A member of Amigos dos Amigos poses with his gun in Rocinha,
Rio de Janeiro, 2007. © Q. Sakamaki/Redux

Gangs, Groups, and Guns
AN OVERVIEW

3

INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, every day, numerous actors engage in acts of violence. These range from clashes on traditional war battlefields to limited engagements in urban environments, from disputes over land to struggles over access to natural resources such as diamonds, from armed robbery to murder, from rape to domestic violence. Some of these acts are organized, premeditated, or systematic, while others are simply crimes of opportunity.

Violence—both in crime and in conflict—claims an estimated 740,000 lives each year (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 1). The vast majority of these deaths (540,000) result from direct experience of violence, while some 200,000 individuals in conflict zones die from indirect causes such as malnutrition and preventable disease (pp. 2, 32). An average of at least 52,000 people died each year between 2004 and 2007 in armed conflicts (p. 9). This number is likely to be a low estimate. Many relevant studies include conflicts only if they are 'state-based', meaning that the government is one party to the conflict (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 12; HSRP, 2007, p. 23). Yet Africa has witnessed significantly more non-state than state-based conflicts, suggesting that this estimate of conflict deaths represents only a partial count (HSRP, 2007, pp. 23–24).

Current information does not provide sufficient detail to delineate the percentages of violence and death attributable to individuals, groups, and states. States and armed groups are probably responsible for the majority of conflict-related deaths. It is much more difficult to determine the perpetrators of non-conflict violence. An estimated 490,000 non-conflict violent deaths occurred in 2004 (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 67); this figure represents a low estimate in view of a range of factors that contribute to underreporting of homicides (pp. 68–70). In addition, this estimate does not distinguish between deaths caused by individuals and those caused by groups. In some countries efforts are made to identify deaths that result from gang violence, for example, but this remains an extremely difficult task.[1] It is also likely that this overall homicide figure undercounts the deaths resulting from gang and other armed group activity in countries that lack strong death reporting mechanisms, where deaths may occur far from city centres, and where political actors have an interest in concealing the cause of death.

Previous editions of the *Small Arms Survey* have focused on the role of small arms in conflict and crime; the consequences of small arms misuse on development, human rights, and humanitarian activities; and the prevalence of urban armed violence and insecurity. This thematic section concentrates on perpetrators of violence, including a wide range of armed groups, such as gangs. It shifts the focus from location, acts, and impacts to the actors themselves, covering a broad range of groups involved in violence.

Thousands of non-state groups contribute to the global burden of armed violence. Some groups are widely known: the Mara Salvatrucha (commonly known as MS-13) in the United States and Central America, the Taliban in Afghanistan, the FARC in Colombia, the terrorist network al Qaeda, and the 'janjaweed' in Sudan, among many others

that appear in the headlines on a daily basis. Yet these are just the tip of the iceberg. No exact figures exist, but recent estimates suggest there are at least 20,000 gangs with more than 1,000,000 gang members in the United States alone (NGIC, 2009, p. 6), and an estimated 2–10 million gang members around the globe.[2] Organizations that monitor non-state armed groups engaged in organized violence list more than 1,600 around the world (Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe, 2009; IISS, 2009, pp. 465–74; UCDP, 2009).

These groups differ tremendously in their composition, activities, and roles in society. Some armed groups pose a challenge to law and order by representing a significant source of violence, while others threaten to depose the government directly. In other cases, they offer a form of security to communities. In still others they seek to operate under the radar of the law and without directly challenging the state. Whatever their approach, the presence of armed groups raises concerns about violence and other negative social, economic, and political impacts resulting from their activities.

Numerous groups with wide-ranging characteristics fall under the heading of 'armed group'.

In broad terms, the chapters of this thematic section divide along two lines: gangs and (other) armed groups. Categorized by activity, the former consists of those involved in primarily criminal behaviour, while the latter includes mainly those engaged in conflict (either fighting with the government or in opposition to it). Gangs tend to operate very locally, perhaps within a city, while armed groups often operate across larger areas. Gang activities are often directed at economic pursuits, gang (and sometimes community) security, and providing a familial network for members. Armed groups often pursue political, military, and security objectives. These are broad generalizations; additional defining characteristics are introduced below, and not all gangs or armed groups easily fit into a single model.

Although broad generalizations can be useful in trying to separate the thousands of gangs and armed groups into manageable categories, policy-makers need to be wary of making quick conclusions based on a general label: gang or armed group. This in itself provides little information upon which to act. Instead, policy-makers should aim to understand the broad nature and characteristics of these gangs and armed groups while also identifying the features specific to the given gang or armed group of interest. Only by developing a coherent and detailed picture of the particular gang (or armed group)—who they are, whom they represent, their origins, how they function, what they aim to achieve, and why members join—can policy-makers develop strategies to address the factors that enable and encourage their organization and mobilization and reduce their negative impacts on society.

This overview provides a framework for the thematic section that follows. It highlights important definitional issues: the wide variance in types of gangs and armed groups; and the blurry distinction between these two broad categories of armed groups (and the many sub-groups that fall within each). It then touches on the main findings arising from the chapters. Finally, it highlights some common themes arising in the chapters.

DEFINING ARMED GROUPS

What is an armed group? On the surface, the answer might seem obvious. At its most basic level, an armed group is a distinct collective of individuals who possess firearms. Yet this definition does not provide much assistance in distinguishing different armed groups. For example, it could include state security forces, such as the police and military, or state-sponsored security forces such as paramilitaries and militias. It could also include a wide range of other groups, from the criminal to the legal, from gangs and criminal organizations to national hunting associations. Numerous groups with wide-ranging characteristics fall under the heading of 'armed group'.[3]

While it is important to use common definitions for comparisons across contexts, there is no general agreement on a single definition of an armed group[4] or gang.[5] The divergence of views is captured in the chapters that follow. Rather than impose a single definition on contributing authors, they have been given scope to define the groups studied as best suits the phenomena described in each chapter. This approach underscores both the importance of definitions as well as the wide range of armed groups, rendering universal definitions impossible.

It may be more useful to think about armed groups as falling along a continuum that captures the relationship of the group to the government, the level of organization of the group, and the capacity of the group to perpetrate wide-scale violence (PRO-GOVERNMENT, see Figure 10.1). The use of a continuum underscores, and tries to address, the difficulty of providing clear definitions for commonly used group labels (such as militias, rebels, or warlords), the challenges involved in ranking different types of groups (such as according to levels of violence or organization), and the fact that particular armed groups may move across the spectrum over time (such as by becoming more or less violent, changing their level of organization, or shifting from supporting the government to opposing it).

Armed groups go by many names. Positive labels, indicating that the group has some legitimacy in taking up arms, include: revolutionaries, liberation movements, freedom fighters, militias, community volunteer organizations, and community defence forces. More negative labels, hinting at the illegitimacy or illegality of the group, include: terrorists, rebels, insurgents, criminals, gangs, bandits, and warlords.[6] Since the same group can be called both a

A Congolese Army soldier stands next to the charred body of an alleged local Mai-Mai militia fighter, November 2008. © Roberto Schmidt/AFP

'liberation movement' and a 'terrorist group', labels may say more about who applies them than about the group itself (Bhatia, 2005).

Applying broad labels does little to clarify. Labels are political and can be used to misdirect. For example, the 'terrorist' label has become a useful tool for any government to designate a troublesome group and gain domestic and international support for suppressing it. 'Terrorist' also deflects attention from the goals, concerns, and membership of a group to its tactics (such as suicide bombing). Similarly, militias and civil defence forces tend to present themselves as 'self-defence organizations', creating a perception of legitimacy, whether earned or not. The use of the self-defence label can make it easier for some governments to arm such groups and assign them tasks normally performed by state security forces (PRO-GOVERNMENT).

Labels aside, there are distinct ways in which armed groups differ from one another and from gangs. Acknowledging such heterogeneity is important in order both to understand the groups of interest and to design and implement effective strategies to reduce their ability to violently challenge the state as well as their harmful effects on society. The following characteristics are relevant.

Labels are political and can be used to misdirect.

Relationship to the state. Some groups operate in opposition to the government, others work with either tacit or overt support from government leaders, and many simply seek to remain under the radar of law enforcement in order to pursue their economic activities (PRO-GOVERNMENT). Despite some recent efforts to portray US gangs as a challenge to the state akin to a modern insurgency (Manwaring, 2005; 2007; 2009), most gangs never reach the level of security threat this implies—nor is toppling the state generally a gang objective. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances some gangs can pose a clear threat to the ability of the government to effectively impose law and order.

Relationship to the community. In some cases gangs and armed groups are protectors rather than predators, at least from the point of view of the community suffering from insecurity and violence. In such areas, the armed group may be the only source of security because state forces cannot or will not provide such services. In other cases, armed groups are a direct threat to community security, waging war and perpetrating violence against civilians. Yet sometimes the protector is also the predator. In such cases, an armed group may provide security for the community as a whole, while posing a threat to community members who fail to provide support.

Relationship to the legal economy. Gangs and armed groups engage in both legal and illegal economic activities. Some may be primarily economic actors, driven by profits, and using violence as a means to maintain their competitive edge (such as organized crime or drug gangs). Some armed groups may be primarily political actors who use illicit economic activities to fund their military operations. Gangs and armed groups that function primarily as security actors fund themselves through economic activities and in some cases taxes on (or 'donations' from) community members. Many gangs and armed groups engage in economic crime (such as theft or armed robbery), activities in the illicit economy (such as drugs, prostitution, and money laundering), or sectors of the legal economy that have fallen outside of government control (such as natural resource trade in conflict zones).

Use of violence. Whether violence is perpetrated by a gang, a militia, or a rebel group, innocent civilians are often killed and injured. Unfortunately, in many cases, the available evidence precludes a determination of intended target and measurement of impact. However, trends in existing data do suggest that gang violence tends to occur between and within gangs. It is, in other words, mainly directed at gang members, rather than non-gang members (GANG

VIOLENCE; Shelden, Tracy, and Brown, 2004, p. 105). By contrast, over the past few decades most non-state armed groups fighting civil wars have targeted mainly non-combatants, with civilians bearing an enormous share of the burden of war.[7]

Territory and reach. Gangs and armed groups exhibit different patterns of territorial control and operation. Gangs, for the most part, tend to operate locally.[8] By contrast, terrorist organizations that might operate locally have, in some instances, established far-reaching international networks. In these situations controlling territory is far less important than the ability to move freely and operate in numerous territories undetected. In civil wars, rebel groups tend to operate in rural areas where government control is weak and use this lack of state presence to their advantage. From their rural bases, they can control local economies, launch hit-and-run attacks, and stage operations to displace the government.

GANGS, GROUPS, AND GUNS

The thematic section presents diverse chapters that draw on a range of methods and sources. While all chapters cover gangs or armed groups, or both, each has a specific focus, including: guns, gang violence, girls and gangs, gang interventions, codes of conduct, and pro-government groups. These topics are introduced briefly below.

Firearms

A common focus of any discussion of gangs and armed groups is their weapons. Yet gangs and armed groups possess a very small percentage (0.4 to 1.3 per cent) of circulating guns when compared to other actors, such as the military, law enforcement, and the broader civilian population (FIREARMS). The focus on guns partly results from a concern about use. Whereas military and law enforcement officers are usually seen as legitimate forces possessing guns for security purposes—and civilians are commonly granted the right to own guns for hunting, sport, and defensive purposes—gangs and armed groups are widely perceived as holding weapons to cause harm. Evidence suggests their impact is significant.

> Gangs and armed groups possess a very small percentage of circulating guns.

Exact estimates of the number of guns, and other weapons, held by gangs and armed groups are difficult to determine (FIREARMS). These actors use a range of weapons, from handguns and shotguns to assault rifles and even anti-aircraft guns. They have increasingly obtained, and used, more powerful small arms (FIREARMS). The crash of a military police helicopter from gang gunfire over the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro only two weeks after Rio won the bid to host the 2016 Olympics fuelled concerns over gang arsenals (Phillips, 2009). The implication is clear: a gang's firepower can be an important determinant of its ability to challenge the capacity of the state to enforce law and order in the gang-controlled area.

Gang violence

As the chapter on gang violence reveals, gang members are more violent than non-gang members. Gang members are the most common victims of gang violence. Gang homicide rates can be as much as 100 times greater than homicide rates for the broader population (GANG VIOLENCE). Yet the levels and intensity of gang violence vary across the globe, with the Americas at the top of the list for gang violence.

Gang members commonly use firearms in the United States and Latin America, but this seems to be an exception. Elsewhere across the globe the use of firearms is far less prevalent. In part this discrepancy is due to the more limited availability of firearms in many countries. It may also reflect differences in cultural norms about firearm use.

Although violence and criminal activity feature prominently in gang life throughout the world, most gang members spend much of their time engaging in typical, non-violent adolescent activities. In most cases, they spend far more time 'hanging out' than breaking the law (Klein and Maxson, 2006, p. 69). Gang members do not perpetrate the majority of crimes in most communities (Greene and Pranis, 2007, p. 61), but media portrayals obscure this fact. While the vast majority of gangs engage in some form of criminal activity, the crimes committed vary and they are not always violent in nature. Gang members rarely specialize in a particular type of crime (Klein and Maxson, 2006, pp. 73–74).

Prison gangs

The term 'gang' incorporates a wide range of groups. The first image that comes to mind in association with 'gang' is often a group of tattooed young men on the street. Yet a number of recognized types of gangs exist, including: street gangs, drug gangs, motorcycle gangs, skinheads,[9] and prison gangs.[10] Each type of gang has a set of defining characteristics. In reality gangs rarely fall neatly into any single category.

Prison gangs originally represented a distinct form of gang, largely removed from broader discussions of threats to the public.

Street kids from a gang in Kinshasa, June 2001. © Tim A. Hetherington/Panos Pictures

In many places, such as Brazil, El Salvador, South Africa, and the United States, prison gangs are increasingly demonstrating links between those living on the 'inside' and those operating on the 'outside' (PRISON). In some cases, prisons provide an organizing framework, a mechanism of cohesion, and even a 'university' for street gang members. It is no longer unusual to have gang leaders running the operations of a street gang from within a prison cell. The resulting criminal organizations are 'networked, resourceful, and highly resilient' (PRISON).

Girls and gangs

Historically, gangs and armed groups have been viewed as the domain of men, typically young men. As the chapter on girls suggests, there is reason to reconsider some long-standing assumptions about women and their roles in violence. Evidence reveals that girls and women play a more central role than originally thought (GIRLS). Although they join gangs and armed groups in far fewer numbers than men, some estimates of female gang membership range from 25 to 50 per cent of total members. Women and girls are less likely to engage in violent acts or to use firearms when they do engage in violent acts. In gangs, boys and men are more likely to experience gun violence, while their female counterparts are more likely to experience sexual abuse.

Female members of gangs and armed groups do act in gendered roles that emphasize taking care of men: they are mothers, girlfriends, cooks, war wives, sexual objects, and housekeepers. But they also perform roles that have traditionally fallen to men. In gangs, they may hide and transport drugs

Mara 18 members make their gang's handsign, Guatemala, 2003.
© Donna DeCesare

and weapons because they are less likely to be stopped by the police or military. They also engage in theft, graffiti, carjackings, drive-by shootings, and clashes with other gangs, in particular female members of other gangs. Women and girls have also fought on the front lines with rebel groups and joined the ranks of suicide bombers.

Gang interventions

For years, cities such as Chicago, Kingston, Los Angeles, and Rio de Janeiro have experienced relatively high levels of crime involving large numbers of gangs. In response, political leaders have supported dozens of interventions to reduce and prevent violence. Despite a proliferation of programming aimed at stemming the tide, and some success stories, strong evidence of what works remains limited (INTERVENTIONS). In part, this is the result of poor implementation and limited monitoring and evaluation of programmes. In other cases, it reflects the difficulty of measuring the success of any single violence reduction programme, such as keeping youths out of gangs, in reducing a city's crime rate. The programme may be successful in keeping numerous youths from joining gangs, but this may not result in an overall visible and measurable reduction in the crime rate. Moreover, given the numerous factors affecting rates of crime and violence, it is not usually possible to determine the impact of an intervention on specific crime trends, such as homicide rates.

What is known is that it is easier to prevent an individual from becoming a perpetrator than it is to rehabilitate offenders (Small Arms Survey, 2008, p. 296). Programmes that target people early in life tend to be more effective in reducing the likelihood that an individual will commit violence. Yet here, too, many factors at the levels of the individual, family, peer group, and community play a role (Small Arms Survey, 2008, pp. 254–55, 258–59; GANG VIOLENCE). The numerous risk factors that contribute to a heightened likelihood of violence underscore the need for multi-faceted intervention programmes that target not only the symptoms of violence but also the factors that increase the risks of violence (INTERVENTIONS).

In Ecuador, like in other parts of Latin America, violence is common in gang areas. Although no official figures exist, estimates of gang members in the country's largest city, Guayaquil, range upward to 65,000. Similarly, reliable data on crimes committed by gang members is rare, yet most communities associate gangs with violence and delinquency—a view encouraged by sensationalist media coverage. Ecuador's government has responded with a number of policies over two decades—policies that mainly adopt a criminal justice approach that emphasizes incarceration and rehabilitation. These efforts have proved largely ineffective in reducing the gang problem and associated violence (ECUADOR). They also failed to address the root causes of violence and gang formation.

SER PAZ, a local organization based in Guayaquil, where the level of gang violence is particularly high, has taken a different approach to gangs. SER PAZ has sought to employ Ecuadorean gangs' own organizational and control

Police officers guard two Mara Salvatrucha members, who were arrested during a police operation in Puerto de la Libertad, El Salvador, 27 October 2006. © Yuri Cortez/AFP

structures to convert them into more productive, even positive, social forces. This approach has empowered several gang members economically; they are now responsible for running a number of local, legitimate businesses. These achievements are encouraging, but without any systematic evaluation of the SER PAZ programmes, it is difficult to determine their exact impact on gang violence, and whether similar efforts could be successful elsewhere. Research in the United States, for example, has shown that initiatives that work with existing gang structures can increase gang solidarity and organizational capacity, making gangs stronger and more difficult to suppress if this becomes necessary (Klein and Maxson, 2006, pp. 196, 202–3).

No single policy response can address all types of gangs or other armed groups, or all types of violence in a community, city, or country. Governments tend to consider all armed groups as threats, rather than understanding their various roles in communities (such as providers of protection) and the conditions that give rise to armed groups. This often leads to policies that do not fit the targeted group or the specific context of violence. For example, there **No single policy** is a growing tendency to blame urban violence on gangs. The available evidence suggests that gang violence makes a **response can** disproportionate contribution to insecurity in some countries (GANG VIOLENCE), yet it is not known what percentage **address all types of** of violent incidents is perpetrated by gangs.[11] Different measures of so-called 'gang violence' lead to widely divergent **gangs or other** assessments of gang involvement. Strategies that call for a focus on 'gang violence' may not address all—or even **armed groups.** most—of the armed violence in a community.

Across the board there is a tendency to address non-state armed groups using heavy-handed, militarized responses. The first reaction is almost always to authorize police, the military, or other state-aligned armed actors to use force. Despite this tendency, there is little evidence that militarized strategies work. In fact, they may backfire and embolden groups. Heavy-handed approaches (such as Mano Dura in El Salvador) have not proven effective in reducing violence or in weakening gangs, but instead appear to have contributed to their solidification (PRISON). More nuanced strategies, based on an understanding of the group(s) in question and the context in which they operate, are clearly needed. There is some evidence of a shift in thinking. The focus on 'suppressive' criminal justice solutions has given way to a broader perspective on the problem and on potential solutions that incorporate prevention and treatment (INTERVENTIONS).

Engaging armed groups

Despite the atrocities committed in many of today's conflicts, rules do exist for the conduct of war, codified in law. International humanitarian and human rights law, as they pertain to armed conflict, although traditionally developed by and for states, are increasingly being applied to non-state entities. At present few mechanisms are in place to enforce such obligations, however (ENGAGEMENT).

Some non-state armed groups engaged in intrastate conflicts have developed codes of conduct to regulate group behaviour (ENGAGEMENT). These codes, intended as a guide for group action, cover areas such as the indiscriminate use of violence, including violence against civilians, the recruitment of child soldiers, and the protection of civilians during conflict. Additional opportunities exist for human rights and humanitarian groups to engage armed groups on humanitarian issues (ENGAGEMENT).

Pro-government groups

Non-state groups are perceived as dangerous, a threat to stability and in some cases a threat to the viability of a state. Yet there is also the other side of the coin: groups that operate under the direction, if not the immediate control, of

government and political leaders (PRO-GOVERNMENT). So-called pro-government non-state armed groups play an important role in state-directed violence. In some cases they provide security in areas where the government cannot operate effectively; in others, they wage war on behalf of the government or are supported by the government in their war campaigns. They have also been used by political leaders to obtain a variety of economic and political gains.

Despite the widespread use of such pro-government groups and the numerous negative impacts they have on local populations, more attention is focused on the role of anti-government non-state groups. In part this results from a bias in favour of the state and the legitimacy of state actors to use force to ensure security. It may also reflect the often murky links between a government and an armed group. In many cases, such links are intentionally kept opaque to reduce the accountability of government for atrocities committed by these groups.

Armed groups

The Sudanese civil war, which ended with a peace agreement in 2005, is often oversimplified as a North–South conflict. The reality was much more complex, and it remains so in the current 'post-conflict' environment. Although the agreement officially outlawed armed groups, many former fighters, communities, and youth groups remain armed and mobilized. Five years later, an intricate patchwork of armed groups is spread across Southern Sudan; many are ethnic groups with wide-ranging loyalties and objectives. Politicized tribal clashes are on the rise, resulting in thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. The threat of future armed violence involving
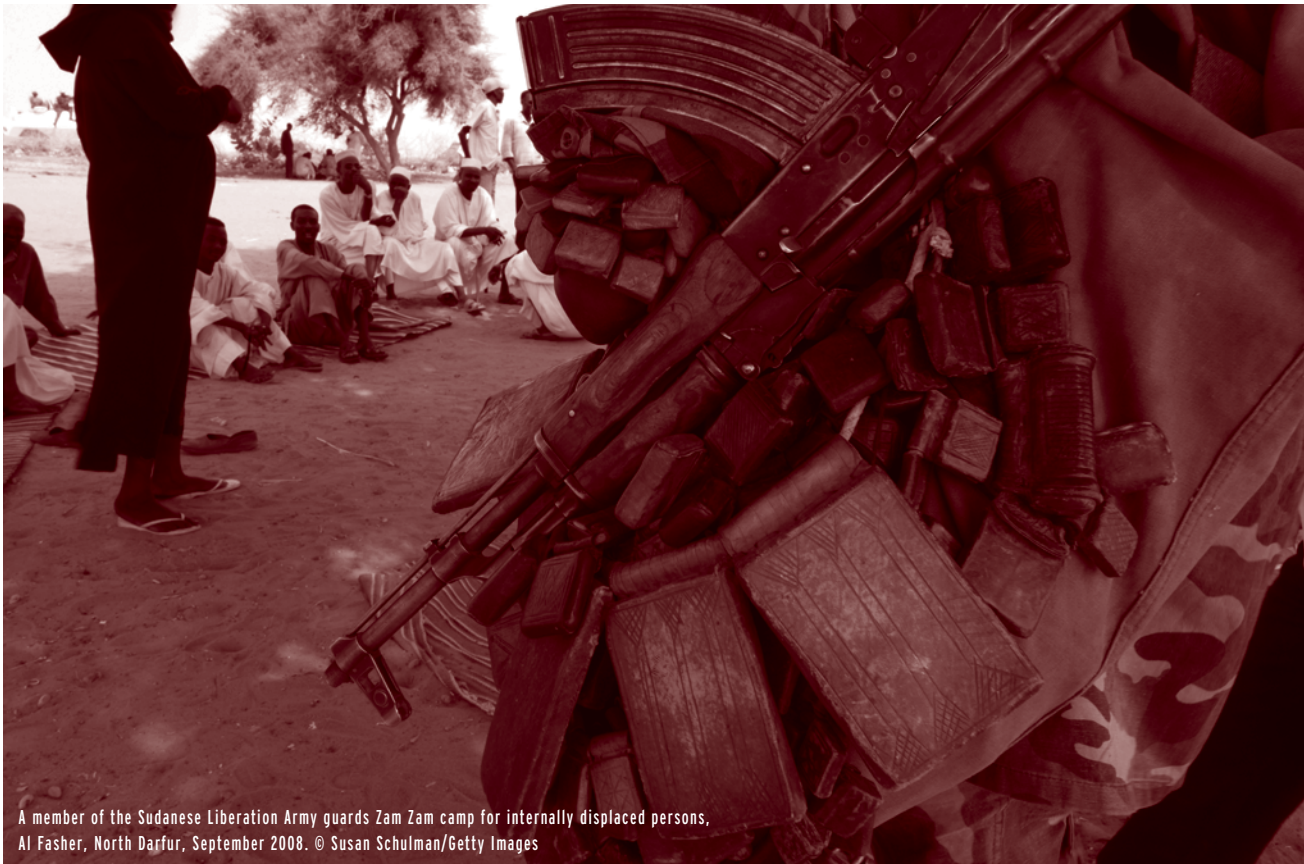
A member of the Sudanese Liberation Army guards Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons, Al Fasher, North Darfur, September 2008. © Susan Schulman/Getty Images

these groups is high—not just as a result of tensions between the parties to the civil war, but also resulting from long-standing intra-Southern grievances and their politicization (SUDAN).

CONCLUSION

The chapters in this section cover a number of topics pertaining to gangs and armed groups. Despite such diversity, several common themes emerge from the collection. In particular, the chapters call for a greater emphasis on measuring violence, obtaining better information about various gangs and groups, and conducting comparisons across groups and contexts in order to develop effective policies and programmes for reducing violence.

The importance of addressing gangs and armed groups. Members in gangs and armed groups make up a mere fraction of the broader population. Gangs and armed groups hold a very small percentage of the world's small arms—less than two per cent. Despite what could, on the surface, be considered inconsequential in terms of the
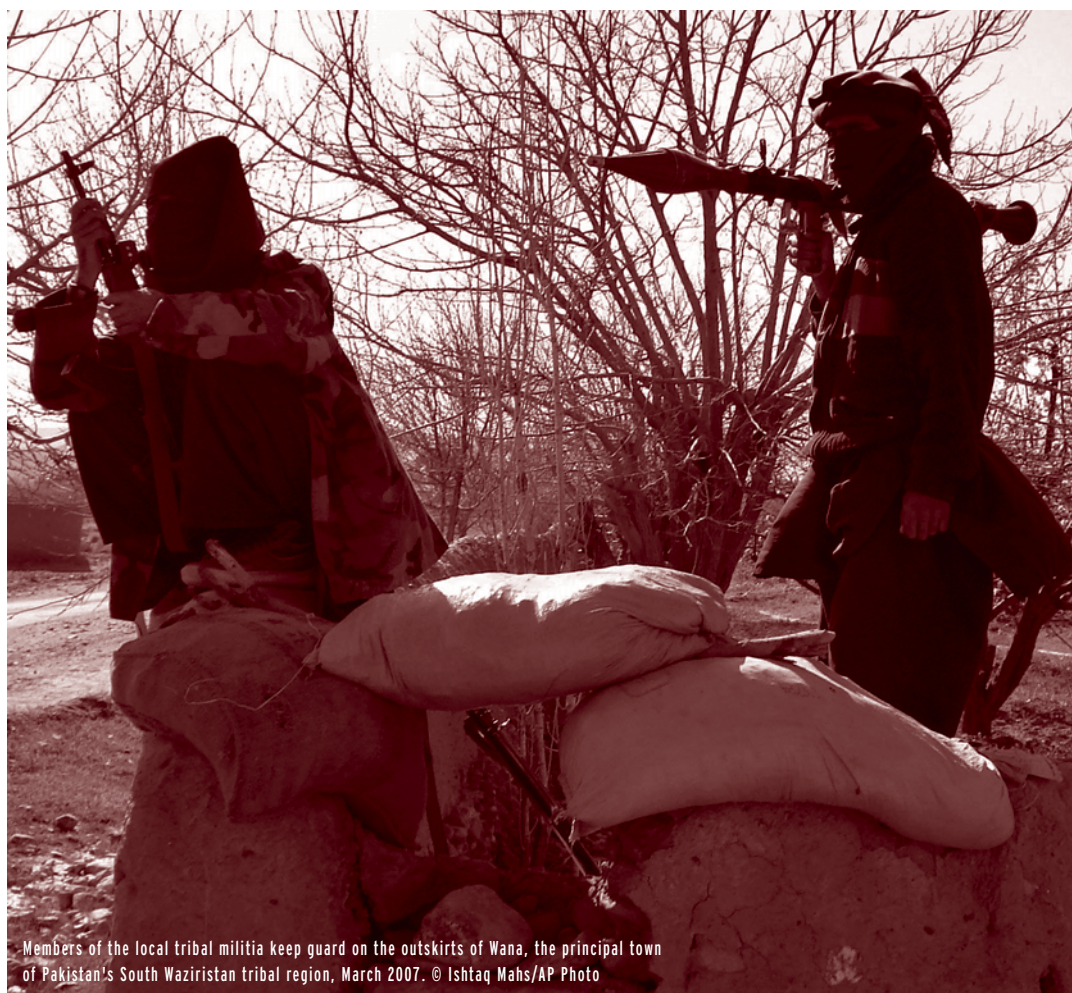
Members of the local tribal militia keep guard on the outskirts of Wana, the principal town of Pakistan's South Waziristan tribal region, March 2007. © Ishtaq Mahs/AP Photo

numbers involved, the reality is that these gangs and groups have an inordinate impact on populations. There are consistent links between their presence and the perpetration of violent acts.

Limited data outside the United States. Far more information is available about gangs operating in the United States than elsewhere in the world, with some exceptions, such as Brazil, El Salvador, and South Africa. Information about armed groups is similarly concentrated on a handful of notorious armed groups. While certain studies have focused on particular gangs, cities, and armed groups, there is a dearth of research on hundreds of other groups. The lack of diversity in information provides a poor basis for comparison. The result has been limited comparative work within the fields of gang and armed group research, let alone between the two.

'What gets measured gets managed.'[12] While more information about gangs and armed groups can aid in understanding these groups—their origins, actions, goals—it is not simply that more information is better. How information is measured also matters. Ongoing debates about the definitions of gang and armed group means that different definitions are used, resulting in different measurements, thereby reducing comparability across cases. Moving forward collectively will require some agreement on what is being studied. Collaborative action will also call for consensus on how information about gangs and armed groups will be used, and whether such information will inform military strategies, in general, and targeting selection, in particular.

Gangs, groups, and guns. The use of small arms by gangs and armed groups varies. Gangs in the United States and Latin America more frequently use small arms than gangs elsewhere. Most armed groups use small arms of some form. Knowledge of the types of weapons used by gangs and armed groups is based on deaths and injuries of those caught in exchanges of fire. Yet knowledge of how these groups purchase, acquire, and transport small arms remains limited.

The role of gangs and armed groups in violence and the broad impacts they have on communities are attracting increasing attention from researchers and policy-makers alike. Recent studies have begun to address the gaps mentioned above, but our understanding of these groups is often sketchy. As the knowledge base expands, a further challenge looms, namely, how to convert this information into effective policy. ◾

ENDNOTES

1   For an example of how US statistics distinguish gang and non-gang violence, see FBI (2009). For a discussion of gang crime databases, and the numerous challenges to producing reliable gang crime estimates, see ASC (2009).

2   This estimate is based on gang membership in 18 countries, one of which is the United States (FIREARMS).

3   For a discussion of the 'universe' of armed groups—from marauders, criminals, and gangs to warlords and rebel groups—and references for key sources on each type, see Schneckener (2009, pp. 8–14).

4   For various definitions of 'armed group' (and a discussion of competing definitions), see: Bruderlein (2000, p. 8); Grävingholt, Hofmann, and Klingebiel (2007, pp. 22–28); OCHA (2004, p. 7); Petrasek (2005, pp. 8–10); Policzer (2005, pp. 6–10).

5   For various definitions of 'gang' (and a discussion of competing definitions), see: Bursik and Grasmick (2006); GANG VIOLENCE; Greene and Pranis (2007, pp. 9–11); Hagedorn (2008, pp. 23–31); Klein and Maxson (2006, pp. 5–10).

6   For examples of typologies of non-state armed groups, see Krause and Milliken (2009); Schneckener (2009); Schultz, Farah, and Lochard (2004); Vinci (2006); Williams (2008).

7   See Kalyvas (2003), who distinguishes between conventional wars (both inter-state and intrastate) and non-conventional wars, with the latter involving far more violence and more violence experienced by non-combatants.

8   While there is evidence to suggest that gangs are increasingly operating in rural areas in the United States, they remain a predominantly urban phenomenon (NYGC, 2007).

9   The term 'skinheads' has been used interchangeably with neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups.

10   For a discussion and listing of different types of gangs, see NGIC (2009, pp. 6–8, 23–31).

11   For example, the *National Gang Threat Assessment* states that 'gang members are responsible for as much as 80 percent of the crime in some areas' but then adds the caveat in a footnote that this figure is based on self-reporting by local law enforcement officers and is not representative (NGIC, 2009, p. 8). For a discussion of problems with identifying gang members and collecting reliable statistics on gang violence, see Spergel (2009).

12   The aphorism is attributed to management consultant Peter Drucker.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASC (American Society of Criminology). 2009. *Criminology & Public Policy,* Vol. 8, Iss. 4, pp. 667–925.

Bhatia, Michael V. 2005. 'Fighting Words: Naming Terrorists, Bandits, Rebels and other Violence Actors.' *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 26, No.1, pp. 5–22.

Bruderlein, Claude. 2000. *The Role of Non-State Actors in Building Human Security: The Case of Armed Groups in Intra-State Wars.* Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. May.

Bursik, Robert J., Jr., and Harold G. Grasmick. 2006. 'Defining and Researching Gangs.' In Arlen Egley, Jr., et al. *The Modern Gang Reader.* 3rd edn. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company, pp. 2–13.

Carey, Sabine, Neil J. Mitchell, and Will Lowe. 2009. 'A New Database on Pro-Government Armed Groups.' Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, New York. February.

FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation). 2009. *Expanded Homicide Data Table 12: Murder Circumstances, 2004–2008.*
<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/offenses/expanded_information/data/shrtable_12.html>

Geneva Declaration Secretariat. 2008. *Global Burden of Armed Violence.* Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat.

Grävingholt, Jörn, Claudia Hofmann, and Stephan Klingebiel. 2007. *Development Cooperation and Non-State Armed Groups.* Bonn: German Development Institute. <http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/(ynDK_contentByKey)/ENTR-7BMCTB/$FILE/Studies%2029.pdf>

Greene, Judith and Kevin Pranis. 2007. *Gang Wars: The Failure of Enforcement Tactics and the Need for Effective Public Safety Strategies.* Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute. July. <http://www.justicepolicy.org/content-hmID=1811&smID=1581&ssmID=22.htm>

Hagedorn, John M. 2008. *A World of Gangs: Armed Young Men and Gangsta Culture.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

HSRP (Human Security Report Project). 2007. *Human Security Brief 2007.* Vancouver: Simon Fraser University.
<http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/HSRP_Brief_2007.pdf>

IISS (International Institute for Strategic Studies). 2009. *The Military Balance 2009: The Annual Assessment of Global Military Capabilities and Defence Economics.* London: IISS.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2003. 'The Sociology of Civil Wars: Warfare and Armed Groups.' Unpublished background paper. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. November. <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/issueareas/perpetrators/perpet_pdf/2003_Kalyvas.pdf>

Klein, Malcolm W. and Cheryl L. Maxson. 2006. *Street Gang Patterns and Policies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krause, Keith and Jennifer Milliken. 2009. 'Introduction: The Challenge of Non-State Armed Groups.' *Contemporary Security Policy,* Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 202–20.

Manwaring, Max G. 2005. *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency.* Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College. March.

—. 2007. *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Transnational Criminal Organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Brazil.* Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College. December.

—. 2009. *State and Nonstate Associated Gangs: Credible 'Midwives of New Social Orders.'* Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College. May.

NGIC (National Gang Intelligence Center). 2009. *National Gang Threat Assessment 2009.* Washington, DC: NGIC. January.

NYGC (National Youth Gang Center). 2007. *National Youth Gang Survey Analysis.* Accessed 21 December 2009.
<http://www.iir.com/nygc/publications/2007-survey-highlights.pdf>

OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). 2004. *Glossary of Humanitarian Terms in Relation to the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.* New York: OCHA.

Petrasek, David. 2005. *Armed Groups and Peace Processes: Pondering and Planning Engagement*. Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. November. <http://www.hdcentre.org/files/Armedgroupsandpeaceprocessponderingandplanningengagement.pdf>

Phillips, Tom. 2009. 'Twelve Dead and Helicopter Downed as Rio de Janeiro Drug Gangs go to War.' *The Guardian*. 17 October. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/17/rio-favela-violence-helicopter>

Policzer, Pablo. 2005. *Neither Terrorists nor Freedom Fighters*. Armed Groups Project Working Paper 5. Calgary: University of Calgary. March. <http://www.armedgroups.org/sites/armedgroups.org/files/AGP_Working_Paper_5_-_Policzer__March_05_.pdf>

Schneckener, Ulrich. 2009. *Spoilers or Governance Actors? Engaging Armed Non-State Groups in Areas of Limited Statehood*. SFB-Governance Working Paper No. 21. Berlin: Sonderforschungsbereich 700, Freie Universität Berlin. October.

Shelden, Randall G., Sharon K. Tracy, and William B. Brown. 2004. *Youth Gangs in American Society*. 3rd edn. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Shultz, Richard H., Douglas Farah, and Itamara V. Lochard. 2004. *Armed Groups: A Tier-One Security Priority*. INSS Occasional Paper 57. Colorado Springs, CO: United States Air Force Institute for National Security Studies. September.

Small Arms Survey. 2008. *Small Arms Survey 2008: Risk and Resilience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spergel, Irving. 2009. 'Gang Databases: To Be or Not To Be.' *Criminology & Public Policy,* Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 667–74.

UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Database Project). 2009. Accessed 12 November 2009. <http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/UCDP_pub/UCDPNonStateActorDataset.xls>

Vinci, Anthony. 2006. 'The "Problems of Mobilization" and the Analysis of Armed Groups.' *Parameters,* Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 49–62.

Williams, Phil. 2008. *Violent Non-State Actors and National and International Security.* Zurich: International Relations and Security Network, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Principal author