

CHAPTER  
4

# Beyond Civil War

## The Costs of Interpersonal Violence

JAMES FEARON AND ANKE HOEFFLER\*

### Introduction

In the broad area of building stable and peaceful societies, the UN High-Level Panel (HLP) has identified several areas where the benefit-cost ratio may be very high and that have been relatively neglected by the development community to date. There are areas where the current economic and social costs are plausibly quite large, and where the amount of attention is very small in comparison to other areas such as health, education, and governance reform. We argue that there is a strong case for making societal violence reduction a priority in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

When thinking about the costs of violence, the international community has focused primarily on civil wars. However, for each battlefield death in civil war, about nine times as many people are killed in interpersonal disputes, including many killings related to drug trafficking, intimate partner violence (of all homicides, 7 percent female and 5 percent male), and killing of children (7 percent). About 43 percent of all female homicide victims were killed by a current or former intimate partner.

Beyond the 418,000 homicides, *reported* crime figures suggest that there are about 300,000 cases of sexual violence, of which almost one-third are committed against children. There are also more than 2 million cases of assault. In addition to these reported crime figures, survey estimates suggest that about 275 million children are subjected to violent physical discipline in their homes, that 100 million girls and women live with female genital mutilation, and that about 30 percent of all partnered women have been subjected to intimate partner violence during their lifetime. This corresponds to about 769 million women.

Thus, physical violence in societies is a much larger and more pervasive phenomenon than just

civil war violence. Figures for homicides and violence in low- and middle-income countries are summarized in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. As we discuss later, a number of studies suggest that the strictly economic consequences are very large and, of course, will be much larger if we try to factor in social damage and individual suffering, and yet a tiny fraction of aid funding goes toward reducing societal violence or improving criminal justice systems. Because the area receives so little attention, it is impossible to estimate a rate of return for projects aimed at reducing violence, but it is plausible that returns are substantially higher for this than for projects aimed to improve governance in developing countries (which usually means improving performance and accountability of local institutions that make decisions about local public goods).

Although the goal of eliminating violence against women and children by 2030 as advocated by the UN HLP must be seen as purely aspirational, substantial reductions can be made as falling homicide rates in high-income countries in general and also in Colombia have shown. Maintaining an annual reduction of 1.5 percent – half the average seen in these examples – would reduce the global homicide rate by 21 percent by 2030. Halving the current high level of intimate partner violence would dramatically improve the welfare of millions of women and help break ongoing cycles of violence.

Arguably this would be an ambitious target – it is greater, for example, than the World Health Organization (WHO) projection of a 13.5 percent decline in “interpersonal violence” globally from

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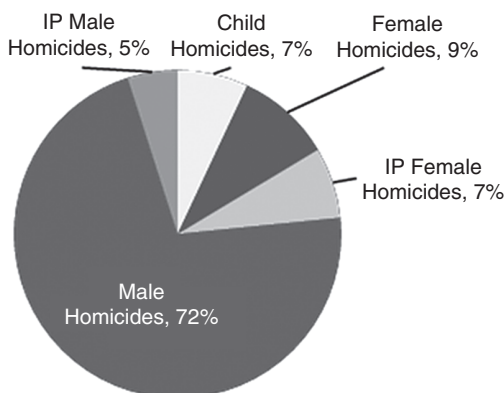


Figure 4.1 *Homicides in low- and middle-income countries*

Sources: WHO (2013b) for the age and sex of victims and Stöckl et al. (2013) for intimate partner violence.

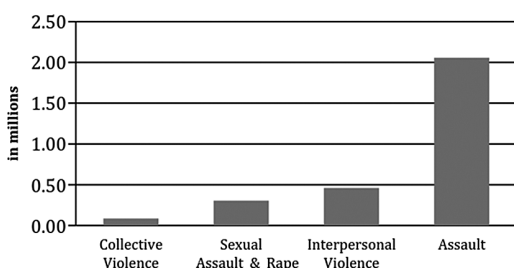


Figure 4.2 *Violence in low- and middle-income countries*

Sources: WHO (2013b) for collective and interpersonal violence and UNODC (2013) for sexual assault, rape, and assault.

2015 to 2030. But targets should be somewhat ambitious, and though we have little go on in terms of evidence about the responsiveness of homicide rates to social programs and policy reforms, the experience of Colombia and the United States suggests 21 percent over 16 years is feasible.

### *Interpersonal and Collective Violence*

According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) figures, in 2008 there were just over 418,000 homicides in the 186 countries with data. In that same year, about 49,000 people are

estimated to have died in “battle deaths” in civil wars, slightly more than the average annual battle death estimate of 43,410 for the period 1998–2008. So by these measures total homicides run at about eight and a half times the rate of civil war battle deaths.<sup>1</sup>

Civil wars can cause wholesale destruction and displace communities, but recently only 20–25 countries have been affected each year, generally involving only a small part of the country. In contrast, about a third of countries had a homicide rate of over 10 per 100,000, considered to be an epidemic level by WHO.

A recent study estimated each homicide in the United States to cost \$9.1 million, and this does not take account of effects on family and friends nor the dynamic economic effects of violent crime. Scaling this on the basis of each country’s GDP and their murder rate, the total cost varies from 0.33 percent of GDP for high-income countries to 4.1 percent for Latin America and the Caribbean. Results are shown in Table 4.1. The table uses World Bank categories for low- and middle-income countries, showing the estimate for the “High-Income Countries” as a point of comparison. These are large costs – especially for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean – given that this is a single category of violent crime and that the method here probably does not come close to counting the full social and economic cost of homicides.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We use 2008 because this is the year with the most complete set of homicide estimates, and it is also the last year for which the best source for estimates of civil war battle deaths exists (Lacina and Gleditsch, 2005). The reliability of the data for both battle deaths and homicides, at least the global level, is doubtful. The battle deaths data deliberately tries to count only intentional killing in war fighting and so leaves out what appears to be a great deal of mortality that is the indirect result of civil war. For homicide data, these appear to be fairly accurate for developed countries, but may be highly inaccurate (and understated) for many developing countries.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, to follow IEP as closely as possible (we use more of their data later in the chapter), the estimates for Table 4.1 used only the “intangible costs” of homicide as estimated by McCollister et al., thus a unit cost of 1.08 \* \$8,442,000 = \$9,117,360, where the 1.08 is a CPI adjustment to express the 2008 McCollister et al. estimate in 2013 dollars. IEP count the “tangible costs” of homicide under a category for the criminal justice system; see footnote 3.

**Table 4.1 Homicide costs as a share of GDP, by World Bank region**

Region	As % of regional GDP	As % of country GDP (avg.)
Latin America and Caribbean	3.68	4.10
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.68	3.01
Europe and Central Asia	1.11	0.67
Middle East and North Africa	0.71	0.66
South Asia	0.68	0.61
High-Income Countries	0.42	0.33
East Asia and Pacific	0.26	1.03
World	0.82	1.71

*Notes:* Based on Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP, 2013) estimates. First column is total costs in region as % of total GDP of countries in region. Second column is average of country costs (as % of country GDP) in region. World Bank regions are for low- and middle-income countries; High-Income Countries can be anywhere.

Overall, this comes to 1.71 percent of global GDP for a single category of violent crime. These figures are an estimate of the benefits that could be achieved from a reduction in violence, not a current loss to the economy.

Other violent crimes, such as assault, are much more common, though less costly individually. A U.S. study estimated total costs of violent crime in 2012 to be 2 percent of GDP, while the British Home Office estimated 6.1 percent for England and Wales in 2003. The higher figure in the UK is due in part to an assumed underreporting of actual crime. Developing country estimates are of a similar magnitude, although figures are less common and more conjectural. Incorporating intangible costs, Londoño and Guerrero (1999) offer 14 percent of annual GDP per year for crime in Latin America. Other estimates are 7.5 percent for Latin America (and 3.7 percent for the U.S.) for 1995. Acevedo's (2008) study of costs of violence in Central America produced estimates of 10.8 percent per year for El Salvador, 10.0 percent for Nicaragua, 9.6 percent for Honduras, 7.8 percent for Guatemala, and 3.6 percent for Costa Rica. A study

of South Africa, which has very high crime rates, finds that 3.7 percent of GDP is spent on the criminal justice system *alone* (Altbeker, 2005).

Using 2013 figures from the Institute for Economics and Peace, interpersonal violence has a global welfare cost of 2.1 percent for an average country, or 1.44 percent if we weight by country population. In comparison, collective violence (dominated by civil war) has a cost of only 0.33 percent on average: less than one-sixth of the cost of interpersonal violence. The difference is actually even greater in most regions, but the civil conflicts arising from the Arab Spring raise the average collective violence estimates.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 use the IEP's most recent estimates for 186 countries to calculate measures of the welfare cost of interpersonal and collective violence as a percentage of GDP circa 2013. In Table 4.2, costs are summed by region and divided by total GDP for the region. Table 4.3 provides country averages and country averages weighted by population. The estimates in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 are arguably quite conservative.<sup>3</sup> To summarize, these estimates suggest that both civil war and interpersonal violence impose large costs globally, with interpersonal violence being much more pervasive and much costlier than civil war violence.

### *Violence against Children*

There is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes child abuse and neglect. For example, corporal punishment is common, but what is regarded as excessive is a cultural issue. In some societies, for example, Egypt, Somalia, and Ethiopia, the majority of girls still undergo female genital mutilation (FGM). Overall, the global prevalence of violence against children is difficult to estimate because much abuse is never reported. And despite

<sup>3</sup> See IEP, 2014 for further discussion of the conservatism of their estimates (in the categories we are using). The one highly consequential component of these estimates that one might argue overstates true costs is the value of human life based on the value per statistical life (VSL) approach (or that of other methodologies), and scaling this for developing countries by the ratio of GDP per capita to U.S. GDP per capita. Perhaps people put a proportionally high value on years of life at higher income levels, for example.

**Table 4.2 Estimates of welfare costs of interpersonal and collective violence as a share of regional and global GDP for 2013**

	Interpersonal violence		Collective violence	
	Cost (\$ billions)	% of GDP	Cost (\$ billions)	% of GDP
L. America/Carib.	334.52	4.43	40.86	0.54
Sub-Saharan Africa	85.55	3.90	14.6	0.67
Europe and Central Asia	86.79	1.58	53.47	0.98
High-Income Countries	592.87	1.33	1.41	0.00
M. East/N. Africa	25.62	0.95	40.20	1.48
South Asia	47.4	0.78	15.61	0.26
East Asia/Pacific	72.53	0.41	1.03	0.01
World	1245.27	1.44	167.19	0.19

*Notes:* Estimates based on IEP data for 2013. % of GDP refers to total GDP of region.

**Table 4.3 Estimates of welfare costs of interpersonal and collective violence as a share of country GDP for 2013, by region**

	Interpersonal violence cost as % of GDP		Collective violence cost as % of GDP	
	Avg.	Avg. (pop weighted)	Avg.	Avg. (pop weighted)
L. America/Caribbean	4.57	4.61	0.11	0.45
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.31	3.23	0.47	0.72
East Asia/Pacific	1.26	0.46	0.02	0.01
High-Income Countries	0.97	1.23	0.01	0.00
Europe and C. Asia	0.94	1.41	0.11	0.74
M. East/N. Africa	0.90	0.96	2.03	2.05
South Asia	0.74	0.76	0.4	0.27
World	2.10	1.44	0.33	0.34

*Notes:* Estimates based on IEP data for 2013.

the media attention on such issues as FGM and child prostitution, most of the violence happens at home: 80 percent of all perpetrators are the child's parents. We do not consider abuse and neglect in schools, care institutions, prison, at work, and in the community because no comparable figures are available across countries.

WHO provides global data for children up to age 14. Almost 34,000 deaths are attributed to interpersonal violence. The great majority of these occur in the first month of life, and girls are more at risk than boys (18 per 100,000 as against 14 per 100,000). Figure 4.3 shows global homicide rates per 100,000 of the population. However, the

highest rate is for newborn girls in the East Asia Pacific region: 46 per 100,000. Beyond that, the rate drops to around 2 per 100,000 for both genders. For comparison, the highest overall homicide rate is for boys and men ages 15 to 29, at 19 per 100,000 (mainly driven by high rates in Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa). Child homicides as a percentage of the total vary from 2 in Europe and Central Asia to 14 in the Middle East and North Africa, and we use these figures to estimate total costs.

Data on child homicide, in particular neonatal homicide, are difficult to collect. If no signs of physical violence are present, is it difficult to

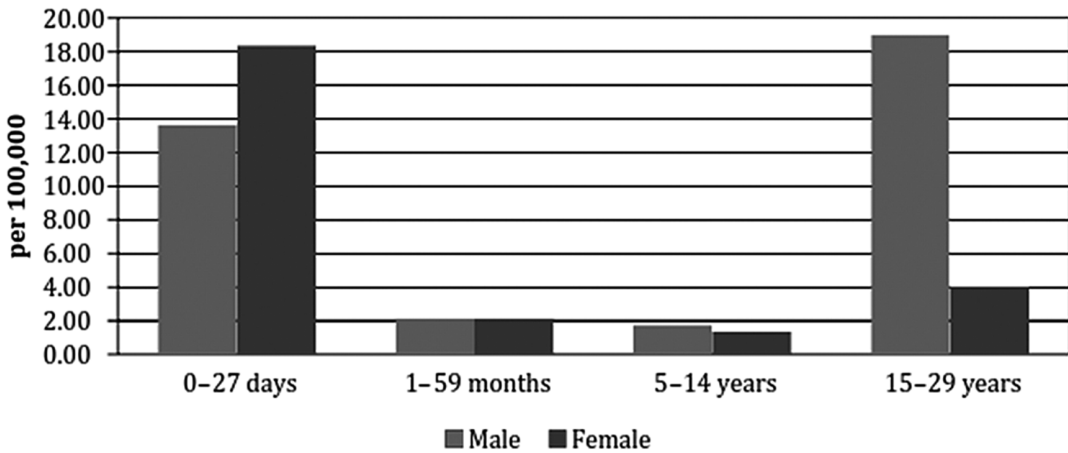


Figure 4.3 *Global child and young adult homicide rates*

Source: WHO, 2013b.

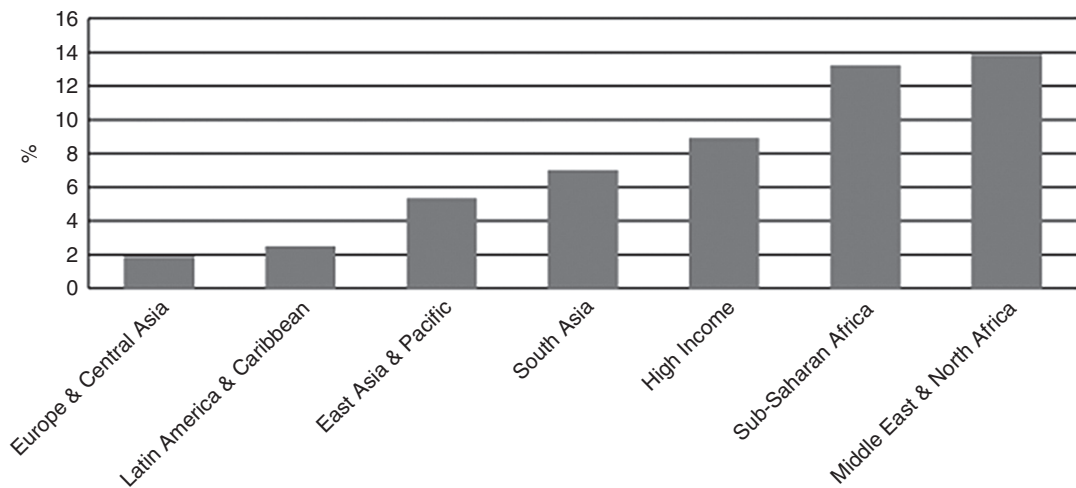


Figure 4.4 *Child homicides (0–14 years) as a percentage of total homicides*

Source: WHO, 2013b.

attribute the death to neglect rather than illness. Nevertheless, using WHO data, we calculate the percentage of child homicides (persons under 14 years of age) in total homicides. Figure 4.4 presents these child homicide figures by region.

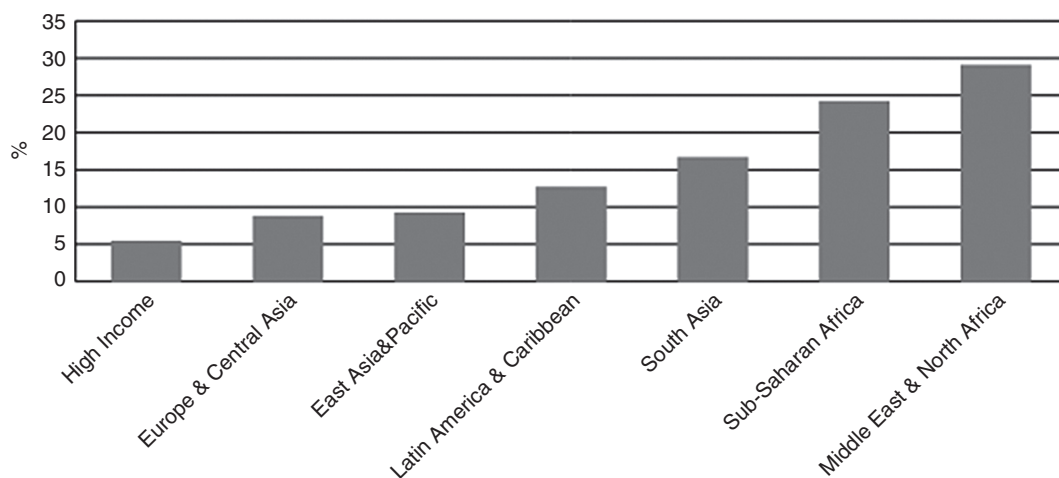
Overall, using the same figure for a child homicide as that for an average homicide (\$8.44 million) – corresponding to the intangible cost of

the death – we estimate a total cost of \$37.7 billion for child homicide, corresponding to 0.044 percent of world GDP.

Not all violence against children is fatal. We approximate the level of non-fatal child abuse through violent disciplinary practices from UNICEF data covering 34 countries (about 10 percent of children). Aggressive and violent punishment is

**Table 4.4 Cost of nonfatal domestic child abuse**

Region	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total Cost (in UDS billions)	Region Average (% of GDP)	Country Average (% of GDP)
High Income	829	1.87	1.87
East Asia & Pacific	608	3.60	5.29
Europe & Central Asia	173	3.16	3.46
L. America & Caribbean	512	6.78	7.41
Middle East & N. Africa	437	16.13	17.52
South Asia	604	9.93	10.96
Sub-Saharan Africa	431	18.66	19.89
World	3,594	4.21	9.57

Figure 4.5 *Percent of primary caregivers using severe physical punishment*

*Data Source:* UNICEF (2014), no data available for South Asia (using sample average). Trinidad and Tobago is the only high-income country.

common and used by 73 percent of caregivers surveyed. Severe physical punishment is used by 28 percent of primary caregivers in the Middle East and North Africa and 24 percent in sub-Saharan Africa, but it is less common elsewhere. Figure 4.5 summarizes the regional situation.

Using average regional rates for severe physical punishment, a total of about 290 million children (15.5 percent of the total) are abused in this way. Our definition of child abuse includes slapping on the face, head, or ears, and/or beaten repeatedly

with an implement. If someone outside the family received such treatment, this would be classified as assault. Thus, we suggest that figures for the unit cost of assault can be used to approximate the cost of child abuse. At a unit cost of \$98,000, we estimate the total cost of child abuse as about \$3.6 trillion, or 4.2 percent of global GDP. Although this is about 1.9 percent of GDP in high-income countries, it rises to nearly 19 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. A breakdown of the data is given in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.5 Cost of reported sexual abuse of children**

Region	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total Cost (in UDS billions)	Region Average (% of GDP)	Country Average (% of GDP)
High Income	25.4	0.057	0.066
East Asia & Pacific	3.9	0.023	0.023
Europe & Central Asia	1.1	0.020	0.013
Latin America & Caribbean	4.9	0.065	0.079
Middle East & North Africa	0.2	0.008	0.008
South Asia	0.1	0.002	0.002
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.2	0.051	0.051
World	36.8	0.043	0.046

Sexual abuse is another facet of the overall problem. UNODC figures show 72,000 cases of child sexual assault and rape (almost a quarter of the total), but based on surveys of women, it seems that this is just the tip of the iceberg, with significant adults in children's lives most likely to be the abusers. Using a unit cost for all rape/sexual assault cases of \$199,642 and considering only reported cases, the absolute minimum cost of child sex abuse is about \$37 billion (0.043 percent of world GDP). For a breakdown of the costs, see Table 4.5.

In the context of violence against children, it is sensible to highlight the practice of early marriage in some cultures. Marriage of emotionally and physiologically immature girls to older men, often against their will, has a number of health implications as well as a higher risk of violence and sexual abuse. For girls under 16 in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Ethiopia, the maternal mortality rates were found to be about six times higher than for mothers ages 20–24. Fifteen percent of all deaths for girls and women ages 10–24 are due to maternal conditions, the leading cause of deaths in this age group.

Early marriage is most prevalent in South Asia; in 2000, 56 percent of all young women were married before they were 18. However, although 41 percent of women ages 45–49 were married by age 15, only 15 percent of women in the 20–24 age range were married this young. This declining trend is the same for all regions. In the countries surveyed, 47 percent of all women ages 45–49 were married by the age of 18 in 2000. If the trend continues, this figure should be 25 percent in 2030.

Figures 4.6 and 4.7 show the percentage of women married at a young age.

We have concentrated on violence against children in the home, but we should not forget that neglect and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of children also happens in school, in care institutions, in prisons, at work, and in the community.

### *Violence against Women*

Across the world there are a number of harmful traditional practices that constitute violence against women. Examples include female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, early marriage, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), “honor” crimes, and maltreatment of widows. However, there is limited information on many of these practices, with the exception of FGM.

The most common form of violence experienced by women globally is intimate partner violence (IPV), with about 30 percent of women experiencing this in some form during their lifetime. WHO studies conclude that women suffering IPV are 16 percent more likely to have a low-birth-weight child, and they also have a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. There are also longer-term consequences for children of abused women: daughters are more likely to be abused by their partners, and sons are more likely to become abusers themselves.

About 16 percent of all homicide victims are women of 15 and over; 43 percent of all female victims are killed by a current or former intimate

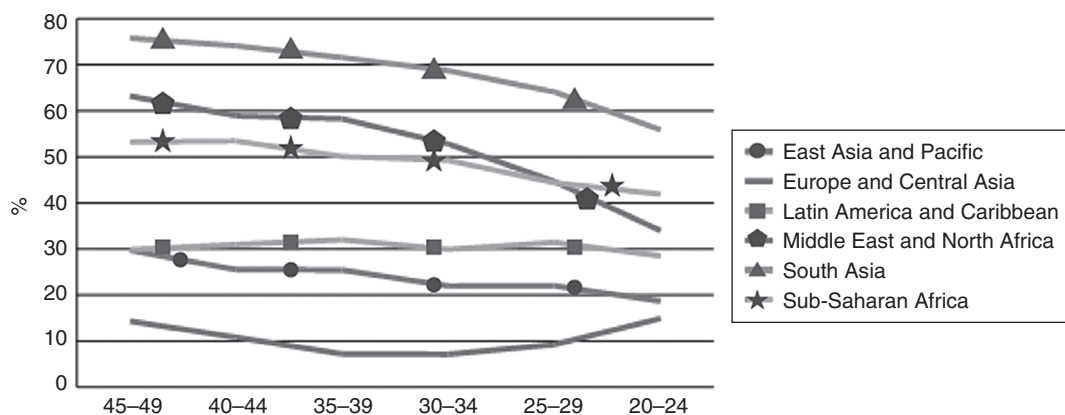


Figure 4.6 Percentage of women married at 18

Source: UNICEF (2005)

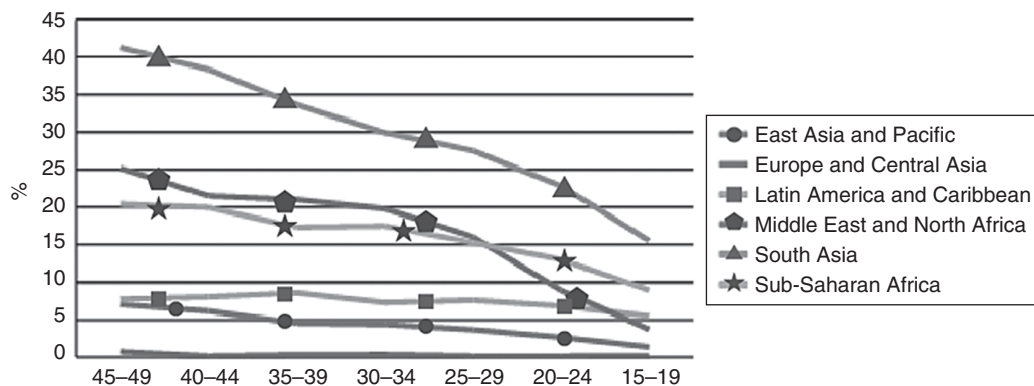


Figure 4.7 Percentage of women married at 15

Source: UNICEF (2005)

partner (Stöckel et al., 2013). Using the World Bank classification of regions, we find that the prevalence of intimate partner homicides among all female homicides was highest in high-income countries (56 percent) and lowest in Europe and Central Asia (20 percent).

Using a standard unit cost of \$8.44 million per homicide (which may be too high because women's earnings are lower), the global cost of female homicides is estimated at around \$105 billion, or 0.12 percent of GDP, as set out in Table 4.6.

Because we have data on the homicides due to IPV from Stöckel et al. (2013), we can also calculate

the cost estimates for female homicides committed by intimate partners: see Table 4.7.

Overall prevalence of nonfatal violence against women is difficult to estimate, but there are figures available for sexual assault and rape. However, reported sexual violence is likely to be only the "tip of the iceberg," most cases are never reported (Palermo et al., 2014). Thus, the figures on sexual violence should be regarded as a very conservative estimate of sexual violence. Much violence – sexual, physical, and emotional – is perpetrated by intimate partners. Revealingly, over half of women in sub-Saharan Africa think

**Table 4.6 Cost of female homicide**

Region	(1)	(2)
	Total Cost in USD billions	Regional Averages % of GDP
High Income	34.7	0.078
East Asia & Pacific	12.8	0.076
Europe & Central Asia	15.2	0.277
Latin America & Caribbean	23.3	0.309
Middle East & North Africa	1.8	0.067
South Asia	5.7	0.094
Sub-Saharan Africa	11.8	0.511
World	105.3	0.123

*Note:* WHO (2013b) provides data on deaths due to interpersonal violence by sex and age. We use the ratio of deaths of females age 15 and over to total deaths and apply this ratio to the UNODC (2013) homicide rates to estimate the number of female homicide victims.

**Table 4.7 Cost of female homicides by intimate partners**

Region	(1)	(2)
	Total Cost in USD billions	Regional Averages % of GDP
<b>High Income</b>	19.3	0.043
<b>East Asia &amp; Pacific</b>	4.1	0.024
<b>Europe &amp; Central Asia</b>	3.1	0.056
<b>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</b>	6.6	0.087
<b>Middle East &amp; North Africa</b>	0.1	0.004
<b>South Asia</b>	2.5	0.041
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	4.5	0.193
<b>World</b>	40.1	0.047

*Note:* WHO (2013b) provides data on deaths due to interpersonal violence by sex and age. We use the ratio of deaths of females age 15 and over to total deaths and apply this ratio to the UNODC (2013) homicide rates to estimate the number of female homicide victims and the information from Stöckl et al. (2013) to approximate homicides perpetrated by intimate partners.

their husbands are justified in beating them for such things as arguing or burning the food, while only 37 percent of men agreed that this would be acceptable.

The prevalence of IPV varies widely, as we can see from Figure 4.8. Only 4 percent of women over 15 in high-income countries report it, compared to a high of 28 percent in sub-Saharan Africa.

Assuming 90 percent of women have partners and using a cost of \$95,023 for an assault (actually more than double this figure for rape and sexual assault), the total costs of IPV are \$4.4 trillion, or 5.2 percent of global GDP, as shown in Table 4.8.

The figure for reported cases of sexual violence, whoever the perpetrator, is \$67 billion, or 0.08 percent of global GDP, using a unit cost of \$199,642. In both cases, the actual figure is likely to be much higher because of the high level of underreporting (see Table 4.9).

FGM is still widespread in Africa and the Middle East, as shown in Figure 4.9. Although it is outlawed in 26 of 29 countries surveyed, UNICEF estimates that about 100 million women worldwide have undergone FGM and that 30 million girls are at risk over the coming decade. Among women ages 15–49 FGM is almost universal (88 percent or

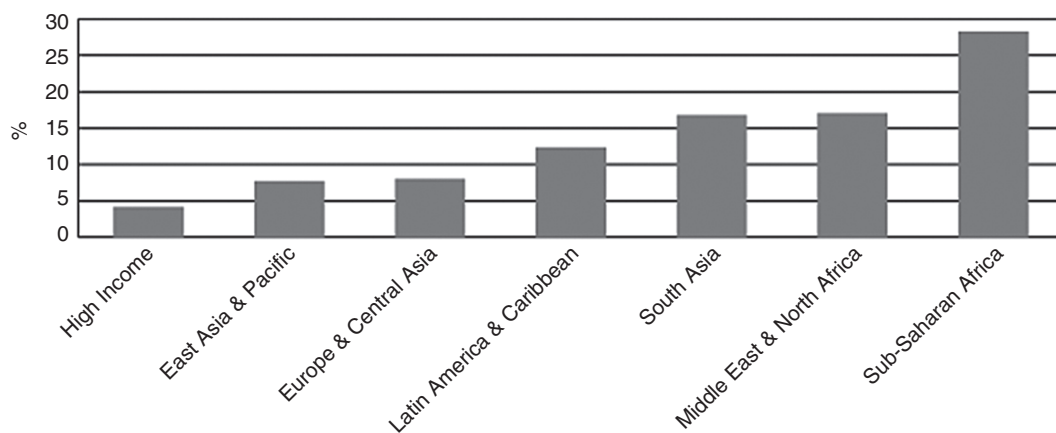
**Table 4.8 Cost of intimate partner assault**

Region	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total cost of IPV, USD billions	Regional Averages, % of GDP	Country Averages, % of GDP
<b>High Income</b>	1,360	3.06	2.93
<b>East Asia &amp; Pacific</b>	894	5.29	4.81
<b>Europe &amp; Central Asia</b>	333	6.08	5.81
<b>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</b>	605	8.01	7.65
<b>Middle East &amp; North Africa</b>	286	10.55	10.15
<b>South Asia</b>	600	9.87	9.52
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	345	14.94	14.28
<b>World</b>	4,423	5.18	8.02

**Table 4.9 Cost of reported cases of sexual violence**

Region	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total cost, USD billions	Regional Averages, % of GDP	Country Averages, % of GDP
<b>High Income</b>	49,3	0.111	0.112
<b>East Asia &amp; Pacific</b>	5,5	0.033	0.033
<b>Europe &amp; Central Asia</b>	0,8	0.014	0.012
<b>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</b>	8,2	0.109	0.122
<b>Middle East &amp; North Africa</b>	0,3	0.011	0.011
<b>South Asia</b>	1,3	0.022	0.022
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	1,3	0.056	0.057
<b>World</b>	66,7	0.078	0.066

Source: UNODC (2013).

**Figure 4.8 Prevalence rates of IP assault**

Source: Devries et al. (2013).

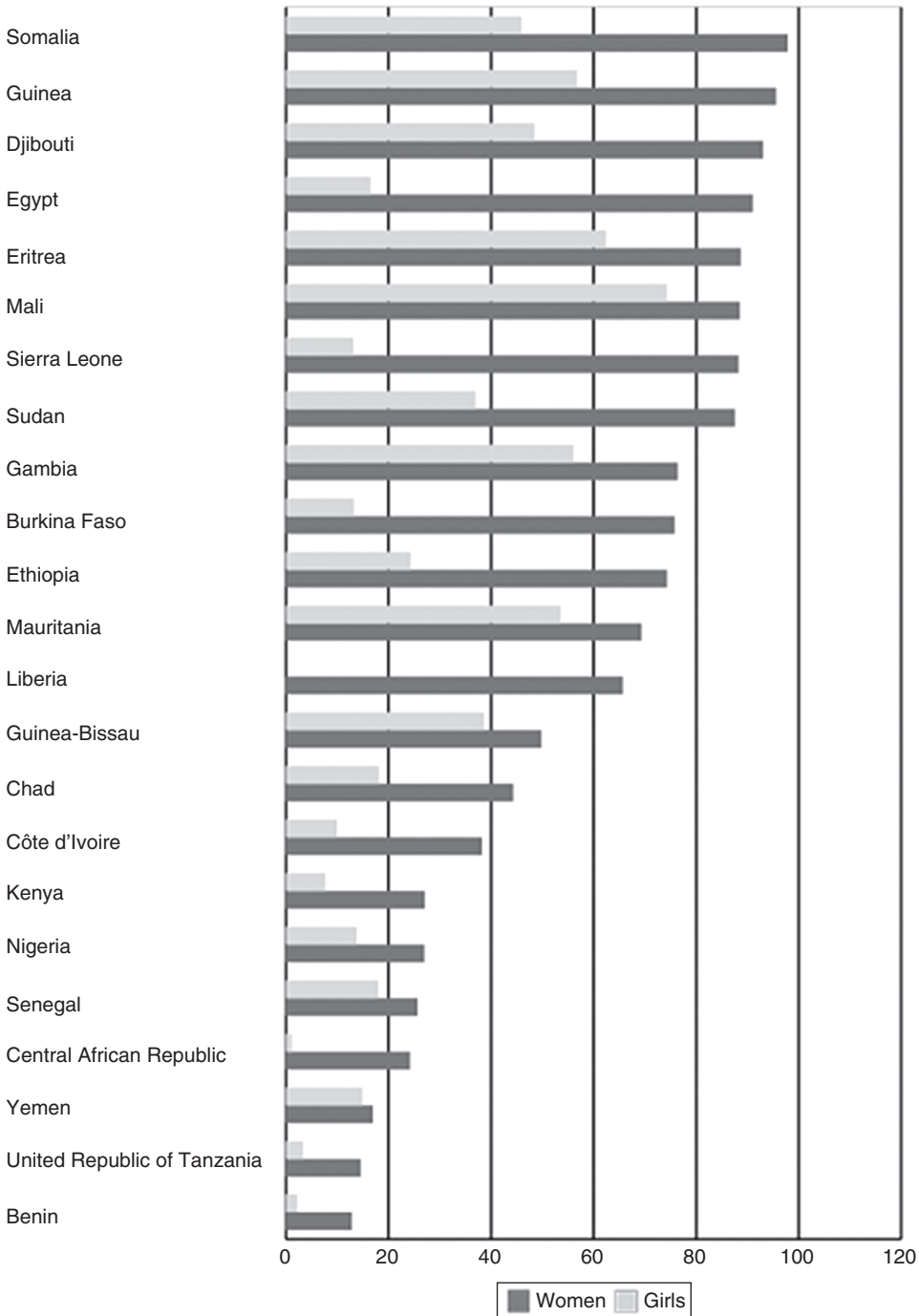


Figure 4.9 *Prevalence of female genital mutilation*

Source: UNICEF, 2013.

**Table 4.10 Sectoral shares of development assistance (% of total aid)**

Sector	1990–94	1995–99	2000–04	2005–09
Social health	3.26	3.75	4.81	7.70
Education	4.64	4.03	4.79	5.43
Water	5.37	4.67	3.83	4.55
Environment	1.66	1.79	1.47	2.36
Women	0.03	0.08	0.03	0.04
Government/civil society	4.35	7.46	10.59	13.63
Legal/judicial	0.06	0.24	0.52	1.04
Economic transport/communications	13.42	11.02	9.71	10.31
Energy	10.48	7.76	5.29	6.95
Production agriculture	9.82	6.10	4.45	4.47
Industry	8.16	6.41	3.00	2.94
Trade	3.60	1.41	1.18	1.25
Multisector	6.49	5.48	5.49	5.60
Budget support and finance				
Budget support	11.75	21.35	21.24	10.63
Finance, debt	14.62	13.51	15.33	13.60
Humanitarian emergency	1.87	3.68	4.70	5.50
Other	0.48	1.49	4.09	5.03
Total aid (billions current \$)	437	612	766	1063

higher) in Somalia, Guinea, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Sudan, although in all countries the prevalence rates among girls ages 0–15 are lower than for their mothers. A WHO study shows that women who have undergone FGM suffer more obstetric problems, including higher rates of perinatal death.

#### *Aid Programs Targeted at Reducing Violent Crime or Improving Police and Judicial System Performance*

Considerable amounts of aid are directed toward “fragile states” to help stop or prevent civil war and to emergency humanitarian aid, but violent crime, child abuse, and domestic violence are far more pervasive and costly in terms of human welfare. There is, however, great wariness about providing aid to police and other security forces. Tables 4.10 and 4.11 give shares of total development assistance spent in different sectors for five-year periods

from 1990, together with a closer look at the category “Government and Civil Society.”

Aid for government and civil society projects has risen sharply to 13.63 percent of the total since the end of the Cold War; within this larger category, legal and judicial aid has increased, but still only to about 1 percent of the total. Projects that have “crime prevention” as one component receive in total only 0.27 percent of funding. The bulk of this goes to postconflict countries and is not directly related to preexisting levels of societal violence. Although it is very difficult to derive reliable figures for benefits of projects of this type, funding for peace-keeping operations and postconflict aid does seem to be modestly cost-effective.

Figure 4.10 plots average “crime prevention” aid for 2008–10 (for each country that received at least some such aid) against the 2008 homicide rate in that country. Both variables are logged to deal with extreme skew. It is evident that however these

**Table 4.11 Aid shares (percentages) within the “Government and Civil Society” category, 2000–2010**

Administration, policy	48.32
Government administration	21.39
Economic and development policy/planning	18.66
Public-sector financial management	7.43
Decentralization and support to subnational govt.	0.84
Governance and civil society	25.67
Government and civil society	22.38
Human rights	2.32
Women’s equality organizations and institutions	0.85
Anticorruption organizations	0.12
Civil conflict-related	13.32
Conflict prevention	5.11
Reintegration and small weapons control	2.18
Security system management and reform	2.54
Land mine clearance	1.71
Postconflict peace building (un)	1.71
Child soldiers (prevention and demobilization)	0.07
Legal and judicial development	10.84
Legal and judicial development	10.84
Parties, elections, media	1.86
Elections	1.35
Legislatures and political parties	0.13
Media and free flow of info	0.38

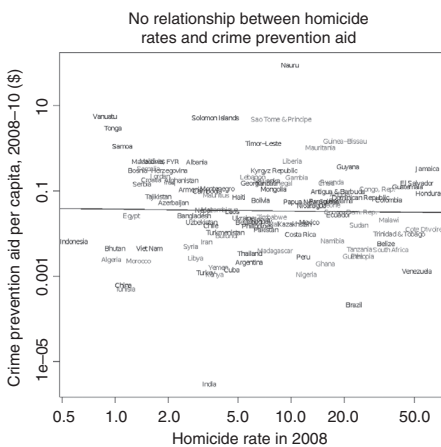


Figure 4.10 *Crime prevention aid and homicide rates*

projects are being allocated, the level of violent crime in the country is not an important consideration. There is no relationship at all between the two variables.

*The Return on Investment in Reducing Civil War and Societal Violence*

At the outset it has to be stressed that in both cases – civil war violence and societal violence – it is impossible to provide benefit-cost ratios (BCRs) for aid spending that are more than extremely conjectural.

For internal conflict, BCRs for a package of interventions that include UN Peacekeeping Operations are between 2 and 7 (depending on

discount rates and general conflict prevention or postconflict stabilization). There is limited evidence that aid prevents conflict. Although there is no evidence that aid prevents civil war onset (Hoefler, 2014), there is some evidence that development aid helps to stabilize postconflict situations. Aid has a positive effect on growth in postwar economies. However, the effect is moderate: an extra 1 percent of aid might increase growth by 0.05–0.1 percent per year.

There are alternative ways to use aid to reduce other forms of violence. Wealthier regions tend to be characterized by lower rates of societal violence, so development is likely to decrease violence with time. In addition to social programs, one of the commonly suggested measures is to criminalize certain forms of violence, but this appears to have a limited effect when it runs counter to social norms. Also, studies on policy interventions have mainly been in high-income countries, where police and the criminal justice system have the institutional capability to be effective. In contrast, in many low-income countries, police corruption, abuse, and simple poor performance appear to be a large part of the problem of societal violence.

In rich countries, targeting resources on “hot spots” and using “problem-oriented policing” appear to have a very low cost, and their BCRs are likely to be high. A similar approach could be very effective in developing countries where police and state authorities are interested in improving performance and where there is sufficient political will. Alcohol consumption is another contributory factor to violence, and a number of cost-effective interventions to make drinking more responsible seem to be possible. Changing permitted alcohol sales times, reducing the density of alcohol outlets, increasing alcohol prices, specific interventions targeted at problem drinkers, and improving drinking environments by encouraging/training service staff to serve alcohol responsibly all seem to be helpful.

The last intervention strategy is, for example, analyzed by Moore et al. (2012). They suggest that randomized controlled trials (RCTs) are feasible to assess the effectiveness of reducing alcohol-related violence. In the UK they matched pairs of

32 licensed premises (pubs, bars, and nightclubs) and in the treatment group they encouraged the enforcement of the existing laws, e.g., not supplying alcohol to already intoxicated customers. This trial study suggests that the incidence of violence decreases by about 10 percent in the control group. The BCR appear to be phenomenal; they cite a cost of the intervention of £600, which prevents roughly one assault, costed at £10,407. This provides a BCR of about 17.

Turning to specific interventions, a number of programs have been assessed to reduce the level of violence against children. Early response of trained social service and welfare officers appear to provide the best BCR, at about 13–14. Home nurse visits to at-risk mothers and newborns also offer a positive BCR, estimated at around 2.75. However, implementation could be difficult in low- and middle-income countries.

Programs to improve parenting skills can also be very cost effective. The best-known is the Positive Parenting Program, or “Triple P,” applied in a number of high- and middle-income countries (Prinz et al., 2009). A two-year evaluation in the United States found that in a population of 100,000 children under 8 years of age there were 688 fewer cases of substantiated child maltreatment recorded by child protective services staff, 240 fewer out-of-home placements, and 60 fewer children with injuries requiring hospitalization or emergency room treatment. This has a calculated BCR of 8.74.

On the question of FGM, legal reform appears to have had little impact, and there is no reliable evidence of other specific interventions lowering the prevalence. However, the incidence of FGM has declined in a number of countries with medium to low prevalence rates over the last 15 years; in contrast there has been little reduction in countries with high prevalence of the practice. Prevalence by age is plotted for several countries in Figure 4.11.

Interventions to combat domestic abuse such as the DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, and Honour-Based Violence) risk identification model in the UK and the Duluth model in the United States and elsewhere have not been properly evaluated in terms of their impact.

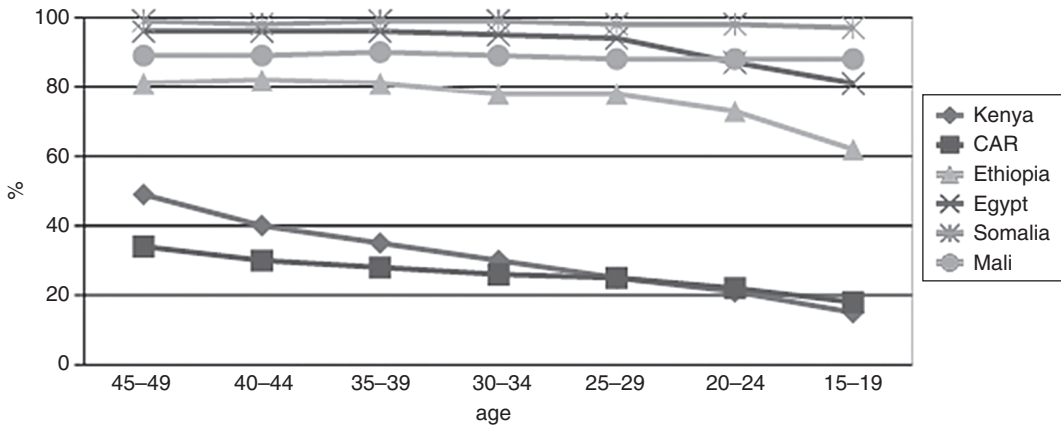


Figure 4.11 *Prevalence of FGM by age*

Source: UNICEF, 2013

Programs aimed at economic empowerment, such as (un)conditional cash transfers and micro-finance programs do not appear to systematically lower levels of violence, although a conditional cash transfer program in Ethiopia increased the chances of girls going to school threefold and reduced their chances of early marriage by 90 percent. Messages promoting the positive aspects of “doing the right thing” have also been successful, but no BCRs are available for any of these interventions.

### Targets

As of 2012, there were about 30 active civil conflicts ongoing in 25 countries. Although they account for a relatively small proportion of violent deaths, they can have massive indirect effects. But civil war is probably far less amenable to “treatment” by international aid programs or other policy interventions than are obstacles to development in areas like health and education. So the idea of international targets for levels of civil war is necessarily going to be much more aspirational than operational.

Figure 4.12 shows the regional trends over time for our two types of war, at two levels of intensity for the period 1946 through 2012. The y-axis is the share of countries in the region that were experiencing the type of war in question in the

year indicated on the x-axis. A first, encouraging observation is that high intensity wars of both types (center-seeking and autonomist) have been in significant decline in all regions except for Middle East/North Africa. Indeed, proposing a zero target for large separatist wars just means aiming to continue the current state affairs. Second, note that in a number of regions the other types and levels of civil conflict have been in significant decline for most of the post-Cold War period.<sup>4</sup>

We have developed targets for wars of different intensity (“small” being 25–999 killed in combat in a given year) and different objectives (taking over central government or gaining more autonomy for a region). Given the downward trend, we propose a 2030 target of a 20 percent reduction from 2012 levels or a 20 percent reduction in the current trend, if this is larger. Total wars would decline modestly to 17.1 from the 2012 level of 20, but large-scale civil violence would be rare, at only three ongoing conflicts. Tables 4.12–15 show

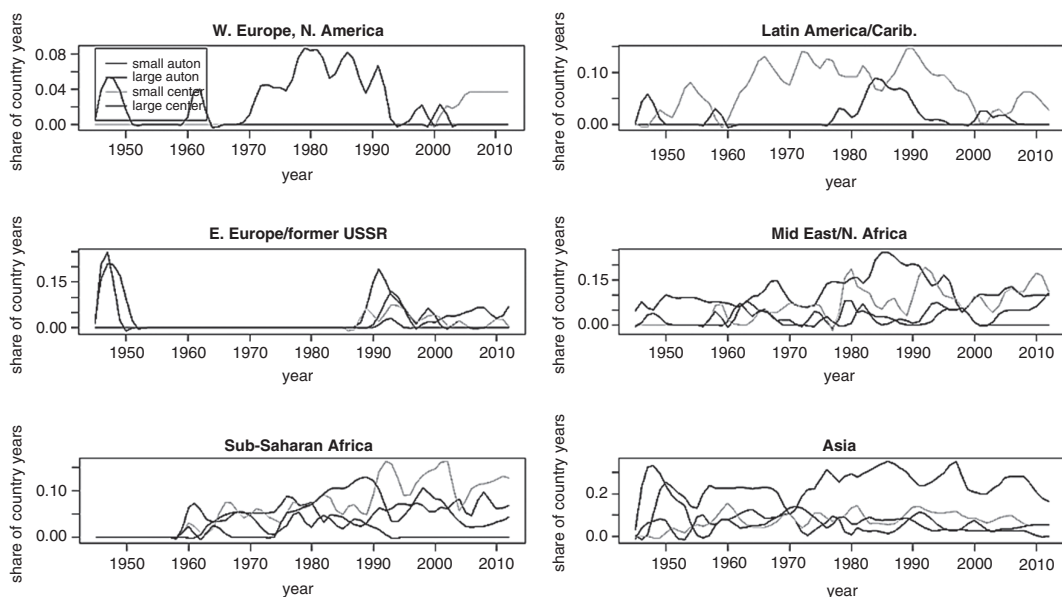
<sup>4</sup> The increase since 2001 in low-level center-seeking wars in Western Europe and North America is entirely due to Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD) coding an “internationalized civil war” between the U.S. and al Qaeda and locating this conflict in the U.S. ACD codes the start of the conflict with 9/11, and then presumably is coding U.S. attacks on al Qaeda abroad since then as part of the same conflict. So the location coding here is not right except for 2001.

**Table 4.12 Annual change in percent with war, 1990–2012**

Region	Small Aut.	Large Aut.	Small Cen.	Large Cen.
Asia	-0.29	-0.40	-0.40	0.03
SSA	0.05	-0.04	-0.06	-0.28
NA/ME	-0.33	-0.25	-0.01	0.28
LA/Ca	0	0	-0.41	-0.06
E Eur	-0.41	-0.36	-0.20	-0.06

**Table 4.13 Percentage of countries with war, actual 2012 and 2030 by trend**

Region	War type							
	Small Aut.		Large Aut.		Small Cen.		Large Cen.	
	2012	2030	2012	2030	2012	2030	2012	2030
Asia	16.2	11.3	0	0	5.4	0	5.4	5.9
SSA	6.1	7	0	0	12.2	11.2	4.1	0
MENA	10	4.4	0	0	10	9.8	10	14.8
LA/Ca	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
E Eur/FSU	6.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Figure 4.12 Civil war trends**

**Table 4.14 Percentage of countries with war, actual 2012 and 2030 target**

Region	War type							
	Small Aut.		Large Aut.		Small Cen.		Large Cen.	
	2012	2030	2012	2030	2012	2030	2012	2030
Asia	16.2	11.3	0	0	5.4	0	5.4	4.3
SSA	6.1	4.9	0	0	12.2	9.8	4.1	0
MENA	10	4.4	0	0	10	8	10	8
LA/Ca	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
E Eur/FSU	6.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 4.15 Number of countries with war, actual 2012 and 2030 target**

Region	War type							
	Small Aut.		Large Aut.		Small Cen.		Large Cen.	
	2012	2030	2012	2030	2012	2030	2012	2030
Asia	6	4.2	0	0	2	0	2	1.6
SSA	3	2.4	0	0	6	4.8	2	0
MENA	2	0.9	0	0	2	1.6	2	1.6
LA/Ca	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
E Eur/FSU	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
total Eur/FSU	13	7.5	0	0	11	6.4	6	3.2

current trends and projected figures using our proposed target.

Moving away from civil conflict, evidence from the UK suggests that child homicides have been reduced by 40 percent over the last 10 years. With 75 percent of all children being murdered by a member of their family, a friend, or an acquaintance, interventions should be targeted mainly at the family. If a reduction of 43 percent could be achieved by 2030, the number of neonatal deaths could be reduced by 745 annually, and there would be 6,370 fewer deaths of children under 14. We propose a zero target for severe physical punishment, with the incidence of less violent punishment halving to 30 percent.

Given large reductions in the incidence of intimate partner violence in the United States, it is feasible to target a halving of the number of women experiencing this by 2030. We also suggest a target of no marriages before the age of 15. Because of the difficulties of reducing the number of young women

suffering FGM in high-incidence countries, we suggest an aspirational target of a 50 percent reduction. In societies with lower incidence, an elimination of the practice seems feasible.

### Conclusion

Civil war violence is too narrow a category when considering what the next set of international development goals concerned with violence should be. Interpersonal violence in its major forms – homicide and violent assaults, including intimate partner violence, child abuse, and FGM – are far more pervasive than civil war violence and almost surely far more costly in terms of human welfare. If it is the case that the benefit-cost ratio of interventions are at least comparable across these three areas (societal violence, civil war-related costs, and poor governance), then there is a strong case that much more aid should be flowing to programs to address violent crime and abuse.

*Summary of Targets and Cost-Benefit Ratios*

Target	Example interventions	Studies and context	Reported Cost-Benefit Ratio	Comments
By 2030, reduce the number of countries experiencing large scale wars (1000+ deaths) to 3 or fewer and the number of countries experiencing small scale wars (>1000 deaths) to 14	UN Peace Keeping Operations	Dunne (2012)	2–7	Only available as option in limited circumstances
	Increase aid in postconflict zones	Hoeffler (2014)	None reported	Does not prevent onset of civil war conflict
Reduce assaults	Enforcing laws on alcohol consumption	Moore et al. (2012) in UK	17	Small pilot study in the UK, high BCR because existing rules were enforced (i.e., intervention required few resources)
Improve policing	India, Rajasthan: program to improve perception of and actual police performance	Banerjee et al. (2012)	None reported	BCR likely to be high because the program required no additional resources
Improve policing	Bogotá, Columbia	Moncada (2009)	None reported, depending on cost of program BRC could be large	
Reduce infant homicide globally by 43%	UK policies	Time series evidence in this study	None reported	Difficult to establish why homicides of infants fell in the UK
Eliminate severe physical violence as a method of child discipline	Social services	WSIPP (2013) in U.S.	13–14	Only measured in U.S. – unlikely that developing countries have the capacity to roll out early intervention programs
	Triple P program	Prinz et al. (2009) in U.S.	8.7	Large RCT in Georgia, U.S., difficult to generalize to low- and middle-income countries
Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls	DASH, Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence	Richards et al. (2008) in UK	None reported	No evaluation so far, but BCRs potentially large because DASH requires very few new resources
	Duluth Model	Corvo et al. (2008) in US	None reported	No evaluation so far
	SASA! Program against Domestic Violence in Uganda	World Bank (2014b)	None reported, depending on cost of program BRC could be large	Rigorous evaluation, large significant impact
	Use of TV and Radio Programs, for example Soul City in South Africa	World Bank (2014b)	None reported, depending on cost of program BRC could be large	Large significant impact

*(cont.)*

(cont.)

Target	Example interventions	Studies and context	Reported Cost-Benefit Ratio	Comments
	Conditional cash transfer program to prevent early marriage in Ethiopia	World Bank (2014a)	None reported, depending on cost of program BRC could be large	Large significant impact
	(Un)conditional cash transfer for female empowerment FGM	World Bank (2014a) Meta study by Denison et al. (2009)	None reported, BRCs likely to be (very) low	BRCs likely to be very low or even negative, domestic violence increased after some interventions Most programs are not rigorously evaluated but it appears that very few have any impact on prevalence rates

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