USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CENTER ON CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

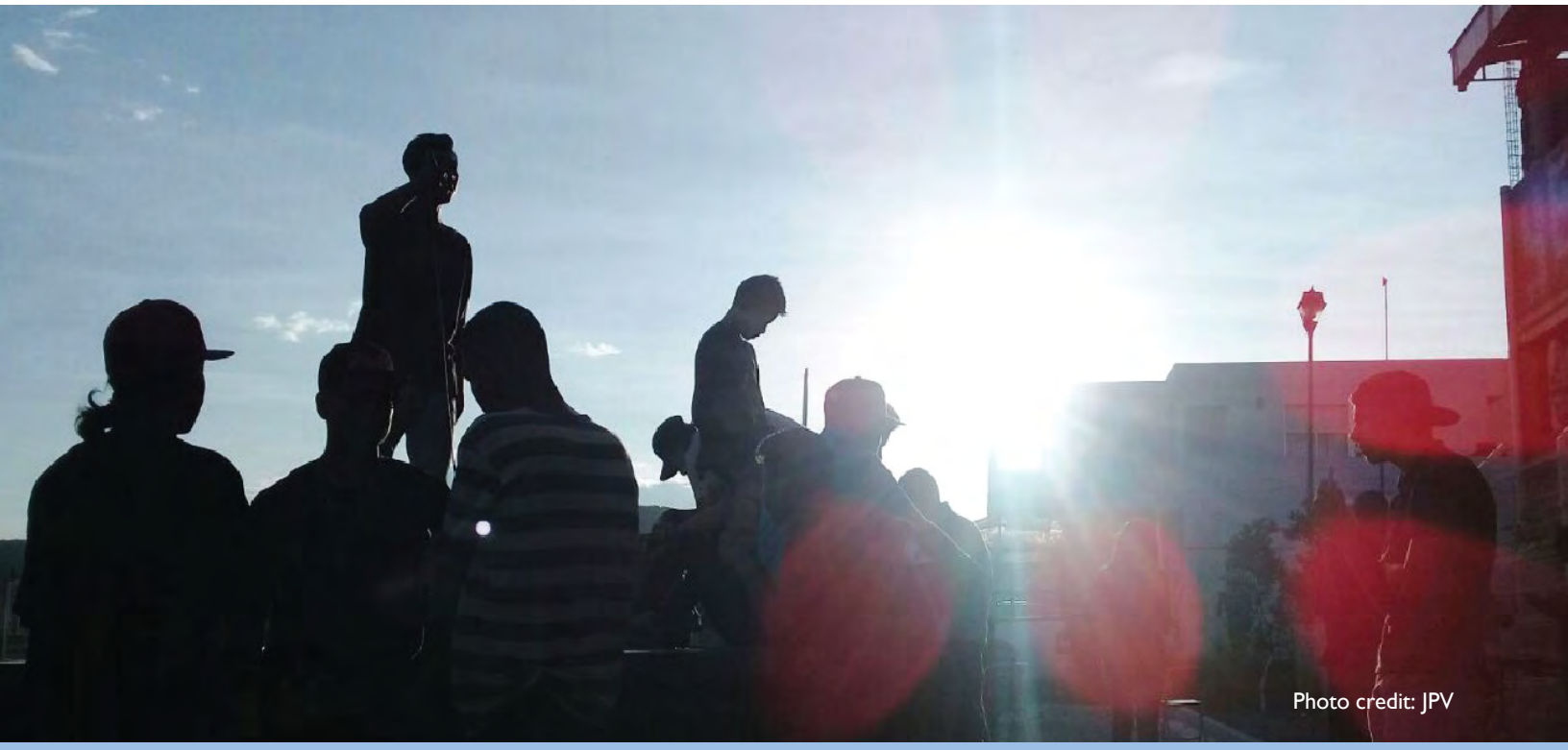


Photo credit: JPV

Phase II Report

Performance Evaluation of USAID/Mexico's Crime and Violence Prevention Activity

October 2021

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by the Center on Conflict and Development, Texas A&M University.

Vivian Bronsoler Nurko, Omar García-Ponce, Shahriar Kibriya, Isabel Laterzo, Elisa Lavore Fanjul.

Contents

Abstract 3

Executive Summary 4

I. Introduction 9

II. Literature review 11

II.1 Criminal Life Paths 11

II.2 Attribution of Blame 13

III. Context: Youth, Crime, and Violence in Urban Mexico 15

IV. Research Design 17

IV.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses 17

IV.2 Research Design 18

Survey 18

Vignette Experiment 19

Focus Groups 19

V. Findings 22

V.1 Survey Analysis 22

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents 22

Violence Normalization 24

Protective Factors: Organizational Affiliation and Program Participation 28

Gang Participation 30

V.2 Experimental Results 33

V.3 Focus Groups 40

Violence Normalization 43

Analysis of selected mediators 47

Gang Participation 52

Blame Attribution 53

Protective Factors as Promoted by JPV Supported Interventions 57

VI. Conclusions and Policy Implications 61

VII. Recommendations 63

References 66

Appendix 72

Abstract

Joining a criminal organization or participating in any kind of criminal activity involves numerous risks. Why do some young individuals decide to take these risks and embark on criminal life paths? A first step toward answering this question is to understand how youth rationalize violence and criminal behavior and under what conditions they justify involvement in crime. Relevant literature suggests that both contextual factors (e.g., socioeconomic condition, exposure to crime and violence during childhood) and individual incentives are important determinants of youth involvement in criminal life. Following standard theories of blame attribution, we use a mixed-methods approach to investigate the motivations and justifications for youth violence and crime in urban Mexico.

First, we conduct a face-to-face survey representative of youth in urban Mexico—with 2,880 individuals aged 16 to 29 in approximately 100 urban municipalities—to understand how socioeconomic characteristics and potential protective factors against delinquency relate to violence normalization and gang participation. Second, we embed a vignette experiment to test a set of hypotheses about blame attribution for criminal acts. Third, we conduct seven focus groups to further explore the mechanisms that mediate attitudes toward violence and drive the justification and blame attribution of crime involvement. We also explore how protective factors, as incorporated into prevention interventions, may mediate these attitudes. We explore which intervention components may work and why.

Our study contributes to a better understanding of patterns regarding Mexican youths' exposure to violence and crime, how these individuals rationalize violence and involvement in criminal life, as well as how they attribute blame for different criminal acts. The study also underscores the role of normalization of extreme forms of violence, perceptions on the state and societal responsibility for youth involvement in criminal organizations, and the relevance of local crime dynamics in shaping these phenomena. These findings are crucial to design better policy responses for crime prevention. We generate actionable recommendations from our results.

Executive Summary

The choice to participate in a criminal organization or engage in any kind of criminal activity involves numerous risks, including potentially life-threatening situations. This is particularly true for states with low governance capacity, poverty, and strong organized crime presence. Why do some young individuals decide to take these risks and embark on criminal life paths? A first step toward answering this question is to understand how youth rationalize violence and criminal behavior. If and to what extent do they normalize violence? Under what conditions do they justify involvement in crime? And how do they perceive the role of the government and society in youth crime?

Following standard theories of blame attribution, we use a mixed-methods approach to investigate the motivations and justifications for youth crime in urban Mexico. First, we conduct a face-to-face survey of representative youth in urban Mexico—with 2,880 individuals aged 16 to 29 in approximately 100 urban municipalities—to understand how socioeconomic characteristics and potential protective factors relate to violence normalization and gang participation. This observational data also provides representative information about trends with respect to youth exposure to violence, their relationships with people who might be involved in gangs, and where they are exposed to violence. Second, we embed a vignette experiment in the survey to test a set of hypotheses about blame attribution for criminal acts. Third, we conduct a series of seven focus groups in Chihuahua, Ciudad Juárez, Guadalupe, Monterrey, and Mexico City to further explore the mechanisms that mediate attitudes toward violence and drive the justification and blame attribution of crime involvement. We also explore how protective factors against delinquency, as incorporated into prevention interventions may attenuate these attitudes. Further, our study explores the efficacy of different intervention components and the conditions needed for them to work.

Violence Normalization and Gang Participation

The results from the observational survey suggest that normalization of violence is more likely influenced by specific individual-level characteristics and experiences and less so by recent community-level violence. Individual-level characteristics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic background, as well as exposure to violence in one's home appear more influential. Our results also suggest that young men, those with poor family relations, and those who have been exposed to domestic violence may be most at risk for violence normalization. While beyond the scope of this analysis, a more fine-grained data on individual exposure to different forms of community violence and domestic violence in follow up studies would improve the understanding of the potential mechanisms that influence violence normalization. We remain cautious to acknowledge that these cross-sectional findings based on correlations are not causal relationships.

The focus groups results confirm and expand on these findings. Our analysis identifies four scenarios of violence normalization. The first is when violence is not normalized at all; that is, participants recognize it and actively reject it. Then, we categorize three types of violence normalization based on the *extent* of normalization, defined as nonrecognition, habit, and acceptance. The *nonrecognition* of violence happens when an offense or aggression is not perceived as violence but as some other form of social interaction. The *habit* of violence is when violence is recognized but is seen as a habit, or something that "everybody does." The *acceptance* of violence is when violence is perceived as inconvenient but necessary to solve problems. These

forms of normalization are mediated by the automated responses of youth, as well as by their beliefs, views, and values.

We analyze in detail certain mediators of violence normalization that were identified as highly relevant, namely gender-based violence, domestic violence, substance abuse, and social norms. The focus groups disentangled a layer of violence normalization that is gender-based and rooted in gender stereotypes and misogynist views about how women and men should behave and their respective roles in society. This gender-based violence is prevalent in all social spheres where these youths participate—the community, work, school, and among friends, family, and in intimate partner relationships—which conflicts with the recognition of violence as such. As expected, gender-based violence is particularly intertwined with domestic violence, reflecting misogynist role models that reproduce gender stereotypes and drive violence. The evidence suggests that gender-based violence is learned at home, which, in turn, plays an important role in how normalization takes place. Expanding on the survey results, we find that previous offenders are highly exposed to violence in their families and that these violent dynamics are transmitted from one generation to the next. Violence is learned through socialization from family, and if someone grows up in an environment where violence prevails, it is likely that he or she will replicate it. We also find that substance abuse is seen as something that everybody does and, furthermore, that it is expected that someone who is high or drunk will engage in violence. Notably, substance abuse is also intertwined with family dynamics and plays a major role in generating violence among relatives. Group discussions showed that social norms in the social spheres of these youth reinforce beliefs and automated behavior associated with violence, particularly among peer relations at school and in neighborhoods.

The survey results show that men typically know more gang members than their female counterparts, but that this is also influenced by the security of the community (the more insecure the community is perceived, the higher the percentage of youth who know gang members), and that those who know gang members consider joining gangs to be more fun. As socioeconomic status (SES) and educational attainment increase, so does the perception that gang participation will result in death and injury. The focus group analysis allowed us to further analyze the rationales behind youth's perceptions of the disadvantages and advantages of joining gangs. We identify that economic benefits, coercion, and protection are at the core of their risk assessments and that these rationales vary depending on the criminal organizations' dynamics presented in each context (compared to Mexico City, in the north, criminal organizations have monopolistic control over the territory and impose more coercion or potential to protect than in Mexico City). The results from the survey also point to the potential role of social networks as enablers of gang involvement and that this varies by type of organization. This finding may suggest that youth involvement in gangs does not happen in isolation, and it is plausible that certain local community organizations serve as hotbeds for gang recruitment. At the same time, it is also very likely that other types of organization or group activity disincentivize gang involvement. Based on the available information, we cannot disentangle the specific types of community organization that may facilitate or be correlated with normalization and gang involvement, but this is a relevant area of opportunity for future research.

Blame attribution

The evidence from our experiment on blame attribution reveals that, on average, youth in urban Mexico see lower-class peers who engage in criminal behavior as less deserving of blame compared to middle-class, more privileged individuals. In such cases, respondents are more likely to blame the government or society as a whole for the crimes committed. This finding is also confirmed in the focus groups: while youth always assigned responsibility to the perpetrator for his choices, they tend to provide more justification if the perpetrator came from a lower socioeconomic background and acted out of need. Respondents are also more likely to blame perpetrators who act as gang leaders than those who follow orders. This result is consistent across all experimental analyses and in the focus groups.

In the survey experiment we also find that the perpetrator's actions are evaluated asymmetrically depending on whether the respondent is located in a low- vs. high-homicide area. While in high-homicide areas respondents assign more blame to a middle-class perpetrator, this result is not significant in low-homicide areas. Similarly, individuals in areas of high violence perceive economically disadvantaged perpetrators as less to blame for their actions; rather, the government and society were seen as being at fault. The focus groups provided more nuance to this result. The views from the participants are congruent with the findings on normalization mediators, as society is seen to influence people's behaviors. Interestingly, the concept of society in the focus group discussions was intertwined with family and personal relations. Youth blame the environment in which one develops. Moreover, youth blame the government for lack of opportunities and social services as leading youth offenders to make the choices they do.

The survey experiment show that the type of crime and the identity of the victim seem to be less influential and highly context-specific in shaping assessments of attribution of blame. Namely, relationships were revealed when we examined participants divided by the safety of their community (these relationships were obscured within the pooled sample). Blame assigned to the perpetrator increases with crime severity in low-homicide areas but decreases in high-homicide areas. The focus groups also provided nuance to this result. While most youth express more blame with increasing crime severity, many of them *reduce* this blame considering that the perpetrator likely did not have a choice. Youth justify that when one belongs to a criminal organization, there is no other choice but to follow the leader's orders, also showing a sense of vulnerability. The focus groups also provided more insight into how the type of victim shapes crime perceptions. This happens mainly through two mechanisms: empathy and risk assessment. Youth show empathy toward more vulnerable victims (an elderly lady and a blue-collar worker) because of their social class reflecting their own backgrounds. In this sense, attacking a businessman or a politician would entail a reduced moral load. At the same time, youth expressed that a businessman and a politician are riskier victims because they are more likely to have bodyguards and personal connections in the government to enact punishment for the crime. Further research is needed to explore whether these highly contextual differences with respect to the victim and the type of crime are because of increased normalization of violence or because of a generalized stigmatization of all criminal behavior. Taken together, these findings show that youth rationalize criminal behavior as the result of structural conditions and not only individual agency. The focus group discussions also revealed the complexity underlying the rationalization processes of these youth. While most youth recognize the centrality of individual choices, society and the government were also blamed for crime and violence. This suggests that effective youth

crime prevention requires trust-building strategies to restore the social fabric and legitimize state institutions.

Key Takeaways

Zooming in on how prevention programs may positively impact at-risk youth (particularly offenders), through the focus groups, we find that prevention programs are able to promote protective factors through the components of mental health services, addiction treatment, support networks, and education and employability. Nonetheless, several challenges remain. In terms of mental health services, we find that, while the current mental health services which are mainly focused on socioemotional health are effective, psychiatric treatment and work with families remain urgent. As mentioned above, domestic violence, substance abuse, and criminal activity are highly intertwined with family relations in this context. Although CSOs have incorporated family therapy in their service offerings, this is insufficient to address these complex family dynamics. Most of the youths we surveyed or interviewed had abused drugs and had been exposed to highly violent situations, either as perpetrators or victims. However, there was no indication of services addressing these problems present in their communities. Furthermore, addiction treatment remains a challenge and a sensitive issue to address, given the close relationship of substance abuse with violence and criminal behavior, particularly considering that it affects the social spheres of most of these youths. Harm reduction interventions seem to be promising, although they are more the exception as opposed to the norm. Finally, in terms of employment, the main area of opportunity relates to work training and labor intermediation, as youth struggle to find or maintain a job.

Along with these areas of opportunity, our study contributes to a better understanding of how youth in Mexico rationalize an individual's involvement in criminal life and how they attribute blame for different criminal acts. It also underscores the role of normalization of extreme forms of violence and the state and societal responsibility for youth involvement in criminal organizations, as well as the importance of local crime dynamics. Such findings are also crucial to design better policy responses for crime prevention and should be taken into consideration.

Based on our findings, we provide a set of recommendations. First, we encourage the international aid community to invest in efforts to map local crime dynamics and potential enablers for recruitment, crime, and violence. It is important to map out gangs at the neighborhood level, and to consolidate a census of neighborhood community organizations to identify correlations with gang activity in high-violence areas. These efforts should be advised by academic experts in these subjects and led by local actors. Second, it is imperative to rapidly expand the offerings of youth prevention programs, addressing the mechanisms that drive violence normalization. In this sense, multidimensional therapy models, addiction treatment, and psychiatric models adapted for the Mexican context are promising. We also strongly recommend prioritizing gender-based violence prevention and augmenting interventions aimed at supporting victims of gender-based violence. Third, we recommend implementing perspective-taking interventions to inform participants about the drivers of youth involvement in criminal behavior and raise awareness about the risks and the impacts—for them and for victims—associated with such behavior. Examples include police-youth and victim-youth dialogue programs. Although these strategies may not be enough as stand-alone interventions for youth who have already been involved in crime, they may be helpful as a secondary prevention intervention. Fourth, we advocate for more private sector involvement to expand employment opportunities for at-risk

youth, creating paid job-training programs and positions that are aligned with the labor market demand and train youths to fit those needs, improving profiling and reducing rotation. Fifth, we consider it urgent to engage with government agencies to create and expand specialized capacity for the implementation of specific services aimed at preventing youth crime involvement and reducing recidivism in higher-risk communities. Particularly, expanding services for mental health, employment, and cultural services is paramount, as well as creating programs that allow the combination of post-release support or alternatives to incarceration with comprehensive social services. Finally, we propose the creation of a collaborative research model with academic researchers and practitioners to improve the accumulation of data and knowledge to inform evidence-based policy interventions.

I. Introduction

This report is the second installment of the performance evaluation of the United States Agency for International Development's *Juntos para la Prevención de la Violencia* (USAID/JPV) aimed at promoting reductions in crime and violence levels by strengthening local prevention systems (LPSs) and reducing the likelihood of youth participation in crime and violence. The findings from the first phase suggest that crime in Mexico is a highly contextual behavioral phenomenon, and successful prevention interventions need to consider the broader context of violence to which program participants continue to be exposed during and after the program. Building on those findings and following Sampson and Laun (2005), we conceptualize crime as "a socially emergent and contextually shaped property … [a]n emergent process reducible neither to the individual nor the environment." Within this perspective, "neither agency nor structural location can by itself explain the life course of crime," and it is necessary to study them together. In this report we examine how socioeconomic and contextual variables mediate the normalization of violence, and following theories of blame attribution (McGraw, 1991), we explore how youth explain the causes of crime and violent behavior. We also explore how prevention interventions are able to promote protective factors and how these mediate attitudes of violence. Building on the findings of the first phase of the performance evaluation, we identify effective components of JPV supported interventions as well as areas of opportunity.

Criminal organizations often target young individuals from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds as potential recruits. While some youths are recruited by force or other means of coercion, many others voluntarily decide to participate in criminal activity despite the risks of violence and arrest. A large body of research has been dedicated to identifying the determinants of juvenile crime, particularly in the United States (US) and other developed areas of the world. This literature suggests that both contextual factors (e.g., socioeconomic conditions and childhood exposure to crime and violence) and individual incentives are important predictors of youth criminal involvement. Several studies have provided evidence that material incentives influence crime engagement (Becker, 1968; Ehrlichh, 1973; Draca and Machin, 2015). Others have emphasized the role of nonmaterial motivations, such as status and respect in society and social and peer networks (Billings et al., 2019; Bruce, 2007; Cook and Ludwing, 2005; Lindquist and Zenou, 2019). The existing work is invaluable to understand aggregate patterns of youth crime. However, there has been limited research aimed at exploring both individual incentives and the rationalization of youth violence and criminal involvement. A first step to understanding why some young individuals choose this lifestyle is to examine how youth normalize violence and rationalize criminal behavior and under what conditions they justify it. This study contributes to filling this gap by investigating the motivations and justifications for youth crime and violence in urban Mexico.

In particular, this study aims to understand criminal and violent behavior in Mexican youth through the following inquiries: Why do some young individuals decide to take these risks and embark on criminal life paths? To what extent do they normalize violence? Under what conditions do they justify involvement in crime? How do they perceive the role of the government and society in youth crime? Are there differences by gender? This study also examines how interventions targeted at at-risk-youth can help strengthen and improve protective factors against crime delinquency.

To answer our questions, we use a mixed-methods research design based on three key components: (i) an in-person survey representative of youth in urban Mexico; (ii) a vignette experiment to test a set of hypotheses about blame attribution for criminal acts; and (iii) a series of focus groups to further explore the mechanisms that drive violence normalization and the justification and blame attribution of crime involvement.

The results suggest that normalization of violence is more likely influenced by specific individual-level characteristics and experiences and not so much by recent community-level violence. Individual-level characteristics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic background, as well as exposure to violence in one's home, seem to matter more. In general, young men, those with poor family relations, and those who have been exposed to domestic violence may be most at risk for violence normalization. We also find that gender-based violence, domestic violence, substance abuse, and social norms are important mediators that lead to violence normalization.

Our experimental results show that, on average, youth in urban Mexico see lower-class peers who engage in criminal behavior as less deserving of blame compared to middle-class, more privileged individuals. In such cases, youth are more likely to blame the government or society as a whole for crimes committed. Youth are also more likely to blame perpetrators who act as gang leaders than those who follow orders. Finally, we find that the type of crime and victim identity seem to be less influential and highly context-specific in shaping assessments of blame attribution. Our results suggest that local crime dynamics influence these assessments and that these rationales vary depending on the criminal organizations' dynamics presented in each context.

In terms of protective factors as promoted by JPV-supported prevention interventions, through the focus groups we find that the components of education and employability, mental health services, addiction treatment, and support networks are effective at promoting protective factors. Nonetheless, several challenges remain. In terms of employment, the main area of opportunity relates to work training and labor intermediation, as youth struggle to find or maintain a job. In terms of mental health services, we find that psychiatric treatment and work with families remain urgent. Addiction treatment remains a challenge and a sensitive issue to address, given the close relationship of substance abuse with violence and criminal behavior and considering that it affects the social spheres of most of these youth. Together with the findings above, our findings indicate that prevention strategies should be tailored to the specific local crime dynamics, identifying venues of socialization that minimize youth risks and that are insulated from criminal groups.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. In the next section, we review the literature on criminal life paths and attributions of blame, and in the following section, we review the context of youth, crime, and violence in urban Mexico. Section IV presents the research design. Section V presents the findings, and Section VI presents the main conclusions. Finally, Section VII presents a set of recommendations for future prevention programming.

II. Literature review

II.1 Criminal Life Paths

Since the seminal contributions by Becker (1968) and Ehrlich (1973), a growing body of literature has demonstrated that economic incentives are important determinants of crime outcomes. Income-based explanations underscore the role of wages and unemployment rates in the formal labor market relative to the economic returns and labor opportunities in illegal sectors (Draca and Machin, 2015). This literature has also provided compelling evidence of "neighborhood" effects, in which crime is highly concentrated in certain population groups and places (Weisburd 2015)—particularly in poor neighborhoods with marginalized populations (Pettite and Western, 2004; Raphael and Sills, 2007). For Latin America, Jaitman and Ajzenman (2016) find that in five cities of the region, 50% of crimes are concentrated in 3% to 7.5% of street segments. Calderon et al. (2018) confirm this finding for Mexico, with evidence suggesting that the share of homicide cases found in the top-10 most violent municipalities in Mexico rose from 20% in 2016 to nearly 27% in 2017—representing the highest proportion of homicide cases concentrated among centers of violence since 2012 (when this figure was greater than 30%). Research has also shown that social interaction is a key channel through which neighborhood crime is linked to individual criminal behavior, where the share of convicted criminals affects later crime conviction probabilities, as well as the number of crimes for which a young man is convicted (Damm and Dustnamm, 2014). Similarly, several studies have shown that income inequality is associated with higher crime incidence (Freedman and Owens, 2014; Levitt and Lochner, 2001).

Some literature has focused on understanding what links crime rates with neighborhood disadvantage (Ludwig et al., 2001) and how crime involvement is affected by the proportion of criminals living in the same residential neighborhood (Damm and Dustmann 2014; Bernasco et al. 2017). This literature has pointed toward peer interaction models or social cohesion as variables that explain variation in crime rates among otherwise similarly disadvantaged neighborhoods. For instance, Glaeser et al. (1996) suggest that crime is reinforced by agent-to-agent meetings that create information flows or interactions that result from input provided by family members and peers, which determine the cost and taste for crime. Sampson et al. (1997) argue that social and organizational characteristics of neighborhoods explain variations in crime rates that are not solely attributable to the aggregated demographic characteristics of individuals. They propose that the differential ability of neighborhoods to realize the common values of residents and maintain effective social controls is a major source of neighborhood variation in violence (p. 918).

The literature has further explored peer effects. Evidence has shown that the "source of crime" is located in the intimate social networks of individuals (Lindquist and Zenou, 2019). Peer effects can happen through friends, family members, or neighbors. There has been a growing body of literature showing that juvenile delinquency is a group activity (Lindquist and Zenou, 2019; Haynie, 2001; Warr, 2002). As Lindquist and Zenou (2019) explain, "delinquents often have friends who have themselves committed several offences, and social ties among delinquents are seen as means whereby individuals exert an influence over one another to commit crimes" (p. 78).

The school has been identified as one relevant space where these peer interactions take place. Existing evidence suggests that higher educational attainment is negatively correlated with crime involvement (Lochner and Moretti, 2004). The bulk of the literature has indicated that disadvantaged and at-risk students in the US tend to attend schools with higher dropout rates and lower academic achievement (Rothstein, 2004), which is consistent with findings from extant studies on Mexico (Cárdenas, 2011). The literature has also found consistent evidence of the peer effects happening at school, where the concentration of high-risk youth increases the aggregate level of misbehavior (Cook and Ludwing, 2005; Carrel and Hoekstra, 2008; Daming 2011). Billings et al. (2019) show that social interactions explain the large variance in criminal activity across neighborhoods and find evidence for an agglomeration effect, by which grouping more disadvantaged students together in the same school in small neighborhood areas increases total crime. Daming (2011) find that better schools reduce future crime and presented suggestive evidence that the effect happens through higher school quality in high school and through peer effects in middle school. Furthermore, there is evidence that exposure to criminal violence has a negative effect on Mexican students' academic achievement (Caudillo and Torche, 2014; Michaelsen and Salardi, 2020).

Peer interactions have also been shown to lead to other behaviors, such as alcohol and drug consumption, which is also related to crime involvement. Evidence has shown that there are contagious effects in which the probability that a young person behaves in a certain manner depends positively on the prevalence of such behavior among their peers (Becker, 1998, Crane, 1991). Gaviria and Raphael (2001) find evidence of peer-group effects at the school for these behaviors, as well as school dropout. There is ample evidence showing that a high percentage of youth entering the justice system are drug users (McBride et al., 1999) and that drug use is also related to recidivism (Mitchell et al. 2007). In a study of gang members in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*, Carvalho and Soares (2015) find that individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and with no religious affiliation have a higher probability of joining a gang, while those with problems at school and early use of drugs join gangs at younger ages. For the case of Mexico, Chávez Villegas (2020) find that gang members serving prison sentences show more materially inclined motives and higher substance consumptions relative to peers with no criminal record. Descriptive evidence has also shown that youth in conflict with the law present high rates of substance abuse have been exposed to domestic violence, and present high levels of school dropout (Azaola, 2016; CIDAC, 2016).

Other types of social interaction derive from family, and there is important evidence of an "intergenerational transmission of crime." Parental human capital and behavior influence intergenerational crime relationships (Hjalmarsson and Lindquist, 2012 & 2013), and there is evidence of sibling correlations in crime involvement (Eriksson et al., 2016). The literature concerned with family effects on crime has found that adverse family influences driven by inadequate parenting and unstable homes affect crime involvement (Levit and Lochner, 2001, Blumstein, 1986). This relates to findings from studies on childhood risk factors, including parental substance abuse, that show how these are associated with future antisocial and criminal behavior (Stevens, 2018). Finally, evidence also has suggested that exposing children to illegal labor markets makes them more likely to be criminals as adults (Sviatschi, 2017).

II.2 Attribution of Blame

The literature on the attribution of responsibility in political psychology has paid particular attention to citizens' attributions of the government's responsibility for economic performance (e.g., Arceneaux, 2003; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Levin et al., 2016; Peffley, 1984). A growing number of studies have also explored blame attribution for government performance in noneconomic domains such as natural disaster management (e.g., Achen and Bartels, 2002; Malhotra and Kuo, 2008). Following McGraw (1990, 1991), another stream of research has examined judgments of contextualized actions of individual actors. For instance, Gibson and Gouws (1999) investigate the willingness of ordinary citizens to lay blame on a specific individual for violent actions during the period of struggle over apartheid in South Africa. Our study builds on these streams of literature, with a focus on the factors that affect individual-level blame attribution, as well as how blame may be shared across various actors. Our focus is not only on attribution of blame for the perpetrator, but also for societal actors, including the government.

Previous work in social psychology has examined the relationship between some personality variables and attribution of blame by offenders for their criminal activity (Gudjonsson, 1989), as well as the role of cognitive distortions (Blumenthal et al., 1999), type of offense (Felson and Palmore, 2018; Gudjonsson and Bownes, 1991; Bastian, Denson, and Haslam; 2013), and emotions (Lerner et al., 1998) in shaping attributions of responsibility. In these works, researchers have suggested that the severity of the crime can affect blame attribution; when examining blame attributed to the victim of a crime, less blame has been attributed for more severe crimes (e.g., rape vs. robbery) (Felson and Palmore, 2018). Further, convicted criminals seem to attribute more blame to themselves when they have committed more severe crimes (Gudjonsson & Bownes, 1991). Research on reactions to youth crime and perceptions of accountability has reinforced such results, finding that the type and outcome of a crime are major motivating factors in sentencing decisions and perceptions of legal competence (Ghetti and Redlich, 2001). The specific psychological mechanisms that enable youth to engage in acts of violence remain unclear, but recent studies have suggested that normalizing violence and dehumanizing victims partially explain the violent behavior of youth among gang members (Alleyne et al., 2014).

Knowledge of the influence of contextual factors on blame attribution, as well as the various connections among human capital, family upbringing, and economic circumstances, also suggest that the economic context of crimes may influence blame attribution. Some studies have suggested that individuals are particularly unforgiving when considering poor citizens, often blaming them for their own poverty; however, this depends on respondents' socioeconomic backgrounds (Cozzarelli et al., 2001). Also, recent studies have suggested that blame is often shifted to the government in contexts of economic hardship (Sirotkina and Zavadskaya, 2020).

Accountability mechanisms also seem to be of importance and can include assessments of causality, responsibility, and culpability (Shaver 2012). The role of the actor (whether they are a leader or are taking orders) clearly influences blame attribution, as there is a difference between what a person did and what a person was obliged to do (Hamilton and Hagiwara 1992). Delegating decisions, for example, can shift attributions of blame (Bartling & Fischbacher 2012).

Finally, perceptions of the victim also influence blame attribution. In contexts of sexual abuse, research examining victim blaming has found that victim age, attractiveness, and history of abuse affect blame attribution (Rogers et al., 2007). Such factors also can affect attribution of blame to

the perpetrator (Rogers et al., 2011). Within this general framework, more blame is expected to be attributed when victims of crime are perceived to be innocent (García-Ponce, Young, and Zeitzoff, Forthcoming). This research suggests that victim identity may also influence blame attribution for the perpetrator vs. society as well.

III. Context: Youth, Crime, and Violence in Urban Mexico

Over the past decade and a half, various regions of Mexico have been heavily affected by a wave of crime and violence that affects the life choices of youth. Our understanding of this phenomenon remains limited, to a large extent because of the significant heterogeneity across the country in terms of criminal activity and socioeconomic structural conditions, which influence youth behavior and decision making. As presented in the previous section, the available evidence shows that both the environment and social interactions affect crime involvement through different channels, and emerging evidence in Mexico suggests that crime is correlated with the risk factors known in the literature. Notably, gang violence encompasses much more than the commonly studied drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) and organized crime groups (OCGs). While DTOs and OCGs are prominent, smaller gangs are often not connected, or are loosely connected, to such groups and engage in significantly less-high-profile crimes that result in lesser economic gain. Youth account for an overwhelmingly high percentage of perpetrators (and victims) of gang violence, with recent estimates in Mexico being that approximately 30,000 children and adolescents are actively participating in criminal organizations (IACHR, 2020). In addition, youth have been known to create their own gangs—often termed "youth gangs"—which typically seek to create spaces for their members to exercise rights and access opportunities that they do not find provided to them by their family, community, or government; in these efforts, they often violate the rights of others and create violence (Jones, 2013, OAS, 2007).

Gang structures vary by region in Mexico. Southern Mexican states such as Chiapas and Oaxaca have a significant presence of Central American gangs, while Northern Mexican gangs are heavily influenced by US gangs. Central Mexican gangs tend to be characterized as "youth groups" often with minimal criminal activity. Northern Mexican gangs are structurally modeled on U.S. street gangs, but not every gang in northern Mexico has a strong connection to U.S. gangs nor are they as dangerous. The scant literature on youth gang involvement in Mexico suggests that socioeconomic and psychological factors drive youth gang involvement. Unemployment, limited access to the education system, lack of parental involvement, and poverty are associated with a higher likelihood of criminal behavior among children and adolescents (Jones, 2013).

The Mexican government's response to the gang phenomenon has given priority to a law enforcement approach—"social policy" proposals have been carried out primarily by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Of note, President Felipe Calederón (2006–2012) declared the "war on drugs" early in his administration, dedicating significant resources to military deployment to combat organized crime and gangs. In sharp contrast with his predecessor, Enrique Peña Nieto developed the National Plan for Crime Prevention, placing the prevention approach at the center of the security strategy and assigning resources to municipalities to develop social prevention strategies.[1] However the security strategy of both the federal and state governments

[1] The National Program for the Social Prevention of Violence and Crime (PRONAPRED) subsidized social prevention policies at the municipality level. Between 2012 and 2016, the program distributed more than 10 billion pesos to local governments all over the country, but the budget sharply decreased over the years to almost disappear by the end of the presidential term (Ayala & López, 2016). Evaluations of this program suggest that its efficacy was very limited given a poor technical design (Chapa Koloffon and Ley, 2015).

during this period was more of the same. More military operations, more army, more security forces developed at the state level without training or evaluation (Le Cour, 2018). President Andrés Manuel López Obrador followed the same approach and similarly relied on law enforcement, deploying a new national guard to combat violence. Across administrations, such strategies have targeted not only large DTOs and OCGs, but have impacted smaller, local gangs as well. Critics have pointed out that this strategy ignores the root causes of crime and violence and often breaks up larger organizations and breeds smaller gangs that compete for territory and resources. Such groups often engage in crime that increasingly affects the local communities, such as participating in the retail drug market and engaging in extortion.

With regard to social policy strategies, the Mexican government's response has been limited in comparison to repressive approaches. The government has dedicated resources to programs aimed at reducing inequality, a factor that has been shown to contribute to increased violence in Mexico (Enamorado et al., 2014). For example, the *Prospera* (previously *Oportunidade*s) program targeted families in extreme poverty and aimed to decrease inequality and increase school attendance and healthcare visits of children. Ultimately, the program did result in important outcomes, such as increasing the average time in school of young males by 10 months (WorldBank 2014). However, despite these efforts, Mexico's performance in this domain, comparatively speaking, is lacking—with continuing high rates of inequality and poverty, low rates of educational attainment, and issues of social and healthcare inclusion (SGI 2021). Furthermore, programs and social policies specifically targeted at violence prevention among vulnerable populations are limited and are often provided by the NGO sector.

IV. Research Design

IV.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The goal of the study is to understand how youth rationalize their peers' involvement in criminal life in order to be able to design tailored, impactful interventions. We are particularly interested in gaining a better understanding of the following questions: To what extent do youth normalize violence? Under what conditions do they justify involvement in crime? And how do they perceive the role of the government and society in youth crime?

The outcome of interest can be conceptualized as attribution of responsibility or justification of engagement in crime. Justifications are important for blame attributions and are highly contextual (McGraw, 1991). Within the context of criminal behavior, as previously discussed, background characteristics such as SES help in understanding youth involvement in the criminal world. The type of involvement or the role of the actor (whether they are a leader or are simply taking orders) also influences blame attribution, as there is a difference between what a person did and what a person was obliged to do (Hamilton and Hagiwara, 1992). Within this general framework, more blame is expected to be attributed when victims of crime are perceived to be innocent (García-Ponce, Young, and Zeitzoff, 2020) and when the crimes committed are more severe or outrageous (Bastian, Denson, and Haslam, 2013).

Building on these theoretical foundations, we generated the following testable hypotheses about *individual* responsibility:

> **Hypothesis 1.** An individual from a disadvantaged or marginalized socioeconomic background will be judged as less responsible for the crimes they committed, relative to an individual from a middle-class or affluent socioeconomic background.
>
> **Hypothesis 2.** An individual following orders from a criminal gang leader will be judged as less responsible for the crimes they committed, relative to an individual with a leadership role within the criminal gang.
>
> **Hypothesis 3.** An individual who perpetrated crimes against victims who are perceived as innocent will be judged as more responsible for the crimes they committed, relative to an individual who perpetrated crimes against victims who are not perceived as innocent.
>
> **Hypothesis 4.** An individual who perpetrated more severe crimes will be judged as more responsible for the crimes they committed, relative to an individual who perpetrated crimes that are not as severe.

Following similar logic, we also tested the following hypotheses about *societal* and *governmental* responsibility:

> **Hypothesis 5.** If a crime were committed by an individual from a disadvantaged or marginalized socioeconomic background, compared to a middle-class socioeconomic

background, the government and society will be judged as more to blame relative to the individual.

Hypothesis 6. An individual following orders from a criminal gang leader, compared to an individual with a leadership role within the criminal gang, will be judged as less responsible for the crimes they committed relative to the government and society.

Hypothesis 7. If a crime were committed against victims who are perceived as more innocent, the government and society will be judged as less to blame relative to the individual.

Hypothesis 8. If an individual commits more severe crimes, the government and society will be judged as less to blame relative to the individual.

IV.2 Research Design

Our research design is based on three key components. First, we conduct an in-person survey of representative youth in urban Mexico to measure and analyze their sociodemographic characteristics, victimization, attitudes toward violence, in/security perceptions, exposure to violence (at home and school), exposure to and perceptions about gang participation, and protective factors against delinquency as promoted by prevention programs. Second, within this survey, we embed a vignette experiment to test our hypotheses about blame attribution for criminal acts. Third, we rely on a series of focus groups following a sequential explanatory design to further explore the mechanisms that drive the justification and blame attribution of crime involvement. These focus groups target beneficiaries from JPV-supported interventions.

Survey

We survey a population that is representative at the urban national level for ages 16 to 29 (n = 2,800). Our sampling design ensures that our sample is not only representative across common sociodemographic categories (e.g., education and income), but also by level of violence. To do so, we consider three variables that capture levels of violence at the municipal level: homicide rate, reported nonhomicidal crime, and perceived level of violence. Homicide rates are considered more accurate official statistics compared to nonhomicidal crimes, as they are often reported more often by the general population and are typically recorded more accurately because they are definitionally specific and typically go through the health system (UNODC 2019). However, this measure does not capture the full reality of insecurity.

For this reason, we also include measures generated from Mexico's National Survey of Urban Public Security (ENSU) to capture nonhomicidal violence and insecurity at the municipal level. Given that the ENSU data are not representative at the municipal level, using this survey and the 2015 intercensus, we generate municipal estimates using multilevel regression and poststratification (MRP). These measures capture the preponderance of nonhomicidal crime (MRP victimization) and perceived community insecurity (MRP insecurity) at the municipal level. With these estimates and homicide rates, we then order municipalities based on level of insecurity and sample via seriation. Our sampling strategy generated a survey sample that is reflective of the ENSU survey in terms of violence level across all three categories. Section A in

the Appendix presents more detailed information about the data and methodology used for the survey design.

As mentioned above, the survey is composed of four blocks that aimed to gather information about respondents' sociodemographic characteristics, victimization, attitudes toward violence (violence normalization), in/security perceptions, protective factors against delinquency, exposure to violence (at home and school), and exposure to and perceptions about gang participation. The questionnaire (in Spanish) is available in Section B in the Appendix.

Vignette Experiment

To test our hypotheses, we embed an original vignette experiment in the survey. Experimental vignette studies in survey research use short descriptions of hypothetical scenarios (vignettes) that are usually presented to respondents within surveys in order to elicit how their judgments about such scenarios affect outcomes of interest, often revealing their perceptions, values, or social norms. In our vignette, we randomize the perpetrator's SES/upbringing, the type of criminal involvement (leader vs. gang member), the severity of the crime, and the type of victim to understand how youth attribute blame. The following table presents the vignette with randomized segments in bold. In total, we had 48 experimental combinations:

Ahora te voy a contar una historia de una situación que pasa frecuentemente en muchos lugares de nuestro país. Cuando termine de leer, te pediré tu opinión sobre la situación.

Rodrigo es un joven mexicano que creció en una familia **[DE BAJOS RECURSOS CON MUCHAS CARENCIAS/DE CLASE MEDIA DONDE NO LE FALTÓ NADA]**.

Desde muy temprana edad empezó a delinquir y recientemente fue arrestado por **[ROBARLE EL CELULAR / EXTORSIONAR / SECUESTRAR / ASESINAR]** A **[UN OBRERO/ UN EMPRESARIO / UN POLÍTICO LOCAL]**.

Rodrigo confesó a las autoridades haber cometido este crimen **[Y SER EL LÍDER DE UNA BANDA CRIMINAL / Y DIJO QUE ESTABA SIGUIENDO ÓRDENES DEL LÍDER DE UNA BANDA CRIMINAL]**.

We then ask respondents three questions to assess the influence of each attribute on the assignation of blame to the perpetrator (Rodrigo), the government, and society using these variables. We isolate the main effect of each variable across the pooled sample. In addition, we isolate the main effects for certain subgroups of interest according to other variables we gathered in the survey or to our municipalities' strata. In particular, we compare these effects for more violent vs. less violent municipalities and men vs. women. Power analyses indicate that our sample size is large enough to find effects for all main effects (controlling for interactions) across both the pooled sample and smaller subgroups (if divided into two groups). In particular, a power analysis (at the 0.8 level) indicates that an n of 1,397 responses is needed to find results at the $p < 0.05$ level. With a sample of 2,800, we have a sufficient sample size to conduct analyzes, even when dividing our sample in half.

Focus Groups

Following a sequential explanatory design, we conduct six focus groups with beneficiaries of JPV-supported interventions and one additional focus group with youth involved in one of Mexico City's Puntos de Innovación, Libertad, Arte y Educación (PILARES) groups. The target population

of the focus groups is young offenders (as these were youth participating in one tertiary prevention program given their trajectory) and from low socioeconomic backgrounds, which means that this analysis should be interpreted as a zoom-in on this segment. These participants were contacted through civil society organizations (CSOs) that either intervene at the community level in highly insecure areas, that provide services for alternative justice measures to detention for young offenders, or that do both types of intervention through a vast array of services and activities, such as therapy, education, scholarships, labor intermediation, sports, and cultural activities, among others. The PILARES group is an exception. PILARES is a policy of Mexico City's Department of Education that integrates 25 community centers located in prioritized areas in terms of insecurity. These centers offer services such as distance learning, work training, conversation groups, remediation courses, and cultural activities. Participants from the PILARES group are at-risk youth who live in low-SES neighborhoods in Mexico City, but who have not been involved with criminal activity and who have more protective factors than youth from other groups. We include this group to be able to gather some data on youth from low-SES neighborhoods who have not yet been involved in crime. The neighborhoods of all participants are insecure, and fights between neighbors and drug dealing are part of daily scenarios.

The groups were conducted after the survey was completed to further explore the mechanisms of violence normalization and blame attribution. The focus groups also explore how protective factors, as promoted by crime and violence prevention interventions, mediate these attitudes. In interviewing direct beneficiaries, we aim to understand which intervention components might have worked (or not) and why in order to decrease the likelihood of youth engaging in violence. Focus groups convened both women and men, with the number of participants ranging between 4 and 11 per group. Although the design intended to have a gender balance, this was only achieved in one group; the rest had a majority of men, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Focus group participants per program

Organization	Program description	Women	Men	Total
Centro de Asesoría y Promoción Juvenil, A.C. (CASA)	Alternative measures programs/community intervention	3	7	10
Consejo Ciudadano Seguridad y Justicia A.C.	Alternative measures programs	3	4	7
La Tenda di Cristo A.C.	Alternative measures programs/community intervention	2	4	6
Puntos de Innovación, Libertad, Arte y Educación (PILARES)	Community centers	4	4	8
Reinserta a un Mexicano A.C.	Alternative measures programs	1	6	7
Renace - Solidaridad y Justicia	Alternative measures programs	1	3	4
Supera A.C.	Alternative measures programs/community intervention	2	5	7

The focus group sessions discussed youth hobbies, work, goals, satisfaction with CSO programs, and violence normalization in different settings. Also, groups were presented with a vignette to assess blame attribution similar to that which was present in our survey. For the violence normalization section, participants were divided by gender into two separate groups, as there were questions related to gender-based and sexual violence that might have generated biased responses in mixed groups. The vignette was adapted from the survey, and it was presented as an evolving story introducing variation in the variables of interest as the discussion progressed, namely in the perpetrator's (Rodrigo's) socioeconomic background, the type of victim, and the severity of the crime and its circumstances (e.g., following orders, making his own decisions). The focus group guide (in Spanish) is available in Section C of the Appendix.

V. Findings

V.I Survey Analysis

In this section, we examine the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents and their relationship with violence normalization, as well as the relationship of protective factors (understood as participation in prevention programs and organizational affiliation) with violence normalization. We also explore how youth risk assessment of gang participation relates to their exposure to gangs (risk factors) and to protective factors.

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

In this section, we explore the socioeconomic characteristics of our respondents, particularly examining their work status and gender. For this analysis, SES is measured via a series of questions regarding respondents' possession of certain household goods (e.g., television, cell phone, vehicle) and was created using principal component analysis (PCA). Overall, we find that fewer than half of the sample was employed during the fielding of the survey, with some variation by gender and SES.

Figure 1 presents the work status of respondents broken up by gender. This figure demonstrates the plurality of both men and women having worked in the past week (across both genders, 43.5% of respondents worked). A minority of respondents neither worked nor were in school (6.3% across both genders). This figure also shows women as disproportionately dedicated to housework (across both genders, 15.6% of responders were dedicated to housework). **Figure 2** also presents the work status of respondents via a box-and-whisker plot and breaks up respondents by SES. The middle horizontal line of each bar represents the median SES of each group. From this figure, we can see that students tend to be of higher SES. Among women, those who are dedicated to housework tend to be of the lowest SES, while among men, those who are incapacitated and unable to work represent the lowest SES. **Figure 3** presents the employment type of individuals who reported having an occupation in the past week. The majority of both males and females were employees during this timeframe. About one-quarter of respondents were self-employed. Overall, from these figures, we can conclude that the main difference between males and females is the overrepresentation of females in housework and that this is more pronounced in lower-SES conditions. Moreover, youth from higher-SES conditions tend to stay in school.

Figure 1. Work status of respondents by gender

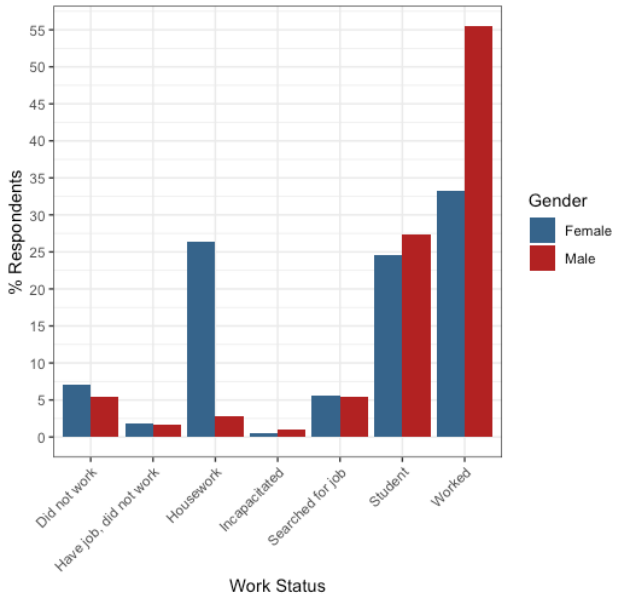


Figure 2. Work status of respondents by gender and SES

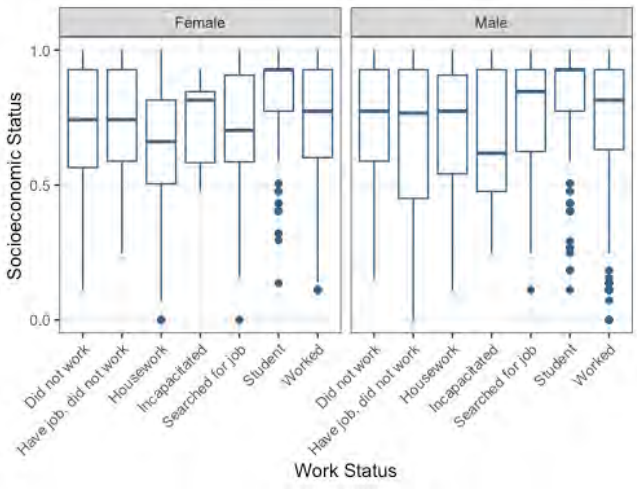
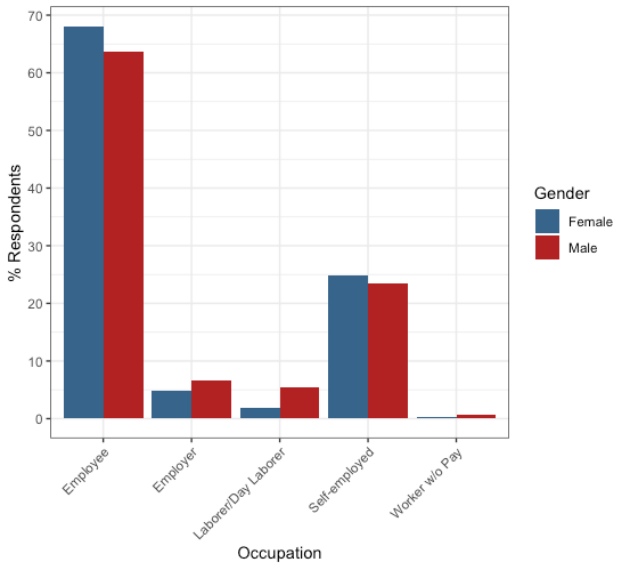


Figure 3. Employment type of individuals who reported having an occupation in the past week



Violence Normalization

This section explores violence normalization. We first present average perceived levels of violence by act and by gender. Then, we show a series of regressions examining how normalization is influenced by victimization (robbery at home or business, robbery of car, assault on public transportation, being hurt by a weapon, attempted homicide, extortion, kidnapping, sexual assault), perceived level of insecurity, school victimization, domestic violence, and interpersonal trust—all of these controlling for a set of socioeconomic characteristics. We find that violence is significantly more normalized among men compared to women, with some variation dependent on the type of crime examined. We also find some evidence that abuse at the home (verbal or physical) is associated with violence normalization, as is school victimization. Ultimately, trust in one's family is associated with less normalization of violence (i.e., those who trust their family more normalize violence less). These results suggest that young men, those with poor family relations, and those who have been victims of abuse at home may be most at risk for violence normalization.

Figure 4 presents average perceived levels of violence by act (nonconsensual sex, hitting on someone, hitting someone, nonconsensual kissing, selling drugs, and making fun of someone) and by gender. Nonconsensual sex, hitting, and selling drugs are considered the most violent acts across genders, whereas hitting on, nonconsensual kissing, and making fun of other people are, on average, considered less violent. However, it is noticeable that, in general, women tend to consider all acts more violent than men do.

Figure 4. Normalization of violence (by act, gender, and age)

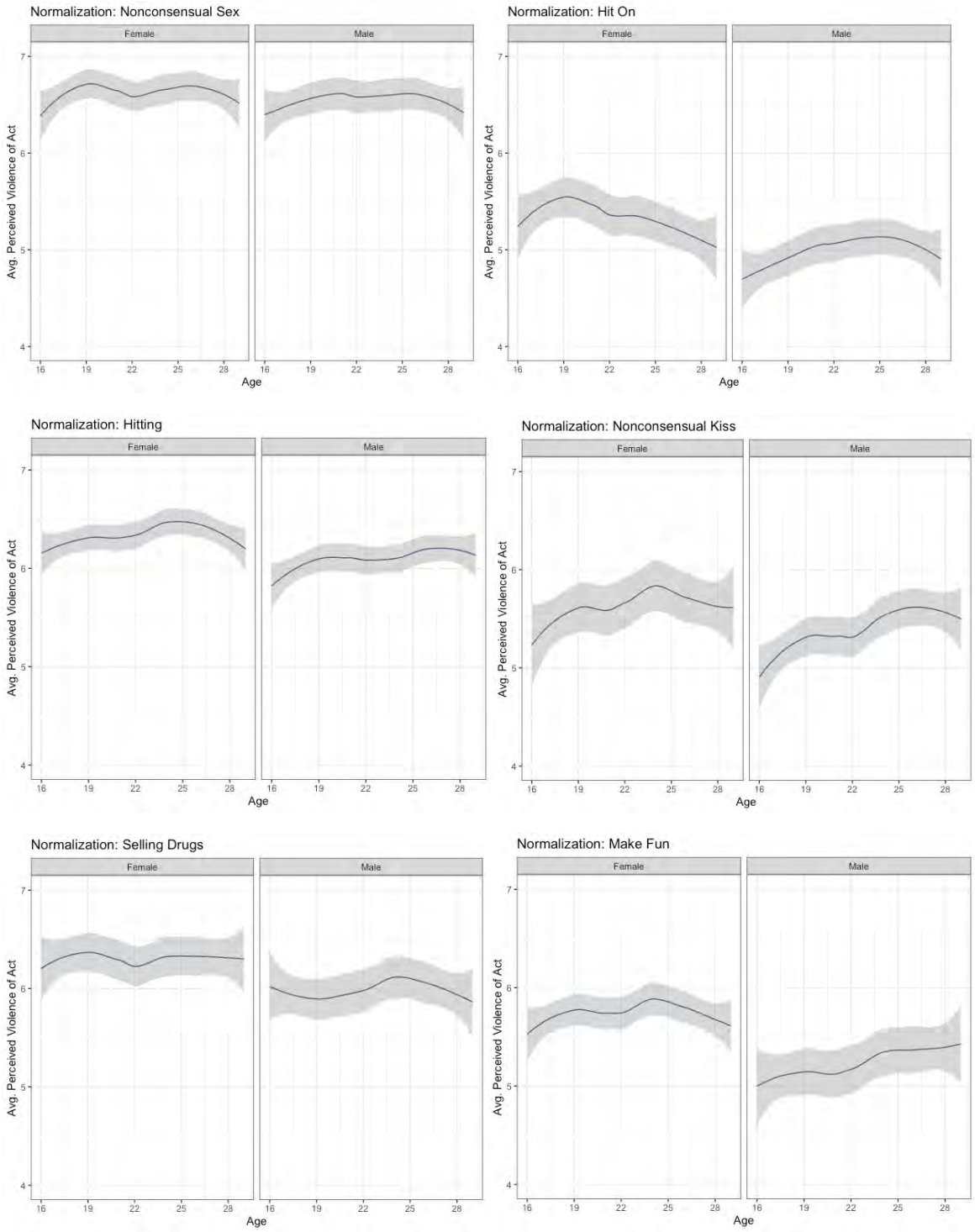


Table 2 further examines normalization of violence based on victimization, perceived level of insecurity in the community, and sociodemographic controls, including SES, age, gender, and respondent education. In addition to the acts presented in **Figure 4**, this table includes greeting

or helping someone one doesn't know. In the survey, we include these variables to get more variation in the responses and to avoid bias if all items were negative. The regression in this table and all regressions in this section employ ordinal logistic regression models (utilizing the polr package in R). All models include fixed effects by state. The variable "victim" is a binary variable that equals 1 if respondents reported any type of victimization in the past 12 months and that equals 0 otherwise. The community security scale is from 1 to 7, where 1 is very insecure and 7 is very secure. The normalization scale is from 1 to 7, where 1 is not violent at all and 7 is violent.

To our surprise, some of these correlations are counterintuitive. For example, the results suggest that perceptions of increased community security are associated with normalization of certain acts. Specifically, those who perceive their communities as more secure are less likely to think that hitting someone and selling drugs are acts of violence. Although we cannot test this hypothesis further with the data available, one potential explanation for this result is that normalization of violence is intertwined with perception of security. In other words, respondents who believe that their community is safe (despite being objectively violent) are more likely to normalize certain acts of violence. That is, their normalization of violence could be biasing their own security perceptions. Relatedly, as we will review in the focus group analysis, we find that in some instances, youth classified selling drugs as a nonviolent act because gangs protect their communities, thus making drug activity a nonviolent act. But again, we cannot make causal claims about these correlations, and these hypotheses should be subject to future research.

The survey results also suggest that victimization (which captures petty to severe crimes as described above) does not play a major role in the normalization of violence. Generally speaking, violence is more normalized among men. The effect of SES depends on the act in question. Violent acts (e.g., nonconsensual sex) are perceived as more violent as SES increases, and nonviolent acts (e.g., greeting or helping someone one doesn't know) are perceived as less violent as SES increases. In the focus groups, there were interesting insights into this finding. Youth from lower-SES backgrounds tended to find helping someone as dangerous because their intentions are unknown and there may be an intention to harm. We review this in more detail in that section. Violence is less normalized as age increases, and this is more salient across certain, more extreme acts, including nonconsensual sex, nonconsensual kissing, and hitting.

Table 2. Normalization of Violence, Insecurity, and Victimization

Normalization of Violence, Insecurity, and Victimization

	Dependent variable:								
	NC Sex	Hit On	Criticize	NC Kiss	Hit	Greet	Sell Drugs	Make Fun	Help
Victim	−0.013	0.041	0.107	0.025	0.147	−0.082	−0.094	0.106	−0.054
	(0.139)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.101)	(0.082)	(0.101)	(0.084)	(0.088)
Household Victim	−0.002	0.013	−0.001	−0.004	−0.120	−0.011	−0.026	−0.074	−0.101
	(0.137)	(0.080)	(0.080)	(0.083)	(0.098)	(0.081)	(0.100)	(0.082)	(0.087)
Comm. Sec.	−0.022	−0.009	−0.007	−0.036	−0.074**	0.045*	−0.083***	−0.037	0.076***
	(0.040)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.025)	(0.025)
SES	0.450***	0.104	0.055	0.101	0.078	−0.295***	0.009	−0.053	−0.193**
	(0.113)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.076)	(0.087)	(0.073)	(0.091)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Male	−0.395***	−0.432***	−0.282***	−0.287***	−0.469***	−0.588***	−0.491***	−0.595***	−0.256***
	(0.121)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.086)	(0.071)	(0.087)	(0.072)	(0.076)
Age	0.025*	−0.007	−0.006	0.031***	0.023**	−0.002	0.007	0.014*	0.013
	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Edu	0.162***	0.062***	−0.029	0.049**	0.097***	−0.060***	0.014	−0.008	−0.173***
	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Observations	2,802	2,809	2,807	2,805	2,794	2,814	2,801	2,806	2,802

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3 examines the relationship between violence normalization and school victimization with the same controls as in **Table 2**. While victimization outside of school does not seem to play a major role in the normalization of violence, victimization in a school setting does play a role in certain circumstances. In particular, being touched leads to a decrease in the normalization of being hit on. Being robbed leads to a decrease in the normalization of hitting, although this effect is weak.

Table 3. Normalization of Violence and School Victimization

Normalization of Violence and School Victimization

	Dependent variable:								
	NC Sex	Hit On	Criticize	NC Kiss	Hit	Greet	Sell Drugs	Make Fun	Help
Hit	0.086	−0.123	0.030	−0.107	−0.079	0.041	0.200	−0.118	0.038
	(0.178)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.109)	(0.125)	(0.107)	(0.128)	(0.105)	(0.117)
Attack	−0.133	0.138	0.102	−0.133	−0.304	0.421**	−0.337	0.369*	0.262
	(0.335)	(0.211)	(0.215)	(0.207)	(0.239)	(0.213)	(0.235)	(0.216)	(0.235)
Cyberbully	−0.229	−0.093	0.030	−0.125	0.076	−0.153	−0.190	0.049	−0.053
	(0.184)	(0.110)	(0.112)	(0.113)	(0.136)	(0.112)	(0.131)	(0.113)	(0.122)
Destroy Prop.	−0.016	0.033	0.096	0.010	−0.062	−0.116	−0.156	−0.029	−0.088
	(0.183)	(0.106)	(0.107)	(0.110)	(0.129)	(0.110)	(0.127)	(0.107)	(0.122)
Rob	0.054	−0.055	−0.074	0.056	0.202*	−0.183**	−0.103	0.032	−0.229**
	(0.155)	(0.089)	(0.088)	(0.093)	(0.111)	(0.090)	(0.108)	(0.090)	(0.100)
Touch	−0.154	0.394***	0.128	0.195	−0.252	−0.228	0.065	−0.113	−0.348**
	(0.261)	(0.152)	(0.147)	(0.156)	(0.180)	(0.152)	(0.187)	(0.149)	(0.170)
Favors	0.580	−0.108	0.305	0.196	0.130	−0.171	−0.057	0.057	0.024
	(0.408)	(0.206)	(0.205)	(0.212)	(0.251)	(0.199)	(0.240)	(0.211)	(0.225)
SES	0.427***	0.087	0.060	0.101	0.076	−0.287***	0.012	−0.052	−0.182**
	(0.113)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.076)	(0.087)	(0.073)	(0.091)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Male	−0.451***	−0.415***	−0.275***	−0.266***	−0.492***	−0.592***	−0.514***	−0.614***	−0.222***
	(0.123)	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.074)	(0.088)	(0.074)	(0.089)	(0.074)	(0.078)
Age	0.026*	−0.005	−0.002	0.034***	0.027***	−0.006	0.004	0.018**	0.011
	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Edu	0.165***	0.065***	−0.033	0.047**	0.096***	−0.057***	0.020	−0.011	−0.176***
	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Observations	2,823	2,826	2,825	2,825	2,816	2,832	2,820	2,822	2,821

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4 examines the relationship between violence normalization and experience with domestic violence, and **Table 5** examines its relationship with interpersonal trust, again with the same controls. The data show that domestic violence (verbal or physical abuse at home) does not have a prominent effect on normalization of violence; however, there are some relationships of note. Verbal abuse in the home is associated with a normalization of nonconsensual kissing; physical abuse is associated with a normalization of criticism. We should note that, given the sensitive nature of these questions and the interview mode, underreporting of domestic violence is likely to be high and concealing of its potential impact on normalization of violence. Across the sample, verbal abuse is "somewhat" or "very" common across 20.1% of respondents, while physical abuse is "somewhat" or "very" common across 13.4% of respondents.

While trust in one's neighbors is not associated with a normalization of violence, trust in one's family is associated with a decreased normalization of violence across many actions (e.g., nonconsensual sex, hitting on, criticism, nonconsensual kissing, hitting, and selling drugs). As we discuss later, the focus groups provided more insights about the relationship among family relations, the experience of domestic abuse, and normalization of violence.

Table 4. Normalization of Violence and Experience with Domestic Violence

Normalization of Violence and Experience with Domestic Violence

	Dependent variable:								
	NC Sex	Hit On	Criticize	NC Kiss	Hit	Greet	Sell Drugs	Make Fun	Help
Verbal Abuse	−0.017	−0.060	0.056	−0.086*	0.037	−0.081*	−0.025	−0.029	−0.096**
	(0.075)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.054)	(0.045)	(0.055)	(0.045)	(0.049)
Hitting	−0.060	0.011	−0.095*	0.048	−0.044	0.035	−0.016	−0.021	0.055
	(0.082)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.053)	(0.061)	(0.051)	(0.062)	(0.051)	(0.054)
SES	0.443***	0.123*	0.065	0.121	0.106	−0.298***	0.024	−0.046	−0.208***
	(0.113)	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.076)	(0.087)	(0.073)	(0.091)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Male	−0.455***	−0.455***	−0.290***	−0.294***	−0.498***	−0.560***	−0.531***	−0.610***	−0.206***
	(0.119)	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.085)	(0.071)	(0.086)	(0.072)	(0.075)
Age	0.028*	−0.005	−0.002	0.036***	0.029***	−0.004	0.009	0.019**	0.011
	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Edu	0.157***	0.057***	−0.037*	0.044**	0.093***	−0.067***	0.010	−0.016	−0.180***
	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Observations	2,810	2,814	2,811	2,811	2,802	2,821	2,808	2,809	2,809

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 5. Normalization of Violence and Interpersonal Trust

Normalization of Violence and Interpersonal Trust

	Dependent variable:								
	NC Sex	Hit On	Criticize	NC Kiss	Hit	Greet	Sell Drugs	Make Fun	Help
Trust Neighbors	0.035	0.028	0.019	0.027	−0.003	−0.009	0.019	−0.018	−0.019
	(0.032)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Trust Family	0.189***	0.106***	0.109***	0.108***	0.171***	0.054	0.217***	0.146***	0.017
	(0.048)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.039)	(0.035)	(0.039)	(0.035)	(0.037)
SES	0.401***	0.094	0.040	0.081	0.064	−0.306***	−0.026	−0.073	−0.203***
	(0.113)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.087)	(0.073)	(0.091)	(0.075)	(0.076)
Male	−0.458***	−0.459***	−0.294***	−0.318***	−0.509***	−0.560***	−0.542***	−0.615***	−0.207***
	(0.119)	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.085)	(0.070)	(0.086)	(0.071)	(0.075)
Age	0.025*	−0.005	−0.002	0.033***	0.027***	−0.002	0.007	0.019**	0.012
	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Edu	0.154***	0.058***	−0.040*	0.042**	0.095***	−0.062***	0.004	−0.014	−0.177***
	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Observations	2,830	2,837	2,833	2,832	2,824	2,842	2,828	2,832	2,832

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

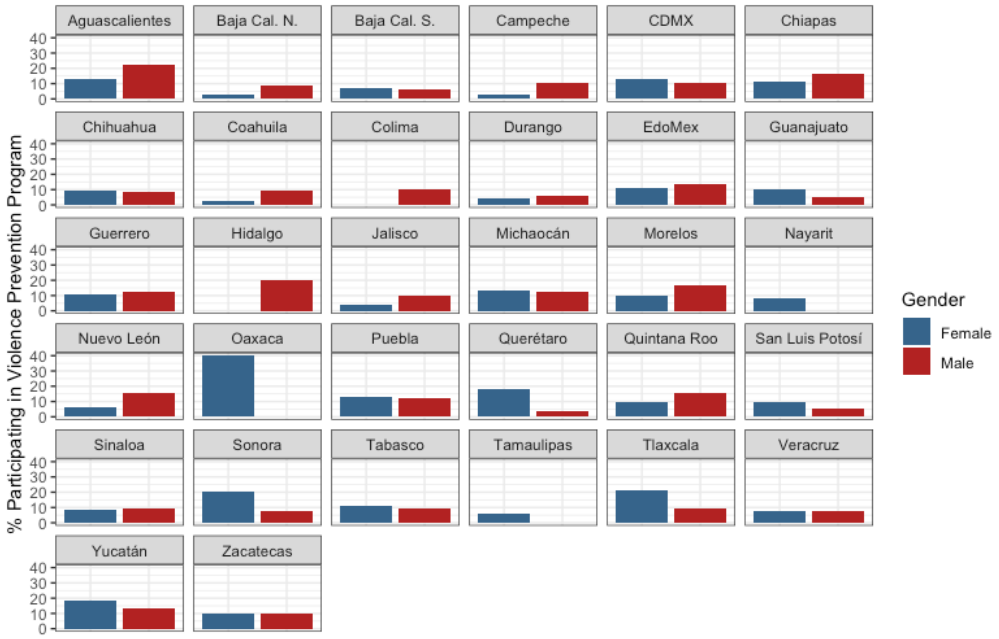
As part of our analysis, we also explore correlations between our violence strata with normalization variables and other important survey variables (see Section D in the Appendix). Overall, correlations seem to suggest that normalization of violence is more likely to be influenced by specific individual-level experiences and not so much by recent community-level violence. The correlations show that areas with high levels of violence do not necessarily correlate with higher victimization or normalization of violence. However, the analysis does show correlations between victimization and perceived security and, most importantly, between victimization across crimes and strong correlations between normalization of various elements of violence.

Protective Factors: Organizational Affiliation and Program Participation

In this section, we explore participation in different organizations and substance-abuse prevention programs, and whether this has any impact on violence normalization. We first explore some descriptive statistics regarding youth participation in relevant programs across states. We then show a series of regression analyses to explore the degree to which program participation may influence the normalization of violence among youth. Our results suggest that violence is most normalized among those who participate in certain organizations such as sports and community groups. These results are not causal conclusions (i.e., participating in sports does not necessarily lead to violence normalization), but suggest that those in such groups report higher levels of such normalization. We discuss these results in more detail below.

Figure 5 presents the percent of youth participants who had participated in violence prevention programs, and **Figure 6** presents the percent of youth participants who had participated in drug-abuse reduction/prevention programs, both by state and gender. A total of 10.9% of males and 9.7% females had participated in at least one violence prevention program, while a total of 17.3% of males and 10.4% of females had participated in at least one substance-abuse prevention program. We observe that in more than half of the states, male participation is more common in violence prevention programs, although there is a good number of states (16) where female participation is more widespread. In terms of substance abuse, we see that, in general, male participation is more common.

Figure 5. Percent of youth who have participated in violence prevention programs, by state and gender.



Given these relatively high participation rates in prevention programs, it is interesting to examine the relationship between organizational affiliation and violence normalization. **Table 6** looks at the effect of current organizational affiliation and the normalization of different violent acts, with the same controls as before. The results show that the type of organization matters for its effect on normalization. We observe that affiliation with community organizations and, to a lesser extent, affiliation with sports are associated (although only at a 10% confidence level) with a decreased perception that nonconsensual sex is a violent act (this act is normalized), while affiliation with community organizations is associated with a normalization of hitting on an individual. Affiliation with a political party is associated with normalization of both criticism and selling drugs. These results are not causal conclusions (i.e., participating in a community organization does not necessarily lead to violence normalization), but suggest that those in such groups report higher levels of such normalization. This may suggest that interventions should be targeted at these youth. In the case of community organizations, for example, it may suggest these groups are appropriately reaching youth already at risk of normalization.

Figure 6. Percent of youth who have participated in drug-abuse reduction/prevention programs, by state and gender.

The results also show that those who are affiliated with religious groups see selling drugs as more violent. Affiliation with student organizations decreases the normalization of nonconsensual sex and hitting (they are seen as more violent) at confidence levels of 10% and 5%, respectively. In general, it seems that participation in school organizations is associated with the most positive and consistent effect on normalization of violence.

Table 6. Normalization of Violence and Current Organizational Affiliation

Normalization of Violence and Current Organizational Affiliation

	Dependent variable:								
	NC Sex	Hit On	Criticize	NC Kiss	Hit	Greet	Sell Drugs	Make Fun	Help
Relig. Org	0.089	−0.010	−0.132	−0.154	−0.067	−0.025	0.415***	0.007	0.095
	(0.172)	(0.099)	(0.099)	(0.102)	(0.119)	(0.100)	(0.135)	(0.103)	(0.107)
Sports	−0.250*	−0.065	0.064	0.051	−0.117	0.373***	−0.089	0.063	0.271***
	(0.149)	(0.092)	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.109)	(0.092)	(0.112)	(0.095)	(0.100)
Community Org.	−0.525*	−0.442**	−0.182	−0.203	−0.133	−0.296	−0.252	−0.124	−0.037
	(0.284)	(0.193)	(0.196)	(0.201)	(0.225)	(0.201)	(0.230)	(0.200)	(0.217)
Political Party	−0.364	−0.088	−0.393*	−0.128	−0.207	−0.041	−0.616***	−0.175	0.290
	(0.308)	(0.202)	(0.210)	(0.204)	(0.240)	(0.201)	(0.229)	(0.209)	(0.218)
Art and Music	−0.021	−0.056	0.084	0.094	−0.033	0.172	−0.184	−0.095	−0.090
	(0.221)	(0.129)	(0.130)	(0.136)	(0.155)	(0.127)	(0.154)	(0.132)	(0.146)
Student Org	0.392*	0.152	−0.026	0.153	0.270**	−0.243**	0.079	0.056	−0.457***
	(0.201)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.109)	(0.132)	(0.106)	(0.129)	(0.107)	(0.121)
SES	0.470***	0.101	0.048	0.090	0.085	−0.319***	0.025	−0.068	−0.211***
	(0.113)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.076)	(0.087)	(0.073)	(0.091)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Male	−0.387***	−0.430***	−0.298***	−0.308***	−0.475***	−0.641***	−0.488***	−0.619***	−0.255***
	(0.123)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.087)	(0.073)	(0.088)	(0.073)	(0.077)
Age	0.033**	−0.0001	−0.002	0.037***	0.031***	−0.003	0.013	0.020**	0.006
	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Edu	0.158***	0.058***	−0.030	0.044**	0.095***	−0.058***	0.011	−0.009	−0.168***
	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Observations	2,825	2,830	2,826	2,826	2,818	2,835	2,823	2,825	2,825

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Gang Participation

In this section, we explore some descriptive statistics and show a series of regression analyses to examine how exposure to gangs, socioeconomic factors, organizational affiliation, and prevention program participation are associated with "gang risk factors," or risk assessments regarding gang participation. Overall, we find that men typically know more gang members than their female

counterparts, but this is also influenced by the security of the community (the more insecure one perceives the community is, the higher the percentage of youth who know gang members). Furthermore, we find that those who know gang members consider joining gangs to be more fun. As SES and educational attainment increase, so does the perception that gang participation will result in death and injury. Participation in certain types of organization, such as sports, is associated with lower levels of these beliefs.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of respondents who know someone in a gang, separated by gender and perceived security of one's community. As can be observed, the percentages are much higher for males (32.4% of males vs. 22.4% of females), and the percentages increase as the perception of insecurity in one's community increases.

Figure 7. Percentage of respondents who know someone in a gang, by gender and perceived security of one's community

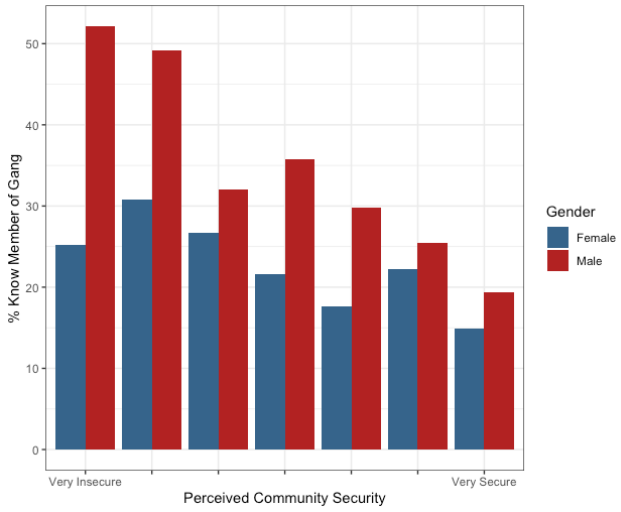


Table 7 examines the effect of knowing someone who belongs to a gang on the perception of risks associated with joining a gang, controlling for the same socioeconomic variables as above. Lower values indicate more agreement with a statement (e.g., joining a gang increases security), while higher values indicate more disagreement (e.g., joining a gang does not increase security). Results indicate that victims of crime tend to believe that gangs increase one's security, but also increase one's chance of dying; victims of crime are also less likely to believe that being in a gang will lead one to end up in prison. Those who know gang members personally are more likely to believe that gangs are fun, but this also increases the likelihood of physical injury. As SES increases, individuals are more likely to believe that joining a gang will result in death and injury. Males are more likely to see gang membership as fun. As age increases, individuals are less likely to believe that gangs are fun and more likely to believe that membership will result in death and injury. As educational attainment increases, individuals are more likely to believe that gang membership will result in death, injury, and imprisonment.

Table 7. Gang Risk Factors

Gang Risk Factors

	Dependent variable:				
	Secure	Fun	Death	Injured	Prison
Victim	−0.261***	−0.121	−0.154*	−0.084	0.156*
	(0.088)	(0.098)	(0.087)	(0.094)	(0.081)
Know Gang Member	−0.153	−0.394***	−0.146	−0.190*	−0.109
	(0.096)	(0.103)	(0.096)	(0.105)	(0.090)
SES	0.061	0.142	−0.222***	−0.334***	0.097
	(0.088)	(0.096)	(0.084)	(0.089)	(0.082)
Male	−0.094	−0.457***	0.090	0.040	−0.055
	(0.086)	(0.096)	(0.083)	(0.090)	(0.079)
Age	0.016	0.027**	−0.032***	−0.025**	−0.007
	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Edu	0.027	0.015	−0.084***	−0.099***	0.089***
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.023)
Observations	2,801	2,786	2,812	2,813	2,805
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Expanding on the results above about protective factors and violence normalization, **Table 8** shows the relationship between affiliation with different types of organization and perception of risks associated with joining a gang. Respondents affiliated with community organizations are more likely to report that gangs are fun and secure, while underestimating the potential risks associated with gang activity (death, injury, and imprisonment). This underscores the potential role of social networks as enablers of gang involvement. In other words, youth involvement in gangs does not happen in isolation, and it is plausible that certain local community organizations serve as hotbeds for gang recruitment. Based on the available information, we cannot disentangle the specific types of community organization that may facilitate or be correlated with gang involvement. It is very likely that other types of organization or group activity disincentivize gang involvement. Note, for example, that participation in sports (which is weakly correlated with normalization of nonconsensual sex, likely because the proportion of males is much higher) is, in fact, associated with a decrease in the perception that gangs are fun and an increase in the perception that gang membership leads to death and imprisonment. Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning that current participation in student organizations has no relationship with perception of gang risks.

We ran further analysis to explore the association between past participation in violence prevention and drug-abuse prevention programs on these perceptions (see Section E of the Appendix). We find that while past participation in violence prevention programs is associated with a decrease in the perception that gang membership is fun, participation in drug-abuse prevention programs is associated with an increase in the perception that gangs increase one's security and are fun. Notably, this is not a causal relationship; it is possible that those who participate in drug-abuse prevention programs are more likely to hold these views in the first place.

Table 8. Gang Risk Factors and Current Program Participation

Gang Risk Factors and Current Program Participation

	Dependent variable:				
	Secure	Fun	Death	Injured	Prison
Relig. Org	0.032	0.109	0.038	0.036	0.016
	(0.127)	(0.143)	(0.119)	(0.129)	(0.116)
Sports	0.004	0.229*	−0.191*	−0.011	−0.356***
	(0.115)	(0.128)	(0.112)	(0.120)	(0.109)
Community Org.	−0.536**	−0.817***	0.393*	0.607***	0.577***
	(0.213)	(0.232)	(0.216)	(0.221)	(0.210)
Political Party	0.126	−0.368	0.347	0.566**	0.075
	(0.250)	(0.257)	(0.225)	(0.234)	(0.224)
Art and Music	−0.021	−0.304*	0.007	−0.049	0.159
	(0.161)	(0.167)	(0.154)	(0.170)	(0.145)
Student Org	−0.018	0.049	0.013	−0.194	0.101
	(0.130)	(0.145)	(0.124)	(0.141)	(0.118)
SES	0.041	0.131	−0.243***	−0.372***	0.068
	(0.088)	(0.096)	(0.084)	(0.089)	(0.083)
Male	−0.070	−0.498***	0.104	0.027	−0.027
	(0.088)	(0.098)	(0.085)	(0.093)	(0.081)
Age	0.016	0.030**	−0.040***	−0.036***	−0.009
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Edu	0.025	0.005	−0.085***	−0.092***	0.092***
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Observations	2,808	2,793	2,819	2,817	2,811
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Overall, the results from the survey seem to suggest that normalization of violence is more likely to be influenced by specific individual-level characteristics and experiences and not so much by recent community-level violence. Individual-level characteristics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic background, as well as exposure to violence in one's home, seem to matter more. The results also point to the potential role of social networks as enablers of normalization and gang involvement and that this varies by type of organization. This finding may suggest that youth involvement in gangs does not happen in isolation, and it is plausible that certain local community organizations serve as hotbeds for gang recruitment. At the same time, it is also very likely that other types of organization or group activity disincentivize normalization and gang involvement. Based on the available information, we cannot disentangle the specific types of community organization that may facilitate or be correlated with normalization and gang involvement, but this is a relevant area of opportunity for future research. This is beyond the scope of our analysis, but more fine-grained data on individual exposure to different forms of community-violence over time would improve our understanding of the potential mechanisms that influence violence normalization. It is important to keep in mind that these correlations are not causal findings and should not be interpreted as such.

V.2 Experimental Results

In this section, we explore the experimental results. We run two sets of models, both of which employed a linear model (ordinary least squares [OLS]). For the first set of models, the outcome variable is an index of blame capturing blame for the individual perpetrator in the vignette (Rodrigo). Respondents are asked how much blame they attribute to the perpetrator on a scale of 1 to 7. We treat this as a continuous variable. In these models, positive coefficients can be interpreted as more blame attributed to the individual, while negative coefficients indicate less blame attributed to him.

For the second set of models, the outcome variable is an index of blame capturing blame for the individual perpetrator in the vignette (Rodrigo) vs. blame for society and the government. To calculate this index, we average the level of blame attributed to the society and government and subtracted this value from the level of blame attributed to the individual perpetrator. We then

normalize this score to be from 0 to 1, where lower values (below 0.5) indicate more blame attributed to society and the government and higher values (above 0.5) indicate more blame attributed to the individual.

In terms of the explanatory variables, we use the severity of crime, the upbringing of the perpetrator, his position in the gang, and the type of victim. The severity-of-crime variable is constructed as a continuous variable, with robbery, extortion, kidnapping, and assassination assigned values from 1 to 4, respectively. All other variables are categorical. Reference categories remain constant across all tables in this section: for class, the reference variable is "lower-class"; for type of victim, the reference category is "businessman"; for perpetrator position in the gang, the reference category is "following orders." All coefficients can be interpreted as comparative effects between the reference category and listed category.

In the first set of models, coefficients should be interpreted as the average increase in blame to the individual on the 1-to-7 scale compared to the reference category. For example, in **Table 11,** if Rodrigo is middle-class (vs. lower-class), the estimated mean of blame attributed to him will increase by 0.215 points on the 1-to-7 scale. In the second set of models, positive coefficients indicate more blame attributed to the individual compared to the government and society, while negative coefficients indicate the opposite. In other words, the latter measure only tells us whether more blame is attributed to one actor over the other, but it doesn't capture the amount of blame being attributed to such actors.

For all of these models, we run regressions using the pooled results (the whole sample), and we also divide populations by relevant categories, including the municipal homicide rate, municipal MRP victimization rate, municipal MRP perceived security, gender, and SES of respondents. To create the two samples for each comparative test, the total survey sample is divided in half based on the median value of the variable of interest (e.g., homicide rate).

Table 9 and **10** summarize the results found for individual blame attribution and for index of blame capturing blame for the individual perpetrator vs. blame for society and the government, respectively.

Table 9. Individual blame attribution

Variable/ Sample	Pooled	High Homicide	Low Homicide	High Perceived Insecurity	Low Perceived Insecurity	High Victimi-zation	Low Victimi-zation	Male	Female	High SES	Low SES
Middle-Class	+ Blame	+ Blame		+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame
Crime Severity (Increasing Value)		– Blame	+ Blame		+ Blame		+ Blame				
Gang Leader	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame	+ Blame
Victim (Worker)						+ Blame					
Victim (Local Politician)								– Blame			

Table 10. Individual vs. Government + Society Blame Attribution

Variable/ Sample	Pooled	High Homicide	Low Homicide	High Perceived Insecurity	Low Perceived Insecurity	High Victimi-zation	Low Victimi-zation	Male	Female	High SES	Low SES
Middle-Class	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo		+ Rodrigo			+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	
Lower-Class	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc		+ Gov & Soc			+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	
Crime Severity (Increasing Value)			+ Rodrigo		+ Rodrigo	+ Gov & Soc	+ Rodrigo				
Gang Leader	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo	+ Rodrigo
Following Orders	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc	+ Gov & Soc
Victim (Worker)						+ Rodrigo					
Victim (Local Politician)								+ Gov & Soc			

Table 11 presents the pooled results for the individual blame attribution model. What stands out are Rodrigo's characteristics. According to our hypothesis, on average, Rodrigo is more to blame if he comes from the middle class compared to the lower class and if he is a gang leader compared to a member following orders. Contrary to our expectations, the severity of the crime is not significant, nor is the type of victim. This result is further explored in other models.

Table 11. Blame for Individual, Pooled Results

Blame for Individual: Pooled Results

	Dependent variable:
Class: Middle	0.215^{***}
	(0.058)
Crime Severity	0.024
	(0.026)
Victim: Worker	0.068
	(0.071)
Local Politician	-0.041
	(0.071)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.390^{***}
	(0.058)
Constant	4.936^{***}
	(0.091)
Observations	2,864
R^2	0.022
Adjusted R^2	0.020
Residual Std. Error	1.548 (df = 2858)
F Statistic	12.582^{***} (df = 5; 2858)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

When dividing the sample by relevant characteristics, we also find that, in general and consistent with the pooled results, Rodrigo is more to blame if he comes from the middle class. However, this result is not significant in low-homicide areas, meaning that in areas where respondents are rarely exposed to homicidal violence, Rodrigo's upbringing does not impact the blame attributed to him. In other words, Rodrigo's actions are evaluated asymmetrically depending on whether the respondent is located in a low- vs. high-violence area. One possible interpretation of this finding is that respondents in localities with lower homicide rates are more likely to be middle-class and, therefore, evaluate Rodrigo's actions in a more positive or neutral light. This phenomenon is often referred to as "intergroup bias," which is characterized by a systematic tendency to evaluate one's own membership group more favorably than the "out-group" (Hewstone et al., 2002). This could also mean that respondents in lower-homicide areas simply do not care about the perpetrator's characteristics, and they assign blame equally. The results suggest that further research is needed to identify the mechanisms underlying such asymmetric behavior. It is also noteworthy that the baseline level of blame is higher in high-homicide areas compared to low-homicide areas. This can be seen by examining the constant in each model, which is about 5.1 for high-homicide areas and 4.7 in low-homicide areas. Further, we see that in high-homicide areas, crime severity has a negative relationship with blame, but there is a positive relationship with blame in low-homicide areas. However, the effect size for this variable is quite small in high-homicide areas, indicating that those from such communities may be less sensitive to differences in crime severity. In **Table 12,** we parse apart the sample by homicide level. Models parsing apart the sample by MRP security and victimization level are presented in Tables 1 and 2 of Section F in the Appendix.

Table 12. Blame for Individual by Community and Homicide Level

Blame for Individual: Divided by Community Homicide Level

	Dependent variable:	
	High Homicide	Low Homicide
Class: Middle	0.321***	0.106
	(0.083)	(0.080)
Crime Severity	−0.086**	0.146***
	(0.036)	(0.036)
Victim: Worker	0.145	−0.008
	(0.101)	(0.099)
Local Politician	−0.021	−0.059
	(0.101)	(0.098)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.428***	0.335***
	(0.083)	(0.081)
Constant	5.108***	4.744***
	(0.131)	(0.125)
Observations	1,479	1,385
R^2	0.033	0.027
Adjusted R^2	0.029	0.024
Residual Std. Error	1.587 (df = 1473)	1.494 (df = 1379)
F Statistic	9.943*** (df = 5; 1473)	7.733*** (df = 5; 1379)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

In the models that capture blame for the individual perpetrator vs. blame for society and the government, the pooled results (shown in **Table 13**) show that, in general, Rodrigo is more to blame vs. the government and society if he comes from the middle class, and, conversely, the government and society are more to blame if Rodrigo comes from the lower class. Further, we also see that if he is the leader of the gang, more blame is attributed to him, and if he is following orders, more blame is attributed to the government and society.

Table 13. Blame for Individual vs. Government + Society, Pooled Results

Blame for Individual vs. Gov/Society: Pooled Results

	Dependent variable:
Class: Middle	0.021***
	(0.007)
Crime Severity	0.001
	(0.003)
Victim: Worker	0.010
	(0.008)
Local Politician	−0.011
	(0.008)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.053***
	(0.007)
Constant	0.516***
	(0.011)
Observations	2,849
R^2	0.026
Adjusted R^2	0.024
Residual Std. Error	0.184 (df = 2843)
F Statistic	15.150*** (df = 5; 2843)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

However, when we parse out the sample by the level of violence in the respondents' areas of residence, we see that the result of more blame attributed to Rodrigo (relative to the government and society) if he comes from the middle class only holds in areas with high homicide and high perceived insecurity (for the victimization breakdown, we found a null effect for this variable). **Table 14** presents the results for the sample broken down by homicide level; the models for insecurity perception, victimization, SES, and gender can be found in the Appendix. These results suggest that individuals in high-violence areas perceive perpetrators who are economically disadvantaged as less to blame for their actions; rather, society is at fault. It is possible that individuals perceive such crimes as "more" justifiable as the government has not adequately provided for lower-class individuals. Conversely, in low-violence areas (homicide and perceived

insecurity) the results suggest that the perpetrator's upbringing does not seem to matter when respondents assign blame to the individual vs. the government and society. These respondents do not evaluate differently someone who is relatively richer compared to someone who is relatively poorer. It is possible that respondents in these areas do not identify themselves with the perpetrators or that they belong to middle- or upper-class networks, in which case, their assessments of blame are less likely to be informed by the perpetrator's upbringing.

Table 14. Blame for Individual vs. Government + Society by Homicide Level

Blame for Individual vs. Gov/Society: Divided by Community Homicide Level

	Dependent variable:	
	High Homicide	Low Homicide
Class: Middle	0.042***	−0.0002
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Crime Severity	−0.006	0.007*
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Victim: Worker	0.016	0.003
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Local Politician	−0.006	−0.016
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.059***	0.047***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Constant	0.512***	0.519***
	(0.015)	(0.016)
Observations	1,465	1,384
R^2	0.041	0.021
Adjusted R^2	0.038	0.017
Residual Std. Error	0.182 (df = 1459)	0.185 (df = 1378)
F Statistic	12.439*** (df = 5; 1459)	5.829*** (df = 5; 1378)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

It is important to note that, regardless of community security level, respondents consistently perceived the perpetrator as more to blame if he is a gang leader; this suggests that the government and society are, generally speaking, seen has having little influence on the decisions of higher-ranking gang members, whose actions are based more on their individual decisions.

As mentioned above, the pooled results show that blame attribution toward Rodrigo is mainly about his personal characteristics, as the severity of crime has no effect. However, when we divide the sample by violence level in respondents' areas of residence, we found that not only do Rodrigo's characteristics matter, but also what he does matters (i.e., the severity of the committed crime). Both the models on individual blame attribution and on individual blame attribution vs. the government and society show that Rodrigo's blame increases with crime severity in areas of low homicide (see **Tables 12** and **14**), low victimization, and low perceived insecurity (see **Tables 1, 2, 4** and **5** in Section E of the Appendix). These results suggest that, in areas that are not as exposed to crime, individuals are more to blame for more severe crimes. It is also notable that the level of blame attributed to Rodrigo decreases with crime severity in high-homicide areas, and, while the coefficient estimates are not significant for other sample breakouts (although they have the same sign), the government and society are more to blame for more severe crimes in high-victimization areas. As before, this result may suggest that individuals who are not exposed to crime do not identify with the perpetrators (as opposed to areas with high violence) and, therefore, blame the individual more for more severe crimes. This result may also suggest a perception that the government is not protecting against severe crimes in high-violence areas. Finally, the results seem to suggest that the blame attribution depends on the context in which one operates. In higher-homicide areas, people see crime involvement as part of organized crime; therefore, homicide is part of the nature of violence. More severe crimes are not unexpected; therefore, respondents placed less blame on the individual for these types of

crimes, which are more common. It might be that this is the way disputes are usually resolved, which speaks to crime normalization.

Overall, there seems to be a class divide shown by the results broken down by both respondent context and Rodrigo's identity. The average attribution of blame for Rodrigo is higher in areas with higher levels of insecurity/homicide/victimization. However, respondents' assessments of blame are more sensitive to the type of crime in low-violence areas. Respondents who live in safer areas are more likely to increase the amount of blame to Rodrigo if the crime is more severe. This could be caused by the fact that severe crimes, such as homicide, stand out as extraordinary or spectacular forms of violent criminal behavior—and are therefore less likely to be condoned than less severe crimes—whereas in high-homicide areas, either severe crimes have been normalized, or criminals have been heavily stigmatized and perpetrators are thought to engage in all sorts of criminal behavior (if Rodrigo engages in extortion, it is very likely that he has committed more severe crimes).

V.3 Focus Groups

As mentioned in the methodology section, focus group participants were young offenders (with the exception of those from PILARES) from poor socioeconomic backgrounds who had participated in reintegration programs. This means that our participants had been involved in violence and also had gone through processes to help them understand what happened, recognize automatic behaviors, and revise their choices while working to devise better paths for the future. Throughout the focus group discussions, we find that youth oftentimes have mixed or even contradictory views about violence in all its forms, and therefore, all of the results presented herein may portray a tension between the different arguments expressed by youth. We consider this to be a reflection of the reality in which youth struggle to reconcile past—mostly harmful—choices with opportunities for a better future. These are incredibly difficult mental processes in which youth have to understand what drove them to make those choices, understand their contexts, and work very hard to move forward. The results we present in this section reflect this reality, accompanied by tensions in different rationales with which youth struggle.

To further understand how complex these processes are, it is important to remember the context from which these youth come and how their beliefs, views, and values are shaped by their environment. Here, we understand beliefs as what is considered true based on assumptions and past experiences. Views point to someone's attitudes when assessing a situation, and values indicate what is important when making decisions. This environment also determines automatic behavior, which can drive negative outcomes such as violence or delinquency involvement, because people often respond to a context without conscious deliberation. While automatic responses are generally adaptive, they can also be ill-suited. Disadvantaged youth face greater situational variability, therefore increasing the likelihood that automaticity leads to negative outcomes (Heller et al. 2017).[2] We consider that this situational variability impacts all sorts of youth reflections about what is right and wrong, what is acceptable, and what is understandable.

[2] Heller et al. (2017) explained this situation with a very clear example: Consider two situations faced by youth in which they have to deal with different forms of authority. At school, teachers assert authority by telling students to be quiet. On the street, a larger person may demand money or their mobile. The adaptive response of a middle-class youth is to comply. They will do what the teacher says and hand over their phone and then go and tell authorities

In the analysis below, we first describe the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, further expand on the survey results, and explore how precarious work conditions influence youth motivations and aspirations. Second, we explore how youth normalize violence and what mediates this normalization. We also analyze in detail certain mediators of violence normalization that were found as highly relevant through the focus group analysis, namely gender-based violence, domestic violence, substance abuse, and social norms. Third, we investigate the rationales behind the advantages and disadvantages to joining a gang as perceived by youth. Fourth, we explore how protective factors as enabled by prevention programs may prevent recidivism, and we identify important areas of opportunity. Finally, we analyze the results of the vignette as presented in the focus groups, allowing us to further disentangle mechanisms behind blame attribution as found in the survey.

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

The focus groups confirmed some of the survey findings and enabled further exploration of how violence normalization and blame attribution take place among at-risk youth. As mentioned in the methodology section, focus group participants were a segment of youth who had been exposed to various types of victimization and who are from low-SES backgrounds (see Section G of the Appendix for a distribution of reports of domestic abuse by SES). Their neighborhoods are insecure; fights between neighbors and drug dealing are part of the daily scenarios in which these youth live. The presence of groups with violent tendencies is also frequent, such as gangs and junkies living on the street. This is particularly marked in Ciudad Juárez, as explained by one participant from La Tenda:

> *" … in my neighborhood, in the street I live in, there are some that fight all the time. It's a family of junkies … When I was younger, once there was a 'tecato,'[3] skinny, malnourished, without having eaten in days, and jarocho. A muscled guy came, younger than him, grabbed him, shook him by his shirt, lifted him, and 'poom,' down to the floor. He hit his head and started bleeding, horrible … "*

As mentioned above, all groups convened young offenders, with the exception of the PILARES group. Participants from PILARES were at-risk youth who live in low-SES neighborhoods in Mexico City, but who had not been involved with criminal activity and who have had more protective factors than youth from the other groups. These participants had, on average, a higher educational attainment compared to the rest, as most had finalized their upper-secondary

about what happened. For a youth from a more disadvantaged background, school requires compliance, but on the street, it may be adaptive to develop a reputation as someone who will fight back to deter future victimization. Handing over their phone may create a signal of weakness. Automaticity interacts with the social environment. Disadvantaged youth face heterogeneous situations that demand different responses. While middle-class youths can simply comply in both situations, for disadvantaged youth, if they comply in both situations, they will be abused on the streets. If they resist in both situations, they will do poorly in school. The situation requires different responses that create automaticity more costly for the disadvantaged youth. Disadvantaged youth have to learn to recognize when not to be automatic.

[3] Tecato: slang from Ciudad Juárez meaning a drug addict who mostly consumes crystal meth and crack by inhaling from a Tecate (beer) can.

education and some are in college, while for all the other CSOs, participants were either finishing middle school or studying at the upper-secondary school, if at all.

The focus groups gave further detail into the type of jobs to which youth have access and the consequences this has on their motivations and aspirations. In general, the jobs they get are precarious. Jobs are usually sporadic, without social security, a contract, or a stable salary, and, in most cases, youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are self-employed (in very low-pay activities). In terms of income, participants expressed it not being sufficient (the highest salaries were found in the manufacturing industry at around 500 USD per month). Some PILARES participants (who, as mentioned before, have slightly higher SESs), reported having access to better jobs. For instance, one outlier was a youth working for a company as a community manager.

The focus groups also confirmed the differences in youth employment by gender. In most groups, youth mentioned that most women in their neighborhoods do not work or study. When they do, it tends to be in highly stereotyped occupations. One notable finding is that for this population, early pregnancy was mentioned as a common reason for school abandonment, as well as the desire of young women to be in a partnership at an early age. **Table 15** synthesizes youth occupations.

Table 15. Youth occupations

Program description	Women	Men	Both
Employed	Cook Security staff in a bar Mason Butcher	Nurse Tailor Catering	Maquila Factories Call center
Self-employed	Box trainer Deliverer (Rappi, restaurants) Loader at market Stand builders at air markets Uber Mechanic Temporary migration	House-cleaning Nails Selling catalogs	Selling clothes (by internet, air market, house) Blacksmith

The focus groups gave us a better sense of youth aspirations and motivations derived from this precarious job context. It was common for participants to express that having a job they like is unattainable, and therefore, being employed with an income is enough. Given these perceptions, a lack of a personal projects is common among participants. The most common aspirations are establishment of different types of small business (i.e., food stand for males and tailoring and catering for females) and self-employment as tattoo artists, professional football players, and musicians for males. Commonly expressed desires are to be their own boss, to have control of their own time, and to have enough to make a living, in contrast to jobs like "maquila" in the north and call centers in Mexico City. Only a few expressed looking forward to continuing studying in college and becoming professionals. Moreover, some youth from the north see migrating to the US as the only option, where they think they can access better job opportunities.

Others mentioned that it is very common for youth to have the aspiration of engaging in criminal activity, as this is the most promising path to become famous and to gain respect.

Violence Normalization

Types of Violence Normalization

Through the focus group discussions, we identified four scenarios of violence normalization. The first is when violence is not normalized at all; that is, participants recognize it and actively reject it. Then, we categorized three types of violence normalization based on the *extent* of normalization, defined as nonrecognition, habit, and acceptance. The *nonrecognition* of violence is the strongest form of normalization and happens when an offense or aggression is not perceived as violence, but as some other form of social interaction. The *habit* of violence is when violence is recognized but is seen as a habit, as something that "everybody does." The *acceptance* of violence is when violence is perceived as inconvenient but necessary to solve problems. These forms of normalization are mediated by the automated responses of youth, as well as their beliefs, views, and values related to gender, emotional regulation, substance abuse, social norms, domestic violence, type of aggression, and perception of threat or harm from others.

While participants reject violence most of the time, they do normalize violence in specific situations. While to some youth certain forms of violence might be unacceptable, other forms of violence can be necessary, and some others may not even be considered violence. We found some tensions between the different rationalities presented by youth while discussing violence, which, as mentioned above, is a reflection of the realities in which they live and the contradictions they have to manage between what they are or were exposed to and how to build better opportunities for themselves.

Table 16. Violence normalization categories by mediator

Mediator / category of violence	No violence recognition	Habit of violence	Necessity of violence	Rejection of violence
Gender stereotypes and misogynist views		Partner relationships Women's competition for men Flirtation/jealousy Men are protective	To gain respect	Sexual advances without consent Intimate partner relationships Economic control
Substance abuse	Rape while drunk Selling drugs	Fights while high Fights while drunk	Persistent aggression	Violence increases with substances Rape while drunk Harm to consumers

Domestic violence	Verbal abuse	Partner relations	Parenting styles Partner relations	Economic control
Social norms	Aggressions among friends	Bullying	Peer pressure To gain respect	
Perception of threat or harm	Verbal and psychological abuse	Excess of contact (sports, transport) Bullying	Persistent aggression Debts Work Self-defense Defense of others	Lack of respect Death Pregnancy Psychological harm
Emotional regulation		Impulse	To calm others	It might escalate

No recognition of violence

No recognition is the strongest type of violence normalization and relates to some participants' perceptions that actions not entailing physical aggression, such as verbal or psychological violence, are not violent as they consider there is no real harm. Similarly, some of the participants' responses indicated that verbal abuse and certain forms of psychological aggression (e.g., criticizing and insulting) are not seen as violent when they take place among friends. Although infrequent, one noticeable result from the women's section of La Tenda di Cristo in Ciudad Juárez is the belief that rape is not violent if there is no resistance from the victim, such as when she is drunk:

> *"I don't see it as something violent, I see it as something that shouldn't be done and shouldn't be forced, but it is not violent … when you are drunk, you don't struggle."*

Another noticeable result is the perception that selling drugs is not just not violent, but that it can be beneficial, as criminal organizations protect those who live in the areas where they sell (replacing the police). As mentioned in the survey analysis, an unexpected but interesting finding is that as community security perception increases, so does the normalization of selling drugs, which might be partially explained by this mechanism. This is illustrated by one participant from Reinserta in Mexico City:

> *" … where I live, drug-dealers are the ones who protect us. I live in a housing unit. Outside, there is a huge fence, there are many entrances, but only those who live there get in. When someone gets inside to steal cars or something else, they take action. For example, my stepfather works with Uber. He leaves his car outside, and when they have tried to steal something from it, those who act are the drug-dealers, and they do it in their way. Before, they called the police, but it took them centuries to arrive. So, it's the drug-dealers who protect us. There might be some violence, but I don't think it's too much."*

Habit of violence

The second type of normalization—when violence is recognized but conceived as a habit or something that "everyone does"—is frequently related to gender-based violence, such as in intimate partner relationships, and to gender stereotypes that dictate that men have to be protective and dominant, that women should compete for men, and that men can be violent when jealous or flirting:

> *Participant 1: "I have girlfriends where I live who are abused by their husbands. Abuses, harassment, that's normal. Yes, that's very normal here."*
>
> *Participant 2: "As [Participant 1] said about harassment, violence starts with relationships, there's no way that a stranger hits a woman just like that."*

This type of normalization also appeared when referring to substance abuse: it is expected that drunk or drugged people become aggressive and get involved in fights. Other cases relate to the type of aggression, such as in soccer games or in a crowd on the subway, for which participants pointed out that an excess of physical contact will understandably drive to violence. In a similar vein, bullying seems to be something that everybody does at school; although it is not considered good, it is just expected to occur.

Finally, this type of normalization seems to be associated with emotional self-regulation and automatic responses. Some participants mentioned that violence can stem from frustration and anger, and although that is something negative, it just happens:

> *" … the truth is that you get angry when people trick you, and sometimes that impedes you from controlling yourself and you act violently or by impulses. You should dominate them. My opinion is that it isn't good, but sometimes the impulse is stronger and you act with violence."*

Necessity of violence

Necessity of violence, which is the weakest form of normalization and happens when violence is considered negative but necessary in unbearable situations, is mostly related to perceptions of threat or potential harm against oneself or others, mainly one's family. Also, responses that fall in this category referred to situations in which participants are aggressed first. Here, violence is considered necessary for self-defense or protecting others. This finding is consistent with the literature of automaticity. In more disadvantaged areas, it is considered adaptive to avoid conflicts (because they can escalate quickly), but predicts higher retaliation (Heller et al. 2017):

> *"I had a fight with Teeth, a guy at school. I don't know what he wanted. Others were telling him to bother me and I was telling him, 'Control yourself!' Then, I told him, 'We will fix this outside,' and we fought. He was a foolish kid. I was telling him, 'You think he's going to defend you, but he only wants to see a fight,' but he didn't control himself. Outside of school I made him understand [by hitting him], just to see if he would keep listening to the others."*

"[You can use violence] just to solve problems because it's been days, weeks. You can have a problem for several weeks and you want it to end. I know people who do that [violence] to terminate it, and that's how the problem ends."

Relatedly, some participants mentioned that the use violence is sometimes necessary to collect debts and in certain situations at work, such as when dealing with difficult clients. Finally, an interesting finding related to this category is that violence can be assumed to be necessary as part of the process of raising children:

"It is better to talk, but when they don't obey, I'm not saying it is good to spank them, but when they don't obey, I think you should. It is not hitting them as if you were going to kill them. As I say, I talk to my kids all day long, 'Sit-down,' 'Be quiet,' 'Stop jumping,' 'Don't go out.' That's how I spend my day. But when I see that it isn't working, I just spank them."

Rejection of violence

Although all groups manifested some type of violence normalization—with the exception of the PILARES group, which had an overall lower level of normalization—there were several statements against violence. In most cases, these statements stemmed from perceived harm associated with certain conduct. Here, both verbal and physical aggressions are mainly considered violent because they result in psychological or physical harm, including death. Also, certain comments pointed out that selling drugs is violent because it harms consumers and drug-trafficking entails violence.

Some responses also indicate a sense of moral harm related to verbal abuse and sexual aggressions by highlighting that they constitute a "lack of respect." This includes one noticeable result from the women's section in the Supera group: pregnancy being the main reason that rape is worse than any physical or emotional harm. Many participants stressed the importance of consent in any sexual advance, and consider that nonconsensual sexual intercourse while drunk is rape. Similarly, many participants reject intimate partner aggressions and highlighted how gender roles result in different forms of violence against women, such as economic control and household duties (this was more salient in the women's section of the PILARES group).

An additional and interesting finding is that many participants perceive that violent or criminal acts should not be perpetrated mainly because they are illegal, not because they harm others. This result might be related to their own risk assessments, given that these youth had already been in touch with the justice system, with the exception of the PILARES participants. Relatedly, we found that a common mechanism toward violence rejection is risk assessment. Youth reject violence because it can escalate. Again, this might relate to their own previous experiences, given that these youth had been involved with violence in various spheres (more than once) and were also participants of violence prevention programs that raise awareness about these issues. This type of assessment was frequent, but not exclusive, during discussions on substance abuse, where many participants mentioned that violence tends to escalate when people are drunk or drugged.

Analysis of selected mediators

Gender stereotypes and misogynist views

While in general all groups recognized that women suffer more sexual violence and intimate partner violence than men, the focus groups also disentangled a layer of normalization of violence that is gender-based and rooted in gender stereotypes and misogynist views about how women and men should behave and their respective roles in society. Also, the discussions reveal that gender-based violence is prevalent in all social spheres where these youth participate—community, work, school, friends, family, and intimate partner relationships—which conflicts with the recognition of violence as such.

Participants identify different forms of intimate partner violence, including physical, verbal, and emotional abuse, economic violence, and abandonment. As explained by a male and a female participant,

> *"I have seen cases where men don't accept that women earn more than them. They say, 'Fuck, this bitch is bringing more money than me, no way.' That's one reason why violence against women begins. As we were saying earlier, because of the crisis, women have to work, and men start imagining things such as, 'I'm not earning that much. She might get to know someone else who earns more, I shouldn't let her go to work.'"*

> *"When my father abandoned us, my mother had to show what she was made of. She struggled, she struggled a lot."*

Youth also recognize how this violence can be transformed into physical abuse (inside or outside the home) that oftentimes ends up in homicide. It is interesting to note that the recognition of violence against women was much more significant among males in Ciudad Juárez relative to other places. One potential explanation for this finding is the context of Ciudad Juárez, which is one of the places with more violence against women in Mexico. During the past decade, a movement to increase visibility and address this violence has grown, and this topic is covered in some of the prevention programs in which the youth had participated. Moreover, these youth live near where the "Muertas de Juárez" are buried, which makes gender-based violence visible to them. As two participants mentioned,

> *"I say women (suffer) more, no? Yes, it is women, there have even been more deaths and assassinations. It might be the crisis, because of coronavirus, there's no work and men release their anger against their families. Young women are kidnapped."*

> *"[Women suffer] abuse, they get stared at, or they can even be taken away—that is what my girlfriend says. One time a man in a car was whistling at her, telling her to jump into the car, and she just ran away. That happens very often, when the kidnapping of women and all of that. Sometimes they also get touched … I have seen that various times … Not only once, there was this girl in between many crazy men, for things like this they are affected. Even their own family touches them. It is something terrible."*

As mentioned above, the discussions disentangled a layer of normalization of violence that is gender-based and founded in misogynist views and gender stereotypes. In many instances,

participants began by stating that both women and men "suffer equally." As the discussion progressed, they tended to distinguish differences in the forms of violence that affect them, although considering them equivalent. The rationale behind this is that both women and men perpetrate violence against each other in their own ways, resulting in a sort of "victimization balance." In the words of a male participant,

> *"There's a certain balance in that. Women are more victims of physical violence than men because women can't bear too much physical violence, but men are more victims of verbal violence than women. That's something we all have known. By genetics, men are stronger than women, although there are women who are stronger than me, that's true. However, normally, if you take two people from the same age, a man is stronger than a woman, but mentally, women are stronger than men. Men are more psychologically harmed and women are more physically harmed. Hence, I don't feel that one suffers more violence than the other. Both suffer violence. Although both can suffer from both types of violence because there are women who rape men and people laugh at it, and there are women who feel bad just because a man told them they are ugly. Both are victims of violence, it's not that one gets more."*

Interestingly, this rationale was partially shared by women in all groups with the exception of PILARES. Although they pointed out that women tend to suffer more sexual aggression and physical violence than men, they highlighted that there are men who are also victims of violence from their intimate female partners and that women are perpetrators of violence against women as well, which ends up balancing the victim-perpetrator ratio. This was illustrated by the discussion in the women's section of the Consejo Ciudadano group:

> *Interviewer: "Thinking about your female friends and other women you know, which forms of violence do women suffer more?"*
> *Participant 1: "Harassment, critics, there are women who do plots, women can be real bitches. Men also do things, when they tell you, 'Come here,' and they force you, they rape you … "*
> *Participant 2: "When your partner wants to dominate you."*
> *Interviewer: "Which other forms of violence do women suffer?"*
> *Participant 1: "There isn't that much anymore."*
> *Participant 2: "Did you read on Facebook that they tried to kidnap a young woman? … A man was driving the car, a woman was the copilot, and there was another woman in the back. The two women tried to kidnap the young woman."*
> *Participant 1: "They hit and scratch her … I think we are the weaker sex indeed."*
> *Interviewer: "Which forms of violence do men suffer more?"*
> *Participant 1: "There are many who are hit by their female partners."*
> *Participant 2: "Yes, I agree, maybe not as frequent, you see that a little more with women, but I think it's the same."*
> *Participant 1: "I think the same. Those women hit men, they do the same as a man does, they don't let them go out either."*

Another relevant finding gathered from the men's discussions is the perception that men are often victims of women's manipulations and provocations, as they perceived women to have all the governmental and legal support, mainly regarding sexual offenses. For instance, to some participants, women push men to have sex, and then they manipulate and say it was rape because the law favors them. Other misogynist views point to women taking advantage of their gender to

obtain things, such as getting a job, and to women being responsible for the offenses they experience on the street because of the way they dress. Many male participants also consider that men are victims of women's movements (e.g., referring to supporters of the feminist movement as "feminazis"). This is accompanied by the perception that "feminism" is the women's equivalent of "machismo" and that feminist movements are the reason why men are perpetrating more violence against them, as explained by these male participants:

> *"I think violence against women is getting harder because of the feminazis' movement, feminists, who are revealing all that men have done to women over time. Obviously, as a man, I believe it is wrong that most men do that to women, but there has to be an agreement to reach equality, so nobody is over the other."*

> *" … violence against women began with 'machismo' and violence against men is starting with feminism. Machismo and feminism are the same type of movement, they don't seek gender equality, they want to dominate the other."*

Domestic violence

Although the survey results found that domestic violence (verbal or physical) does not have a prominent effect on the normalization of violence, they did depict some correlations of interest such as the effect of verbal abuse at home with a normalization of nonconsensual sex. In that analysis, we hypothesize that given the sensitive nature of these questions and the interview mode, underreporting of domestic violence is likely to be high, therefore concealing its potential impact on normalization of violence. Moreover, the survey found that trust in one's family is associated with a decreased normalization of violence across many actions (e.g., nonconsensual sex, hitting on, criticism, nonconsensual kissing, hitting, selling drugs), which may suggest that family dynamics are relevant in mediating violence normalization.

In this view, one notable finding from the focus groups is that participants are highly exposed to violence in their families, and they point out that these violent dynamics are transmitted from one generation to the next. Youth claim that violence is learned through socialization from family, and that if someone grows up in an environment where violence prevails, it is likely that he or she will replicate it. In the words of some participants,

> *"I see what happens at home, it's highly probable that I follow the same path. For example, if my father hits my mother … When we are kids, we learn what parents teach us. At school, they teach you things, but you bring the values of your family, and if you see things that are not okay, it's highly probable that you will replicate them."*

> *" … it depends on who you grow up with. For example, in my family, my father didn´t give a fuck. Every time the police passed by, he told my brother to yell insults at them. Then, when women passed, he told us to yell 'mamacita' … "*

Discussions also indicated that, as expected, gender-based violence is intertwined with domestic violence, as described situations reflected misogynist role models who reproduce gender stereotypes and drive violence. Some of the participants' experiences suggest that gender-based violence is learned at home, which plays an important role on how normalization takes place. This was illustrated with two examples. One participant minimized violence when describing an

episode of abuse by his father, and another one pointed out that most of the people he knows reproduce these dynamics, indicating that it is something that everybody does:

> *"In my family, there is no violence. My father drinks and all, sometimes he gets a bit annoying, but he goes to bed. When I was younger, he would yell and smash dishes. I never saw him hitting, but once I saw him giving a slap to my mom, a small one. That's when I grabbed him and kicked him out. That's how violence was, just yells and smashed dishes."*

> *" … almost everyone who lives up here: 'My father hits my mom,' and almost everyone I know. Well, I identify myself, my father used to hit my mom. It's typical from here, I would say almost 60% of the people I know."*

Substance abuse

Substance abuse is frequent among participants and their social circles, including their families; it is part of their social dynamics. Access to drugs is easy for them; they can buy them in their neighborhoods, as they know where the selling points are in bars or at parties. Participants from PILARES mentioned that drug distribution occurs at schools as well. The most used drugs are cocaine, crack, marijuana, and, in the north, crystal meth. In all groups, alcohol abuse is frequent, and going to parties to get drunk is a very common weekend activity:

> *"[We go to parties] … you just go to drink. My friends just go out to parties to drink. They don't even dance; they just drink."*

Groups from Ciudad Juárez and Supera revealed a more intense use of drugs; some of them openly mentioned being active consumers, although they are participating in harm reduction programs with their CSOs. This is relevant given the dependency generated by different types of drugs and their different relationships with violence and crime involvement; for instance, there is wide evidence on methamphetamine increasing violent behavior (Brecht and Herbeck, 2013). This was further explained by two participants from CASA:

> *Participant 1: " … cocaine and crack alter you a lot. Some people use that type of drug to do things that are not good, or just because they want to have more and they don't get the money, they hit you."*
> *Participant 2: "Those are the most vicious, they sell things from their own homes or pawn them."*
> *Participant 1: "Or stealing for drugs."*
> *Participant 2: "They end up killed for not paying."*

As mentioned before, substance abuse is a mediator of violence normalization. As expected, participants expressed perceiving that drugged individuals engage with violence or escalate violence. However, discussions also showed that substance abuse among family members relates to domestic violence. As with misogynist views and gender stereotypes, substance abuse is entangled with many of the family dynamics of these youth and plays a major role in generating violence among their relatives. This was illustrated by participants from Consejo, La Tenda, and Reinserta:

"At home, there are problems with my brother because of drugs, violence, but only that. For me it's very stressful. The thing is that my brother stresses me out when he's drugged. There are fights, and my father and my mother fight for the same reason."

"For instance, it happens when a mother is an addict and has children, as happened to one friend. She has children and starts hitting them because of the 'malilla."[4] *When she stops drugging herself, the 'malilla' is a bitch, it's tempting. I do hit my brothers, whoever is in front of me."*

"I know a girl whose mom is an alcoholic, and every time she would come drunk, she would kick her out of the house, she would tell her things and that kind of thing."

"Women suffer from physical and psychological abuse. I once heard about a guy that was in his home and his father arrived very drunk. The mother tried to calm him down, but the father was very mad and it escalated to hitting. When the son arrived, he saw and the father hit him too."

Social norms

Social norms mediate violence normalization by shaping the behavior of these youth through expectations, rewards, and pressure from their peers, communities, and society. From a broader perspective, youth recognized that society as a whole reflects "thoughts and beliefs" that "normalize everything," in the words of one participant from Renace in Monterrey. Social norms were pointed out more than once as reinforcing conduct that drives violence, such as what is necessary to gain respect in their neighborhoods, as explained by one participant from Reinserta in Mexico City:

"You don't always run with the same luck. Society tags you and that's how everything starts. It's rare to see a guy selling candy and going to the countryside. Why? Because he's scared that the others will laugh at him or that they will put him down. Before, I was ashamed because, after all, they can laugh at you if you take the bus to sell candy. I thought those guys were going to humiliate me, they are going to say now you're selling."

Furthermore, the need or desire to belong to a peer group by adapting to gain acceptance or to avoid being victimized was identified as another driver of normalization. This factor appears to be mostly related to bullying and other forms of more severe violence that also take place at school (although not exclusively), such as obliging someone to consume drugs or threatening others with exclusion. These forms of peer pressure were explained by participants from PILARES and CASA:

"I had a group of friends that smoke, well, consumed drugs. They wanted to include a friend and told him, 'If you don't consume, we will take you out of here.' That group was considered popular, the school populars, and they wanted to kick him out if he didn't consume. He had to consume."

"In the end, if you don't want to leave that social circle because you are insecure to stay alone. I mean, you may have chances to have friends, but for not going out of your comfort zone with your friends, you decide to start consuming and staying with them instead of choosing another group."

[4] Malilla: slang word for craving.

> *"When you arrive at school, you look for the group of those who break the rules, the ones that have control, you adapt to them. Thus, you look at a guy who is there, sitting alone, quiet, and you are going to start calling him names, teasing him, and that's how it starts, that is bullying in schools."*

The survey also found that nonviolent acts (e.g., greeting or helping someone you don't know) are perceived as more violent as SES decreases. The focus groups allowed us to unpack this finding. Youth expressed that helping a stranger is dangerous because their intentions are unknown and there may be an intention to harm. This perception stems from their experiences with their social environments, where a general mistrust in others prevails. These youth live in insecure areas, where crime and violence are expected. The rationale behind these answers was exposed in this comment:

> *"I can greet someone I don't know, but you don't know how that person will react … where I live, I know nobody and I have seen that if an outsider comes and greets them, they will ask, 'Who are you? Where are you from? Are you from here?' They will take offense because they live with the expectation that something is wrong. They don't know if the person they're greeting is down the wrong path, if it's the police or someone else. Obviously, they mistrust everyone."*

Gang Participation

The focus group analysis allowed us to further analyze the rationales behind the disadvantages and advantages of joining gangs as perceived by youth.

Participants' reflections on joining a criminal organization revolved around three factors: economic benefits, coercion, and protection. These are at the core of their risk assessments of the convenience of joining. Groups revealed different rationales in this regard, some against and others in favor.

Among those against joining a gang, one rationale is the "entrepreneurial" one, which is that it is better not to join an organization if you are already making good money by yourself, as you would have to share your earnings. This rationale is exclusive to Mexico City's groups and reflects the dynamics of criminal organizations. Compared to Northern Mexico, drug cartels' territorial control in Mexico City does not seem to entail an absolute monopoly of criminal activity in the places where these youth live and travel; thus, there is more room to engage in criminal activity alone. In the north, youth considered as part of their risk assessment the potential reprisal they may receive if involved in petty crime in territories that are controlled by the cartels.

Others pondered more risks than advantages, mainly related to getting killed and "losing freedom," because once one joins, one cannot leave, which can also put their families at risk. These are the reasons why they described joining as inconvenient or undesirable. However, one interesting finding from Chihuahua's groups is that participants did point out these risks, but did not perceive them as enough reason to abstain from joining because, for them, earnings would compensate for the risks, and they would be able to give more to their families, even if they were killed.

This relates to another rationale, which is the "aspirational" one. This is the perception that joining an organization will enable both access to more profitable criminal activity, such as hijacking retail stores, and the possibility to make a criminal career by progressing in the hierarchy, as explained by one participant:

> *"Profits increase … you aren't going to enter a small house to steal a TV, a stereo, or a washing machine anymore. When you join, they are going to send you to places with more money and merchandise to steal, such as 'Del Río,' 'Oxxo,' or something like that. So it's more what you're going to get, and more what you share, since it's not fifty-fifty, but it's going to be more than what you had before."*

This thinking is reinforced by a "fear of coercion," which was mostly found in groups from Northern Mexico, where drug cartels have greater control over the social fabric, determine who can perpetrate a crime in a given area, and take retaliation against those who are not aligned with them. As explained by one participant in Ciudad Juárez:

> *"There are two options: whether you join or not. If you don't, there's a risk that they will retaliate, that they say, 'This dude didn't want to join us, I should kill him, so there's less of an asshole to bother me.' As they say, if you join, it's going to benefit you and your boss."*

This view is also strengthened by the perceived "protection" from both the police and other criminal organizations. The first form of protection is dependent on the type of arrangements held by the organization with the police, while the other one relates to the amount of control had by an organization over a certain territory. As illustrated by one participant also from Ciudad Juárez:

> *"Sometimes it's convenient because, like me, as I live up there in the last houses, there was a time when I was selling, and some guys came saying, 'We're going to take your brother to the sierra even if he doesn't want to.' 'No, you aren't going to take him. I know this guy.' ' Call him to see if it's true'. That's how it helped, because my brother did want to go. It suited me to be with them at that time."*

Blame Attribution

Findings from the vignette discussions in the focus groups confirmed the results from the survey while allowing us to further disentangle mechanisms. As mentioned in the methodology section, the vignette was presented as an evolving story. It started with depicting Rodrigo as a youth from a low socioeconomic background who got involved in petty crime (by invitation from his neighbor) to help his mother. At this point, we inquired about the type of victim having any effect on blame attribution. Then, we introduced to the story that Rodrigo became popular and the leader of a gang asked him to join, and we asked participants to name pros and cons to joining or declining the offer. As the story evolved, we increased the severity of the crimes committed by Rodrigo to understand participants' assessment of blame according to this evolution (from robbery to kidnapping to homicide). We then asked about blame for Rodrigo's acts. Finally, we opened a discussion to see if any of the previous assessments would change if Rodrigo came from a higher socioeconomic background.

Initial conversations revolved around blame attribution to Rodrigo. Initially, the general sense was that Rodrigo is to blame for his decision to get involved in petty crime because there are alternatives. Arguments about Rodrigo's responsibility pointed to the self-consciousness of one's acts, the fact that being poor does not equal being mean, the fact that there are legal ways to obtain money in case of an emergency, such as borrowing and offering to do small tasks (e.g., washing clothes, sweeping) as repayment, and the opinion that crime is the easy way. Most participants from all groups shared these views. However, in most of the groups, positions that were more "understanding" of Rodrigo's choices came up, particularly in the groups from CASA, La Tenda, and Supera (all in Northern Mexico). In groups where there was variation around individual blame, participants were more sensitive to Rodrigo's socioeconomic background, which was presented as a justification or explanation for his choices. Poverty and economic harshness attenuate responsibility. This view was clearly presented in the statements below:

> *" … but in some cases, communities do not have the resources to give jobs. In my case, there are many people and young people who have to get involved in robbery because of need. This may be for children, for siblings, for the mother … "*

> *"I will obviously tell you this is wrong [to get involved in crime], but I have done it when I was younger. Now I do not do that anymore. When you look and look and look and cannot find [a job], the need calls you. If you have this option you will say yes. You have to 'atorarle para sacar la papa' [work to bring potatoes to the table]."*

The fact that these youth are conscious about the wrongdoing involved in this decision may come from social desirability bias. These youth had already been in contact with the law and had taken part in reintegration programs. Although many said they wouldn't do it anymore because they understand the implications, it was clear that they still thought about the attenuating circumstances that explain why Rodrigo may have made a choice in the first place.

When asked about joining a gang, the perception was similar. The general sense was that Rodrigo is to blame for his decision, and the main rationale presented by youth was that it was no longer out of necessity but out of greed—a choice to become a criminal. However, youth also pondered some circumstances that may explain this choice—one being that this might have not been a real choice as there might be retaliation from the gang. Again, in some cases, youth expressed an understanding of why Rodrigo may have made this decision. As put by one participant,

> *"We are saying no because we already lived through that, we know the difference between the good and bad. Knowing that you will make good money, imagine how that is like for a youth in need. Especially now in the pandemic. Le conviene. Claro que le conviene [it is in his interest to join, of course it is]."*

It is also noteworthy that youth seemed to be conscious about the risk implied in the decision to join a gang. Again, it is important to keep in mind that this came from youth who had participated in reintegration programs. As two participants expressed,

> *"With one saying I can tell you everything: don't play with fire because you will get burned."*

"I want to share something a friend of mine posted. When you put a frog in water it will stay there, even if the water is getting hot. When the water is boiling, he cannot longer jump out. The message is that, sometimes, even if you know that the things you are doing are wrong, you feel comfortable and you want to stay there. Like Rodrigo, he might feel comfortable with the leader of the gang. But it may be that the water will boil and he will not be able to get out."

As the story evolved, youth were asked about their perceptions as the severity of the crime increased. In collaboration with the gang, Rodrigo was involved in the kidnapping of a businessman. After the payment for his rescue did not come through, Rodrigo ended up killing the businessman following the gang leader's order. Youth were asked about how much they blame Rodrigo for the homicide (using a scale from 1 to 7, with 7 being most to blame). Overall, the sense was that Rodrigo made his choice. While in all groups the majority of participants assigned 7 to Rodrigo being to blame for the homicide, in all CSO groups,[5] some participants assigned 4, 5, or 6, with the justification that Rodrigo was following orders and had no choice. Many blamed the leader equally or more than Rodrigo. As two participants expressed,

"I would give him a 4 because he was the weapon but was induced. It was not out of his own choice. If he was more conscious or mature he would have chosen differently. He is like a puppet."

"It is not about whether you want it or not, 'es a huevo' [it is obligatory], they are telling you that you have to do it. If you say no, most likely they will tell you, 'So then don't do it and tambien the vamos a dar suelo' [we will also kill you]. It is more about what you are mandated to do rather than wanting to do."

Participants were then asked about how they attribute blame to Rodrigo, the government and society, and his mother for the circumstance in which Rodrigo ended up. While most participants, again, recognized the role of Rodrigo in making these choices and that bad choices led him to this scenario, society and the government were also blamed for the crimes committed by Rodrigo. A vast majority of participants from all groups blamed both. With regard to society, views are congruent with the findings about the mediators of normalization, as society is perceived as influencing people's behavior. It is noteworthy that in several groups, the concept of society was intertwined with family and personal relations. Youth blamed the environment in which one develops. We found a tension between what is understandable and what is perceived as wrong. Youth may have recognized the wrongdoing involved in violence or its potential negative consequences, while at the same time showing empathy toward Rodrigo and understanding the circumstances that may have led him to make these choices. As mentioned above, we believe that this is a product of the incredibly hard work done by these youth to recognize and understand their choices while building toward a better future. It is a reflection of the realities they live. The three following statements are very telling in this respect:

"It is also society's blame. I came to that point because of the environment in which I developed. It begins with society … I started getting along with certain people, to know certain things, I started doing things and that was it."

[5] In PILARES, there was no variation; all participants blamed Rodrigo.

"I think sometimes it is not so much about society's blame, but I think it is in some cases. We are all guilty, but no one is at the same time. We are not guilty in the sense that our parents taught us how to behave, maybe they taught us incorrectly. But they are not to blame because they were taught the same. Many times you have the decision and strength of choice, but if it's what you learned, what you were taught at home where you saw that it was normal to be involved in robbery and killings, maybe you made those choices when you were not mature enough to say, 'This is not what I want, this is not right.' … When you are not old enough to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong, you are not to blame. When you are mature enough, then you can differentiate and you are to blame … "

"I think everyone intervenes [in these decisions]. But also education comes from home. Rodrigo's mother also had something to do. In my house, my mother is now more concerned about me, she calls me or gives me advice. I wake up and say, 'a huevo' [of course] I can. And she says I should not listen to people who give me bad advice."

Regarding the government, most answers related to the lack of employment, social services, and opportunities for youth, as shown by one discussion among participants:

Participant 1: " … if the government were like the US government or like the government from another country, we wouldn't be so fucked up."
Participant 2: "It's true. It has a lot to do with the areas where you live as well, how's your school, how're your surroundings. They just say, 'Well, he just wanted to stay like that.' You have to look deeper into the problem. Anyone can say, 'He wanted to be like that,' but she doesn't know what that youth is going through."
Participant 1: "I do feel it's the government."
Participant 2: "It's what the youth bears on his back."
Participant 3: "I think the government is the origin of this. As [other participant] says, these are the most abandoned areas, the ones getting least help from the government. As [Participant 2] says, you don't know what they bear on their back until you carry it. Sometimes you want to study, but there's no benefit for it here, there's no money."
Participant 4: "Here the government … I have never had scholarships or anything like that. The only thing was a jacket, and that's because they were campaigning."

Finally, when asked if Rodrigo would be more to blame if he had more money, the general sense was that Rodrigo is still to blame because he made his own choices, dependent on his values However, again, for participants sensitive to the socioeconomic context (those mainly from the north), having sufficient money put more blame on Rodrigo, as he would only be acting for greed and there would not be a need that "justifies" his behavior. In the words of the participants,

" … when they had nothing, they pushed him to do that. Apparently he had no option, but here, in this other situation, where he has money, it might be he has one. It might be that he wouldn't have done it because, if he had the money, why did he want more? Only if he is greedy."

Conversation:
Participant 1: "If he had money I would no longer say 5 because he didn't have the need. He would be more guilty."
Participant 2: "I also think that more, he made that out of his own choice."

Participant 3: "If he had money, I think he would not have reacted this way. But because he did, he is more guilty. He was crazy."
Participant 4: "When there is no need, you do it because 'acá' [referring to adrenaline that was being discussed or because you like it], but then when they tell you they will break you because you have been involved in crime, you get very scared because you know there was no need."

Finally, we found that the type of victim is also relevant in shaping perceptions on crime. This occurs in two manners: through empathy and through risk assessment. Participants revealed empathy with certain victims. In all groups, most of them considered that the crime would be aggravated if the victim were an elderly worker lady. The elderly worker lady was seen as more vulnerable because of her age and her worker status, which indicate that she does not have much money. In a similar vein, there was empathy with the blue-collar worker because of his social class reflecting participants' own backgrounds. From this perspective, the businessman and the politician were the preferred victims, as they carry the least moral load. Regarding the politician, it is interesting that a few participants even perceived the crimes against him as fair, given the corruption typically associated with politicians; one even mentioned an old Mexican saying: "a thief steals from a thief."

On the other hand, this rationale was contradicted when it came to risk assessment. Participants perceived different risks associated with each victim. Most of them considered the acts against the businessman and the politician as being riskier because they would be more likely to have bodyguards and personal connections in the government to enforce punishment for the crime. Risks associated with the blue-collar worker had more to do with his physical strength, as many participants perceived that he would know how to fight and defend himself. Regarding the elderly lady, only one participant mentioned a risk associated with her, based on his personal experience, which is that she might die from the shock of being assaulted. From this perspective, the preferred victim was the elderly lady, which is completely opposite from an assessment based on empathy.

Protective Factors as Promoted by JPV Supported Interventions

The first phase of the performance evaluation had found pressing challenges remaining in the programmatic offer of the JPV activity in terms of addressing the underlying factors that cause violence in the first place and that interfere with program adherence and hamper social reintegration. These areas of opportunity were found mainly for interventions that are able to interrupt the community and family dynamics that produce antisocial behaviors, as well as interventions to address substance abuse. The first phase of the evaluation also found as an outstanding agenda the need to develop capacity among government agencies to generate a specialized offer of youth services. Relatedly, it identified the urgent need to strengthen promising models (mainly those that incorporate territorial strategies) and to scale them up to reach youth in need. The results gathered through the focus groups analysis build on these preliminary findings.

Our results indicate that the studied programs do contribute to the development of protective factors in these youth. Some of them, mainly from Ciudad Juárez, expressed highly valuing CSO programs because of the otherwise nonexistence of social and cultural services with a youth perspective in the areas where they live. In general, youth consider that these programs help

them to stay away from the dynamics that drive them to get involved with crime and violence. This was clearly stated by one participant from CASA, who used Rodrigo's vignette to explain:

> *" … to distract your mind from 'Let's go robbing.' If [Rodrigo] were with CASA, he would be like, 'Let's play football, let's get a snack.' Here, there's always food. He would be more relaxed. 'No, don't go robbing, here we'll give you a scholarship for your studies.' So, he stops thinking about crime. The story would be different, no?"*

Participants were generally positive about their experience with CSOs and identified clear benefits of education and employability, mental health, addiction treatment, and support networks. Nonetheless, challenges remain, and opportunity areas were identified in the group discussions.

Education and employability

As mentioned above, most of the participants had dropped out of school and had not finished their upper-secondary education, with the exception of those in the PILARES group. CSOs and PILARES provide education services focused on helping youth find a job or undertake an economic activity of their own. The programs aim to support youth in continuing their formal education through distance-education systems, tutoring, and scholarships. In PILARES, education services integrate training in demanded skills in the labor market (e.g., Microsoft Office, English) and training in skills for self-employment (e.g., electricians, mechanics). CSOs are mainly centered on training for self-employment.

After being involved in the programs, youth assign value to continuing with their studies and to learning new things, both for personal development reasons and to be occupied. They highly value the scholarships given to them by CSOs, as they do not think they would have been able to continue with their education otherwise. In most instances, education is perceived as a means to access better employment opportunities, other than being a mason or working at the "maquila."

The most important challenge found relates to work training and labor intermediation. In some CSOs, youth stressed the need to enhance the relevance of training to help them find a job. This was particularly salient in Reinserta, where no work training is provided at all. Furthermore, CSOs' capacity to find job vacancies is limited, if any in certain cases. Although some of them have direct relationships with private-sector organizations at the state level, like Consejo and Supera, and others, like Reinserta, have established direct agreements with restaurants and firms, these do not seem to be effective in supporting youth employability. In some cases, there are profiling problems and youth do not last in these jobs. In other instances, jobs are too far away from where these youth live. In this context, self-employment might be an alternative, although no structured services for this purpose were identified beyond specific skills training. This is a highly sensitive issue given that, while we know that recidivism is not only responsive to income (Wilson et al., 2000) economic need may indeed drive recidivism. Moreover, these youth may face frustration after not being able achieve their goals and may have negative reactions that drive recidivism.

Mental health

CSOs provide both individual and group therapies. Participants mentioned that these have helped them to improve their emotional regulation and their family relationships. They also noted that

they have changed their views in many ways, such as not wanting to be wandering and doing nothing anymore. Some of them highlighted that these are services too expensive for them to afford and that they would not have access to them otherwise. The exception is PILARES, where there are no psychological services, only group discussions and workshops for socioemotional skill development. Nonetheless, participants mentioned these as useful, as they can learn from others' experiences.

We identified three main areas of opportunity, the first being staff profiles in CSO psychology departments. This was pointed out in one organization in particular where some participants considered there to be limited rapport from psychologists, as they come from backgrounds too distant from theirs and do not seem to fully understand the situations from which these youth come. The second area of opportunity is psychiatric treatment. Most of these youth had abused drugs and had been exposed to highly violent situations, either as perpetrators or victims. However, there was no indication made of services existent for these problems. The third area of opportunity is work with families. As mentioned above, domestic violence, substance abuse, and criminal activity are highly intertwined with family relations in this context. Although CSOs have incorporated family therapy in their service offerings, this is insufficient to address these complex family dynamics.

Addiction treatment

All CSOs address addictions in group therapy; however, only a few (i.e., Supera, CASA, and La Tenda from the north) have put in place harm reduction programs. Based on participants' comments, harm reduction programs seem to have some effectiveness in helping youth with drug abuse. This was particularly salient in discussions from La Tenda:

> *"I was slimmer than him, and now look. It helped me with consumption, but not only here, I went to Alcoholic Anonymous and it does help. When they encourage and advise you, you feel better."*

> *"I quitted drugs, I don't care about them anymore, and I stopped seeing my friends from that time. I don't talk to them anymore."*

Nonetheless, addiction treatment remains a challenge and a sensitive issue to address, given the close relationship of substance abuse with violent and criminal behavior and considering that it affects the social spheres of most of these youth. As mentioned before, only a few CSOs have put in place specialized strategies in this area, and some of them only address it in group therapy; they do not admit youth who are active substance abusers. This is a major opportunity area for social reintegration programs. Promising intervention models from certain CSOs should be strengthened and shared with CSOs that are not fully addressing this issue yet. This should be reinforced with partnerships with specialized institutions to ensure that youth are assisted in this matter.

Support networks

A salient benefit of CSO programs, specifically of CASA, La Tenda, Consejo, and Supera, is that of support networks. Participants from these CSOs highlighted that they have made friends there, including both peers and staff. In PILARES, one participant also mentioned having generated a support network with women from a feminist discussion group. A relevant aspect in this regard is the follow-up done by these CSOs after program conclusion in inviting youth to regular

activities to maintain relationships. To many, CSOs had become a safe place where they feel well. In the words of one participant from Consejo and CASA,

> *" … my generation is one of the oldest. I've been here since it started. Then, I felt so happy to be here that I keep coming back, although it's not the same anymore, I keep coming back because here's where I found happiness."*

A remaining area of opportunity is strengthening the follow-up strategies of CSOs, as this component is not yet incorporated into every model. This is highly relevant to sustain programs' positive effects and to keep youth away from dynamics that drive them to violence and crime. After finishing the programs, there are very few opportunities for youth to engage in productive and health promoting activities, and the CSOs capacities are very limited to provide these services alone.

VI. Conclusions and Policy Implications

Over the past decade and a half, Mexican youth have been raised amid an unprecedented wave of organized criminal violence. They comprise a particularly vulnerable population as targets of violence, but also as potential recruits. Criminal career paths start early in life, often through participation in gangs. The motivations driving youth involvement in criminal activity vary across contexts. In addition to economic opportunity and coercion, nonmaterial incentives and contextual factors play important roles in determining why some individuals embark on criminal life paths while others do not. This study contributes to our understanding of youth crime by investigating how they (i) perceive, (ii) rationalize, and (iii) condemn or justify acts of crime and violence.

Our findings indicate that the gender, family and school environments, as well as social networks of youth significantly influence the normalization of certain acts of violence and their perceptions of gang involvement. Of particular interest is the role of neighborhood spaces for socialization as potential enablers of gang involvement and recruitment. Based on the survey evidence, we cannot disentangle the specific types of group activity, community organization, or social gathering that are correlated with gang involvement and recruitment. But the data indicate that risks of gang involvement increase among those affiliated with a generic category of community organization. It is very likely that community organizations in some neighborhoods have been infiltrated by members of criminal organizations. The focus groups shed light on how drug cartels' dynamics (e.g., whether they have monopolistic control over the territory or not) and their relationships with the communities' influence youth risk assessments of joining criminal organizations, indicating that prevention strategies should be tailored to the specific local crime dynamics. Hence, it is important that interventions aimed at preventing youth crime identify venues of socialization that minimize youth risks and that are insulated from criminal groups. School organizations seem to be one such avenue, as indicated in our analysis.

Our findings also reveal that it is crucial to design interventions targeting young men with poor family relations and those who have been victims of domestic violence. In this regard, curbing the normalization of violence—particularly among men—seems to be critical to preventing youth criminal behavior. The survey analysis provides robust evidence indicating that men normalize violent behavior much more than women across all types of violence. From this perspective, families themselves should also be targets of intervention programs. Early interventions are central to preventing normalization, as they constitute the primary sphere of socialization. As found in the focus group discussions, violence is a form of social interaction that is transmitted from one generation to the next. Gender stereotypes and misogynist views are also learned at home and appear to be central in the normalization of violent behavior across all social spheres. Work in this area needs to be reinforced as part of the violence prevention agenda, as is work focused on substance abuse, which plays a major role in generating violence among relatives and affects all social spheres of youth at-risk.

The evidence from our experiment on blame attribution reveals that, on average, youth in urban Mexico see lower-class peers who engage in criminal behavior as less deserving of blame compared to middle-class or more privileged individuals. In such cases, respondents were more likely to blame the government or society as a whole for the crimes committed. Respondents were also more likely to blame perpetrators who act as gang leaders than those who follow orders. The type of crime and the identity of the victim seem to be less influential and highly

context-specific in shaping assessments of attribution of blame. Further research is needed to explore whether this apparent indifference with respect to the victim and the type of crime is due to increased normalization of violence or to a generalized stigmatization of all criminal behavior. The focus groups revealed some promising lines of research in this regard: empathy and risk assessments associated with the victim appear as relevant dimensions to be explored to further disentangle the mechanisms behind blame attribution. Taken together, these findings show that youth rationalize criminal behavior as the result of structural conditions and not necessarily due to individual agency. The focus group discussions also revealed the complexity underlying the rationalization processes of these youth. While most youth recognized the centrality of individual choices, society and the government were also blamed for crime and violence. This suggests that effective youth crime prevention also requires trust-building strategies to restore the social fabric and legitimize state institutions.

VII. Recommendations

1. **Map local crime dynamics and enablers.**

   The aim should be to create a map of local criminal dynamics and potential enablers for recruitment, crime, and violence in high-violence areas. In particular, we consider it highly relevant to:

   a. **Create a map of gangs at the neighborhood level** in collaboration with local police authorities to understand the potential reach and coverage of the territory, as well as their local crime dynamics, whether there are affiliations with organized crime, and the potential consequences such as gang recruitment. These efforts should be prioritized in high-violence areas.
   b. **Create a census of neighborhood or community organizations**, including governmental organizations, NGOs, and informal organizations to identify the types of organization or group activity that are more likely to be correlated with patterns of gang activity, crime, and violence.

   The evidence on how to prevent youth from joining gangs in the first place is very scarce. These efforts would be a first step towards understanding these dynamics and providing data-driven evidence to design and target effective policy approaches.

2. **Expand the offer of youth prevention programs, addressing the mechanisms that drive violence normalization.**

   It is imperative to expand the services available to support at-risk youth, particularly focused on those at high risk for violence (secondary prevention) or to prevent recidivism of offenders in high violence areas. In this sense, we consider it urgent to:

   a. **Invest in the development of multidimensional therapy models, addiction treatment, and psychiatric models, specific for the Mexican context**. The aim should be to enable the environment for *specific and promising* innovations to be able to thrive, to generate knowledge, and to identify new, effective solutions with the potential for scaling. Unfortunately, the evidence base on what works to reduce violence among youth is relatively narrow. Governments, CSOs, researchers, and the private sector are addressing this issue by conducting a variety of policy experimentations. The objective of aid programming should be on developing specific subject matter–related technical expertise, implementation, and monitoring-and-evaluation (M&E) capacities that allow strengthening, evaluating, and replicating models if effective. The evidence has suggested that these models are promising to prevent violence engagement and recidivism,[6] and efforts should be implemented to enable innovation and adaptation around their principles.

[6] See "What Works to Prevent Violence Among Youth?", USAID J-PAL–commissioned report, 2018.

Existing programs, such as those supported by JPV, provide observational evidence (we do not yet have causal evidence) that some interventions components may work, for example, by providing support networks, harm reduction, or psychological support, among others. These experiences show that there is opportunity to successfully intervene, even before youth join gangs. Efforts and investments should be targeted to strengthen these interventions, to generate more evidence on whether and how they work, and to eventually scale up effective components.

b. **Prioritize gender-based violence prevention interventions.** A gender perspective can be undertaken with a cross-cutting approach in programs from both the government and CSOs. These can be reinforced with interventions to create awareness of sexual violence, gender stereotypes, and misogynist views.
c. **Implement and test specific interventions aimed at supporting victims of violence, particularly the gender-based ones.** For instance, work with peer networks for young women can be relevant to support them when facing intimate partner violence. Interventions at the parental level may also be relevant to raise awareness about the negative impacts of physical and verbal abuse, as well as discussions with youth exposed to domestic violence in which they can discuss and conscientize these negative impacts to help them understand, overcome, and prevent future occurrence.

3. **Implement perspective-taking interventions.**

To inform participants about the drivers of youth involvement in criminal behavior and raise awareness about the risks and the impact—for them and for victims— associated with such behavior. Although these strategies may not be enough as stand-alone interventions for youth who have already been involved in crime, they may be helpful as a secondary prevention intervention. We propose the following:

a. **Test police-youth or victim-youth dialogue programs that apply narrative-based approaches to increase empathy and trust,** and define outcome measures that can be systematically evaluated.
b. **Work with community organizations to assess mechanisms through which they may be enabling certain types of violence normalization and leverage their targeting (or capacity to reach at-risk youth) to implement perspective-taking interventions** (see below), particularly focused on the risk of joining gangs. These interventions should consider variations in risk assessments resulting from specific local crime dynamics, mainly regarding drug cartels' types of activity.

4. **Work with the private sector to expand employment opportunities for at-risk youth**. Also, creating paid job-training programs and positions that are aligned with the labor market demand and train youths to fit those needs, improving profiling, and reducing rotation. For many of these youth, self-employment is a better alternative, as their profiles

can hardly be aligned with available job vacancies. Thus, programs for entrepreneurship skill development should also be incorporated, adapted to youth characteristics.

5. **Engage with government agencies to create and expand specialized capacity for the design and implementation of specific services aimed at preventing youth crime involvement and reducing recidivism.**

   Increasing the capacity of CSOs to work with at-risk youth is paramount, especially given that the civil society sector has more flexibility to try out innovative approaches. However, there is also a need to generate specialized capacity within governments to support youth to build alternative pathways to crime and violence, which is of the greatest priority to achieve the needed reach and scale. In particular, we consider it urgent to accomplish the following:

   a. **Improve the offer of social services with a youth perspective in higher-risk communities.** There is a lack of mental health, education, employment, and cultural services tailored for this population in the places where they live. This means that both the design of programs and the service provision staff should be prepared to address the specific needs of these youth. This should be a governmental responsibility as it constitutes a condition of access to social rights for these youth.
   b. **Create programs that allow combining post-release support or alternatives to incarceration with comprehensive social services** that are aimed at remedying the behavior leading to the original arrest and that promote safety, strength, and permanence in the community, schools, home, and place of employment while keeping youth accountable—this is the most promising approach to reduce recidivism sustainably. These services should coordinate physical and mental health services, education and employment support, and family counseling. There remain ample opportunities to engage with public institutions to generate this specific offer.

6. **Create a collaborative research model with academic researchers and practitioners to improve the accumulation of knowledge and inform evidence-based policy.** This could be done through the implementation of a cluster of coordinated research studies subjected to preregistration analysis, constant monitoring of results, and impact evaluations.

References

Achen, C. H., and Larry M. B. (2002). "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks." Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston.

Alleyne, E., Fernandes, I., & Pritchard, E. (2014). Denying humanness to victims: How gang members justify violent behavior. Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 17(6), 750-762.

Arceneaux, K. (2003) "The Conditional Impact of Blame Attribution on the Relationship Between Economic Adversity and Turnout." Political Research Quarterly 56(1): 67–75.

Azaola, E. (2016). Diagnóstico de las y los adolescentes que cometen delitos graves en México, UNICEF, Subsecretaría de Prevención y Participación Ciudadana de la Secretaría de Gobernación.

Ayala, M., & López, A. (2016, September 15). Prevenir delitos: crónica de una muerte anunciada. Animal Político. Retrieved from http://www.animalpolitico.com/blogueros-el-blog-de-mexicoevalua/2016/09/15/prevencion-del-delito-cronica-una-muerte-anunciada/

Bartling, B., & Fischbacher, U. (2012). Shifting the blame: On delegation and responsibility. The Review of Economic Studies, 79(1), 67-87.

Bastian, B., Denson, T. F., & Haslam, N. (2013). The roles of dehumanization and moral outrage in retributive justice. *PloS one*, *8*(4), e61842.

Becker, G. S. (1968). Crime and punishment: An economic approach. In The economic dimensions of crime (pp. 13-68). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Becker, G. S. (1998). Accounting for tastes. Harvard University Press.

Bernasco, W., de Graaff, Th., Rouwendal, J., and Steenbeek, W. (2017), 'Social Interactions and Crime Revisited: An Investigation Using Individual Offender Data in Dutch Neighborhoods', Review of Economics and Statistics, 99, 622–36.

Billings, S. B., Deming, D. J., & Ross, S. L. (2019). Partners in crime. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 11(1), 126-50.

Bisbee, J. (2019). BARP: Improving Mister P Using Bayesian Additive Regression Trees. American Political Science Review, 113(4), 1060-1065.

Blumenthal, S., Gudjonsson, G., & Burns, J. (1999). Cognitive distortions and blame attribution in sex offenders against adults and children. Child abuse & neglect, 23(2), 129-143.

Blumstein, A. (Ed.). (1986). Criminal Careers and" Career Criminals," (Vol. 2). National Academies.

Bruce, D. (2007). "To be someone: Status insecurity and violence in South Africa." In P. Burton (Ed.) Someone stole my smile, 57-68.

Calderón, L., Ferreira, O. R., & Shirk, D. A. (2018). Drug violence in Mexico: Data and analysis through 2017. Justice in Mexico, University of San Diego, April, 7.

Cárdenas, S. (2011) "Escuelas de doble turno en México. Una estimación de diferencias asociadas con su implementación," Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa, 16(50), 801-827.

Carrell, S. E., & Hoekstra, M. L. (2008). Externalities in the classroom: How domestic violence harms everyone's kids. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics.

Carvalho, L. S., & Soares, R. R. (2016). Living on the edge: Youth entry, career and exit in drug-selling gangs. Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 121, 77-98.

Caudillo, M. and Torche, F. (2014). Exposure to Local Homicides and Early Educational Achievement in Mexico. Sociology of Education, 87(2):89-105.

Chapa Koloffon, L., & Ley, S. (2015). Prevención del Delito en México: ¿Cuáles son las prioridades? Mexico City: México Evalúa.

Centro de Investigación para el Desarrollo, A.C. Justicia para Adolescentes, 2016.

Chávez Villegas, C. (2020). Poverty, aspirations, and organized crime in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Victims & Offenders, 15(3), 330-349.

Cook, P. J., & Ludwig, J. (2005). Assigning deviant youths to minimize total harm (No. w11390). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Cozzarelli, C., Wilkinson, A. V., & Tagler, M. J. (2001). Attitudes toward the poor and attributions for poverty. Journal of social issues.

Crane, J. (1991). The epidemic theory of ghettos and neighborhood effects on dropping out and teenage childbearing. American journal of Sociology, 96(5), 1226-1259.

Damm, A. P., & Dustmann, C. (2014). Does growing up in a high crime neighborhood affect youth criminal behavior?. American Economic Review, 104(6), 1806-32.

Deming, D. (2011). Better schools, less crime. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 126(4):2063–2115.

Draca, M. and Machin, S. J. (2015). Crime and economic incentives. Annual Review of Economics, 7:389–408.

Ehrlich, I. (1973). Participation in illegitimate activities: A theoretical and empirical investigation. Journal of political Economy, 81(3), 521-565.

Ehrlich, I. (1973). Participation in illegitimate activities: A theoretical and empirical investigation. Journal of political Economy, 81(3), 521-565.

Eriksson, K. H., Hjalmarsson, R., Lindquist, M. J., and Sandberg, A. (2016). The Importance of Family Background and Neighborhood Effects as Determinants of Crime. Journal of Population Economics, 29(1), 219–62.

Felson, R. B., & Palmore, C. (2018). Biases in blaming victims of rape and other crime. Psychology of Violence, 8(3), 390.

Freedman, M. and Owens, E. G. (2014). Your friends and neighbors: Localized economic development and criminal activity. Review of Economics and Statistics.

García-Ponce, Omar, Lauren Young, and Thomas Zeitzoff. Forthcoming. Anger and Support for Retribution in Mexico's Drug War. Journal of Peace Research.

Gaviria, A., & Raphael, S. (2001). School-based peer effects and juvenile behavior. Review of Economics and Statistics, 83(2), 257-268.

Ghetti, S., & Redlich, A. D. (2001). Reactions to youth crime: Perceptions of accountability and competency. Behavioral sciences & the law, 19(1), 33-52.

Gibson, J. L., & Gouws, A. (1999). Truth and reconciliation in South Africa: Attributions of blame and the struggle over apartheid. American Political Science Review, 93(3), 501-517.

Glaeser, E. L., Sacerdote, B., and Scheinkman, J. A. (1996). Crime and social interactions. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 111(2):507–548.

Gudjonsson, G. H., & Bownes, I. (1991). The attribution of blame and type of crime committed: data for Northern Ireland. The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry, 2(3), 337-341.

Gudjonsson, G. H. (1989). Compliance in an interrogative situation: A new scale. Personality and Individual differences, 10(5), 535-540.

Hamilton, V. L., & Hagiwara, S. (1992). Roles, responsibility, and accounts across cultures. International Journal of Psychology, 27(2), 157-179.

Haynie, D. L. (2001), Delinquent Peers Revisited: Does Network Structure Matter?. American Journal of Sociology, 106(4), 1013–57.

Hjalmarsson, R., and Lindquist, M. J. (2012), Like Godfather, Like Son: Exploring the Intergenerational Nature of Crime. Journal of Human Resources, 47, 550–82.

Hjalmarsson, R., and Lindquist, M. J. (2013), The Origins of Intergenerational Associations in Crime: Lessons from Swedish adoption data. Labour Economics, 20, 68–81.

Jaitman, L., & Ajzenman, N. (2016). Crime concentration and hot spot dynamics in Latin America (No. IDB-WP-699). IDB Working Paper Series.

Jones, N. P. (2013). Understanding and addressing youth in "gangs" in Mexico. *Washington, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Working Paper Series on Civic Engagement and Public Security in Mexico*.

Kluegel, James R., and Elliot R. Smith. 1986. Beliefs about Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought to Be. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Le Cour, R. (2018). Rediseñar la estrategia de seguridad pública desde lo local. In *Léase (si quiere gobernar en serio*. México Evalúa.

Lerner, Jennifer S, Julie H Goldberg and Philip E Tetlock. 1998. "Sober second thought: The effects of accountability, anger, and authoritarianism on attributions of responsibility." Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 24(6):563–574.

Levin, I., Sinclair, J. A., & Alvarez, R. M. (2016). Participation in the wake of adversity: Blame attribution and policy-oriented evaluations. Political Behavior, 38(1), 203-228.

Levitt, S. D., & Lochner, L. (2001). The determinants of juvenile crime. In Risky behavior among youths: An economic analysis (pp. 327-374). University of Chicago Press.

Lindquist, M. J., & Zenou, Y. (2019). Crime and networks: ten policy lessons. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 35(4), 746-771.

Lochner, L. and Moretti, E. (2004). The effect of education on crime: Evidence from prison inmates, arrests, and self-reports. American Economic Review, 94(1):155–189.

Ludwig, J., Duncan, G. J., and Hirschfield, P. (2001), Urban Poverty and Juvenile Crime: Evidence from a Randomized Housing-Mobility Experiment. Quarterly Journal of Economics, 116(2), 655–79.

Malhotra, N., & Kuo, A. G. (2008). Attributing blame: The public's response to Hurricane Katrina. The Journal of Politics, 70(1), 120-135.

McBride, D. C., VanderWaal, C. J., Terry, Y. M., & VanBuren, H. (1999). Breaking the cycle of drug use among juvenile offenders. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

McGraw, K. M. (1990). Avoiding blame: An experimental investigation of political excuses and justifications. British Journal of Political Science, 20(1), 119-131.

McGraw, K. M. (1991). Managing blame: An experimental test of the effects of political accounts. The American Political Science Review, 1133-1157.

Michaelsen, M. M., & Salardi, P. (2020). Violence, psychological stress and educational performance during the "war on drugs" in Mexico. Journal of Development Economics, 143, 102387.

Mitchell, O., Wilson, D. B., & MacKenzie, D. L. (2007). Does incarceration-based drug treatment reduce recidivism? A meta-analytic synthesis of the research. Journal of Experimental Criminology, 3(4), 353–375.

Moncada, E. (2020). The politics of criminal victimization: Pursuing and resisting power. Perspectives on Politics, 18(3), 706-721.

Montgomery, J. M., & Olivella, S. (2018). Tree-Based Models for Political Science Data. American Journal of Political Science, 62(3), 729-744.

Peffley, Mark. (1984). The Voter as Juror: Attributing Responsibility for Economic Conditions. Political Behavior 6(3): 275–94.

Pettit, B., & Western, B. (2004). Mass imprisonment and the life course: Race and class inequality in US incarceration. American sociological review, 69(2), 151-169.

Raphael, S., & Sills, M. (2006). Urban crime, race, and the criminal justice system in the United States. A Companion to Urban Economics, 515-535.

Rogers, P., Josey, N., & Davies, M. (2007). Victim age, attractiveness and, abuse history as factors in the perception of a hypothetical child sexual abuse case. Journal of Sexual Aggression, 13(2), 121-137.

Rogers, P., Wczasek, R., & Davies, M. (2011). Attributions of blame in a hypothetical internet solicitation case: Roles of victim naivety, parental neglect and respondent gender. Journal of Sexual Aggression, 17(2), 196-214.

Rothstein, R. (2004). Class and schools. Teachers College, Columbia University.

Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (2005). A life-course view of the development of crime. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 602(1), 12-45.

Sampson, R. J., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. science, 277(5328), 918-924.

Shaver, K. G. (2012). The attribution of blame: Causality, responsibility, and blameworthiness. Springer Science & Business Media.

Sirotkina, E., & Zavadskaya, M. (2020). When the party's over: political blame attribution under an electoral authoritarian regime. Post-Soviet Affairs, 36(1), 37-60.

Stevens, M. (2018). Preventing at-risk children from developing antisocial and criminal behaviour: a longitudinal study examining the role of parenting, community and societal factors in middle childhood. BMC psychology, 6(1), 1-12.

Sviatschi, M. M. (2018). Making a narco: Childhood exposure to illegal labor markets and criminal life paths. Manuscript, Department of Economics, Princeton University. https://rpds. princeton. edu/sites/rpds/files/sviatschi making-a-narco march2018. Pdf

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime data. UNODC, 17 2020, available at: dataunodc.un.org [accessed 13 November 2020]

Warr, M. (2002), Companions in Crime: The Social Aspects of Criminal Conduct, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Weisburd, D. (2015). The law of crime concentration and the criminology of place. Criminology, 53(2), 133-157.

Appendix

Section A. Supporting Information - Data and Methodology

In the case of Mexico, homicide data are available from police investigations, compiled by the Executive Secretariat of the National System of Public Security (SESNSP), and from death certificates, compiled by the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI). While INEGI data tend to be more precise, their disadvantage is that they are usually delayed for more than a year. For this reason, we relied on SESNSP data, which covered the year we examined (2020) at the municipal level. We only examined intentional homicides.

Although homicide statistics are considered quite accurate, they do not capture the full extent of violence within communities. They do not give us a grasp on the extent of nonhomicidal crime or on residents' perceived level of crime and insecurity in their areas (irrespective of reality). Both of these factors likely influence residents' behavior as well and are relevant to our analysis. Thus, we incorporated these measures in our sampling design (Methods 2 and 3). However, this information is not typically available at the municipal level. National crime and victimization surveys, such as the ENSU and the National Survey on Victimization and Public Security Perception (ENVIPE), often collect this information with sampling strategies for higher-level geographic units (e.g., metropolitan area or city). Because of this, these statistics are not representative at the municipal level.

To circumvent this issue and ensure stratification at a more fine-grained level of the municipality, we relied on innovative methods to extrapolate these data from such surveys and create municipal-level estimates. The method we utilized is called MRP, a form of small-area estimation, which is used widely by researchers to predict estimates of certain variables at geographic units below a survey's level of representativity (e.g., see the works of Park et al. [2006], Hanretty [2019], and Butz and Kehrberg [2016]). Using MRP, we relied upon survey questions regarding crime from the most recent ENSU survey and the 2015 intercensus to generate our municipal estimates. In particular, we utilized the following two questions from ENSU for our estimates:

1. PERCEIVED SECURITY: In terms of crime, do you consider that to live in (CITY) currently is … [safe, unsafe]? *En términos de la delincuencia, ¿considera que vivir actualmente en (CIUDAD), es … [seguro, inseguro]?*
2. VICTIMIZATION: During the past year [insert year], that is to say from January to today, has a member of your household (including yourself) been victim of (INSERT TYPE OF CRIME) on card A? *Durante este año [insert year], es decir, de enero a la fecha, ¿algún integrante de este hogar incluido usted, sufrieron la situación (CÓDIGO DE INCIDENCIA) de la tarjeta A?*
    1. *Robbery or assault in the street or in public transportation? Yes or No. Robo o asalto en la calle o en el transporte público (incluye robo en banco o cajero automático)? Sí o No?*
    2. *Threats, pressure, or deception to demand money or goods or to do something/not to do something (extortion, blackmail)? Yes or No? Amenazas, presiones, o engaños para exigir dinero o bienes; o para que hiciera algo o dejara de hacerlo (extorsión)? Sí o No?*

For the first measure, perceived security, we coded the variable as 1 if an individual reported feeling "insecure" and 0 if an individual reported feeling "secure" in their city. For our second measure, victimization, we coded the variable as 1 if the individual reported that a member of their household had either experienced robbery or extortion in the past year and coded 0 if not.

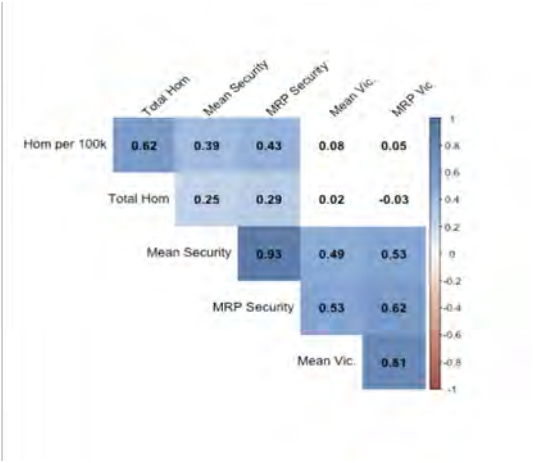
With these questions, we then estimated the relationship between various individual-level characteristics and their responses on these selected survey questions. We did this through multilevel regression, where we determined the relationship between selected characteristics—in this case age, gender, education, and occupation—and reported (i) insecurity and (ii) household victimization. This involved two separate regression models, one for each outcome variable. The regression also factored in geographic location, with individuals' municipalities (unrepresentative unit of interest) nested within their states (geographic unit of the survey).

Once these regression estimates were calculated, we then post-stratified them. This involved weighting our estimates by the prevalence of each type of individual within each municipality based on their individual-level characteristics (i.e., age, education, etc.). This "prevalence" was calculated by determining the population of each type of individual within a municipality according to the 2015 intercensus. The regression estimates, weighted in this manner, generated a municipal-level estimate (one for each municipality) for the most likely response to each of the two survey questions.

Through this process, we calculated two municipal-level estimates: one quantifying nonhomicidal victimization and the other quantifying residents' perception of community security in their municipality. We calculated these values for all municipalities included in the most recent ENSU survey, yielding estimates for 157 municipalities. These values can be interpreted as a ranking of perceived security and victimization among the municipalities we examined. They allowed us to determine within our sample of municipalities how they rank comparatively in terms of these two values. However, these measures do have error associated with them and cannot be compared to estimates outside of these analyses. This error was predominantly created by limitations due to question wording and the need to match variables between the census and survey. We had to match individual-level responses on the ENSU survey to biographical information about the head of household, as certain attributes were only recorded at the head-of-household level (e.g., education level, occupation) in this survey. We used these head-of-household characteristics when considering the prevalence of each type of individual in the intercensus. Thus, these measures are not perfect individual-level measures, but did provide us with comparable intersample estimates. For this reason, we interpreted them as a ranking.

We confirmed the adequacy of our estimates and explored the correlation between these variables with a simple correlation analysis, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Correlations between MRP estimates and true values (means)



From Figure 1, we can confirm that our MRP estimates and the true values are highly correlated (for those municipalities for which we had a representative estimator). We also see a correlation between homicide rates and MRP insecurity perception estimates, but a nearly zero correlation between homicide rates and MRP victimization estimates. We observe a high correlation between MRP security and victimization estimates.

To further explore these results, we ran mixed-effects models with random intercepts by state. Results are shown in Table 1, on which population, homicide, and homicide rate are rescaled as values ranging from 0 to 1.

Table 1. Mixed-Effects Models with Random Intercepts

	Security 2020			Vic. 2020		
Predictors	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*	*Estimates*	*CI*	*p*
Intercept	5.88	-20.14 – 31.90	0.658	5.62	-1.32 – 12.57	0.113
Log Population	4.03	2.00 – 6.06	**<0.001**	0.69	0.17 – 1.22	**0.010**
Hom. Total	6.32	-20.92 – 33.56	0.649	1.40	-5.85 – 8.65	0.705
Hom. Per 100k	28.13	7.67 – 48.59	**0.007**	1.44	-4.09 – 6.97	0.610
Random Effects						
σ^2	106.15			6.74		
τ_{00}	181.22 $_{state\_code}$			31.08 $_{state\_code}$		
ICC	0.63			0.82		
N	32 $_{state\_code}$			32 $_{state\_code}$		
Observations	157			157		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.208 / 0.708			0.036 / 0.828		

For the security measures on Table 1, as the population increases, so does insecurity. As the homicide rate increases, so does the insecurity index. Total homicide does not have a significant relationship with this index. In terms of the victimization index, there is little relationship with the included variables (the coefficient sizes are very small and confidence intervals cross zero). As population increases, the victimization index increases slightly. However, total homicide and homicide rate do not have significant relationships with victimization index, as confidence intervals include zero in both cases. From this analysis, we observe that in urban Mexico, there are places with homicide violence but not much other violence and vice versa, and there does

seem to be little correlation between homicide rates and victimization estimates. There are correlations between homicide rates and security perceptions, although these are not high. Therefore, we divided the sampling units (using the ENSU sample) by levels of homicide, nonhomicide violence (victimization), and insecurity perception.

The survey was applied to a random selection of respondents using Mexico's electoral sections as the primary sampling units (PSUs). PSUs were selected for the sample through a systematic method of stratified probability proportional to size. Each PSU in the sampling frame was assigned to a nonoverlapping sample stratum based on three variables mentioned above: homicide rate, reported nonhomicidal crime, and perceived insecurity. After analyzing both explicit and implicit sampling strategies, we decided to use an implicit strategy because the resulting sample was more representative of our target population in terms of community security.

Section B. Survey Questionnaire

Hola, mi nombre es . Estoy haciendo entrevistas para un estudio sobre eventos actuales en México para la Universidad de George Washington. Tu participación nos ayudará entender mejor algunos asuntos del país. Todo lo que comentes será completamente anónimo y la participación es voluntaria. En cualquier momento podemos parar la entrevista o saltarnos preguntas si así lo deseas.
Si tienes cualquier pregunta después, puedes contactar a las personas en esta tarjeta **[ENTREGAR AL ENTREVISTADO LA TARJETA DE INFORMACIÓN].**
¿Tienes alguna pregunta? **[SI SÍ, RESPONDE LAS PREGUNTAS DEL ENTREVISTADO. SI NO, CONTINÚA].**

BLOQUE 1

P1. ¿Cuántos años tienes?

_____
99) NS/NC

P2. ¿Creciste en este municipio? [SI RESPONDE NO, PREGUNTAR Y ANOTAR EN QUÉ MUNICIPIO Y ESTADO CRECIÓ O PASÓ LA MAYOR PARTE DE SU INFANCIA]

1) Si, crecí acá
2) No, crecí en: Municipio:_____ Estado:_____
98) NS
99) NC

BLOQUE 2

Ahora te voy a leer una serie de preguntas para las cuales no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas, solo opiniones.

P3. [MOSTRAR TARJETA] En tu opinión, ¿cuál de los siguientes grupos crees que sería más efectivo para mantener el orden y la seguridad en tu comunidad?
[ESPERAR RESPUESTA]

1) Ejército
2) Marina
3) Policía federal / guardia nacional
4) Policía estatal
5) Policía municipal
6) Un grupo de autodefensa
7) El crimen organizado
8) Otros
98) NS
99) NC

P4. [MOSTRAR TARJETA] En una escala de 1 a 7, donde 1 significa que NO CONFÍAS NADA y 7 significa que CONFÍAS MUCHO, ¿qué tanto confías en ___ *[INSERTAR ALEATORIAMENTE]*?

	1 Nada	2	3	4	5	6	7 Mucho	NS/NC
Tus vecinos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
Tu familia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
La policía municipal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

La policía estatal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
El ejército	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
La marina	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
Policía federal / guardia nacional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
El gobierno federal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
El gobierno estatal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
El gobierno municipal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

BLOQUE 3

P5. [MOSTRAR TARJETA] En una escala de 1 a 7, donde 1 es muy inseguro y 7 es muy seguro,¿qué tan seguro crees que es vivir en *[INSERTAR NOMBRE DE MUNICIPIO]* actualmente?

[ESPERAR RESPUESTA]

1) 1 Muy inseguro
2) 2
3) 3
4) 4
5) 5
6) 6
7) 7 Muy seguro
99) NS/NC

P6. ¿Con qué frecuencia crees que en esta colonia alguien como tú haya pasado por alguna de las siguientes situaciones en los últimos 12 meses? ¿Nunca, rara vez, de vez en cuando, o siempre?

	Nunca	Rara vez	De vez en cuando	Siempre	NS/NC
Ha sentido miedo de salir a la calle por temor a su seguridad personal	1	2	3	4	99
Ha pagado por protección personal	1	2	3	4	99
Ha presenciado o visto un homicidio	1	2	3	4	99
Ha visto personas con armas que no son policías o militares	1	2	3	4	99

P7. En los últimos 12 meses, has sido o no has sido víctima de ____?

	Sí	No	NS	NC
Robo de casa o negocio	1	2	98	99
Robo de auto	1	2	98	99
Asalto en transporte público	1	2	98	99
Herido/a por arma	1	2	98	99
Tentativa de homicidio	1	2	98	99
Extorsión	1	2	98	99
Secuestro	1	2	98	99
Abuso sexual	1	2	98	99

P8. En los últimos 12 meses alguna de las personas que viven en tu hogar ha sido o no ha sido víctima de ____?

	Sí	No	NS	NC
Robo de casa o negocio	1	2	98	99
Robo de auto	1	2	98	99
Asalto en transporte público	1	2	98	99

Herido por arma	1	2	98	99
Tentativa de homicidio	1	2	98	99
Homicidio	1	2	98	99
Extorsión	1	2	98	99
Secuestro	1	2	98	99
Abuso sexual	1	2	98	99

BLOQUE 4

Ahora te voy a contar una historia de una situación que pasa frecuentemente en muchos lugares de nuestro país. Cuando termine de leer, te pediré tu opinión sobre la situación.

Rodrigo es un joven mexicano que creció en una familia **[DE BAJOS RECURSOS CON MUCHAS CARENCIAS/DE CLASE MEDIA DONDE NO LE FALTÓ NADA]**.

Desde muy temprana edad empezó a delinquir y recientemente fue arrestado por **[ROBARLE EL CELULAR / EXTORSIONAR / SECUESTRAR / ASESINAR]** A **[UN OBRERO/ UN EMPRESARIO / UN POLÍTICO LOCAL]**.

Rodrigo confesó a las autoridades haber cometido este crimen **[Y SER EL LÍDER DE UNA BANDA CRIMINAL / Y DIJO QUE ESTABA SIGUIENDO ÓRDENES DEL LÍDER DE UNA BANDA CRIMINAL]**.

P9. Primero me gustaría que pienses qué tan culpable consideras que es Rodrigo por lo que sucedió en esta historia. En una escala del 1 al 7 donde 1 significa que no es culpable y 7 significa que es completamente culpable, ¿qué tan culpable crees que es Rodrigo?

[MOSTRAR TARJETA 4]

1) 1 No es culpable
2) 2
3) 3
4) 4
5) 5
6) 6
7) 7 Completamente culpable
98) NS
99) NC

P10. Algunas personas piensan que el gobierno y la sociedad son en parte responsables por lo que pasó en esta historia. Otros consideran que no tienen ninguna responsabilidad. En una escala del 1 al 7 donde 1 significa nada de responsabilidad y 7 mucha responsabilidad, ¿cuánta responsabilidad crees que tiene____? [MOSTRAR TARJETA 5]

	1 Ninguna responsabilidad	2	3	4	5	6	7 Mucha responsabilidad	NS	NC
El Gobierno	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
La sociedad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99

P11. Ahora, te pediré que pienses en las posibles razones o causas por las que Rodrigo cometió este crimen. Por favor menciona las tres primeras razones que te vienen a la mente.

[RESPUESTA ESPONTÁNEA, ESCRIBIR RAZONES POR SEPARADO]

RAZÓN A _____
RAZÓN B _____
RAZÓN C _____
98) NS
99) NC

P12. ¿Cómo consideras que Rodrigo debe ser castigado?

[LEER OPCIONES 1 A 3]

1) Debe ser arrestado y procesado por autoridades
2) Debe ser castigado por otro grupo criminal
3) Debe ser sujeto de castigo por parte de la comunidad o un grupo de autodefensa
4) No debe ser castigado **[NO LEER ESTA OPCIÓN]**
5) Otro **[NO LEER ESTA OPCIÓN]**
98) NS
99) NC

P13. Pensando en tu colonia, ¿qué tan probable es que algo como lo que ocurrió en la historia de Rodrigo pase aquí?

[LEER OPCIONES 1 A 4]

1) Muy probable
2) Algo probable
3) Poco probable
4) Nada probable
98) NS
99) NC

P14. En una escala del 1 al 7, donde 1 es nada violenta y 7 es muy violenta, ¿qué tan violentas son las siguientes acciones? [MOSTRAR TARJETA]

[ROTAR]

	1 Nada	2	3	4	5	6	7 Muy	NS	NC
Tener sexo con alguien sin su consentimiento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Decirle piropos a alguien	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Criticar a alguien por cómo se viste	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Besar a alguien sin pedirle permiso	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Golpear a alguien	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Saludar en la calle a alguien desconocido	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Vender drogas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Burlarse de alguien	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99
Ayudarle a un desconocido	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	98	99

BLOQUE 5

P15. Ahora por favor dime si estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones [ES PERAR RESPUESTA Y PREGUNTAR MUY O ALGO]:

	Muy de acuerdo	Algo de acuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni	Algo en desacuerdo	Muy en desacuerdo	NS	NC
Si te sumas a una banda criminal estás más seguro, y tienes protección	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
Puede ser divertido estar en una banda criminal	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
La mayoría de quienes forman parte de una banda criminal terminan asesinados	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
La mayoría de quienes forman parte de una banda criminal terminan heridos	1	2	3	4	5	98	99
La mayoría de quienes forman parte de una banda criminal terminan en la cárcel	1	2	3	4	5	98	99

P16. ¿Conoces en persona a alguien que pertenezca o haya pertenecido a una banda criminal?

[ESPERAR RESPUESTA]

1) Sí
2) No
98) NS
99) NC

RECUERDA QUE SI ALGUNA PREGUNTA TE HACE SENTIR INCÓMODO(A) NO TIENES QUE CONTESTAR

P17. Durante tu infancia, ¿qué tan común era el abuso verbal, insultos fuertes, u ofensas hirientes, en tu casa?

[LEER OPCIONES 1 a 4]

1) Muy común
2) Algo común
3) Poco común
4) No era común
99) NS/NC

P18. Durante tu infancia, ¿qué tan comunes eran los golpes en tu casa?

[LEER OPCIONES 1 a 4]

1) Muy común
2) Algo común
3) Poco común
4) No era común
99) NS/NC

P19. Durante tu vida de estudiante, en cualquier escuela a la que asististe, algún maestro o personal de escuela, o tus compañeros:

	Sí	No	NS	NC
¿Te golpearon?	1	2	98	99
¿Te atacaron con un cuchillo o un arma?	1	2	98	99
¿Te hicieron cyberbullying o chantajearon por medio de redes sociales / celulares / correo electrónico?	1	2	98	99
¿Destruyeron tus pertenencias?	1	2	98	99
¿Te robaron?	1	2	98	99
¿Te tocaron sin tu consentimiento?	1	2	98	99
¿Te pidieron favores sexuales?	1	2	98	99

BLOQUE 6

P20. ¿Actualmente, estás afiliado a alguna organización que aparece en esta tarjeta?
[MOSTRAR TARJETA Y MARCAR TODAS LAS QUE INDIQUE EL ENTREVISTADO]

	Sí	No	NS	NC
Organización religiosa	1	2	98	99
Equipo de deporte	1	2	98	99
Organización de la colonia/barrio	1	2	98	99
Partido político	1	2	98	99
Grupo musical, de artes o danza	1	2	98	99
Organización estudiantil	1	2	98	99

P21. ¿Has participado alguna vez en algún programa social para jóvenes que aparece en esta tarjeta?

[MOSTRAR TARJETA Y MARCAR TODAS LAS QUE INDIQUE EL ENTREVISTADO]

	Sí	No	NS	NC
Prevención de la violencia	1	2	98	99
Prevención o reducción de consumo de drogas	1	2	98	99
Empleo juvenil	1	2	98	99
Deportes	1	2	98	99
Participación comunitaria	1	2	98	99
Arte o cultura	1	2	98	99

P22. ¿Qué tan satisfecho estuviste con ese o esos programas?

[ESPERAR RESPUESTA]

1) Muy satisfecho
2) Satisfecho
3) Neutral
4) Insatisfecho
5) Muy insatisfecho
98) NS
99) NC

P23. ¿Te interesaría o no te interesaría participar en un programa de ___?

	Sí	No	NS	NC
de empleo (bolsa de trabajo, emprendimiento, elaboración de CV)	1	2	8	9
de capacitación para el trabajo	1	2	8	9
religioso o espiritual	1	2	8	9
de arte/cultura	1	2	8	9
de deporte	1	2	8	9
de prevención de la violencia	1	2	8	9
educativo	1	2	8	9

P24. ¿Crees que existen opciones disponibles en tu comunidad si quieres formar parte de un programa social juvenil?

[ESPERAR RESPUESTA]

1) Sí
2) No
98) NS
99) NC

BLOQUE 7

Dado que el Covid-19 ha impactado nuestras vidas, nos gustaría hacerte una pregunta relacionada con ello.

P25. Durante la pandemia, muchas familias se han visto afectadas en nuestro país y en el mundo. ¿Podrías decirme si desafortunadamente alguno de tus familiares o amistades cercanas falleció a causa de Covid-19?

1) Sí
2) No
98) NS
99) NC

BLOQUE 8

Muchas gracias por contestar todas estas preguntas. Ya nos faltan muy pocas para terminar.

P26. ¿Hasta qué año o grado _____ en la escuela?

A. Aprobaste
B. Aprobó tu papá
C. Aprobó tu mamá

1) Ninguno
2) Preescolar
3) Primaria
4) Secundaria
5) Carrera técnica con secundaria terminada
6) Normal básica (con antecedente en secundaria)
7) Preparatoria o bachillerato
8) Carrera técnica con preparatoria terminada
9) Licenciatura o profesional
10) Maestría o doctorado
98) NS
99) NC

P27. ¿Quién es el principal proveedor o proveedora en tu hogar?

1) Madre
2) Padre
3) Ambos padres
4) Abuelo(s)
5) Hermano(s)
6) Tío(s)
7) Pareja
8) Otro
98) NS
99) NC

P28. ¿La semana pasada _____?

A. Usted
B. El principal proveedor del hogar

1) Trabajó
2) Tenía trabajo, pero no trabajó
3) Buscó trabajo

4) Es estudiante
5) Se dedica a los quehaceres del hogar
6) Es jubilado(a) o pensionado(a)
7) Está incapacitado(a) permanentemente para trabajar
8) No trabajó
99) NR

SÓLO SI RESPONDIÓ CÓDIGO 1 O 2 EN RESPUESTA ANTERIOR

P29. En su trabajo o negocio de la semana pasada _____ fue ...

A. Usted
B. El principal proveedor del hogar

1) jornalero(a) o peón?
2) empleado(a) u obrero(a)?
3) trabajador(a) por su cuenta?(no contrata trabajadores)
4) patrón(a) o empleador(a)? (contrata trabajadores)
5) trabajador(a) sin pago?
99) NR

P30. Por favor dime si tu o cualquier miembro de este hogar tienen acceso a los siguientes servicios en casa ACTUALMENTE. También me gustaría saber si también tenían acceso a dichos servicios CUANDO TU TENÍAS 10 años.

	Sí	No	NS/NC
¿Automóvil **actualmente**?	1	2	99
¿Automóvil **cuando tenías 10 años**?	1	2	99
¿Lavadora **actualmente**?	1	2	99
¿Lavadora **cuando tenías 10 años**?	1	2	99
¿Drenaje dentro de la casa **actualmente**?	1	2	99
¿Drenaje dentro de la casa **cuando tenías 10 años**?	1	2	99
¿Computadora **actualmente**?	1	2	99
¿Computadora **cuando tenías 10 años**?	1	2	99
¿Internet **actualmente**?	1	2	99
¿Internet **cuando tenías 10 años**?	1	2	99
¿Teléfono celular **actualmente**?	1	2	99
¿Teléfono celular **cuando tenías 10 años**?	1	2	99
¿Servicio doméstico **actualmente?**	1	2	99
¿Servicio doméstico **cuando tenías 10 años?**	1	2	99

P31. El pasado 6 de junio se llevaron a cabo las elecciones para elegir Diputados Federales. Algunas personas no pudieron ir a votar por falta de tiempo, porque estaban ocupados, porque tenían miedo de contagiarse, o porque simplemente querían expresar su descontento con los partidos políticos. ¿Tú fuiste a votar o no fuiste a votar en la elección del 6 de junio?

[ESPERAR RESPUESTA]

1) Sí
2) No
99) NC

P32. [SÓLO SI RESPONDIÓ CÓDIGO 1 EN PREGUNTA ANTERIOR]

[ENCUESTADOR: MUESTRE LA TARJETA Y DESPUÉS HAGA LA PREGUNTA]

Te voy a entregar esta tarjeta donde vienen los partidos que compitieron en la elección de Diputados Federales. ¿Por cuál partido votaste?

1) Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)

2) Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)
3) Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD)
4) Partido Verde
5) Partido del Trabajo
6) Movimiento Ciudadano
7) Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (MORENA)
8) Partido Encuentro Solidario
9) Redes Sociales Progresistas
10) Fuerza por México
96) Ninguno / Anuló voto
97) No votó
98) No recuerda
99) No quiere contestar / El voto es secreto

SOCIODEMOGRAFICOS

P33. Sexo **[NO PREGUNTAR]**
1) Hombre
2) Mujer

P34. ¿Cuál es tu estado civil?

1) Soltero
2) Casado
3) Divorciado
4) Viudo
5) Cónyuge
99) NC

P35. ¿Cuántos hijos tienes?

1) No tengo hijos
2) 1 hijo
3) 2 hijos
4) 3 hijos
5) 4 o más hijos
8) NS
99) NC

P36. ¿Cuántas personas viven en tu hogar, incluyendo niños pequeños y adultos mayores?

_____
99) NC

P37. ¿Con quién vives? [RESPUESTA MÚLTIPLE, MARCAR TODAS LAS QUE MENCIONEN]
[ENCUESTADOR MARCAR TODAS LAS QUE APLICAN]

Madre	○
Padre	○
Abuelo(s)	○
Tío(s)	○
Amigo(s)	○
Pareja(s)	○
Hermano(s)	○
Hijos	○
Solo	○
Otros	○

La entrevista ha terminado. Muchas gracias nuevamente por contestar las preguntas.

Section C. Focus Group Guide

INTRODUCCIÓN

1. Presentación de los facilitadores y de los objetivos del proyecto.
2. Explicación sobre cómo la identidad de los participantes y toda la información que surja como parte de la sesión será tratada con absoluta confidencialidad.
    a. Se solicitará a los participantes elegir un sobrenombre, y sólo los sobrenombres podrán ser utilizados durante la sesión.
    b. Se solicitará a los participantes NO MENCIONAR ningún nombre personal de personas durante la sesión. Pueden referirse a las personas como "amigos", "hermanos", etc.
    c. Se le pedirá a los participantes que no hablen sobre la discusión durante la sesión con otras personas que no formaron parte.
3. Explicación de la dinámica de la sesión:
    i. Solo una persona habla a la vez.
    ii. Si alguien tiene una opinión diferente al resto del grupo, es importante que lo diga.
    iii. No hay respuestas correctas e incorrectas, todos los comentarios son importantes
4. Dinámica rompehielos y presentaciones: los participantes compartirán el nombre que seleccionaron con el grupo, y deberán compartir por qué eligieron ese nombre. Cada participante también compartirá sus expectativas sobre la sesión.
5. Leer el consentimiento en fuerte y preguntar a los participantes si se puede audio-grabar la sesión.

GUIA DE TEMAS PARA LA SESIÓN

I. USO DEL TIEMPO Y ASPIRACIONES

1. ¿Qué hacen los jóvenes de su edad que viven en su barrio/colonia para divertirse?
    - Música
    - Deportes
    - Baile
    - Fiestas
    - Alcohol/drogas

2. ¿En qué trabajan los jóvenes de su barrio/colonia?
    - Les gusta
    - Ingresos
    - Tienen varios trabajos
    - Trabajo ideal

3. ¿A qué aspiran los jóvenes de su barrio/colonia?

- Estudiar
- Familia
- Negocio propio
- Vivir en otro lugar
- Parecerse a alguien
- Ser famosos

----------SEPARAR GRUPOS POR SEXO----------

II. NORMALIZACIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA

4. Ahora, les voy a pedir que me ayuden a clasificar estas acciones. El rojo es para aquellas que son muy violentas, el amarillo es para las que son poco violentas y el verde es para las que no son violentas. (En la clasificación de cada una, que expliquen por qué).

Saludar en la calle a alguien desconocido
Decirle piropos a alguien
Tener sexo con alguien sin su consentimiento
Vender drogas
Criticar a alguien a sus espaldas
Besar a alguien sin pedirle permiso
Golpear a alguien
Saludar en la calle a alguien desconocido
Burlarse de alguien
Ayudarle a un desconocido

5. ¿En qué situaciones puede ser válido usar violencia?
    - Defensa personal
    - Darse a respetar
    - Cobrar deudas
    - Conseguir algo
    - Ejemplos en que ellos hayan tenido que usar violencia

6. Pensando en sus amigas y conocidas, ¿qué formas de violencia sufren más las mujeres? ¿Qué formas de violencia sufren más los hombres?
    - Ejemplos
    - A qué lo atribuyen/quien tiene la culpa

7. Pensando en sus amigas y amigos, ¿cómo es la violencia en las escuelas?
    - Ejemplos
    - A qué lo atribuyen/quien tiene la culpa

8. ¿Y cómo es en las familias?

- Ejemplos
- A qué lo atribuyen/quien tiene la culpa

----------BREAK DE 10 MINUTOS----------

----------JUNTAR AMBOS GRUPOS----------

(ESTIRAMIENTOS)

III. JUSTIFICACIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA

9. Les voy a contar la historia de Rodrigo. Él tiene 17 años, es de muy bajos recursos y se salió de la prepa para trabajar y ayudarle a su mamá con el gasto. Como no conseguía trabajo, un vecino le propuso robar pertenencias de otras personas (bicicletas, bolsas, celulares) para revenderlas. ¿Qué les parece la propuesta del vecino?

10. Rodrigo decidió entrarle al negocio con el vecino porque les urgía el dinero a él y su mamá para pagar la renta. De todas estas personas, ¿a quiénes les parece que sería peor que asaltara?

Un empresario
Un obrero
Un político
Una trabajadora de edad avanzada

11. Rodrigo se volvió muy hábil asaltando, pudo cubrir los gastos de él y su mamá, y se dio a conocer, por lo que el líder de una banda criminal lo invitó a participar con ellos y le ofreció protección. ¿Le convendrá unirse?
    - Razones por las que sí
    - Razones por las que no

12. Rodrigo aceptó unirse y su primera tarea fue secuestrar a un empresario. Al cabo de un tiempo, como no estaban pagando el secuestro, el líder de la banda le pidió a Rodrigo que asesinara al empresario. Rodrigo lo hizo y la policía lo agarró. Del 1 al 7, ¿qué tan culpable creen que es Rodrigo de este crimen?

13. ¿Quiénes más son responsables de este crimen?

El empresario
El líder de la pandilla
La mamá de Rodrigo

La policía
La sociedad
El gobierno

14. ¿Su percepción sobre la culpa de Rodrigo en esta historia cambiaría si su familia tuviera dinero? ¿Por qué?

15. ¿Quién tiene la culpa de que haya jóvenes que se involucren con el crimen?
    - Los jóvenes
    - Familia
    - Gobierno
    - Sociedad (indaguen qué entienden por sociedad)
    - Organizaciones criminales

16. ¿Qué propondrían para evitar que más jóvenes se involucren con el crimen o que se sumen a bandas?

IV. PERCEPCIÓN SOBRE LA ORGANIZACIÓN

17. ¿Por qué decidieron participar con (nombre de la organización)?

18. ¿En qué les ha ayudado (nombre de la organización) en su vida personal? ¿Qué han aprendido?
    - relaciones familiares
    - capacitación para el trabajo
    - manejo de emociones
    - uso de sustancias
    - poner en práctica

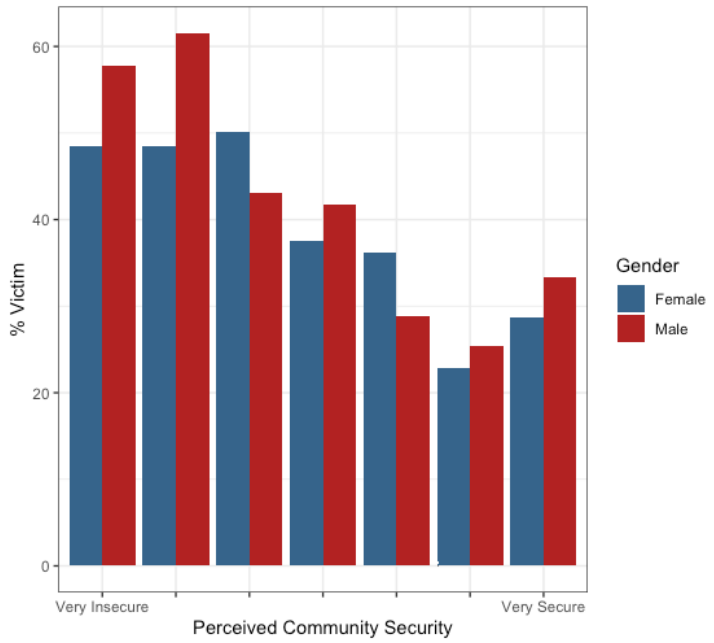
19. ¿Qué le cambiarían al programa? ¿Cómo lo mejorarían?

20. ¿Creen que este programa puede servir para prevenir la violencia en jóvenes?

Section D. Correlations Between Survey Violence Strata and Sociodemographic and Normalization Variables

The figures in this section show correlations between important survey variables and our violence strata. We start by analyzing correlations between our individual-level variables (as measured by the survey), and then we present correlations between our strata variables and individual-level victimization, as well as with our normalization variables. Overall, correlations seem to suggest that normalization of violence is more likely to be influenced by specific individual-level experiences and not so much by recent community-level violence. Results in this section should be interpreted with caution. Simple correlations do not provide us with causal conclusions and do not control for possible other confounding factors or omitted variables. Relationships in this section should only be interpreted as associations without considering controls. **Figure 1** presents the percent victimization, separated by gender and perceived community security, showing that individual victimization is correlated with perceived security level.

Figure 1. Percent of victimization, by gender and perceived community security



The following figures show whether our individual-level variables are correlated with municipal strata. **Figure 2** presents correlations between municipal-level strata elements (homicide rate, perceived security, and victimization) and individual-level victimization across a variety of crimes, showing little correlation across elements. However, this figure demonstrates some level of correlation between victimization across crimes. Being hurt by a weapon ("shot") is correlated with attempted homicide at the 0.36 level. Further, experiencing robbery and car robbery are correlated at the 0.21 level.

Figure 2. Correlations between municipal-level strata elements and individual-level victimization across different crimes

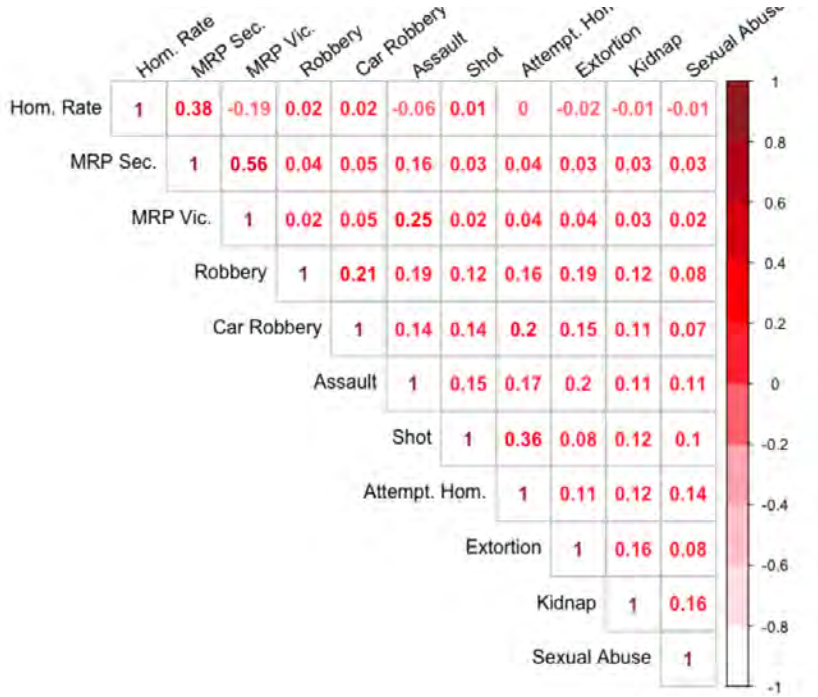
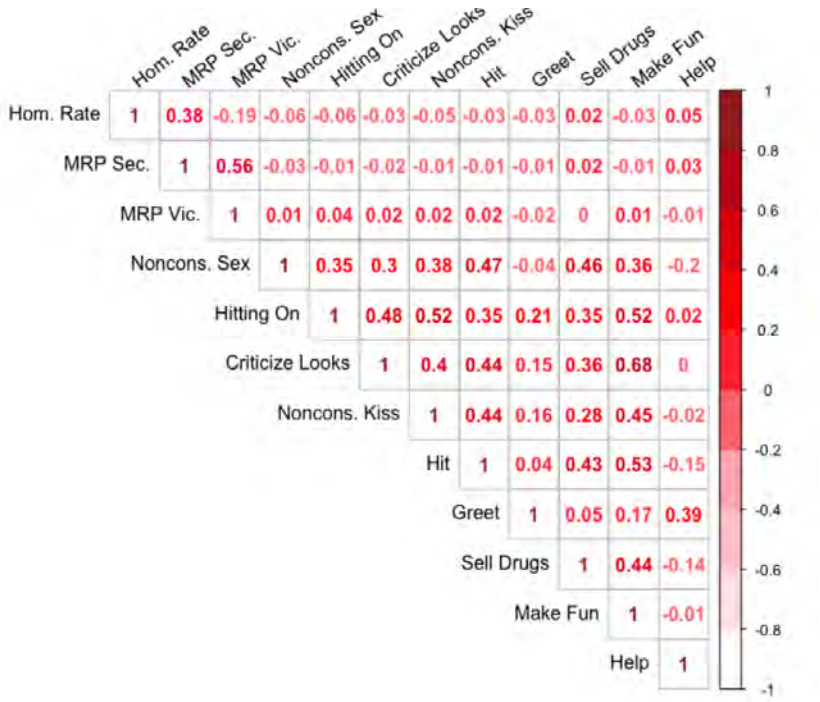


Figure 3 demonstrates correlation between municipal-level strata components and individual-level normalization of violence across certain acts. Strata levels are not highly correlated with normalization of violence across elements. However, there are strong correlations between various normalization-of-violence elements. Notably, responses regarding nonconsensual sex and hitting an individual are correlated at the 0.47 level, hitting on an individual and nonconsensual kissing at the 0.52 level, and criticizing looks and making fun of an individual at the 0.68 level.

Figure 3. Correlations between municipal-level strata components and individual-level normalization of violence across different acts



It is important to keep in mind that these correlations are not causal findings and should not be interpreted as such. The correlations show that areas with high levels of violence do not necessarily correlate with higher victimization or normalization of violence. However, the analysis does show correlations between victimization and perceived security and, most importantly, between victimization across crimes and between various normalization-of-violence elements. Together with the findings above, the correlations seem to suggest that normalization of violence is more likely to be influenced by specific individual-level experiences and not so much by recent community-level violence. This is beyond the scope of our analysis, but more fine-grained data on individual exposure to different forms of violence over time would improve our understanding of the mechanisms that generate a normalization of acts of violence.

Section E. Additional Results on Program Participation and Violence Perceptions

In **Table 1**, we observe that participation in prevention programs is negatively correlated with risk perceptions about gang belonging. As expected, past participation in violence prevention programs is associated with a decrease in the perception that gang membership is fun. Participation in drug prevention programs is associated with an increase in the perception that gangs increase one's security and are fun, and past participation in arts and culture groups is associated with a decrease in the perception that gang membership will lead to imprisonment. Notably, this is not a causal relationship; it is possible that those who participate in drug prevention programs are more likely to hold these views in the first place.

Table 1. Gang Risk Factors and Past Program Participation

Gang Risk Factors and Past Program Participation

	Dependent variable:				
	Secure	Fun	Death	Injured	Prison
Vio. Preven.	0.080	0.317*	0.059	0.003	0.035
	(0.163)	(0.179)	(0.153)	(0.172)	(0.147)
Drugs Preven.	−0.281**	−0.429***	0.210	0.030	0.0003
	(0.140)	(0.150)	(0.134)	(0.149)	(0.132)
Youth Employ.	−0.193	−0.033	0.137	0.186	−0.167
	(0.130)	(0.144)	(0.128)	(0.140)	(0.125)
Sports	−0.055	−0.004	−0.121	−0.076	−0.110
	(0.098)	(0.108)	(0.095)	(0.104)	(0.090)
Community Org.	−0.030	−0.190	−0.058	0.032	0.125
	(0.119)	(0.129)	(0.116)	(0.127)	(0.109)
Art and Culture	−0.026	−0.146	−0.019	0.019	0.300***
	(0.115)	(0.125)	(0.113)	(0.123)	(0.103)
SES	0.067	0.145	−0.238***	−0.366***	0.064
	(0.088)	(0.096)	(0.084)	(0.089)	(0.083)
Male	−0.044	−0.438***	0.096	0.041	−0.055
	(0.089)	(0.099)	(0.086)	(0.094)	(0.082)
Age	0.013	0.022*	−0.037***	−0.030***	−0.006
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Edu	0.030	0.021	−0.086***	−0.101***	0.084***
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Observations	2,812	2,798	2,823	2,823	2,817

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Section F. Additional Experimental Results

Table 1 examines the results for individual blame attribution parsing apart the sample by perceived insecurity level—high vs. low. If the perpetrator is from the middle class, he is more to blame in both high- and low-perceived-insecurity areas. In low-perceived-insecurity areas, as the crime increases in severity, the individual is more to blame, and while this estimator has the opposite sign in high-perceived-insecurity areas, it is not significant. In both types of community, the perpetrator is more to blame if he is a gang leader.

Table 1. Blame for Individual by Perceived Security Level

Blame for Individual: Divided by Community MRP Security Level

	Dependent variable:	
	High Insecurity	Low Insecurity
Class: Middle	0.205^{**}	0.223^{***}
	(0.083)	(0.081)
Crime Severity	-0.047	0.092^{**}
	(0.037)	(0.036)
Victim: Worker	0.161	-0.009
	(0.102)	(0.100)
Local Politician	-0.037	-0.042
	(0.101)	(0.098)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.443^{***}	0.331^{***}
	(0.083)	(0.081)
Constant	4.986^{***}	4.888^{***}
	(0.131)	(0.126)
Observations	1,425	1,439
R^2	0.027	0.023
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.019
Residual Std. Error	1.563 (df = 1419)	1.528 (df = 1433)
F Statistic	7.925^{***} (df = 5; 1419)	6.634^{***} (df = 5; 1433)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2 examines the results for individual blame attribution parsing apart the sample by victimization level—high vs. low. If the perpetrator is from the middle class, he is more to blame in both high- and low-victimization areas. Again, In low-victimization areas, as the crime increases in severity, the individual is more to blame, but the effect is not significant for high-victimization areas. Notably, in high-victimization areas, if the victim is a worker vs. a businessman, the individual is more to blame. In both types of community, if the perpetrator is a leader of a gang vs. a follower, he is more to blame.

Table 2. Blame for the Individual by Victimization Level

Blame for Individual: Divided by Community MRP Victimization Level

	Dependent variable:	
	High Vic.	Low Vic.
Class: Middle	0.174**	0.254***
	(0.078)	(0.085)
Crime Severity	−0.031	0.084**
	(0.035)	(0.038)
Victim: Worker	0.224**	−0.115
	(0.095)	(0.107)
Local Politician	−0.081	−0.010
	(0.097)	(0.102)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.355***	0.428***
	(0.078)	(0.085)
Constant	5.062***	4.798***
	(0.123)	(0.134)
Observations	1,466	1,398
R^2	0.024	0.029
Adjusted R^2	0.021	0.026
Residual Std. Error	1.499 (df = 1460)	1.593 (df = 1392)
F Statistic	7.250*** (df = 5; 1460)	8.405*** (df = 5; 1392)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3 presents the results for individual blame attribution breaking the sample by respondent SES, and **Table 4** presents the results for individual blame attribution breaking the sample by respondent gender. Both SES groups blame the individual more if he is of middle vs. lower class. Both men and women blame the individual more if he is of the middle class as compared to the lower class. Crime severity does not matter in any of these samples, and in every case, if the perpetrator is a gang leader he is more to blame than if he were following orders. For men, if the victim is a local politician, the perpetrator is more to blame.

Table 3. Blame for Individual by Respondent SES

Blame for Individual: Divided by Respondent SES

	Dependent variable:	
	High SES	Low SES
Class: Middle	0.273***	0.168**
	(0.079)	(0.084)
Crime Severity	0.038	0.007
	(0.035)	(0.037)
Victim: Worker	0.012	0.109
	(0.097)	(0.103)
Local Politician	−0.153	0.058
	(0.097)	(0.102)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.411***	0.364***
	(0.079)	(0.084)
Constant	5.034***	4.856***
	(0.124)	(0.132)
Observations	1,397	1,467
R^2	0.032	0.016
Adjusted R^2	0.029	0.012
Residual Std. Error	1.478 (df = 1391)	1.606 (df = 1461)
F Statistic	9.216*** (df = 5; 1391)	4.641*** (df = 5; 1461)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4. Blame for Individual by Respondent Gender

Blame for Individual: Divided by Respondent Gender

	Dependent variable:	
	Male	Female
Class: Middle	0.177**	0.241***
	(0.082)	(0.081)
Crime Severity	0.053	−0.005
	(0.036)	(0.036)
Victim: Worker	0.054	0.090
	(0.101)	(0.100)
Local Politician	−0.175*	0.082
	(0.100)	(0.099)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.492***	0.296***
	(0.082)	(0.081)
Constant	4.966***	4.915***
	(0.129)	(0.128)
Observations	1,314	1,550
R^2	0.036	0.015
Adjusted R^2	0.033	0.012
Residual Std. Error	1.488 (df = 1308)	1.593 (df = 1544)
F Statistic	9.897*** (df = 5; 1308)	4.682*** (df = 5; 1544)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 5 presents the results for blame attribution to the individual vs. the government and society parsing out the sample by perceived security level; it shows very similar results to the model parsing apart the sample by homicide level.

Table 5. Blame for Individual vs. Government + Society by Perceived Security Level

Blame for Individual vs. Gov/Society: Divided by Community MRP Security Level

	Dependent variable:	
	High Insecurity	Low Insecurity
Class: Middle	0.029***	0.014
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Crime Severity	−0.006	0.007*
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Victim: Worker	0.015	0.006
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Local Politician	−0.012	−0.010
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.057***	0.049***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Constant	0.517***	0.514***
	(0.015)	(0.015)
Observations	1,414	1,435
R^2	0.034	0.023
Adjusted R^2	0.031	0.019
Residual Std. Error	0.183 (df = 1408)	0.184 (df = 1429)
F Statistic	9.956*** (df = 5; 1408)	6.616*** (df = 5; 1429)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 6 presents the results for blame attribution to the individual vs. the government and society dividing the sample by victimization level of the areas from where the respondents come, with slightly different results from other examinations of community security contexts. It is those in low-victimization areas who attribute more blame to the individuals if they come from the middle class. Crime severity has a significant and divergent effect—those in high-victimization communities attribute more blame to the government and society for more severe crimes, while those in low-victimization communities attribute more blame to the individual for more severe crimes. Further, if the victim is a worker vs. a businessman, in high-victimization areas, more

blame is attributed to the individual. In both cases, if the perpetrator is a gang leader, more blame is attributed to the individual.

Table 6. Blame for Individual vs. Government + Society by Victimization Level

Blame for Individual vs. Gov/Society: Divided by Community MRP Victimization Level

	Dependent variable:	
	High Vic.	Low Vic.
Class: Middle	0.015	0.028***
	(0.009)	(0.010)
Crime Severity	−0.007*	0.009**
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Victim: Worker	0.025**	−0.008
	(0.011)	(0.013)
Local Politician	−0.017	−0.006
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.053***	0.054***
	(0.009)	(0.010)
Constant	0.534***	0.496***
	(0.015)	(0.016)
Observations	1,461	1,388
R^2	0.032	0.030
Adjusted R^2	0.029	0.026
Residual Std. Error	0.180 (df = 1455)	0.187 (df = 1382)
F Statistic	9.756*** (df = 5; 1455)	8.504*** (df = 5; 1382)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 7 examines differences by gender. Both genders attribute more blame to the individual if the perpetrator is of the middle class as compared to the lower class. Men attribute more blame to government and society if the victim is a local politician; women do not. Both attribute more blame to the individual if the perpetrator is a gang leader.

Table 7. Blame for Individual vs. Government + Society by Gender

Blame for Individual vs. Gov/Society: Divided by Respondent Gender

	Dependent variable:	
	Male	Female
Class: Middle	0.017*	0.023**
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Crime Severity	0.005	−0.004
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Victim: Worker	0.007	0.014
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Local Politician	−0.032***	0.007
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.051***	0.054***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Constant	0.528***	0.507***
	(0.015)	(0.015)
Observations	1,307	1,542
R^2	0.034	0.025
Adjusted R^2	0.030	0.022
Residual Std. Error	0.177 (df = 1301)	0.189 (df = 1536)
F Statistic	9.039*** (df = 5; 1301)	7.933*** (df = 5; 1536)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8 examines the differences by respondent SES. Those of high SES attribute more blame to the individual if he is of the middle vs. the lower class; no results exist for those of low SES.

Crime severity and victim identity are not significant factors affecting blame for either group. For both groups, if the perpetrator is a gang leader, more blame is attributed to the individual.

Table 8. Blame for Individual vs. Government + Society by Respondent SES

Blame for Individual vs. Gov/Society: Divided by Respondent SES

	Dependent variable:	
	High SES	Low SES
Class: Middle	0.031***	0.014
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Crime Severity	0.0003	0.0003
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Victim: Worker	0.011	0.007
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Local Politician	−0.013	−0.010
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Perpetrator: Gang Leader	0.049***	0.056***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Constant	0.531***	0.503***
	(0.015)	(0.015)
Observations	1,394	1,455
R^2	0.030	0.025
Adjusted R^2	0.026	0.021
Residual Std. Error	0.180 (df = 1388)	0.186 (df = 1449)
F Statistic	8.500*** (df = 5; 1388)	7.282*** (df = 5; 1449)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Section G. Percentage of Youth Who Have Been Victims of Domestic Verbal and Physical Abuse

The table below suggests that reports of abuse are more common among lower-SES respondents.

Domestic Verbal Abuse by SES Status

SES Level	Abuse Level	Percentage
Low	Common	22.30
Low	Not Common	77.70
Med. Low	Common	22.55
Med. Low	Not Common	77.45
Med. High	Common	21.30
Med. High	Not Common	78.70
High	Common	17.89
High	Not Common	82.11

Domestic Physical Abuse by SES Status

SES Level	Abuse Level	Percentage
Low	Common	16.97
Low	Not Common	83.03
Med. Low	Common	13.27
Med. Low	Not Common	86.73
Med. High	Common	14.15
Med. High	Not Common	85.85
High	Common	11.09
High	Not Common	88.91