# 2. THE MANY FACES OF HOMICIDE

The study of why people kill other people is vital from a policy perspective, as without such knowledge it is very difficult to implement appropriate strategies and policies for the prevention and reduction of homicide. A number of homicide types can be identified on the basis of elements such as premeditation, motivation, context, instrumentality and perpetrator-victim relationship, which all play roles of varying magnitudes in different forms of homicide. That said, developing homicide typologies is a complex business, not least because they sometimes overlap and, in real life, homicide drivers can be multiple. Indeed, further research and methodological work is needed to help develop a comprehensive categorization of homicide,[1] but some of its typologies, which are particularly relevant from the crime prevention perspective, can already be identified in the following manner:

- Homicide related to other criminal activities
- Interpersonal homicide
- Socio-political homicide

Homicide related to other criminal activities

The first of the three typologies is homicide committed in relation to other criminal activities that are aimed, directly or indirectly, at obtaining illicit profits. Within such a broad category, two distinct types of homicide can be identified: those commit-

Fig. 2.1:   A classification of intentional homicide
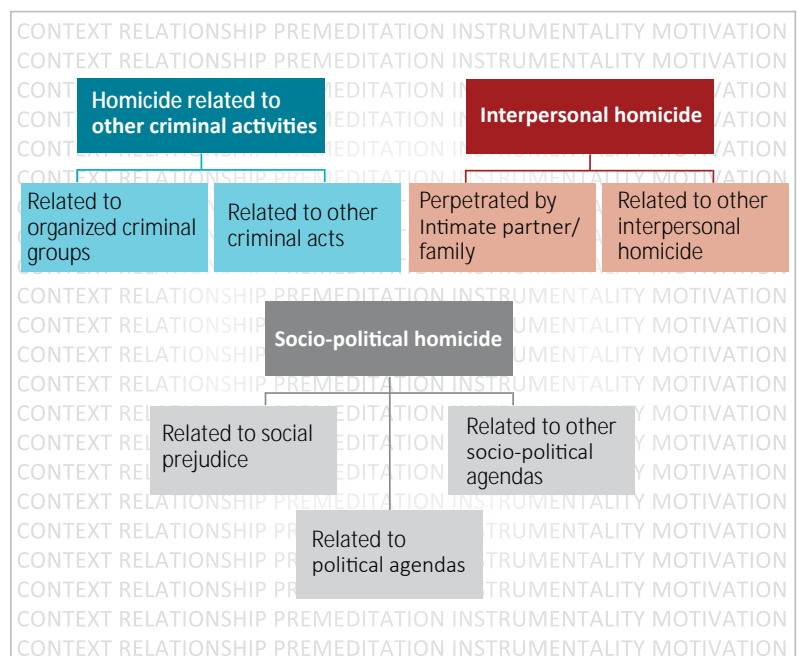
ted by organized criminal groups;[2] and those committed while perpetrating other, more conventional criminal acts such as robbery. Although the main goal of organized criminal groups is to generate illicit profit, they may commit homicide for a variety of reasons, from the elimination of rivals and State representatives, to shows of strength and territorial control. In such cases, homicides are instrumental to achieving longer-term criminal

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1   The International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), currently under development in a process led by UNODC, will provide tools to build a consistent categorization of intentional homicide.

2   An "organized criminal group" is defined by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) as a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences…in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit. (See United Nations (2000). *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,* article 2.).

goals and are typically the result of premeditation and purpose. On the other hand, while organized criminal groups may also commit conventional crimes, homicides perpetrated during other criminal acts have different drivers: homicide does not represent the primary goal of most criminals, though it may be perpetrated in order to accomplish the original crime and/or avoid detection.

Interpersonal homicide

Central to the definition of the second homicide typology is the fact that homicide is not instrumental to the accomplishment of a secondary goal, but is rather a means of resolving a conflict and/or punishing the victim through violence when relationships come under strain (including from friction due to social and cultural norms). The two main categories in this typology are homicide related to intimate partner or family relationships, in which victim and perpetrator are relatives, share the same household and/or an intimate relationship; and other interpersonal homicide, in which the victim and perpetrator may or may not know each other. The relationship in intimate partner/family-related homicide is distinguished from the relationship in the other interpersonal homicide category by the level of emotional attachment and other links, often of an economic or legal nature, between victim and perpetrator. Homicides within this typology can be the result of a premeditated design or of a random act of violence, but the nature of the relationship between perpetrator and victim is a fundamental feature of this crime. Straddling the divide between the private and public spheres, much of this type of violence is attributed to the very nature of coexisting with and among others.

Socio-political homicide

The third typology encompasses homicides that originate in the public sphere and are typically committed as an instrument for advancing social or political agendas. Power relationships, including among social, ethnic and political groups, are involved and homicide is committed in order to exert influence over those relationships, whether directly or indirectly. People are killed for what they represent and/or for the message that such killings can convey to the general public or to specific sub-sectors. In contrast to interpersonal homicide, the victims of this typology are often anonymous to its perpetrators, or at least the nature of the relationship between them is not a consideration in the decision to kill. Often the

result of premeditation and organization, homicides of this type include those resulting from acts of terrorism and hate crime, amongst many others. War and conflict-related killings are also considered acts of socio-political violence, but are not included in this category as they are outside the realm of intentional homicide.

Homicide typologies: data challenges and regional patterns

Just as countries are affected by different types of violence, the three homicide typologies affect a country's overall homicide rate in different ways. Global analysis of such differences is hampered by insufficient statistical information as not many countries produce or disseminate data on motives for homicide, and important differences exist as to the criteria used for determining motivation when they do. This makes it difficult to identify homicide drivers and the relative prevalence of each of the homicide typologies in a comprehensive manner, whether at the country or regional level.

Where data is available, different types of homicide can be linked to the differences in homicide levels between some regions. For example, homicide related to other criminal activities seems to be largely a phenomenon in the Americas, with 30 per cent of homicides in the region being linked to organized crime or gangs. In five countries with available trend data in the sub-regions of Central America and the Caribbean, homicide linked to other criminal activities drives overall national homicide rates.

While homicide linked to robbery is a very stable share of all homicides (about 5 per cent of all homicides in the Americas, Europe and Oceania each year), homicides linked to gangs or organized crime tend to be more variable over time and more diverse across countries. This suggests that organized crime or gang-related homicides can produce sudden changes in the homicide level of a given country; an example being the sharp (40 per cent) decline in homicides in El Salvador in the course of a single year (see chapter 2.1), or the rapid increase in the homicide rate in Central America between 2007 and 2011. Those most at risk from this type of homicide are males, particularly young males aged 15-29 in the Americas.

By contrast, intimate partner/family-related homicide affects every region and country across the globe, accounting for one in seven (14 per cent) of all homicides in 2012. Although its intensity is

greater in the Americas, this type of homicide accounts for a greater share of total homicides in Asia, Europe and Oceania. Unlike other types of killing, it disproportionately affects women: two thirds of all victims of this type of homicide are women, and almost half (47 per cent) of all female victims of homicide are killed by their intimate partners or family members. Those most at risk from this type of homicide are adult women aged 30 and over.

Other types of interpersonal homicide may include those resulting from conflicts relating to issues such as property disputes or revenge-type killings, or even from random acts that may be solely the result of the victim being in the wrong place at the wrong time. From limited available data, it appears that other interpersonal-type homicides occur at all latitudes, though for different reasons (such as land disputes or urban violence).

Very limited statistical information is available on killings motivated by social or political agendas (such as hate crimes or acts of terrorism). This typology of homicide can represent a substantive share of total homicides in specific contexts or regions, such as in post-conflict settings or countries experiencing social, economic or political upheaval. However, national definitions and recording practices may differ substantially and determine if and how such homicides are reflected in statistics.[3]

Fig. 2.2: **Shares of homicide, by typology, selected countries (2001-2012)**
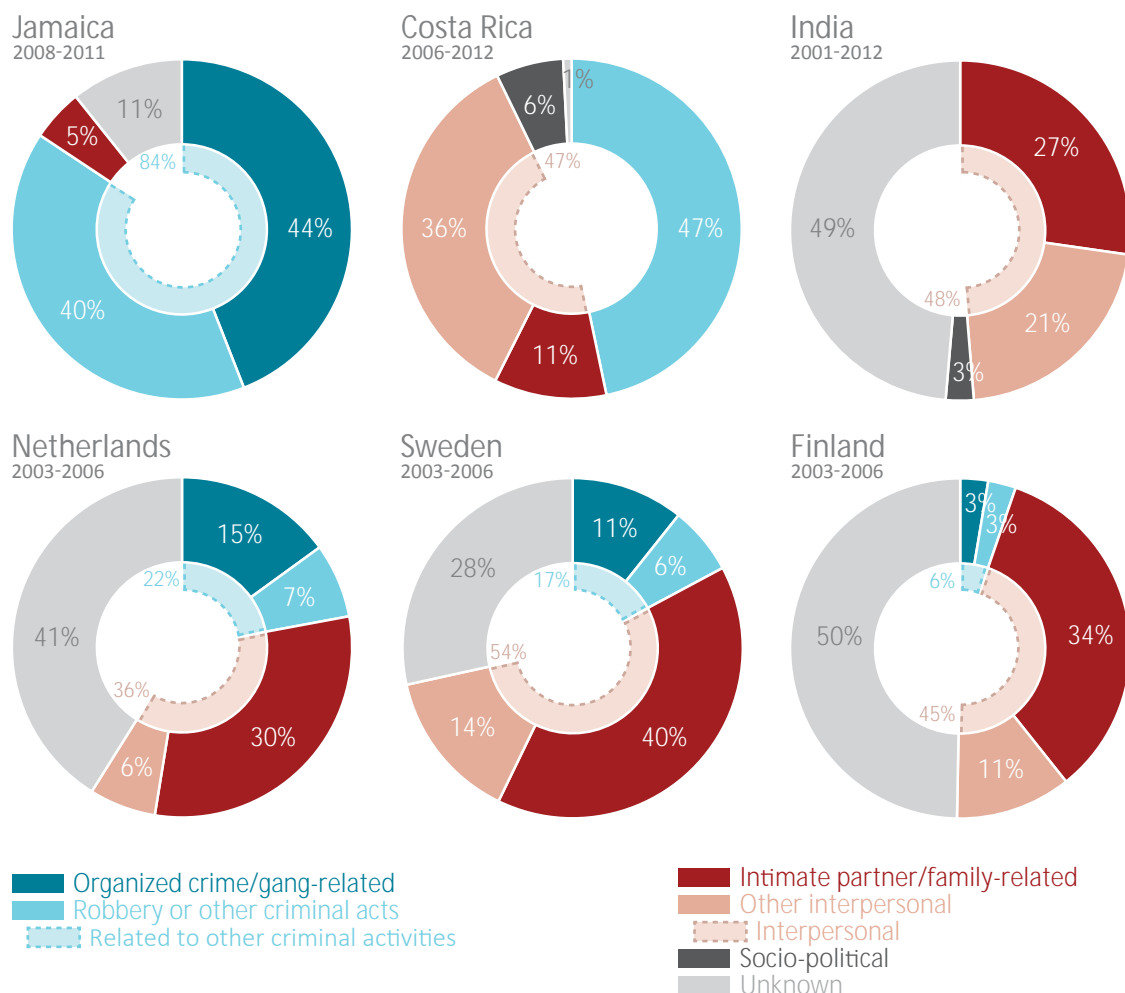
Source: UNODC elaboration of data from the Jamaica Constabulary Force (2008-2011); UNODC elaboration of data from the Sección de Estadística, Departamento de Planificación, Costa Rica (2013); National Crime Records Bureau, India, (2001-2012); European Homicide Monitor (2003-2006).

3   Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (2013).

A sample of countries with available data on homicide by type (see figure 2.2) illustrates that the proportions of homicide related to the various typologies can differ greatly across countries and regions. Homicides related to other criminal activities make up the vast majority of homicides in Jamaica and less than half of all homicides in Costa Rica. The share of interpersonal homicides is high in selected European countries and in India, but a large share of unknown homicide contexts leaves room for uncertainty.

As demonstrated by the variety of regional and national experiences analysed in this study, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to tackling homicide. Better understanding of motivations, contexts and relationships between perpetrators and victims will facilitate targeted strategies and policies to decrease homicide around the world.

2.1 HOMICIDE RELATED TO OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

Due to its direct impact on public security, homicide committed by "professional" criminals often attracts the full attention of law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system. But the relationship between other criminal activities, particularly the most clandestine among them, and homicidal violence is not a straightforward one. Homicides committed while perpetrating other crimes such as robbery (homicide is not the primary goal) show constant trends and levels across regions, while trends and levels of homicides related to organized criminal groups (homicide is instrumental and premeditated) vary over time and by region.

The share of homicides related to organized criminal groups out of total homicides is highest in the Americas and lowest in Asia. In developed countries with low homicide rates, homicides related to organized criminal groups are stable or decreasing, whereas they are on the increase in countries with high homicide rates. Also of note is the extreme gender bias towards male victims in homicides related to organized criminal groups. In the Americas, for example, 96 per cent of the victims of this type of homicide are male.

Organized crime/gang-related homicide

When looking at proportions of homicides related to gangs and organized criminal groups (according to national police statistics from several countries
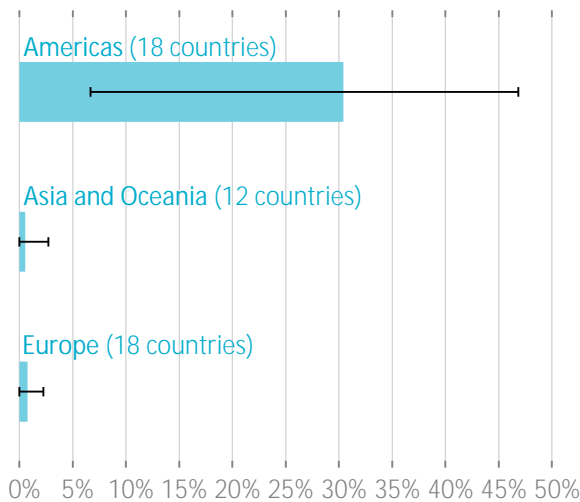
Organized criminal group or gang?

Significant efforts have been made to distinguish between organized criminal groups, gangs and drug trafficking groups.[a] They frequently overlap and it is often difficult to draw a distinction between them due to the heterogeneity and dynamics of the phenomena in different regions. Much of the debate centres on the degree of organization or sophistication in the operations of the group and how such groups use violence. Gangs are thought to be less sophisticated than organized criminal groups and to focus their use of violence on short-term, more tactical goals and delinquency, whereas organized criminal groups are characterized as profit-driven, relatively sophisticated criminal enterprises that use violence strategically in order to further their goals and to assert power. Despite the use of violence being a key characteristic of organized criminal groups, it is preferably used as a last resort, as violence tends to draw attention to their operations. Organized criminal groups aim to keep a low profile in order to protect their illicit activities from law enforcement attention, but will use violence instrumentally to protect their interests.

[a] The *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (2000) provides a definition of an organized criminal group (see article 2). For a more in-depth look at the theoretical distinctions between these groups, see also UNODC (2011). *Global Study on Homicide*. P. 48.

in three regions), a relatively clear pattern emerges. The median proportion of organized crime/gang-related homicides is highest in the Americas and lowest in Asia (see figure 2.1.1), though these figures should be interpreted with caution because of the existence of different criteria in the classification of homicides linked to organized crime.[4] Moreover, the fact that organized crime/gang-related homicides are more prevalent in the Americas does not necessarily mean that organized crime or gangs are more prevalent there than in Europe or Asia. Rather, violence is often linked to competition between involved parties, such as organized criminal groups, or between them and the State, with regard to control over territory or illicit activities, including trafficking. Such groups in the Americas may be experiencing higher levels

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4   The attribution of homicide to "organized crime" or "gang" depends on national penal legislation, practices by law enforcement agencies and accuracy in compiling statistics. For example, in one country, a homicide is defined as gang-related if the suspect is known to be a gang member, while in another country, the classification can be related to crime-scene criteria such as the modalities of killing, weapon used, number of perpetrators, etc.

Fig. 2.1.1: **Percentage of organized crime/ gang-related homicides out of total homicides, by region (2011 or latest year)**

Americas (18 countries)

Asia and Oceania (12 countries)

Europe (18 countries)

0%   5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%

Note: The bars refer to the median percentage of homicides involving gangs or organized criminal groups, with the low and high estimates derived from the first and third percentage quartiles within each region.

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

Fig. 2.1.2: **Rate of organized crime/gang-related homicide, selected developed countries (2005-2011)**

Rate per 100,000 population

— United States
— Italy
— Netherlands
— Japan
— Australia

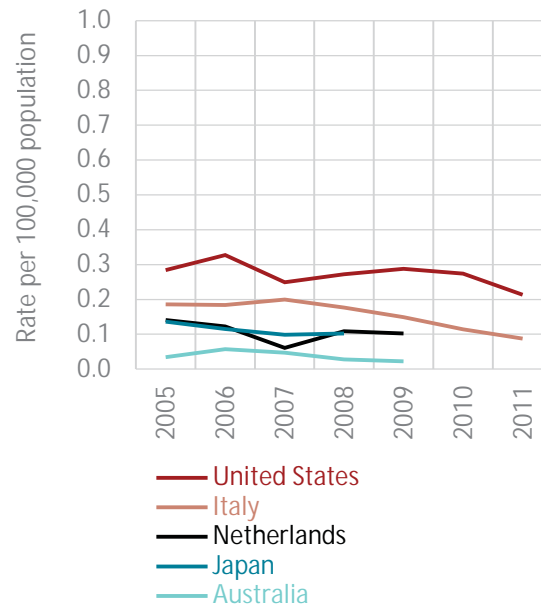Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

of conflict with each other, or with the State, than organized criminal groups in other regions, which, though they may also be active, may have reached a level of stability or control over their territory and resources that does not generate the same level of visible violence.

Across the world, trends in organized crime/gang-related homicide vary considerably. In selected developed countries (see figure 2.1.2), in a framework of relatively low homicide rates,[5] the trend in such killings has been quite stable and slowly decreasing, and rates of organized crime/gang-related killings have decreased to below 0.3 per 100,000 population since 2006. In Italy, there has been a 50 per cent decline in this type of homicide since 2007, with organized crime-related rates of homicide decreasing from 0.2 to less than 0.1 per 100,000 population.

The picture is different in Central America and the Caribbean (see figure 2.1.3) where, in a context of high homicide levels, countries reporting on homicides linked to gangs and organized criminal groups often show increasing trends, particularly the Bahamas, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras.

Levels of violence related to organized criminal groups and gangs have been linked to a variety of different dynamics across different countries. For example, while some countries in Central America and the Caribbean have had a strong presence of

Fig. 2.1.3: **Rate of organized crime/gang-related homicide, selected countries, Central America and the Caribbean (2005-2011)**

Rate per 100,000 population

— Honduras
— Jamaica
— Bahamas
— Belize
— Panama
— Trinidad and Tobago
— El Salvador

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

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5   The group of developed countries considered here has an average homicide rate below 0.8 per 100,000, with the exception of the United States, which in the last five years has had an average homicide rate of 4.9 per 100,000 population. (UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013)).
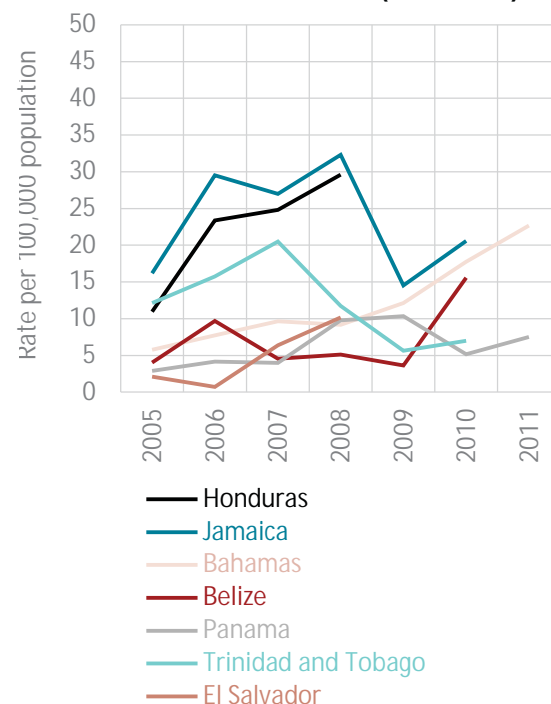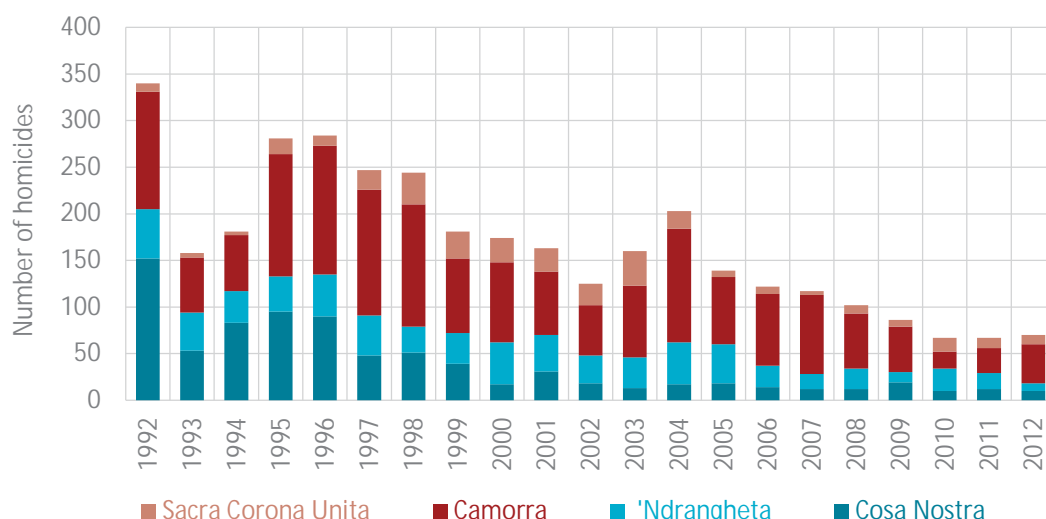
Fig. 2.1.4: **Number of homicides in Italy, by Mafia-type association (1992-2012)**

Source: Massari, M. (2013); Small Arms Survey; Ministry of Interior, Transcrime, Italy (2013).

organized criminal groups and gangs for years, the surge in homicide levels in Central America in recent years is largely a result of violence related to the control of drug trafficking routes, to turf wars between criminal groups and to conflict between organized criminal groups and the State.

Italy: Mafia-related crime

Although many of their activities take place outside the law, from the perspective of organized criminal groups, these activities are still business activities. As in conventional business, the main goal of organized criminal groups is to maximize their profits, which means being pragmatic and adaptable, particularly in terms of the amount of attention they draw from law enforcement agencies. The term "pax mafiosa" has been used to refer to situations when organized criminal groups maximize their efforts to avoid the use of violence, which can result in low levels of violent crime even though levels of other crime may be high. Indeed, the relationship between organized criminal groups and homicidal violence is not symmetrical and though a high level of violence caused by organized criminal groups is a clear indicator of their presence, a lack of such violence is more difficult to interpret.

A case in point is Italy, where the story of organized crime-related homicide is not only one of declining trends, but also of varying relationships between crime and the presence of Mafia-type associations.[6] Despite having fallen by over 80 per

cent from 1992 to 2012 (see figure 2.1.4), Mafia-related homicides currently make up a significant proportion (approximately 10-15 per cent) of all homicides in Italy. In 2012, there were 70 reported Mafia-related homicides, all of which occurred in the southern regions of Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Sicily, where Mafia-type associations are traditionally considered to have a foothold.[7]

A declining rate of Mafia-related killings does not mean, per se, that Mafia-type associations are necessarily loosening their grip in certain Italian regions. Such organizations typically operate in a covert manner, thus the assessment of the scope and intensity of their activities is extremely challenging. However, by using a number of direct and indirect indicators, a composite indicator of the presence of Mafia-type associations has been recently proposed. Using four variables to cover different dimensions of Mafia activity, including persons charged for being associated with the Mafia and assets confiscated from organized criminal groups, the "Mafia Index"[8] measures the pres-

association ties, and of the resulting conditions of submission and silence (*omertà*), to commit criminal offences, to directly and indirectly acquire management or control of economic activities, licences, authorizations, public contracts and services, or to obtain unlawful profits or advantages for themselves or any other person, or with a view to preventing or limiting the freedom to vote, or getting votes for themselves or other persons, on the occasion of an election (Government of Italy (1930). *Italian Criminal Code, Article 416. Association to commit crimes*).

7   ISTAT, Italy (2012).

8   Ministry of Interior, Transcrime, Italy (2013). The Mafia Index is a composite index that measures the presence of Mafia-type associations in Italy, by covering various dimensions of a Mafia organization. Those dimensions include persons charged for Mafia associations, Mafia-related murders,

6   In Italy, an association is said to be of a "Mafia-type" when the participants take advantage of the intimidating power of the

ence of Mafia-type associations at the provincial level in Italy. By mapping the presence and activities of Mafia-type associations, it indicates that the infiltration of such groups is not limited to southern Italy, as areas in the centre and north of the country also show signs of Mafia activity (see map 2.1.1).[9]

Mafia-related homicides are still concentrated in areas where there is a strong Mafia presence (high Mafia Index). But while there is generally a link between homicide and organized criminal groups, there are areas with a significant presence of Mafia-type associations without Mafia-related homicides. As such, provinces with high levels of Mafia-related homicides have a high Mafia presence, but a high Mafia presence does not necessarily result in organized crime-related homicides.

El Salvador: the gang "truce" and decreasing homicide rates

The experience of Italy shows that organized crime-related homicide is not just a function of the presence of organized crime per se. In contrast to other types of homicide, trends in organized crime-related homicide are exposed to sudden changes as a consequence of power shifts between organized criminal groups, conflicts between those groups or between them and State authorities. But organized criminal groups are clearly also susceptible to the effect of specific policies aimed at fighting or mitigating violence stemming from their activities.

Central America's gang-related homicides have been driving the extremely high levels of homicide in the sub-region. In El Salvador, major changes in homicidal violence took place after a "truce" between two major gangs was agreed upon in March 2012. The truce, brokered by local government, the international community and religious leaders, had an immediate impact on homicide levels (see figure 2.1.5).[10]

The long-term impact of the truce cannot yet be evaluated, but the most welcome effect has been the dramatic drop in the homicide rate. In 2011

city councils that were dissolved for Mafia infiltration, assets confiscated from organized crime, as well as other variables derived from reports of the National Anti-Mafia Department and the Anti-Mafia Investigation Department from 2000-2011.

9 The map is based on a revised Mafia Index, which does not include Mafia-related homicides. This is to avoid autocorrelation effects in the analysis of Mafia-related homicides and Mafia presence, as measured by the Mafia Index.

10 Government of El Salvador (2013).

Map. 2.1.1: Number of Mafia-related homicides and revised Mafia Index scores, by province (2010-2011)
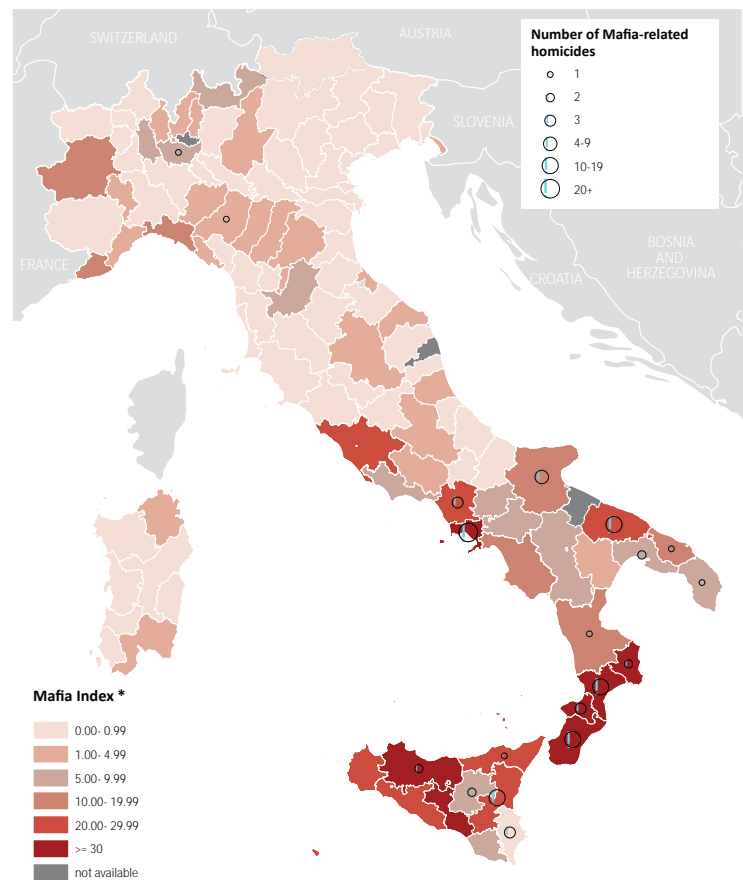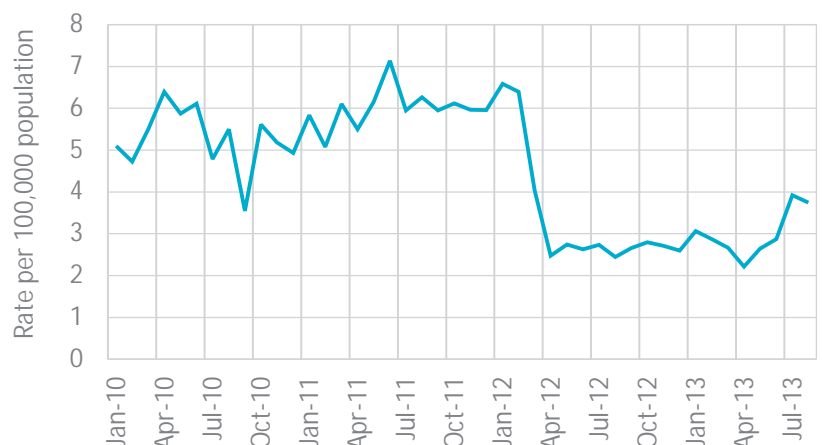

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

* Note: A revised Mafia Index, which excludes Mafia-related homicides for the calculation of the Mafia Index at the provincial level, is used in this map.

Source: ISTAT, Italy (2012); Ministry of Interior, Transcrime, Italy (2013).

and January-February 2012, prior to the truce, the average monthly homicide rate was 6.0 per 100,000 population, a value close to the global annual homicide rate, meaning that people were killed at the same rate on a monthly basis in El

Fig. 2.1.5: Monthly homicide rate, El Salvador (2010-2013)

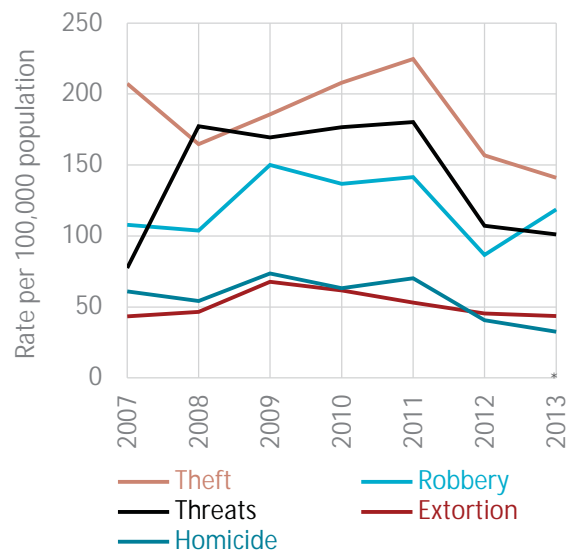Source: National Police of El Salvador (2013).

Salvador as in one year at the global level. After the truce, however, the monthly homicide rate was more than halved (averaging 2.8 per 100,000 population) from March 2012 to February 2013. This sudden reduction provides an indirect quantification of the homicidal violence that could be directly attributed to gang-related conflict in the period before the truce. In parallel with the decline in homicides since the truce, there also appears to have been a slight decline in some other criminal activities, according to data on crime reported (see figure 2.1.6).

For example, levels of extortion, a crime typically associated with gangs, appear to have decreased slightly since the truce but are still extremely high throughout the country, particularly its eastern region (see map 2.1.2).

Despite an overall decline in violent crime rates, especially the homicide rate, the situation remains fluid and fragile. According to surveys in 2012 and 2013, just over 50 per cent of the population felt that the truce had helped to reduce crime,[11] suggesting that the benefits of the truce have yet to be perceived by the population with an intensity reflecting the drop in the homicide rate.

Elsewhere in Central America, gang truces have seen mixed results. For example, in Honduras, a truce agreement has been in place since May 2013 but, in contrast to the situation in El Salvador, the

Fig. 2.1.6: Rates of selected crimes, El Salvador (2007-2013)

*Note: Data for 2013 based on data from January-August 2013.
Source: National Police of El Salvador (2013).

number of homicides did not decrease in the period immediately following the truce.[12] This may be attributable to differences in the gangs themselves, as gangs in Honduras may be less organized and less hierarchical than those in El Salvador, possibly making it more difficult for gang leaders to impose their will over the various factions.

Map. 2.1.2: Homicide and extortion rates, by department, El Salvador (2011 and 2012)
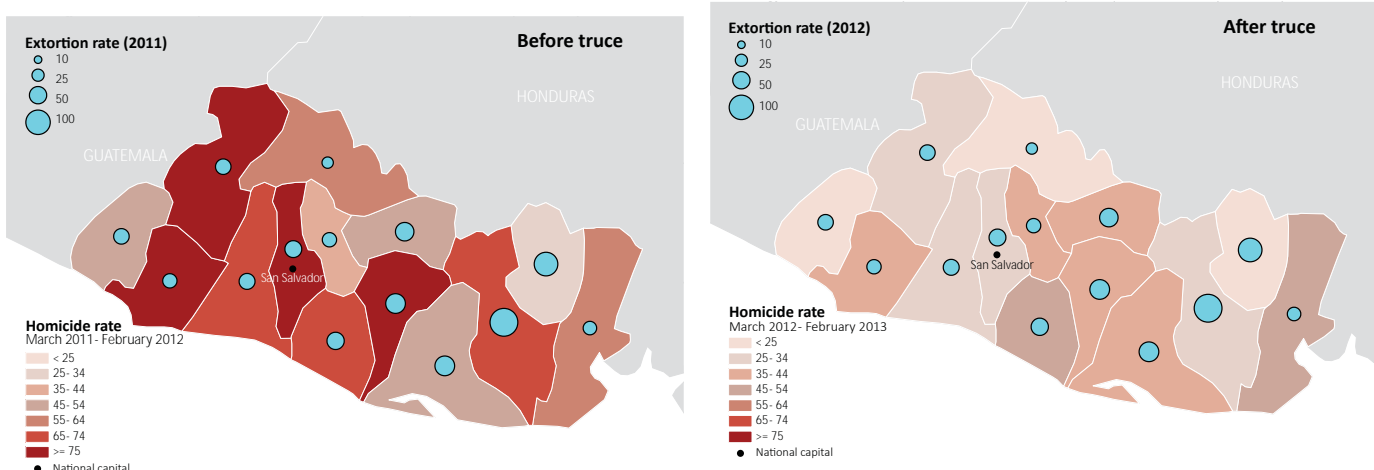
Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: UNODC elaboration of El Salvador National Police (2013) data.

11 Instituto Universitario de Opinion Publica (2013). Data relates to the sum of answers "a lot", "some" and "a little" to the question "In your opinion, how much has the truce between gangs reduced crime?"

12 Instituto Universitario de Democracia, Paz y Seguridad (2013). In the month following the truce, there were 614 murders, an increase from the 599 murders in the month preceding the truce.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: progress in prevention

Brazil has made significant inroads in combating gangs and related violence in recent years. In particular, an innovative programme known as Unidades de Policia Pacificadora (Pacifying Police Units (UPPs)) has been instituted in favelas, or slums, in Rio de Janeiro, which have become the base of operations for many organized criminal groups and, with competing criminal factions vying for territory, are also traditionally the most violent parts of the city.

UPPs have been instituted in several favelas since 2008/2009 to provide traditional community "proximity" policing, while consolidating State control over those communities and linking them to State social services. As of November 2013, 34 units were in operation in 226 communities, benefiting over 1.5 million people. UPP officials are given specialized education and training, notably in human rights and modern policing techniques, with the aim of taking control back from the gangs and promoting long-term security.[a]

Official data attest to a decrease in homicide rates, as well as robbery rates, since the UPP programme began. The trend in homicide incidents was decreasing in the areas now controlled by UPPs prior to their implementation (see figure 2.1.7), but those areas have experienced a continued decline in the number of homicides since the programme commenced and they all show a greater decrease than the one recorded in the city of Rio de Janeiro over the same period of time. It is noteworthy that the number of reported sexual assaults in the same period significantly increased in communities where UPPs operate (by almost 200 per cent). This latter trend may be attributed to higher rates of reporting of those crimes, which may be interpreted as growing trust in the police, or be due to better recording practices.

Fig. 2.1.7: **Trend in homicides in UPP areas of operation and the city of Rio de Janeiro, (2007-2012)**
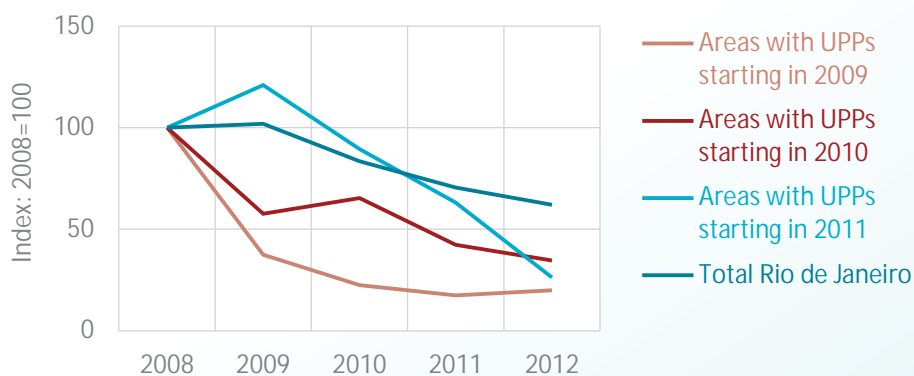
Note: Data for UPPs starting in 2009 include Cidade de Deus, Batam, Chapeu Mangueira and Pavao Pavaozinho, as well as for Santa Marta (which commenced 19 December 2008); data for UPPs starting in 2010 include Andarai, Borel, Formiga, Macacos, Providencia, Salgueiro, Tabajaras and Turano; data for UPPs starting in 2011 include Coroa, Fallet e Fogueteiro; Escondidinho e Prazeres; Mangueira; Sao Carlos; and Sao Joao Quieto e Matriz.

Source: Instituto de Segurança Publica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2013).

There is also broad support for the UPPs from favela residents. For example, 66 per cent of those surveyed in Santa Marta and Cidade de Deus approved of the programme in 2009. In 2010, 93 per cent of people resident in UPP areas felt safer, while 70 per cent of residents of communities without UPPs would have liked to have had the programme implemented in their neighbourhood.[b] The installation of UPPs is an important acknowledgement that social inclusion and community development are key components in preventing crime. They facilitate or promote security and access to social services, as well as help create opportunities for social and economic development.

[a] United Nations. Human Rights Council (2010). A/HRC/14/24/Add.4. Para. 21.
[b] Getulio Vargas Foundation, in United Nations Human Rights Council (2010). Op. Cit. Para. 22.

Conventional crime and homicide

Despite the fact that homicide may be considered a possible outcome of a criminal action, it does not represent the primary goal of the majority of criminals. For that reason, homicides linked to more conventional types of crime such as robbery or burglary are of a different nature from homicides linked to organized crime, for which homicide can often be a strategic element of its modus operandi.

In 37 countries with available data, roughly 5 per cent of all homicides were linked to robbery in 2012. This percentage holds true for the three

Fig. 2.1.8: Total homicide and homicide linked to robbery rates, selected countries (2005-2011)

Total homicide (16 countries)

Homicide linked to robbery (16 countries)
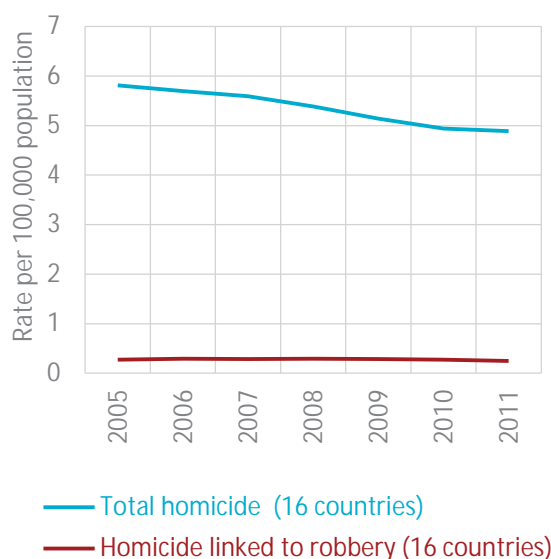
Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013) and UN-CTS (2013).

regions for which data are available, the Americas, Asia and Europe, where, at 5.2, 5.2 and 5.3 per cent of all homicides, respectively, it is remarkably similar.

When looking at data from a smaller selection of countries for which trend data on homicide linked to robbery are available, the homicide rate generally decreased from 2005 to 2011, as per the global trend, whereas the rate of homicide linked to robbery bucked that trend by remaining stable (see figure 2.1.8). As such, the share of homicides linked to robbery slightly increased from 2005 to 2011. Contrary to fluctuations that are often recorded in trends in organized crime-related homicide, killings during robberies show a higher degree of stability.

Homicide in Latin American cities

Homicide linked to other criminal activities, and particularly to criminal groups, garners significant attention in the Americas, but considerable levels of other types of homicide also exist there. Based on data available for five cities in South America, homicide levels are lowest in the cities of Montevideo (Uruguay) and Santiago (Chile), in the southern part of the sub-region, but the proportion of homicides that the different typologies account for varies considerably. In Santiago, the vast majority of homicides are linked to other criminal activities, while the share of interpersonal homicides is higher in Montevideo. In Quito (Ecuador), the share of homicides attributed to the interpersonal and crime-related typologies are nearly identical[a] (see figure 2.1.9).

In those cities, homicides due to assaults and robberies, as well as vengeance-related killings, are considered to be included in the typology of homicide linked to other criminal activities, while interpersonal homicide encompasses homicides resulting from inter-family and inter-couple homicide, femicide, and homicides linked to sexual crimes.

[a] Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (2013).

Fig. 2.1.9: Average share of homicides, by typology; and homicide rates, by selected cities, South America (2008-2011)

Undetermined
Interpersonal
Related to other criminal activities
Homicide rate per 100,000 population
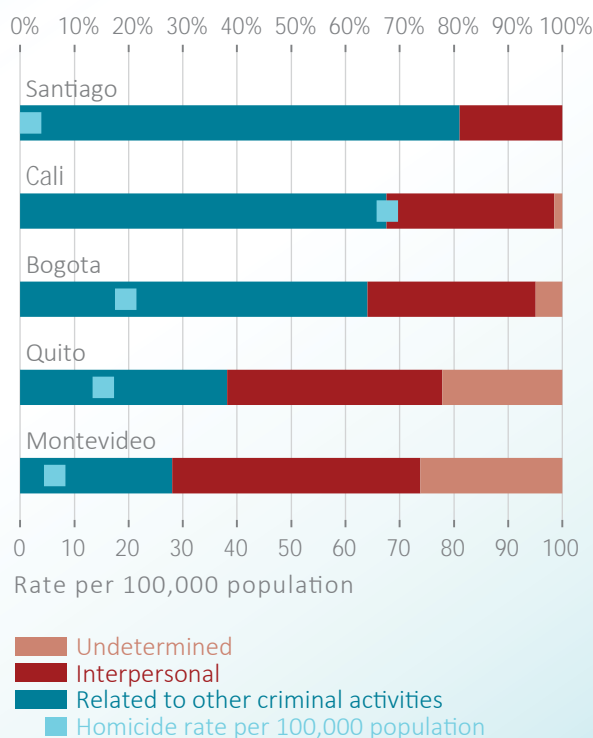
Source: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (2013).

2.2 INTERPERSONAL HOMICIDE

Straddling the divide between the private and public spheres, much of this type of lethal violence is attributed to the very nature of coexisting with others. Central to its definition is the fact that interpersonal homicide is not instrumental to the accomplishment of a secondary goal, but is rather a means of resolving a conflict and/or punishing the victim through violence when relationships come under strain (including from friction due to social and cultural norms).

Its two main sub-types, intimate partner/family-related homicide and homicide related to other interpersonal conflicts are distinguished from each other by the nature of the relationship between perpetrator and victim. This means that in homicides related to intimate partners or family members, the relationship between victim and perpetrator is characterized by an emotional attachment, as well as other links, often of an economic or legal nature, whereas the perpetrator and victim in other interpersonal-related homicide may or may not know each other.

In contrast to the rates of other forms of homicide, which can vary significantly from year to year, the average rate of homicide by intimate partners or family members is relatively stable at the global level, though regional trends can differ remarkably. Although this type of homicide affects people in all regions, it disproportionately affects women to the extent that, in some countries, most female victims of homicide are killed by their intimate partners or family members. Indeed, at the global level, almost half of female homicide victims are killed by their family members or intimate partners, whereas the figure for men is just over 1 in 20 homicide victims. With bitter irony, women run the highest risk of being killed by those who are expected to care for and even protect them.

As clear and consistent data on other types of interpersonal homicide, including property- or revenge-related killings, are less readily available, such a broad category of lethal violence is difficult to examine. A snapshot of mass murder, which spans both types of interpersonal homicide is, however, provided.

### Intimate partner/family-related homicide

Conflicts and violence within families and couples contribute significantly to shaping patterns of homicide.[13] Given the intimate nature of such relationships, and the daily interaction, stresses and intricacies of emotional, financial and cultural ties, it is not surprising that a large share of known-context homicides are of this type. Based on available data, rates of intimate partner/family-related homicide at the regional level range from 0.6 to 1.7 per 100,000 population, with some significant variations (see figure 2.2.1).

Although the rate of intimate partner/family-related homicide is higher in Africa and the Americas than in other regions, it accounts for a larger share of total homicide victims in Asia, Europe and Oceania than in Africa and the Americas (see figure 2.2.2). This is due to the fact that in regions with high homicide rates, other types of homicide (such as that related to other criminal activities) are more prevalent.

Unlike the rates of other forms of homicide, which can vary significantly from year to year, intimate partner/family-related homicide is, on average, remarkably stable at the global level, though more significant differences are visible at the regional level. In the 32 countries with available trend data, the average rate of intimate partner/family-related homicide remained constant from 2006 to 2011, whereas the total homicide rate in the same group of countries decreased by 15 per cent (see figure 2.2.3).

Fig. 2.2.1: Intimate partner/family-related homicide rate, by region (2012 or latest year)
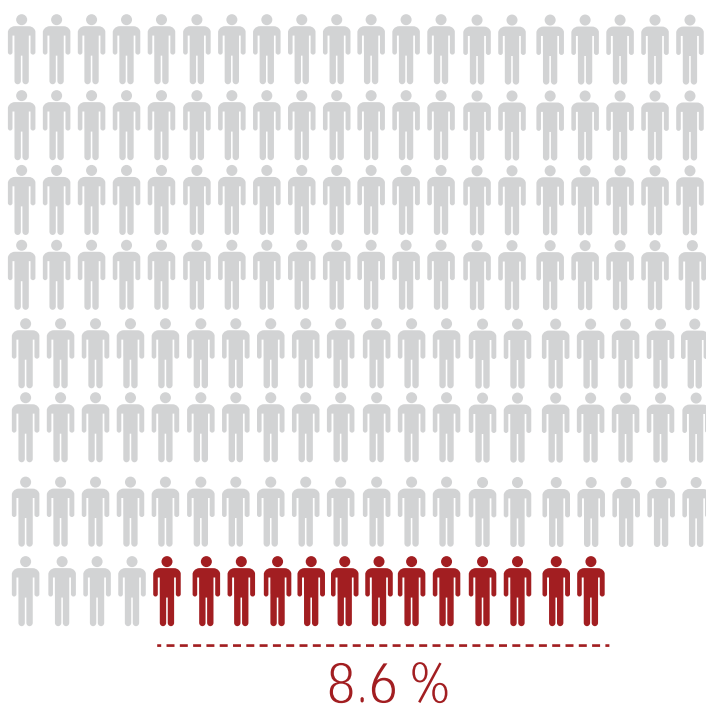

Rate per 100,000 population
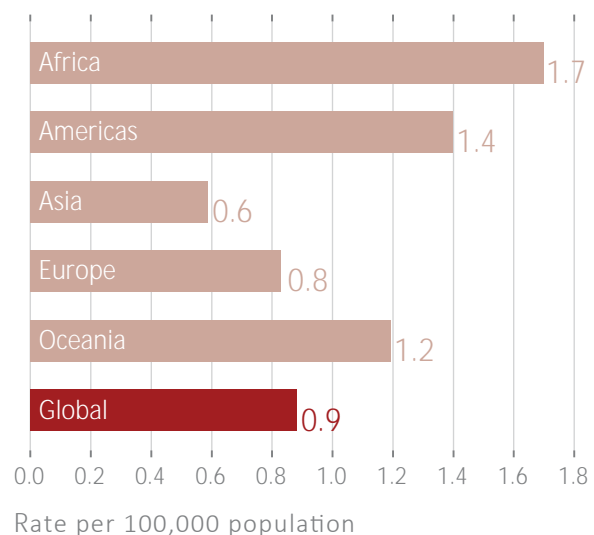
Note: Rate estimates based on data for 4 countries in Africa, 14 countries in the Americas; 9 countries in Asia; 21 countries in Europe; and 3 countries in Oceania.

Source: Elaboration based on UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

13 For more, see Campbell, J.C. (2007), in *Trauma, Violence and Abuse 8(3);* and Weizman-Henelius, G. (2012), in *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 27(8).

Fig. 2.2.2: Number and share of victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide out of total homicide victims, by region (2012 or latest year)
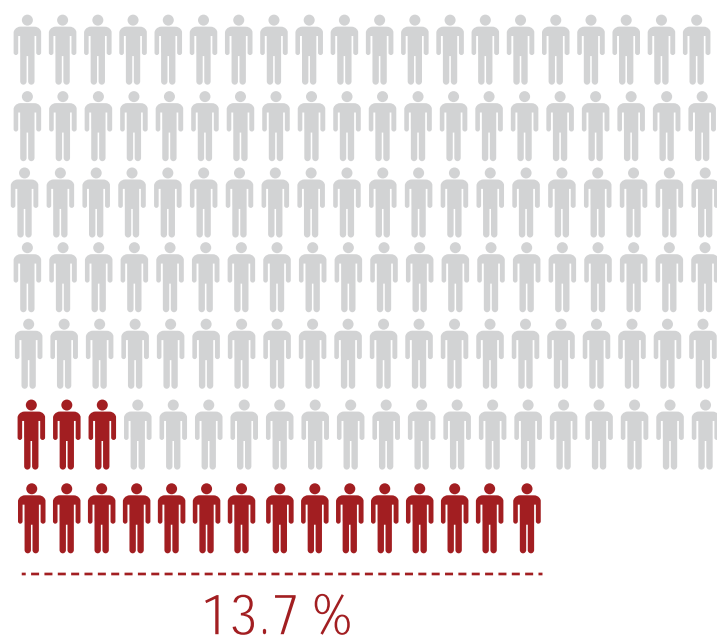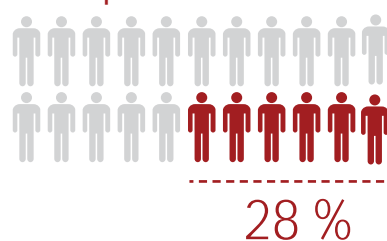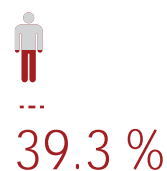

Americas

8.6 %

Asia

20.5 %

Africa

13.7 %

Europe

28 %

Oceania

39.3 %
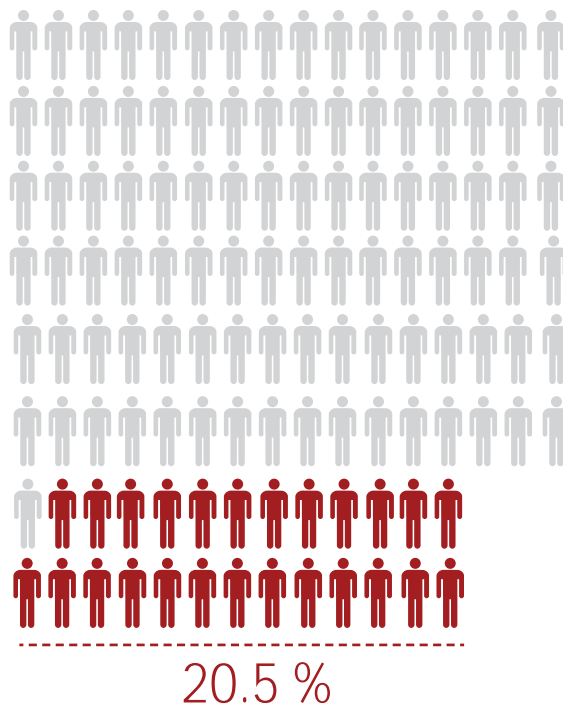
Victim of homicide   Victim of intimate partner/family-related homicide   = 1,000

Note: estimates based on data for 4 countries in Africa, 14 countries in the Americas; 9 countries in Asia; 21 countries in Europe; and 3 countries in Oceania.

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

The enduring risk factors for intimate partner/family-related homicide may explain some of the stability of its prevalence. When not addressed through non-violent mechanisms of reconciliation, conflicts and disputes between individuals living in family contexts or as couples can have violent outcomes, especially when certain concomitant factors or enablers are at play, such as power relations based on gender, or patterns of alcohol use (see chapter 3). Factors of that nature tend not to change in the short term.

Fig. 2.2.3: Total homicide rate and intimate partner/family-related homicide rate, selected countries (2006-2011)
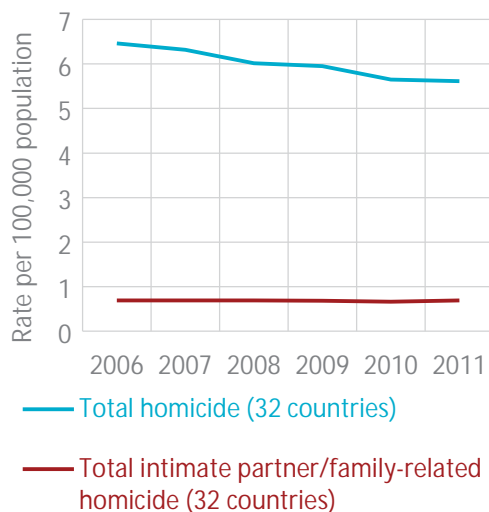
Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

However, while intimate partner/family-related homicide appears to be very stable at the global level, this disguises nuances across regions (the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe 2006-2011) (see figure 2.2.4). For example, female victim rates of intimate partner/family-related homicide are consistently higher than male rates for this type of homicide, and there is more fluctuation than can be seen at the global level. In promising trends, levels of intimate partner/family-related homicide for both sexes are decreasing in selected countries in Asia and Oceania for which data are available.

Intimate partner/family-related homicide as a component of violence against women

Violence against women is a very broad concept that encompasses forms of physical, sexual and

Intimate partner/family-related homicide: progress in prevention

In the United States of America, various programmes termed "high-risk team networks"[a] or "lethality assessment programmes"[b] have emerged at State-level to coordinate the sharing of information among law enforcement, social and health services about those experiencing intimate partner or family-related violence (mainly women) who are at risk of being killed at the hands of intimate partners or family members.[c] These programmes are based on the concept that there are several predictors of intimate partner and family-related homicide; among them, previous physical abuse, attempted strangulation, threats with weapons, stalking, sexual assault, and obsessive jealous and controlling behaviour.[d] When people experiencing such violence seek help from various services such as law enforcement or health care, those services screen them and, through a risk assessment tool, identify cases with a high likelihood of reoccurrence or of lethal assault. Individual intervention plans may involve everything from monitoring offenders to sharing information across the many disciplines of law, justice, health and social services, to working preventatively to protect those experiencing violence and their families. Such measures seem to show a good degree of effectiveness; for example, over the eight years this model has been in place in the State of Massachusetts, 92 per cent of the 106 high-risk individuals identified have reported no subsequent assault and there have been no homicides.[e]

a See, for example, Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center. *Domestic violence high risk team network*.
b Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. *Lethality Assessment Program – Maryland Model*.
c Hanson, B. (2013). *Preventing and Reducing Domestic Violence Homicides*. United States Department of Justice.
d Campbell, J.C., et al. (2003), in *American Journal of Public Health* 93(7).
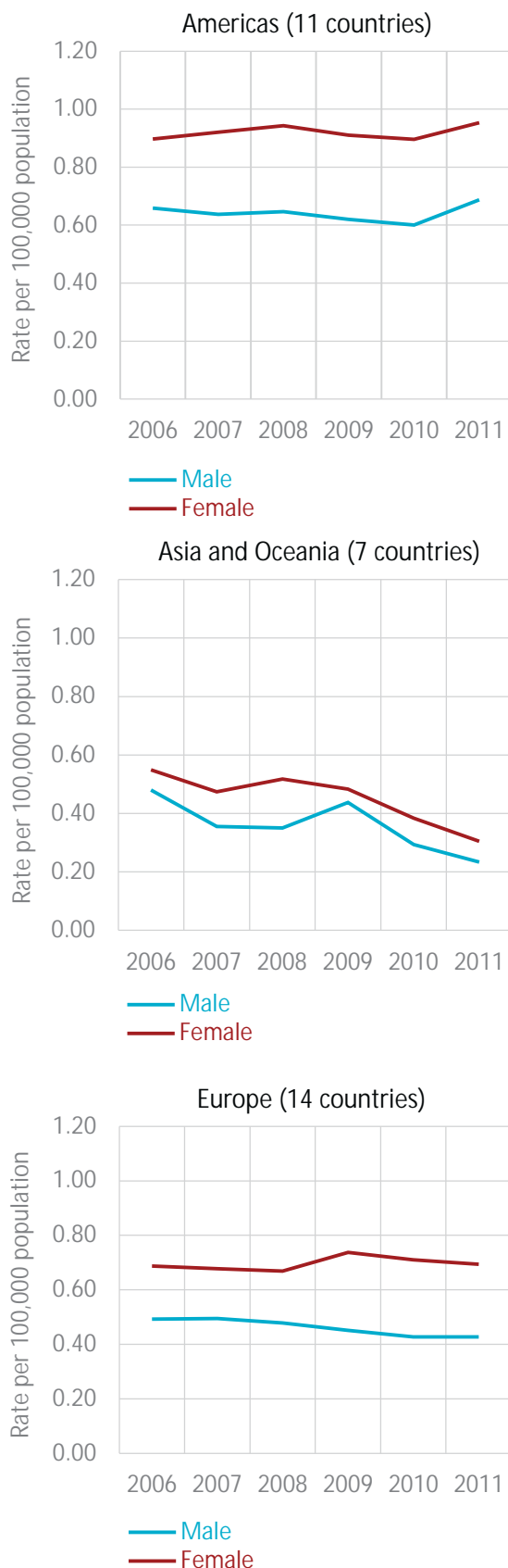e Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center. *Op.Cit*.

psychological violence.[14] According to the Beijing Declaration, violence against women "is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement."[15] There are multiple challenges to measuring all forms of violence against women because of its complexity, the high "dark figure" that affects data based on victim reports to authorities (law enforcement and public health), the different means and criteria for collecting data on victimization which may not be comparable, and the difficulty of accurately measuring certain types of violence against women (such as psychological violence).[16]

14 Violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. United Nations General Assembly (1994). A/RES/48/104.

15 United Nations (1996). *The Beijing Declaration*. Para. 73f.

16 For more information on those challenges, see Jansen, H.A.F.M. (2012). *Prevalence surveys on violence against women: Challenges around indicators, data collection and use*. UNWOMEN.

Fig. 2.2.4: Intimate partner/family-related homicide rate, by sex, Americas, Asia and Oceania, and Europe (2006-2011)

Americas (11 countries)

Male
Female

Asia and Oceania (7 countries)

Male
Female

Europe (14 countries)

Male
Female

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

The killing of women on the basis of their gender represents the ultimate form of violence against women. In some countries, legislation recognizes the vulnerability of women to violence and makes a link between homicide and violence against women.[17] Terms such as "femicide" or "femicide" have been used to define the gender-related killing of women, which itself can take many forms. For example, "honour"-related killings, dowry-related killings, as well as witchcraft or sorcery-related killings, are direct forms of gender-related homicide that almost exclusively target women, whereas more indirect forms include other types of killings that may not be counted as homicides.[18] Such homicides are poorly captured by official statistics, which rarely provide information on homicide motives. But what does emerge from available statistical evidence relating to the relationship between victims and offenders is that a significant portion of lethal violence against women takes place in a domestic environment.

Given the aforementioned challenges of measuring gender-related violence in a comprehensive manner, exploring intimate partner/family-related homicide is one way of gaining a clearer understanding of the killing of women due to gender motives.[19] In contrast to other types of homicide in which the victims are predominantly men, the percentage of female homicide victims resulting from intimate partner/family-related homicide is much higher than the corresponding percentage of male victims in all regions. Homicide of this type is the ultimate consequence of unequal power relationships between men and women in the private sphere, which it serves to reinforce and sustain.[20] Intimate

17 For example, in Mexico, the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2007) defines femicide violence as "the most extreme form of gender violence against women, produced by the violation of their human rights in public and private spheres and formed by the set of misogynist actions that can lead to the impunity of society and the State and culminate in the homicide and other forms of violent death of women." (article 21).

18 United Nations General Assembly (2012). A/HRC/20/16. Para. 15-16.

19 There are two main theoretical approaches in intimate partner homicide research, notably the "gender perspective" that sees intimate partner violence, particularly against women, as an instrument used by men to maintain their dominance in a patriarchal society, where gender roles and relationships are often crystallized in certain practices and where violence may be a tool to enforce them. The other perspective, the "violence perspective" suggests that the motivation for homicide against intimate partners is no different from the motivation for other types of violence, such as individual defiance or social disadvantage. For more, see Kivivuori, J. and M. Lehti (2012), in *Homicide Studies* 16 (1): 60.

20 Fulu, E. et al. (2013). *Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it?* UNDP, UNFPA, UN

partner/family-related homicide represents a small share of total acts of violence against women, but its very nature, as well as the fact that data on intimate partner/family-related homicide are increasingly available and comparable, make such indicators extremely valuable for understanding and monitoring patterns of violence against women.

It is estimated that of all the women killed in 2012 (93,000 women), 43,600 (47 per cent) were killed by their family members or intimate partners, whereas 20,000 of all male homicide victims (6 per cent) were killed by such perpetrators. Thus, at the global level, more than twice as many women as men are killed by their intimate partners or family members. In absolute terms, the highest numbers of such killings of women take place in Asia and Africa (see figure 2.2.5), but their relative share in the total number of female homicides in each region tells a slightly different story.

Of particular note is the fact that most (over 50 per cent) female victims of homicide in Asia, Europe and Oceania (see figure 2.2.6) are killed by their intimate partners or family members. As such, the killing of women in those regions is effectively a function of intimate partner/family-related violence and, in some countries in those regions, the elimination of intimate partner/family member homicides would substantially reduce the total number of female homicides.

Fig. 2.2.5: **Number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide, by region (2012 or latest year)**
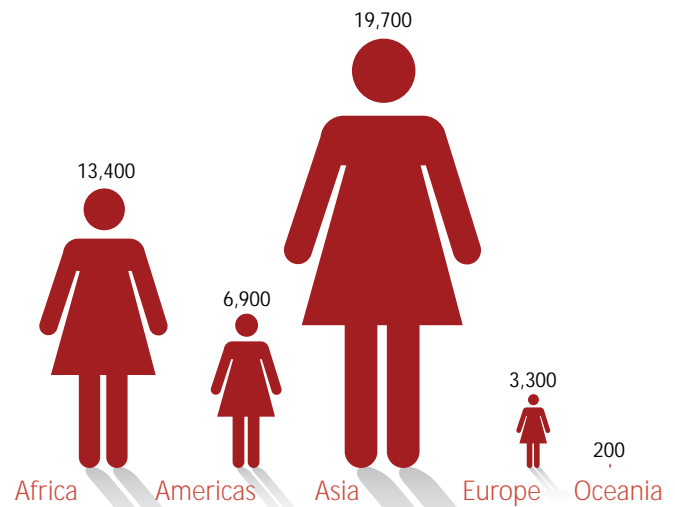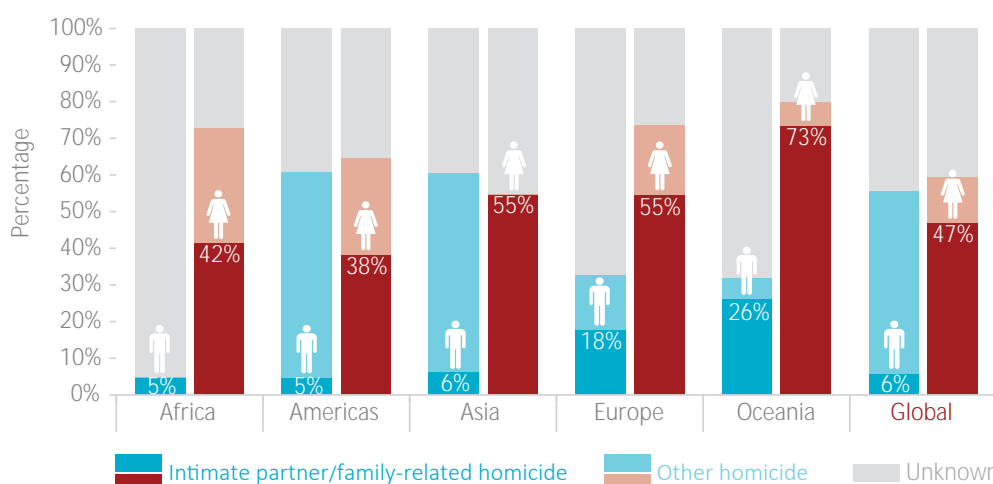

Note: Estimates based on data for 4 countries in Africa, 14 countries in the Americas; 9 countries in Asia; 21 countries in Europe; and 3 countries in Oceania.

Source: Elaboration based on UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

Intimate partner versus family-related homicide

A clearer picture of the burden of lethal violence borne by women can be drawn when sex-disaggregated homicide data are available that can distinguish homicides committed by intimate partners from those perpetrated by other family members. In 18 countries (mostly in Europe),[21] almost equal shares of victims are killed by intimate partners (53

Fig. 2.2.6: **Male and female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide as a percentage of total male and total female homicide victims, by region (latest year)**

Note: Estimates based on data for 4 countries in Africa, 14 countries in the Americas; 9 countries in Asia; 21 countries in Europe; and 3 countries in Oceania.

Source: Elaboration based on UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

WOMEN and UNV.

21 UNECE Statistical Division Database.

South Africa: the enduring nature of intimate partner homicide

An example of the enduring nature of intimate partner homicide can be seen in the recent experience of South Africa, a country with a high homicide rate (31 per 100,000 population in 2012). The South African Medical Research Council conducted a study of female homicide for two points in time, 1999 and 2009, and found a substantial (50 per cent) decrease in the overall rate of female homicide over the 10-year period, but less of a decrease in the rate of females killed by their intimate partners.[a] The rate of female homicide was 12.9 per 100,000 females in 2009, a little over half of the 24.7 in 1999, while the rate of women killed by their intimate partners decreased 36 per cent over the decade (8.8 to 5.6 per 100,000 females). The decrease is encouraging but South Africa's female homicide rate is still five times the global rate (2.6 per 100,000 women) and intimate partner homicide now accounts for 57 per cent of total female homicides in the country.
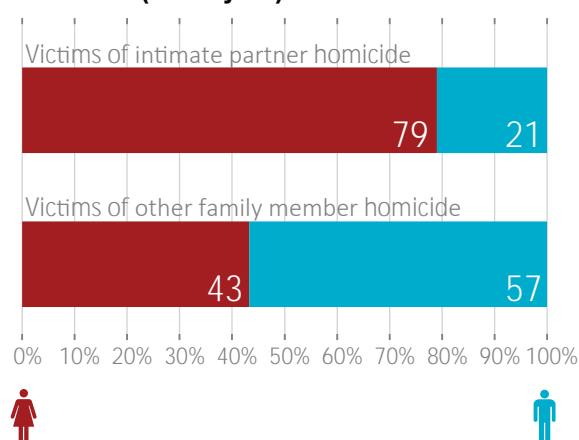
[a] Abrahams, N. et al. (2012), in South African Medical Research Council Research Brief.

Fig. 2.2.7: Average percentage of male and female victims of types of intimate partner/family-related homicide, selected countries (latest year)

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database.

per cent) and by other family members (47 per cent). There is, however, far greater disparity in the sex distribution of victims killed by these perpetrators, with 79 per cent of victims killed by their intimate partners being women (see figure 2.2.7).

Homicide and gender parity

Available data suggest that in countries with very low (and decreasing) homicide rates (less than 1 per 100,000 population), female victims constitute an increasing share of total victims and, in some of those countries, the share of male and female victims appears to be reaching parity. For example, in Japan and Hong Kong, China, which have some of the lowest homicide rates in the world (0.3 and 0.4 per 100,000 population in 2011-2012, respectively), females account for just over half of all victims of homicide (see figure 2.2.8).

"Honour killings": there is no honour in homicide

"In the name of preserving family "honour", women and girls are shot, stoned, burned alive, strangled, smothered and knifed to death with horrifying regularity." — Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 March 2010.[a]

"Honour"-related homicides are the killings of (mostly) women or girls by a member of their family for an actual or presumed act of sexual or behavioural transgression (such as adultery, sexual intercourse or pregnancy outside marriage, refusal to enter an arranged marriage, wearing certain clothing or engaging in activities deemed unsuitable) that is perceived to bring shame upon their family. Such killings are the ultimate manifestation of discrimination against women and girls; the ultimate act of gender-based violence.

It is a challenge to differentiate statistics on "honour killings" from the broader field of statistics on female homicide, as data on this particular motive for homicide are not generated by most police forces. Qualitative studies and interviews on the dynamics and acceptance

of "honour killings" have been produced, but little reliable quantitative data is available.[b] For example, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, media coverage and the Crown Prosecution Service documented an average of 12 "honour killings", which were investigated by the police, each year between 1998 and 2007.[c]

"Honour" crimes may not be specific categories within legal systems, but in some countries they may be treated distinctly from non-"honour"-based violence against women.[d] In the last few years, several countries have repealed aspects of their criminal and penal codes that provided for mitigated sentences for perpetrators of "honour killings", and the practice is increasingly criminalized.[e]
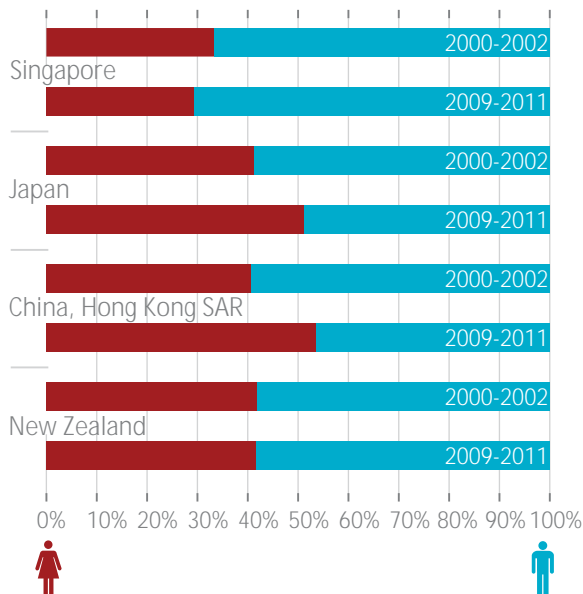
[a] UN OHCHR (2010).
[b] See, for example, UNDP and UNFPA (2007); Oberwittler, D. and Kasselt, J. (2011); Eisner, M. and L. Ghuneim (2013), in *Aggressive Behaviour* 39(5).
[c] Crown Prosecution Service (2007); Crown Prosecution Service (2007), in United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women.
[d] United Nations General Assembly (2002). A/57/169.
[e] United Nations General Assembly (2012). A/HRC/20/16.

Fig. 2.2.8: **Percentage of total homicide victims, by sex, selected countries with homicide rates below 1.0 per 100,000 population in 2009-2011, Eastern Asia and Oceania (2000-2002 and 2009-2011)**

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

Fig. 2.2.9: **Average homicide rate, by sex, six European countries with homicide rates below 1.0 per 100,000 population in 2011 (2000-2011)**

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

Fig. 2.2.10: **Percentage distribution of suspects brought into formal contact with police for completed intentional homicide, by sex, selected low-homicide countries (2009-2011)**
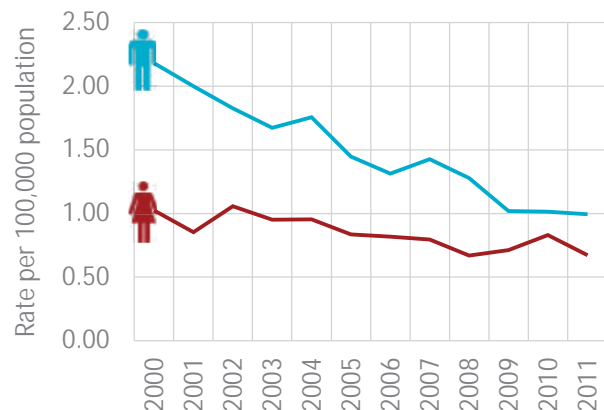

Source: UNODC Homicide Statistics (2013).

In another group of countries with low homicide rates, made up entirely of European countries, the pattern is the same. The homicide trend is also a downward one, but the pace of the decrease is noticeably faster for rates of male homicide than for rates of female homicide, and the historical gender gap is closing (see figure 2.2.9). If such trends continue, in years to come, there could be more female homicide victims than male victims in a number of countries.

Yet while some countries with very low homicide rates are approaching gender parity in terms of homicide victimization, the same cannot be said for homicide offenders. There remains an imbalance from a perpetrator perspective, with the vast majority of formal suspects[22] of intentional homicide being men (for more, see chapter 5). The overwhelming pattern is still that men kill both men and women (see figure 2.2.10), irrespective of the increasing gender parity of the victims in some countries.

Even in some of the world's safest and most developed countries, it appears that homicide is very much the tip of the iceberg when it comes to viol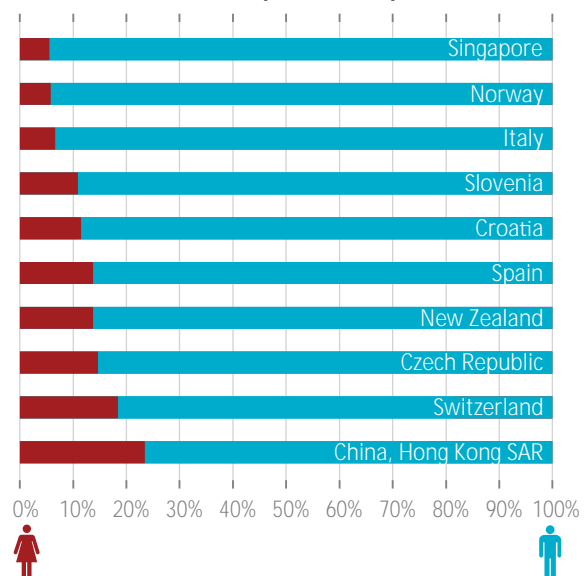ence against women. Although the decrease in female homicide victims (see figure 2.2.9) is a positive trend in itself, its slow pace highlights the difficulty of eradicating practices and behaviours that are all too often ingrained in cultural and societal norms around the world. Available data show that even in countries with very low homicide rates, a significant share of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. For example, at some point in their lifetime, roughly a quarter to a third of women in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partner.[23]

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22 Suspects brought into formal contact with the police may include persons suspected of, or arrested and cautioned for, a criminal offence by the police, at the national level.

23 See UNWOMEN (2011).

Intimate partner violence in Japan

The experience of Japan indicates that in a context of very low levels of homicidal violence, additional efforts may still be required to address intimate partner and family-related violence. Every three years, the Japanese Cabinet Office conducts a "Survey on Violence between Men and Women." In the 2002 survey, 4.4 per cent of female respondents reported that the spousal violence they experienced was severe enough to make them fear for their life.[a] In subsequent surveys in 2005 and 2008, over 10 per cent of married women and approximately 3 per cent of married men reported that they experienced either "physical assault", "mental harassment or frightening threats", or "sexual coercion" by their spouse on many occasions.[b] More than one in five married women and approximately 15 per cent of married men reported having experienced spousal abuse on one or two occasions (see figure 2.2.11).

In response to these new findings about the particular vulnerability of women, in the same period, Japan enacted several laws designed to protect women and prevent domestic violence.[c] Since the enactment of those laws, more arrests for intimate partner violence have occurred. This could indicate that women who survive such violence feel more empowered by the protection provided by the laws, and, as a result, an increase in the number of arrests for non-lethal spousal violence has occurred (see figure 2.2.12). It is noteworthy that the homicide rate of women killed by their husbands and the corresponding number of husbands arrested for this crime was very stable over the time period, reaffirming the global trend in the stability of intimate partner homicide.

Fig. 2.2.11: Percentage distribution of victimization experience of spousal abuse, by sex, Japan (2008)

Legend:
- Many occasions
- Once or twice
- Never
- No answer
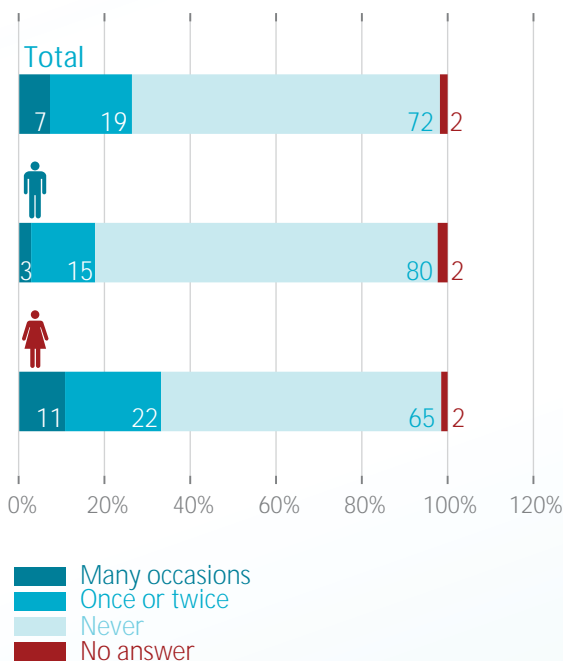
Source: Cabinet Office, Japan (2009). P. 34.

Fig. 2.2.12: Arrests for cases of spousal violence against wives by husbands, Japan (1996-2008)

Number of arrests

Legend:
- Murder
- Injury
- Assault
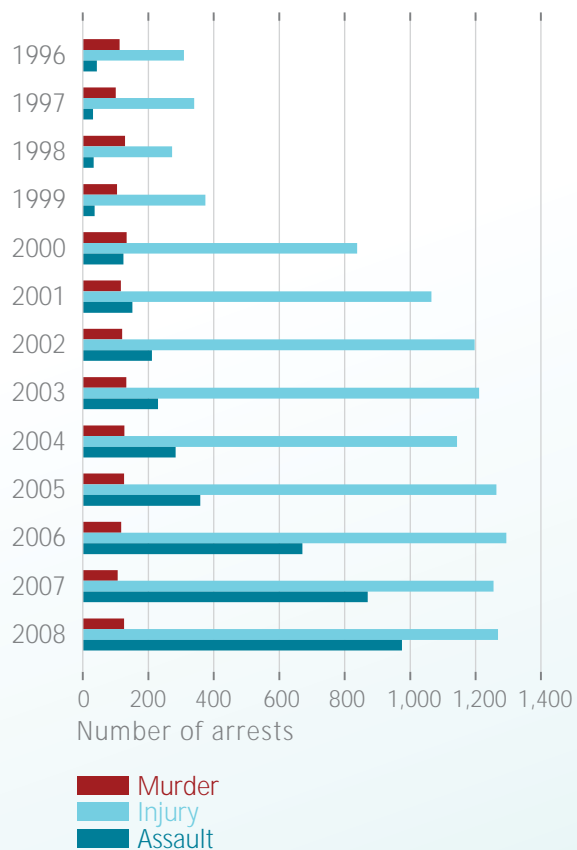
Source: Cabinet Office, Japan (2009). P. 35.

[a] Cabinet Office, Japan (2004). P. 31.
[b] "Spouse" includes common-law partners, spouses living separately, and also ex-spouses. In the 2008 survey, this term was also expanded to include current partners (boyfriend/girlfriend).
[c] For example, the Law on Proscribing Stalking Behaviour and Assisting Victims (enacted 2000), and the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and Protection of Victims (enacted 2001).

Other interpersonal homicide

The previous section deals with homicide in the private or family sphere, but many forms of lethal violence, which are not connected to other criminal activities or socio-political violence, also exist outside domestic relationships. This type of lethal violence can be attributed to the very nature of coexisting with others and the concomitant frictions and differences that exist in some relationships. It may, for example, be rooted in disputes between neighbours, revenge-related killings or may result from random and seemingly unprovoked acts in which the victim is simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some types of interpersonal homicide particularly affect women, especially when linked with forms of sexual violence, and they should be considered a component of violence against women in general.

The division between what can be considered "other interpersonal" homicide or socio-political homicide (as discussed in the last section of this chapter) is not always clear, but the former is the case when killing is not instrumental to the achievement of a further goal, and when the personal dimension drives the homicidal act. Such acts can happen outside in the street, or inside public spaces or establishments, and even at the home of the perpetrator or victim. But the motives that lead to homicides in the public sphere are not often recorded, which is why specific data relating to much "other interpersonal" homicide are difficult to come by.

Mass murder

No other type of homicide generates such public fear or stupefaction at its meaninglessness as that involving multiple victims. Due to its often shocking and sensational nature, particularly of so-called "rampage killings", mass murder also captures the attention of the public, the media and policymakers the world over, which no doubt colours perceptions of the prevalence and patterns of such events. Also affecting the view of mass murder is the fact that some such incidents bridge the divide between the "other interpersonal" and socio-political homicide typologies, since, depending on the number of victims, deaths due to acts of terror can also be considered mass murder.

Mass homicides may have a high profile, but they are actually low-frequency events, accounting, for example, for less than 1 per cent of all homicide cases in the United States and less than 3 per cent

in Finland and Sweden.[24] Despite the notoriety of this type of killings, there is no universal definition for what actually constitutes "mass murder", but for most purposes the term denotes the wilful homicide of at least four persons. A common form of mass murder is familicide,[25] which, due to its relationship-driven nature, actually spans both components of interpersonal homicide. In available data for both Finland and the United Kingdom, for example, most murders of four or more people have been familicides.[26] Other, more public, acts of mass murder, often called rampage or "spree" killings, have occurred in schools and workplaces around the world.

Other interpersonal homicide in India

As denoted in figure 2.2 in the introduction to chapter 2, roughly one in every five homicides (21 per cent) in India is linked to selected forms of other interpersonal-type homicides. From 2000 to 2012, over half of all such homicides were the result of property-related disputes (54 per cent) and the remainder were associated with personal vendettas (46 per cent). Homicides motivated by personal vendetta have decreased by 40 per cent since 2000, while property-related disputes have decreased by 25 per cent.

Fig. 2.2.13: **Rate of homicide motivated by personal vendetta or property-related disputes, India (2000-2012)**
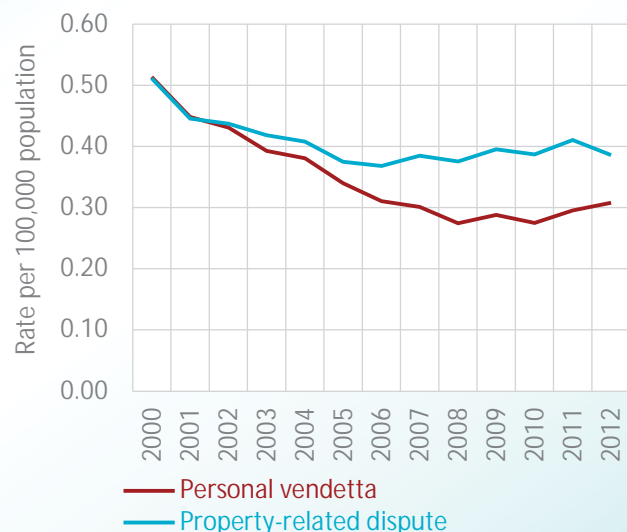
Source: National Crime Records Bureau, India. (2012).

24 Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States (2013); and European Homicide Monitor.

25 "Familicide" refers to the killing of multiple family members. In its most common form, it is the killing of an intimate partner and child(ren), but may also include the killing of parents and/or siblings. While typically considered a form of intimate partner homicide, given the number of victims in such events, this type of homicide is often "mass murder".

26 Government of the United Kingdom (2012); and National Research Institute of Legal Policy, Finnish Homicide Monitoring System (2011).

As technology now enables instant access to global news, awareness of mass murder events has increased, but mass murder is not a new phenomenon. In the United States alone, some 909 mass killings were documented between 1900 and 1999,[27] with the frequency of mass public shootings, the most visible form of mass murder, increasing in the 1960s. More recently, between 2002 and 2011, there was an average of 32 acts of mass
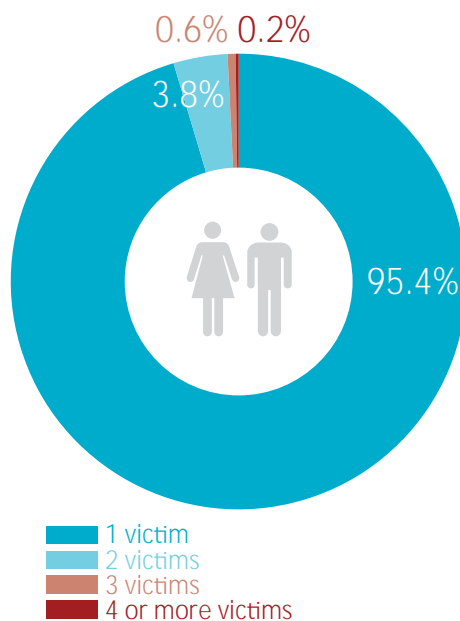
murder per year; a relatively stable trend in spite of the overall declining trend for all homicides. All those mass murder events resulted in more than 1500 victims over 10 years, which is a small fraction of all homicides that occur in the United States.[28] The fact that an average of 70 per cent of all mass murders in that time period involved firearms[29] points to the accessibility of firearms as being a decisive element in their perpetration.

2.3 SOCIO-POLITICAL HOMICIDE

In contrast to the two other homicide typologies, this type of homicide can be seen to be the outcome of the socio-political agenda of its perpetrator(s). As its name implies, socio-political homicide may be politically motivated, or particular individuals or groups may be targeted due to their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality or status, amongst others. For example, homicides linked to hate crimes or acts of terror are both considered to be part of this typology. In all such cases, a social dimension (such as the management of diversity in society) or a power-related struggle comes into play.

Data availability on socio-political homicide is very limited, either because some killings of this nature are often excluded from homicide counts at the country level or, when included, they cannot be statistically identified due to a lack of information about the motive and context of such killings. For these reasons, this section provides a snapshot of some of their manifestations.

Hate Crimes

Crimes motivated by the perpetrator's bias against the victim's race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability, amongst others, hate crimes can also be thought of as products of social prejudice. Ingrained attitudes may promote an atmosphere that condones violence against marginalized segments of society, often resulting in "message crimes" that instil fear or terror based on prejudicial attitudes.[30] As they not only affect indi-

Fig. 2.2.14: Number of homicide cases with four or more victims; and related number of victims, United States (2002-2011)

— Number of victims in homicide cases with four or more victims
— Number of homicide cases with four or more victims

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States (2013).

Fig. 2.2.15: Average percentage distribution of homicide cases, by number of victims, United States (2002-2011)

0.6% 0.2%
3.8%
95.4%

■ 1 victim
■ 2 victims
■ 3 victims
■ 4 or more victims

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States (2013).

27 Duwe. G. (2004), in *Justice Quarterly*, 21.

28 Some mass homicides are not represented in the data because they have been reported by law enforcement agencies in separate records, with a maximum of 11 victims per record. For example, an incident with 32 victims was reported as 4 separate incidents, with 10 victims each in the "first" three incidents and two in the "fourth" incident. The net result is that these data somewhat over-count the number of mass murder incidents and somewhat undercount the average number of victims per mass murder incident.

29 Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States (2013).

30 Mouzos, J. and S. Thompson (2000), in Australian Institute

vidual victims, but also members of the victim's group and even society as a whole, such crimes are threats to social cohesion.[31]

Hate crimes can consist of a variety of violent and non-violent crimes, ranging from threats and robbery to rape, with homicide their most extreme manifestation. Accurately identifying, classifying and recording a homicide as a hate crime can be particularly challenging, as it requires the determination of a causal link between an offender's prejudice towards the victim and their act of lethal violence.

There are relatively few cases of known hate crime-related homicide, and studies of this issue are few in number. For example, gender-based killing due to sexual orientation and gender identity is a phenomenon that has only recently been documented and only very limited, often anecdotal, data are available.[32] That said, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions has documented murders believed to have been committed on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.[33] Furthermore, according to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, homicides of transgender people were documented in 816 cases in 55 countries between January 2008 and December 2011.[34] Many of those homicides are believed to be the result of hate-based violence, but data on motivation are extremely limited, thus it is not possible to identify all of them as being specifically due to the victim's identification as transgender. In South Africa, information from case studies has indicated that 31 lesbians have been murdered in homophobic attacks since 1998.[35] An academic study in Australia that examined gay-hate related homicides in New South Wales identified approximately four gay men killed due to their sexual orientation each year over the 10-year period covered by the study (1989-1999).[36]

Fig. 2.3.1: **Homicide rate among total population and among foreign residents, selected European countries (2010)**

Rate per 100,000 population

■ Total population
■ Foreign residents

Source: UN-CTS (2011); data on Austria include attempted homicides.

Other social prejudices, such as those based on race, religion or ethnic origin, can also result in lethal violence. When looking at the scarce data available, it can be noted that in three European countries which do have data, foreign residents are over-represented among homicide victims (see figure 2.3.1). Such data cannot be strictly interpreted as hate crime-related, as it is not known whether those victims were specifically targeted due to their membership of a racial, ethnic or religious group, but it does indicate that foreign residents can face a higher risk of victimization than the general population.

As mentioned earlier, homicide is the most extreme manifestation of hate-related violence. Other than lethal violence, crimes motivated by bias or prejudice are also difficult to identify, as many victims of hate crimes are reluctant to report them, which means that many hate crimes remain invisible.[37]

Acts of terror

Often resulting in multiple victims, acts of terror leading to death are a global phenomenon but also a challenging category to examine statistically, as very few countries produce data on such deaths. Those with multiple victims, which result in mass murder incidents, may be classified in different ways based on varying definitions.

of Criminology: *Trends and Issues in crime and criminal justice.* No. 155.

31 Bleich, E. (2007), in *American Behavioural Scientist*, 51. Also, for example, in some case law, family members of victims were also considered victims, and sometimes granted compensation. See Inter-American Court of Human Rights, (2009).

32 United Nations General Assembly (2012). A/HRC/20/16.
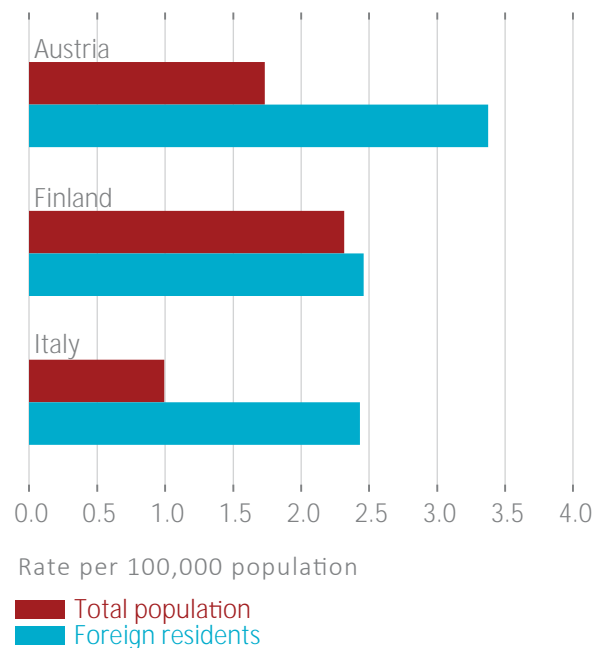
33 United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2013) A/HRC/24/23.

34 United Nations General Assembly (2012). *Op.Cit.*

35 Wesley, T. (2012), in *BUWA! A Journal on African Women's Experiences.*

36 Mouzos, J. and S. Thompson. (2000). *Op.Cit.*

37 For an overview of hate crimes in Europe, see European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2012).

From a conceptual perspective, the label "intentional homicide" is certainly broad enough to encompass such deaths, and whilst perpetrators may face additional charges, such as acts of terrorism, acts against the State, or even crimes against humanity, the core act still concerns the unlawful intentional killing of another. That said, in national recording practices, such deaths are not always recorded and counted as intentional homicide, or in other cases, though considered as such, a specific statistical count is not available.[38]

Unlawful killings by law enforcement authorities

Some of the most challenging incidents to identify and account for statistically as "intentional homicide" are unlawful killings by law enforcement authorities, including the police. The State has an obligation to safeguard life:[39] the use of lethal force by the police is strictly limited by international human rights law and relevant standards, and is to be applied only in situations where it is necessary to protect life.[40] Deaths occurring as a result of the necessary and proportionate use of force by law enforcement officers do not constitute unlawful killings. Unplanned killings that result from excessive use of force in law enforcement operations may be unlawful, although they would not qualify as intentional homicides in the absence of any element of intentionality.

Among the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions holds the mandate for examining situations of unlawful killing by the police, among other situations of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.[41] For example, killings by the police may occur in situations where the police are not pursuing law enforcement objectives, such as attempts at extortion that may escalate into extrajudicial killings; engaging in "social cleansing" operations and intentionally killing criminals or members of marginalized groups; or in even more extreme situations, where police are operating as a militia or death squad.[42] All such cases should be counted as intentional homicides, consistently with the standard definition, but little statistical information is available on such homicides, often due to a lack of recording and tracking, as well as a lack of investigation into the nature of the killings, all of which hamper data collection efforts. Findings, conclusions and recommendations of the United Nations Special Rapporteur are submitted to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, and constitute both a source of data and examples.[43]

Mob violence/Vigilantism

Cases of "vigilante" or "mob" violence have been reported in different places around the world. The nature of these acts can vary widely, but at their core they are "killings carried out in violation of the law by private individuals with the purported aim of crime control, or the control of perceived deviant or immoral behaviour."[44]

Although vigilantism has occurred across the world, recent studies have focused on this phenomenon in Africa, the Americas and Asia.[45] For example, in Uganda in 2010, there were 438 fatalities due to acts of mob justice, accounting for 25

38 Country practice varies as to whether such deaths are included in police homicide statistics. For example, neither the 3,000+ victims of the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, nor the nearly 200 killed in terrorist attacks on 11 March 2004 in Madrid were recorded as homicides in national criminal justice statistics. By contrast, the 52 victims of the 7 July 2005 London bombings and the 77 victims of the terror events of 22 July 2011 in Norway were included in official police statistics as homicides. Homicide statistics in India include murder related to "terrorist/extremist" violence.

39 This obligation of the State consists of three main aspects: a) the duty to refrain, by its agents, from unlawful killing; b) the duty to investigate suspicious deaths; and c) in certain circumstances, a positive obligation to take steps to prevent the avoidable loss of life. (For example, see European Court of Human Rights (2013); Ovey, C. and R. White (2002).

40 Principle 9 of the *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials* (1990) provides for instance: "Law enforcement officials shall not use firearms against persons except in self-defence or defence of others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury, to prevent the perpetration of a particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life, to arrest a person presenting such a danger and resisting their authority, or to prevent his or her escape, and only when less extreme means are insufficient to achieve these objectives. In any event, intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life." Article 3 of the *Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials*, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/169, states that "Law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duty." Principle 3 of the *Interpol Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials* states that "Officers must never knowingly use more force than is reasonable, nor should they abuse their authority."

41 United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2011). A/HRC/RES/17/5

42 United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2010). A/HRC/14/24/Add.8. Para. 9.

43 See, for example, United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council. *Reports of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions*. For example: A/HRC/21/49; A/HRC/22/67; A/HRC/23/51.

44 United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2009). A/64/187. Para. 15.

45 See United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2009).

per cent of all homicides in the country.[46] The most common victims of mob violence are suspected criminals, generally young males, especially those suspected of committing theft.[47] Other targets of "vigilante justice" include suspected murderers, members of gangs or organized criminal groups, suspected or convicted sexual offenders, suspected "witches" and street children.[48]

Mob violence can indicate a population's lack of faith or trust in the rule of law and its implementing institutions to provide justice. If people feel the criminal justice system is not legitimate, is corrupt or unresponsive, they may feel obliged to take matters into their own hands to enforce laws. For example, in a study of formal and informal dispute resolution systems in poorer, rural areas of South America, vigilantism appeared to be five times greater in communities where informal mechanisms of justice were not functioning.[49]

Shooting the messengers: the killing of journalists and humanitarian aid workers

As professionals who often work in insecure environments, mostly in response to natural or man-made disasters, journalists and aid workers are both prone to certain risks that can threaten their safety and even their lives.

Journalists, as purveyors of information who seek out and report the news from around the world, often venture into the darkest corners to shed light on current events. A considerable number of them are subjected to intimidation, physical violence, kidnapping or illegal detention in direct relation to their work and, in extreme cases, they can be killed because of their professional activity. Some are killed in war or conflict zones or in situations of civil unrest, while others are the specific targets of homicidal violence.

It is challenging to disentangle the various motives behind such killings, but some data are available. According to UNESCO, since 1992 there have been 984 documented cases of killings of journalists, with over 600 of them occurring in the last 10 years.[50] UNESCO has also drawn attention to the

Fig. 2.3.2: Number of journalists killed, by region (2006-2012)
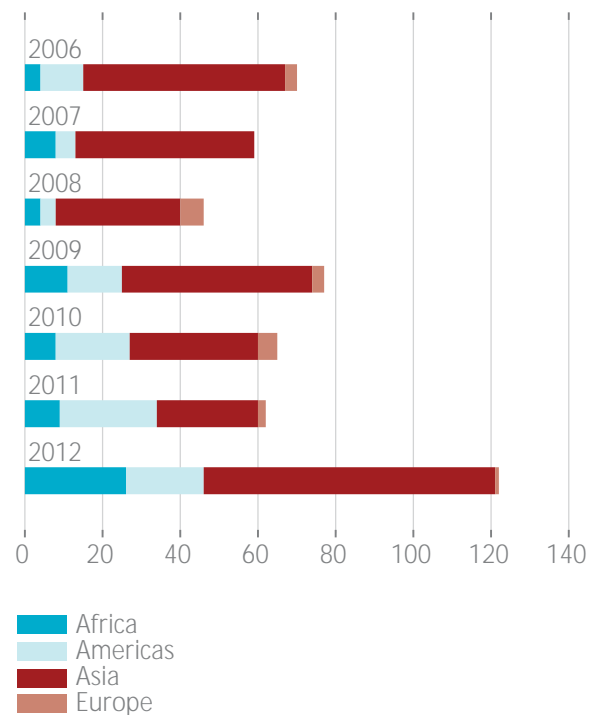
Source: UNESCO. *Facts and Figures of Killed Journalists from 2006-2012.*

fact that there is often impunity for many of the abuses against journalists,[51] which, in conjunction with a climate of violence, generates censorship, depriving citizens of the information they need to make informed decisions.

Besides UNESCO, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)[52] also tracks events around the world in which journalists are killed because of their professional activities. The statistics kept by each organization differ due to varying definitions as to who exactly is considered a journalist and what is considered a "killing in the line of duty"[53]

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46 Ugandan Police Force (2011). P. 7.

47 United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2009). Para. 58.

48 Ibid. Para. 64.

49 UNDP (2006). P. 14.

50 United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council

(2013). Para. 5; and UNESCO (2013). *UNESCO condemns the killing of journalists.*

51 See United Nations (2012). *Second Inter-Agency Meeting on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.*

52 The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is an independent, non-profit organization that promotes press freedom worldwide.

53 CPJ keeps statistics on the death of every journalist whom it is reasonably certain was killed in direct reprisal for his or her work; was killed in crossfire during combat situations; or was killed while carrying out a dangerous assignment such as coverage of a street protest. Journalists killed in accidents such as car or plane crashes are not included. UNESCO uses a broad definition and it refers to the killing of reporters, camera operators, photojournalists, television presenters, columnists, editors, broadcasters, radio presenters and other members of the media. Given these definitions, it is not always possible to differentiate between journalists who were victims of intentional homicide and those who were victims of war/conflict, based on these sources.

**Fig. 2.3.3:** Number of journalists killed in the line of duty (2003-2012)
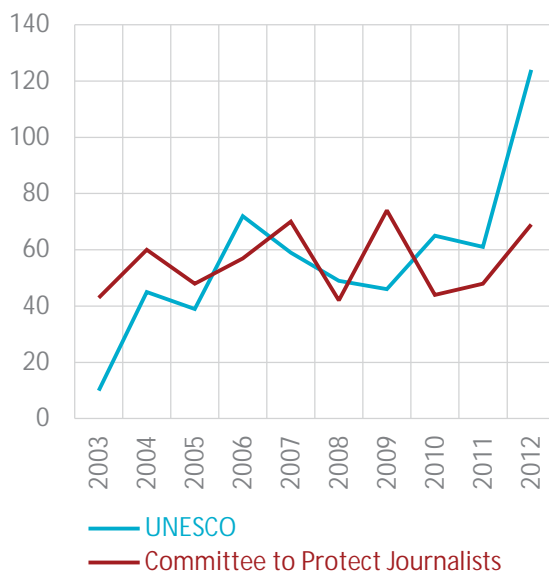
Source: UNESCO and Committee to Protect Journalists.

(see figure 2.3.3). In spite of these differences, the overall trends are similar, indicating an increase in the last year. According to UNESCO data, the number of killings of journalists reached a record high in 2012 (122 journalists killed) (see figure 2.3.2). Over half of those were killed in Asia, more than half of them in the Syrian Arab Republic alone.[54] Some 20 per cent of the journalists killed in 2012 were killed in Africa, two-thirds of them in Somalia. South America, Central America and the Caribbean each accounted for 8 per cent of all such killings.[55]

Many journalists are killed in contexts of armed conflict, as demonstrated by the large share of deaths occurring in Asia (particularly in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic), but a large amount of killings and attacks occur outside such situations. Most of those killed have been covering politics, war or corruption (see figure 2.3.4),[56] and, according to UNESCO, 95 per cent of all journalists killed since 2006 were local reporters, rather than foreign correspondents.[57] Print journalists made up the largest share of journalists killed between 2006 and 2012 (43 per cent), followed by television journalists (28 per

cent).[58] The killing of photojournalists has increased in the last few years, with over a third of the journalists killed in 2012 being camera operators or photographers.[59]

A significant share of journalists have been killed by organized criminal groups (see figure 2.3.5): according to the CPJ, of all the killings that specifically targeted journalists between 1992 and 2013, some 13 per cent were committed by criminal groups. Investigative journalism can become a real threat for criminal groups, some of which do not hesitate to exert violence and intimidation on the media in order to maintain a climate of silence around their illicit activities. It is even more alarming that no perpetrator was convicted in 77 per cent of those cases: impunity has an incrementally negative effect on the freedom and independence of journalists.

Fig. 2.3.4: Topics covered by journalists killed (1992-2013)
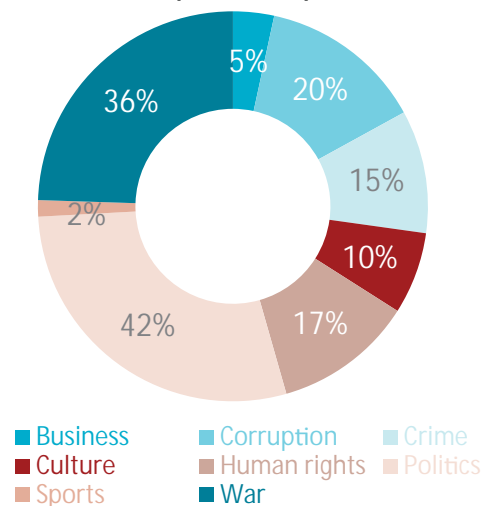
Note: The sum is higher than 100 as journalists killed could have been covering multiple topics.

Source: United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2012). A/HRC/20/22. Para. 6.

Most humanitarian organizations are accustomed to operating in violent settings, and violence against aid workers has always been a challenge to humanitarian access. Like journalists, aid workers[60] can be subjected to physical attacks in direct

54 See UNESCO (2012).

55 Ibid.

56 See United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2013).

57 UNESCO. *Facts and Figures of Killed Journalists from 2006-2012.*

58 Ibid.

59 United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council (2012). Para. 35.

60 Aid workers, as defined by the Aid Worker Security Database, are the employees and personnel of not-for-profit aid agencies, including both national and international staff, which provide material and technical assistance in humanitarian relief contexts. These include various locally contracted staff (e.g. transportation, security, etc.), as well as relief and multi-mandated (relief and development) organizations, such

relation to their work, which result in kidnapping, serious injury or even death. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), based on data from the Aid Worker Security Database,[61] the magnitude of the violence and the types of threats faced by aid workers have changed over the years.[62]

The Aid Worker Security Database does not disaggregate data by context and cannot provide information specifically on intentional homicides, but it does denote an increase in attacks against aid workers over the last decade (see figure 2.3.6), and a fluctuating though slightly increasing number of such workers killed in attacks. The increase in incidents against aid personnel has taken place in a period and context in which the number of humanitarian workers has also grown. However, the increase in attacks has surpassed the growth in numbers of aid workers, thus indicating an increased exposure to risk for humanitarian workers.[63]

In 2008, 127 aid workers were killed; the highest number on record. The decrease in killings of aid workers between 2008 and 2012 can be attributed in large part to improvements by aid organizations in security awareness and management systems, which allow for more effective risk assessment and mitigation by staff in the field.[64] Since 2009, six countries (Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic) have accounted for 75 per cent of all aid workers killed. Attacks on aid workers have become more sophisticated in recent years, and the tactics and weapons used, such as heavy explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), have become more lethal.[65] In 2013, attacks in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan have accounted for a significant share

as non-governmental organizations, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent, donor agencies and the agencies of the United Nations that belong to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO), as well as the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The definition of "aid worker" does not include United Nations peacekeeping personnel, human rights workers, election monitors, or purely political, religious or advocacy organizations.

61 The Aid Worker Security Database collects data on deliberate acts of violence affecting aid workers all over the world, through systematic media filtering or through information provided by affected aid organizations.
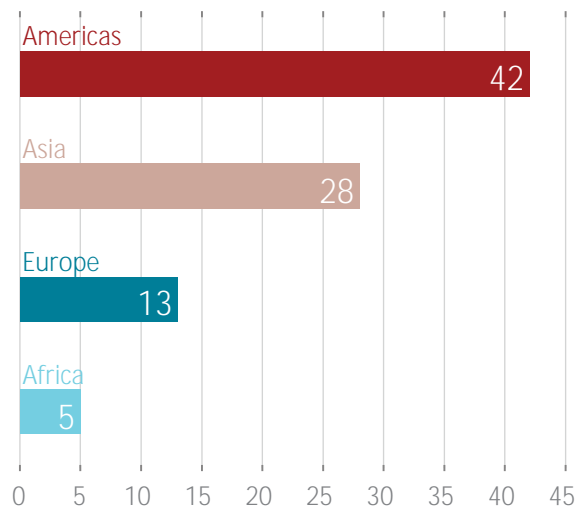
62 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (2011).

63 United Nations (2009). S/2012/376. Annex, Para. 32.

64 UNOCHA (2011).

65 Ibid.

Fig. 2.3.5: Number of journalist victims of homicide perpetrated by organized criminal groups, by region (1992-2013)

Note: Data for 2013 up to 13 November 2013.

Source: Committee to Protect Journalists.

of the increase in humanitarian workers killed during the course of the year.[66]

The killing of journalists and humanitarian aid workers has consequences beyond the loss of individual lives. The killing of journalists can be considered an attack on the human right to free expression, the foundation of strong democracy and the need for an informed, active and engaged

Fig. 2.3.6: Number of aid workers attacked and number of aid workers killed (1997-2013)

Source: Aid Worker Security Database, 1997-2013.

66 Aid Worker Security Database.

citizenry to access the information necessary to reach their full potential.[67] Violence against aid workers greatly restricts access and mobility on the ground and often results in suspended, reduced or even terminated humanitarian activities, thus placing the lives and well-being of the hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people who depend on them at risk.[68]

67   UNESCO. *UN Plan of action on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.* CI-12/CONF.202/6.

68   United Nations (2009). S/2012/376. Annex, Para. 38.