

Inequality, Social Cohesion and Urban Violence



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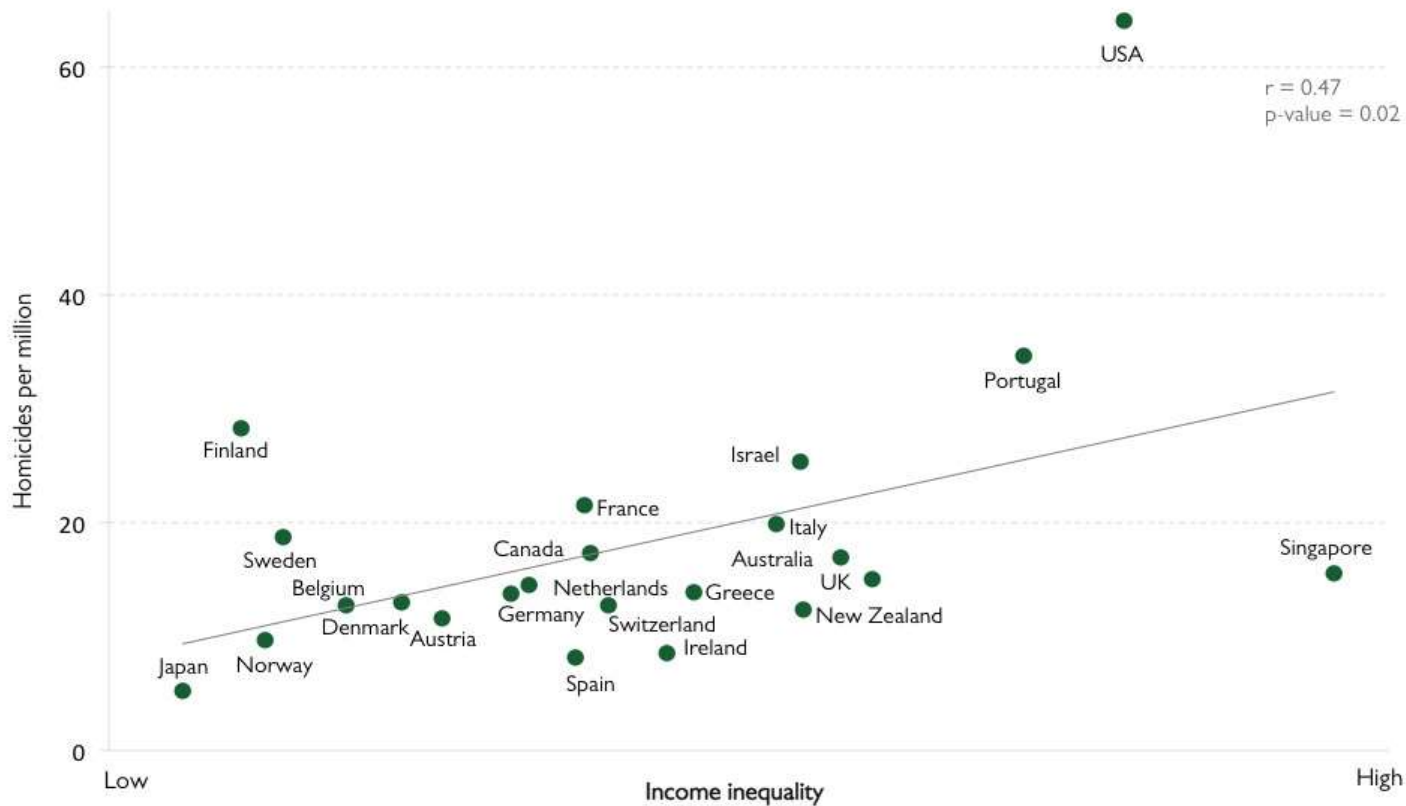
Inequality and Violence:

- Industry Standard - income inequality (Gini) has significant and positive effect on incidence of violent crime (Fajnzylber et al 2002)
- Study Mexico municipalities with less inequality lower rates crime, only weak relation to level poverty (World Bank 2014)
- Grievance – loss ‘respect’ (Gilligan 2001), high inequality creates identifiable targets of crime and violence, high return threshold (Ehrlich 1973; Soares 2002).
- Deprivation theory - relative deprivation of poor causes frustration and anger that prompts violent crime, including within own communities (predation) (Hagan & Peterson, 1995).
- Spirit Level – inequality associated multiple ‘bads’, including ill-health, child well-being, school drop-out, domestic violence, drug use (Wilkinson & Pickett 2009)
- Weakens institutions – lower levels trust in high inequality societies, including in institutions (Piketty: “extreme inequality makes it impossible to have proper working of democratic institutions”).



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Homicide rates are higher in more unequal rich countries



Source: Wilkinson & Pickett, *The Spirit Level* (2009)

THE EQUALITY TRUST

Urban Inequality and Violence:

- Urban inequality increased past 20 years, now worse – in major 50 cities – than before 1929.
- Economic crises deepened inequality– 18 of 50 cities rich much richer since 2007 and poor poorer. Racial inequality worse (Sampson 2013).
- Inequality higher in cities than countries generally because of what cities do (attract skills, agglomerate opportunities, strengthen networks, have close-proximity markets...).
- Inequality is highest in large cities because of what they do (make rich richer, poor relatively poorer).
- Inequality is highest in high productivity cities (which also tend to be largest cities).
- Inequality may be higher in high density cities (land markets, real estate costs), also less happy in these cities (Luttmer 2005; Glaeser 2012).

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GOVERNO DO
Rio de
Janeiro

SECRETARIA DE
SEGURANÇA



Série histórica da taxa de letalidade violenta por 100 mil habitantes
estado do Rio de Janeiro



Fonte: Elaborado por ISP com base em informações da PCERJ e do IBGE



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Social Cohesion, Hospitality and *Convivência*:

Social Cohesion - long held argument that social cohesion is weak in cities and especially where inequality and social heterogeneity are high.

Cohesion reflects (tested) social relationships, from trust, reciprocity, friendship and sense of belonging (recognition) at neighbourhood scale.

Social cohesion more ambiguous relation with violence; conflicts can enhance resilience (steeling) and intra-community bonding, but also break down social relations.

Hospitality - operates as a sociological code to mediate the encounter between locals and the culturally marked stranger (Pitt-Rivers 2012)

In our study, concept of 'hospitality' used to examine how people understand 'living together' under conditions of uncertainty.

In convivial settings, hospitality to strangers works to express living with differences (inequalities) and reinforce social cohesion – strangers are not threatening.



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Ethnography of Vidigal:

Faded division between favela and asfalto: influx hostels, AirBnb, bars, boutique hotels, culinary & art schools, improved infrastructure.

One resident reflected: “All this has turned inside-out. This is the most sought-after place in the city right now.”

Violence declined – traffickers still present but less visible and active.

Presence (perceived) of new residents as *remoção branca*, rumours of rising prices.

Disquiet at changing social norms to public behaviour - dissolution of community ties and loss social cohesion.

Anxieties that moral economy favela breaking down - expectation that one person's gain is benefit to all undermined - adding rooms for rent, commercialising space, criticised as ‘cashing in’ and not ‘neighbourly’.

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Convivência:

Frequently entered conversations as a means to express the anxiety that favela had changed, and that in 'getting better' (less excluded, less violent, more entrepreneurially dynamic) it was getting worse.

Convivência used as signal to a politics of identity and resistance to social change.

“Are you against *convivência*?” the journalist asked Márcia. “In some way,.... I’m against appropriation. To be out strolling with my son and be photographed. I’m not a monkey.”

To Márcia convivência implied a performance to ‘living together’ that masked economic and social (racial) inequalities. Now, Márcia uses term to express anxiety. “And I am against the rising real-estate prices,” she continued. “How does that make it for those who rent? ... The favela is for favelados”.

“Any group can be a community. It has no face. Favela means something. A kind of place. History. It is a pretty word. It’s in songs. And community? What’s that? It sounds like the euphemism of saying ‘moreno’ instead of black.”

Convivência asserts an autonomy, blackness and poverty, the right to know your neighbours: as a graffiti put it *Gentrificação não é Convivência*

As expressed at a community meeting, “You know that famous book about Rio *Cidade Partida*? Well, now what we have is the *favela partida*.”

Márcia later explained in a private conversation: “We're not worried with relation between favela and ‘asphalt’. We are concerned with the occupation of the favela *by* the asphalt,... I don't know anymore if someone is a resident or not, so it is hard to relate to people”

To Márcia the more equal and less violence favela-city had made the favela a space of strangers.

At risk, is the history and identity of the place – produced through inequality - and, including its association with violence.

As one woman commented about growing heterogeneity of the favela: “Sometimes I wish the traffickers would come back so they'd [newcomers] leave here.”

Challenges & Future Research:

Ethnographic study of urban inequality and violence

To unpack the relation between inequality and violence we need to define what this means at different (urban) scales – fine-grain analysis to complement cross-sectional.

Also need to appreciate what reducing inequality at one scale, and violence, might mean to people's sense of place and identity, and what other social, economic and cultural processes these changes might provoke.

Finally, Violences – understanding peoples' relations with violence beyond homicide.



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Commodification of Poverty &
Violence in the Americas:
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