

COVID-19 and Police Agency Operations in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Institutions for Development
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Services Division



COVID-19 and Police Agency Operations in Latin America and the Caribbean

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AND LEOPOLDO LABORDA**



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Prologue

The year 2020 will always be remembered as the year of COVID-19. The health and economic crisis unleashed by this pandemic is having a profound impact on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The region will need strong institutions to help society overcome the extensive effects of the current crisis quickly and effectively. The police, along with other public institutions, are on the front lines working to respond to the health crisis, doing everything possible without neglecting their traditional role of safeguarding the streets and homes in the region.

As these lines are being written, the COVID-19 health crisis rages on. Although it is still too early to draw conclusions about the impact of the crisis on policing, it is clear that the police, in addition to being highly vulnerable to becoming infected, are being overloaded with responsibilities due to this crisis. The COVID-19 crisis poses a greater challenge specifically to the police in LAC, compared to other regions, due to the region's high levels of crime and perceived insecurity.

Despite the challenges in this new context, there are also opportunities for the police to continue strengthening their institutional capacities to adapt to changing circumstances and to respond effectively to citizen expectations for security services.

Citizen security in LAC is a development priority. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has been working for more than 20 years with several countries in the region to support police agencies in institutional strengthening, professionalization, and citizen outreach. Additionally, the IDB has been pushing for a research agenda based on a rigorous analysis of information that can help identify good practices and facilitate the learning process through generating and sharing new knowledge.

The objective of this report is to present a snapshot of policing in LAC during the COVID-19 health emergency. This study, the only one of its kind in the region, can support the generation of further information and the use of data to respond to the crisis. It can also help to identify new and improved ways for police and citizens to interact, to strengthen their collaboration, and, ultimately, to allow for enhanced efficiency in public safety services and greater appreciation of the police by citizens.

Moisés J. Schwartz

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Abstract

*The health and economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on the operations of public institutions worldwide, and the police have been no exception. In particular, the police forces of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are in a critical situation given the scenario of high crime rates and limited resources they were already facing before the outbreak. During this health emergency, the region's police have played an essential role in enforcing isolation measures while continuing to perform their crime-fighting tasks. In this context, **this study analyzes how the COVID-19 crisis is changing policing and assesses the potential impact of these changes on the effectiveness and legitimacy of the region's police agencies.***

This study provides a snapshot of the work of LAC police forces in the COVID-19 health emergency based on the results of a standardized survey of 13 police agencies conducted between April 15 and 27, 2020, by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The results reveal that most police agencies in the region were prepared and acted promptly: they put in place security protocols, equipped officers with security equipment, and made contingency plans. In terms of day-to-day crime fighting, police agencies have continued to respond to calls for service (while also making greater use of virtual tools) and to make arrests. Contrary to international practices, most police in the region had not received instructions to reduce the use of physical arrests for minor offenses. However, LAC police did reduce their usual preventive and community policing activities. On the other hand, the data collected show that in many cases there is little public information available on the scope and limitations of police power to enforce health measures with which citizens are required to comply.

*The results of the survey should be interpreted in light of evidence that "preventive/proactive" policing approaches have greater impact on crime reduction than "reactive" ones. It is also important to keep in mind that citizen cooperation with law enforcement is essential during the pandemic and that this willingness to cooperate is based on citizens' judgments of police legitimacy. Considering the above, **the main conclusion of this study is that it is necessary to be cautious about the potentially negative impacts that could result from reducing proactive and community policing activities, particularly when little is clear about how the police should implement and enforce new regulations related to social distancing and maintenance of public order.***

While the current scenario provides a great opportunity for interaction between police and citizens, it is not yet possible to determine whether this new interaction will have clear parameters and actively involve the community in defining the priorities, problems, and solutions of their concern. In any case, the health crisis provides an opportunity for the police to strengthen ties with the community, improve collaboration with community leaders and other public servants, and increase public appreciation for the service they provide.

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Keywords: police effectiveness, police justice, security, trust in the police, crime control policies



Introduction

Policing Challenges during
the Health Emergency

/

COVID-19: Crisis and Opportunity

Policing Challenges during the Health Emergency

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on the activities of all institutions, especially first responders. Police agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have been no exception. The police, along with firefighters and other rescue units, have to respond to emergencies that arise from the health crisis while continuing to protect the safety of citizens as they go about their daily lives.

Widespread confinement measures and closures of non-essential activities have changed people's routines and behaviors across the world, and these changes have also affected crime patterns. Crime data recorded during social distancing show considerable differences compared to the weeks before the crisis and to averages from the same period in previous years. To cite a few examples from outside the region, in the United States, general crime decreased by nearly 50 percent in the first weeks of confinement compared to the same period in the last three years. However, domestic violence did not decrease by the same measure.¹ In Spain, the total number of crimes decreased by 74 percent during the first 15 days of confinement compared to the same period last year, although there were significant differences among different types of crime, according to a study

conducted by the Ministry of the Interior.² In Britain, the police have reported a 28 percent decline in crime since the population was told to stay at home to fight the contagion of the coronavirus.³

In LAC, the inherent diversity among countries makes it difficult to identify a clear pattern in the changes in criminal behavior at this time. In Colombia, for example, data seem to point to a downward trend in crime. In Bogotá, according to police-reported data, from March 25 when the mandatory quarantine began to April 29, felonies such as homicides decreased by 53 percent, extortion by 100 percent, petty theft by 93 percent, domestic violence by 86.1 percent, and sex crimes by 83.1 percent. Cybercrimes increased, according to police reports, by 145 percent (157 cases in total), mainly in the cities of Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, and Barranquilla.⁴ In the Province of Buenos Aires (Argentina), data from the Public Prosecutor's Office show a decrease of more than 60 percent in the total number of reports filed during the first week of the quarantine compared to the previous week. Rape and sexual assault cases, however, registered a much-higher-than-average increase of 408 percent.⁵

1 For example, between February 23 and March 22, overall violence decreased in San Francisco (-42 percent), Detroit (-22 percent), Los Angeles (-19 percent), and Chicago (-13 percent). In Chicago, police reports indicate that between March 8 and April 12, domestic violence reports decreased by 23 percent while overall crime declined by 43 percent. Based on data from the Marshall Project, a nonprofit news organization covering the U.S. criminal justice system, and from open data portals on crime in Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, and San Francisco. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/03/27/as-coronavirus-surges-crime-declines-in-some-cities>

2 The largest decreases in the number of offenses were recorded in property crimes, which usually make up 75 percent of police reports. However, the study conducted by the Ministry of the Interior does not include gender-based violence. The Ministry of Equality reported that by the end of March, calls to 016, the domestic violence hotline for women, had increased by 18 percent from March 14 to March 29 compared to the same two-week period in February. Cybercrime experienced a similar development, where internet fraud is estimated to have increased by up to 70 percent. Information published in the newspaper *El País*. <https://elpais.com/espana/2020-05-01/los-delitos-se-redujeron-un-738-los-primeros-15-dias-del-confinamiento.html>

3 Crime reports to the police in the four weeks leading up to April 12 showed a 37 percent decrease in theft and 27 percent decrease in vehicular crime, aggravated assaults, and personal property theft. Reports of rape decreased by 37 percent and shoplifting by 54 percent. Based on data reported in the newspaper *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/apr/15/in-uk-falls-sharply-since-start-of-coronavirus-lockdown>

4 Based on information published in the newspaper *El Tiempo*. <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/delitos/por-aislamiento-por-coronavirus-disminuyen-los-delitos-en-colombia-477392>

5 Information published in the newspaper *La Nación*. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/seguridad/coronavirus-cuarentena-genero-disminucion-delitos-ciudad-nid2347809>. See also information published in *Infobae*. <https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/policiales/2020/03/28/durante-la-cuarentena-las-causas-por-delitos-en-la-provincia-bajaron-casi-un-60-por-ciento/>



Photo: Honduras Police

In Mexico, 543 intentional homicides were recorded in the week of February 23 to 29, just as the first case of coronavirus was recorded in the country. The number grew to 646 (up by 19 percent) a month later, during the week of March 23 to 29.⁶

The declines observed in several types of crimes during the health emergency have interrupted an upward trend in criminal activity in recent times. For example, the absolute number of thefts committed in Colombia, Mexico, and the city of Rio de Janeiro decreased during the first quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. On the other hand, homicides decreased in Colombia, but increased in both Rio and Mexico at different points in time. For example, in Mexico, intentional homicides in March 2020 remained the same and even increased compared to the same month in the previous year, reaching the highest level since December 2018.⁷

⁶ Information published in the newspaper *El Comercio* based on data released by the Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana (SSPC), the Military, the Navy, and the Public Prosecutor's Office. <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/violencia-imparable-mexico-coronavirus-delitos.html>

⁷ Information reported by Spanish news agency EFE. <https://www.efe.com/efe/espana/sociedad/mexico-muestra-repunte-de-homicidios-dolosos-con-3-000-casos-en-marzo/10004-4226402>

New crime patterns during the pandemic call for changes in police deployment, the speed and efficiency of which depend on the analytical capacities of the police and their relationship with the community. Given that crime patterns differ by country and by type of criminal activity, it is even more important for police agencies to have robust technological and human capacities for crime analysis, as well as adaptive capacities to act in a changing and uncertain environment. This also requires police agencies to strengthen their partnerships with the community in order to address these public safety challenges, especially in light of dwindling public resources given the shift in public spending towards the health sector and economic recovery.

Police effectiveness and citizen trust are two interdependent variables. The situation calls for reflection on how police action in the face of crisis can enhance or undermine internal and external trust in the police. Crises such as COVID-19 require a more proactive response from the police to anticipate crime and respond to community needs. While not all police forces took this approach before the pandemic, they could develop and strengthen it during this health crisis. Actions taken now will have medium- to long-term impacts on police effectiveness, as well as on public recognition and trust in the police during and after the crisis.

COVID-19: Crisis and Opportunity

This study examines how the police in LAC are responding to the unique challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and how their responses may impact police effectiveness and legitimacy in the future. The current context can provide a great opportunity to adopt more proactive models that anticipate crime and focus on prevention, but there is also a risk of regression to reactive policing.

The analysis presented here is based on systematically collected, standardized information on how LAC police institutions are responding to COVID-19. This information has been collected through a short survey adapted for the region. The survey includes questions on the protocols, preparation, training, and operational changes put in

place following the declaration of the pandemic.⁸ The survey sample consists of 13 LAC countries.⁹ Mirroring police operational models themselves, this report is not "reactive" to the current crisis. Rather, it is part of a "proactive" research agenda with an ambitious data collection process underway for a more comprehensive understanding of the organizational and management practices of the police in the region's major cities.¹⁰

8 This report presents the results of a survey conducted between April 15 and 27, 2020, in which police agencies from 13 countries (see next footnote) responded regarding directives and initiatives implemented by April 15, 2020. April 15 was used as the baseline date because by then COVID-19 had already been declared a pandemic with cases identified and states of emergency declared in nearly all LAC countries. Through April 15, all countries included in the survey had issued some social distancing measures such as mandatory confinement and undertook other measures such as teleworking.

9 The police agencies that participated in the survey are: Argentina (Rosario), Bolivia (La Paz), Colombia (Bogotá), Costa Rica (San José), Chile (Santiago), Ecuador (Quito), Panama (Panama City), Paraguay (Asunción), Peru (Lima), Brazil (Santa Catarina), Mexico (Mexico City), Guyana (Georgetown), and Honduras (Tegucigalpa).

10 This broader study is based on a standardized questionnaire composed of seven modules that analyze, respectively, the following aspects: (1) structure; (2) administrative data; (3) management and oversight; (4) operations; (5) information, technology, and crime analysis; (6) human resource management; and (7) training and coaching. With this information, the study intends to provide an overview of police management, as well as an analysis of the current police management and administrative practices in these cities.

The survey is based on a questionnaire developed by Lum, Maupin, and Stoltz (2020) for a recent study conducted in the United States and Canada, but with significant differences. Specifically, the study has been adapted to take into account the greater degree of heterogeneity of the sample, due to not only the greater number of countries considered but also significant differences among them in terms of crime rates, socioeconomic and political contexts, human resource endowment of police agencies, and even the impacts of the pandemic itself.

This report has five sections. Section I provides an introduction including observations regarding crime patterns in LAC before and during the first weeks of the pandemic. Section II discusses some basic and relevant concepts from the literature on policing. Section III provides a backdrop for understanding the challenges, resources, and capabilities of LAC countries in coping with a new context shaped by the pandemic, and for interpreting the results obtained from the survey. These results are discussed in Section IV, which presents evidence on how the police are preparing for and adapting to COVID-19. Finally, Section V concludes with a series of reflections on the potential implications for policing and public security in the region.



**Relevant Concepts
in Policing**

To interpret some of the changes in policing approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications, it is important to understand a few key concepts. These concepts are grounded in an extensive body of literature on policing and include "reactive" versus "proactive" approaches, as well as internal and external legitimacy of police institutions.

A modern police force must combine reactive and preventive roles. On one hand, the police are tasked with response, capture, and arrest of suspects, and with investigation of crimes after they happen (reaction). On the other hand, police also increasingly seek to protect citizens and places against crime before it occurs (prevention). Reacting to crime—particularly to citizen calls for service after a crime occurs—has been the backbone of modern policing. This is exemplified in the daily activities of police patrol officers. Patrol officers are contacted during their shift, either directly by the station or by dispatchers, to attend to citizens' calls reporting crimes, suspicious behavior, and other complaints. Officers respond to calls for service with a range of options including the use of force, arrest, and conflict resolution, among others. Criminal investigation by detectives is part of a case-by-case response. All these activities are considered part of the

standard policing model, sometimes referred to as the "reactive" model (Skogan and Frydl, 2004; Weisburd and Eck, 2004).

When not responding to calls for service, the police also engage in other activities. These include preventive patrolling to create a sense of omnipresence and thus deter crime. An officer can patrol in high-crime areas, talk to members of the community, and check on suspicious people and vehicles, through which he or she tries to solve underlying problems of crime in the community. Most police institutions combine both reactive and proactive policing, and usually fall somewhere on the spectrum from purely "reactive" to completely "proactive."

When police agencies make a decision to strategically employ these proactive responses in a programmatic way (not just ad hoc) we refer to this as "proactive" policing. Proactive policing stands in sharp contrast to reactive approaches by addressing problems before they lead to crimes, through strategies that often do not emphasize arrest. Examples of proactive and preventive approaches include community policing, problem-oriented policing (POP), hot-spot policing, intelligence-led policing, and focused deterrence, as well as approaches aimed at reducing disorder and promoting peaceful coexistence.¹¹

Literature on the evidence of effective policing over the past 30 years has found the "reactive" model—also known as the standard model of policing—to have limited impacts on crime reduction. Specifically, there has been little to no evidence found on the correlation between crime reduction and reactive arrests,¹² rapid responses

Photo: Panama Police



11 All aforementioned strategies have been the subject of systematic reviews which examine the evidence of their impact in studies from around the world. For a comprehensive review of these strategies, see Telep and Weisburd (2016) and Weisburd et al. (2019), or the study featured in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018).

12 See reviews by Nagin (2013), Sherman and Eck (2002), or Sherman (2018).

to calls for service,¹³ and even improved case clearance rates.¹⁴ On the other hand, there is growing evidence of the effectiveness of proactive policing strategies for reducing crime and improving citizen perceptions of police activity.¹⁵

Police legitimacy is another issue to consider, since the police need public support and citizen cooperation to be effective. Voluntary cooperation such as obeying the law and reporting crimes or providing information to police officers is dependent on citizens' judgments of police legitimacy. In other words, people are more willing to cooperate when they believe that the police are fair and respectful in their treatment of citizens (Tyler, 2004; 2006). This legitimacy conferred to the police by citizens is often called "external legitimacy" to differentiate it from "internal legitimacy," which refers to the perception by the officers themselves that the police agency treats

13 For example, in the United States, studies showed that a faster response to 911 calls did not contribute to increased apprehension of suspects or prevention of future crimes (Sherman and Eck, 2002; Spelman and Brown, 1981).

14 For example, felony clearance rates in the United States and in other countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom have decreased or remained virtually unchanged for more than four decades despite significant fluctuations in crime rates (Braga, Hureau, and Papachristos, 2011).

15 For an in-depth review of this literature, see, for example, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018).



Photo: Paraguay Police

them well and transparently, is committed to their welfare, and prepares them adequately to carry out the tasks they must perform.

The current health crisis poses significant challenges for the police, but also provides great opportunities to move towards increasingly efficient and evidence-based models. Changes in police operations can have a significant impact on policing efficiency, as well as on the external and internal legitimacy of the police institution itself.



Contextual Framework: Demands for Crime Control and Health Emergency Support, Police Capacity, and Country Strength

The Pre-COVID-19 Situation

/

The Infected Population and Police
Resources: The Situation Faced
under COVID-19

/

Crime and the Infected Population:
Where Are the Biggest Challenges?

This study analyzes policing in a diverse range of countries. Hence, the survey results must be interpreted in light of their contexts to be accurately understood.

First, it is important to establish a metric to classify police institutions based on their capacity to adequately address the traditional challenges of crime reduction, the current demands for additional tasks that emerged from the health crisis, and the socioeconomic and political context in which they operate.

It is also important to find alternative indicators to income levels (for example, GDP per capita), which are traditionally used to gauge countries' needs for assistance and funding. These traditional indicators fall short from a citizen security perspective. This is especially true when considering certain crimes such as intentional homicides, including those associated with organized crime.¹⁶ As is shown below, there are countries in LAC with high rates of intentional homicides and very different income levels, but similar performance in other multidimensional indicators such as the Fragile States Index (FSI). As shown in Table A3 of the Statistical and Methodological Appendix, countries with the highest levels of intentional homicides (Honduras, Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico) show larger differences in their FSI economic indicators (economic decline, uneven economic development, and human flight and brain drain) than in their cohesion indicators (security apparatus, factionalized elites, and group grievance). All of these are described in more detail in Table A1 of the Statistical and Methodological Appendix.

Using the FSI, it is possible to create a stylized analytical framework for a preliminary contextual review since, for example, the number of police officers does not reflect essential aspects of their possible effectiveness such as training and experience, among others. In this sense, the number of officers is a measure of the volume of capacity (coverage) that does not include important elements of police performance such as human capital endowment,

a topic that will be discussed in a more comprehensive IDB study currently underway. The FSI integrates several indicators (see Table A3 of the Statistical and Methodological Appendix) and groups the results into three quintiles¹⁷ that categorize countries into three levels of fragility (high, medium, and low). A country's level of fragility indicates its capacity to address both traditional demands for crime control and new demands for contagion prevention, control, and management due to the pandemic, taking into account its human resource endowment in terms of the number of police officers.

The following section presents a stylized characterization of the countries given their level of fragility based on economic, political, and social metrics. The characterization considers the demand for crime control (estimated based on the number of intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants) and the human resource endowment of the police (estimated based on the number of police officers per 100,000 inhabitants). Then, we take a similar approach to analyzing the additional demand for new tasks as a result of the pandemic (estimated based on the number of COVID-19 infections per 100,000 inhabitants) and police staffing. Finally, we put together the two types of demands that police agencies must meet to estimate the scale of total requirements, taking into account the levels of fragility of their countries and, ultimately, their vulnerability in a potential future scenario induced by the health crisis.

The Pre-COVID-19 Situation

LAC faces great challenges given its elevated crime rates, which are the highest in the world. For example, the number of intentional homicides reached an average of

¹⁶ The term "intentional homicide" encompasses a wide range of acts, including domestic disputes that end in homicide, interpersonal violence, violent conflict over land resources, gang violence for control of territory, as well as predatory violence and killings by armed groups (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

¹⁷ It should be noted in this point that, although it is possible to categorize all LAC countries by their overall level of fragility (establishing 3 or 5 quintiles), there was practically no variability among the 13 countries sampled in this study (Haiti was the only country with a different level of fragility compared to the rest of the region). In this sense, to visualize the different levels of fragility of the countries sampled, three categories were established as a transparent method to avoid relying on subjective considerations beyond the denomination of established categories. The measures of fragility are relative to the countries in the sample only.

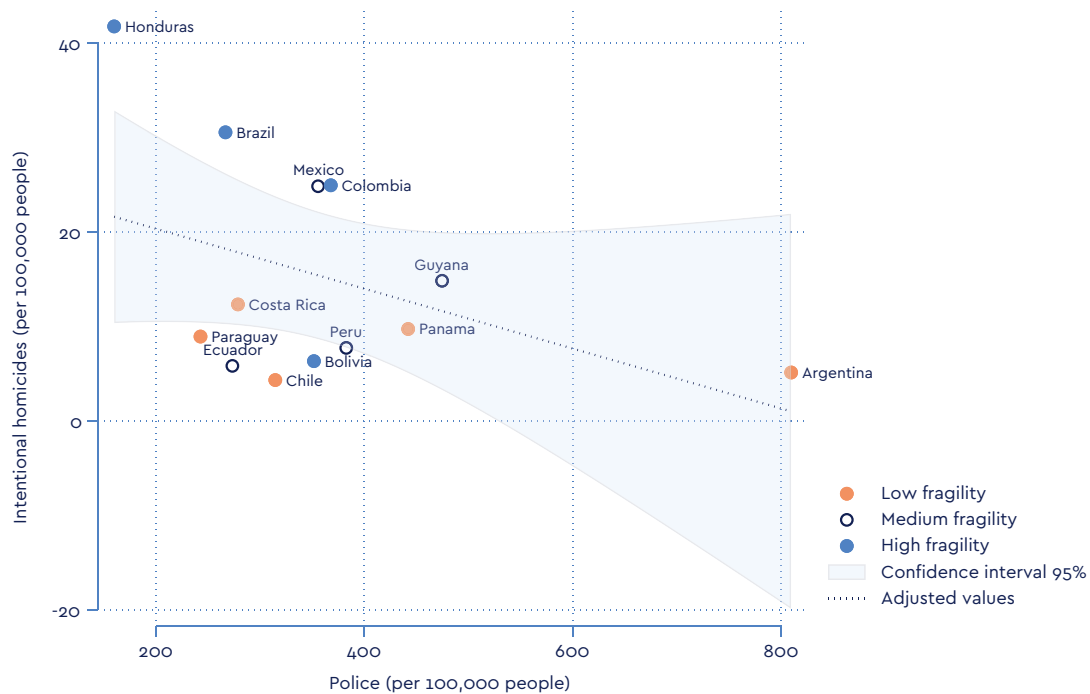
14.33 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2017 for the 13 countries sampled in this study,¹⁸ in clear contrast to Africa (7.05), Asia (2.41), Europe (1.76), or Oceania (0.75). If we only look at LAC, we find significant differences both between subregions (Central America, 22.12; South America, 12.03) and between countries (Chile, 4.3, and Honduras, 41.7).

Compared to other regions of the world, LAC also exhibits significant differences in the number of police officers available to address the problem. According to the latest UN data released in 2019, the 13 LAC countries analyzed in this study have an average of 363.02 police officers per 100,000 inhabitants **compared to**

higher figures in Europe (407.18) or Oceania (782.59), which also have substantially lower crime rates when it comes to intentional homicide. Again, there are also differences between subregions (Central America 309.00; South America, 387.03) and between countries (e.g., Argentina, 809.67, and Honduras, 159.8).

In general, LAC countries with the highest rates of intentional homicides are not the ones with the largest police forces. Figure 1 shows the rates of intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in relation to the number of police officers per 100,000 inhabitants, controlling for three levels of fragility (FSI index)—high, medium, and low.

Figure 1. Homicide Rate vs. Police-to-Population Ratio: Controlling for Fragility Level



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from the UN and Fund for Peace (FFP).

Note: See footnote 17 on the fragility levels based on the FSI.

18 Information obtained from the international database on homicide of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Nationwide data. Rates per 100,000 inhabitants. <https://dataunodc.un.org>

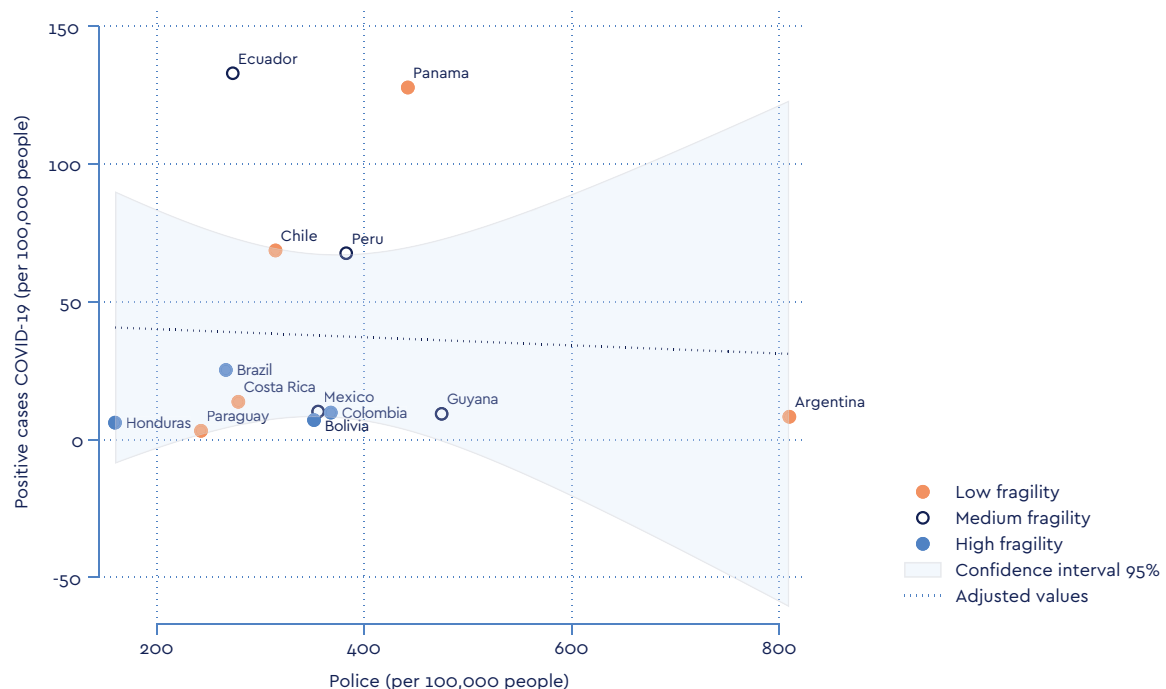
The Infected Population and Police Resources: The Situation Faced under COVID-19

LAC police agencies must respond to emergencies related to the COVID-19 crisis. A comparison of the number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants (as of April 26)¹⁹ against the number of police officers per 100,000 inhabitants shows the relationship between increased demand for security services by the police

(e.g., securing facilities and health supplies) and current staffing levels (which may decrease further as the virus spreads) in the absence of more precise measures.

Although there is practically no correlation between the number of COVID-19 cases and the number of police officers, which is logical in the early stage of this random health shock, Figure 2 highlights countries such as Ecuador, which has a large number of COVID-19 cases with a relatively low number of police officers compared to the rest of the countries in the sample. This can be a risk factor as there are fewer police officers available to provide health emergency support, in addition to the risk of officer infection.

Figure 2. Positive COVID-19 Cases vs. Police-to-Population Ratio: Controlling for Fragility Levels



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from the UN, the WHO, and FFP.

Note: See footnote 17 on the fragility levels based on the FSI.

¹⁹ Data obtained from the World Health Organization (WHO). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 97. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200426-sitrep-97-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=d1c3e800_6

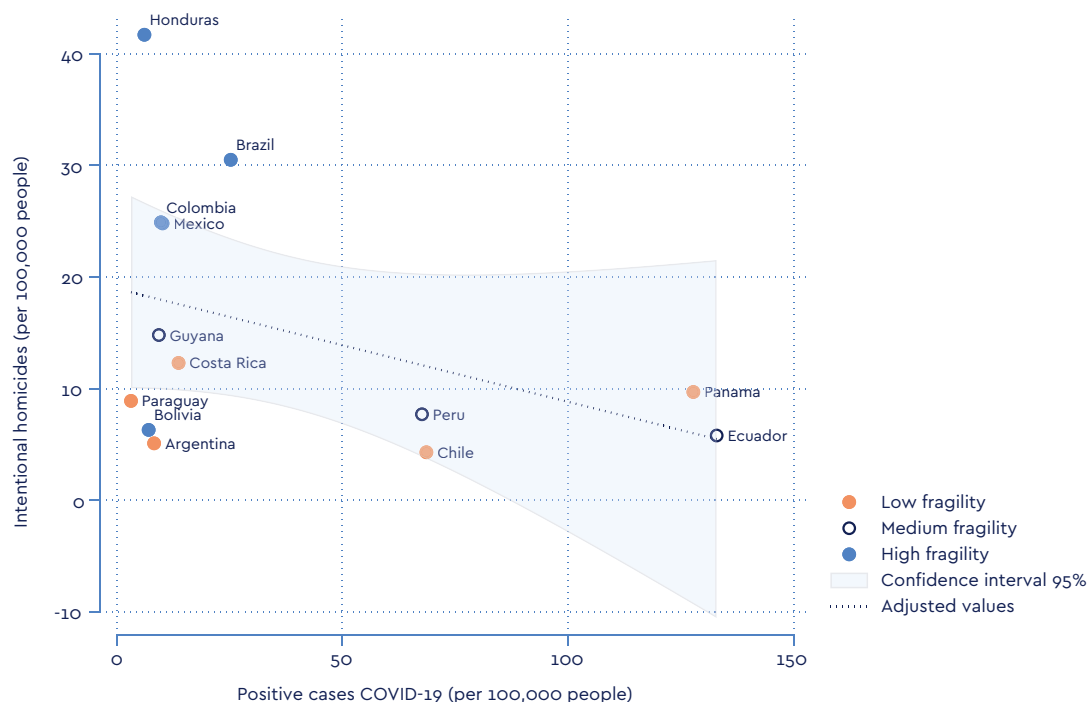
Crime and the Infected Population: Where Are the Biggest Challenges?

In order to include the full range of basic factors necessary for a contextualized analysis of the results of this study, the two dimensions examined previously are combined (see Figure 3) to estimate the demand for services by LAC police agencies. Once again, only a slight negative correlation is observed between the crime rate and the percentage of the population infected by COVID-19,

given the aforementioned randomness of the onset of the health-related shock. Figure 3 makes it possible to identify countries that may struggle to respond to these new demands for health service support due to high crime rates, high fragility level, and greater number of infections, as these demands push far beyond the police's usual crime-control responsibilities.

The aforementioned results, taken with caution given the use of aggregate and indirect measures of recent developments, allow us to identify LAC countries that may see their police agencies' capacity to fight crime and provide health emergency-related support compromised given their current staffing levels and degree of institutional development.

Figure 3. Intentional Homicide Rates vs. Positive COVID-19 Cases: Controlling for Fragility Level



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from the UN, the WHO, and FFP.

Note: See footnote 17 on the fragility levels based on the FSI.

IV.

How Are Police Forces Preparing and Adapting in the Face of COVID-19?

COVID-19 Preparedness

/

Changes in Police Operations

/

Police-Initiated Activities to
Address New Challenges

The responses of the 13 police agencies that participated in the survey can be divided into three sections: (1) COVID-19 preparedness—the extent to which they have training, personal protective equipment, and contingency plans in place; (2) changes in daily operations—including in how they respond to calls for service, arrests, and proactive and community policing activities; and finally, (3) initiatives launched to address new challenges.

COVID-19 Preparedness

During the pandemic, all routine activities—such as responding to calls for service and maintaining relationships with communities—put police officers at risk of infection by the virus. For this reason, it is essential that police officers are trained in how to keep themselves safe with personal protective equipment and contingency plans.

Training

Between April 15 and 27:²⁰

- 77 percent of police agencies that participated in the survey reported having formal training or guidelines for officers on how to maintain social distancing when responding to calls for service.

Personal Protective Equipment

Police agencies report personal protective equipment (hereinafter PPE) for frontline officers as an important element to carry out their work.

- 85 percent of the police agencies surveyed stated that, by April 15, all of their active patrol/uniformed police officers who regularly interacted with the community had PPE they could use while on duty.
- 62 percent reported having disinfectant for 100 percent of their officers.
- 54 percent reported having face masks for 100 percent of their officers, while only 39 percent reported having gloves for all their officers.
- Only one country confirmed having face shields and goggles for 100 percent of its police force.

The survey also asked police agencies if they had contingency plans in case a large number of officers were to end up on sick leave or in quarantine. The results indicate that between April 15 and 27:

- 85 percent of police agencies had a strategy or contingency plan in the event that a large number of officers were to go on sick leave.



Photo: Chile Police

²⁰ April 15 was used as the baseline date because by then COVID-19 had already been declared a pandemic with cases identified and states of emergency declared in almost all countries in the region. By April 15, all countries included in the survey had issued some social distancing measures such as mandatory confinement and undertook other measures such as teleworking.

Changes in Police Operations

The daily operations of the police are divided between responding to crimes that have already occurred and preventing new crimes. A key activity in daily operations is responding to calls for service which may include reports of crimes, suspicious behavior, or other complaints. When not responding to these calls, many police officers are taking proactive steps to prevent and deter crime or improve engagement and relationships with their community. The following are responses from police institutions in LAC about how they have directed their activities.

Calls for Service

Survey responses indicate that as of April 15, COVID-19 had substantially changed how the police respond to calls for service:

- 85 percent of police agencies had provided their officers with formal and written guidelines on how to respond to calls for service in light of COVID-19 (e.g., when officers are required to respond in person and when not). However, such guidelines are considered public information in only 62 percent of agencies (eight countries) and the IDB has only been able to access those of five agencies.
- 92 percent of police agencies reported having telephone, internet, or teleconferencing systems in active use for responding to calls for service and receiving reports remotely.
- 39 percent of police agencies reported having experienced a significant decrease of between 10 and 50 percent in the calls for service received. Two countries, or 15.38 percent of agencies, reported no substantial change and indicated a variation of +/- 10 percent. However, 30.77 percent of agencies (four countries) reported an increase in calls of between



Photo: Bolivia Police

10 and 50 percent and 15.38 percent of the agencies (two countries) reported an increase of more than 50 percent.

These changes may reflect a reduction in certain types of calls and increases in others, and may have to do with the most common type of crime in each country. In this regard, further analysis of the dynamics of crime is needed to understand the impact of COVID-19 on calls for service to police agencies. Table 1 presents a breakdown of call volume by country.

Table 1. Breakdown of Call Volume

Changes in Call Volume	Country
▲ Increase by more than 50%	Peru and Panama
▲ Increase between 10 and 50%	Paraguay, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Bolivia
Virtually unchanged (around +/- 10%)	Argentina and Guyana
▼ Decrease between 10 and 50%	Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico
▼ Decrease by more than 50%	-

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data gathered through the survey.

Note: The changes reported are comparisons against pre-COVID-19 numbers.

Preventive and Community Policing

The COVID-19 crisis significantly reduced preventive and community policing between April 15 and 27:

- 100 percent of the police agencies reported having changed their policies on proactive and preventive policing. For example, agencies ceased proactive stops of both drivers and pedestrians.
- 92 percent of police agencies reported having adopted policies to reduce or limit community policing activities.
- However, all police agencies reported having adopted specific policies to increase police presence in certain places (supermarkets, hospitals, and other public spaces).

Arrests

Many police institutions outside of LAC have provided instructions to their officers to reduce physical arrests for minor offenses.²¹ As the name suggests, minor offenses have less impact and entail less severe responses than more serious crimes. Although they vary by country, minor offenses may include: non-violent or low-monetary-value theft, prostitution, public intoxication, disorderly conduct, vandalism, reckless driving, possession of small amounts of marijuana or certain other drugs, and other similar crimes. Not arresting people for minor offenses can reduce the police workload, allowing them to

²¹ Lum, Maupin, and Stoltz (2020) report responses from a sample of nearly 1,000 police agencies in the U.S. and Canada, noting that 76 percent had provided their officers with formal guidelines on reducing the use of physical arrests for minor offenses.

prioritize pandemic-related tasks and reduce officers' physical contact with others, thereby mitigating the risk of infection. Reducing arrests for minor offenses is especially important in LAC, since overcrowding and major deficiencies in jails make them susceptible to outbreak. However, as of April 15:

- The majority of policies agencies in LAC—54 percent (seven countries)—had not provided their officers with formal guidance on reducing physical arrests for minor offenses.

Police-Initiated Activities to Address New Challenges

Police were asked to share successful tips on addressing problems or mitigating challenges of COVID-19. Their responses were categorized into six groups: early preparation, adaptability, communication, collaboration, service, and gratitude.

Early Preparation

Some police agencies report **having begun to organize and manage PPE supplies and experimenting with disinfection, telecommuting, or social distancing** as soon as the first cases of COVID-19 were detected in their countries. Some mentioned the sanitation of police facilities, vehicles, and sidewalks. In Panama, for example, the temperature is taken of everyone who enters police facilities. In Ecuador, police agencies have purchased tests exclusively for their police officers to diagnose positive COVID-19 cases. In addition, several police agencies have reinforced training and conducted large-scale self-protection and family care campaigns through institutional mechanisms. In this regard, many agencies shared examples of posters and educational materials with the IDB.

Police agencies face several challenges in developing contingency plans for a possible scenario in which a significant number of officers were to go on sick leave or end up in quarantine at the same time. For example, some have prepared plans to accommodate infected officers outside of their facilities (in hotels in the case of Panama, or in voluntary isolation centers in each province of Ecuador). On the other hand, agencies face the challenge of designing plans for specific risk scenarios, although so far, they have not been able to determine the impacts of these scenarios precisely. In light of this, some agencies are trying to identify potential impacts and plan actions and response procedures in terms of: necessary resources, anticipatory measures, tasks and executors, etc. Agencies are also preparing for possible scenarios for specific groups of personnel (active duty and reserve officers, pensioners, dependents, and family members).

Adaptability

LAC police agencies **have made their routines more flexible and adapted them by taking steps to adjust shift schedules, work days, staff training, and patrolling**, and using phone calls or videoconferencing to minimize officers' interactions among themselves and with the public. In addition, some agencies reported making use of vacation days to protect susceptible populations. To prevent contagion, the National Police of Colombia has placed 20 percent of its police forces on furlough. The Panamanian police even point out the need to adjust the schedules for the use of common areas—dining room, entertainment areas, food distribution facilities, etc.

LAC police are **reallocating human resources to achieve a balance between administrative staff and operational staff** to maximize available officers and engage in activities to maintain public order. Agencies also reported targeting preventive patrolling to commercial, banking, and residential areas to deter vandalism, looting, and high-impact crimes.

Some agencies have also worked on strengthening their evidence-based response capacities during the pandemic. For example, the Colombian Police took four strategic measures: (1) putting together a team of experts in criminology, police studies, and information analysis, who were in charge of analyzing crime dynamics and trends; (2) strengthening data and information analysis tools; (3) prioritizing spatial analysis of safety and disorder to support service planning; and (4) conducting daily command meetings with all police commanders to analyze and address security and policing challenges in the emergency.

Communication

Increased communication both among police officers and with community members, via various channels, was deemed extremely important. In this regard, 92 percent of police agencies (12 countries) reported having implemented innovative ideas to improve internal and public communication regarding the challenges posed by COVID-19. The police mentioned using various channels such as social media (Facebook and Twitter), posters, institutional videos, and information on official websites for both internal and external communication. In addition to the above, the police also used other forms of external communication, relaying messages to

communities with megaphones and finding innovative ways to support citizens during the quarantine by bringing giant screens to neighborhoods for screening movies and playing music.

For internal communication, some police agencies reported holding daily videoconferences or calls with field commanders to conduct crime analysis and propose strategies to solve local problems arising from the pandemic. Police agencies have also been using radios to transmit general orders and communicate preventive health measures to the officers and the rest of the staff. In addition, police agencies have worked on disseminating information through posters and brochures visible in common areas such as armories, dining rooms, bathrooms, public service areas, and entrances to police facilities.

Other initiatives in communication have focused on facilitating inquiries about restricted economic/production activities (Brazil) and improving the handling of emergency calls received as a result of COVID-19 (Bolivia). In Brazil, the military police of Santa Catarina developed an online search tool for police officers and citizens to learn which economic activities are permitted as well as the potential restrictions. Both can make inquiries by searching for the company identification number (CNPJ), the National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE), or the description of the activity. The Bolivian National Police in the city of La Paz took steps to ensure that COVID-19-related calls to the emergency line 110 are handled by doctors who perform a telephone triage. In addition, calls are recorded in the system with emergency subtypes (COVID-19 suspected cases, positive cases, etc.).

Photo: Ecuador Police



Collaboration

The police feel most successful when they have consistent and robust collaboration with other entities involved in addressing the health crisis (hospitals, firefighters, state and municipal government, the ministry of health, etc.).

*Photo: Colombia Police**Photo: Peru Police*

Service

Some police agencies have gone beyond their law enforcement duties to assist in the distribution of food and medicine to vulnerable populations, especially those in isolated areas, or to the poor or the elderly. Other police forces have worked to reduce workload, redirect their priorities, and mitigate risks by suspending some police services such as issuing identity documents and criminal records, and/or other services that bring together a large number of people in one place.

Internal and Community Recognition

Police agencies in 10 countries (77 percent) reported having implemented innovative ideas to show gratitude internally to the officers and externally to citizens for their behavior during the pandemic. Several police agencies mentioned the importance of officers being recognized for their contribution by the police chief, commanders, secretaries, or the authorities. They also pointed out the importance of citizen recognition of police work. On the other hand, they indicated how important it is for the police to show gratitude to healthcare workers for their service, as well as to the general public for complying with the quarantine and social distancing measures. Finally, some police officers stated that local businesses and community members had donated PPE and other supplies to police departments in need.



Conclusions and Reflections

The health crisis is still ongoing. Although it is still too early to draw conclusions about its impact on policing, it is possible to reflect based on the interaction between three components presented in this paper: the socioeconomic and crime context in LAC, basic principles of effective policing, and responses of the region's police to the crisis.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, LAC police face a greater challenge than those of other regions given a history of high crime rates and a great deal of social anxiety about perceived insecurity. In contrast, the police in European countries or in North America—such as Italy, Spain, or Germany and the United States—already faced the lowest crime rates in decades before the crisis. Furthermore, it is important to consider the significant differences within LAC countries in terms of the number of police officers, crime incidence, and COVID-19 cases. These factors, considered in conjunction with the lack of institutional capacity in some countries, warns of the difficulties the police could encounter if the demand for their services were to further increase.

The COVID-19 pandemic could lead to a critical situation for the region's police. High crime rates and limited police resources are compounded by the fact that officers have to respond to the health emergency and enforce social distancing without neglecting the fight against crime. It is necessary to reflect on the extent to which the police can deal with this overload of duties over extended periods of time, since the situation does not seem to be returning to normal any time soon.

The police need equipment, training, and clear protocols to protect themselves against infection. While it appears that police agencies have been taking measures to protect their officers from possible infection, it is necessary to always be prepared because the scenario may change rapidly as the pandemic spreads and as confinement measures are relaxed. Most agencies surveyed said their officers had personal protective equipment: at least disinfectants and face masks, while significantly fewer provided eye protection and face shields. Most also reported having trained police officers on how to maintain social distancing when responding to calls for service. Finally, most reported having

contingency plans in place to deal with a potential scenario in which a significant number of officers end up on sick leave or in quarantine.

Police forces have maintained their reactive practices and are making greater use of technology. Police officers continue to respond to calls for service and are making greater use of systems that allow for remote service. Survey results on call volumes reveal a decline in those received by some police agencies (in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico), which may be an opportunity to redirect their efforts towards other, more proactive policing activities. In contrast, call volumes have increased in other LAC countries (Paraguay, Honduras, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Peru, and Panama). Lastly, in contrast to international practices,²² most agencies in the region have not received instructions to reduce physical arrests for minor offenses, despite the fact that several countries have taken such measures to decongest jails to prevent the risks of infection to officers themselves.

The health crisis has changed preventive policing activity. Most of the police agencies changed their activities, including reducing proactive/preventive policing (such as personal or vehicle searches) as well as community policing initiatives (community meetings, problem-solving task forces, etc.). In this regard, while most reported having increased police presence in shops (to prevent theft), hospitals (to assist in health emergencies), and public spaces (to manage quarantine and enforce social distancing), it would be important to verify to what extent this reallocation of police resources is not only reactive to the crisis, but rather oriented towards vulnerable areas with high crime rates that require a greater police presence based on solid analysis of crime data and community needs.

In summary, **the majority of the police agencies surveyed have substantially changed their activities, but these**

22 Lum, Maupin, and Stoltz (2020) indicate that 76 percent of the sample of U.S. and Canadian police agencies reported having provided their officers with formal guidelines on reducing the use of physical arrests for minor offenses.

changes do not indicate a new direction in policing. On the contrary, they seem to reflect the entrenchment of the standard, reactive model. In this regard, most agencies are strengthening reactive policing (such as responding to calls for service and making arrests), while rolling back proactive and community policing. However, one should take this statement with caution given the limited sample size, the level of aggregation of the study's metrics, and the very short time horizon in which to establish certain trends. Therefore, it is essential to monitor these changes closely because they can compromise police effectiveness in crime prevention and reduction and affect the quality of the relationship between the police and citizens and, consequently, affect police legitimacy.

Transparency and greater interaction between the police and citizens contribute to police effectiveness and legitimacy. It is important for both police officers and citizens to have a clear idea of the responsibilities and limitations of the police in enforcing social distancing and quarantine measures. In this regard, 11 of the 13 agencies surveyed reported having provided their staff with guidelines through a written protocol on how to respond to calls for service during the crisis. The limited access to information made it difficult to analyze this issue in greater depth, as only five police agencies could share their protocols and none had clear limitations on the extent of police power and the means to be used (e.g., use of force or detention) with persons who fail to comply with health measures.

If citizens are to comply with COVID-19 containment measures, they need to trust the people enforcing them. To enhance their efficiency, the police require voluntary cooperation. This reasoning is based on ample evidence from rigorous studies that conclude that citizens are more collaborative with the police when they consider them to be fair, transparent, and respectful in their treatment of citizens.²³ Rather than canceling community policing

activities, perhaps it would be a good time to strengthen ties and seek collaboration with the community and its leaders, as well as with other public servants. In fact, in some LAC countries, this crisis has required some police to increase their interaction with the population, and the manner in which this interaction happens can potentially contribute to the legitimacy and greater appreciation of the police service.

Future research should shed more light on some of the issues highlighted here. Among these, it will be important to consider how crime patterns are changing in the short, medium, and long term,²⁴ and to verify whether the existing evidence on police effectiveness and legitimacy is relevant to the new reality. For example, will the dynamics of crime change permanently, or is there a risk of old crime patterns returning after the short-term changes? Will evidence on the effectiveness of proactive and preventive policing strategies for crime reduction still be relevant during and after COVID-19? What will happen if the police discontinue proactive measures such as preventive patrolling of critical high-crime areas? On the other hand, how can tried-and-true practices in building legitimacy, such as procedural justice mechanisms,²⁵ be applied in the current scenario to enforce social distancing and maintain public order?

The dangers and challenges for the police are new and daunting. However, the challenges also present opportunities. Therefore, the measures currently undertaken by leaders of police agencies can have a considerable impact, in the medium and long term, on both the officers themselves and on citizens, in terms of legitimacy of police agencies and the trust invested in them.

²³ See Mazerolle et al. (2013) for a review of the evidence on procedural justice and legitimacy.

²⁴ Some studies in this area are already underway. See, for example, Campedelli, Aziani, and Favarin (2020) and Molher et al. (2020).

²⁵ For an overview of the evidence on procedural justice as applied by the police, see Tyler and Meares (2019).

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Statistical and Methodological Appendix

Survey and Sampling Methodology

The sample of police agencies in LAC consists of those that have participated in the IDB's regional survey on police management.²⁶ Each police agency was explicitly instructed to complete only one survey, preferably by an executive director with direct knowledge of the operational changes made in light of COVID-19. The IDB sent out requests to 18 countries in the region, 13 of which had responded by the April 27 deadline (a 72 percent response rate). Although a higher response rate and a larger sample that includes several representative cities per country, state, or province would have been preferable, the authors considered it critical not to prolong the process in order to obtain an estimate of the current impact of COVID-19 on police agencies that could be useful in its timing and content to public decision makers in the region, as well as to academics and the general public interested in issues of citizen security and justice.

Incomplete Responses and Statistical Processing

Only one of the police agencies surveyed left a specific question unanswered because they could not confirm the information before the deadline. The rate of missing responses was therefore close to zero and had no significant influence over the survey results included in this report. Finally, the small sample size and the aggregate nature of several of the questions suggest that these results should be taken with caution. It is important to note that the empirical analyses presented in Figures 1–3 should be interpreted as a snapshot of the situation of violence, the fragility of states, and the staffing of the public safety and justice systems in the countries considered, against which the survey results can be assessed. Therefore, the results should not be understood as convincing evidence of the predictions of the proposed models (which would require empirical analyses to isolate exogenous variation in the predicted determinants) or as causality between the variables.

Measuring State Fragility

The FSI integrates five components which in turn are composed of a series of specific indicators (all defined in Table A1) and which take on values between 0 (least fragile) and 10 (most fragile). The first component refers to the conditions of cohesion of the state and includes indicators of its security apparatus (C1), factionalized elites (C2), and group

²⁶ This survey, which is currently being conducted with various police agencies in the region, takes as its sampling unit the major city, state, or province in a given country where the police agency is located for the deployment of its operations.

grievance (C3). The second component refers to the economic conditions of the state and includes indicators of economic decline (E1), uneven economic development (E2), and human flight and brain drain (E3). The third component looks at political conditions and includes indicators of state legitimacy (P1), public services (P2), and human rights and the rule of law (P3). The fourth component is about the social conditions of the state and includes indicators of demographic pressures (S1) and refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) (S2). Finally, the FSI includes an indicator of external intervention (X1).

Table A1. Components of the Fragile States Index

Component	Factors	Indicators
Cohesion	Security apparatus	Includes questions on the monopoly on the use of force, the relationship between security and the citizenry, as well as those on force and arms.
	Factionalized elites	Includes questions on representative leadership, identity, resource distribution, equality, and equity.
	Group grievance	Includes questions on post-conflict response, equality, divisions, and communal violence.
Economic	Economic decline	Includes questions on public finances, economic conditions, economic climate, and economic diversification.
	Uneven economic development	Includes questions on economic equality, economic opportunity, and socioeconomic dynamics.
	Human flight and brain drain	Includes questions on retention of technical and intellectual capital and their economic implications (remittances, etc.).
Political	State legitimacy	Includes questions on confidence in the political process, political opposition, transparency, openness and fairness of the political process, and political violence.
	Public services	Includes questions on the general provision of public services, health, education, shelter, and infrastructure.
	Human rights and rule of law	Includes questions on civil and political rights, civil and political freedoms, violation of rights, openness, justice, and equality.
Social	Demographic pressures	Includes questions on population, public health, food and nutrition, the environment, and resources.
	Refugees and IDPs	Includes questions on refugees, internally displaced persons, and responses to displacement.
Cross-Cutting	External intervention	Includes questions on political, economic, or force intervention.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on information from FFP 2020.

Notes: (1) The indicators above were created by the Fund for Peace (FFP). <https://fragilestatesindex.org>

(2) Descriptions of the indicators are not exhaustive and are intended only as a starting point for further interpretative analysis by the reader.

Table A2 presents a categorization of fragility levels of all the abovementioned indicators into five groups at the global level by region.

Table A2. Indicators of the Fragile States Index by Category and by Region

Region	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Cohesion indicators	Security apparatus		Factionalized elites		Group grievance	
Africa	6.87	1.72	7.69	1.72	6.44	2.13
Americas	5.81	1.38	5.54	2.03	5.14	1.75
Asia	5.97	2.22	7.73	1.68	6.88	2.27
Europe	3.28	1.74	4.48	2.36	5.01	2.08
Oceania	4.51	2.06	5.29	2.79	4.61	1.32
Economic indicators	Economic decline		Uneven economic development		Human flight and brain drain	
Africa	7.26	1.21	7.43	1.35	7.04	1.01
Americas	5.04	1.52	5.66	1.57	5.83	1.89
Asia	5.16	1.85	5.33	1.46	5.35	1.65
Europe	3.98	1.54	2.76	1.20	3.44	1.60
Oceania	5.51	2.30	5.49	2.99	6.37	3.41
Political indicators	State legitimacy		Public services		Human rights and rule of law	
Africa	7.33	1.96	7.60	1.69	6.91	1.82
Americas	4.97	2.24	4.96	1.88	4.89	1.83
Asia	7.25	2.00	4.88	2.43	7.22	1.69
Europe	3.43	2.48	2.27	1.13	2.74	2.00
Oceania	4.30	2.47	4.79	2.99	4.01	2.24
Social indicators	Demographic pressures		Refugees and IDPs		External intervention	
Africa	7.85	1.61	6.60	1.97	7.07	1.54
Americas	5.12	1.54	3.55	1.59	4.81	1.99
Asia	5.59	1.91	5.36	2.55	5.99	2.27
Europe	2.33	1.02	3.64	1.75	3.42	2.37
Oceania	4.89	2.73	3.13	1.20	6.19	3.91

Source: Authors' elaboration based on FFP data.

Notes: Nationwide data. The Fund for Peace (FFP) Fragile States Index (FSI) for 2019. <https://fragilestatesindex.org>

The FSI makes it possible to calculate an overall score that varies between 0 (not fragile) and 120 (most fragile). In 2019, Yemen (113.5) was the most fragile state and Finland (16.9) the least fragile among the 178 countries assessed. This measurement shows significant differences among LAC countries, with Costa Rica and Argentina scoring 42 and 46, respectively, on one hand, and Honduras and Colombia, with a score of 77.8 and 75.7, respectively, on the other.

Table A3. Overall Fragile States Index (FSI) and Country-Specific Indicators

		Cohesion			Economic			Political			Social	Cross-Cutting	
Country	FSI	C1	C2	C3	E1	E2	E3	P1	P2	P3	S1	S2	X1
Argentina	46	4.9	2.8	4.4	4.9	5.2	3	4.2	3.3	3.9	3.2	1.9	4.3
Bolivia	72.9	5.9	8	5.4	5.4	8.2	6.8	6.7	6.2	5.7	6	3.4	5.2
Brazil	71.8	7	6.2	7	5	7.4	4.5	7	6.6	6.9	7.3	3.3	3.6
Chile	38.9	3.8	2.2	3	3.7	5.1	3.8	2.7	3.4	3.2	4.7	1.8	1.5
Colombia	75.7	6.9	7.6	7.1	4.8	6.8	5.6	5.7	5.3	6.7	6	7.8	5.4
Costa Rica	42	3.7	3.8	3.6	4.6	4.7	4.1	1.8	3.4	1.5	2.7	3.7	4.4
Ecuador	71.2	6.2	8.2	6.7	5.7	6.4	5.2	5.7	5.9	4.2	5.7	5.5	5.7
Guyana	68.2	6.7	5.1	6.7	5.8	5.1	8.8	4.8	5.6	3.4	5.6	3.5	7.1
Honduras	77.8	7	7.3	5.3	6.1	7.1	6.4	6.9	6.4	6.9	5.9	5.1	7.5
Mexico	69.7	8.8	5.4	6.6	4.5	5.5	5.3	5.9	6.2	5.9	5.5	4.8	5.2
Panama	47	5.2	2.2	5.6	2.8	6.6	4.6	2.9	4.4	3.8	4.1	2.5	2.3
Paraguay	67	6.2	7.8	5.2	4.9	7.3	5.6	6.8	5.6	5.7	4.9	2.9	4.2
Peru	68.2	6.5	6.9	8	3.6	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.1	3.7	6.2	4.1	2.9

Source: Authors' elaboration based on FFP data.

Notes: C1: Security apparatus; C2: Factionalized elites; C3: Group grievance; E1: Economic decline; E2: Uneven economic development; E3: Human flight and brain drain; P1: State legitimacy; P2: Public service; P3: Human rights and rule of law; S1: Demographic pressures; S2: Refugees and IDPs; X1: External intervention. Nationwide data. The Fund for Peace (FFP) Fragile States Index (FSI) for 2019. <https://fragilestatesindex.org>

