³⁸ While the poorest 20 per cent of the population earns less than 4 per cent of GDP, the richest 10 per cent earns nearly 45 percent of the GDP. And while the composition of the wealthiest class has changed over the last decade, now including a small layer of wealthy black South Africans, **poverty remains significantly divided by race with black South Africans making up over 93 percent of the 21.9 million poor.**³⁹

Unemployment is closely related to economic inequality and has been one of the dominant issues in the political, social and economic landscape of post-apartheid South Africa.

Unemployment rates are estimated to lie between 23.6 and 32.5 per cent.⁴⁰ While total employment increased from 11.9 million in 2005 to 13.6 million in 2009 supported by higher growth, the global economic situation has recently had a negative impact on employment.⁴¹

Youth unemployment is particularly high. **In 2005, about half of the labour force aged 15-24 was reportedly unemployed.**⁴² Many of those young people who are employed only have low wage jobs. About a third of all youth falling below the age of 25 are working in elementary, unskilled occupations, including filling positions as domestic workers.⁴³

Youth unemployment can partly be explained by the changing nature of the South African economy over the last 15 years. **Between 1995 and 2003 barely 1 million formal-sector jobs were created in South Africa, while the labour force grew by about**

³⁶ World Bank (2009) The costs of violence. Washington, World Bank. Lorentzen, P., McMillan, J. & Wacziarg, R. (2007) Death and Development. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 13, 81-124.

³⁷ Based on Vanessa Barolsky (2010) Income inequality and armed violence in South Africa. Background Paper; and Prescilla Wamucii (2010) Young men and unemployment. Background paper.

³⁸ *Development Indicators 2009*. (2009). The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, p.25

³⁹ Bhorat, H. & van der Westhuizen, C. (2009). *Economic growth, poverty and inequality in South Africa: The first decade of democracy*: Paper commissioned by the Presidency, Republic of South Africa, p. 3

⁴⁰ *Presidency Development Indicators 2009*, p. 21

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 20

⁴² Bhorat, H. and Oosthuizen, M. (2007). Young people and the labour market. *Africa Insight* 37(3), 388-403.

⁴³ *Towards a fifteen year review*. (2008). The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, p. 75.



six times that number.⁴⁴ The rate at which job opportunities were created was therefore not consistent with the population entering the job market.

It is important to emphasize that the current South African economic model is hinged on designing job opportunities that are both capital and skill intensive. This has the unintended consequence of marginalizing a significant proportion of the population who has low skill levels. Owing to this economic trajectory there is a strong link between level of education and access to jobs.

What is more, South Africa experiences one of the highest murder rates in the world. The latest crime statistics released by the South African Police Service for 2008-2009 put South Africa's **murder rate at 37.3 murders per 100 000, at least five times above the global average of 7.24.** Approximately 53 per cent of homicides in the country are committed with a firearm that are on the one hand an instrument to commit a crime, and on the other, symbols of masculine and social power and dominance.⁴⁵ Violent crime is characterized by encounters between people who know each other as either as friends, relatives or acquaintances. Recent statistics indicate that up to 82 per cent of murders and 59 per cent of attempted murders occur between people who know each other.⁴⁶

Not unlike most other contexts affected by chronic armed violence, young men form the bulk of offenders and victims of crime. Crime and particularly violent crime is typically a male youth enterprise.⁴⁷ South Africa's government found that homicide, primary involving firearms, was the leading cause of death among young men between ages 15-21.⁴⁸ Youth in South Africa are also twice as likely as adults to be victims of at least one crime. Young males are more at risk of becoming victims of crime and violence with almost one out of two (46 per cent) males reporting victimization, compared to 37 per cent of young females.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *Adding Injury to Insult. How exclusion and inequality drive South Africa's Problem of Violence.* Report by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security, p. 40.

⁴⁵ *Streets of Sorrow, Streets of Pain: The circumstances of the occurrence of murder in six areas with high murder rates.* (2008). Report on Component 2 of a study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster on the violent nature of crime in South Africa. Unpublished, p. 22

⁴⁶ De Kock, C. (2007). *Crime Situation in South Africa for the 2006/2007 Financial Year*, South African Police Service, Crime Information Analysis Centre.

⁴⁷ Pelser, E. (2008). *Learning to be Lost: Youth Crime in South Africa.* Discussion Paper on the HSRC Youth Policy Initiative, Reserve Bank, Pretoria, May 2008. Centre for Justice and Prevention, p. 11.

⁴⁸ Fleshman, M. (2001) cited in Economic Commission for Africa. *Economic Report on Africa 2005. Meeting the Challenges of Unemployment and Poverty in Africa*, p. 178.

⁴⁹ Burton, P. (2006). Snapshot results of the 2005 National Youth Victimization. *Research Bulletin*, No 1. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, p. 2.



A large number of international and national studies have investigated the link between inequality and crime, in particular the link between inequality and violent crime in South Africa. Economists and sociologists have posited a number of theories for the apparent links between economic inequality and crime. While economists tend to focus on the perceived gains from illegal activity as opposed to legal activity in contexts where unemployment is high or wages from work may be low in particular strata of society. One model holds that **the incentives for individuals to commit crime are determined by the differential returns from legitimate and illegitimate pursuits.**⁵⁰

Sociologists on the other hand have focused on the way in which inequality may be associated with lack of social capital, lack of upward mobility, or social disorganization, all of which may create the context in which higher levels of crime occur. This perspective holds that 'when a system of cultural values emphasizes, virtually above all else, certain *common symbols of success for the population at large* while its social structure rigorously restricts or completely eliminates access to approved modes of acquiring these symbols *for a considerable part of the same population*, that antisocial behavior ensues on a considerable scale'.⁵¹

As such, **the lack of upward mobility in a society, combined with a high premium on economic affluence results in a progressive deterioration of societal standards and values.** The contradictions between the structural exclusion of a large proportion of population from formal sector employment and the aspirations for economic inclusion and improvement of lifestyle that the advent of democracy inaugurated has led to exactly this tension between a high premium on economic affluence and the lack of real possibilities for upward mobility.⁵²

Interviews with offenders jailed for violent crime revealed this structural contradiction between their exclusion from the formal economy or belief that they would never be incorporated in it. In explaining the motives for their violent actions, these **offenders expressed an intense desire to acquire consumer goods, not simply for their material value but as a marker of 'success' and status.**⁵³

Connections have also been made between masculinity and violence. Crime and violence may constitute a way for young men to reclaim and assert their manhood in an

⁵⁰ Becker, 1968, as cited in Demombynes, G. and Ozler, B. (2002). *Crime and local inequality in South Africa, Policy Research Working Paper, 2925*. The World Bank Development Research Group, Poverty Team, November 2002, p. 3-4.

⁵¹ Merton, 1938, as cited in Demombynes and Ozler, 2002, p. 6

⁵² *Adding insult to injury: How exclusion and inequality drive South Africa's problem of violence.* (2008), p. 46

⁵³ Posel, D. (2002). *A matter of life and death: Revisiting 'modernity' from the vantage point of the 'new' South Africa*. Unpublished paper, Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) Posel, 2002, p. 16.



environment where masculinity is widely compromised.⁵⁴ In a social setting where men are expected to be socially and physically powerful and provide for their families, high levels of poverty, unemployment and powerlessness experienced by men under both the apartheid and post-apartheid regimes have arguably led to feelings of emasculation among men, who may become more likely to attempt to reassert their masculinity through crime and violence.⁵⁵

It is evident therefore that there does seem to be a significant link between economic inequality, unemployment, and violent crime in the South African context. However, it is also clear that this link is complex and needs to be explored in further depth.

Burundi: Armed violence as an obstacle to development⁵⁶

After years of international donor support and investment, Burundi appears to be making important strides toward reducing armed violence and improving its development ranking. A number of studies have documented trends and patterns in the risks and symptoms of armed violence.⁵⁷ These and others have found that armed violence still claims thousands of victims every year.⁵⁸ As in other post-conflict environments, the official end of the war in Burundi has not guaranteed security for the population, whether real or perceived, nor has it signaled an end to acts of armed violence.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to estimate the overall magnitude of armed violence and MDG attainment in Burundi since reliable data is not publicly available. While Burundi is not likely to reach all of MDG by 2015, the country is reporting slow and steady progress on some fronts. For example, the country registered increased enrolment in primary schools (Goal 2), an increased number of women representatives in parliament (Goal 3), and an increased utilization of landlines, cellular phones, computers and the internet (Goal 8).⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Jeffthas, D., & Artz, L. (2007). Youth Violence. A Gendered Perspective. In P. Burton (Ed.). (2007). *Someone Stole my Smile. An Exploration into the Causes of Youth Violence in South Africa*. Monograph Series, 3. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town, South Africa.

⁵⁵ Ibid., also see Simpson, G. (1992). *Jack-asses and Jackrollers: Rediscovering Gender in Understanding Violence*. Research Report for the Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

⁵⁶ Based on Julie Abbass (2010) Armed violence created obstacles to development and MDG achievement in Burundi. Background paper.

⁵⁷ See for example Pézard, S, and de Tessières, S. (2009). *Insecurity is Also a War: An Assessment of Armed Violence in Burundi*. Geneva: Geneva Declaration.

⁵⁸ See for example Manirakiza, Thadée, Joseph Hatungimana, and François Nkezabahizi. 2007. *Analyse critique de la gestion des conflits fonciers au Burundi*. Bujumbura: United States Agency for International Development.

⁵⁹ United Nations Statistics Division. *The official UN site for MDG indicators: Burundi pages*. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>.



Despite these and other positive signs, there are also indications that **armed violence has generated important societal and development impacts in Burundi.**⁶⁰ Over nearly three decades, Burundi has experienced different types of armed violence including genocide and civil war, followed by volatile and fast-changing 'post-conflict' violence that witnessed a surge in banditry and political violence. **Armed violence in Burundi has created an obstacle to development in multiple ways and at various levels.**⁶¹

Table 2 highlights various types of obstacles resulting from armed violence that have a continuing impact on Burundian development prospects in the post-conflict context. Fear of violent attack, of harm, of reprisal, of displacement and of the return to full war can debilitate people and therefore development investments. Years of cyclical trauma are also known to have fostered a decline in trust among neighbours and in the police, military, and government.

Violent attacks in the countryside have undermined economic recovery by limiting mobility and restricting access to water sources, cultivation sites, markets and merchandise in rural areas.⁶² Limited access to food and water are not just obstacles economically, but also from a health perspective, as they result in reduced nutrition, the transmission of water and food borne diseases and declining health in the population.

⁶⁰ Cliffe, L., Ginifer, J, Turner, M. (2005) *The impact of armed violence on poverty and development: Full report of the Armed Violence and Poverty Initiative*. Centre for International Cooperation and Security, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford; Berman, E. and Muggah, R. *Humanitarianism Under Threat: The Humanitarian Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*. (2001). Small Arms Survey with support from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

⁶¹ Pézard, S. and Florquin, N. 2007. *Small Arms in Burundi: Disarming the Civilian Population in Peacetime*, Special Report 7. Geneva: Small Arms Survey, Ligue Iteka and UNDP-Burundi and Oxfam-NOVIB; Rackley, E. (2005) *Burundi: the impact of small arms and armed violence on women*. GRIP UNDP - Small Arms Reduction Programme for the Great Lakes Region (SARP); Voors, M., Nillesen, E., Verwimp, P, Bulte, E, Lensink, R., van Soest, D. (2010) *Does Conflict affect Preferences? Results from Field Experiments in Burundi*. Working Paper #71 HiCN. The Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex; HiCN; Buchanan, C. and Muggah, R. (2005) *No relief: surveying the effects of gun violence on humanitarian and development personnel*. Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Small Arms Survey.

⁶² Uvin, P. (2009) *Life After Violence: A People's Story of Burundi*. London: Zed Books.



Table 2. Armed violence as obstacles for development and MDG achievement in Burundi⁶³

Type of Obstacle	Manifestation of obstacle	How obstacles affect development and MDG achievement in Burundi
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of violence, harm, displacement and the return to full conflict • Sense of depression, hopelessness, futility, anger, vulnerability and loss • Lack of trust for neighbours and state authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower productivity, more despondency • Reduced motivation toward development and belief in the possibility of change • Decreased participation in political process, especially for women • Hesitancy to return after displacement
Migratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement • Large population movement, especially of youth, from rural to urban areas • Rapid population growth due to the return of refugees and IDPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work force is diminished in rural areas • Development resources become stretched by large population increases • Land rights disputes and social tensions between returnees and those that stayed
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted mobility and less access to water, cultivation sites, markets, goods • Destruction and/or theft of personal resources including livestock and crops; • Unemployment • Damage to infrastructure • Stunted investment • Interrupted education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower productivity, loss of livelihood resulting in subsistence living • Lack of economic opportunities • Governmental funds available for development limited • Lack of basic literacy and educated work force, especially in rural areas • Emergence of illicit enterprise
Social and cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition and role changes in households and communities • 'Culture of violence' fortified by possession of arms and young males 'coming of age' through violence • Acquiescence to violence as the main form of 'conflict resolution' • Marginalization of women first through widowhood and sexual violence, then through ostracizing traditions • Limited male presence and positive role models in areas hardest hit by violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and mothers heading households unequipped to fill new roles • Decreased community cooperation and effectiveness of social structures • 'Culture of violence' power structures are difficult to transcend in communities • Many disputes left unsettled due to missing conflict management mechanisms weaken society and hinder development • Sustainable development will require positive participation by both genders

⁶³ Table 2 based on Abbass (2010) and a review of multiple sources specific to Burundi.



Conclusions

This study has demonstrated a host of emerging associations and relationships between homicidal violence and specific MDG indicators – some stronger than others. While gaps remain in our knowledge owing to data limitations, the picture is becoming increasingly clear. There is a strong bilateral relationship between armed violence and MDG attainment and the development and other sectors must take action to promote the prevention and reduction of armed violence as a matter of urgency.

The MDG review summit and follow-on process offers an important opportunity to mainstream armed violence indicators into routine surveillance of MDG progress. This will take courage on the part of UN members, and a more intensive investment in measuring and monitoring mechanism on the ground. The UNDP and partners such as the Geneva Declaration Secretariat and the Small Arms Survey will continue to issue empirical assessments to deepen understanding and awareness about the scale and magnitude of the challenge, but also evidence-based solutions to prevent and reduce it. The preliminary findings presented above will be deepened in a report on the relationship between armed violence and MDG achievement to be released in July 2010.

South Africa: Income Inequality and unemployment

Violent crime in South Africa

Despite the dramatic decline in political violence after South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, violent crime has remained a significant problem in the country. In trying to understand the continuing high levels of armed violence in South African society, it is worth noting that South Africa is characterised by a number of variables identified in this report as statistically indicating a risk for high levels of homicidal violence. They include a low Human Development Index (South Africa is ranked 129 out of 182 countries)¹, high rates of inequality, high rates of youth unemployment, high rates of HIV/AIDS (South Africa has one of the highest prevalence rates in the world at 18.1%)² as well as relatively high adolescent birth rates (58 births per 1000 women aged 15-19)³. This document explores in detail the variables of high inequality and high male youth unemployment as potential predictors of high homicide rates.

South Africa has one of the highest murder rates in the world. Latest crime statistics released by the South African Police Service for 2008-2009 put South Africa's murder rate at a ratio of 37.3 murders per 100 000 of the population⁴ at least five times above the global average of 7.24. This places South Africa among the top ten countries in the world for intentional homicide. Approximately 53% of homicides in the country are committed with a firearm⁵.

Firearms play a significant role in violent crime in South Africa, particularly in relation to homicide. Illegal firearms are widely available in South Africa, partly as the result of the legacy of various

¹ *Human Development Report*. (2009). Country Fact Sheet. South Africa. The Human Development Index-going beyond income. Available at: http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_ZAF.html

² *South Africa*. Country Profile. (2009). UNAIDS. Joint United Nations on HIV/AIDS. Available at: http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/south_africa.asp

³ *Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)*. (2009). Data. The World Bank. Available at: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?cid=GPD_12

⁴ Crime Statistics: April 2008 - March 2009. Crime Situation in South Africa (Released September 2009). South African Police Service. Department of Police. Available at: http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2009/crime_stats.htm

⁵ *Streets of Sorrow, Streets of Pain: The circumstances of the occurrence of murder in six areas with high murder rates*. (2008). Report on Component 2 of a study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster on the violent nature of crime in South Africa. Unpublished, p. 22

armed conflicts in the region. However, since 1994, theft and loss of legally owned private firearms has been the major contributory factor increasing the pool of illegal firearms. Currently, estimates for the number of illegal firearms in circulation range from 500 000 to 4 million⁶.

Young men form the bulk of offenders and victims of crime. Crime and particularly violent crime is typically a youth male enterprise⁷. South Africa's government found that homicide, primary involving firearms, was the leading cause of death among young men between ages 15-21.⁸ Youth in South Africa are also twice as likely as adults to be victims of at least one crime. Young males are more at risk of becoming victims of crime and violence with almost one out of two (46%) males reporting victimization, compared to 37% of young females⁹. Men also form the majority of the perpetrators of violence.

In explaining why men are the primary victims and perpetrators of violence, it is important to note research which indicates a significant link between masculinity and violence, i.e. an understanding of masculinity in which violence is utilised to establish and maintain an identity as a man. Crime and violence therefore may constitute a way for young men to reclaim and assert their manhood in an environment where masculinity is widely compromised¹⁰. In a social setting where men are expected to be socially and physically powerful and provide for their families, high levels of poverty, unemployment and powerlessness experienced by men under both the apartheid and post-apartheid regimes have arguably lead to feelings of emasculation among men, who may become more likely to attempt to reassert their masculinity through crime and violence¹¹.

⁶ Keegan, M. (2005). *The proliferation of firearms in South Africa, 1994–2004*. Report commissioned by Oxfam Canada. South Africa: Gun Free South Africa, p. 62. Available at <http://www.iansa.org/regions/safrica/documents/proliferation-firearms-southafrica.pdf>.

⁷ Pelser, E. (2008). *Learning to be Lost: Youth Crime in South Africa*. Discussion Paper on the HSRC Youth Policy Initiative. Reserve Bank, Pretoria, May 2008. Centre for Justice and Prevention, p. 11.

⁸ Fleshman, M. (2001) cited in Economic Commission for Africa. *Economic Report on Africa 2005. Meeting the Challenges of Unemployment and Poverty in Africa*, p. 178.

⁹ Burton, P. (2006). Snapshot results of the 2005 National Youth Victimization. *Research bulletin* (1). Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, p. 2.

¹⁰ Jefthas, D., & Artz, L. (2007). Youth Violence. A Gendered Perspective. In P. Burton (Ed.). (2007). *Someone Stole my Smile. An Exploration into the Causes of Youth Violence in South Africa*. Monograph Series, 3. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town, South Africa.

¹¹ Ibid., also see Simpson, G. (1992). *Jack-asses and Jackrollers: Rediscovering Gender in Understanding Violence*. Research Report for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Since the advent of democracy South Africa has been beset by a number of significant social and economic challenges, which are important in understanding the incidence of violent crime in the country. Key among them has been the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Levels of inequality have deepened since South Africa became a democracy, with the Gini coefficient rising from 0,64 to 0,69 between 1995 and 2005¹². Some illustration of the levels of inequality in the country is, for example, the fact that, while the poorest 20% of the population in South Africa earns less than 4% of GDP, the richest 10% earns nearly 45% of the GDP. While the composition of the wealthiest class has changed somewhat, now including a small layer of wealthy black South Africans, poverty remains significantly divided by race with black South Africans making up over 93 percent of the 21.9 million poor¹³.

Both economists and sociologists have posited a number of theories for the apparent links between economic inequality and crime. While economists tend to focus on the perceived gains from illegal activity as opposed to legal activity in contexts where unemployment is high or wages from work may be low in particular strata of society. One model holds that the incentives for individuals to commit crime are determined by the differential returns from legitimate and illegitimate pursuits¹⁴. Sociologists on the other hand have focused on the way in which inequality may be associated with lack of social capital, lack of upward mobility, or social disorganization, all of which may create the context in which higher levels of crime occur. This perspective holds that 'when a system of cultural values emphasizes, virtually above all else, certain *common* symbols of success *for the population at large* while its social structure rigorously restricts or completely eliminates access to approved modes of acquiring these symbols *for a considerable part of the same population*, that antisocial behavior ensues on a considerable scale'.¹⁵

Hence, the lack of upward mobility in a society, combined with a high premium on economic affluence results in anomie, a breakdown of standards and values. The contradictions between the structural exclusion of a large proportion of the population from formal sector employment and the

¹² *Towards a fifteen year review*. (2008). The Presidency, Republic of South Africa. Pretoria. p. 101

¹³ Bhorat, H. & van der Westhuizen, C. (2009), *Economic growth, poverty and inequality in South Africa: The first decade of democracy*: Paper commissioned by the Presidency, Republic of South Africa. p. 3

¹⁴ Becker, 1968, as cited in Demombynes and Ozler (2002). *Crime and local inequality in South Africa, Policy Research Working Paper, 2925*. The World Bank Development Research Group, Poverty Team, November 2002. p. 3-4.

¹⁵ Merton, 1938, as cited in Demombynes and Ozler (2002). p. 6

aspirations for economic inclusion and improvement of lifestyle that the advent of democracy introduced has led to exactly this tension between a high premium on economic affluence and the lack of real possibilities for upward mobility¹⁶.

Interviews with offenders jailed for violent crime revealed exactly this structural contradiction between their exclusion from the formal economy or belief that they would never be incorporated in it and an ethos of materialism as an overt mark of 'success'. Thus, in explaining the motives for their violent actions, these offenders expressed an intense desire to acquire consumer goods, not simply for their material value but as a marker of 'success' and status¹⁷. This desire to 'appear' to have a certain social status, and the willingness of the participants to engage in crime, including violent crime to acquire them, appears to accord with the thesis that 'social delinquency' emerges when there is a disjuncture between what are held up to be the common symbols of success and achievement in a society and the actual possibility of their acquisition for the majority of the populace.

Closely related to the problem of inequality is the problem of unemployment, which has also not improved significantly since South Africa's democratic transition. Estimates of unemployment range from 23.6% to 32.5¹⁸. While total employment increased from 11.9 million in 2005 to 13.6 million in 2009 supported by higher growth, the global economic situation has recently had a negative impact on employment¹⁹. This decline in employment as a result of the global financial crisis has particularly negatively affected young people in South Africa²⁰ leading to a 6.3% decline in employment for youth between the ages of 15-24 over the last year.

In general young people have been disproportionately affected by unemployment in the country. Latest figures released in June 2009 indicate that approximately half (48.1%) of those in the labour force cohort aged 15-24 are unemployed. In addition, approximately 30 % of those aged 25-34 are

¹⁶ *Adding insult to injury: How exclusion and inequality drive South Africa's problem of violence.* (2008), Report on Component 4 of a study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster. Unpublished. p. 46

¹⁷ *Case studies of perpetrators of violent crime.* (2008). Report by the Human Sciences Research Council on behalf of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. Component 5 of a study conducted for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster. Unpublished.

¹⁸ *Development Indicators 2009*, (2009). The Presidency, Republic of South Africa. Pretoria. p. 21

¹⁹ *Development Indicators 2009*. p. 21

²⁰ *Development Indicators 2009*. p. 21.

also unemployed. Of the young people who are employed, about a third are working in elementary, unskilled occupations, including filling positions as domestic workers²¹. It is also notable that the youth unemployment rate in South Africa is significantly higher than youth unemployment in other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, which is at 21%.

Youth unemployment can partly be explained by the changing nature of the South African economy over the last 15 years. Thus between 1995 and 2003 barely a million formal-sector jobs were created in South Africa, while the labour force grew by about six times that number²². The rate at which job opportunities were created was therefore not consistent with the population entering the job market. While more recent data indicates that the situation stabilized from 2003 onwards with faster GDP meaning that the net number of new jobs started to outstrip growth, South Africa's labour force participation rates are still very low. The proportion of people either employed or seeking employment is only 56,5%, much lower than the 65% average in comparable countries²³.

It is important to emphasize that the current South African economic model is hinged on designing job opportunities that are both capital and skill intensive. This has the unintended consequence of marginalizing a significant proportion of the population who have low skill levels. Owing to this economic trajectory there is a strong link between level of education and access to jobs.

Thus the legacy of apartheid, which prevented many people from attaining education and skills as well as the current economic path of development, which has led to the structural exclusion of a large proportion of the working population from participation in the economy, due to the decline in the demand for unskilled labour, has created a situation of ongoing unemployment where the slow pace of creating formal sector jobs in the economy has exacerbated hopelessness among the job-seeking population, up to 2,2 million of whom are no longer looking for work.²⁴

There are important gender differentiations in youth unemployment trends, which help to understand how unemployment may be affecting young males in particular. These trends point to a deteriorating employment situation among young men relative to young women over the past ten

²¹ *Towards a fifteen year review*. (2008). p. 75.

²² *Adding Injury to Insult. How exclusion and inequality drive South Africa's Problem of Violence*. Report by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security. p.40.

²³ *Towards a fifteen year review*. (2008). p. 32

²⁴ *Ibid*

years as women's labour force participation has increased while men's has declined. Therefore, while in absolute terms more women are unemployed than men (33% of males are unemployed, 49% of females are unemployed)²⁵ recent trends indicate that young males find themselves in a worsening position, for instance, between the third and fourth quarters of 2009, the number of unemployed women *decreased* by 47, 000 while the numbers of unemployed men *increased* by 18, 000²⁶. In addition, year on year comparisons show that of the total increase of unemployed persons, unemployment among men was significantly higher, increasing by 18.1% (327 000), while there was a decrease in unemployment of 1.8% (37, 000) among women²⁷. While increases in women's employment may be the result of a very low starting base, it is also likely that such declines in employment among young men would increase feelings of frustration and alienation and vulnerability to involvement in violent crime. Wages are also characterized by gender distinctions. Although men's wages have remained considerably higher than women's, over the long term they have fallen at an average annual rate of 2.5 percent during between 1995-2003, compared to a 0.6 percent decline for women.

Another important trend to note in terms of the gender distribution of unemployment in the future, are recent studies, which have shown that female students are performing better in primary and secondary schooling than male students²⁸. Women also outnumber men in participating and completing secondary school and higher education²⁹. This is significant in terms of South Africa's current trajectory of development which is increasingly requiring skilled participants in the labour force. The declining numbers of males at these levels of education are likely to affect their access to employment opportunities in the future and could potentially lead to an increasing pool of unemployed young men unable to access the formal economy due to their lack of skills, which would be likely to make them significantly more vulnerable to involvement in criminal violence.

²⁵ Towards a Fifteen Year Review, (2008), p. 75-6

²⁶ *Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Quarter 4, 2009* (2009). Statistics South Africa, Pretoria, p. x. Available at: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2009.pdf>

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid

Regional trends, inequality, poverty and unemployment

In order to understand in more depth potential links between homicide and other indicators such as inequality, poverty and unemployment, the table below gives a regional breakdown of trends in the different provinces of South Africa. This is important to begin to disaggregate these phenomena at the sub-national level. A breakdown of murder rates in the different provinces in the country compared to poverty levels, the Gini coefficient and unemployment rates in these provinces reveals a multifaceted picture (See table 1).

On the one hand high levels of murder and a relatively low level of absolute poverty in the major metropolitan provinces of Gauteng and Western Cape where considerable amounts of the country's wealth are concentrated, would seem to lend weight to the thesis that it is inequality rather than absolute poverty which generates high levels of violent crime. Both these provinces have a relatively low level of absolute poverty but experienced a significant increase in *inequality* over the period 1995-2005. Limpopo province which has one of the highest levels of poverty in the country but one of the lowest rates of murder would also seem to support this thesis. Limpopo is one of the only provinces which have experienced a *decline* in inequality levels between 1995 and 2005. It is notable however that Limpopo still has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country at 26.9%. On the other hand there are provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape which experience both high levels of poverty as well as high levels of murder. The Eastern Cape has actually experienced a small decline in inequality, while KwaZulu-Natal has experienced a significant increase in levels of inequality. Unemployment trends in these provinces differ with KwaZulu-Natal recording a relatively low level of unemployment (19.2%) and the Eastern Cape a high level of unemployment (27%).

It appears therefore that **a link between high levels of inequality and high levels of violence can be strongly demonstrated for the metropolitan areas of Gauteng and the Western Cape** but that this relationship is more ambiguous in the less urbanised areas of the country. There seems to be very little correlation between general unemployment and homicide rates. It would be necessary to disaggregate male youth unemployment from unemployment in general to investigate the nature of this link further.

Table 1

Province	Murder ratio per 100 000 of population (2008-9) ³⁰	Percentage of people living below R283 per month poverty lines ³¹	Gini coefficient ³² 1995	Gini coefficient ³³ 2005	Unemployment ³⁴ 2008	Unemployment 2009
Eastern Cape	49.5	29%	0.65	0.64	25.2%	27.0%
Free State	31.6	16%	0.66	0.65	22.6%	25.3%
Gauteng	37.2	6%	0.54	0.65	20.7%	25.7%
Kwa-Zulu Natal	47.0	33%	0.63	0.67	20.8%	19.2%
Limpopo	14.2	24%	0.63	0.58	28.9%	26.9%
Mpumalanga	25.1	38%	0.58	0.67	23.1%	26.6%
Northern Cape	36.5	27%	0.65	0.62	21.6%	24.9%
North West	27.4	23%	0.63	0.64	25.7%	27.0%
Western Cape	44.6	9%	0.58	0.69	16,9%	21.5%
RSA	37.3	22%	0.64	0.69	21.9%	24.3%

³⁰ Data drawn from South African Police Service, Department of Police, Crime Statistics: April 2008-March 2009

³¹ Data drawn from *Development Indicators 2009*. (2009).

³² Data drawn from Borat, H. & van der Westhuizen, C. (2009)

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Data drawn from *Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Quarter 4, 2009* (2009). Statistics South Africa, Pretoria, p.

School Violence in South Africa

There is a general view that the violence that characterizes South African society at large finds its way into the country's schooling system. Due to the highly segregated nature of South Africa's schooling system during the apartheid years, the systematic collection of data on violence and schooling was not recorded. There are currently some attempts to rectify this situation, yet as a result of the lack of extensive historical data collected in a systematic and consistent manner, there are conflicting reports on the extent to which this impacts on feelings of safety at schools. According to a 2008 study by the South African Institute of Race Relations, for example, South Africa's schools are 'the most dangerous in the world', with widespread occurrence of shootings, stabbings, rape and robbery. They found that only 23% of students surveyed felt safe at school³⁵. On the other hand, a larger survey-based study conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention³⁶ conducted in the same year, found that despite high levels of violence at schools, most learners felt safe at schools, with 'more than nine out of ten learners indicating that they felt safe', and with a similar proportion reporting that there 'is no place in their school that they are scared'³⁷.

Whether South African schools are the *most* dangerous or not, a certain level of violence has become normalized in the schooling system. In the CJCP study data revealed that up to three in ten learners at secondary schools knew of another learner that had brought a weapon to school, and that one in ten learners reported that it would be easy for them to get a gun at school. At the primary school level, 29.5% of reported violence involved a weapon, while at the secondary school a weapon was involved in 54.7% of reported cases of violence. These cases involved fights or brawls, which were common place. They also often involve gangs who hang around at many schools in order to sell drugs. It is violence often associated with these activities that involves the use of illegal weapons such as guns or knives. Some reports also note that gangs enter schools in some areas, armed with guns, in order to rob learners. Most reports generally suggest a strong correlation between access to alcohol and drugs and access to weapons within communities. The majority of learners in both primary and secondary schools who found it easy to get alcohol and drugs in their community also generally found it easy to get access to a weapon. This generally increases the likelihood of the violence outside the school-- in the community-- entering into the school.

³⁵ *South African schools most dangerous in the world – only 23% of pupils safe - 5th February 2008*. Statement released by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR). Johannesburg. Based on statistics drawn from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2006). TIMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies) & PIRLS International Study Centre, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, USA.

³⁶ Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (2008) *Merchants, Skollies and Stones: School Violence in South Africa*, Plumstead, Cape Town.

³⁷ *Ibid.*