

Peace and Security in Bogotá: Transformations and Perspectives After the Armed Conflict

Report

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Executive Summary

Cities are at the centre of new security and violence trends in Colombia. This is a stark contrast to the fact that the urban theme has been largely absent from the single most important security development in recent years in Colombia: the end of the armed conflict with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Even though that conflict centred heavily on rural areas, its political economy converged on cities - in the shape of cocaine shipments, money laundering and myriad of armed groups that fed on the wealth created by transnational drug trafficking and the growing internal drug consumption. The capital Bogotá, as well as other medium and large cities linked to it, face the challenge of designing prevention and intervention policies against criminal networks and the socio-economic vulnerabilities they exploit within those cities.

The implications of these threats are not always manifested through killings and displacements, which tend to be more visible aspects of insecurity in cities. Security issues such as organised crime have long-term implications to Bogotá's socio-economic development and the governance of marginalised spaces.

The central message of this report is that Bogotá's most vulnerable areas to violence and crime are linked to the broader urban system through public services, mobility, infrastructure and the overall functioning of the city. Therefore, what happens in one urban area has implications for other areas and communities because of the deeply interconnected nature of cities. These interdependent challenges, spanning several policy areas, also extend to areas outside Bogotá. Despite a widespread popular perception that it is isolated from conflict dynamics, it has been and will continue to be

profoundly affected by transnational illicit flows and non-state armed groups.

Therefore, a critical policy recommendation of this report is that security strategies engage with the problems of socio-economic development and institutional presence in urban areas that have helped fuel the current threats. Related to this, another recommendation is that the planning of post-conflict national development, such as the significant investment being made by the national government in transportation infrastructure, take into account the gaps in local governance in terms of marginalised territories, weak institutional presence, poor connectivity and lack of economic opportunity. Evidence displayed in this report point to these vulnerabilities as being critical entry points for disruptive actors that will eventually harm socio-economic progress and security stability in Bogotá.

Systemic Threats

Bogotá is privileged in being such a central hub for Colombia's commercial, intellectual, financial and demographic exchanges – but this also places it at a uniquely vulnerable position to transnational organised crime. We highlight in this report two threats to Bogotá's urban system - that is, threats with the potential to disrupt several institutions, areas and activities:

- one is of a local character, comprising small gangs based on marginalised neighbourhoods, usually operating at a small scale with drug trafficking and extortion.
- The second systemic threat comes from illicit economies (especially the illicit drugs market) that provide the bond between these gangs and

a much larger network of criminal organisations with national, regional and transnational aspects.

The Impact

These threats result in a systemic impact: they affect areas beyond their most apparent geographical bases and carry implications for several spheres of public policy beyond security. The broader impact can be grouped in two cross-cutting urban challenges: socio-economic development of marginalised populations and governance of urban spaces and institutions.

Insecurity stemming from the threats identified above increases the fragmentation of the urban territory, leaving behind areas that are disproportionately affected by extortion, violence and forced displacement. It also affects services critical to connectivity, that is, the capacity of people to get to where they need or access the goods, services and opportunities for leisure, employment, education, health, business and a variety of other reasons. We give examples in the report of such an impact on Bogotá's public transportation and education, among other services.

Additionally, organised crime decreases the ability of the government and its institutions to implement policies and enforce laws across the municipal territory. This is a significant impact on governance - a government's ability to make and enforce rules and to deliver services.

The end of the armed conflict with FARC brings new questions within the policy domains of reintegration, employment and security. Whereas authorities interviewed for this report diverge on the dimension and pace of migration of former FARC rebels to Bogotá, there is preliminary evidence of some political violence related to the post-conflict processes.

It is also estimated that 55% of ex-combatants have left the special rural areas designated for reintegration into legal rural activities. A growing concern for Bogotá's authorities relates to the physical security of demobilised fighters, with two of them already having been assassinated in the capital - one of which was a member of the new FARC political party (Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria de Común).

Lessons learned from previous demobilisation and

reintegration processes point both to the permanent lure that large centres such as Bogotá represent for demobilised fighters out of economic options and the precarious manner with which settlement takes place in cities, often in marginalised areas with few jobs and many recruitment pressures towards illicit activities. There are also transformations under way in the criminal underworld: in cities, the fragmentation of illicit groups and the increase in domestic demand for cocaine; in the coca producing areas, the continuation of cultivation, production and transportation of coca leaves and cocaine inherited from FARC - what is now being called "criminal recycling".

Urban systems

This report argues that the use of a 'systems approach' helps to highlight and prioritise the main interactions between parts of the city (and the people in it) contributing to a problem. In other words, it helps us to understand how different problems are connected and, therefore, to devise cross-cutting, multidisciplinary, responses - bringing together the 'silos' in government and society. Under these lens, the focus of a comprehensive security policy goes beyond armed groups or even territories, but is instead placed on relationships between populations and the urban functions they need or want to access.

We exemplify that in Chapter 3 and argue that the ultimate aim of a systems-based security strategy would be to increase the linkages, or connectivity, between a troubled area and the rest of the urban environment, by building secure and efficient access to key opportunities and needs. These opportunities and needs may vary from context to context and from time to time, but they should help improve the socio-economic development and governance of troubled spaces.

Systems theory guides the analysis of this report and is more thoroughly explored and applied in Chapter 3. Systems are 'organised entities that are composed of elements or objects and their interaction'. This approach is helpful because it places its focus on the interactions between areas, actors and institutions and helps to better design comprehensive policies and approaches against malign actors.

We hope that this report can help illuminate the

linkages in Bogotá's urban system and how security, development and governance issues are inseparably linked to each other. The report aims to contribute to the strategic debate, approaches and methodology used by policy-makers, security practitioners, the private

sector and a broader audience involved in the search for solutions to urban areas. This is certainly one of Latin America's top challenges this century and is likely to be a critical element for Colombia's prosperity in the post-conflict.

Introduction

Colombia's transition period from internal war to peace is also a time of uncertainties. Following the disarmament that marked the end of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), in June 2017, the country braced for two critical security shifts. First, and perhaps the most obvious change, is the reduction in insurgency and guerrilla warfare (the National Liberation Army, ELN, is still active). The second, and less clear-cut, relates to shifts in the illicit economies of a country that has long ranked among the largest cocaine producers in the world, alongside other categories such as micro-trafficking informal mining and extortion.

The geographical distribution of armed groups and criminal networks is not clear either – which makes it difficult to plan policy interventions to fight them. Whereas rural areas have been at the centre of policy planning for the 'post-conflict' (a common word in Colombia despite remaining threats represented by ELN and dissident FARC), even featuring as the first item of the negotiating agenda with FARC, it is urban areas that account for overwhelming shares of economic activities and – perhaps even more importantly – social, political and economic opportunities and aspirations of increasing numbers of Colombians.

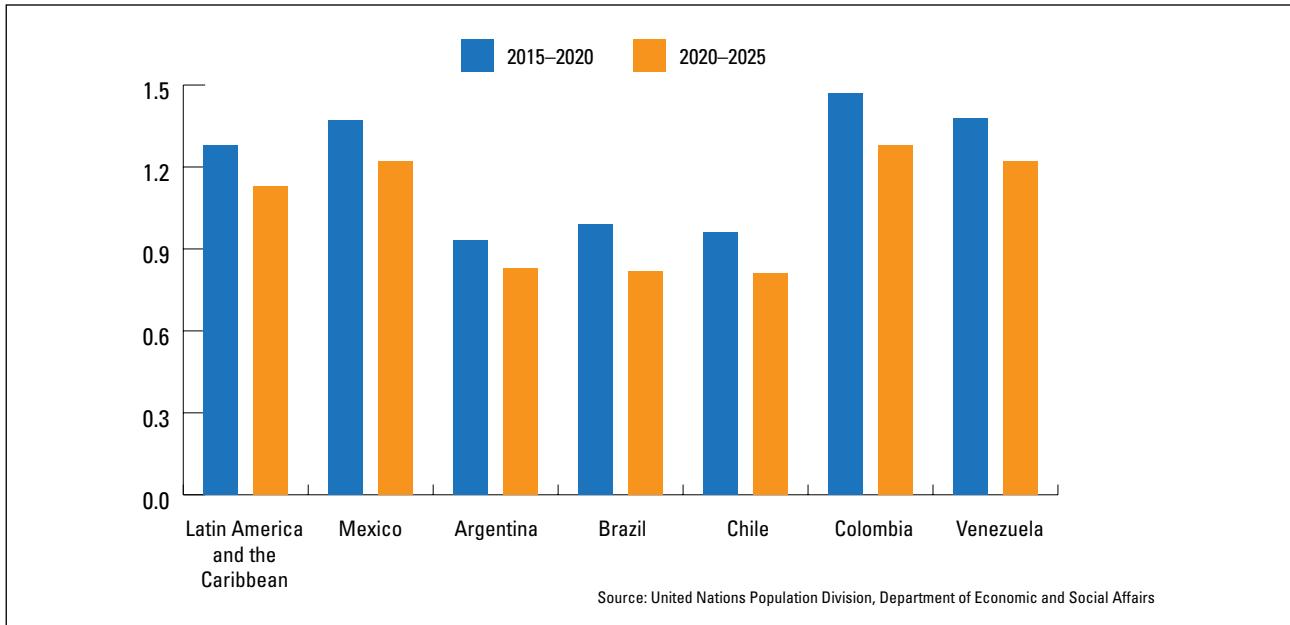
The country currently faces the highest annual growth of urban population (as a percentage) among large economies of Latin America, with 1.47% (see graphic). Colombia, therefore, concentrates two trends that have been consistently linked to increased risk of urban violence: rapid urbanisation, nearby conflict and post-conflict transition.

Bogotá, by far its largest city with eight million inhabitants (Medellín comes at a distant second with 2.5 million), exemplifies the paradox of large metropolises

during the past few decades: they have been largely spared from the bulk of guerrilla-related violence but, at the same time, face increased risks from security threats emerging in the period after the peace agreement with FARC. As we will show in Chapter 1, the country's policy-makers and security sector institutions (mainly the National Police and the armed forces) have turned their attention to the less-militarised but highly damaging threat of organised crime. Our own research and a wide range of secondary sources provide ample evidence that they are right in doing so.

We also highlight that cities, despite having been largely absent from the FARC peace process, are at the centre of the new security dynamics. This speaks directly to the concept of urban systems, which forms the main analytical lens of this report, guiding also its policy recommendations. Bogotá, forecast by the United Nations to become a megacity (with more than ten million inhabitants) by 2030, is our main geographical focus of analysis.

The main argument that will be supported throughout this report is that security threats and challenges in one urban area have implications for other areas and communities because of the deeply inter-connected character of cities. This is an important point because it provides a cautionary lens through which to analyse the recent improvement in terms of violent crime indicators experienced by Bogotá and other large cities. We also emphasise that this connectivity within and between cities tends to increase as they are increasingly considered crucial for socio-economic prosperity – something currently being explored by the Colombian government through significant investment in transportation infrastructure, bringing the country's settlements closer than ever to each other.¹



Graphic 1: **Average annual rate of change of the urban population (per cent)**

Given the importance of the connectivity within and between cities for all their social and economic processes, recent studies have started to also lay out how security trends are affected – and in turn affect – urban systems. For instance, one of our main points below is that Bogotá is privileged in being such a central hub for Colombia’s commercial, intellectual, financial and demographic exchanges – but this also places it at a uniquely vulnerable position to the so-called ‘dark side of globalisation’, or transnational organised crime.

The answer is not to cut these global links but rather to understand how urban systems work in order to design better prevention and interventions. That is the main utility of analysing security within an urban systems approach: to focus on interactions between areas, actors and institutions and to better design comprehensive policies and approaches against malign actors. Following urban planner Michael Batty’s definition, systems are ‘organised entities that are composed of elements or objects and their interaction’.²

With this systemic lens in mind, we have identified two security threats with potential to cause disruption across urban institutions, areas and activities – that is, impact beyond a specific locality. The threats are: illicit economies connected to cities’ national and global connections and territorially-based gangs (pandillas) exploiting areas of longstanding marginalisation.

These threats are explored in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 examines the impacts of criminal threats on urban society, economy and governance in more detail, grouping them in two categories of cross-cutting urban challenges: socio-economic development of marginalised populations and governance of urban spaces (the capacity of public institutions to act in certain areas). Our aim is to showcase not only how they are important, but how security threats interact with and intensify them. Finally, in Chapter 3, we tie these different trends together into a framework for use by policy practitioners and policymakers, based on systems approach and theory.

The study of urban security through a systems perspective is not a new approach, as we argue in Chapter 3. But its use by security experts has been almost negligible until recently, despite a number of policy-oriented studies from other disciplines already adopting it. For instance, we will later provide examples of how national and international institutions such as the National Planning Department (DNP), the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (Conpes), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank have analysed the Colombian urban systems.

We have adopted this theoretical lens because the systems approach provides tools for a more disciplined (systematic) analysis of how different elements

Systems theory

This approach was developed by the disciplines of biology and cybernetic studies in the 1960s. In essence, it is the study of interactions and the results they produce. Systems are 'organized entities that are composed of elements or objects and their interaction', according to urban planner Michael Batty. This approach is useful because it focuses on the *relationships* between areas, actors and institutions (in contrast to case studies). In the system of cities, security is not only influenced by events, but also by flows (illegal economies, migration, public transport, information, money) and interactions between communities, state or non-state actors (such as gangs). Strengthening some interactions and reinforcing the links between communities and urban opportunities and institutions are examples of objectives within a systems approach. Chapter 3 consists of a detailed analysis of that theory and its application.

of the city influence each other. Furthermore, it strongly encourages the analysis of interactions between two or more elements, rather than a strictly-delimited case study. For instance, in Chapter 3 we mention the case of a deeply marginalised community and the main elements and interactions to be taken into consideration by policy-makers, such as: threat, space, flows, spatial vulnerability and implications for the broader metropolitan area.

The aim of this report is to provide further analytical input to policy discussions and planning by authorities, agencies and other interested parties (such as the private sector). The study is based on field research, interviews, visits to areas of Bogotá that have faced recent intervention and an extensive survey of secondary sources. Our aim is not to conduct an exhaustive survey of security issues in Bogotá, but instead identify and categorise those that pose a significant risk of impact on cities' prosperity, governance and socio-economic development.

The linkage between security, development and, more specifically, urbanisation, has also garnered international recognition. This has been enshrined in the New Urban Agenda, a document by all United Nations member countries to guide urban growth in the next 20 years. It urges 'special attention' to cities undergoing post-conflict transitions and pledges to 'integrate inclusive measures for urban safety and the prevention of crime and violence', including terrorism, in developing urban strategies.³ This, alongside a specific goal in the sustainable development agenda for 2030 (goal 11: inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities) adopted by the international community, provides a global call for the integration of urban security, peacebuilding and development strategies. This study is meant as a contribution to this debate.

Chapter 1 – Systemic threats in Bogotá

Bogotá has registered impressive security improvements in the past few decades. The homicide rate decreased from 42 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1999 to 14.2 in 2017, a 66% fall.⁴ It has also managed to ‘convert itself into a model city in terms of reduction of violence indicators’.⁵ It is also considered a pioneer in security policies due to ‘innovations in the discourse and management of security themes’, such as the promotion of ‘citizen culture’ to prevent violence under mayor Antanas Mockus, the recovery of public spaces in degraded areas by Enrique Peñalosa (both in the second half of the 1990s) and,⁶ in the early 2000s, the prioritisation of security and social development policies in ‘critical zones’ that tended to concentrate crime.⁷ The municipal government’s 2016 intervention in the problematic Bronx area, bringing in policing and socio-economic recovery, represents another milestone in attempting permanent state presence in a longstanding criminal hotspot.⁸

Another source of optimism for the future is the fact that Bogotá does not have a strong presence, at least not directly, of large organised-crime groups, such as Clan del Golfo or Medellín’s La Oficina. Instead, its criminal underworld is populated by smaller gangs with a much more restricted reach, often at the level of one neighbourhood or a sub-area of it.⁹ These positive indicators can be misleading, or at the minimum they require further explanation. There are important shifts related to organised crime and illicit economies affecting Bogotá and other Colombian cities. To cite one important trend that has been consistently raised by authorities and experts alike, the so-called ‘micro-trafficking’ activity has been expanding ‘throughout the city’.¹⁰ The term refers to small neighbourhood-based gangs smuggling and selling drugs in small scale, without being directly part of

a large, regional or national criminal organisation (despite often having loose connections with larger groups).

This decentralised character of the problem has been cited by authorities and experts as a reason why they perceive a low threat of armed violence for Bogotá in the future. While it is true that many violent cities in Latin America, such as Rio de Janeiro, San Pedro Sula and San Salvador, are affected by large organised criminal groups (such as the Red Command, Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18), the literature on urban violence points to many other factors affecting urban security.

Increasingly, academic studies and international organisations working on development, security and humanitarian action have highlighted a changed pattern in urban vulnerability to violence and organised crime. These patterns relate mainly to the pace and management of urbanisation in the developing world, the impact of transnational illicit flows and the persistence of territories with insufficient state presence. The patterns affect many developing regions, but are particularly acute in Latin America - the most urbanised of all developing regions and also one of the hardest hit by criminal violence.

Therefore, shifting risk factors influence Colombian cities despite the expected decline in armed conflict after the demobilisation of its largest guerrilla group, FARC. Even though Bogotá has experienced security improvements, it is not disconnected from other, less secure, cities and regions. Much to the contrary, strategic planning for Bogotá’s security cannot consider it in isolation, but as part of a system of other cities in Colombia and transnational networks further afield.

This chapter aims to provide tools to help in the strategic planning and situational awareness for urban

security policy in Bogotá. It is not an exhaustive analysis of local security trends (we make reference to several local studies that have explored these issues). Instead, it analyses the critical risk factors relevant to Bogotá's urban system based on lessons and best practices from an international body of literature on urban security and development. It focuses on two critical threats: transnational illicit flows and local gangs (pandillas) focused on micro-trafficking.

The chapter is divided in the following way: the first section will lay out the growing body of evidence displaying the interaction between transnational crime and cities, highlighting why this is important for Bogotá as a future megacity and aspiring 'global city'.¹¹ The second part will develop further the analysis of security threats through a systems perspective, highlighting how armed actors and crime have interacted with the urban space and affected key services, institutions and areas in Colombian cities. The third and final part will connect these broader lessons to the key security trends identified during field research in Bogotá: micro-trafficking, decentralised gang structures and transnational criminal flows.

The risks that come with success

Despite the progress outline above, Bogotá's aspirations are much higher than purely managing the pockets of criminality and micro-trafficking. As then-mayor Gustavo Petro highlighted in 2013, Bogotá is a 'global city'.¹² It ranks as such in studies conducted by two international consulting firms, A. T. Kearney and Oxford Economics.¹³ The latter highlights Bogotá in its December 2016 study as one of the two highlight cities in Latin America, alongside Lima.¹⁴ Its dedicated agency for foreign direct investment, Invest in Bogotá, states that the Colombian capital received 840 foreign projects between 2006 (the year the agency was founded) and 2017, which amounts to a whopping 54% of all foreign direct investment in Colombia outside of the extractive sector.¹⁵

Furthermore, Colombian cities in general, including its capital, will need to invest in improving their connectivity to each other and to the outside world. In its urbanisation review for Colombia, the World Bank highlighted 'connectivity' as one of the top

three challenges for urban areas in order to transition the country 'from high-risk commodity- and natural resource-driven growth to a more-balanced model characterized by increasingly more productive, innovative, and diversified manufacturing and service sectors'.¹⁶ Colombia, says the World Bank, lags behind other countries at comparative rates of urbanisation in terms of connective infrastructure. Despite being by far the main national hub for investment and economic growth, the Bank strongly encourages more investment in transportation infrastructure connecting it to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.¹⁷

The pursuit of 'global city' status and the rising connectivity required by the changing political economy of Colombia comes with challenges associated with the 'dark side of globalisation' - the disruptive and threatening elements catalysed by the technological and economic aspects of globalisation. Ranking high among these threats lie transnational crime and terrorism, two recurring concerns for urban areas in Colombia. Other voices, this time from the strategic studies field, point to the exploitation of communications technologies and the global architecture of rules and norms (designed to bring order to globalised flows) by 'polymotivated' and fragmented criminal networks as a key preoccupation in Colombia.¹⁸ This fragmentation means that each node in a criminal network can work as an efficient contributor to a larger 'segmented economy' formed by 'transporters, money launderers and weapons dealers', among other criminal specialities.¹⁹

These warnings are not new, but they become increasingly relevant as new research narrows down on the specific impacts of transnational crime to cities - specifically those that are large and well-connected to illicit economies such as drugs, weapons and migrants.

Cities, especially the well-connected economic hubs that are increasingly referred to as 'global', are the central nodes of illicit networks, in a perverse game of risk-taking: the more global investment and human traffic a city attracts, the more criminal risk it takes. This was highlighted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which pointed to the immense growth in air passengers in the late 20th century and early 21st and the 29 million scheduled flights between 3,750 airports in cities across the world as examples of how the global

economy 'confounds the regulatory attempts of any individual nation'.²⁰ Prominent studies on cities' role in global development also highlight this darker side of global cities: Jo Beall and Sean Fox argue that transnational criminal networks thrive in low- and middle-income countries' urban areas, particularly those affected by armed conflict - categories that seem relevant for Colombian settlements.²¹

Latin America has been, unfortunately, at the centre of recent case studies on the urban impact of transnational organised crime. The municipal level is where transnational illicit structures inevitably maintain 'relationships with grassroots criminal activity', something that has been particularly acute in Colombia:

The development of hybrid local power relationships has played a particularly important role in Colombia, where first the guerrilla movement in the 1990s and then paramilitaries demobilized since 2003 sought to influence local power, while a new class of politicians with strong illegal connections in regions such as La Guajira, Valle del Cauca and Magdalena have sought to direct and use this support for their own ends.²²

The most severe instances of 'hybrid local power', when territories or local administrations are co-opted by criminal organisations, take place in smaller municipalities in less-developed areas. But these are connected to Bogotá as part of a system of cities, what is known in urban studies as a system of systems. In the case of Colombia, this system is unevenly developed: whereas cities concentrate 76% of the population²³ and have accounted for 50% of gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the past four decades, their transportation infrastructure is considered more time-consuming and expensive in comparison to other Latin American countries of similar level of socio-economic development.²⁴ This connectivity problem undermines linkages in the legal economy: there is relatively low levels of inter-regional trade and industrial connections (such as supply-chain linkages). For instance, Bogotá and Medellín have similar industrial activities, replicating each other's output rather than complementing each other.²⁵ This precarious state of legal economic connections contrasts to

the proven interest and ability of illicit networks to utilise Colombian cities as hubs for activities such as selling drugs and laundering money, in addition to the loose but highly effective connections between large criminal organisations and local gangs. In summary, legal economies lag behind the illicit ones in terms of connectivity.

Perhaps even more concerning for Colombia's urban security landscape, political and administrative coordination is also deficient. Colombia is 'one of the most-highly decentralized countries in Latin America', with local governments having responsibilities over aspects of economic development, security and social services. Coordination between public administrations and agencies - a key asset in fighting transnational (and national) criminal networks - is precarious between municipal governments in several policy areas.²⁶ Although the national government has nominal responsibility over organised-crime structures, local governments have been confronted with several challenges related to both insurgents and criminal groups - for instance, municipalities have been involved in responses to displaced populations, forced recruitment, land mines and, perhaps even more challenging, the armed structures dealing with national and transnational illicit economies.²⁷ Aggravating this picture of uneven urban governance is the lack of adequate technical and operational capacities by medium and small municipalities to deal with these challenges.²⁸

The contrast between the connectivity of criminal organisations and the still precarious coordination between agencies and authorities highlights how the 'dark side of globalisation' is at work in Colombia. Even though Bogotá has been spared the harshest impact of this urban nexus of transnational crime, other Colombian cities connected to it have not - what we will explore in the next section. This warning is particularly acute now that Colombians expect to reap economic and developmental benefits of the post-conflict and a growing chorus of development experts point to the centrality of built-up areas to transition Colombia's economy away from commodity dependence.

Connected problems

As Colombia negotiated the end of over half a century of conflict with FARC, it established ambitious

goals for socio-economic development in rural areas and the replacement of coca production for legal crops. The demobilisation of guerrilla fighters was accompanied by the armed forces' 'Plan Victoria' in early 2017, aiming to bring military and civilian state presence to former areas with FARC influence.²⁹ In July 2017 President Juan Manuel Santos launched the Development Programme with Territorial Focus (Programa de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial, PDET), aimed at the 170 municipalities most affected by the armed conflict, poverty and illicit economies.³⁰ These are important measures, and indeed the internal armed conflict against leftist guerrillas has consistently been fought in rural areas and small towns, with a few exceptions (Medellín being a prominent one). However, the policy priority given to rural areas in the postconflict risks sending a message that urban areas are immune to the spoilers expected in coca-producing regions or that security risks are low.

As the Fundación Paz y Reconciliación (PARES) has emphasised in an article, 'Bogotá is not unconnected to the postconflict'.³¹ The capital, alongside other medium and large settlements, have long been affected by the effects of armed conflict in their rural surroundings. Recent academic studies and journalistic pieces in Colombia have highlighted how some of these dynamics are being altered and sometimes intensified after the peace agreement with FARC. Finally, other cities in Latin America provide plentiful examples of how peacetime organised crime, if not tackled with the right policy tools, can develop methods of territorial and population control very similar to the ones Colombia has suffered with FARC or ELN.

Colombia is not alone in focusing predominantly on the rural aspects of conflict and post-conflict. Studies on conflict involving guerrilla groups such as FARC and other non-state political armed actors (such as right-wing paramilitaries) have been heavily influenced by the rural bias of counter-insurgency theory.³² A worrying sign for Colombia and other post-conflict settings is that the literature and policy practice on post-conflict security and development suffers from the same rural bias, including in areas such as conflict prevention, peacemaking and reconstruction.³³ The problem with this approach is that it generally fails to take into account

specific risks and vulnerabilities of cities, with geographical, social, political and security features substantially different from those in rural areas.

Consider this warning from Colombia's public ombudsman in 2012, on how three non-state armed groups, including two of a criminal nature (Los Rastrojos and Los Urabeños, the latter now known as Clan del Golfo) 'issue threats to leaders and social organizations, carry out murders and terrorist attacks, establish rules for coexistence, restrict the mobility of local inhabitants, control prices and impose tributes on local business, collect extortion money'.³⁴ The assimilation of some selected aspects of nation-state responsibilities and privileges (taxation, monopoly on the use of force, restrictions on freedom of movement...) have been, unfortunately, common in Colombian cities such as Buenaventura and Tumaco. The territorial demarcation of such 'assimilation' of selected powers by organised crime is one manifestation of a broader geographical and political challenge posed by organised crime, which the IISS has described as 'disputed territories': 'pockets of high-intensity armed activity in which governance challenges and the activities of non-state armed groups converge'.³⁵

With the exit of FARC from many isolated rural areas that have had a longstanding linkage to illicit economies such as coca cultivation, drugs production and illegal mining, the scope for organised criminal groups increases. Medellín, for instance, has been deeply affected by drug trafficking flowing between troubled rural areas. The commander of Antioquia's police force has recently urged more action to survey 'inter-municipal roads, where clandestine merchandise travel hidden in the enormous commercial flows' around the country's second-largest city and longstanding smuggling 'highways' connected to the Pacific coast of neighbouring Chocó department.³⁶

Medellín today is considered a 'model city' and a 'world laboratory' in urban security,³⁷ with the World Bank recently saying the city's experience 'in integral urban transformation and social resilience attracts intense interest from other cities around the world'.³⁸ Our own field research visit to Medellín and Comuna 13, previously a site of territorial control for FARC and paramilitary groups such as the Bloque Cacique

Nutibara (BCN), shows that former 'no-go areas' have been deeply integrated into the urban society via tourism, transportation infrastructure and public services.³⁹ However, there is also extensive evidence of continued territorial influence by criminal groups tapping into the illicit 'highways' mentioned above - a testament that organised crime, like cities, can be resilient. Carlos Alberto Patiño cites 14 criminal gangs based in different areas of Medellín in 2012, linked to national organisations such as Clan del Golfo (then called Los Urabeños), Oficina de Envigado and Los Ratojos.⁴⁰ In 2017, local newspaper *El Colombiano* published a detailed investigation into 'La Oficina' a networked organisation overseeing at least eight local gangs, each with 'jurisdiction' (meaning at least partial territorial control) over different areas of the city and its metropolitan area.⁴¹ That doesn't even include a separate (although reportedly smaller) group of gangs linked to Clan del Golfo.⁴² War and peace between these groups are fleeting conditions, depending on personal relationships between gang leaders, their national overlords, arrests and killings of members, among other reasons.

One important characteristic of current criminal occupation of urban spaces in Medellín is the reduced level of violence it causes, especially in terms of homicides: it had its highest homicide number in 1991, with 6,349 murders, whereas in 2013 it had 924.⁴³ The improvement has been fragile, with increases in homicides since then, although still much lower than the figures from the war against the Pablo Escobar Cartel. Part of the improvement in security is also due to greater stability inside the combos and gangs.

The data on homicides hide other forms of territorial influence on the part of criminal groups. In 2015, a study by Alexandra Abello Colak and Jenny Pearce reported extortion as 'one of the crimes (that have) expanded most' in the previous decade, part of a 'criminal economy' that forces people, including some of the city's poorest, to pay a price for 'protection' by criminal groups.⁴⁴ Another study, on criminal bands in the post-conflict by Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, makes 'special reference' to 'shifts in the geography of extortion', with small businesses, transport companies and other activities having to pay tolls to criminal groups in

'at least 30 cities', affecting 125,000 people (with numbers from 2012).⁴⁵ In Medellín, the study mentions the age-old phenomenon of invisible borders, in which people who want to cross into a gang's territory have to pay for the privilege.⁴⁶

Extortion is also a prominent business model in Buenaventura, which Fundación Ideas para La Paz calls an example of 'what the new scenarios for confrontation will be: more urban than rural' and 'more concentrated territorially'.⁴⁷ The city made international headlines in 2014 when Human Rights Watch denounced the practice of 'chop-up houses', where criminal groups would dismember their enemies alive. Two years later, 'chop up' houses seem to have ceased (or become less visible) as a practice among criminal groups, but a local inhabitant told Fundación Ideas para La Paz that criminal groups 'no longer chop [pican], but they still threaten, extort and we even have to ask permission to leave the neighbourhood'.⁴⁸

Another rising aspect of urban violence patterns in Colombia is forced displacement. This is another phenomenon strongly linked to criminals' territorial control, both in rural and urban areas.⁴⁹ Displacement in rural areas also affects cities, since rural-to-urban movement has recently formed the majority of forced displacements in Colombia.⁵⁰ Whereas a significant portion of rural inhabitants flee to nearby towns and villages, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in February 2017 that 'at least 50%' of all registered internally-displaced persons have based themselves in 'slums of the 27 largest cities', amounting to 3.6 million displaced people who have moved to informal settlements of large and medium-sized cities where public services and access to opportunities tend to be poor.⁵¹

An even greater challenge for the near future, however, comes from intra-urban displacement, that is, people forced to move from their homes but fleeing to other (often precarious) accommodation within the same city. This category has experienced a constant growth since at least 2005 due to clashes between armed groups for territorial control, with a spike in 2012.⁵² Although plentiful information exists on the incidence of intra-urban displacement in cities recently affected by high levels of conflict and violence such as Buenaventura, Tumaco

and Medellín, experts still point out the lack of wider data on at-risk populations and armed violence in urban areas.⁵³

Media and government attention to this phenomenon tends to be linked to small cities and towns in poorer areas of the country, but that is at least partially linked to the 'hidden' character that displacement takes in large centres such as Bogotá and Medellín. Whereas displacement of large groups of people has gone down, individual displacement has increased, adopting a 'drop by drop' character that tends to attract less media attention.⁵⁴ The modus operandi of territorial control by criminals in urban peripheries is also significantly different from that of guerrilla groups or paramilitaries: instead of focusing on overt displays of combat power, criminals use fear as a 'tool of social control', in the words of a humanitarian organisation.⁵⁵ For instance, gangs use 'threats and selective killings', 'displace people that refuse extortion', recruit children and teenagers and sexually exploit inhabitants.⁵⁶

The numbers relating to forced displacements in Bogotá, like those of homicides, have experienced

significant decline in recent years. However, the capital still receives a significant number of displaced persons: in 2017, whereas 177 people were displaced in Bogotá, 4,349 people arrived. Whereas the number of incoming population has also been in decline (compared to, for instance, 53,746 in 2007), the accumulated number in the decade until 2017 is 270,939, which comprises a rapid migration pattern with ongoing implications for territorial governance and development (see next chapter).⁵⁷

The picture from recent trends and numbers relating to the territorial pattern of non-state armed violence is that of ongoing and, in some cases, increasing risks to urban areas in the years to come. Time and time again we see Bogotá experiencing reductions in its violence indicators, something that is also repeatedly pointed out by its authorities. However, there is a tendency to downplay the qualitative aspects of criminal patterns in urban Colombia, such as territorial control, the illicit economies flowing across cities and the networked aspect of criminal organisations. In the next section we will explore some of the implications of these trends for future urban vulnerabilities and policy-making.

The ELN in Bogotá

The National Liberation Army (ELN), which has become Colombia's largest guerrilla after the demobilization of the FARC, has been involved in several attacks on the capital in recent years. Less than two weeks after the start of peace negotiations with that guerrilla, in February 2017, a bomb exploded in the city centre, leaving one person dead and dozens injured. In June of the same year an explosive device affected another commercially important area of the city: the Andean Commercial Centre. The attack, which killed three people, was attributed by the authorities to the People's Revolutionary Movement (MRP), which has links to the ELN. In addition, during 2018 other incidents have been reported in the capital, such as a bomb that left no injuries in Paloquemao, distribution of pamphlets and paintings of the group's acronym in houses.

The attacks are part of a broader series of actions that, according to many analysts, were intended to demonstrate military strength to increase the guerrilla's bargaining power, in the context of the conversations that began in Ecuador in February 2017. An advantage that Bogotá has is the fact that the ideology motivating the ELN is alien to the city, or very marginal. Bogotá, like most metropolitan centres, is cosmopolitan and pragmatic. This makes it difficult for its citizens to connect with the communist ideology of the ELN, which has traditionally had more success in rural areas. It is a very different situation, for example, from Belfast, in Northern Ireland, where the division between Protestants and Catholics, even by means of walls, was a fundamental factor in the armed struggle of groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

But it is important to note the warning made by Brigadier General Raul Antonio Rodriguez, commander of the Fifth Division of the National Army, that the ELN has cells operating in the capital autonomously, with members that do not generally know each other. In addition, Daniel Mejía, then Secretary of Security, said in March 2018 that the MRP "has recruited in several Bogota sites; this has led us to conduct more investigations that have made it possible to prevent attacks." The challenge for the capital is to strengthen the work of intelligence to prevent further physical and psychological damage in Bogotá.

Systemic vulnerabilities

Authorities in several layers of public administration perceive little risk to Bogotá from two of the most disruptive security threats identified above: large (national or transnational) organised crime and territorial control of spaces by gangs. Authorities interviewed for this report tend instead to emphasise the presence of small ‘micro-trafficking’ gangs as the main threat for the years to come.⁵⁸ However, evidence also coming from interviews, visits on the ground and a review of documents pertaining to Bogotá’s security indicates a more complex situation: indeed, there is little evidence of gangs’ territorial control or presence of powerful criminal organisations, but there has been consistent documentation of armed groups of varying sizes and organisational structures operating in peripheral areas and influencing their populations and related illicit economies (short of acquiring ‘control’ of said territories). For instance, as recently as 2014 UNHCR reported that ‘the armed groups present in some neighbourhoods of [Bogotá] possess a level of organisation, control, weaponry, information and capacity to establish networks that very rarely is thought possible for common delinquency’.⁵⁹

As we have stated before, the effects of organised crime and ‘post-conflict’ security trends on Bogotá encompass more than the direct criminal violence manifested through killings and displacements. The most immediate security threats affecting Bogotá are related to non-state armed groups emerging from and woven into both transnational networks and peripheral urban areas.

These armed groups exploit the city’s systemic vulnerabilities – that is, the gaps and failures in city functioning that allow for illicit processes to take root. The systemic vulnerabilities in Colombia’s large urban areas consist mainly of transnational illicit networks and weak state presence in peripheral areas. These two factors are linked to the social and physical organisation of the urban system and cannot be easily changed – at least in the short term. Hence they are systemic, involving a complex array of intertwined institutions, policymakers and infrastructure, complicating government interventions. In this way, Bogotá’s non-state armed groups tap into core vulnerabilities intrinsic to

large and well-connected cities such as Bogotá and deriving from, among other sources, rapid and unmanaged urbanisation processes.

These two systemic vulnerabilities – transnational flows and weak state presence – act as accelerators and catalysts for conflict and violence. They facilitate the action and presence of criminal actors and reduce local institutions’ capacity to prevent or counter them.

Systemic threats: illicit economies and territorial ‘micro-trafficking’ gangs

We will explore more of the developmental and governance impact of these trends in Chapter 2. To conclude this chapter, we will explore two broad categories of threats exploiting them: illicit economies connected to cities’ national and global connections and the territorial presence of non-state armed groups in marginalised areas.

We will explore these two immediate risk factors requiring policy and operational attention by authorities mainly in the security sphere. They are, however, linked to other dimensions of urban life and, for that reason, to other policy areas.

Illicit economies and criminal networks

Bogotá, as capital of a country with a longstanding role in the global drugs market (especially the cocaine market), has been affected by the illicit economies feeding armed conflict and organised crime even when they don’t physically operate in the city itself. The effects of criminal trends in other parts of the country on Bogotá have been clear at least since the 1960s, when ‘emerald mafias’ bosses established themselves and their ‘support groups’ with armed capabilities there, followed by the Medellín Cartel.⁶⁰ The interest and presence of guerrilla groups in the capital bears some resemblance to today’s organised crime picture, in the sense that groups such as M-19 and the ELN ‘kept a low profile’, acted in the peripheries and operated in extortion, among other activities.⁶¹

This systemic vulnerability comes with the ‘package’ of being by far Colombia’s largest, wealthiest and most well-connected city. In fact, it is not an exclusive vulnerability of Bogotá, but one that is shared by many large and mega-cities. For instance, David Kilcullen

has outlined how violence surged in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, as gangs fought for control of 'key nodes in the city's flow systems', including legal trade in textiles and the illicit one in cocaine.⁶²

The physical location, volume and profitability of illicit economies are famously difficult to measure, since only a small share of illicit flows globally are ever apprehended or even detected. The extent of money laundering has been estimated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at 2% to 5% of global GDP (gross domestic product), whereas the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that only around 0.2% of all proceeds of crime laundered through the global financial system are seized.⁶³

The evidence points to a strong role for Bogotá in illicit flows from Colombia's still-thriving organised criminal landscape. It is not surprising that the Corporación de Abastos de Bogotá, or Corabastos, one of the largest open markets in Latin America, serves as 'generator for part of the criminal activity in Bogotá' and a 'local, regional and national node for illegal transactions'.⁶⁴ It is a hub for the trends we have outlined above with regards to connectivity of global cities: it sees a daily flow of 200,000 people, 13,000 vehicles, transporting 16,800 tonnes of food.⁶⁵ Research by Ariel Ávila and Bernardo Perez has highlighted five illicit products that enter Corabastos 'regularly and in great quantity': narcotics, weapons, adulterated liqueur, contraband liqueur and money for laundering of criminal assets.⁶⁶

Money laundering is an almost natural vulnerability for Bogotá as a political and economic capital, but it has been magnified by the diverse array of illicit actors surrounding the city in recent decades. In the 1990s and 2000s, one of the main sources of interest for national criminal groups (known locally as *bandas criminales*) in the capital was its role as a money laundering hub for international drug-trafficking businesses.⁶⁷ This interest is still strong, alongside the more recent internal drug-trafficking market developed among the capital's eight million dwellers. An example of this money-laundering role is the arrest in Bogotá of alleged leaders of an extortion and money laundering ring serving FARC and the apprehension of assets worth 650 billion pesos (US\$ 227 million) by the General Prosecutor's Office in February 2018.⁶⁸

Whereas it is difficult to track the evolution of these illicit flows through time due to the unreliable numbers available, metropolitan centres face increased vulnerability from a key trend taking place across Colombia: the character of threats to public security has shifted decisively to organised crime from insurgency. Whereas Colombia's guerrillas have traditionally been linked to rural areas and causes (hence rural reform being such an important component of the FARC peace agreement), the higher priority given by crime to economic output links their interests to cosmopolitan areas.

Security authorities interviewed for this study have expressed more concern with the growth of organised crime in rural areas or peripheries of large cities than with increased vulnerability of large cities themselves. For instance, authorities in the Bogotá Metropolitan Police expressed concern with 'an increase in criminality in rural areas due to the absence of an actor that exerts and imposes its justice and control', referring to FARC's demobilisation.⁶⁹ This evaluation seems accurate, given the predominantly rural character of the two biggest illicit economies in Colombia: the cocaine industry and informal mining. However, a truly systemic view of the strategic challenge posed by organised crime has to view the linkages between rural and urban areas. As the International Crisis Group has highlighted, 'armed groups and drug traffickers use illegally mined gold to launder money', facilitated by the international commodity market.⁷⁰ A similar warning has been issued by the Organisation of American States (OAS), whose head of the Support Mission to Colombia has said 'criminal bands have more influence in urban areas' while at the same time aspiring to control rural areas and their economies revolving around drugs and mining.⁷¹

The impact of illicit economies from surrounding areas (and abroad) on metropolitan centres has become even more important as a risk factor due to a new modus operandi of organised crime in the country. The consensus among both policy practitioners and experts is that organised crime in Colombia has been shifting to a more decentralised leadership structure, with less emphasis on top-down command and fragmented nodes operating autonomously on the streets of major cities, but still linked to larger and potentially more dangerous criminal organisations. This poses a direct

risk to some of the more destitute territories that can then spread to other parts of the urban system.

Micro-trafficking gangs

Organised criminal groups are potential spoilers of peace settlements by, among other things, prolonging the life cycle of non-state armed groups and exacerbating violence.⁷² Even international peace operations now take organised crime seriously as a critical peace spoiler.⁷³ One major study states that 'organised crime tends to become more prominent' during transitions from conflict to peace.

Recent studies focused on Latin America have identified a gradual shift in this dynamic that is even more worrying for large, well-connected cities: globalisation, argues James Cockayne, facilitates global 'value chains' for illicit networks and thus increases the resources available even for small local gangs to build a criminal enterprise.⁷⁴ Easy transportation, illicit financing and communications with transnational actors are now available to a larger range of criminal actors.⁷⁵

A version of this local-global linkage between criminal actors is taking place in Colombian metropolitan areas, including Bogotá. As a senior authority involved in security policy at the national level told us, 'there is a huge concern with micro-trafficking and drug business involving local gangs. This is a very important factor since we were never a consuming country until now'.⁷⁶ This view is backed up by broader academic studies of Colombia's organised crime: Fundación Ideas para La Paz says the current picture of organised crime is 'more localised, more fragmented in organisation and territorial terms'.⁷⁷ Ariel Ávila says large criminal organisations and local gangs have established loose alliances that can be termed 'criminal subcontracting' by the larger groups to the smaller, local, ones.⁷⁸ He raises attention to a 'decentralisation' of criminal structures in Colombian cities caused in part by the elimination of larger and more centralising criminal bosses. In their places, local bosses achieved control over smaller nodes of criminal markets, usually in relatively small territorial spaces, resulting in a 'complex network articulating itself through territorial nodes'.⁷⁹

Bogotá has not been recently affected by territorial disputes by well-resourced criminal organisations for

territory (such as the ones seen in Mexico and some Brazilian cities, especially Rio de Janeiro). Criminal groups are, however, linked to larger structures operating around Colombia's longstanding illicit economies. The city is no stranger to criminal violence and has hosted structures directly linked to some leftist guerrilla groups (FARC, ELN), but a significant investment in multidimensional urban security has reduced homicides and gang warfare. These policies have built on the 1991 Constitution's devolution of more security responsibilities to local and departmental governments and the resulting increase in local leadership around security policies.⁸⁰ Multidimensional security efforts include mayor Antanas Mockus's regulations reducing opening hours and alcohol consumption at night, disarmament programmes and a 'citizen culture' education initiative against violence.⁸¹ Subsequent administrations have built on this progress with a steady increase in security budgets alongside continued attention to social development, security institutions and 'co-habitation' measures.⁸² This has not eliminated the presence of organised crime, much less that of illicit economies, but instead contributed to a less violence-prone and decentralised structure in Bogotá.

Whereas less visible and, more importantly, less harmful to the lives of bogotanos, this decentralisation also hampers traditional law enforcement tools. The persecution of criminal leaderships as a strategy to 'decapitate' organised criminal organisations is one such tool, classed by Moises Naím as 'rigid, top-down' structures of law enforcement, with declining effectiveness against globalised, networked crime.⁸³ In fact, the 'kingpin strategy', consisting on the elimination of top criminal leaders, has been consistently linked to a subsequent further fragmentation of criminal organisations, thus perpetuating – rather than reducing – the problem now experienced by Bogotá and other Colombian urban centres.⁸⁴

The resilience of organised crime and illicit economic flows to law enforcement and even military responses consisting on repression of gang members, kingpin elimination and drugs interdiction raises broader public policy questions. For urban areas, which tend to see the heaviest impact in terms of human lives and social disruption, this highlights a public policy challenge that has recently received increased academic

attention: the formulation of local alternative responses based on the design, organisation and governance of cities – in other words, the urban system. The case for such alternatives becomes even stronger when one considers that the impact of organised crime and illicit

economies extends to other spheres of urban governance and life beyond law enforcement. The next chapter will analyse these implications and the resulting policy challenges in two key areas: socio-economic development and territorial governance.

Chapter 2 – Shocks and vulnerabilities: the broader impact of violent actors in the urban system

Organised crime and illicit networks are complex challenges to urban public policy, and the need for multi-dimensional, cross-governmental coordination against them has been a frequent recommendation by experts and international organisations. These challenges are also systemic, not only because they happen in cities (which have increasingly been studied through a systems approach) but also because they can affect areas beyond their most apparent geographical bases and carry implications for several spheres of public policy beyond security. The broader impact can be grouped in two cross-cutting urban challenges: socio-economic development of marginalised populations and governance of urban spaces and institutions.

Shock to the City

The impact on Colombia's governance and development from these sources of insecurity, while not as severe as in the past, threatens its aspirations and momentum after the peace agreement with FARC. Whereas rural areas are of great importance to the implementation of the agreement, it is in cities where these impacts risk the greatest damage to Colombia's long-term prospects. Colombia is embarking on an ambitious expansion of its inter-city connectivity via infrastructure investment. Even if the government's plan of keeping former guerrillas in rural areas as farmers is successful, the connectivity between cities – and that between them and their rural hinterlands – is poor. As we have mentioned above, the World Bank considers that 'Colombian cities are poorly connected to internal and external markets'.⁸⁵ An example of this is that, at the end of 2016, 13 municipalities could only be reached by plane or boat (both much more costly

than travelling by road or train).⁸⁶ Whereas this might not be so harmful to large agricultural businesses, it poses a challenge to the expansion of opportunities to smaller-scale farming as part of the first item of the peace talks with FARC (consisting of rural reform and access to agriculture). This is particularly challenging considering the need to move farmers away from highly-profitable coca crops.

This fragility of rural economies places cities as a potential destination for at least sections of demobilised guerrilla members (alongside 'common' economic migrants) to cities. Furthermore, Colombia's future economic prosperity is linked to economic and social development in cities to a much larger extent than in rural areas. As the World Bank has put it, 'the efficiency and productivity of Colombia's urban system will be a key determinant in the ability of the country to transition from a middle-income to a higher-income economy'.⁸⁷

It is abundantly clear that national authorities are aware of the importance of a well-connected system of cities. One of 'the most ambitious infrastructure plans in the country's history' is underway to expand the road network and reduce travel time and risks between Colombia's main cities,⁸⁸ called Fourth Generation of Road Concessions, with current investment estimated at \$50 billion pesos.⁸⁹

Inside the cities themselves, Colombia has earmarked US\$ 8 billion for infrastructure investment in the next decade, but it is unclear whether this will be sufficient to correct major imbalances in past infrastructure investment. For instance, global real estate consultancy JLL has highlighted that 'all major Colombian cities are struggling with chronic mobility issues' due to rapid urbanisation in past decades and loose regulations

exempting developers from investing in public goods such as traffic solutions.⁹⁰

This massive bet on increasing connectivity between and within cities brings with it the risks related to the 'dark side of globalisation' mentioned above: the expansion of licit flows also increases opportunities for illicit economies and the organised crime driving them. In other words, the two main systemic threats we identified above, namely illicit economies and organised crime, tend to also benefit from the positive trend of increased connectivity. Furthermore, with urban economic output becoming increasingly important for Colombia, the relative impact of crime for Colombia's economic development tends to increase.

Development issues

Organised crime and illicit economies have had a significant impact on two key drivers of urban socio-economic development. First, insecurity increases the fragmentation of the urban territory, leaving behind areas that are disproportionately affected by extortion, violence and forced displacement. The second impact relates to mobility and accessibility, particularly that of disadvantaged neighbourhoods affected by criminal violence.

The persistence of crime in a city causes what Vanda Felbab-Brown has called 'bifurcation' of urban development: the wealth and relative safety of some areas in 'global cities' stand in contrast to nearby slums stuck in a vicious cycle of poverty and insecurity.⁹¹ This has caused the formation of gated communities and overall wealthy areas disconnected from and fearful of the dangerous slums. For instance, the term 'broken city' has often been used in Rio de Janeiro to describe this contrast between safe and unsafe neighbourhoods ever since the 1994 publication of an iconic book by journalist Zuenir Ventura describing the Vigário Geral slum, site of a massacre perpetrated by military police officers in 1993.⁹² Beyond the ethical problem of developing cities that persistently place the poor in more dangerous areas, this bifurcation carries socio-economic costs: the fear driving this 'cantonisation' of the wealthier classes 'closes avenues for dialogue and inclusion, and creates territorial divisions harmful to cities' efficient functioning', according to CAF.⁹³

The gradual and unplanned segregation regime that came to characterise urbanisation in many Latin American cities has disproportionately exposed the poor to the socio-economic costs of violence. The most damaging impact of this exposure to violence, from an urban development perspective, is the reduced access to opportunities. The most obvious one is perhaps the financial cost to the poor, mainly in the way that 'taxes' (extortion) levied by criminal groups, even small gangs, drain savings and reduce earnings for people and small businesses.⁹⁴ But arguably an even greater damage is wrought on social capital, that is, the norms, reciprocity, trust and the overall network of social relations between communities.⁹⁵ A community affected by violence has its social capital eroded through reduction in trust and cooperation.⁹⁶ As Robert Muggah has explained: 'Urban residents trapped in urban "hotspots" may themselves opt to decrease or avoid investing in their (or their families') physical or human capital', such as building small businesses, improving their homes and other forms of physical ownership, as well as intangible assets such as education.⁹⁷ They may also, Muggah continues, 'curb their own social exchange and solidarity with neighbours for fear of being exposed to victimisation'.⁹⁸

Bogotanos are not exempt from these costs to social, human and physical capital. Particularly, authorities have been concerned by the cost of criminal activity to two critical sets of urban services providing such opportunities: education and public transportation.

One of the most visible manifestation of this curb on access to opportunities in Bogotá is the problem of gang activity around schools. In September 2016, 78 schools were reported by the local government to be in 'unsafe areas' with regular drug trafficking activity.⁹⁹ An investigation by Colombia's City TV has also reported some intra-municipal displacement linked to this activity, due to threats, retaliations and pressure on minors around schools to sell drugs and reach certain 'quotas' of sales.¹⁰⁰ Claudia Palacios, director of City TV, said the drug sale often takes place openly, with students complaining that their first sight when they leave the school building is a drug trafficker.¹⁰¹

Drug consumption per se is not the only direct impact of this gang activity on education. Arguably, it has serious repercussions since drugs can have an impact

on school performance and lead to addiction. However, from an urban systems perspective, the main risk lies at the attraction of unwanted criminal attention to school areas. In other words, gang activity around schools can have the perverse effect of creating 'hot spots' around the very areas where a key socio-economic development asset is being developed, namely education. Violence, including homicide, involves 'networks of association that follow geographical vectors': in other words, the occurrence of a certain crime in one area may lead to further crime and different (potentially more physically harmful) types of crime in adjacent areas.¹⁰²

Evidence of spreading gang activity around Bogotá's schools supports this theory. Official data from the local government's 'Bogotá Como Vamos' assessment shows that the perception of safety in school areas decreased by 25 percentage points in just two years, reaching 45% in 2015.¹⁰³ Another official study, from 2014, detected 695 'social and criminal risk actors' around Bogotá's schools, including 212 gangs ('pandillas') and 51 'criminal organisations'.¹⁰⁴ Even clashes between gangs for territorial influence have been reported around schools, although there is still not conclusive evidence these are directly related to control of the school's drug market.¹⁰⁵ The relationship between deteriorated and crime-prone areas and education has been explicitly recognised in the local government's 2015 School Environment and Victimization in Bogotá' study, which highlights a worsening of gang activity around schools (in comparison to the 2013 poll) and warns that 'the importance of the surrounding areas' on drugs and gang presence reduces the room for manoeuvre available to schools for mitigating the problem.¹⁰⁶

Another key public service for Bogotá's future, and one also afflicted by several problems, is public transport. The city has famously failed to build an underground train system (metro), which is only now gradually being planned. This leaves public transportation almost entirely dependent on buses and other vehicles vulnerable to overground criminal dynamics of theft, territorial demarcation and extortion. Recent data suggests that the expansion of small and decentralised gangs has increased the risk to buses and minibuses crossing in and out of gang 'hotspots': unlike most security indicators in Bogotá, security in the public

transport system has deteriorated. The number of people reporting theft in the system went up by 13 percentage points according to a 2017 poll by the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, accounting for 29% of all thefts reported in Bogotá.¹⁰⁷ The occurrence of mass robberies, including an incident in March 2018 when two buses in different routes were robbed at the same time, point to organised crime's attempt to systematically exploit the public transportation system.¹⁰⁸ Extortion has also been on the radar of Bogotá's authorities, with arrests targeting bands specialising in the extortion business against bus drivers.¹⁰⁹

The extortion situation in Bogotá is much less pervasive than in Central American countries such as El Salvador, where extortion against bus companies amount to an estimated US\$ 26 million a year and where 692 transportation workers were murdered between 2011 and 2016.¹¹⁰ The significance of extortion on public transportation in other cities in Colombia's urban system, such as Medellín, should provide a cautionary tale for Bogotá: it is estimated that 90% of Medellín's fleet of buses and minibuses are affected by extortion.¹¹¹ The National Police also launched a nationwide campaign in 2015 calling on owners and drivers of public transportation companies to report extortion incidents to the police.¹¹²

Persistent crime in the public transport system entails more than financial cost to victims. It decreases trust in public services and raises the cost for the predominantly poor people who tend to live in peripheral areas, to connect with the economic and social opportunities clustered in city centres. Personal safety is a key element in people's decision-making process on whether to use public transport, adopt less efficient and more polluted alternatives (such as private cars) or give up on the opportunities altogether.¹¹³ In fact, increasing safety and efficiency have been crucial achievements of Bogotá's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network, called TransMilenio.¹¹⁴ Therefore, criminal targeting of this service represents a systemic shock with repercussions to urban assets connected to it: for instance, the decreased property values and tax revenue along the main line, as well as less jobs and poorer health due to greater air pollution associated with widespread use of private cars.¹¹⁵

Governance issues

Organised crime also presents a challenge to local governance, that is, the ability of authorities to implement policies and enforce law across the municipal territory. Governance is 'a government's ability to make and enforce rules and to deliver services'.¹¹⁶ Whereas damage to public services such as education and transport harms socio-economic development paths of certain populations, weak governance can disrupt the population's trust in authorities and institutions. In doing so, it reduces the local government's capacity to improve the urban system by intervening in its vulnerabilities and implementing policies to prevent and tackle risks.

As in the case of socio-economic development opportunities, the impact of crime on governance is complex. Crime does not simply cause weak governance of territories and populations, but it intensifies and facilitates this process while taking advantage of pre-existing vulnerabilities. For instance, areas with a longstanding problem of poor state institutional presence tend to present good opportunities for criminal enterprises due to a low likelihood of law enforcement action. The World Bank cites as one of the top costs of criminal violence the change it sparks in 'the way victims (and those afraid of becoming victims) perceive state institutions and how such changes can debilitate good governance'.¹¹⁷

In Colombia, strategies designed to restore state control in areas controlled by non-state armed groups have been traditionally focused on rural areas.¹¹⁸ Recent research on the relationship between criminal violence and governance in Latin America has shown that organised crime's impact extends to large cities where large armed groups are not visibly present.

Juan Carlos Palou argues that 'organised crime tends to degrade the mechanisms for control of common criminality, and in this way it impacts citizen security'.¹¹⁹ Juan Carlos Garzón, writing on Cali, says the longstanding presence of criminal groups, even in today's decentralised form, has 'created spaces that have been favourable to organised crime' activity.¹²⁰ He points to how local structures of crime (decentralised gangs not too different from the ones present in Bogotá) help in the 'configuration of a kind of social order' regulating how the illicit economy (usually drug trafficking), recruitment

of gang members and relationships between local dwellers and criminal organisations work.¹²¹ A concrete manifestation of this (almost literally) is the existence of 'ollas', a colloquial word frequently used in Colombia to describe urban areas where the illicit drug economy operates undisturbed given the lack of institutional presence, especially security institutions.¹²²

One such area, until recently commonly described as an 'olla' is the Bronx, located in the heart of Bogotá not too far from the presidential palace. In fact, field research conducted for this report has exemplified how the impact on governance in these 'ollas' can be persistent. We visited the area in June 2017, more than a year after the intervention conducted by local authorities. Despite the absence of any visible criminal activity, our guide from the Security Secretariat still felt the need to call a local police patrol to accompany us.¹²³ Furthermore, the effect of the 'criminal order' has rendered buildings and the public space there deteriorated to such an extent that one of the main aspects of the intervention consisted on the demolition of several structures.¹²⁴

This weakening of state governance also takes a toll on private spaces – that is, houses, social housing projects and other residential areas in disadvantaged areas. As we have highlighted in the previous chapter, cities in Colombia and elsewhere have seen a strong linkage between gang extortion and displacement. Humanitarian organisations have shed light on displacement linked to the use of 'fear as a tool of social control' by armed groups, citing orders of mass business shut-downs in medium cities and the use of threats, selective homicides, extortion, child and teenage recruitment, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence.¹²⁵ These 'tools', says one study, have destroyed the social tissue and capacity of communities to organise in resistance to non-state armed actors, sparking a wave of individual or 'drop by drop' displacement – which have been on the increase whereas mass displacement has decreased.¹²⁶ In Barranquilla, for instance, gangs paint the houses they consider 'military objectives' due to failure to comply with either extortion demands or invisible borders established by the criminals.¹²⁷

The systemic shock of displacement has affected other areas within the same municipality where displacement happens, but also other nodes in the urban

system. The National Police, for instance, worries about social housing projects under development to benefit impoverished sectors in Bogotá but sparking ‘conflict between institutional design and state capacity’, with fears that the state’s offerings of justice and policing are not sufficient to serve these ‘great urbanisation projects’ in course.¹²⁸ Furthermore, a senior member of Bogotá’s Security Secretariat told us in 2017 that the nearby municipality of Soacha, effectively within the Bogotá metropolitan area, has ‘a big population of displaced people, bigger presence of criminal groups and higher index of unmet basic needs’.¹²⁹ Because housing is cheaper there, it tends to be more attractive than Bogotá for migrants and displaced populations from rural areas. Despite being ‘absolutely conurbanised’ with Bogotá, the respective police agencies of each city can only act within their local jurisdictions.¹³⁰ This is a potential curb on coordination and effective intelligence sharing.

The implications of displacement do not affect exclusively the victims but ‘provoke changes that affect all the country’.¹³¹ An example is the fact that displacement has often meant ‘de-ruralisation’ of the country, with mass flows of people towards the cities.¹³² Studies of Colombian displacement also emphasise urbanisation as one of the consequences of this process, highlighting ‘shifting territories’ in peripheries without the local capacities to answer to the rapid increase in population and expanding informal settlements.¹³³

This phenomenon affects the capital, which hosted the largest percentage (4.9%) of displaced people in the country as of 2013.¹³⁴ Colombia’s only megacity received hundreds of former right-wing paramilitary groups during the demobilisation process in the 2000s, at least some of whom have been linked to ‘micro-criminality’ practices such as extortion rackets in Santa Rosa, in the south-east of Bogotá.¹³⁵ The total number of internally-displaced people (IDPs) in Bogotá’s metropolitan area, which includes Soacha, is estimated to be around 600,000. La Silla Vacía, a news website, has called the metropolitan area the ‘the world’s displacement capital’.¹³⁶

Even the decentralised gang structure that characterises the organised criminal landscape in Bogotá causes displacement, often resembling the ‘drop by drop’

phenomenon identified above rather than mass displacement. Human rights NGO Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES) detected a geographical correlation in Bogotá between presence of armed groups, poverty and concentration of displaced populations, citing areas such as Ciudad Bolívar, Bosa, Usme, Rafael Uribe Uribe and San Cristobal.¹³⁷ This criminal presence, even in a decentralised and local character, has an impact on governance. As CODHES puts it, ‘modalities of social violence overlap in the city’, making reference to extortion, predatory loans and drug trafficking.¹³⁸ This impact, similarly to that of ‘drop by drop’ displacement, is more diffuse and often remains under the radar of the media. This only increases the importance of planning and action by the municipal administration to promote governance and security in areas where public institutions and policies have not yet arrived entirely.

Ex-combatants and Bogotá’s urban system

In addition to ongoing challenges posed by organised crime and illicit economies to Bogotá, the end of the armed conflict with FARC brings new questions within the policy domains of reintegration, employment and security. Preliminary findings related to the current reintegration process as well as lessons learned from previous experiences allow us to identify risks related to Bogotá’s capacities to manage its development and governance challenges.

In the field research for this report, we have found widely diverging opinions on what the geographical character of the FARC demobilisation and reintegration process will assume. Whereas most government and security authorities have said former FARC combatants will stay in rural areas, the Reincorporation and Normalisation Agency has expressed concern with a scenario in which cities receive up to 35% of the approximately 8,000 former combatants.¹³⁹ ‘Low-level combatants don’t want to stay with FARC’ in the Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación (ETCR) officially established in rural areas to help them transition to legal rural activities, according to an expert. ‘Which is a problem given that the government had agreed on collective demobilisation, yet former fighters have the right to self-determination’.

This 'urbanisation' of a reintegration process originally designed to occur in rural concentration areas may already have started. The head of the United Nations' Verification Mission Jean Arnault, said in November 2017 that 55% of ex-combatants had already abandoned the designated spaces due to 'disillusionment' with the lack of economic opportunities there.¹⁴⁰ Underlying the importance of the economic motivation for such exodus, Arnault said the search for such opportunities was a more important reason to leave than the former guerrillas' desires to reunite with their families or pursue political office.

Although there is no public information on the location of these 55% of ex-combatants, lessons learned from previous processes and the trends outlined in Chapter 1 point strongly in the direction of medium and large cities. Given the strong rural roots of the FARC guerrilla and its members' lifestyle during the armed conflict, it is unlikely that Bogotá or other large cities will be flooded by them. But nonetheless, combined with the systemic threats present in Bogotá (organised crime and illicit economies), this potential influx poses serious development and governance challenges. The government of Bogotá can expect challenges associated with social reintegration, economic opportunities and the security of former FARC combatants. The problem is further complicated by the lack of clarity on which level of government should serve them in various stages of reincorporation: municipal or national.

The most immediate concern for Bogotá's authorities in terms of reintegration relates to security concerns around former FARC fighters, with two of them already having been assassinated in the capital. A 23-year-old member of the new political party formed by the former guerrilla movement, now called Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria de Común, was murdered on 21 January 2018 in Ciudad Bolívar.¹⁴¹ A second murder took place on 17 February, when former political prisoner and FARC member Jhon Mariano Ávila Matiz was killed in Bosa. He had moved to Bogotá for his reintegration process after leaving prison due to the amnesty law. Bogotá was singled out in a statement by the national FARC leadership on 23 May, when the party reported 'that the threats and harassment against militants in Bogotá have continued, as well as the presence of criminal groups

that are successors of the paramilitaries in various localities. The cases of Ciudad Bolívar, Usme and San Cristóbal are particularly worrisome'.¹⁴² These episodes display how Bogotá's position as a centre for politics and economic opportunity presents a lure to former fighters. Whereas it is not the centre of the reintegration effort, the capital is a hub for political aspirations and conflicts. This risk becomes more evident as rural reintegration in territories of former guerrilla presence is incomplete, as progress seems to demonstrate.

These security concerns are not momentary anomalies. Their connection to cities' systemic threats has been outlined by the Defensoría del Pueblo, which said in a report from October 2017 that illegal economies in urban environments such as drug trafficking, micro-trafficking, smuggling and money laundering intensify the activities of illegal armed groups, adding that 'current elements such as the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement could lead to serious human rights violations'.¹⁴³ This is a prominent – and urgent – example of how systemic threats have ripple effects over other urban policy domains and weaken response capacities once other risk factors are added.

This effect on institutional capacities is central to the discussions around urban resilience, a concept used by urban planners and experts to describe the ability of a city, its institutions and communities to adapt and prosper even in face of protracted problems and sudden crises.¹⁴⁴ The Defensoría mentions the additional risk of 'shock' to urban environments from increased competition for public services and goods with the arrival of demobilised fighters and the bad receptivity this will have among existing local communities. Bogotá has 351,870 registered victims of the armed conflict, displaying the existing strain on urban services from recent decades of armed conflict. The public education service, for instance, services 66,935 victims.

These challenges inevitably interact with pre-existing fragilities, such as the already-significant poverty and unplanned urbanisation caused in part by previous waves of conflict-related migration. Bogotá has faced in the past 60 years a 'conflictive association between urbanization, migration, marginality and subnormality', reflected in a deficient offering of health, education and housing, among other services.¹⁴⁵

There is significant evidence in Colombia of this linkage between pre-existing fragilities and new challenges related to the demobilisation processes. For instance, a survey conducted by Fundación Ideas para La Paz concluded that 'risk factors' present during the reintegration process increase the risk of recidivism by former fighters. Prominent among risk factors are the social networks to which these former fighters are associated with. It is interesting to note that Bogotá is listed in the report as one of the top 'regions with larger recidivism networks'.¹⁴⁶ Another FIP study on problems of reintegration strategies of mid-ranking FARC members lists the difficult adaptation to urban environments as a top concern.¹⁴⁷ Again, the presence of organised crime and violence is cited as part of the problem, both for their personal security and recidivism risks. The report says 'localities in Bogotá such as Usme and Bosa are mentioned as economically affordable places by the demobilized but with perceptible deficiencies in terms of security'.

These problems, related both to development and governance in Bogotá, have manifested themselves in previous demobilisation processes such as that of paramilitary groups. Their arrival in large cities took place predominantly in peripheral areas with pre-existing networks of illicit activities and sometimes violence.¹⁴⁸ The contrast between the fragility of legal, state-centred, services and institutions and the ubiquity of illegal networks adds to the risk factors hovering over demobilised fighters - both now and in the past.

Even without an abundance of legal economic opportunities, cities in general are seen as places of hope and socio-economic progress by the poor. This is true not only in Colombia - it has been described as a worldwide

problem known as 'urbanisation without growth'.¹⁴⁹ In the absence of a major boom in the agriculture industry in Colombia, Bogotá is likely to attract some of these hopeful rural migrants - not to mention the continuation of internal displacement related to criminal violence and the conflict with the ELN.

The exodus from the ETCRs shows that part of the demobilised population is already taking the path of individual reintegration. During the government of President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), which conducted a demobilisation process of right-wing paramilitary groups, their reintegration in Bogotá 'took the shape of internal migration', with a gradual increase of the demobilised population.¹⁵⁰ In 2005, Bogotá hosted 60% of fighters that went through the individual demobilisation processes (when they are not part of a group settled in a specific place to receive some form of government aid). Of those, only 7% had been borne in the city.¹⁵¹ The fact that most of them go to impoverished peripheries, where housing is cheaper but public services and economic opportunities are generally less common, intensify the challenges posed by these new arrivals.

The reintegration process, therefore, poses important risks to Bogotá, but they are manageable as long as institutions are ready to meet them. The main challenge for policy-makers and practitioners comes from the accumulation of different sources of pressure to urban governance and development mechanisms. Despite Bogotá not being the centre of the reintegration process, past and present trends point to existing risks for the capital in terms of increased pressure on its offerings of development, governance and economic opportunities during the reintegration phase.

Chapter 3 – Shocks and threats to the urban system

A common diagnosis among both experts and policymakers working on Latin America's many urban violence hotspots is that programmes and institutions work in 'silos', poorly-coordinated and in the absence of a cross-sectoral strategy. A prominent policymaker who constantly made this point is José Mariano Beltrame, who authored and implemented the Pacifying Police Units (UPP in the Portuguese acronym) in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He frequently complained about the lacking presence of public services and infrastructure, conceived as developmental counterpoint to the security presence in slums covered by UPPs.¹⁵² Referring to the precarious presence of services such as public prosecution, urban planning and social security, he said: 'the system as a whole has been neglected'.

Like Beltrame, other policymakers and analysts have used the term 'system' to study a range of urban challenges - from economic development to environmental issues. In this chapter, the different elements affecting the urban system in relation to public security (and related development issues) will be tied together into a framework that can be used by policymakers to plan interventions and prevention of security risks. We have referred to systemic threats (illicit economies and micro-traffic) as those with the ability to affect several urban sub-systems, or critical aspects of urban life. These effects have been described in the previous chapter as systemic shocks due to their capacity to affect several spheres of public policy beyond public security, which we have grouped in the categories of socio-economic development and territorial governance.

Much more than just highlighting the magnitude of the threats and shocks, the use of a 'systems approach' helps to highlight and prioritise the main interactions

between parts of the city (and the people in it) contributing to a problem. In other words, it helps us to understand how different problems are connected and, therefore, to devise cross-cutting, multidisciplinary, responses - bringing together the 'silos' in government and society.

Definition of Systems

Systems theory has been a useful approach to study social phenomena since at least the 1960s, deriving from biology and cybernetics.¹⁵³ Even though it has been under-utilised in disciplines such as criminology, strategic studies and security studies, the growing preoccupation with urban violence and local policies to counter it presents the ideal opportunity to further develop this approach and apply it in practice.

In fact, many recent studies of urbanisation processes in Latin America have adopted a systems perspective. The National Planning Department (DNP) conducted a study in 2012 and 2013 to better define the administrative and economic linkages and gaps between 58 Colombian cities.¹⁵⁴ The World Bank has also published a study of urban systems in Colombia with the aim of encouraging stronger linkages between cities and facilitating planning and policies.¹⁵⁵ Likewise, the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (Conpes) issued in 2014 a document entitled 'National Policy to Consolidate the System of Cities in Colombia', in order to 'take better advantage of the benefits of urbanisation and agglomeration'.¹⁵⁶ These approaches, like many other urbanisation studies at an international level, have adopted a predominantly economic approach, studying flows such as trade, jobs, human labour and industrial activity.

It was David Kilcullen who most prominently laid out a framework for analysing negative and disruptive flows through a systems perspective to 'see what is happening in a city under stress'.¹⁵⁷ He mentions some of the systemic threats we have outlined in chapter 1, such as illicit global networks, rural migrants and information flows, as 'sets of interactions' that affect 'local and international conflict dynamics'.¹⁵⁸

This systems approach is designed to highlight linkages between different actors or spaces and the flows between them. In that way, it is useful to study a problem such as organised crime and related illicit economies – for which things such as illicit flows, decentralisation, fragmentation and transnational linkages have been repeatedly pointed out in the literature as being defining characteristics.

As we have stated in the introduction, the systems approach is relatively simple. It departs from a definition of systems as 'organised entities that are composed of elements or objects and their interaction'.¹⁵⁹ The significant focus devoted to systems theory and approaches by urban planning has expanded our understanding of human, or social, systems such as cities. In 1969, for instance, Brian McLoughlin argued a human system is composed of 'activities located in spaces', interacting or connected 'by means of physical or non-material communications'.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, a systems approach is much more than just saying that things are interconnected. It is about identifying the main *interactions* within the organised entities that cities are.

The typical example of urban system when this approach was at its infancy was mass transportation, in which different commercial or residential locations establish a wide array of linkages to each other: for instance, employees commuting to and from work, supply chains, consumers purchasing services and goods etc.¹⁶¹ The uses of the systems approach have since expanded and the interactions that can be studied include not only the physical exchange of goods or services but also the exchange of information, human capital and even political power.¹⁶² For instance, John Friedmann has laid out how power exerted by governments or other (private) actors can the distribution and flows of resources, businesses and innovation across the urban space,

which in turn affects the growth and development of the metropolis.¹⁶³

Urban Systems and the Colombian Security Environment

The systems approach to study urban risks, vulnerabilities and shocks is supported by previous assessments of urban violence and security as complex and multidimensional problems, but adds new tools for policy planning. By placing a spotlight on interactions between urban actors – how they take place, their intensity, directions and changes within the urban space – the approach paves the way for visualising the impact of insecurity along a chain of actors, activities and policy areas.

For instance, the problem of micro-trafficking, or local gangs, feeds on a spatial vulnerability (the gaps in public services and state presence in marginalised areas), with impact on specific areas and communities, further harming their connection to productive areas and actors in the city, resulting in harm to socio economic development of that area and, at a higher scale, of the city as a whole. In this system analysis, we have the following elements or activities connected to each other:

- Threat: local gang, organised micro-trafficking activity (with impact on a range of locations and actors)
- Space: underserved and marginalised periphery
- Spatial vulnerability (preceding the appearance of a particular threat): public services, infrastructure and state presence
- Affected activities (implications, shocks): productivity, economic opportunities, socio-economic development
- Affected flows: community's access to broader social networks, state institutions, legal economy, job opportunities, private sector connections

Thinking about a problem as a system is an alternative for policymakers to, for example, focusing on one particular area at a time for security interventions. It forces both policy planners and analysts to focus on the chains of activities and actors affecting and being affected by a particular problem. This helps in the mapping

of policy actors (stakeholders) involved in preventing, mitigating and potentially eliminating the problem in each activity or element (for instance, local secretariats, security agencies, private sector agents, community leaders, etc).

The difference from existing approaches also based on holistic and multisectorial coordination is that setting out a system perspective of a public security problem involves laying out the interactions between each element. Following that, one can anticipate what an action (say, an intervention to eliminate a drug-selling point) will cause in another area or another activity in terms of repercussion because of the existing patterns of interaction they maintain (for example, migration of illicit activity to another area due to criminals' social links and geographical proximity). As Brian McLoughlin laid out in his 'Urban and Regional Planning: A Systems Approach', an action by an individual or group 'has repercussions which alter the context for decisions to act by other individuals or groups at subsequent times'.¹⁶⁴

The core concept for the purpose of urban security is that of *interactions*. How does one analyse interactions? It is not exactly a concrete or visible element. McLoughlin suggests that they are patterns of behaviour – frequent activities connected by 'physical or non-material communications'.¹⁶⁵ A useful insight is that these behaviours follow a logic: because individuals and groups seek to maximise their benefits and minimise costs, it is possible to increase costs on specific behaviours (let's say, drug trafficking in a street corner), leading to a change in the pattern of behaviour. i.e. in the way a given group interacts with the street corner, the local inhabitants, the external consumers who go there and the surrounding areas. In principle, it would be possible to attempt to anticipate the adjustments in interactions of this group with other street corners of the city and their contexts.

Uses of system approach in Bogotá

While arguing for a 'new science of cities', Michael Batty has highlighted that the study of these interactions, flows and elements are still evolving because 'in the last twenty years, there has been a sea change in the way we have come to understand how cities function'.¹⁶⁶ There are two main challenges in applying systems approach to analyse a problem as specific (in comparison to

generally broad theories of urban systems) as security or crime. The most immediate problem is that the most well-developed literature on urban systems analyses elements, actions and interactions consisting of physical locations such as houses, roads and businesses. The second – and related – challenge is that urban systems approach is much more developed among economists than among security or political analysts.¹⁶⁷ For instance, the study of urban systems in relation to production value chains and jobs have even been applied to the Colombian case.¹⁶⁸

John Friedmann has analysed the influence of power relations within an urban system.¹⁶⁹ Granted, his focus was not only on describing relations within a city but also between cities within a national urban system. Still, his focus on power relations and competition between different categories of urban elements, for instance between a 'core' elite and a 'periphery', can be related to dynamics underlying security problems described above, such as state weakness, alternative social orders, illicit economies and territorial control. In other words, it is possible to adapt his framework of power relations between urban elements to a context of governance relations, in which relations and trust between peripheries and an urban core (which may be the state, institutions and the local government) vary in a spectrum from reciprocal to non-reciprocal.

A fully reciprocal relation is that involving a very well-serviced urban area: its citizens pay their taxes and comply with law and order, in exchange receiving efficient public services, security and infrastructure. At the other end of the spectrum we can visualise an extremely non-reciprocal relationship, resembling that in place in the Bronx area of Bogotá prior to the local government's 2016 security intervention: citizens barely recognise state authority and may be too poor to pay any taxes but, equally, they barely receive any public services, security or infrastructure. In the middle of the spectrum, or perhaps closer to the non-reciprocal end, we can think of an area with an uneven relationship with the state: they mostly pay their taxes, factions of it have resorted to illicit activities and some among the youth have developed ties to gangs whereas, in turn, public services, security and infrastructure are patchy. Similar to Friedmann's model, the relationships (interactions) between these

urban elements can change, which in turn would change the character of the area or community and its place in the spectrum. For public policy purposes, we would obviously aim to move a non-reciprocal interaction gradually towards a more reciprocal one.

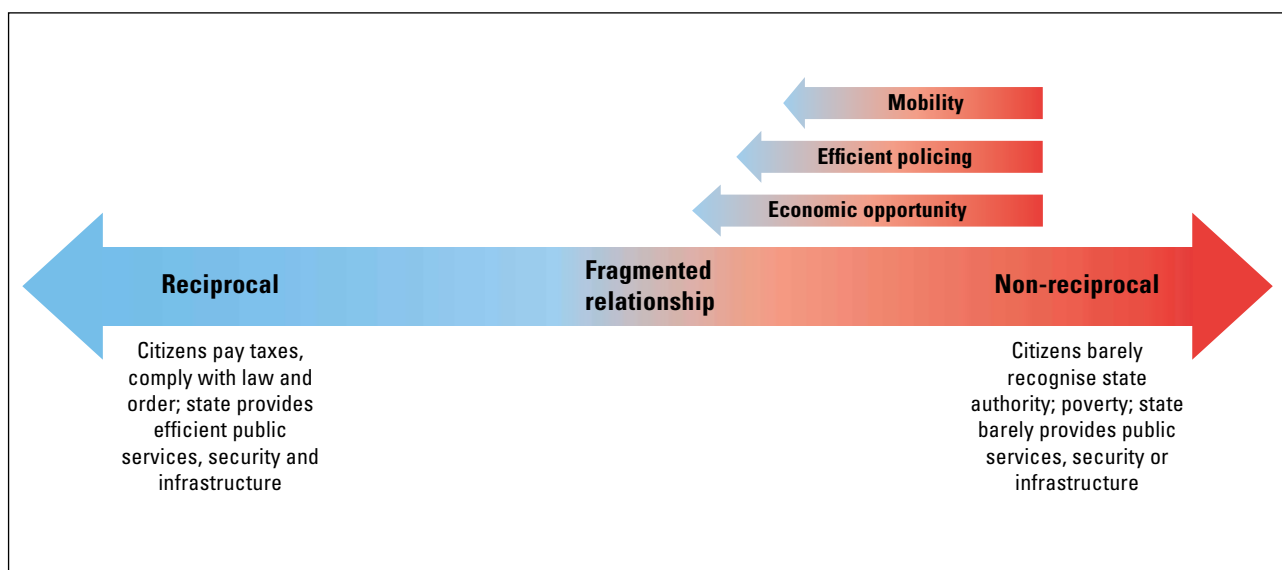
An important addition to this model is the possibility of competition between different ‘cores’ or elements, for influence or power over peripheries. In Friedmann’s words (referring to a ‘passive’ periphery coming ‘within the area of influence’ of a competing core): the periphery has ‘little strength of [its] own to resist such advances, and [its] original oppressor may be equally incapacitated’.¹⁷⁰ In our own model, the role of the competing core is that of illicit actors or organised crime, which provides alternative sources of income, precarious jobs, a rudimentary territorial security for local dwellers and overall an alternative ‘social order’.¹⁷¹

The model would therefore be organised as in the graphic, with the horizontal axis representing the level of reciprocity between periphery and state in an urban context. Along this spectrum, illicit actors such as criminal organisations may exploit the situation to provide or force upon the periphery an alternative governance system. These rogue actors are represented by the colour variation in the horizontal spectrum: the further towards the right the greater the risk of the community being captured by competing relationships with illicit and armed actors fragmenting or replacing state governance.

The policy challenge lies in improving the interactions between the periphery and the state in order to gradually transition the relationship from non-reciprocal (marginalised, vulnerable communities) towards more reciprocal ones (stable, well-connected and –serviced communities). In order to represent these public interventions, the model includes arrows on top of the spectrum relating to different policy areas, agencies and actors that can contribute to move the linkages or relationships from right to left (non-reciprocal to reciprocal), that is, to help build stronger and better interactions based on the vulnerabilities identified (which can obviously vary across different peripheries or communities). The arrows associated with each element of public intervention vary in size to represent the importance allocated to each policy area, based on the community’s vulnerabilities.

This model helps to lay out the multidimensional character of security-and-development issues we have been examining with a heightened focus on interactions, or the linkages between a periphery and the state. This is essential because urban systems theory consistently points to interactions as a core aspect. Like any theoretical model, it consists of simplifications and generalisations to help in the visualisation of a challenge or framework for change. In this case, we can think of other potential formulations in which (for instance) citizens provide their due to the state without receiving a corresponding response. Other

Graphic 2: **Spectrum of linkage between an urban periphery and the state**



formulations are possible. But for the purpose of this study this model offers a good departure point for further analysis and, potentially, further research to improve and develop it.

The utility of using a systems approach lays in its focus on interactions and inter-dependencies between different actors, institutions and risks. This approach echoes other recent studies that highlight the growing

need to analyse violence and security in a coordinated manner between disciplines and public policy areas. It is also a useful approach for security problems in Bogotá, which faces organized crime and well-connected and decentralized transnational illicit economies. This reinforces the need to move away from a narrow focus on violent areas without considering their inevitable connections with the rest of urban society.

Conclusion

Building peace and security in Bogotá means breaking the ties that unite armed and illegal actors with the most vulnerable communities in the city. Only in this way can the city correct the damages that these actors impose on the development and governance of the city. But current security threats resist short-term solutions because they are intertwined with marginalized urban communities and their political economies.

Therefore, the best way to adapt the municipal security strategy for the security challenges of the future is to strengthen the links between institutions, public services and marginalized communities where crime acts most strongly. Improving coordination among public actors, therefore, is essential. We have suggested a systems approach as a method to analyse problems and identify the main weaknesses in the offering of institutions and services to communities.

This approach strengthens the strategy that already exists in Bogotá. To cite Bogotá's Integral Plan of Security, Citizen Cohabitation and Justice for 2017-2020, issued by the local government, the city's security problems 'are the result of multiple social, economic, cultural and historic factors, among others, and the design and implementation of security policy should involve permanent coordination between different sectors'.¹⁷² The plan lays out an existing strategy to achieve intersectoral cooperation based on prevention, control of problematic areas, improving justice and investment on technologies and assets. This strategy is well-developed and includes approaches sensitive to the urban space such as CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), which uses tools of architecture, street design and community participation in policy-making in order to deter criminal activity.¹⁷³

The strategy also sets out a 'model of integral intervention in territories', based on the coordination between security authorities, local communities and other authorities involved in security and stability. Of particular importance to the threats and implications we have identified above, the plan sets out the concept of interventions in 'high-complexity territories', citing the following locations: Kennedy, Ciudad Bolívar, Bosa, Santa Fe, Los Mártires, San Cristóbal, Rafael Uribe Uribe and Suba. In these locations, authorities have identified dynamics of violence that complicate interventions.¹⁷⁴

The municipal 'strategy of territorial articulation' aims to 'establish communication channels with the community and other local actors' that affect security. It is implemented by 'cohabitation advisers', agents serving as a bridge between community concerns and policymakers.¹⁷⁵

These existing aims and approaches would benefit greatly from a systems approach. The latter would be of special usefulness in planning processes at the strategic level, to scan the urban system beyond the immediate location of a security crisis in order to identify the main elements involved in relationships and interactions of populations, illicit economies, armed actors and other key actors.

The systems approach can also be useful to prioritise certain authorities and policy areas based on patterns of interaction that are stronger at the specific area under intervention. For instance, an area may reduce its linkage to illicit actors through improved roads and transportation to legal economic opportunities in another part of the city, whereas others will have greater initial priorities such as education, justice system or increased policing in specific hotspots.

The systems approach also encourages policymakers to look at the linkages beyond the immediate area of intervention and anticipate possible spillover effects to other areas – for instance, by identifying areas posing the highest risk to other neighbourhoods in terms of thefts, extortion or homicides. For that purpose the ‘Quadrant’ model of policing, using data-driven technologies to guide patrol officers based on locale-specific needs across a city, is a perfect fit with the urban system focus.¹⁷⁶ It allows for the monitoring of which crime categories are rising or falling in different spots, highlighting with more precision the systemic character of urban insecurity patterns.

This study also highlighted threats and impacts with potential to affect Bogotá’s urban system as a whole, with the aim of further highlighting the systemic character of its security challenges. The study confirmed two systemic threats, non-state armed groups operating in a decentralised but highly-connected way and illicit economies. These threats exploit vulnerabilities that facilitate or accelerate the linkages between peripheral communities and illicit activities – for instance, weak state security presence, insufficient public

services, poor connectivity to the urban economy, among others. The aim of policy-making is to eventually correct these weaknesses and monitor activities in order to guide vulnerable communities from the influence of illicit and violent actors towards security and opportunity. The ultimate aim is to create stable access to the opportunities of the urban system as a whole: its economy, culture, social networks and all the elements that underpin the hopes and dreams of Bogotá’s growing population.

The end of the armed conflict with FARC provides a call for the adaptation of public strategies and policies. In cities, especially large centres such as Bogotá, it is essential to adapt strategies to the new dynamics of organized crime and illicit economies in order to guarantee peace and security. The challenges of implementing socio-economic development and improving the institutional offer in marginalized areas are critical for the maintenance of urban peace, bearing in mind that today’s criminal threats are even more interested in cities than guerrillas. Progress on these fronts in Bogotá has the potential to serve as a model for other vulnerable centres in Colombia and Latin America.

Policy recommendations

The adoption of a systems approach for urban security to strengthen the link between security, peace, development and governance: Security planning in Bogotá should not be taken in isolation from other areas of public policy. Traditional approaches to public security in Latin America include the elimination of criminal leaders and the temporary (often temporary) deployment of military or police forces during or after a crisis. While these approaches have their merits, a more strategic approach must take into account the understanding of the city as a system. This means that the different activities that take place in a city are connected to each other and the ultimate goal of security policy is to facilitate citizens' connections with urban services and opportunities, while taking into account their concerns and perceptions.

The ability to use public transportation, seek employment and have access to basic public services, entertainment and education should be considered closely related to the public safety effort. The improvement in the Bronx area through a comprehensive intervention shows the progress made in multidimensional interventions in violent territories, further exemplified in territorial programs in Medellín and Rio de Janeiro.¹⁷⁷ But targeted interventions also cause criminal migration to other areas and do not eliminate the vulnerability of the city to illicit economies in an important way. In parallel to comprehensive (but geographically-limited) interventions, a systemic approach should consider the links that a territory like the Bronx has with other areas, actors and institutions. Priorities should be determined in dialogue with the communities themselves, according to the areas, actors, institutions and opportunities to which they aspire to access. A stable area is of little use for an inhabitant who cannot access a job or seek

professional education due to insecurity elsewhere or poor public transportation.

The fact that Bogotá is growing and will become a megacity in the year 2030 (according to United Nations forecasts) is a reason to pay more attention to the 'institutional offer' for the populations of marginalized areas. As the population pressure grows on the existing infrastructure, the need to address these deficiencies will also grow beyond the areas considered as security hotspots. Otherwise, its fragilities will have implications for the public safety of the metropolis as a whole.

Urban challenges must be considered within the context of their interactions with criminal and post-conflict dynamics: inhabiting one of the most prosperous cities in South America, bogotanos often feel disconnected from the armed conflict and violence that have historically affected the less-developed rural areas of Colombia. The most important challenge for the security and development of Bogotá in the coming years is not directly related to the process of demobilization and reintegration. But it is indirectly related to the end of the armed conflict with the FARC and compliance with the peace agreement: national and local authorities must move their security priorities from a rural insurgency to a sophisticated network of criminal actors that is increasingly fragmented and benefits from discretion and the lower visibility it has in the media.

The attraction of urban areas to illicit economies (especially drug-related ones), worsened by a recent increase in domestic consumption in Colombia, puts the security, development and governance of Bogotá at risk. Therefore, policies aimed at carrying out socio-economic development, combating poverty and increasing public services and infrastructure to marginalized areas

must be carried out in coordination with the security authorities in order to maximize the mutual benefit between security and development in vulnerable areas.

The private sector is a crucial actor in the link between vulnerable communities and economic opportunities: One of the most critical links in any urban system is that between people and their economic opportunities. For the middle and upper classes of the metropolis, this link is often relatively simple, although heavy traffic is a common problem. However, within the peripheries and marginal neighborhoods with a long history of social and economic marginalization in relation to the centers of wealth and work, inhabitants face enormous barriers when they try to tap into economic opportunities. These barriers include long travel times, insecurity (including in terms of gender violence and harassment against women and members of the LGBTI community), cultural prejudice and insufficient qualifications. This is a critical vulnerability in the urban system, and one that the government cannot correct without the private sector.

The most important contribution that the private sector can make to urban security in the post-conflict period is to strengthen and expand this critical link in the system: the one that exists between people and economic opportunities, also referred to in this report as human capital. This goes far beyond simply 'jobs' (although these are very important). Human capital includes a process that leads to the achievement of a sustainable economic activity.

A critical gap that affects socio-economic development throughout the world is the phenomenon of young people who are at the same time uneducated and unemployed, which is commonly known as the 'ni-nis' phenomenon, neither at work nor at school. The expansion of human capital, through training, scholarships, aid in public investment and basic employment programs, can be understood as part of the shared values of companies towards their city.

Adoption of cross-governmental mechanisms for policy planning and strategy: Government departments and private companies involved in the aforementioned services must participate closely in the planning and evaluation of public security policies. This should consist of concrete and simple steps. For example, a

cross-governmental committee should be established to monitor and evaluate comprehensive interventions, such as the Bronx and others.

These meetings would be attended by representatives of all municipal departments with roles in the services, infrastructure and opportunities considered essential for recovery and stability, for example, public transportation, police, housing, water services, education, health, employment and the private sector. The participation of the private sector and the expert community would also be welcome. In this way, views can be exchanged about concrete measures and challenges to achieve security objectives, including social, economic, political, urbanistic, and law enforcement aspects. This multidimensional approach would be a practical implementation of the systemic perspective to security policies. This does not have to be a burden for public employees (already with busy schedules), since the meetings can take place virtually or happen monthly.

An additional input for planning and strategy is the expansion of security indicators. Numbers related to homicides (especially intentional ones) have been widely used as the main safety indicator, and there are good reasons for that (for example, the fact that homicides are more widely registered than other types of crime). But that report has identified dynamics that point to other forms of high-impact criminal activity. Some criminal activities are less violent but still result in significant impact on the development and governance of marginalized areas. For example, data on theft and on the perception of security among women and the LGBTI community can serve as a warning about an environment of insecurity in the streets. Illegal occupations and recent migrations to peripheries are risk factors that, as mentioned in Chapter 2, have been exploited by illegal armed groups for recruitment or extortion.

These dynamics, although of less impact on life than homicide, have a high socio-economic impact for the inhabitants of marginalized areas. Therefore, the inclusion of these data can serve as an input for planning by several governmental actors involved in security and development of vulnerable areas.

Security authorities must increase their intelligence and communication capabilities to get involved with the urban system: the Metropolitan Police recognizes that 'in

the future, society will demand that we be more efficient in preventing crime, and this will only be achieved by having a good communication with the communities'.¹⁷⁸ In order to increase its connectivity both with the population and with other governmental actors, the police must prioritize two processes: intelligence for the prevention of crime and community policing for stabilization.

Intelligence is essential to detect and interrupt the current structure of the systemic threats identified above: transnational illicit economies and fragmented local gangs. This network threat is resistant to traditional police tactics that consist in the 'decapitation' of criminal groups through operations against their leaders. Even comprehensive territorial interventions tend to result in the geographic displacement of illicit structures to other areas or brief pauses followed by increases in activity (although interventions also bring many benefits to these communities). Part of the problem depends on the authorities at the national level and the interruption of larger criminal organizations (which sometimes operate transnationally). Increasing analytical and data collection capabilities can help local security officials plan for the deployment of forces and adopt a strategic approach to crime, maximizing the impact of the resources they have. For that, however, cooperation with national agencies is critical.

Quadrant policing (*vigilancia por cuadrantes*) has been successful in helping to reduce crime, but intelligence must go further by increasing trust in the communities and the cooperation of the inhabitants, based on more efficient coordination between police and members of intelligence agencies. This effort is traditionally helped by the use of community policing as a model of proximity to the most vulnerable communities. The term is surrounded by ambiguity, with the exact meaning varying widely among countries. Development agencies and donor countries that work in regions affected by conflict have usually considered community policing as adaptation of law enforcement to the needs and interests of specific local communities.¹⁷⁹ This definition provides an excellent connection to our idea of urban systems, since it calls on local forces to prioritise the problems that most affect local communities' social, economic and other connections with areas further afield. This greater commitment to the most vulnerable communities would also contribute to the intelligence effort – a specific type called 'human intelligence', that is, information collected through interactions between people. This would feed information to local authorities about the needs and aspirations of local populations beyond security, including public services, infrastructure and economic opportunities.

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