



José Teles Mendes

Crime and political behavior

Legitimacy, punitiveness, and vigilantism in Latin America

Tese de doutorado

Thesis presented to the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Sociais of PUC-Rio in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doutor em Ciências Sociais.

Advisor: Profa. Maria Celina D'Araújo

Co-advisor: Prof. Thiago Moreira da Silva

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Abstract

Mendes, José Teles; D'Araújo, Maria Celina Soares (Advisor). **Crime and political behavior:** legitimacy, punitiveness, and vigilantism in Latin America. Rio de Janeiro, 2021. 126p. Tese de Doutorado – Departamento de Ciências Sociais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

This dissertation analyzes the associations between crime and political behavior in Latin America. Chapter 1 performs a causal mediation analysis of the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy, testing if satisfaction with democracy mediates the association between fear and support. Chapter 2 examines the relations between fear of crime and two different dimensions of punitiveness – support for harsher punishments for criminals and approval of the death penalty. Chapter 3 investigates the effect of crime victimization on support for vigilantism. It also studies whether trust in the justice system mediates the association between crime victimization and support for vigilantism. The dissertation reaches a few conclusions. First, individuals who are more fearful of crime are less satisfied with democracy and, because of it, decrease their support for the regime. Second, persons who exhibit higher fear of crime are more supportive of harsher sentences and the death penalty. Third, the association between fear and support for harsher sentences is stronger among low trust individuals and weaker among high trust ones. Fourth, crime victims, overall, display more support for vigilantism than non-victims. Fifth, the effect of victimization on support for vigilantism is mediated by trust in the justice system, i.e., being a crime victim lowers confidence, enhancing support for vigilantism. This dissertation used data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop) for different countries and years to achieve these results. It also applied multiple statistical techniques. Chapters 1 and 2 used fixed-effects models to analyze data from numerous Latin American countries simultaneously, with a causal mediation analysis in chapter 1. Chapter 3 also employed a causal mediation analysis, but using a novel approach, the regression-with-residuals (RWR), with observational data from Brazil.

Keywords

Legitimacy; democracy; crime; punitiveness; vigilantism

Resumo

Mendes, José Teles; D'Araújo, Maria Celina Soares. **Crime e comportamento político:** legitimidade, punitividade e vigilantismo na América Latina. Rio de Janeiro, 2021. 126p. Tese de Doutorado – Departamento de Ciências Sociais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

A tese analisa as relações entre crime e comportamento político na América Latina. O capítulo 1 realiza uma análise de mediação causal do efeito do medo do crime sobre o apoio à democracia, testando se a satisfação com a democracia media a associação entre medo e apoio. O capítulo 2 se dedica à análise da relação entre o medo do crime e duas dimensões da “punitividade” – apoio ao endurecimento da legislação penal e apoio à pena de morte. O capítulo 3 avalia o efeito do sofrimento de um crime sobre o apoio dos indivíduos a iniciativas privadas de combate à criminalidade, o chamado vigilantismo. O terceiro capítulo testa também se o efeito da vitimização pelo crime sobre o apoio ao vigilantismo ocorre através da confiança no sistema de justiça. A tese chega a algumas conclusões: 1) que indivíduos com maior medo do crime estão, em geral, menos satisfeitos com o funcionamento da democracia e, por isso, reduzem seu apoio à democracia; 2) que pessoas que sentem mais medo de sofrerem crimes são mais favoráveis ao endurecimento da legislação penal e à pena de morte; 3) que a associação entre medo e punitividade é mais forte entre indivíduos com baixa confiança na justiça do que naqueles com alta; 4) que vítimas de crimes, em média, apoiam mais práticas de vigilantismo; 5) que a associação entre sofrer um crime e o apoio ao vigilantismo é parcialmente explicada pela diminuição da confiança no sistema de justiça causada pela vitimização. Para chegar a essas conclusões, o trabalho utiliza dados do Barômetro das Américas (Lapop) de anos e países variados, além de diversas técnicas estatísticas. Os capítulos 1 e 2 aplicaram modelos com efeitos fixos para analisar múltiplos países da América Latina simultaneamente, com um estudo de mediação no capítulo 1. O capítulo 3 também empregou uma técnica de análise causal, mas utilizando uma nova abordagem, a regressão com resíduos (RWR), com dados observacionais do Brasil.

Palavras-chave

Legitimidade; democracia; crime; punitividade; vigilantismo

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1. Introduction

This dissertation analyzes the intersections between crime and political behavior. It addresses how crime salience variables, such as fear of crime and victimization, affect attitudes related to democracy and punitiveness in contemporary societies, using data provided by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop) for several Latin American countries. The dissertation consists of three independent but complementary studies.

These three chapters, which are the core of this dissertation, share a common theme – the associations between crime salience variables and attitudes towards democracy, legitimacy, and punitiveness. They all depart from the same theoretical and empirical questioning: how does crime affect the rooting of democratic principles, such as due process and human rights, particularly in high crime countries as in Latin America? Are crime and fear eroding the values upon which contemporary political regimes have been built, as trust in justice, support for democracy, and even the state monopoly on violence? These types of questions were the motivators of this dissertation.

Besides a common theoretical background, these chapters also share a quantitative approach, which is currently the most used in the study of political behavior. They all use data provided by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop). Each of these chapters has its theoretical framework, particular hypotheses, and conclusions. Despite sharing the same data source, they use different data frames since not all study variables are available in the same countries and survey years. The first and second chapters analyze various Latin American countries simultaneously, whereas the third chapter focuses on the Brazilian case. All these specifications are discussed in the chapters, where the methodology, data, and theory used are introduced and discussed.

The first chapter performs a causal mediation analysis of the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy. This study unravels that satisfaction with democracy partially mediates the impact of dread of crime on support, i.e., higher fear diminishes satisfaction with democracy, which decreases support for it. This mechanism is based on the assumption that legitimacy is split between two main dimensions: a specific and diffuse one (Easton, 1975). Elements of the specific dimension, as satisfaction with democracy, are more volatile and hence more strongly affected by perceptions about changing living standards in society. In contrast, components of the diffuse dimension, like support for

democracy, are more stable and less affected by citizens' everyday life experiences. Nevertheless, social indexes, as crime and employment rates, or fear of crime, directly affect specific components of legitimacy and may spill-over to diffuse aspects. Chapter 1 finds evidence in that direction since it demonstrates that fear affects support for democracy in part due to its effect on satisfaction with it.

The second chapter changes the study focus towards attitudes on crime policy. It questions how fear of crime is associated with perspectives on criminals' punishment, particularly with support for harsher punishments and the death penalty. It concludes that more fearful individuals are overall more supportive of increasing punishments and even executing convicted felons. Chapter two also tests whether these associations between fear, support for harsher punishments, and the death penalty's approval are moderated by trust in law enforcement. The rationale is that persons who are less trustful of penal institutions, especially courts, might be more inclined to demand transformations in criminal law to fight what they perceive as an escalating crime issue. The analysis concluded that individuals who present higher confidence in courts are less susceptible to favor tougher crime sentences even when they are more fearful of crime. On the other hand, fear of crime is more strongly correlated to support for harsher sentencing among those who have less trust in courts. Notwithstanding, this moderation mechanism does not work for the relation between fear and the approval of the death penalty, meaning that the statistical association between these two variables remains the same for individuals regardless of their level of trust.

The third chapter complements the first and second ones by studying the effects of crime victimization on support for vigilantism through trust in the justice system. Vigilantism is the prevention, investigation, or punishment of offenses carried out by private agents acting independently of the state (Bateson, 2020). To perform this mediation analysis, chapter three applies a new selection in observables approach, the regression-with-residuals (RWR) (Zhou and Wodtke, 2019; Wodtke and Zhou, 2020). The RWR decomposes the observed effects into indirect and direct effects, allowing the researcher to check for existing mediations. I hypothesized that trust in the justice system mediated the impact of victimization on support for vigilantism, i.e., persons who were recently victimized would exhibit less trust in law enforcement, which would prompt them to increase their support for vigilantism. Chapter three confirmed this expectation.

In this introduction, besides this brief presentation of the dissertation, I will address some critical issues for all three studies. First, I present the sociological debate on the relations between crime and politics in contemporary societies. How did crime become such an important political issue in the last decades? What are the reasons? And what are the expected consequences for our institutions and democratic politics? Second, I analyze the state of crime in Latin America by showing its recent evolution and comparing homicide rates and fear levels with developed countries. Third, I quickly discuss the current trends of political legitimacy indexes in Latin America, comparing them with the North American numbers.

1.1. The emergence of the victim: crime as a political phenomenon

In the last thirty to forty years, crime has become a major public opinion issue. It is often portrayed in popular media, such as in the news and TV shows. Families have started to decide where to live, which car to drive, and even what to wear based on fear of crime. Crime originated a new market: organizations spend millions of dollars every year to develop new risk management policies, hire new private security firms, and install new video monitoring interfaces. Lawmakers' emphasis has changed from passing legislation on welfare and employment to the control, prevention, and punishment of crime: governments debate new criminal laws and develop more and more detailed policies to address different kinds of offenses. Leaders prompt their communities to build community policing initiatives (Simon, 2007).

The differences between left and right, which were often portrayed as mainly an economic and behavioral divide, have grown to incorporate distinct visions on how to deal with crime (Garland, 2001). Differently from the first half of the 20th century, where economic and welfare issues were at the center of the political agenda, some of the crucial pieces of lawmaking of the last decades are related to law enforcement, such as the American Safe Streets Act of 1968 or the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Simon, 2007). Expenditures in the fight against crime have also grown steadily. In the US, state expenditures on corrections have multiplied ten times from 1985 to 2020 (The Sentencing Project, 2020). In Latin America, the economic costs of fear of crime are also high due to the demand for public and private resources for activities such as increasing the number of police officers on the streets, building and maintaining more prisons, and establishing particular securities systems for upper-class neighborhoods. Yearly amounts are estimated to be around 3% of the region's GDP (Jaitman and Keefer, 2017). All these

resources could otherwise be invested in public healthcare, education, and social programs, improving the social indexes of the subcontinent.

The enhanced expenditures on corrections are a byproduct of the increases in incarcerated populations. According to The Sentencing Project, in 2020, there were approximately 2.2 million people in American prisons and jails, a number four times bigger than forty years ago. The two most significant populations of Latin America, Brazil, and Mexico, are amongst the top countries in total incarceration. Brazil is currently ranked fifth in international incarceration rates, with an index of 333 incarcerated individuals per 100,000 inhabitants. The United States presently leads this sad ranking (655 persons in prison per 100,000 inhabitants), followed by a Latin American country, El Salvador (The Sentencing Project, 2020).

Nevertheless, all this growing emphasis on crime in legislation, politics, and public opinion was not necessarily due to increased crime. Indeed, homicide rates grew steadily in parts of the second half of the 20th century in Latin America and the US. Yet, fear of crime and the perception of crime have strongly outgrown crime indexes as the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in the period (Garland, 2001).

If escalating crime rates were not the main reason – or at least the only one – behind the emergence of crime as a political problem, what were the fundamental driving forces? There is no single answer, yet there are some convergences in the literature. Many sociologists agree that there is a general social trend of rising perceptions about risks in many different aspects of everyday life. For example, Ulrich Beck (1992) emphasized the expanding role played by risk assessments in late modernity. According to him, globalization made the world smaller, creating new possibilities of business, cooperation, production, and work, but it also engendered collective problems. Global issues, such as climate change and terrorism, are features of the risk society, as well as a generalized fear and nervousness driven by escalating unemployment, loss of job security, and the general dismantling of the welfare state. This widespread anxiety provoked the development of a new economy and new politics, both aimed at analyzing, classifying, and dealing with risks (Beck, 1992). Within this context, the so-called policy of “war on crime” began in the 1980s.

Hence, fear of crime may be one more type of generational anxiety amongst many, as fear of unemployment or socioeconomic downgrade (Hollway and Jefferson, 1997). Fear of crime then turned into a central social concern in many parts of the western hemisphere

in the second half of the 20th century, especially after the 1970s, due to general changes that dismantled the welfare state, increasing overall insecurity with life. With fear of crime, a new political actor emerged: the crime victim (Garland, 2001). Before the 1970s, the ideal type of penal policy aimed to recover criminals, reduce incarceration rates, and fight the background causes of criminal behavior. Criminals were perceived as deviating individuals who suffered from some social or psychological trauma. Social policies, such as support for orphans, investments in education, and job creation, were seen as forms of dealing with the roots of crime. Garland (2001) called this criminological and political consensus penal-welfarism when most policymakers and public opinion identified crime as a social problem that had social reasons and demanded solutions via social policy.

This consensus started to change quickly in the 1970s. The American 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act was a landmark, introducing a new kind of crime legislation with distinctive rationality (Simon, 2007). This legislation portrayed the American citizenry as potential crime victims who needed to be heard, protected, and have their needs for “closure” and even revenge attended. Akin to the unemployed in the 1950s or the new settlers who needed land in the 19th century, the crime victim became an ideal type of policy client in the 1970s. Legislators, who framed crime as a social issue that demanded collective solutions in terms of welfare in the age of penal-welfarism, turned to the victim as the social actor who required attention and care, even on an emotional level. Within this rationale, penal policies were converted into compensation for the victims and their families. Then, instead of diminishing jail time, investing in alternate sentences, such as community services, and facilitating parole, legislators were prompted to approve harsher penalties, increase detention periods, and allocate more and more resources to the police and prosecution (Simon, 2007). Such developments can also be found in Latin America, in countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay (Cervini, 1994). In Brazil, the most striking example was the 1990 Heinous Crimes Law (*Lei de Crimes Hediondos*), which reduced benefits given to prisoners, as the possibility of changing from prison in closed conditions to open conditions, in response to popular rage against criminals (Budó & Oliveira, 2012).

The police and prosecutors were the two main state actors perceived as siding with the victims. Simultaneously, the judiciary was regarded as too soft on criminals and had its discretion to choose sentences reduced by legislators. While judges grew in importance and self-esteem until the 1960s, with expanded discretion to decide penalties and jail

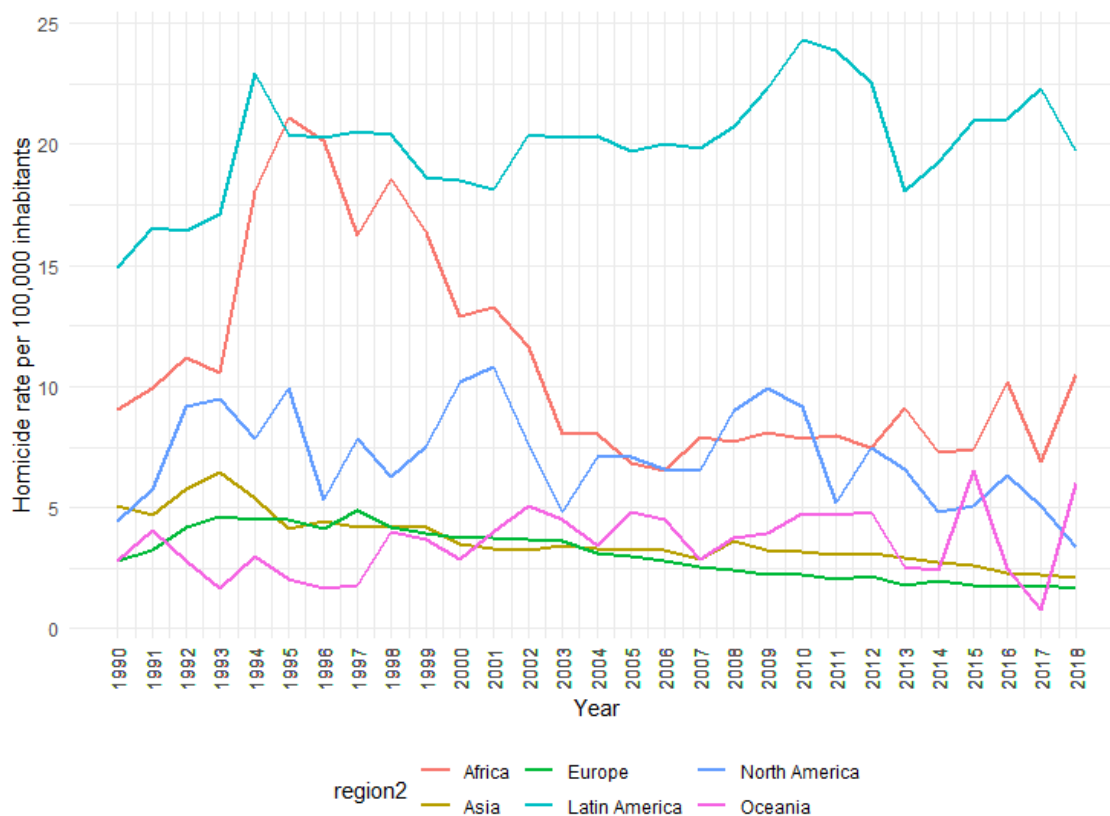
times, the victim's emergence as a political symbol has put tremendous pressure on the judiciary. Their relative autonomy, concern about due process, and attention towards human rights, features which were once seen as assets that could help judges to make the best decisions to deal with criminals, were turned into flaws that bespoke how they framed crime differently from most of the society (Simon, 2007).

In short, the relation victim-offender became a war, and the penal policy turned into a weapon in victims' hands. Politicians did not take long to realize this novel way of framing crime could become an essential political asset and fueled harsher legislation production. This state of affairs created a phenomenon called penal populism, through which politicians try to get into the public opinion's favor by fabricating laws that are tougher on criminals, regardless of their efficacy against crime (Pratt, 2007). With penal populism, expert opinions lose importance, whereas the victims' emotions arise as the main driving force of criminal policy. What is important is that lawmakers convince victims that they are on their side, trying to avenge them and their families by punishing felons (Bottoms, 1995; Pratt, 2007). The consequences of this new culture of control (Garland, 2001) are known: mounting incarceration rates, escalating expenditures on corrections, heightened punitiveness, and violations of core values of contemporary democracies, as civil rights and due process, all in the name of the "common good".

1.2. Crime in Latin America

Irrespective of any discussions about the effectiveness of stricter criminal laws, it is a fact that Latin America performs poorly when it comes to public safety. Despite not having any major international conflicts, the subcontinent exhibits astonishingly high crime rates. Figure 1 shows that, except for a couple of years in the 1990s, Latin America is by far the most violent region in the world. The recent trend of homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants also reveals that most regions entered the 1990s facing skyrocketing crime rates. Later, this upwards trend was reversed, and homicide rates became somewhat stable in most of the globe. Latin America confronted a new peak at the end of the 2000s.

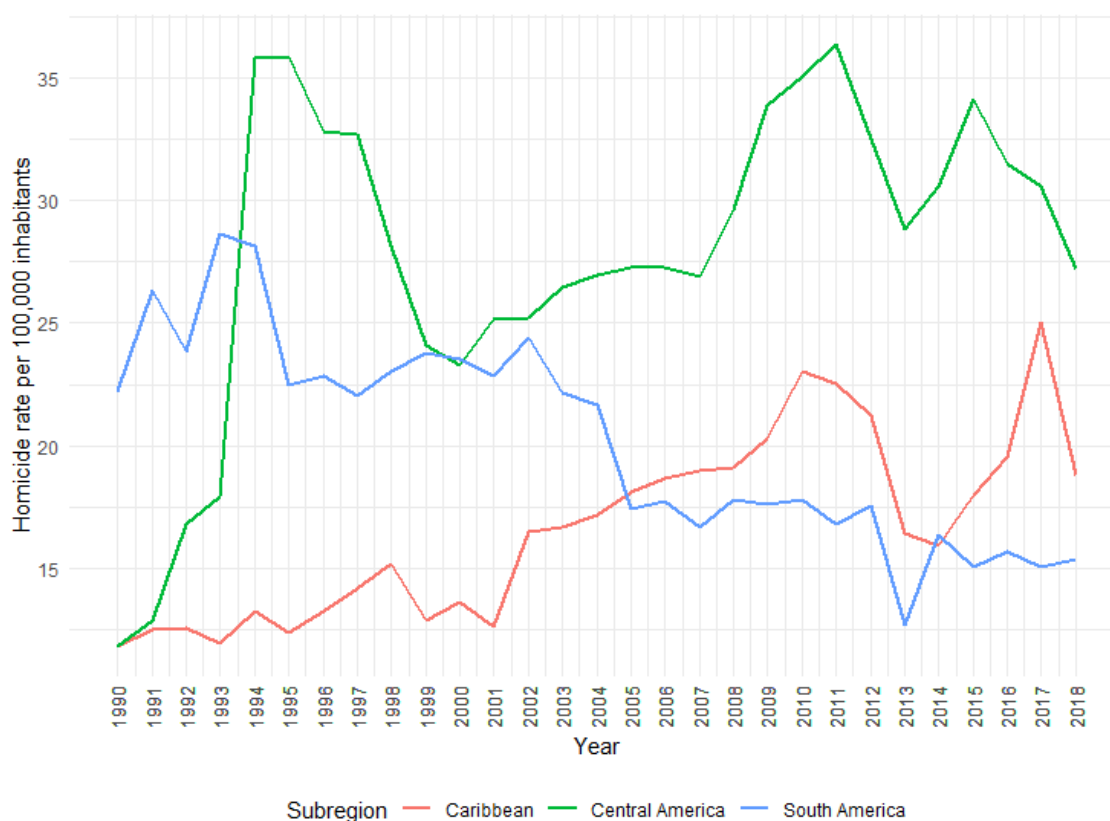
Figure 1 – Homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants by regions of the world (1999-2018)



Source: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Latin America is a vast region composed of various countries with different income levels, social welfare, and security. When applying the subdivisions used by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), we can see that homicide rates in Latin America are not homogenous. They differ considerably by subregion. In 1990, South America was the most dangerous part of the subcontinent. Since 1994 Central America has become the most violent area. South American numbers have improved constantly, especially after 2000. Caribbean rates have experienced more substantial fluctuation, with a growth trend.

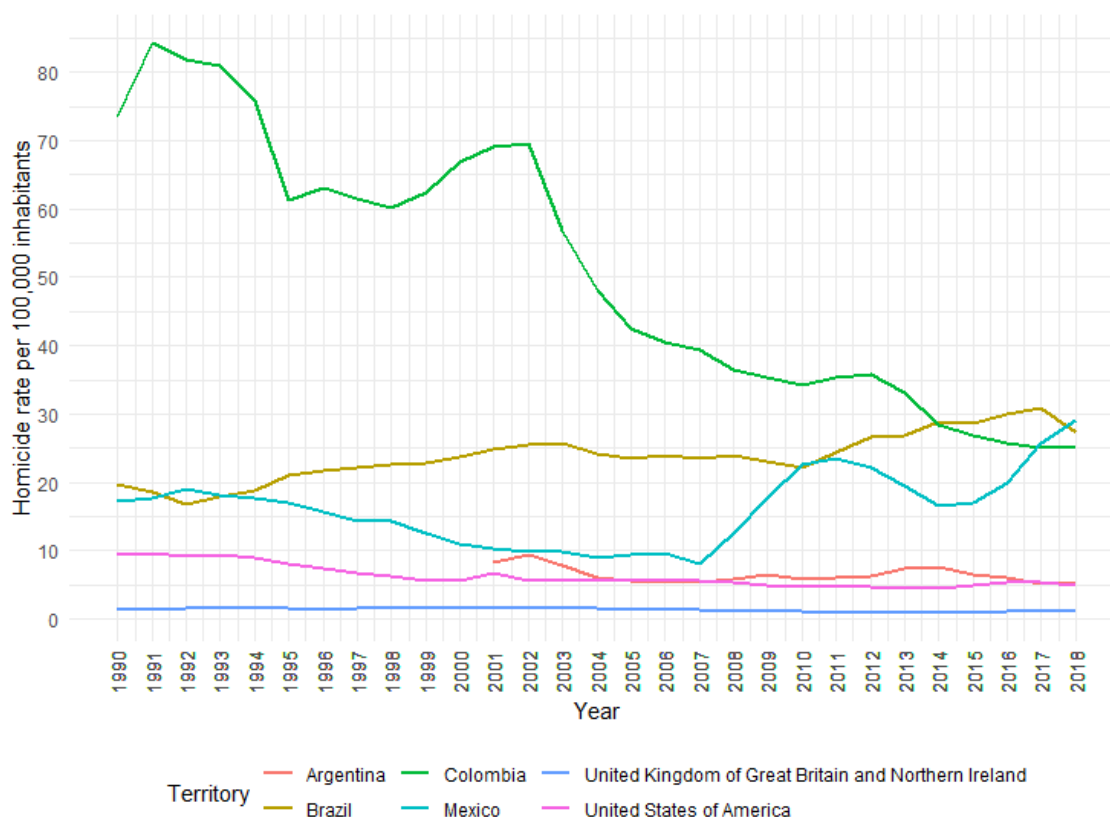
Figure 2 – Homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants by subregions of Latin America (1990-2018)



Source: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The simultaneous analysis of the four most populated Latin American countries (Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina), the US, and the UK sheds light on new information. Despite being overall less violent than most Latin American countries, the US and the UK are both societies that experienced a sharp expansion of crime salience as a political phenomenon, providing good comparison cases (Garland, 2001). First, the three most violent countries are, by far, Latin American. Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil exhibit constant higher homicide rates than Argentina, the US, and the UK over the last 30 years. What happened to Colombia in this period calls attention. In 1991, the country exhibited one of the highest homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants in the world. This index was stable until the 2000s when it started a solid movement of decrease. In the 2010s, Colombia ceased to be the leader of the ranking, being surpassed by Brazil and later by Mexico, which, in 2018, had the highest homicide rate among the six countries in figure 3. Argentina's numbers are close to the American ones, while the UK is the safest country in the group when it comes to homicide rates.

Figure 3 – Homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants in selected countries (1990-2018)



Source: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Still regarding homicide rates, the table below displays the ten most violent and the ten less violent countries in 2018. Among the ten countries with the highest homicide rates, only one, South Africa, is not in Latin America. All other nine are part of this region, with the three most populated countries of the subcontinent, Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia, appearing in the top 10. When it comes to the ten safest countries, the scenario reverses. There is no Latin American country in this group. Most of these territories are in Europe and East Asia. The safest country in 2018 was Singapore, followed by Japan. The Latin American country with the lowest homicide rate in 2018 was Chile, with an index of 4.4 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants – thus, still far from the smallest numbers visible in table 1.

Table 1 – Ten territories with the highest and lowest homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants (2018)

Ten most dangerous territories of the world	
Territory	Homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants
El Salvador	52,01893
Jamaica	43,85228
Honduras	38,92559
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	36,68763
South Africa	36,39917

Mexico	29,07106
Brazil	27,38253
Colombia	25,3438
Guatemala	22,50135
Saint Lucia	21,44153
Ten safest territories of the world	
Croatia	0,577422
Italy	0,569051
China	0,527091
State of Palestine	0,493525
Slovenia	0,48127
Norway	0,468344
China, Macao Special Administrative Region	0,31664
Oman	0,26918
Japan	0,262574
Singapore	0,156318

Source: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

It is unambiguous that Latin America is one of the most violent regions of the world. But how did it become so dangerous? There is no single reason, but scholars have converged around some key sources that took place mainly since the 1980s, concurrent with the punitive turn in the western hemisphere (Garland, 2001). First, the historical deprivation of goods and services that plagues many Latin Americans is central, particularly in a society increasingly based on the symbolic value of consumption. This general state of dispossession and the existing inequality in most Latin American nations have a substantial effect on younger individuals of marginalized groups, who then resort to illegal or informal strategies of acquiring resources (Misse, 2019).

Second, citizens from peripheral communities are regarded as intrinsically dangerous due to their socioeconomic situation and race. There is the criminalization of poverty that became more visible after the punitive turn of penal policy in the second half of the 20th century (Garland, 2001; Simon, 2007). This perspective divides societies between the “good citizens” – usually white and middle-class – and “bad citizens” – generally black, or mestizo, and poor –, aggravating the historical deprivation faced by these marginalized populations. It also legitimizes police’s aggressiveness and confrontation strategies, reinforcing drug traffickers’ factions in search of collective protection against law enforcement (Misse, 2019). These criminal groups make huge profits and are powerfully armed. They also have connections with state and law enforcement authorities, from whom they acquire political goods, such as protection (Arias, 2006). These illegal

markets of political commodities that should be under state monopoly also accelerate the propagation of crime. For example, in some regions of Rio de Janeiro, former and active police formed vigilante groups that established their own rules and justice in impoverished, marginalized neighborhoods, giving birth to the *milícias*, which are now trying to expand their domain in the city and beyond it (Cano, 2013; Misse, 2019). Vigilante groups merchandise political commodities as safety and protection for locals, threatening the rule of law in many Latin American regions.

It is not due to state absence that subnational nondemocratic orders arose in Latin America. Criminal gangs and vigilante groups' ability to control Latin American cities' peripheries stem from their collusion with state officials and civic leaders (Arias, 2006). The scarcity of effective accountability mechanisms and widespread corruption facilitate the construction of networks involving state agents, civil activists, and criminals. These networks enable criminal activities, as drug and arms trafficking, that maintain social violence in Latin America (Arias, 2006). Drug traffickers, other criminal gangs, and vigilantes exert control over communities with thousands of inhabitants in various regions of the subcontinent, managing significant cash flows from illicit activities, territorial, and political power over multiple lives. Politicians, the police, among other state agents, allow criminal gangs to operate in these marginalized areas, as Rio de Janeiro's favelas, in exchange for bribes and electoral support within their domains. Civil activists, like leaders of residents' associations, frequently work as bridges between criminals and state authorities, receiving political and social support from the factions that control their territories. The associations betwixt these three groups create multiple highly profitable illegal networks that foster criminal activities and hinder effective policies to decrease violence in the region (Arias, 2006).

Altogether, these factors lead to a process of social accumulation of violence (Misse, 2019), in which homicide rates became stable at very high levels since the 1990s in many Latin American countries. Solutions are hard to devise and depend on complex cooperations among various public and private actors. They also need to be conceived at the local level, considering the particular characteristics and sources of violence in different regions (Arias, 2006). In general, what happens is that politicians resort to penal populism, implementing harsher policies and confrontation strategies under the "war on crime" rationale that became prevalent since the 1980s. Hence, most policy efforts, involving in some cases even the employment of the Armed Forces to fight drug

trafficking, have been unsuccessful (Pion-Berlin and Carreras, 2017), resulting in low solution rates of homicides (Cerqueira, 2014) and the growth of drug trafficking (Daudelin and Ratton, 2017). Punitive policies are doomed, causing only more violence. Yet, legislators exploit them as an easy and cheap way of staying in a fearful public opinion's favor.

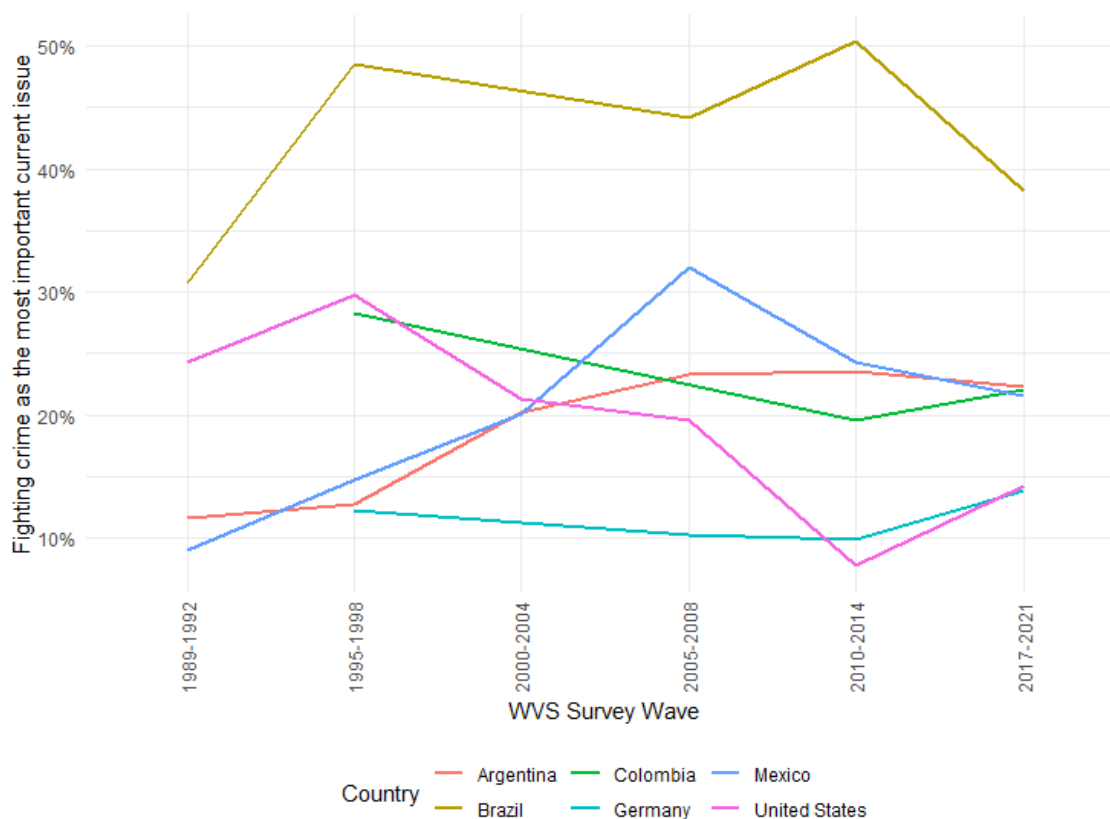
1.3. Crime salience in Latin America

We can think of crime salience in public opinion as one of the primary sources of punitiveness in contemporary societies (Johnson, 2009; Costelloe, Chiricos and Gertz, 2009; Brown and Socia, 2017; Cabral, 2019; Price *et al.*, 2019; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019; Kort-Butler & Ray, 2019). In the political behavior literature, the notion of crime salience refers to the importance of crime in individuals' minds in a given group or society. There are multiple ways of measuring it, such as surveying persons about their levels of fear or concern about crime as policy issue.

The World Values Survey (WVS) questions individuals whether fighting crime is the most important issue for their country. As figure 4 demonstrates, Latin American biggest countries display significantly larger shares of individuals who believe that fighting crime should be their governments' priorities than their American and German counterparts. All four most populated Latin American countries present more significant crime salience levels than Germans in the entire time series. In the US's case, their numbers compete with Latin American ones until the 2000s, when the salience of crime in the US quickly fell. Brazil presents the highest crime salience in public opinion in the whole series.

Interestingly, even in the 1990s, when that country's homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants were significantly lower than those of Colombia, Brazilians worried much more about crime than Colombians. This evidence points to the fact mentioned above that crime salience as a political issue is not directly related to crime rates. Further, Argentina, whose homicide rates are substantially lower than Colombia and Mexico, exhibits similar crime salience rates to these two countries. Argentina also experienced a noticeable increase in crime salience in public opinion in the 2000s, when its crime rates were stable or even diminishing.

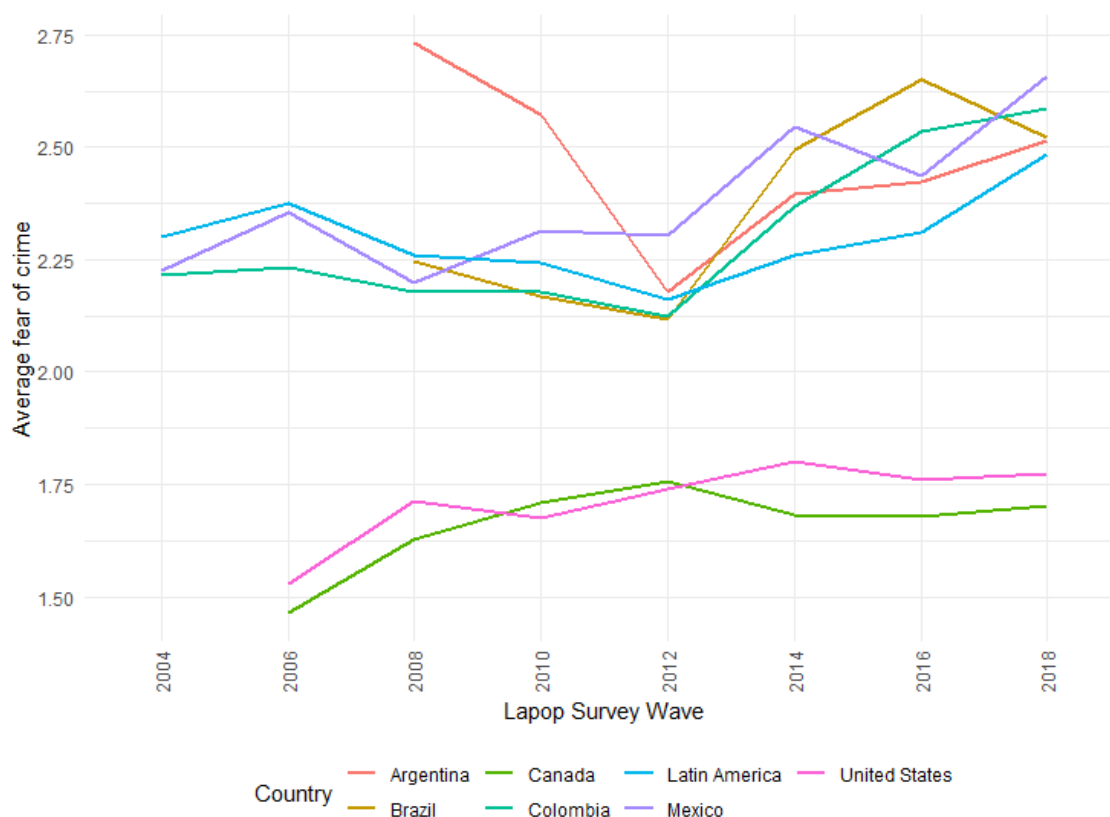
Figure 4 – Proportion of individuals who believe that fighting crime is the most important issue for their societies in selected countries (1989-2021)



Source: World Values Survey (WVS)

Fear of crime is another way of assessing crime salience in public opinion. One more time, Latin Americans have criminality in their minds much more than persons in other regions of the globe. Figure 5 compares the average fear of crime in selected countries, as measured by Lapop on a four-point scale. Survey respondents in the US and Canada are considerably less fearful of crime than those in Latin America in all Lapop waves. The four most populated countries of Latin America display similar averages of fear of crime. Strangely, the only exception is Argentina, one of the safest countries in the subcontinent, which exhibits values above the Latin average in 2008 and 2010. The Latin American mean is between 2.25 and 2.5 in most surveyed years. Since 2012, fear has been increasing in all four countries and the region. The case of Colombia is shocking, given that homicide rates have been declining gradually since the 1990s and, yet, fear levels have started to grow after 2012.

Figure 5 – Average fear of crime in selected countries (2004-2018)



Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

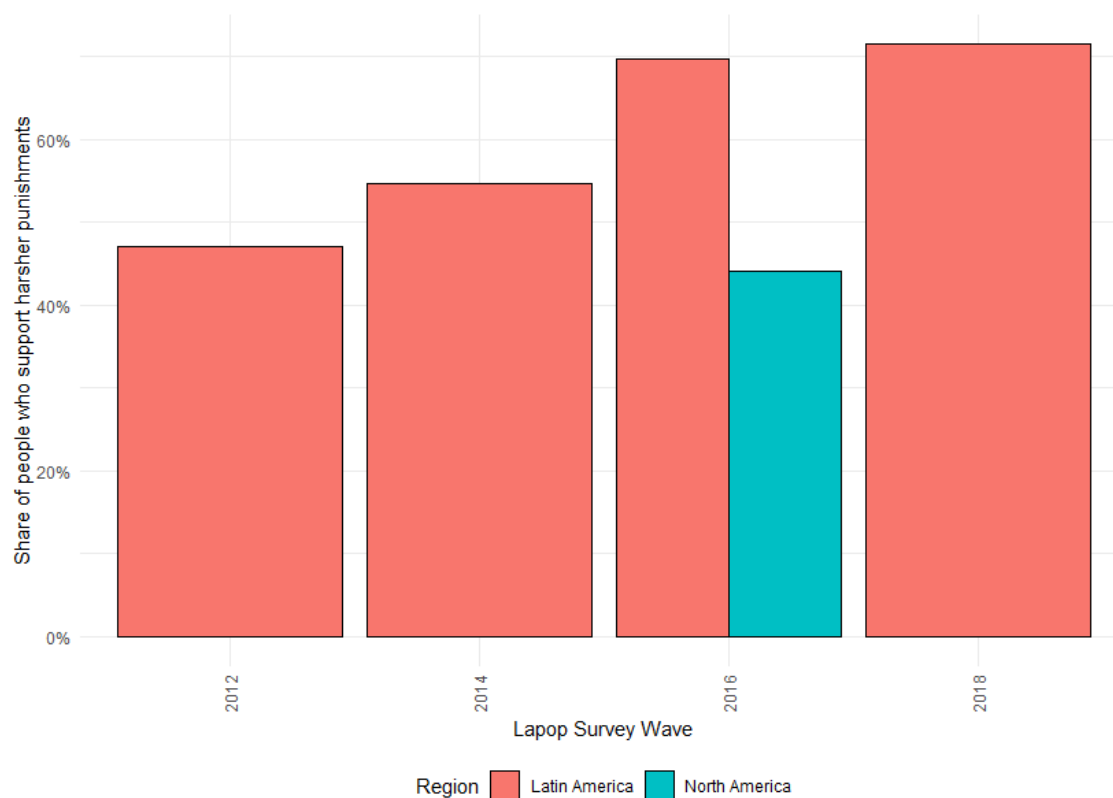
1.4. Punitiveness in Latin America

The concept of punitiveness refers to the prevalent ideas and conceptions regarding the punishment of offenses. This dissertation began with a discussion on punitiveness. In this exposition, I demonstrated how the literature addressed the emerging punitiveness in public opinion and crime policy in the last decades, especially in the US. One of the most influential works on what I have been calling the punitive turn of penal policy ascribed the emergence of punitiveness to heightened fear of crime in society (Garland, 2001). In chapter 2, I empirically test the association between fear and punitiveness. Here, I intend to show how punitiveness has been evolving in Latin American citizens' minds in the last years and to compare their numbers with other countries.

The bar chart below displays the shares of people who support that their respective countries' governments increase punishments for criminals. Red bars stand for Latin American countries and blue bars for the US and Canada. Despite the absence of overtime data for Americans and Canadians, it is clear that their support for harsher punishments is lesser than the Latin American average. We can also see that support for harsher

punishment is trending upwards in the last years in Latin America, although homicide rates were relatively constant in the 2010s.

Figure 6 – Share of supporters of harsher punishments by region



Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

Another aspect of punitiveness, and perhaps a more extreme one, is support for vigilantism. Vigilantism consists of the extralegal investigation or punishment of offenses (Bateson, 2020). Some known vigilante groups in Latin America are the *milícias* in Brazil or the *autodefensas* in Mexico. Because they claim to be crime fighters, vigilantes can gather substantive public approval, even though they often commit felonies.

Table 2 displays the average support for vigilantism in Latin America and North America. Lapop measures support for vigilantism on a 10 point scale. It seems that public opinion backing of vigilantism was relatively stable in the subcontinent until 2016. In addition, Latin American averages do not differ much from North American ones, at least between 2006 and 2014. In 2016, numbers grew in Latin America, but there is no available data for comparison from the US and Canada. In 2018, Lapop only included the question on support for vigilantism in Bolivia's survey.

Table 2– Average support for vigilantism in Latin America and North America

Wave	Latin America	North America
2004	3,8	-
2006	3,9	3,0
2008	3,6	3,5
2010	3,8	3,4
2012	3,7	3,4
2014	3,8	3,8
2016	5,0	-

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

Support for harsher punishments perpetrated by the state and approval of vigilantism are two substantially distinct dimensions of punitiveness. The first one involves only measures allowed by criminal law, whereas the second one is, by definition, illegal. The constant operation of vigilante groups that seek to exert control over Latin American areas contributes to the deterioration of the already fragile rule of law in the region, fostering the emergence of what Arias (2006) called subnational nondemocratic orders.

1.5. Legitimacy in Latin America

Legitimacy consists of various indicators that reflect the way citizens perceive state institutions and the political system. Democratic legitimacy refers to how persons in a given society regard democracy. Higher levels of legitimacy reflect that people are more supportive of the regime and are more willing to fight for it. Lower levels of legitimacy implicate that many voters do not hold very positive views of the regime and do not see it as a pivotal aspect of their lives. Usually, countries with higher levels of quality of democracy also display heightened legitimacy.

In this dissertation, I borrow Easton's (1975) definition of legitimacy and divide it into two main types: the diffuse and specific dimensions of legitimacy. The first one is more entrenched into the political culture of a nation, being harder to modify. In contrast, the second is more volatile and responds more directly to short-term alterations in society, as changing economic scenarios or a sudden increase in crime rates. The concept of legitimacy is more deeply discussed in chapter 1. In this part of the text, I merely present it and analyze the evolution of three indicators of legitimacy in the last two decades in Latin America: satisfaction with democracy, trust in courts, and support for democracy. The first two are part of the specific dimension of legitimacy, while the latter is a more diffuse component (Norris, 1999; Booth and Seligson, 2009).

Satisfaction with democracy echoes how citizens evaluate the performance of incumbent leaders (Booth and Seligson, 2009). In Lapop, its value ranges from 1 to 4. I recoded it, so higher values mean more satisfaction and lower ones, less satisfaction. Its numbers display some variation over time. In 2018, the Latin American index was below its starting value of 2.44 in 2004.

Notwithstanding, it increased from 2004 to 2012, and then started falling. In North America, the trend was the opposite, decreasing from 2006 to 2012 and then growing again. Overall, Latin American respondents were less satisfied with democracy than their North American counterparts.

Support for democracy mirrors general adherence to democratic principles and the regime. It is a crucial measure of democratic vitality among citizens, reflecting at which level people believe that democracy is the best political regime available (Norris, 1999). In Lapop, its values go from 1 (minimum support) to 7 (maximum support). In general, Latin Americans are also less supportive of democracy than North Americans. The average support for democracy in Latin America was 4.75 in 2018, which is smaller than in 2004 (5.05).

Nevertheless, support for democracy improved in Latin America from 2004 to 2008, stabilizing between 2008 and 2012 and then retreating from 2012 to 2018. The lowest level of support in Latin America in this series was found in 2018. North America followed the same downwards trend, and their worst mean of support for democracy was also found in 2018.

Trust in courts comprises citizen's evaluation of whether courts provide a fair trial. As well as satisfaction with democracy, it is also a component of the specific dimension of legitimacy (Norris, 1999; Booth and Seligson, 2009). Similar to the other two legitimacy variables analyzed in table 3, trust in courts is also greater among North American respondents. Confidence in courts increased in Latin America from 2004 to 2012, then reducing from 2012 to 2018. Its lowest value was also found in 2018. In North America, the movement was different: it decreased from 2006 to 2010, then enhancing between 2010 and 2012, falling again in 2014, and stabilizing between 2016 and 2018.

Satisfaction with democracy and trust in courts, which are both components of the specific dimension of legitimacy, followed similar patterns, increasing in Latin America between 2004 and 2012 and then decreasing from 2012 to 2018. In North America, both

decreased between 2006 and 2012, becoming steady or growing after this. More importantly, it became visible that legitimacy in Latin America is substantively lower than in Canada and the US, demonstrating how the democratic regime in the region has more fragile roots than in North America. This scenario makes the Latin subcontinent less resistant to the harmful effects of crime and crime salience on political behavior and attitudes towards democracy. These effects are further studied in the following chapters.

Table 3 - Average satisfaction with democracy, support for democracy, and trust in courts in Latin America and North America

Wave	Region	Satisfaction with democracy	Support for democracy	Trust in courts
2004	Latin America	2,44	5,05	3,67
2006	Latin America	2,43	5,15	3,72
2008	Latin America	2,52	5,26	3,79
2010	Latin America	2,55	5,25	3,88
2012	Latin America	2,56	5,25	3,90
2014	Latin America	2,52	5,15	3,79
2016	Latin America	2,32	4,78	3,54
2018	Latin America	2,32	4,75	3,46
2006	North America	2,98	6,36	4,83
2008	North America	2,87	5,97	4,56
2010	North America	2,64	5,58	4,43
2012	North America	2,62	5,60	4,52
2014	North America	2,65	5,51	4,41
2016	North America	2,67	5,53	4,51
2018	North America	2,71	5,44	4,52

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

1.6. A few remarks

This dissertation analyzes the relations between crime and political behavior in Latin America. Each of the following three chapters focuses on a different aspect of that theme. This introduction sought to provide the reader with the big picture of the dissertation: the connections between crime as a political issue, punitiveness, and legitimacy. It also aimed to show how Latin America is a region where crime rates are noticeably above the world's average, making it a good case study for the consequences of crime in terms of political behavior.

First, this introduction presented the main general interpretations of the associations between crime and politics, mostly based on the American case. It stressed how, in the last decades of the 20th century, the emergence of the victim as a political actor played a pivotal role in reframing crime in citizens and policymakers' eyes. It also introduced the

debate on the sources and consequences of criminality in Latin America, emphasizing how widespread crime and punitiveness undermine democracy and the rule of law in the subcontinent. Examples of deleterious political outcomes of soaring crime and punitiveness are penal populism and the emergence of subnational nondemocratic orders in areas dominated by criminals and vigilante groups. This introduction also briefly discussed some data on crime, crime salience, punitiveness, and political legitimacy in the region, which complement the statistics analyzed in the following chapters.

It was never my intention to directly discuss the causes or solutions for crime as a policy issue in the region or join a profound debate on penal populism. These are vital topics that demand further exploration in Latin America but are not the focus of this dissertation. This work intends to contribute specifically to the comprehension of the associations between crime, fear of crime, and political behavior. In this debate, Latin America emerges as a central source of evidence, given its unique combination of high crime rates, heightened fear of crime, soaring levels of punitiveness, and diminished legitimacy.

2. From the specific to the diffuse: a causal pathway for the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy

This chapter analyzes the effects of fear of crime on support for democracy in Latin America. It hypothesizes that fear of crime is negatively associated with support for democracy; that is, more fear leads to lower support for the democratic regime. It also develops and tests a causal mechanism that explains this association. It argues that the mediation of satisfaction with democracy partially explains the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy, i.e., heightened fear reduces satisfaction with democracy, decreasing support for the regime. Results confirm this expectation.

Despite not facing any major international conflicts, Latin America is one of the most dangerous regions in the world. According to the Igarapé Institute, a Brazilian think tank, 14 of the 20 world's most violent countries are Latin American. Most countries in the region are also third-wave democracies, which are still under development, especially regarding the consolidation of democratic political cultures (Huntington, 1991). The recent rise of authoritarian leaders throughout the world, followed by the worsening of indexes as support for democracy and trust in core democratic institutions, has made some analysts talk about a democratic “rollback” (Puddington, 2009, 2010). This trend has also reached Latin America. Due to their history of authoritarian rule, the region's political regimes are expected to be less resistant to autocratic attempts of undermining democracy.

In fact, scholars have shown that from 2004 to 2019, citizens' support for democracy and satisfaction with democracy have been continuously decreasing, while tolerance for executive coups has been increasing (Zechmeister and Lupu, 2019). Trust in core regime institutions, an essential component of political legitimacy, remains low in Latin America. Most countries investigated by Lapop in 2019 show levels of trust below the scales' midpoint (Zechmeister and Lupu, 2019). In 2017, confidence in core regime institutions had fallen when compared to their level in the previous survey round in 2014 (Carlin, 2017).

The combination of widespread crime, heightened fear of crime, diminishing indexes of trust, and support for the political system makes the subcontinent a critical case to expand the comprehension of the relations between crime salience and democratic legitimacy. Here, the study's focus is on two core legitimacy variables directly related to the perception of the democratic regime: support for democracy and satisfaction with democracy (Norris, 1999; Booth and Seligson, 2009).

Researchers have shown how social and economic conditions, such as age, gender, education, wealth (Booth and Seligson, 2009; Salinas and Booth, 2011), access to social welfare, economic development (Huntington, 1991), and even the reception of cash transfer programs affect indexes of legitimacy (Layton, Donaghy, and Rennó, 2017). Crime salience, which is noticeably high in Latin America, has also called the attention of analysts. Papers have addressed the effects of violence on democracy, particularly the effects of crime victimization and fear of crime on political legitimacy, frequently finding that fear and victimization are negatively associated with legitimacy (Fernandez and Kuenzi, 2010; Salinas and Booth, 2011; Ceobanu, Wood, and Ribeiro, 2011; Bateson, 2012; Blanco, 2013; Blanco and Ruiz, 2013; Carreras, 2013).

Notwithstanding, most available studies have not advanced towards elaborating and testing causal mechanisms that explain these relations between crime salience and legitimacy. This chapter expands on previous work by developing a causal pathway that partially explains the negative association between fear of crime and support for democracy. It tests whether the effect of fear on support is mediated by satisfaction with democracy. Results endorsed this causal mechanism, providing evidence in favor of the hypothesis that heightened fear reduces satisfaction with democracy and, by doing it, decreases support for the regime.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, I discuss the available empirical studies on the associations between crime and political legitimacy. Second, I examine some classic theories on democratic legitimacy and derive the causal mechanism I test in this chapter. Third, I present the data and methods used, which are mainly based on the causal mediation approach created by Imai *et al.* (2010). At last, I present and analyze the results.

2.1. Crime and legitimacy

It was only in the last decade that scholars have turned to study the links between crime and legitimacy. Part of this literature has been trying to address the effects of fear of crime and individual victimization on trust in institutions, support, and satisfaction with democracy in Latin America.

Regarding fear of crime, studies have found adverse effects on support for democracy (Cruz, 2008; Fernandez and Kuenzi, 2010; Salinas and Booth, 2011), on satisfaction with democracy (Fernandez and Kuenzi, 2010), and other democratic attitudes, such as support for participation rights and tolerance of regime-critics rights (Salinas and Booth, 2011).

Higher fear of crime is also correlated with greater support for a government overthrow (Maldonado, 2010). Besides, citizens who have stronger perceptions of violence tend to present more significant support for harsher criminal punishment (Price, Sechopoulos, and Whitty, 2019). They are also more willing to accept that authorities act outside the law to capture criminals (Cruz, 2008). I study these two topics, support for harsher punishments and approval of vigilantism, in chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

When it comes to victimization, some argue that it produces significant adverse effects only on satisfaction with democracy (Fernandez & Kuenzi, 2010; Ceobanu *et al.*, 2011; Blanco, 2013; Blanco and Ruiz, 2013), while others also find adverse impacts on the support for the democratic regime (Bateson, 2012). Salinas and Booth (2011) find a negative correlation of victimization only with one type of democratic attitude: tolerance of regime-critics rights, while Corbacho, Philipp, and Ruiz-Vega (2015) see effects of victimization on trust in the police, but no meaningful impacts on confidence in the judiciary. Victimization also leads to more significant support for repressive measures, such as *mano dura* governments, vigilante justice (Bateson, 2012), and harsher punishment for criminals (Price *et al.*, 2019).

Victimization and fear of crime are both negatively correlated with political system support (Carreras, 2013). In Colombia, greater perceptions of violence are associated with diminishing support and satisfaction with democracy, while victimization is negatively correlated only with the latter (Blanco and Ruiz, 2013). Both variables adversely impact trust in institutions, with a stronger effect on the institutions linked to the fight against crime. For the Mexican case, Blanco (2013) encounters similar relations between fear of crime, trust in institutions, satisfaction, and support for democracy. Still, victimization exerts no significant effect on the latter.

Given the discussion above on the associations between fear of crime and political legitimacy, and taking into consideration Lipset's (1994) defense of the importance of government effectiveness to the consolidation of democratic regimes, I argue that citizens ascribe higher levels of fear of crime to the ineffectiveness of the political system, undermining their support for the regime. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

H1.1: More fearful individuals tend to present lower levels of support for democracy.

2.2. Democracy and legitimacy

As democracies spread throughout the world since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, scholars have tried to understand the mechanisms that could foster or hinder the development of democratic regimes (Easton, 1975; Lipset, 1994; Huntington, 1991; Linz and Stepan, 1996). The so-called third-wave democracies (Huntington, 1991), which include the Latin American countries that became democracies in the 1970s and 1980s, called for special attention given their authoritarian and unstable political history.

An influential point of view is that "systemic failures" (Huntington, 1991) of democratic regimes could undermine their consolidation, especially concerning the provision of welfare, justice, and domestic order. The political system's stability is linked to the trust citizens bestow on it, and this trust is strongly related to individuals' evaluation of governments' ability to improve general well-being (Lipset, 1994; Linz and Stepan, 1996). In the words of Lipset (1994, p.8): "legitimacy is best gained by prolonged effectiveness, effectiveness being the actual performance of the government and the extent to which it satisfies the basic needs of most of the population".

Therefore, on the one hand, consolidation of democratic regimes relies on strengthening a democratic political culture capable of sustaining equally stable democratic institutions. On the other hand, the democratic political culture's entrenchment depends on the regime's capacity to deliver goods and services to its populations, particularly economic opportunities and social welfare. The development of a steady and widely accepted political support for the democratic regime is vital because this is the main link between citizens and the regime.

Political legitimacy is a complex concept and can be analyzed in several ways. Here I follow Easton's (1975) classic definition and divide legitimacy into two main dimensions: a specific and diffuse one. Specific dimension variables are related to how citizens feel the political authorities are fulfilling their needs. It directly responds to how politicians in power are dealing with the problems citizens judge the most urgent. The mediator under study in this chapter, satisfaction with democracy, is a component of legitimacy's specific dimension. It denotes the current perception of citizens regarding the political system's ability to deliver public goods. It may change periodically, given alterations in persons' satisfaction with their daily lives (Booth and Seligson, 2009).

Differently, the diffuse dimension is linked to the attitudes and goodwill citizens show towards not the incumbent political authorities but the regime itself. In democratic governments, it means that diffuse support is the support given to democracy, not the party currently in power or a specific leader. The diffuse side of legitimacy is also composed of multiple variables. My outcome in this study, support for democracy, is a component of the diffuse dimension of legitimacy (Norris, 1999; Booth and Seligson, 2009).

Hence, diffuse support is a perennial element of legitimacy, while specific support is more volatile. Whereas the specific dimension variables of legitimacy are quickly submitted to variations caused by short-term popular dissatisfactions, the diffuse dimension ones show more considerable stability. However, they are not immune to change. Continuous deterioration of the specific support might spill-over to diffuse support. In the long term, persistent poor government performance may lead to greater dissatisfaction with the incumbent politicians and the democratic regime itself (Easton, 1975). In Latin America, where most countries do not have deeply rooted democratic cultures, the probability of popular discontent spilling over from specific support to diffuse support is even higher because the "reservoir of goodwill" (Easton, 1975) towards democracy tends to be smaller.

Hence, citizens may ascribe their heightened fear of crime to states' disability to promote public safety, undermining support for democracy. Besides, this effect tends to be at least partially indirect, being mediated by satisfaction with democracy. The mechanism works as follows: first, fear of crime reduces satisfaction with democracy, a specific dimension of legitimacy and, hence, more volatile. Then, the reduction of satisfaction with democracy leads to the decrease of the diffuse and more constant dimension of support for democracy. Thus, I hypothesize that:

H1.2: More fearful individuals tend to present lower levels of support for democracy partially because fear of crime reduces their satisfaction with the regime.

2.3. Data and method

Given my focus on the association between fear of crime and support for democracy in Latin America, this chapter uses data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop). The 2018/19 round of the Americas Barometer is the eighth regional survey produced by Lapop, based on stratified probability samples representing each country's

populations. The data is composed of samples of 18 Latin American countries, with a total of 26,396 observations. All cases with missing data for the outcome, support for democracy, and the mediator, satisfaction with democracy, were dropped. The dataset was then imputed using multiple imputations with the package *mice* in R.

Multiple imputations is a technique that estimates values for missing data based on other information available. For example, if the education variable is missing for a person, but we know their income, race, gender, and other important predictors, the software estimates and imputes a value for that missing case. Every variable on the dataset, except for the outcome, mediator, and other variables with zero missingness, was imputed. Figure A2 in the appendix exhibits the amount of missing data for each variable on the dataset. The one with the biggest missingness was race. The second one was education, followed by the treatment, fear of crime, with a missing rate of only 1.3%. The missingness of the outcome and mediator is zero because rows with missing information were dropped.

The non-imputed dataset and the imputed one have very similar characteristics. Means and the standard deviation of the variables are the same or very close in all cases. The treatment, fear of crime, has both the same mean and standard deviation in both datasets. Sociodemographic controls also exhibit very similar distributions.

Table 4 – Descriptive statistics of the non-imputed and imputed datasets

Non-imputed dataset					
Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Support for democracy	26,396	4.763	1.720	1	7
Satisfaction with democracy	26,396	2.317	0.795	1	4
Fear of crime	26,053	2.490	1.007	1	4
Race	25,121	0.267	0.443	0	1
Urban	26,396	0.718	0.450	0	1
Sex	26,381	0.491	0.500	0	1
Income	26,122	6.766	2.477	0	13
Education	25,999	10.085	4.239	0	18
Age	26,380	39.659	16.552	16	97
Imputed dataset					
Support for democracy	26,396	4.763	1.720	1	7
Satisfaction with democracy	26,396	2.317	0.795	1	4
Fear of crime	26,396	2.490	1.007	1	4

Race	26,396	0.267	0.442	0	1
Urban	26,396	0.718	0.450	0	1
Sex	26,396	0.491	0.500	0	1
Income	26,396	6.769	2.476	0	13
Education	26,396	10.052	4.254	0	18
Age	26,396	39.658	16.551	16	97

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

The outcome, support for democracy, and the mediator, satisfaction with democracy, had means of 4.8 and 2.3, respectively. Since both variables have different scales (from 1 to 7 in the first case and 1 to 4 in the second), I must compare them accordingly. The aggregated mean of support for democracy for all countries was above half of the scale. This is also true for satisfaction with democracy, even though the standard was closer to the center of the scale than in the case of support for democracy. The explanatory variable, fear of crime, presented a considerably high mean, 2.5 on a four-point scale (1 to 4).

It is important to go beyond the aggregated means and compare the country means of the outcome, mediator, and treatment. The table below displays the means of support for democracy for every country in the sample, arranged from the highest mean to the lowest one. Provided that support for democracy is a diffuse, long-term dimension of legitimacy (Norris, 1999; Booth and Seligson, 2008), we expected that the countries with the highest means were the most stable political regimes, besides providing relatively good living standards for its citizens. Uruguay has the greatest average support for democracy, 5.6, followed by Argentina (5.4), Costa Rica (5.3), and Chile (5). These countries have some of the best living standards in Latin America, and, in the case of Costa Rica, it has a long-lasting, stable political regime. Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Chile were rated “full democracies” by the democracy index of The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2020, being the only Latin American countries ranked among the best democracies in the world. The two largest GDPs and most populated countries in Latin America occupied the fifth and sixth places. Mexico has an average support for democracy of 4.87, followed by Brazil, with 4.84. The lowest mean of support for democracy was found in Honduras (4.22).

Table 5 – Average support for democracy by country

Country	Support for democracy (mean)	Number of observations	Standard Deviation
Uruguay	5.61	1513	1.69

Argentina	5.36	1479	1.76
Costa Rica	5.34	1443	1.63
Chile	5.05	1506	1.61
Mexico	4.87	1461	1.49
Brazil	4.84	1441	1.79
Colombia	4.84	1585	1.65
Dominican Republic	4.75	1438	1.78
El Salvador	4.73	1440	1.57
Ecuador	4.61	1489	1.51
Panama	4.59	1502	1.75
Paraguay	4.54	1453	1.68
Jamaica	4.52	1275	1.89
Nicaragua	4.48	1443	1.92
Guatemala	4.46	1428	1.56
Peru	4.45	1474	1.49
Bolivia	4.41	1597	1.62
Honduras	4.22	1429	1.84

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

Satisfaction with democracy is assessed on a four-point scale that shows how individuals are satisfied with the way democracy works in their respective country, ranging from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (4). Different from support for democracy, it is a more changeable index (Norris, 1999). It presents a more significant variation over time when compared to support for democracy, being a better reflection of the evaluation of current politics in each country than support for democracy. Hence, it comprises mostly the actual political behavior situation towards the incumbent leaders, not the general support for the regime. It is directly influenced by other volatile variables, such as economic growth, employment rates, and current office holders' general performance (Booth and Seligson,

2008). This explains why the ranking of satisfaction with democracy does not precisely match the one of support for democracy. Uruguay is still in the first place, with a mean satisfaction of 2.6, followed by Nicaragua (2.4), which does not rank well in the support for democracy index, Paraguay (2.4), Costa Rica (2.4), and Mexico (2.4). Brazil, the largest economy and biggest population of the region, comes in the seventh place. The lowest average of satisfaction with democracy was found in Panama (2.1).

Table 6 – Average satisfaction with democracy by country

Country	Satisfaction with democracy (mean)	Number of observations	Standard deviation
Uruguay	2,62	1513	0,79
Nicaragua	2,41	1443	0,83
Paraguay	2,40	1453	0,76
Costa Rica	2,39	1443	0,78
Mexico	2,38	1461	0,77
Dominican Republic	2,38	1438	0,89
Brazil	2,37	1441	0,80
Bolivia	2,34	1597	0,80
Guatemala	2,34	1428	0,83
Chile	2,33	1506	0,77
Honduras	2,31	1429	0,84
Ecuador	2,30	1489	0,79
El Salvador	2,29	1440	0,76
Jamaica	2,24	1275	0,71
Argentina	2,22	1479	0,79
Peru	2,17	1474	0,71
Colombia	2,14	1585	0,72
Panama	2,09	1502	0,79

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

My treatment is fear of crime. I analyze how it is associated with support for democracy and satisfaction with democracy. Fear of crime ranges from 1 (very safe) to 4 (very unsafe). The country whose citizens fear crime the most is the Dominican Republic (2.8), followed by Peru (2.8), and Bolivia (2.7). Most countries that ranked well in the support for democracy index are close to the middle of the fear of crime rank, like Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. Chile performs well in both indexes, even though its mean of satisfaction with democracy is in the middle of the distribution. The country whose population least feared crime was Jamaica, with an average of 1.9.

Table 7 – Average fear of crime by country

Country	Fear of crime (mean)	Number of observations	Standard deviation
Dominican Republic	2.81	1438	1.03
Peru	2.80	1474	0.90
Bolivia	2.71	1597	0.92
Mexico	2.66	1461	0.97
Ecuador	2.66	1489	0.95
Colombia	2.59	1585	0.99
Guatemala	2.56	1428	0.97
Brazil	2.52	1441	1.05
Argentina	2.52	1479	0.99
Uruguay	2.46	1513	0.97
Costa Rica	2.44	1443	0.99
El Salvador	2.40	1440	1.00
Paraguay	2.40	1453	1.03
Panama	2.40	1502	0.91
Chile	2.32	1506	0.97
Nicaragua	2.28	1443	1.04
Honduras	2.23	1429	1.08
Jamaica	1.95	1275	1.00

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

To test the hypothesis that satisfaction with democracy mediates the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy, I performed a causal mediation analysis (Imai *et al.*, 2010). This analytical framework allows the researcher to estimate average causal mediation effects (ACME), which are essential for causal inference. The ACME consists of the part of the effect of the treatment on the outcome that was mediated. Hence, the treatment first affects the mediator and then the outcome. In this chapter, I am interested in the ACME of fear of crime on support for democracy, mediated by satisfaction with democracy. With the ACME, I can precisely calculate the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy that occurred through the causal mechanism of satisfaction with democracy.

The causal mediation analysis framework developed by Imai *et al.* (2010) also enables estimating other quantities of interest. One of them is the average direct effect (ADE). The ADE consists of the part of the treatment's impact on the outcome that did not happen due to the causal mechanism under evaluation. Despite the name, this effect is also not necessarily direct. It might also flow from the treatment to the outcome through unobserved causal chains. Hence, in this study, the ADE refers to the portion of the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy that did not occur due to alterations in satisfaction with democracy. The third quantity of interest discussed by Imai *et al.* (2010) is the average total effect (ATE). The ATE is found by simply adding the ACME and the ADE, and it consists of the total effect, both mediated and non-mediated, of the treatment on the outcome. In this study, the ATE comprises the total effect of fear of crime on support for democracy. Formally, we have:

$$\hat{Y} = B_0 + B_1X + B_2A + B_3K + M \quad (1)$$

$$\hat{M} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1X + \gamma_2A + \gamma_3K \quad (2)$$

Equation (1) is the outcome equation, where \hat{Y} denotes the outcome (support for democracy), X is a vector of baseline confounders (age, sex, race, income, education, and urban), A is the treatment (fear of crime), K is a vector of country dummies, and M consists of the mediator (satisfaction with democracy). The mediator, in its turn, is also regressed on the same set X of baseline confounders, on the treatment A , and on the country dummies, as in equation (2).

This causal mediation analysis framework also has its limitations. The most important one is the sequential ignorability assumption. In short, it assumes that there are no critical unobserved covariates that could disturb the associations between the treatment, the

mediator, and the outcome (Imai *et al.*, 2010). In social sciences, the hypothesis that there are no critical covariates that could render the analyzed effects unsizable is often non refutable due to the studied phenomena' multicausal nature. Notwithstanding, sensitivity analysis tools allow researchers to calculate to which degree their analyses are robust to unobserved covariates bias. Here, I applied the sensitivity analysis toolkit developed by Cinelli, Ferwerda, and Hazlett (2020). The sequential ignorability assumption and the sensitivity analysis are further discussed in section 1.7 of the text.

2.4. Results

This section analyzes the associations between fear of crime, satisfaction with democracy, and support for it. Specifically, it tests whether fear of crime is negatively associated with support for democracy and if this association is mediated by satisfaction with democracy. I control for sociodemographic characteristics, also called pre-treatment covariates, namely age, sex, income, education, race, and whether the individual lives in an urban area or not. Country variance is addressed with fixed effects, that is, the inclusion of dummies for countries¹.

As model 1 displays, while controlling for the baseline confounders, the treatment, fear of crime, is significantly associated with support for democracy. Table 8 shows that, on average, people with higher fear of crime show lower levels of support for democracy. The first model displayed is a total effects model, in which only the treatment and pre-treatment controls were included. In this type of model, the association between the treatment (fear of crime) and the outcome (support for democracy) is not disturbed by any post-treatment confounders (Imai *et al.*, 2010). In model 1, the slope of fear of crime is -0.086, meaning that a one-unit increase of fear is, on average, associated with a reduction of 0.086 in the scale of support for democracy, which ranges from 1 to 7. In other words, a two standard deviations increase of fear of crime explains 5.9% of the interquartile range's variance of support for democracy. This first result favors the expectation put by H1.1 that individuals who are more fearful of crime tend to be less supportive of democracy.

¹ In previous versions of this chapter, I applied multilevel models. Nevertheless, I am mainly interested in individual level associations, which are best suited by a one-level, fixed effects approach. In addition, the between countries variance was quite small. The intraclass correlation of the intercept-only model estimated for support for democracy was only 4.8%, meaning that more than 95% of the observed variance was explained by differences between individuals, not between countries.

In model 2, I included the mediator, satisfaction with democracy, as an additional control. The insertion of the mediator renders the slope of fear of crime slighter. It goes from -0.086 to -0.059, losing 0.027 or about 30% of its strength. This alteration suggests that part of the effect of fear on support for democracy is mediated by satisfaction with democracy since the decrease of the coefficient of fear was due to the inclusion of satisfaction with democracy in the equation. It is also important to note that satisfaction is positively associated with support for democracy. Its effect is stronger than the other binary predictors, the sex of the respondent and whether she or he lives in an urban area or not. Someone satisfied with democracy exhibits, on average, 0.486 higher support for democracy than those who are dissatisfied with it.

Satisfaction with democracy initially had four levels, very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied. I recoded it, so that satisfied and very satisfied individuals were coded as 1, and dissatisfied and very dissatisfied ones were coded as 0. To investigate whether satisfaction with democracy mediates the relation between fear of crime and support for democracy, we also need to analyze the effect of fear of crime on the mediator. Model 3 performs this task by regressing satisfaction with democracy on fear of crime and the pre-treatment controls. The effect of fear of crime on it is statistically significant and negative, implying that persons who are more fearful show, on average, reduced satisfaction with democracy when compared to those who exhibit less fear. This result provides evidence in favor of H1.2.

Table 8 – Total effects model, outcome model, and mediator model

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Support for democracy	Support for democracy	Satisfaction with democracy
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fear of crime	-0.086*	-0.059*	-0.249*
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)
Satisfaction with democracy		0.486*	
		(0.021)	

Age	0.012*	0.012*	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Sex	-0.115*	-0.092*	-0.207*
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.027)
Education	0.050*	0.054*	-0.034*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Income	0.032*	0.034*	-0.019*
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Race	-0.005	-0.028	0.213*
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.033)
Urban	-0.093*	-0.071*	-0.194*
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.032)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Constant	4.009*	3.629*	1.248*
	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.092)
Observations	26,396	26,396	26,396
R ²	0.072	0.091	
Adjusted R ²	0.072	0.090	
Log-Likelihood			-16,737.970
Akaike Inf. Crit.			33,525.930
Residual Std. Error	1.627 (df = 26371)	1.611 (df = 26370)	

Note:

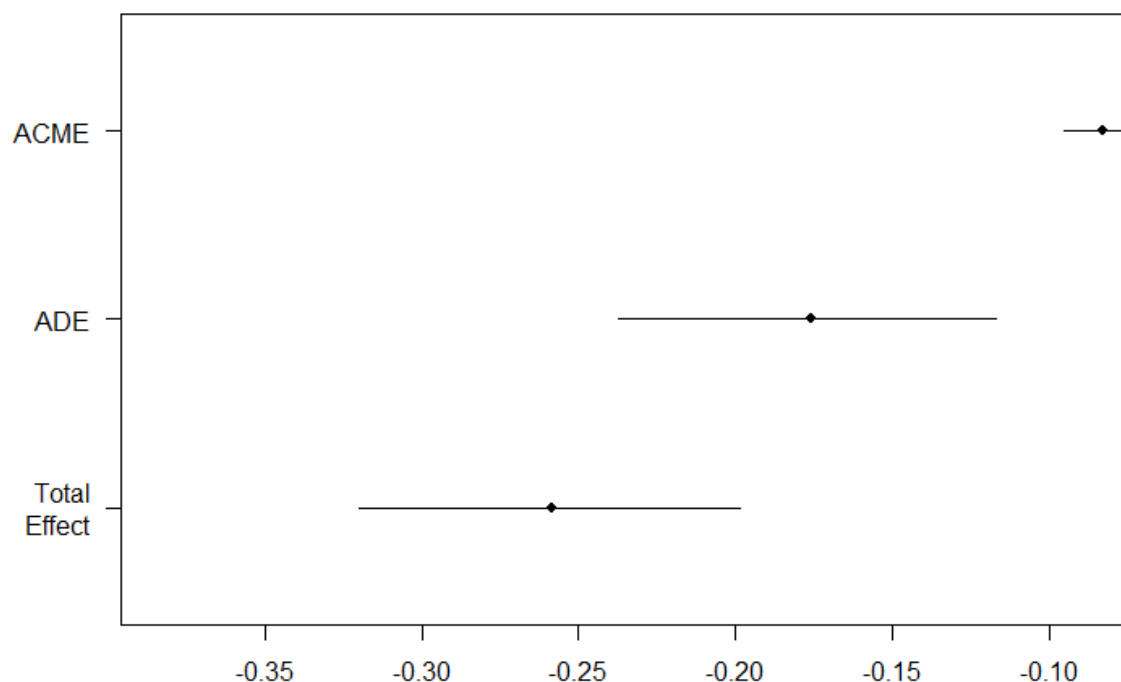
*p<0.05

However, in the causal mediation analytical framework developed by Imai *et al.* (2010), the mere calculation of the differences between the coefficients of the treatment (fear of crime) in the outcome model (model 2) and in the total effects model (model 1) is not sufficient to make causal inferences. Hence, they provided a method for accurately estimating the ACME and the ADE, which can be easily implemented in R with the package *mediation* (Tingley *et al.*, 2014). In this package, the analyst specifies the outcome and mediator models based on which the software estimates the quantities of interest. In this study, I provided model 2 as the outcome model and model 3 as the mediator model. Figure 7 displays the results.

Figure 7 shows that both the ACME and the ADE of fear of crime on support for democracy were significant at the 95% level. The estimated ADE was -0.176, implying that fear of crime has a significant and negative direct effect on support for democracy. Being direct means that it occurs regardless of levels of satisfaction with democracy. This effect might indeed flow directly from fear to support or through non-observed causal pathways. The significant and negative ADE found confirms the expectation that more fearful individuals tend to exhibit less support for democracy.

The ACME was -0.083, meaning that, besides directly affecting support, fear also indirectly affects it through satisfaction with democracy. Heightened fear of crime lowers satisfaction with democracy, which then reduces support for democracy. On average, individuals who are more fearful of crime feel less satisfied with democracy and, because of it, exhibit lesser levels of support for this political regime. The mediated effect is not as big as the total effect of fear on support, but it is still relevant. The *mediation* package also confirms the proportion of the total effect mediated by satisfaction with democracy: 32%, which is similar to what I calculated with the slopes displayed in table 8.

Figure 7 – Average causal mediation effect (ACME), average direct effect (ADE), and average total effect (ATE) of fear of crime on support for democracy



2.5. Robustness tests

In this section, I analyzed alternate specifications of the models so that the stability of the coefficients could be tested. First, I used an alternative form of controlling for the group bias generated by data spread across different clusters, in this case, people in various countries. In the results section, I applied models with fixed effects. Here, I ran regressions with clustered standard errors for both the total effect and outcome models of support for democracy and the mediator model of satisfaction with democracy. Table 9 displays the estimates.

Table 9 demonstrates that the results section's findings remain after altering the form of controlling the group bias from fixed effects to clustered standard errors. The robust errors do not reduce the statistical significance of the treatment, fear of crime, or the mediator, satisfaction with democracy. Since slopes are not modified when changing from fixed effects to clustered errors, all estimates are unchanged.

Table 9 – Total effect, outcome, and mediator models with country-clustered standard errors

Dependent variable:

	Support for democracy Model 4	Support for democracy Model 5	Satisfaction with democracy (ordered) Model 6
Fear of crime	-0.086* (0.013)	-0.059* (0.011)	-0.249* (0.028)
Satisfaction with democracy		0.486* (0.041)	
Age	0.012* (0.002)	0.012* (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Sex	-0.115* (0.020)	-0.092* (0.020)	-0.207* (0.043)
Education	0.050* (0.009)	0.054* (0.008)	-0.034** (0.013)
Income	0.032* (0.006)	0.034* (0.006)	-0.019** (0.010)
Race	-0.005 (0.025)	-0.028 (0.023)	0.213* (0.048)
Urban	-0.093* (0.032)	-0.071** (0.030)	-0.194* (0.045)
Constant	4.009* (0.163)	3.629* (0.165)	1.248* (0.220)
Observations	26,396	26,396	26,396
Akaike Inf. Crit.	101,773.20	101,254.55	33,525.93

Note:

*p<0.05

It is also important to analyze other possible model specifications. One could argue that, since support for democracy is a variable with seven levels, also known as a Likert-scale variable, it would be more suitable to use an ordered logit model instead of a linear model. I applied ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions for the total effect and outcome models and a logit estimation for the mediator model in the results section. Here, as a further test, I ran ordered logit models for the total effect, outcome, and mediator estimates. In the last case, I used the original four-point scale of satisfaction with democracy instead of the

binary one. Fear of crime remains significant and negatively associated with support for democracy, with minor changes in slope sizes in both total effect (model 7) and outcome models (model 8). The proportion of the effect of fear mediated by satisfaction with democracy indicated by the difference between the total effect and outcome models' slopes is 29%, akin to what I found with the OLS estimates.

Table 10 – Total effect, outcome, and mediator ordered logit models

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Support for democracy Model 7	Support for democracy Model 8	Satisfaction with democracy (ordered) Model 9
Fear of crime	-0.094* (0.012)	-0.067* (0.012)	-0.247* (0.012)
Satisfaction with democracy		0.518* (0.023)	
Age	0.015* (0.001)	0.015* (0.001)	-0.0005 (0.001)
Sex	-0.130* (0.022)	-0.105* (0.022)	-0.154* (0.024)
Education	0.057* (0.003)	0.061* (0.003)	-0.032* (0.003)
Income	0.034* (0.006)	0.037* (0.006)	-0.015* (0.006)
Race	-0.001 (0.028)	-0.025 (0.028)	0.187* (0.029)
Urban	-0.094* (0.027)	-0.071* (0.027)	-0.183* (0.029)

Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
AIC	90,596.83	90,107.31	58,565.66
Observations	25,416	25,416	25,416
<i>Note:</i>			*p<0.05

As a final test, I re-estimated the total effect, outcome, and mediator models with listwise deletion. While in the results section I used multiple imputations to deal with missing data, here I simply deleted all rows containing NAs. Estimates with listwise deletion are very similar to what I found in the results section. Fear of crime is a negative predictor of both the outcome and the mediator. The mediation role exerted by satisfaction with democracy also holds. The mediated proportion of the total effect of fear of crime on support for democracy is 34%, as calculated with the differences between the total effect (model 10) and outcome models' slopes (model 11).

Table 11 – Support for democracy and satisfaction with democracy with listwise deletion

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Support for democracy	Support for democracy	Satisfaction with democracy (ordered)
	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Fear of crime	-0.086* (0.011)	-0.057* (0.011)	-0.254* (0.014)
Satisfaction with democracy		0.494* (0.022)	
Age	0.012* (0.001)	0.012* (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Sex	-0.103* (0.021)	-0.078* (0.021)	-0.225* (0.028)
Education	0.050* (0.003)	0.053* (0.003)	-0.030* (0.004)

Income	0.033* (0.005)	0.035* (0.005)	-0.017* (0.007)
Race	-0.011 (0.027)	-0.035 (0.026)	0.209* (0.034)
Urban	-0.106* (0.026)	-0.086* (0.026)	-0.177* (0.033)
Constant	4.012* (0.076)	3.637* (0.077)	1.154* (0.098)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Observations	24,247	24,247	24,247
R ²	0.073	0.092	
Adjusted R ²	0.073	0.091	
Log-Likelihood			-15,313.370
Akaike Inf. Crit.			30,676.750
Residual Std. Error	1.619 (df = 24222)	1.603 (df = 24221)	

Note:

*p<0.05

Finally, models have shown stability in various specifications. The coefficients of fear of crime remained robust in estimates with clustered standard errors, ordered logit models, and specifications with listwise deletion. Hence, tests performed corroborate what I previously presented in the analysis of the results.

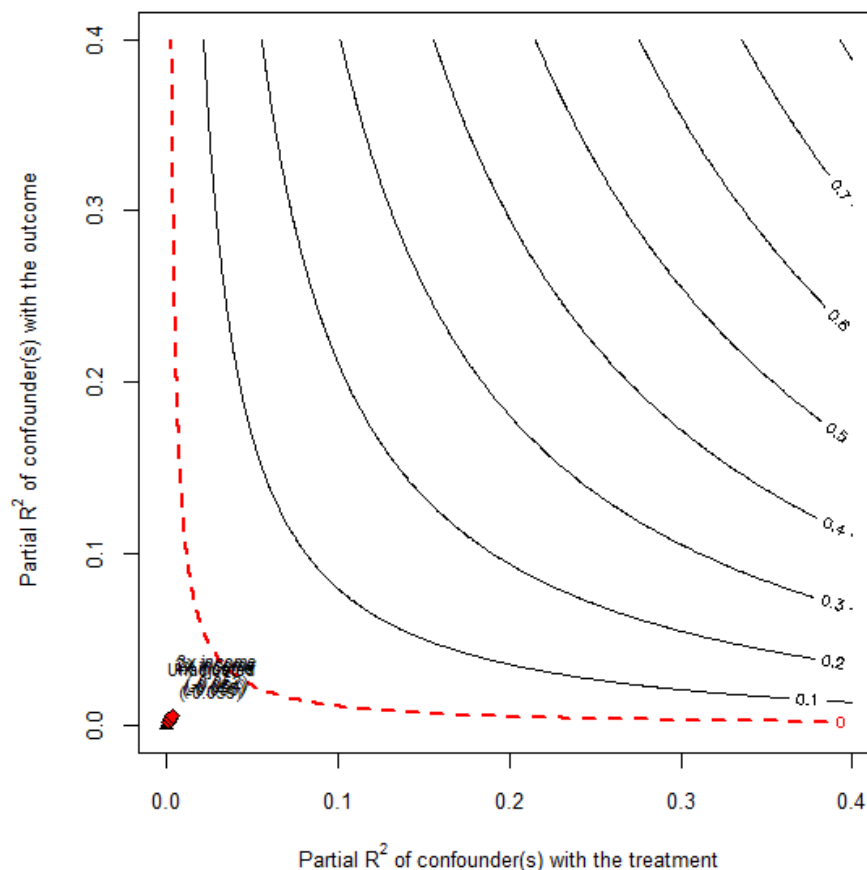
2.6. Sensitivity analysis

Causal mediation analysis is complex and relies on strong assumptions. The most important of them is the sequential ignorability assumption (Imai *et al.*, 2010). In short, sequential ignorability assumes that there are no critical unobserved confounders that causally affect the treatment, mediator, and outcome. In observational studies, it isn't easy to guarantee that the treatment and mediator were randomly assigned. Imai *et al.* (2010) call this assumption non refutable because it is impossible to test it with observed data. Nevertheless, sensitivity analysis tools allow researchers to estimate the extent to which their findings are robust to unobserved confounders.

Here, I applied the sensitivity analysis approach developed by Cinelli *et al.* (2020). Their method implements a simple and straightforward sensitivity analysis, which can be easily performed in R with package *sensemakr*. The method by Cinelli *et al.* (2020) assesses how strong an unobserved variable would have to be to explain away the observed causal effect of the treatment on the outcome. The method utilizes a control variable in the model as a benchmark. It then evaluates how many times an unobserved confounder would have to be stronger than the chosen control to render the treatment effect on the outcome irrelevant.

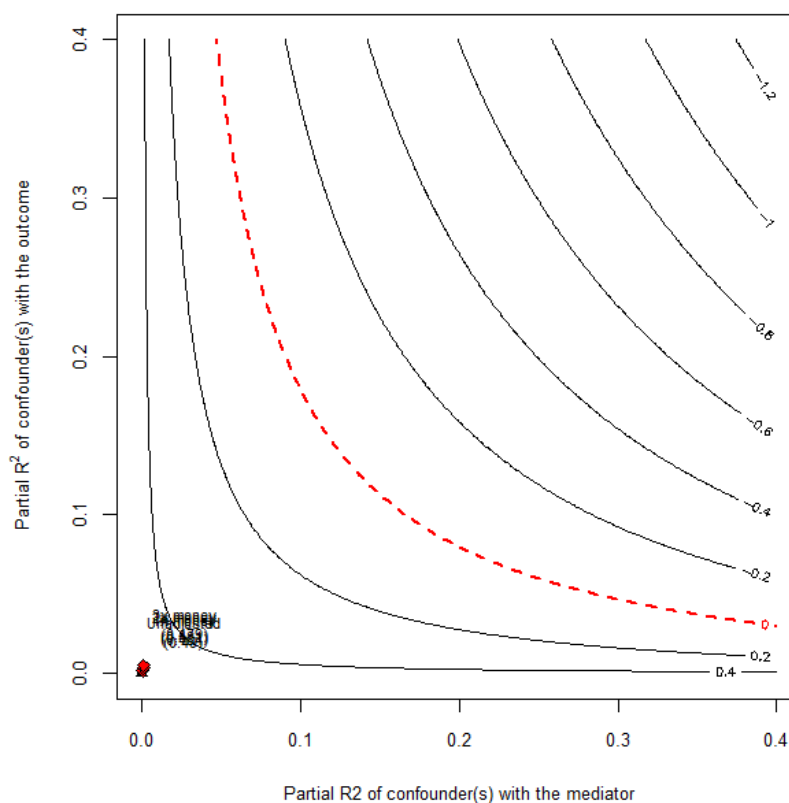
I selected income as a benchmark because the literature deems it to be a significant predictor of support for democracy (Booth and Seligson, 2009; Salinas and Booth, 2011). The sensitivity analysis demonstrated that unobserved confounders would have to explain more than 3.42% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome to be strong enough to bring the point estimate to 0 (a bias of 100% of the original estimate). Conversely, unobserved confounders that do not explain more than 3.42% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome are not strong enough to bring the point estimate to 0. Given that in the political behavior field of studies the proportion of variance explained by statistical models is usually quite low, it is hard to think of confounders that would simultaneously explain more than 3.4% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome. Besides, the figure below shows that this unobserved confounder would have to bear an effect more substantial than three times the slope of income in model 2 to turn the treatment effect statistically non-differentiable from zero.

Figure 8 – Sensitivity plot of the causal mediation effect of fear of crime on support for democracy



The second step of the sequential ignorability assumption assumes that there are no unobserved confounders between the mediator and the outcome. Again, it is almost impossible to prove that in Social Sciences. Hence, I also performed a sensitivity analysis for this relation. In this case, the sensitivity analysis showed that unobserved confounders would need to be responsible for more than 13.15% of the residual variance of both the mediator and the outcome to explain away the association found. Furthermore, figure 9 shows that this unobserved confounder must have a stronger effect than three times the slope of income in model 2 to bring the mediator estimate to zero. Altogether, the sensitivity analyses of both the treatment-outcome and mediator-outcome effects render encountered results quite robust.

Figure 9 – Sensitivity plot of the causal mediation effect of satisfaction with democracy on support for democracy



2.7. Conclusion

This study analyzed the effects of fear of crime on support for democracy. More specifically, it tested the hypotheses that fear of crime is negatively associated with support for democracy and that this association is partially mediated by satisfaction with democracy. In line with previous studies that also tested the first hypothesis, results revealed that fear is indeed negatively associated with support for democracy (Cruz, 2008; Fernandez and Kuenzi, 2010; Ceobanu *et al.*, 2011, Salinas and Booth, 2011, Blanco, 2013; Blanco & Ruiz, 2013).

Notwithstanding, most available papers on the associations between fear of crime, satisfaction with democracy, and support for democracy have not gone beyond the simple study of the correlations between these variables. These papers evaluated how fear of crime, and sometimes crime victimization, affect satisfaction and support for democracy, but they did not try to test any causal mechanisms or mediation effects that could help to explain the associations between those variables (Fernandez & Kuenzi, 2010; Ceobanu *et al.*, 2011; Blanco, 2013; Blanco and Ruiz, 2013).

This chapter fills in that gap by testing a causal mechanism in which satisfaction with democracy works as a mediator between fear of crime and support for democracy. This

mechanism is based on theories of democracy that split legitimacy between a specific dimension, which is more directly connected to citizens' everyday life experiences, and a diffuse dimension, whose components are less susceptible to alteration given changes in society, such as unemployment levels and violence indexes. Diffuse variables do change, but the impact of modifications in living standards does not reach them directly. It first decreases the specific dimensions of legitimacy, and then, after eroding the “reservoir of goodwill” towards democracy, they can modify deeper preferences as support for democracy (Easton, 1975).

This study provided evidence in favor of this causal mechanism, demonstrating that the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy is partially mediated by satisfaction with democracy. Alterations in satisfaction with democracy were responsible for approximately 30% of the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy. The remaining 70% needs to be explained yet. It might flow directly from fear to support, but it may also happen due to causal mechanisms not tested in this chapter. The development and testing of alternative causal pathways between crime, crime salience, and democratic legitimacy are an open venue for future investigations.

This chapter focused on the association between fear of crime and support for democracy, assessing a specific causal mechanism in which the effect of fear of crime on support for democracy is mediated by satisfaction with democracy. The next chapter continues to examine the relations between fear of crime and political behavior in Latin America. This time, the emphasis is on the associations between fear, punitiveness, and trust in courts. I want to know whether persons who are more fearful of crime tend to prefer harsher sentences against criminals instead of softer ones and if their levels of trust in the fairness of courts moderate this relation. I expect higher fear of crime to be linked to more brutal opinions on crime sentencing and this association to be stronger among those who are more distrustful of courts.

3. Does trust moderate the association between fear and punitiveness? Evidence from Latin America

In the last chapter of this dissertation, I proposed and tested a causal mechanism by which fear of crime affects support for democracy through satisfaction with democracy. In other words, I encountered that fear undermines satisfaction with democracy and, by affecting it, decreases support for democracy.

The current chapter expands on this effort of explaining the connections between fear of crime and political behavior through the study of the associations between fear and two dimensions of punitiveness in Latin America: support for harsher punishments of criminals and approval of the death penalty. I conceive punitiveness as the general sentiments regarding the punishment of criminal offenses. I also test if trust that courts provide a fair trial moderates these associations. The expectation is that individuals with higher confidence in law enforcement institutions are less susceptible to alter their preferences given personal experiences with crime. In comparison, persons that already have a lower trust may be more prone to support changing the criminal law due to heightened fear of crime.

Results partially confirm my hypotheses. On average, individuals with a heightened fear of crime tend to be more supportive of harsher punishments and the death penalty. Trust that courts provide a fair trial also moderates the association of fear and support for harsher punishments. In the case of approval of the death penalty, trust exerts no noticeable moderation. Hence, fear of crime is more strongly associated with support for harsher punishments when faith in courts is low and weakly associated when it is high, but the same does not hold for the death penalty's approval.

I achieved these results using data from Lapop, as well as in the previous chapter. Here I used two different waves of the dataset, the 2016/17 and 2018/19 waves, totalizing up to 38,630 individuals spread in 18 countries. I chose these waves because, besides being the most recent ones, they are the only surveys that count with the most current wording of the question on support for harsher punishment. They are also the only ones that count with questions on the approval of the death penalty.

This chapter puts to test the crime-distrust model. This model posits that individuals with a heightened fear of crime and diminished trust in institutions tend to be more punitive than others. The idea is that increased dread is associated with distrust in public

institutions' capacity to fight crime, which generates demands for transformations in law enforcement and penal legislation towards harsher procedures and punishments (Garland, 2001; Simon, 2007; Unnever & Cullen, 2010).

This model has been tested before for the American case by Unnever and Cullen (2010). Authors found no evidence that trust in the Supreme Courts moderates the associations between perceptions of crime and punitiveness. This analysis expands on their work by (1) testing the model in a different political and cultural context, with distinct datasets from other years, and (2) using different variables as treatment and moderator. Unnever and Cullen (2010) used a question on the individual perception of the evolution of crime rates as their treatment, while their moderator was trust in the Supreme Court. In the American context, the Supreme Court is incredibly politicized, dealing with issues far beyond penal legislation and the fight on crime, which might have biased their results. Here, I applied a different model specification, with fear of crime as treatment and trust that courts provide a fair trial as moderator. Fear of crime is more subjective than the perception of crime rates, but the most significant difference between analyzed variables is the moderator choice. Trust that courts provide a fair trial is a much broader question than confidence in the Supreme Court, capturing a more general feeling towards the justice system and avoiding biases induced by opinions on the court's prevailing ideology. Indeed, my results were distinct from previous studies, partially supporting the crime-distrust model.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, I discuss the theoretical and empirical literature dedicated to studying the determinants of punitiveness, emphasizing the available studies on the associations between crime and support for getting tougher on criminals. Second, I present the data and methods used. Third, I analyze and discuss the results.

3.1. Victimization, fear of crime, and the crime-distrust model

A vast literature has been trying to comprehend the variables and mechanisms that drive punitive feelings among citizens, also known as punitiveness. Different studies argue that emotions, such as fear, anger, anxiety, or even sympathy, play an important role in shaping crime punishment opinions (Anjou, Cozijn, Toorn, and Verkoyen, 1978; Feather, Boeckmann, and McKee, 2001; Johnson, 2009). Since Durkheim, who wrote that crimes violate sacred social values, prompting emotional responses (Johnson, 2009), scholars have been trying to address the effects of different emotions on crime opinions. In Australia, for example, a study found that people who feel sympathy towards specific

criminals tend to choose community sentences instead of jail sentences as an adequate punishment (Feather *et al.*, 2001).

The emotion that is most often analyzed as a possible predictor of support for harsher punishment is fear. According to Anjou *et al.* (1978), people who feel threatened tend to develop aggressive behavior as a defense mechanism. Hence, individuals who believe they are under some threat are more likely to show more substantial support for increasing punishments for criminals. This fear may result from heightened crime salience and a product of socioeconomic anxieties, such as the dread of downwards social mobility or impoverishment (Anjou *et al.*, 1978).

Accordingly, studies have found that fear of crime (Johnson, 2009; Costelloe, Chiricos and Gertz, 2009; Cabral, 2019; Price *et al.*, 2019) and anger about crime (Johnson, 2009; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019; Kort-Butler & Ray, 2019) are both strong predictors of punitiveness. Fear of crime and general concerns about crime as a policy issue are some of the strongest predictors of punitiveness in the US (Costelloe *et al.*, 2009; Brown & Socia, 2017). Kort-Butler and Ray (2019) found that those who support the death penalty tend to be angrier about crime than those who do not support it. In Latin America, individuals who hold higher fear of crime develop more severe opinions on crime punishment (Singer *et al.*, 2020; Cabral, 2019), as well as crime victims (Price *et al.*, 2019). In Guatemala, crime victims also tend to be more supportive of harsher punishment (Krause, 2014). Besides, Latin Americans who were crime victims in the last 12 months have 7% higher chances of supporting strong-arm policies (aggressive policing procedures that often violate procedural rights) to fight crime than non-victims (Visconti, 2019).

In Latin America, Visconti (2019) argues that support for democracy partially mediates the effect of crime victimization on support for strong-arm policies. Victimization first undermines support for democratic values, such as human rights, and then increases support for strong-arm policies (Visconti, 2019). There is also evidence that victimization increases punitiveness indirectly. García-Ponce *et al.* (2019) show that victimization experiences lead to more anger about crime, then increasing support for harsher punishments. Crimes against people who are seen as innocent or more vulnerable, such as children, generate even more anger, leading to more considerable approval of more stringent policies.

However, other studies have found that fear of crime and crime victimization do not impact support for harsher punishment (Kleck and Jackson, 2017; King and Maruna, 2009). Kleck and Jackson (2017) conducted a statistical analysis with a representative survey of the US biggest urban counties. They found that personal experiences with crime do not drive support for more severe punishment. Neither prior crime victimization, fear of crime, crime rates, higher perceived risk of victimization, or vicarious victimization had any significant positive associations with support for longer jail sentences or with support for the death penalty. King and Maruna (2009), analyzing a sample of British citizens, reached similar conclusions regarding the absence of substantive effects of crime victimization and crime concerns on individual punitiveness.

This chapter aims to contribute to the debate about the associations between fear of crime and two dimensions of punitiveness: support for harsher punishment and the death penalty's approval. Hence, I hypothesize that:

H2.1: Individuals who are more fearful of crime tend to be more supportive of harsher punishments.

H2.2: Individuals who are more fearful of crime tend to show greater approval of the death penalty.

Other significant predictors of punitiveness are the opinions about the criminal justice system. The crime-distrust model argues that augmented punitiveness is mainly due to the escalating fear of crime, associated with mounting distrust in the justice system (Garland, 2001; Unnever & Cullen, 2010). This approach posits that individuals are more supportive of getting tough on crime because of two coexisting sentiments. First, they feel that society is becoming more and more dangerous. Simultaneously, they deem the state incapable of guaranteeing public security. These individuals believe that widespread crime endangers their lifestyle and feel left behind by state authorities, especially by justice institutions. People deem law enforcement to be too worried about human rights and due process, which are perceived as “liberal excesses” that protect criminals and threaten the “good” citizens (Garland, 2001). Those fearful individuals are then prompted to support harsher punishments as a solution for courts’ perceived softness, while members of the executive and legislative branches may try to reap political gains from these sentiments by posing as leaders who are tough on crime (Simon, 2007). At the same time, persons with more trust in law enforcement institutions may be more satisfied with life in general and feel a lesser need for institutional changes. In short, the crime-distrust

model believes that support for harsher punishment tends to be greater among those who think crime is escalating and have less trust in law enforcement institutions².

Indeed, studies found that individuals who show higher trust in the criminal justice system (Singer *et al.*, 2019), higher confidence in courts, who believe that the police is not corrupt, and that have accurate crime perceptions tend to be less punitive (Roberts and Indermaur, 2007). Roberts and Indermaur (2007) even found that these attitudes towards the criminal justice system accounted for more of the variance in punitiveness than demographic or political factors in Australia. Kort-Butler and Ray (2019) also detected that supporters of the death penalty for those guilty of murder are less trustful of government than supporters of other types of sentences. Other studies found similar results, with trust in the Supreme Court being negatively associated with general support for harsher punishments (Brown & Socia, 2017) and trust in politicians being negatively associated with punitiveness and positively associated with the backing of softer sentences (Soot, 2013). Interestingly, Baumer *et al.* (2006) encountered a positive association between government distrust and support for the death penalty among whites in the US, but a negative one among blacks. There is some contrary evidence as well. A couple of researchers found no association between supporting the death penalty and confidence in the justice system (Brown & Socia, 2017; Kort-Butler & Ray, 2019).

Unnever and Cullen (2010) also detected no relations between trust in the American Supreme Court and punitiveness. Besides, they specifically tested the crime-distrust model assumption with an interaction between perceived crime rates and trust in the Supreme Court, which was not statistically significant. In this chapter, I intend to submit the crime-distrust model to further testing, using different data from a distinct political context, the Latin American region, as well as a novel model specification. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

H2.3: The association between fear of crime and support for harsher punishments is stronger among individuals who have less trust in the justice system.

H2.4: The association between fear of crime and the death penalty's approval is stronger among individuals who have less trust in the justice system.

² A more detailed discussion on the theoretical foundations of the crime-distrust model can be found in the introduction of the dissertation.

It might seem contradictory that the crime-distrust model expects that people who have less confidence in the government are more willing to give it more power to punish criminals, eventually even to execute them. Nevertheless, punitiveness has often more to do with revenge and closure for victims and their families than with a rational decision of empowering the government *per se*. (Garland, 2001; Zimring, 2003; Simon, 2007). In addition, in the crime-distrust model perspective, the decrease of trust in institutions is driven precisely by the alleged “liberal excesses” of the justice system. Hence, citizens may perceive supporting harsher punishment and the death penalty as ways to correct the system.

3.2. Covariates

I included some covariates in the models that should be discussed. Studies found that anxieties related to social and economic factors are significant predictors of punitiveness (Singer *et al.*, 2019; King and Maruna, 2009). Actually, through the study of a sample of British citizens, King and Maruna (2009) argue that economic anxieties (i.e., the perception that the national or individual financial situation is getting worse) are stronger predictors of support for harsher punishment than fear of crime or crime victimization. World views regarding authoritarianism and social dominance also have been found to exert effects on support for strong-arm policies and contestation of human rights in Latin America, even when controlling for victimization (Krause, 2020).

Nevertheless, Costelloe *et al.* (2009) encountered no significant impacts of economic anxieties on support for harsher punishment among a sample of Florida residents, except for a subset of white males. In Latin America, studies have found mixed results. Individuals who deem that the national economic situation is deteriorating are more supportive of harsher punishment, but citizens who perceive their economic status as worse when compared to one year before the survey are less punitive (Singer *et al.*, 2019). Singer *et al.* (2019) also checked for indirect effects of economic anxieties on punitiveness through fear of crime, finding positive correlations for both the perceptions of the national and individual financial situations.

Exposure to media coverage on crime is another variable that has been found to influence opinions on crime punishment (Krause, 2014; Kleck and Jackson, 2017). In the US, the longer individuals are exposed to local TV news, which tends to focus more on local crimes than national news, the more they support harsher punishment (Kleck and Jackson, 2017). Through a survey experiment, Krause (2014) found that exposure to crime news

affects support for extralegal policing through self-reported victimization in Guatemala. In her experiment, individuals in the treatment group exposed to media coverage of murder reported higher crime victimization levels. In contrast, self-reported victimization was positively associated with support for extralegal policing. Similarly, individuals in the treatment group were also more likely to blame the government for the rise in crime, and those who accused the government showed more extensive support for vigilantism (Krause, 2014). Besides, reading *Nuestro Diario*, a popular sensationalist newspaper in Guatemala, directly affects support for vigilantism. Therefore, Krause (2014) concludes that exposure to crime news affects support for authoritarian and extralegal crime control measures both directly and indirectly.

Several studies have addressed how race-related variables impact the way individuals judge crime punishment and control (Miller, Rossi, and Simpson, 1986; Secret and Johnson, 1989; Unnever, Cullen, and Jonson, 2008; Kleck and Jackson, 2017; Lehmann *et al.*, 2020). For example, Secret and Johnson (1989) analyzed a sample of American citizens. They found that race had significant effects on gun control support and the opinion on criminals' treatment by courts. Blacks were more likely to support gun control and more likely to judge that the courts do not need to get tougher on criminals. Whites also tend to be more supportive of general harsher punishments than blacks (Klerck & Jackson, 2017). There is also a noticeable racial divide on the support for the death penalty in the United States, with whites being considerably more favorable to it than blacks (Unnever, Cullen, and Jonson, 2008).

Regarding the relations between gender and punitiveness, studies argued that women hold lesser punitive views than men due to distinct socialization processes (Hurwitz and Smithey, 1998). This is precisely what Applegate, Cullen, and Fisher (2002) found. Analyzing a sample of US citizens, the authors conclude that gender is an important predictor of punitiveness despite not bearing massive effects. Women tend to be more supportive of offender retreatment and to express minor support for harsher punishment. They are much less inclined to support capital punishment and more likely to support rehabilitation than men (Applegate *et al.*, 2002). Women are also more prone to consider softer sentences, such as community services, as adequate (Feather *et al.*, 2001). In Tennessee, Whitehead and Blankenship (2000) found that although most men and women support capital punishment, fewer women support it than men. Hurwitz and Smithey (1998) reached the same conclusion by studying a sample of Kentucky state residents.

Compared to men, women emphasize preventive measures rather than punishing criminals, such as restricting the use of guns and increasing drug rehabilitation programs (Hurwitz and Smithey, 1998).

Background factors, mainly being conservative, education, and class origin, also strongly correlate with punitiveness. Conservatives and right-wing individuals are more likely to demand harsher punishment for criminals (Kleck and Jackson, 2017; King and Maruna, 2009; Roberts and Indermaur, 2007). In contrast, more educated individuals and people from upper-income families are less inclined to uphold punitive points of view (King and Maruna, 2009; Roberts and Indermaur, 2007).

3.3. Data and methods

This research uses data from the 2016/17 and 2018/19 rounds of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop). Lapop surveys have been carried out in Latin America since 2006. They use stratified samples that are representative of countries' populations on the national level. Since available questions vary from year to year and country to country, this study's sample has different sizes for each dependent variable. The analysis of support for harsher punishment is based on a sample of 38,630 individuals distributed in 18 different countries and two survey waves, 2016/17 and 2018/19. The study of approval of the death penalty, in its turn, has a sample of 17,486 observations in eight countries and the same two waves. Cases with missing data for the dependent variables were dropped. Then, both datasets were imputed using multiple imputations with package *mice* in R. Frequencies of missingness can be checked in figures A3 (support for harsher punishment dataset) and A4 (approval of the death penalty dataset) in the appendix.

The table below exhibits the descriptive statistics of the imputed and non-imputed datasets for the analysis of the support for harsher punishment. In general, variables have similar means and standard deviations when comparing both datasets. Since missing cases of the first dependent variable, support for harsher punishment, have been dropped, it has the same number of observations, the same mean, and standard deviation in both datasets. The treatment, fear of crime, also presents the same mean and standard deviation. This is also true for the trust in courts. Even ideology, the variable with the highest missing rate, has a very similar mean after imputation.

Table 12 - Descriptive statistics of the non-imputed and imputed datasets (support for harsher punishment)

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
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Non-imputed dataset					
Support for harsher punishment	38,630	5.91	1.67	1	7
Fear of crime	37,866	2.43	1.02	1	4
Trust in courts	37,611	3.44	1.68	1	7
Victimization	38,555	0.24	0.43	0	1
Education	37,802	9.88	4.32	0	18
Female	38,627	0.50	0.50	0	1
Age	38,596	39.33	16.11	16	112
Race	36,316	0.20	0.40	0	1
Ideology	32,953	5.43	2.87	1	10
Importance of religion	38,245	3.57	0.80	1	4
Individual economic situation	38,235	1.77	0.74	1	3
Country economic situation	37,820	1.55	0.71	1	3
Frequency of watching to the news	38,413	1.71	1.11	1	5
Interpersonal trust	37,460	2.66	0.97	1	4
Income	34,956	7.57	2.87	1	15
Urban	38,630	0.67	0.47	0	1
Imputed dataset					
Support for harsher punishment	38,630	5.91	1.67	1	7
Fear of crime	38,630	2.43	1.02	1	4
Trust in courts	38,630	3.44	1.68	1	7
Victimization	38,630	0.24	0.43	0	1
Education	38,630	9.85	4.33	0	18
Female	38,630	0.50	0.50	0	2
Age	38,630	39.33	16.11	16	112
Race	38,630	0.20	0.40	0	1
Ideology	38,630	5.44	2.88	1	10
Importance of religion	38,630	3.57	0.80	1	4
Individual economic situation	38,630	1.77	0.74	1	3
Country economic situation	38,630	1.56	0.71	1	3
Frequency of watching to the news	38,630	4.29	1.11	1	5
Interpersonal trust	38,630	2.65	0.97	1	4
Income	38,630	7.47	2.88	1	15
Urban	38,630	0.67	0.47	0	1

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

It is also important to compare imputed and non-imputed datasets used to analyze my second dependent variable, approval of the death penalty. Overall, the means and standard deviations of imputed and non-imputed variables are similar. The treatment, fear of crime, has the same mean, 2.56, in both the non-imputed and imputed datasets. The moderator, trust in courts, also presents the same average in both datasets, 3.4. Even the control with the highest missing rate, ideology, kept the same mean and standard deviation after the imputation process.

Table 13 - Descriptive statistics of the non-imputed and imputed datasets (approval of the death penalty)

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Non-imputed dataset					
Approval of the death penalty	17,486	0.57	0.50	0	1
Fear of crime	17,284	2.56	1.00	1	4
Trust in courts	17,184	3.40	1.68	1	7
Victimization	17,456	0.27	0.44	0	1
Education	17,136	9.64	4.49	0	18
Female	17,477	0.49	0.50	0	1
Age	17,471	38.80	16.00	16	93
Race	16,419	0.17	0.38	0	1
Ideology	15,265	5.47	2.77	1	10
Importance of religion	17,364	3.61	0.77	1	4
Individual economic situation	17,378	1.72	0.72	1	3
Social economic situation	17,273	1.49	0.68	1	3
Frequency of watching to the news	17,433	1.71	1.09	1	5
Interpersonal trust	17,163	2.60	0.97	1	4
Income	16,101	7.66	2.83	1	15
Urban	17,486	0.70	0.46	0	1
Imputed dataset					
Approval of the death penalty	17,486	0.57	0.50	0	1
Fear of crime	17,486	2.56	1.00	1	4
Trust in courts	17,486	3.40	1.68	1	7
Victimization	17,486	0.27	0.44	0	1
Education	17,486	9.61	4.49	0	18
Female	17,486	0.49	0.50	0	1
Age	17,486	38.80	15.99	16	93
Race	17,486	0.17	0.38	0	1

Ideology	17,486	5.47	2.77	1	10
Importance of religion	17,486	3.61	0.77	1	4
Individual economic situation	17,486	1.72	0.72	1	3
Social economic situation	17,486	1.49	0.68	1	3
Frequency of watching to the news	17,486	1.71	1.09	1	5
Interpersonal trust	17,486	2.60	0.97	1	4
Income	17,486	7.56	2.84	1	15
Urban	17,486	0.70	0.46	0	1

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

This chapter's first dependent variable is support for harsher punishment. In the 2016/17 and 2018/19 rounds, Lapop questioned surveyed individuals how much they agreed with the statement "To reduce crime rates in a country like ours, punishment of criminals must be increased" from a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Sample averages were 5.9 in the 2016/17 and 2018/2019 waves. In general, Latin American countries have similar means. The highest average support is 6.1, found in 2016 Honduras, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and in 2018 Chile. The lowest support in Latin America is 5.7, found only in the 2018/19 wave in El Salvador and Honduras. A good comparative example is the means for the US and Canada. In the 2016 wave, they were 4.5 and 5.3, respectively, below Latin America's average. Regarding the dispersion of the data, countries with greater standard deviations denote more dispersion of individuals' support for harsher punishment. The country with the most dispersed levels of support was 2016 Venezuela.

Table 14 – Average support for harsher punishment

Wave	Country	Support for Harsher Punishment	Standard Deviation	Number of observations
2016	Sample average	5.9	1.7	27,750
2018	Sample average	5.9	1.6	10,880
2016	Mexico	5.8	1.7	1,535
2016	Guatemala	6.0	1.6	1,519
2016	El Salvador	5.8	1.6	1,525
2016	Honduras	6.1	1.7	1,540
2016	Nicaragua	5.8	1.7	1,541
2016	Costa Rica	5.9	1.7	1,501
2016	Panama	5.9	1.6	1,511
2016	Colombia	5.9	1.6	1,552
2016	Ecuador	5.8	1.6	1,531
2016	Bolivia	5.9	1.8	1,653

2016	Peru	6.0	1.8	2,638
2016	Paraguay	5.9	1.7	1,502
2016	Brazil	5.9	1.7	1,525
2016	Venezuela	6.0	1.9	1,534
2016	Dominican Republic	6.1	1.6	1,506
2016	Haiti	5.8	1.9	2,143
2016	Jamaica	6.1	1.6	1,494
2018	Mexico	6.0	1.8	1,565
2018	El Salvador	5.7	1.5	1,480
2018	Honduras	5.7	1.7	1,540
2018	Bolivia	5.8	1.5	1,674
2018	Paraguay	5.9	1.7	1,508
2018	Chile	6.1	1.8	1,623
2018	Jamaica	6.0	1.6	1,490

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

This study's second dependent variable is the approval of the death penalty, which consists of a question of whether the respondent is in favor (1) or against (0) capital punishment. In 2016/17, it was asked in seven countries (out of 26), and in the 2018/19 round, in five countries. In 2016, 58% of Latin Americans approved the death penalty, against 57% in 2018. Average support for capital punishment varies more among Latin American countries than general support for harsher punishment. The highest proportion found is 75% in 2016 Guatemala, followed by 66% in 2016 Brazil. In 2018, the country with the greatest share of supporters of the death penalty was, again, Guatemala, with 69%. Interestingly, in 2018 Brazil's proportion of supporters fell to 52%.

Table 15 – Proportion of approval of the death penalty

Wave	Country	Approval of the death penalty	Number of observations
2016	Sample average	57.9%	10,285
2018	Sample average	56.6%	7,201
2016	Mexico	53.5%	1,436
2016	Guatemala	75.1%	1,431
2016	El Salvador	58.2%	1,423
2016	Honduras	56.1%	1,420
2016	Bolivia	50.9%	1,595

2016	Brazil	66.0%	1,501
2016	Venezuela	46.7%	1,479
2018	Guatemala	68.8%	1,421
2018	El Salvador	49.7%	1,315
2018	Ecuador	58.6%	1,426
2018	Bolivia	53.6%	1,593
2018	Brazil	52.1%	1,446

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

Akin to chapter 1, the treatment studied in this chapter is fear of crime. Fear of crime shows how unsafe the respondents feel in their neighborhoods on a four-point scale that ranges from (1) very safe to (4) very unsafe. The sample average is 2.4 for both wave years. The highest fear of crime rate in 2016 was achieved by Venezuela, 2.9. In 2018, Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador had an average fear of crime of 2.7. Latin American countries had a greater fear of crime than the US and Canada, whose means are 1.8 and 1.7 respectively, in 2016. The lowest value found was 1.9 in 2016 Nicaragua and 2018 Jamaica.

Table 16 – Average fear of crime

Wave	Country	Fear of Crime	Number of observations	Standard deviation
2016	Sample average	2.4	27,750	1.0
2018	Sample average	2.4	15,173	1.0
2016	Mexico	2.4	1,535	0.9
2016	Guatemala	2.5	1,519	1.0
2016	El Salvador	2.3	1,525	1.0
2016	Honduras	2.3	1,540	1.1
2016	Nicaragua	1.9	1,541	0.9
2016	Costa Rica	2.1	1,501	0.9
2016	Panama	2.2	1,511	0.9
2016	Colombia	2.5	1,552	1.0

2016	Ecuador	2.5	1,531	1.0
2016	Bolivia	2.6	1,653	0.9
2016	Peru	2.6	2,638	0.9
2016	Paraguay	2.5	1,502	1.0
2016	Brazil	2.7	1,525	1.1
2016	Venezuela	2.9	1,534	1.0
2016	Dominican Republic	2.8	1,506	1.0
2016	Haiti	2.5	2,143	1.1
2016	Jamaica	2.1	1,494	1.0
2018	Mexico	2.7	1,565	1.0
2018	Guatemala	2.6	1,421	1.0
2018	El Salvador	2.4	1,480	1.0
2018	Honduras	2.2	1,540	1.1
2018	Ecuador	2.7	1,426	0.9
2018	Brazil	2.5	1,446	1.0
2018	Bolivia	2.7	1,674	0.9
2018	Paraguay	2.4	1,508	1.0
2018	Chile	2.3	1,623	1.0
2018	Jamaica	1.9	1,490	1.0

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

This chapter studies the association between fear of crime and punitiveness. It also tests the hypothesis that trust that courts provide a fair trial (trust in courts) moderates these relations. This variable consists of a Likert-scale measure, ranging from "no trust at all" (1) to "a lot" (7). The average trust in courts was 3.4 in 2016 and 3.5 in 2018, right in the middle of the scale. Nicaragua had the highest average trust in 2016, 4.1. In 2018, it was Jamaica, with 4.0. The lowest rates were 3.1 in 2016 Peru and 2016 Venezuela, and 3.2 in 2018 Chile and 2018 Bolivia. Latin American averages are somewhat below the North American ones. The US and Canada had average levels of fear of 4.2 and 4.8, respectively, in the 2016 wave.

Table 17 – Average trust that courts provide a fair trial

Wave	Country	Trust in courts	Number of observations	Standard deviation
2016	Sample average	3.4	27,750	1.7
2018	Sample average	3.5	15,173	1.6
2016	Mexico	3.2	1,535	1.6
2016	Guatemala	3.6	1,519	1.7
2016	El Salvador	3.6	1,525	1.6
2016	Honduras	3.5	1,540	1.8
2016	Nicaragua	4.1	1,541	1.6
2016	Costa Rica	4.0	1,501	1.5
2016	Panama	3.6	1,511	1.7
2016	Colombia	3.2	1,552	1.5
2016	Ecuador	3.7	1,531	1.6
2016	Bolivia	3.2	1,653	1.6
2016	Peru	3.1	2,638	1.5
2016	Paraguay	3.2	1,502	1.5
2016	Brazil	3.3	1,525	1.8
2016	Venezuela	3.1	1,534	1.9
2016	Dominican Republic	3.5	1,506	1.8
2016	Haiti	3.0	2,143	1.9
2016	Jamaica	4.0	1,494	1.7
2018	Mexico	3.6	1,565	1.5
2018	Guatemala	3.5	1,421	1.7
2018	El Salvador	3.5	1,480	1.6
2018	Honduras	3.3	1,540	1.8
2018	Ecuador	3.6	1,426	1.6

2018	Brazil	3.6	1,446	1.8
2018	Bolivia	3.2	1,674	1.5
2018	Paraguay	3.4	1,508	1.5
2018	Chile	3.2	1,623	1.5
2018	Jamaica	4.0	1,490	1.7

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

Covariates were chosen based on the literature on predictors of support for harsher criminal punishment and the death penalty's approval. An important control added is crime victimization, which reports whether the individual was a crime victim in the last twelve months (1) or not (0). One in each four of the surveyed individuals was a crime victim in the twelve months before responding to the survey in the 2016 wave. In 2018, 23% of Latin Americans had been victimized prior to responding to the questionnaire. The US and Canada had victimization rates of 13% and 10%, respectively, in 2016. These numbers reinforce the perception that Latin America is a violent region. Venezuela had the biggest victimization rate in 2016, 40%. In 2018, it was Mexico, with 33%. The lowest rates were 16%, in 2016 Panama, and 12%, in 2018 Jamaica.

Table 18 – Proportion of crime victims

Wave	Country	Crime victimization	Number of observations
2016	Sample average	25.0%	27,750
2018	Sample average	23.1%	15,173
2016	Mexico	32.1%	1,535
2016	Guatemala	24.1%	1,519
2016	El Salvador	23.5%	1,525
2016	Honduras	21.8%	1,540
2016	Nicaragua	18.6%	1,541
2016	Costa Rica	22.2%	1,501
2016	Panama	15.9%	1,511
2016	Colombia	25.1%	1,552
2016	Ecuador	30.2%	1,531

2016	Bolivia	28.9%	1,653
2016	Peru	31.0%	2,638
2016	Paraguay	23.9%	1,502
2016	Brazil	23.9%	1,525
2016	Venezuela	40.4%	1,534
2016	Dominican Republic	26.1%	1,506
2016	Haiti	22.4%	2,143
2016	Jamaica	10.9%	1,494
2018	Mexico	33.2%	1,565
2018	El Salvador	21.0%	1,480
2018	Honduras	19.5%	1,540
2018	Bolivia	28.2%	1,674
2018	Paraguay	21.9%	1,508
2018	Chile	24.0%	1,623
2018	Jamaica	11.9%	1,490
2018	Guatemala	21.7%	1,421
2018	Brazil	19%	1,446
2018	Ecuador	29.2%	1,426

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

Other controls are race, frequency of watching the news, perception of the country's economic situation, perception of one's financial status, sex, age, and income.

Individuals were questioned whether they considered themselves whites, mestizos, indigenous, blacks, mulattos, or others for the race variable. Whites were coded as 1, and everyone else as 0. The frequency of watching the news is a five-point scale in which survey respondents declared how often they paid attention to the information on TV, radio, newspapers, or the internet, ranging from never (1) to daily (5).

I employed two controls related to economic anxieties: a three-point scale self-assessment of the evolution of the country's economic situation in the last 12 months and a similar scale for the evaluation of the change of the individual's financial status during the

previous 12 months. I also included variables related to one's world views. These are a four-point measure of interpersonal trust, a ten-point ideology scale, and a four-point self-assessment of religion's importance in one's own life.

Background factors are also analyzed, including sex (1 female and 0 male), age, income (a compound index ranging from 1 to 15 based on the number of goods, such as TVs and cars, possessed by individuals, whether the respondent lives in an urban area (1) or not (0), and education. Furthermore, to control for contextual characteristics, I applied fixed effects with country dummy variables and wave dummy variables (omitted from result tables to save space). In the robustness tests section, I also used clustered standard errors and mixed effect models to control possible group-driven error correlations.

3.4. Results

Ordinal logit models in table 19 show the effects of the variables under analysis on support for harsher criminal punishment. The results are presented in a stepwise fashion, beginning with the treatment, fear of crime, and an important control, crime victimization. Then, trust in courts, the moderator, and other controls are included. Finally, the third model introduces an interaction term between fear of crime and trust in courts.

As hypothesized, fear of crime is positively associated with support for harsher punishment. Using model three's results, a one-unit increase in fear of crime leads to 16% higher chances of demanding more punishment for criminals, providing evidence in favor of H2.1. On average, people who were most fearful of crime had a 61% probability of being at the highest level of support for harsher sentences, while those who were the least afraid had a probability of 57%.

Table 19 – Support for harsher punishment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Support for Harsher Punishment		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fear of crime	0.064*	0.061*	0.149*
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.023)
Victimization	0.146*	0.146*	0.143*

	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Trust in courts		-0.009	0.052*
		(0.007)	(0.016)
Fear of crime * Trust in courts			-0.025*
			(0.006)
Frequency of watching the news		0.116*	0.116*
		(0.010)	(0.010)
Ideology		0.020*	0.020*
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Interpersonal trust		-0.003	-0.002
		(0.011)	(0.011)
Individual economic situation		0.022	0.023
		(0.016)	(0.016)
Country economic situation		-0.025	-0.027
		(0.017)	(0.017)
Importance of religion		0.114*	0.114*
		(0.014)	(0.014)
Income		0.003	0.002
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Race		0.035	0.036
		(0.027)	(0.027)
Age		-0.009*	-0.009*

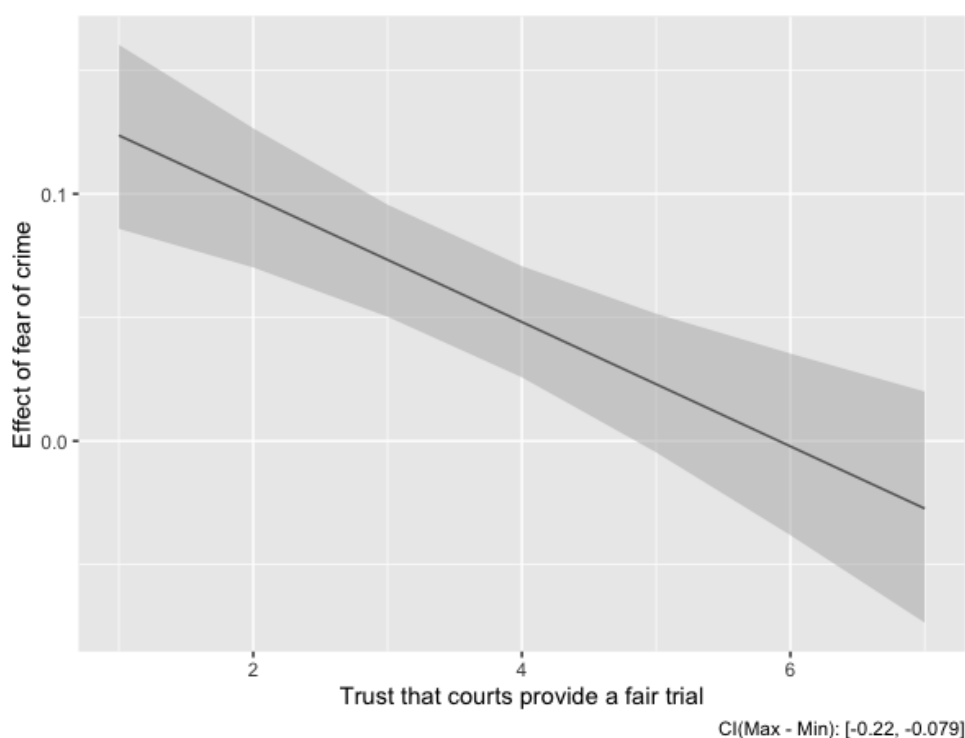
		(0.001)	(0.001)
Female		0.076*	0.076*
		(0.021)	(0.021)
Education		-0.019*	-0.019*
		(0.003)	(0.003)
Urban		-0.027	-0.026
		(0.024)	(0.024)
Observations	35,543	35,543	35,543

Note:

*p<0.05

The coefficient of interaction between fear of crime and trust that courts provide a fair trial is significant at the 95% level. I also plotted the slope of fear of crime conditional on confidence in courts using R's interplot package (Solt & Hu, 2019). The negative slope indicates that the association between fear of crime and support for harsher punishment is stronger among persons with lower trust in courts and weaker in individuals with higher levels of trust, being non-differentiable from zero when closer to the maximum level of the moderator.

Figure 10 – Effect of fear of crime on support for harsher punishment conditional on trust in courts



Following Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006), I also estimated predicted probabilities of supporting more punishment given different levels of fear of crime and trust in courts to provide the reader with quantities of interest that are more easily interpretable. Holding trust at its maximum level, people who were the most fearful of crime had a 57% probability of being the most supportive of stronger crime sentences. In contrast, the least afraid had a probability of 59%, a difference that is close to zero. When I held trust that courts provide a fair trial at its minimum value, the likelihood of being at the highest level of support for harsher punishment of those who feared crime the most was 64%, against 55% of those who feared crime the least. This 9% difference among low-trust individuals is way more significant than the 2% difference for high-trust ones, supporting H2.3.

Table 20 – Predicted probabilities of being at a higher level of support for harsher punishment conditional on fear of crime and trust in courts

Fear of crime	Trust in courts	Predicted probabilities
Very safe	No trust at all	55%
Very unsafe	No trust at all	64%
Very safe	Trust a lot	59%
Very unsafe	Trust a lot	57%

Source: The Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop)

The analysis of the results for the support for the death penalty variable brings the opportunity of examining different aspects of punitive sentiments in Latin America. While the support for harsher punishment variable, as measured by Lapop, is a Likert-scale in which respondents declare how much they agree to the statement that criminal sentences should be longer, the question about support for the death penalty accepts only a binary response: yes (1) or no (0). One favors the state taking the life of convicted felons as a form of punishment, or one opposes it. The formulation of the question makes it blunter than the one on support for harsher punishment. While the expression “punishment of criminals must be increased” is vaguer and may be perceived differently by the survey respondents, being in favor or against the death penalty is a very straightforward question. Therefore, we believe the support for capital punishment variable captures other aspects of individuals' punitive sentiments.

Table 21 – Support for the death penalty

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Approval of the death penalty		
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Fear of crime	0.096* (0.016)	0.091* (0.017)	0.095* (0.035)
Victimization	0.293* (0.036)	0.176* (0.038)	0.176* (0.038)
Trust in courts		-0.058* (0.010)	-0.056* (0.025)
Fear of crime * Trust in courts			-0.001 (0.009)
Frequency of watching the news		0.086* (0.015)	0.086* (0.015)
Ideology		0.002 (0.006)	0.002 (0.006)
Interpersonal trust		-0.065* (0.018)	-0.065* (0.018)
Individual economic situation		-0.045 (0.026)	-0.045 (0.026)
Country economic situation		-0.051 (0.028)	-0.051 (0.028)
Importance of religion		-0.148* (0.022)	-0.148* (0.022)

Income		0.032*	0.031*
		(0.007)	(0.007)
Race		0.013	0.013
		(0.044)	(0.044)
Age		-0.008*	-0.008*
		(0.001)	(0.001)
Female		-0.167*	-0.167*
		(0.033)	(0.033)
Education		0.003	0.003
		(0.005)	(0.005)
Urban		0.088*	0.088*
		(0.039)	(0.039)
Constant	-0.189*	1.025*	1.017*
	(0.066)	(0.154)	(0.173)
Observations	17,486	17,486	17,486
Log Likelihood	-11,650.160	-10,905.620	-10,905.600
Akaike Inf. Crit.	23,322.330	21,859.240	21,861.210

Note:

*p < 0.05

As hypothesized, fear of crime is positively associated with death penalty approval, a similar result to support for harsher punishment. Holding all other variables fixed, model seven indicates that a one-unit increase in the scale of fear of crime is associated with a 19% augment in the odds of supporting the death penalty. In terms of predicted probabilities, it means that someone who fears crime the least has a 48% probability of approving the death penalty, against a probability of 55% of those who fear it the most. This association is sizeable. Altering the frequency of watching the news from its minimum value to its maximum led to a 9% augment in the predicted probabilities of supporting the death penalty. Changing fear of crime led to a slightly smaller increase of 7%. These results provide evidence that confirms H2.2.

Regarding the interaction between fear of crime and trust that courts provide a fair trial, the coefficient falls short of the 95% threshold. Nevertheless, it is necessary to plot the interaction slopes (Brambor, Clark, and Golder, 2006).

Figure 11 – Predicted probabilities of support for the death penalty conditional on fear of crime and trust in courts

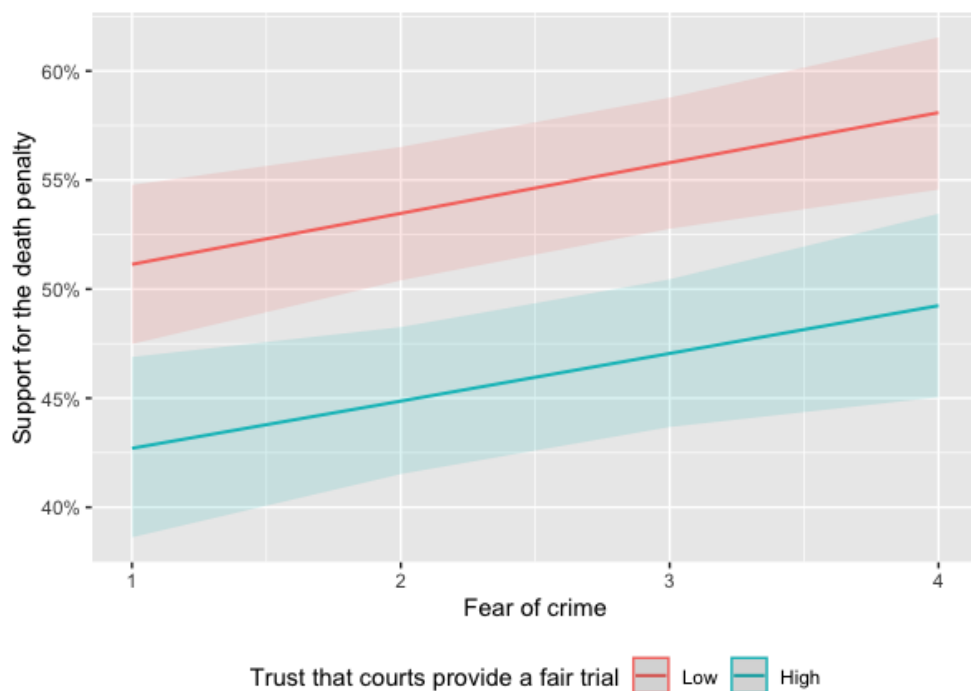


Figure 11 exhibits two very similar slopes for the association between fear of crime and support for the death penalty, given distinct levels of trust in courts. This may mean that H2.4, which consisted of the expectation that fear of crime would have different associations with support for the death penalty depending on the degree of trust in courts, may not be confirmed by our data. As a more detailed test, the table below provides the predicted probabilities of interest.

Table 22 - Predicted probabilities of supporting the death penalty conditional on fear of crime and trust in courts

Fear of crime	Trust in courts	Predicted probabilities
Low	No trust at all	51%
High	No trust at all	58%
Low	Trust a lot	43%
High	Trust a lot	49%

Indeed, table 22 goes in the same direction as figure 11, providing evidence against H2.4. The predicted probabilities of supporting the death penalty given different levels of fear of crime vary similarly across persons with greater trust in courts and smaller trust in courts. Therefore, results found here do not confirm the hypothesis that trust that courts provide a fair trial moderates the association between fear of crime and approval of the

death penalty. In other words, the association between fear of crime and acceptance of the death penalty does not change substantially, given different levels of trust in courts.

3.5. Robustness tests

I estimated several other models to put the robustness of my results to test. Beginning with the models of support for harsher punishment, first, I estimated two mixed effect models with random intercepts. Mixed effect models, also known as hierarchical models or multilevel models, are models whose specifications control biases generated by data clustered in groups (Hox, Morbeek, Schoot, 2018). In this study, I have different individuals distributed in distinct countries. Therefore, some control of this type must be included in the analysis. In the results section, I controlled for this type of bias using country dummies. Here I apply an alternate approach, multilevel modeling, to test the robustness of my results. Both models are cumulative link models: ordinal mixed effect models with random intercepts, estimated with the package *ordinal* in R (Christensen, 2019).

Model eight is an alternate estimation of model three and analyzes the effects of fear of crime on support for harsher punishments conditional on trust in courts. To save space, I kept in tabular form only the estimates of interest, namely fear of crime, trust that courts provide a fair trial, and the interaction term between them. Model eight presents coefficients that do not vary much from the ones in the results section. Fear of crime remains negatively associated with support for harsher punishment. The interaction term also remained negative.

Table 23 – Support for harsher punishment with random intercepts

	Dependent variable:
	Support for harsher punishment
	Model 8
<i>Random effects</i>	
Country	variance 0.129 (0.360)
<i>Fixed effects</i>	
Fear of crime	0.149* (0.023)
Trust in courts	-0.052* (0.016)
Fear of crime * Trust in courts	-0.025*

	(0.006)
Controls	✓
Year fixed effects	✓
Observations	35,543
Log-Likelihood	-53,804.01
Akaike Inf. Crit.	107,656.02
<i>Note:</i> * $p < 0.05$	

As a further test of the associations between fear of crime and support for harsher punishment, I ran models with listwise deletion. There are many ways of dealing with missing data. In the results section, I applied ordinal models with multiple imputations, a method to impute missing cases based on probability. Here, I follow an alternate approach and simply delete the cases in which controls and explanatory variables are missing.

Table 24 shows that the associations of interest remained similar to the results section. This is true for the coefficients of fear of crime and the interaction term of fear of crime and trust. Hence, the moderating effect of confidence in courts seems reliable and robust to the models' alternate specifications.

Table 24 – Support for harsher punishment with listwise deletion

<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Support for harsher punishment	
	Model 9
Fear of crime	0.169* (0.030)
Trust in courts	0.048* (0.020)
Fear of crime * Trust in courts	-0.030* (0.007)
Controls	✓
Year fixed effects	✓
Country fixed effects	✓
Observations	24,191
Akaike Inf. Crit.	64,762.02

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Regarding the death penalty's approval, I ran the same tests as for support for harsher punishment, that is, an estimation with an alternate form of controlling for cluster (country) bias and one with listwise deletion. Nevertheless, support for the death penalty is a variable available in only eight countries in Lapop. Running mixed effect models could lead to bias due to the small number of available clusters (Hox *et al.*, 2018). As a replacement, I used clustered standard errors.

Mostly, coefficients are similar to what I found in the results section. Fear of crime is positively associated with support for the death penalty in both models, while the interaction term falls short of the 95% threshold. The difference between a change from the minimum to the maximum degree of fear of crime among the lowest and highest levels of trust in courts is 2% only. Hence, trust that courts provide a fair trial does not seem to moderate the relation between fear of crime and the death penalty's approval.

Table 25 – Approval of the death penalty with clustered standard errors

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Approval of the death penalty	
	Model 10	
Fear of crime	0.067*	(0.028)
Victimization	0.144*	(0.073)
Trust in courts	-0.060	(0.037)
Fear of crime * Trust in courts	0.003	(0.011)
Controls	✓	
Year fixed effects	✓	
Observations	17,486	
Akaike Inf. Crit.	22,373.430	

Note:

* p < 0.05

The second robustness test for the death penalty's approval is the estimation of models with listwise deletion instead of multiple imputations, which I applied in the results section. Here, I return to the country fixed effects as the way of controlling for grouped data bias. Estimates are identical to the results section. Fear of crime is positively

associated with the approval of capital punishment. Predicted probabilities estimated also reproduce the aforementioned conclusions: the association of fear of crime and the death penalty's acceptance seems independent of trust in courts.

Table 26 – Approval of the death penalty with listwise deletion

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Approval of the death penalty
	Model 11
Fear of crime	0.104* (0.043)
Trust in courts	-0.062* (0.031)
Fear of crime * Trust in courts	-0.002 (0.011)
Controls	✓
Year fixed effects	✓
Country fixed effects	✓
Observations	17,486
Akaike Inf. Crit.	22,373.430
<i>Note:</i> * p < 0.05	

Finally, the majority of the associations found in the results section are robust to the different estimations tested here. In the following section, I discuss these findings further.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter tested four different hypotheses regarding the associations of fear of crime with two distinct dimensions of punitiveness, support for harsher punishments and approval of the death penalty. It also assessed whether trust that courts provide a fair trial moderates these associations. Mostly, results confirm the expectations derived from the theory.

First, fear of crime was positively associated with both dimensions of punitiveness. In general, its coefficients were sizeable, being more prominent than some controls, such as victimization, buttressing H2.1 and H2.3. These findings add to the literature confirming the associations between salient fear of crime and heightened punitiveness in

contemporary societies (Johnson, 2009; Costelloe, Chiricos and Gertz, 2009; Cabral, 2019; Price *et al.*, 2019; Singer *et al.*, 2019).

Victimization, another crime-related variable used here as a control, was positively associated with both support for longer jail terms and the approval of the death penalty. These results point to the same direction that other studies on citizens' punitive feelings (Johnson, 2009; Costelloe *et al.*, 2009; Krause, 2014; Singer *et al.*, 2019; Cabral, 2019), emphasizing the importance of actual experiences with crime on shaping punitiveness. They also point to the opposite direction of other analyses that found no significant impacts of crime variables on support for harsher punishment (King and Maruna, 2009; Kleck and Jackson, 2017).

This chapter also expands on the available literature by analyzing how trust in institutions moderates the effect of fear of crime on support for harsher punishments and the death penalty, testing the crime-distrust model in a different region, time, with distinct model specifications, and new data. The argument is that persons with a heightened fear of crime only demand harsher policies on crime if they also distrust law enforcement institutions. This theoretical expectation may seem contradictory at first. How will individuals who do not trust law enforcement try to increase its power? The rationale is that persons with low confidence in courts perceive the production of harsher legislation on crime as a way to reduce the judiciary's discretionary powers, avoiding what they perceive as "liberal excesses" perpetrated by courts. Hence, unlike high trust individuals, which tend to be more satisfied with justice, low trust ones may feel more inclined to alter legislation and procedures to get tougher on criminals (Garland, 2001; Simon, 2007).

Unnever and Cullen (2010) tested a similar hypothesis on their assessment of the crime-distrust model, but the operationalization of the data was different. Unnever and Cullen (2010) applied an interaction between distrust in the Supreme Court and a measure of Americans' perception of whether crime rates were escalating, finding no significant associations with neither support for harsher punishments nor approval of the death penalty. Here I used a broader question regarding the trust of Latin Americans that courts provide a fair trial. Supreme courts are, in general, highly politicized, which may impact the way persons perceive them beyond the scope of whether people agree or not with the way the justice system deals with crime. Thus, I believe that a more general measure of trust in courts, such as the one applied here, fits better to study the hypothesis that beliefs

about law enforcement institutions moderate the association between fear of crime and punitiveness.

Indeed, my results differ from the ones by Unnever and Cullen (2010). While they found no significant moderation exerted by trust in the Supreme Court, I found one important association. Persons who were more fearful of crime and less trustful of courts had, on average, greater probabilities of being more supportive of harsher punishments than those who feared crime but presented high trust in courts. Regarding the approval of the death penalty, the interaction term was not significant at the 95% threshold, meaning that, in the case of support for the capital punishment, trust in courts exerts no noticeable moderation on the effect of fear of crime on support for harsher punishments. These results confirm most of my hypotheses, excepting H2.4.

This chapter analyzed the associations between fear of crime and two measures of punitiveness, support for harsher punishments and for the death penalty, conditional on trust that courts provide a fair trial. The next chapter, the last of this dissertation, advances on the study of another dimension of punitiveness, support for vigilantism. It assesses how crime victimization affects support for vigilantism through trust in the justice system. The mechanism has similarities to the one analyzed in this chapter, yet it tests another type of relation. Here I assessed if trust in courts worked as a moderator of the associations between fear of crime and punitiveness. In the next chapter, I am going to analyze whether trust in the justice system works as a mediator of the association between crime victimization and support for vigilantism. In the first case, the expectation was that fear of crime would affect individuals with low and high levels of trust in courts differently. In the second case, the hypothesis is that victimization diminishes trust in the justice system, which then leads to bigger support for vigilantism. Therefore, the next chapter performs a causal mediation analysis, akin to chapter 1. This time, however, instead of the toolkit developed by Imai *et al.* (2010), I used a recent methodological development, the regression-with-residuals (RWR) approach (Zhou & Wodtke, 2019; Wodtke & Zhou, 2020).

4. Distrustful victims: a causal mediation analysis of the effect of crime victimization on support for vigilantism

This chapter analyses the association between crime victimization and support for vigilantism, finding that recently being a crime victim increases support for vigilantism on average. Furthermore, it proposes a causal pathway linking victimization and support for vigilantism, testing whether victimization affects support for vigilantism through trust in law enforcement institutions. When the state fails, vigilantism may be perceived as one of the few available approaches to fight crime. The idea behind this mechanism is that when people are victimized, they tend to lower their trust in law enforcement institutions' capacity to deliver public security, increasing their support for vigilantism.

To test this mechanism, this research uses data provided by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop) for Brazil in four different survey rounds: 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014. It applies a novel estimation to the study of support for vigilantism, the regression-with-residuals (RWR) approach, that enables the researcher to estimate direct and indirect effects of a treatment on an outcome of interest, while controlling for post-treatment confounders bias (Zhou & Wodtke, 2019; Wodtke & Zhou, 2020).

The Brazilian case is especially intriguing not only due to the complexity of the country and the size of its population but also due to its long history with vigilantism and to some unique characteristics of Brazilian vigilante groups. The best-known vigilante groups acting in Brazil are the *milícias*, whose history goes back to the death squads that raised in the 1950s in Rio de Janeiro city's outskirts (Cano, 2013; Misse, 2019). Many of the *milicianos*, the members of the *milícias*, are former or active policemen so that *milícias* have strong ties to the state. This situation provides an uncommon empirical case to the study of support for vigilantism, which is regularly perceived as a phenomenon related to state omission or deficiency (Schuberth, 2013). In Brazil, differently, *milícias* were created by law enforcement agents and act as a stable, parallel power that is expanding its control over many neighborhoods, especially in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

The case of vigilantism in Brazil is, then, distinct from what happens in other countries in the world, such as Mexico (Phillips, 2017; Zizumbo-Colunga, 2017) and Pakistan (Tankebe & Asif, 2016), where vigilantism is usually born of a more or less spontaneous organization of civilians who seek to fight crime that is tormenting their neighborhoods. Vigilantism is also more deep-rooted in Brazil than in other societies. *Milícias* are stable,

profitable groups that mix vigilante actions and organized crime, a more complex phenomenon than cases of lynching or violent responses of common citizens to robberies and situations of risk, which are the types of vigilante action most common in developed societies (Misse, 2019).

The chapter is organized as follows. First, I briefly discuss the concept of vigilantism, focusing on the recent advances in the literature. Particularly, I focus on the discussion of Bateson's (2020) definition of vigilantism as the extralegal punishment, investigation, or prevention of crime. Second, I introduce the phenomenon of vigilantism in Brazil, emphasizing the characteristics that make it a unique case for the comprehension of the association between victimization and support for vigilantism. Third, I analyze the available literature on support for vigilantism, focusing on the studies on the relationship between crime and approval of vigilante groups. Then, I present the data and methods used, and, finally, I discuss the results.

4.1. What is vigilantism?

Vigilantism is a widespread phenomenon. Studies have found it to be quite common in many countries around the world. From the United States (Brundage, 1993) to South Africa and Brazil (Schuberth, 2013), vigilantes have been acting individually or collectively in order to punish criminals. Vigilantism is very diverse. It can vary from lynching mobs, common in the southern United States and Latin America (Brundage, 1993), to stable, organized groups as the *autodefensas* in Mexico (Phillips, 2017) and the *milícias*, in Brazil (Cano, 2013; Misse, 2019). Vigilantism can occur spontaneously, such as in a situation when somebody with a gun shoots a person who is mugging another one on the street, or in an organized manner. The *milícias* in Rio de Janeiro, for instance, are permanent organizations with structured hierarchies whose activities involve the patrolling of occupied neighborhoods (Cano, 2013).

Hence, vigilantism can assume many different forms, and it also involves multiple different aspects of social life. It has been studied simultaneously by criminologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists, with different emphasis and definitions. Rosenbaum and Sederberg (1974, p. 542) have defined it as “the taking the of the law into one’s own hands”. That is when an individual, instead of trusting in law enforcement to solve a crime, decides to act by herself. Though intuitive, this definition is too broad. Johnston (1996) argues that vigilantism has five main features: 1) planning and premeditation, 2) voluntary engagement, 3) it applies force or threatens to apply it,

4) it aims to protect an established order from transgression, and 5) it offers guarantees of protection to fight crime. Johnston's (1996) definition is quite more restrictive than Rosembaum and Sederberg's (1974), in a way that it might exclude some groups intuitively classified as vigilantes from the analysis. Take again, for example, *milícias* in Brazil. They act in a planned manner, they threaten to apply force and often apply it, they are known for establishing private aggressive rules to establish order, and, in exchange for payment, they offer protection against crime. However, *milícias* lack the voluntary engagement element. Johnson (1996, p. 226) sees vigilantism as an act of "autonomous citizenship", through which citizens try to provide themselves with security when the state is not able to do so. This view, besides romanticizing vigilantism, also falls into the so-called weak state hypothesis, which posits that vigilantes emerge due to the inability of law-enforcement institutions to establish and maintain the rule-of-law (Schuberth, 2013). Tough intuitive, empirical evidence suggests that this expectation is not always met, especially in countries like Brazil, where the state is relatively developed and capable of delivering many social services. In the case of *milícias* in Rio de Janeiro, studies show that vigilantism recurrently happens with state agents' informal allowance or even with their direct engagement (Schuberth, 2013; Cano, 2013).

More recently, Bateson (2020, p. 4) has defined vigilantism as the "extralegal prevention, investigation or punishment of offenses". Extralegal refers to the fact that vigilantism has the same aims as legal criminal enforcement, but often goes beyond it. Killing an offender, for example, might be directed towards punishing felons, but exceeds Brazilian criminal law, in which there is no death penalty in the majority of cases. Vigilantism is also not limited to punishment. Prevention activities, such as civil policing of neighborhoods, and private investigation of offenses, even if they do not end up in violence or punishment of criminals, are vigilante actions. It is important to note that even state agents, such as police and judges, can also act as vigilantes when acting extralegally to fight crime. Indeed, this is usual in Brazil, where many vigilante groups, such as death squads and *milícias*, are formed by active or retired military police (Cano, 2013). There is a "gray zone" of interaction between vigilantism and state officials (Bateson, 2020). Against the weak state hypothesis, in industrialized countries like Brazil, South Africa, and Mexico, vigilante groups often seek alliances with law enforcement institutions and their leaders even run for political office (Schuberth, 2013; Cano, 2013).

Therefore, vigilantism is a complex phenomenon that demands empirical, case-to-case, understanding. In this chapter, I do not intend to analyze the history or causes of vigilantism in Latin America, Brazil, or anywhere else, but to comprehend some of the mechanisms behind its legitimation in the public's eyes.

4.2. Vigilantism in Brazil

Vigilantism in Brazil, as well as in other countries, is not a recent phenomenon. It has been happening for decades. Some researchers argue that its roots go back to the 1950s when the Brazilian urban population was growing steadily, especially in major cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Back then, Rio was the country's capital and the growth of the peripheries of the city with a minor presence of state security apparatus facilitated the emergence of death squads, whose leaders eventually ascended to public office (Benmergui & Gonçalves, 2019). Besides death squads, lynching and other forms of vigilantism, which are common in many countries in Latin America, have been taking place in Brazil for a long time.

Recently, however, vigilantism has called more attention than ever before. This is mainly due to the spreading of the *milícias*, that began in the 2000s in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Cano, 2013). *Milícias* are organized groups of vigilantes, many of them active or former police, which control territories in the urban peripheries of Rio de Janeiro. They started as relatively small groups that seized areas in poor regions on the west of the city, far away from downtown and the rich neighborhoods in the south of Rio (Arias & Barnes, 2017). Their action was focused on expelling drug gangs from poor communities, the *favelas*, and then seizing control of the neighborhood under the excuse of keeping it free from traffickers (Misse, 2019). In fact, they expelled the criminal groups of drug dealers, which diminished violence in these regions due to the absence of confrontations between traffickers and the police. For illustration, Zaluar and Conceição (2007) found that only 15% of residents of *milícia*-controlled areas had witnessed gunfires, against 52% in drug gang dominated neighborhoods.

At the beginning, the main “product” by the *milícias* was a classic vigilante action according to Bateson's (2020) definition: the extralegal prevention, investigation, and/or punishment of crime. They expelled traffickers, making the constant shootouts between them and the military police vanish, and then occupied neighborhoods, charging fees to protect residents. Citizens often perceived this new situation as safer than it was when

traffickers ruled the communities, making vigilantism a source of legitimacy for the *milícias* (Benmergui & Gonçalves, 2019).

Nevertheless, *milícias*' activities go beyond the scope of vigilantism and fall into the category of organized crime. First, residents have no option but to buy their products. It is mandatory to pay security fees. Second, their economic activities soon exceeded the prevention, investigation, and/or punishment of crimes, involving, for example, the monopoly over the provision of transport and Internet services (Arias & Barnes, 2017). They seek to dominate every aspect of the economic life of the regions they control, in such a way that, after some time, a few citizens would even rather have the drug traffickers back (Cano, 2013).

Public opinion on *milícias* was favorable at the beginning, with important politicians of Rio de Janeiro calling it a “lesser evil”. After 2008, when a group of *milicianos* (the members of *milícias*) kidnapped and tortured journalists, the press coverage on them changed and some state action against them began. Nevertheless, even after they became hostile towards common citizens, many residents of occupied regions still perceive them as “liberators” (Cano, 2013). Despite their criminal activities, they are often regarded as more experienced and organized than traffickers. Having police officers among their ranks is one of their most important sources of legitimacy. Many residents of occupied communities would still rather have them instead of drug dealers, mainly because *milicianos* are seen as more orderly (Conceição, 2016).

Recently, a death squad, with alleged ties to the *milícias*, gained international attention due to the killing of Marielle Franco, a representative in the City Council of Rio de Janeiro. Also, some alleged high up *milicianos* have ascended to important positions in Brazilian national politics, supposedly getting involved in cases of corruption. These recent events might turn the tide against them in public opinion. Indeed, a recent opinion poll carried out by Datafolha showed that inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro city are more fearful of *milicianos* than of drug traffickers and that up to 15% of the west zone's population had already paid fees to the *milícias* at least once. Notwithstanding, as I further argue in this paper, crime victimization is an important driver of support for vigilantism. Despite constantly committing crimes, going beyond the concept of vigilantism (Bateson, 2020), *milícias* still legitimize themselves through an image of crime fighters and liberators. Hence, the high crime rates in major Brazilian cities, such as São Paulo and

Rio de Janeiro, might collaborate to the stability or even increase of public approval of vigilante action.

4.3. Crime and support for vigilantism

Vigilantism is a widespread social phenomenon that affects societies in every continent of the world, demanding analytical efforts from scholars from different disciplines. Support for vigilantism, its counterpart in terms of public opinion, however, has called the attention of only a minor number of scholars. Most of the available studies try to follow the lead left by analysis of punitive attitudes, testing how crime victimization (Nivette, 2016; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019), trust in institutions (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010; Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012; Haas *et al.*, 2014; Nivette, 2016; Tankebe & Asif, 2016), social trust (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010; Zizumbo-Colunga, 2017) and punitiveness itself correlate with support for vigilantism (Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Others, also borrowing from the discussion on the determinants of general punitive behavior, investigate how feelings, such as anger (García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019), political views (Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012; McDermott & Miller, 2016) and personality traits relate to support for vigilantism (McDermott & Miller, 2016). In general, studies find that more crime, less trust in institutions, more social trust, stronger punitive attitudes, anger, and political authoritarianism are all associated with greater support for vigilantism. In the following lines, I discuss these findings further.

First, one could expect that more crime is correlated to higher support for vigilantism. It is only when people believe some criminals need (or deserve) to be punished that demands for harsher punishment and vigilantism arise. This is what studies on the correlation between individual crime victimization and support for vigilantism have found (Nivette, 2016; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Besides, researchers have tried to understand not only the direction of this association but also the mechanisms behind it. García-Ponce *et al.* (2019) tested the hypothesis that, following experiences with violence, individuals tend to feel angry and, as a consequence, foster demands for retribution, even if it requires going beyond the law. Support for vigilantism is, then, perceived as a component of punitiveness, conceived as part of broader desire for harsher punishment motivated by anger towards criminals. That anger varies depending on the type of perpetrated violence and the perceived innocence of the victim. Morally outrageous violence is associated with bigger support for harsher punishment, as well as

when victims are seen as innocent or defenseless, such as children (García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Hence, this study's first hypothesis is:

H3.1: Victimization is positively associated with support for vigilantism.

The association between trust in institutions and support for vigilantism is, perhaps, the most analyzed in the literature. This is probably due to the popularity of the weak state hypothesis, according to which the absence or fragility of law enforcement institutions, such as the police and justice courts, is linked to the emergence of vigilante groups (Schubert, 2013). The majority of these studies find that trust in law enforcement is indeed negatively associated with approval of vigilantism: the higher the trust in institutions, the smaller the support for vigilante groups (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010; Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012; Haas *et al.*, 2014; Nivette, 2016; Tankebe & Asif, 2016). Measures of trust, however, vary. Zizumbo-Colunga (2010), for example, shows that trust in law enforcement institutions, an additive index of three measures: trust in the judicial system, trust in police, and trust in the national prosecutor's office (*Procuraduría General de la República*), is negatively associated with support for vigilantism. Van Damme and Pauwels (2012) applied a different measure of trust in institutions, an index of perceived procedural justice of the Belgian criminal justice system. Procedural justice refers to a sense of justice based on process, implying a fair and respectful treatment given by authorities, strictly following the rule of law (Tyler, 2006). They found an indirect effect of perceptions of procedural justice on support for vigilantism: weaker perceptions of fairness are associated with stronger punitive views, which, in its turn, increase support for extralegal punishment (Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012). Researchers even applied broader measures of institutional legitimacy seeking to explain support for vigilantism, going beyond the scope of law enforcement institutions. Nivette (2016), for instance, created a composite index of 12 items comprising trust in different state institutions, such as the Parliament, the presidency, the political system generally, and also law enforcement agencies such as the police and the courts. This index of institutional trust was negatively associated with approval of vigilantism (Nivette, 2016).

Studies discussed above show that the argument put forward by Norris (1999) that legitimacy is a multidimensional, complex social, and political phenomenon is also true for the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions. Tankebe (2013) argues that police legitimacy has four dimensions: procedural justice, distributive justice, lawfulness, and effectiveness. In the case of police, procedural justice refers to the way the police treat

citizens, for example, if they act politely and respectfully, following the rule of law, or if they deal with citizens aggressively. Distributive justice is linked to how the police treat different groups. Are the poor treated differently from the rich? Lawfulness measures how legally the police act. Do police officers follow due process or do they act extralegally, or even seek bribes while on duty? The fourth dimension, effectiveness, refers to how effective the police are when performing their duties. The amount of time a patrol takes to arrive after receiving a call, for example, is a component of effectiveness (Tankebe, 2013). Each of these dimensions might have different associations with support for vigilantism. In a study in Pakistan, researchers found police lawfulness to be the dimension most strongly associated with support for vigilantism. When people perceived the police to act lawfully, they were less inclined to uphold vigilantism. Perceptions of police effectiveness, on the other hand, showed no effect on support for vigilantism (Tankebe & Asif, 2016). Haas *et al.* (2014) divided police legitimacy into two main aspects: diffuse legitimacy, that is, the general trust in the police, and specific legitimacy, that is, individual experiences with police responsiveness to citizens' calls. Through a between-subjects experiment, they found that both higher trust and good interactions with police were associated with smaller support for vigilantism. Nivette (2016), on its turn, encountered that when people believe the police are involved in criminal activities and/or experienced situations of police corruption, they tend to uphold vigilantism more. All that said, I hypothesize that:

H3.2: Trust in law enforcement institutions is negatively associated with support for vigilantism.

Other studies used trust in law enforcement institutions as a moderator of the effect of a treatment of interest on support for vigilantism. For example, scholars have found that trust in institutions moderates the effect of social trust on support for vigilantism. Surprisingly, higher levels of trust in the members of the community where one lives lead to stronger support for vigilantism, but only when trust in the police (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2017) or justice institutions is low (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010). The argument is that, when crime is perceived as a major social problem, "good citizens" who trust each other may cooperate to form a group to prevent "bad citizens" from perpetrating crimes. This refers to what some researchers have called the "dark side" of social capital (Acemoglu *et al.*, 2013), that is, situations where higher levels of interpersonal trust are associated with deleterious social activities. Most importantly, the logic behind the moderating role

played by trust in institutions is that people only perceive vigilantism as a viable solution for crime when they do not deem the state capable of solving it by itself. Therefore, I expect that:

H3.3: The effect of victimization on support for vigilantism is mediated by trust in law enforcement institutions.

I expect crime victimization to positively impact the approval of vigilantism. But this effect does not go directly from victimization to support for vigilantism. Instead, I hypothesize that it flows from victimization to the outcome through trust in law enforcement institutions. Recently being a crime victim diminishes people's trust in justice, increasing their approval of extralegal measures to fight crime. This expectation might look like a corollary of the weak state hypothesis, yet I argue it is based on different assumptions. While the weak state hypothesis assumes that vigilantism flourishes in contexts of low state capacity, what I test in this paper does not take as granted any weaknesses or strengths of law enforcement, since minor trust in institutions is not necessarily related to weak states. Actually, both weak and strong states throughout the world have been facing legitimacy issues in the last decades (Zeichmeister & Lupu, 2019). Minor trust in institutions, especially law enforcement, can be due to multiple reasons, such as bad personal experiences with the police, perceptions that courts are not fair, but protect privileged citizens (Tankebe, 2013), or a general belief that, despite having enough capacity, law enforcement has too many breaks that obstacles it from punishing crime the way it should, such as due process and human rights concerns (Garland, 2001).

As shown in the previous chapter, fear of crime is an important predictor of punitive attitudes. Individuals who are more fearful of victimization tend to adopt an aggressive approach to crime as a response (Anjou *et al.*, 1978). Indeed, fear of crime is often associated with support for harsher criminal punishment (Johnson, 2009; Costelloe, *et al.*, 2009; Singer *et al.*, 2019; Cabral, 2019). If fear of crime is amongst the most important predictors of punitiveness, one would expect it to predict support for vigilantism as well. Since fear of crime is not the treatment of interest in this chapter, I included it in the study as a post-treatment control.

Approval of vigilante action can be conceived as a dimension of punitiveness. One could expect that an individual who shows high support for harsher legal punishment could also be more supportive of vigilantism. If the goal is to fight crime with violence, both types

of measures, legal and extralegal, can be perceived as useful, especially by authoritarian individuals, who often disregard human rights concerns (Krause, 2020). Indeed, besides having a direct effect on the approval of vigilante actions, studies argue that punitiveness acts as a mediator between authoritarianism and support for vigilantism (Van Damme and Pauwels, 2012). There is also evidence that the anger generated by crime victimization increases punitiveness, whose effect spills over to support for vigilantism (García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Hence, to test for a possible unobserved confounder bias, I control for support for harsher legal punishments in the models analyzed in the robustness tests section.

4.4. Data and methods

This chapter uses data provided by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (Lapop). Lapop is a regional survey that applies a complex, stratified probability sample design to deliver representative results at the national level for most countries in the Americas. Since my dependent variable, support for vigilantism, is only available in a few survey rounds, I used data from the Brazilian surveys of 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014, with a total of 6,865 observations. Interviews were conducted in all 26 states and in the federal district. The usage of multiple waves makes it possible to account for at least some variation across time. Besides, all observations with no answer for the outcome variable were dropped and datasets were imputed using multiple imputations with package *mice* in R, in order to avoid missing data bias. A plot with the number of missing cases for all variables in the study can be found in the appendix (figure A7), as well as a table comparing descriptive statistics of both imputed and non-imputed datasets (table A3).

The choice of restricting the analysis to the Brazilian case was due to its unique characteristics regarding the phenomenon of vigilantism. *Milicias*, death squads, and other vigilante groups have been acting in the country for decades, interacting with the way citizens perceive issues related to crime policy and politics in general. Despite similarities that might exist between vigilante organizations in Brazil and other Latin American countries, I believe that some particular aspects of Brazilian vigilante groups, such as their connections with law enforcement institutions, especially the states' military police, demand specific, focused scrutiny.

My dependent variable, support for vigilantism, is a 10-point scale that denotes the respondents' support for the statement that people should take the law into their own hands when the government does not punish criminals. Higher values indicate stronger

agreement and lower values weaker agreement. A downside of such a general question is that it does not address by name any vigilante groups in Brazil, and might be perceived by respondents as analyzing other aspects of social life unrelated to the action of, for example, *milicias*. Nevertheless, the generality of the question makes it possible to grasp deeper and more diffuse feelings towards vigilantism. One might feel inclined to reject any positive statement linked to the *milicias* given how badly they are now seen. However, when asked how much she would support a random person taking the law into her own hands in case of government failure, that same individual might have a different point of view. Support for vigilantism is relatively low in Brazil in all analyzed waves, but it grew from 2.53, in 2008, to 3.12, in 2014. Compared to other Latin American countries, Brazil had a low average approval of vigilantism in 2014. A country that is also known for the action of vigilante groups (Phillips, 2017), Mexico, had a mean of 4, while another big country of the region, Colombia, had a mean of 3.62. Average levels of support for vigilantism in Latin America and North America can be found in the introduction of this dissertation (table 2).

Table 27– Average support for vigilantism in Brazil (2008-2014)

Wave	Average support for vigilantism	Sd.Dev
2008	2.529	2.432
2010	2.548	2.522
2012	2.690	2.690
2014	3.115	2.879

The treatment, crime victimization, is a binary predictor. It equals 1 if the respondent reported being a crime victim in the last year, and 0 otherwise. Victimization rates are quite stable between the 2008 and 2014 waves.

Table 28 – Victimization rate in Brazil (2008-2014)

Wave	Victim - No	Victim - Yes
2008	83.5%	16.5%
2010	82.5%	17.5%
2012	83.6%	16.4%
2014	83.6%	16.4%

As mediators, I tested three measures of trust in different law enforcement institutions. Trust in the police, trust in the justice system, and trust that courts provide a fair trial. All of them are Likert-scales of 7 points ranging from "no trust at all" to "a lot". Given that

legitimacy is a multidimensional phenomenon and that many distinct institutions are involved in crime control, it is important to use multiple measures (Norris, 1999; Booth and Seligson, 2009; Tankebe, 2013). All trust variables have been demeaned, as well as all the pre-treatment and post-treatment controls. The demeaned minimum and maximum values of trust in the justice system are -2.73 and 3.27, respectively. Trust in the police goes from -2.98 to 3.02 and trust in the fairness of courts varies between -2.94 and 3.06. Table 29 demonstrates that the average trust in all law enforcement institutions has been falling in Brazil from 2010 onwards.

Table 29 – Average trust in law enforcement institutions (2008-2014)

Wave	Average trust in the justice system	Average trust in the police	Average trust that courts provide a fair trial
2008	-0.033	-0.243	-0.148
2010	0.307	0.215	0.365
2012	-0.021	0.105	0.053
2014	-0.448	-0.217	-0.502

Besides the outcome variable, the treatment, and the mediators, I am also using sets of pre-treatment and post-treatment covariates as controls. Pre-treatment covariates are those that are presumably not affected by crime victimization. These are age, gender, race, income, education, and religious attendance. Post-treatment controls, on the other hand, are variables that are assumed to be affected by victimization. In the results section, I used only one post-treatment control, fear of crime. As robustness tests, I added more post-treatment covariates, including punitiveness, which is considered to be one of the strongest predictors of support for vigilantism (Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Following Zhou and Wodtke (2019), I residualized all post-treatment variables on the pre-treatment covariates and treatment.

To analyze the data shown above, I am adopting the regression-with-residuals (RWR) approach (Zhou and Wodtke, 2019; Wodtke and Zhou, 2020). The RWR is an estimation technique that allows the researcher to run mediation analysis, extracting quantities of interest such as the controlled direct effect (CDE) and the natural indirect effect (NIE), without the risk of falling into post-treatment bias. It allows that through conditioning on post-treatment covariates that have been residualized on the treatment and pre-treatment covariates. The RWR estimation is composed of two steps (Zhou and Wodtke, 2019):

1. For each of the post-treatment confounders, compute least squares estimates on the pre-treatment controls and the treatment, and save the residuals.

2. Compute least square estimates of the outcome on the residualized post-treatment variables, on the pre-treatment controls, and on the mediator, which is allowed to vary across different levels of the treatment, pre-treatment, and post-treatment confounders. Formally, we have:

$$\hat{Y} = \tilde{B} + \tilde{B}_1^T Z + \tilde{B}_2^T X + \tilde{B}_3 A + M(\tilde{\gamma}_0 + \tilde{\gamma}_1^T Z + \tilde{\gamma}_2^T X + \tilde{\gamma}_3 A)$$

Where Y denotes the outcome (support for vigilantism), Z is a vector of residualized intermediate confounders (for example, fear of crime and punitiveness), X is a set of baseline confounders (age, sex, race, attendance to religious activities, income and education), A is the treatment (crime victimization), and M is the mediator (trust in law enforcement institutions).

In this chapter, I applied the RWR estimation to compute both, the CDE and the NIE. The CDE measures “the strength of the causal relationship between a treatment and outcome when mediator is fixed at a given value for all units” (Zhou & Wodtke, 2019, p. 2). It means that, with the CDE, one can estimate the direct effect of victimization on support for vigilantism, while fixing the mediators, trust in law enforcement institutions. As hypothesized above, I expect the CDE to be non-differentiable from zero, that is, I expect that victimization has no direct effect on support for vigilantism. This is when the NIE comes in. The NIE “measures the effect of treatment operating specifically through the mediator by fixing the level of treatment for each individual and then comparing outcomes under the different levels of the mediator” (Wodtke & Zhou, 2020). It is, therefore, a measure of mediation. With the NIE, I can analyze the effect of victimization on support for vigilantism that flows specifically through trust in law enforcement institutions. As hypothesized above, I expect the NIE to be positive, that is, I expect that people who were crime victims in the last 12 months present, on average, higher support for vigilantism, and that this effect is mediated by trust in the justice system.

The RWR is based on two strong assumptions: first, that there are no unobserved confounders between the treatment and the outcome; second, that there are no unobserved confounders between the mediator and the outcome. These two ignorability assumptions must be respected, otherwise, estimates may be biased (Zhou and Wodtke, 2019). In order to show the robustness of my results to unobserved confounder bias, I ran robustness tests including important post-treatment controls to the models, such as support for harsher punishments of criminals. Additionally, I ran a sensitivity analysis to unobserved

confounder bias. To check for multicollinearity problems, a correlation matrix can also be found in the appendix (figure A8).

4.5. Results

Table 30 presents the results for the total effect model of victimization on support for vigilantism (model 1), that is, a simple least-squares estimation with no mediators or post-treatment controls. Model 1 shows an average positive effect of 0.182 of victimization on support for vigilantism, meaning that a crime victim has average support for vigilantism that is 0.182 higher than a non-victim when controlling for the pre-treatment covariates. This provides evidence that supports our first hypothesis, that crime victimization is positively associated with support for vigilantism. In model 2, I added the variables of trust in law enforcement institutions, the mediators, as controls. Consequently, the association between victimization and support for vigilantism fell short of the 95% confidence interval threshold. This result points out that the effect of victimization may be mediated by trust in law enforcement. Nonetheless, only trust in the justice system is significant, which means that, at least in the Brazilian case analyzed in this chapter, trust in the police and perceptions about the fairness of courts are not important predictors of support for vigilantism. Hence, hypothesis 3.2 is supported, but only for trust in one law enforcement institution, the justice system.

Besides, after the inclusion of the mediators, the slope of victimization loses about 17% of its size, indicating that at least part of the total effect displayed in model 1 is actually mediated by trust in the justice system, providing a first evidence in favor of H3.3. Finally, model 3 exhibits the negative association between treatment and mediator: crime victims tend to present lesser trust in the justice system.

Table 30 – Total effect, outcome, and mediator models for support for vigilantism

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Support for vigilantism		Trust in the justice system
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Victimization	0.182* (0.084)	0.151 (0.084)	-0.294* (0.062)
Trust in the justice system		-0.084* (0.020)	

Trust that courts provide a fair trial		-0.021 (0.020)	
Trust in police		-0.005 (0.019)	
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Pre-treatment controls	✓	✓	✓
Constant	2.510* (0.069)	2.501* (0.069)	-0.049 (0.051)
Observations	6,865	6,865	6,865
R ²	0.026	0.031	0.050
Adjusted R ²	0.025	0.029	0.049
Residual Std. Error	2.516 (df = 6854)	2.511 (df = 6851)	1.855 (df = 6854)

Note: * $p < 0.05$

To further test hypothesis 3.3, that the effect of victimization on support for vigilantism is mediated by trust in law enforcement, table 31 displays the results of models 4, 5, and 6, which were calculated with the regression-with-residuals (RWR) estimation. Model 4 adds to model 1 by including trust in the justice system, our mediator, to the equation. As it was discussed in the previous section, RWR estimation enables us to calculate the direct and indirect effects of the treatment (crime victimization) on the outcome (support for vigilantism). Indirect effects are effects that are mediated by other variables. In models 4, 5, and 6, I tested if trust in the justice system acted as a mediator of the effect of victimization on support for vigilantism while controlling for the same pre-treatment confounders we have in model 1. Model 5 includes fear of crime as a post-treatment control and I also allowed it to interact with trust and victimization.

Coefficients from model 4 show that, after adding trust in the justice system, the mediator, to the model, victimization's slope loses its statistical significance and about 17% of its strength when compared to model 1. This finding provides additional evidence that the effect found in model 1 may be indirect, flowing from victimization to support for vigilantism through trust in the justice system. Victimization negatively impacts trust in the justice system which, in its turn, impacts support for vigilantism.

Since studies have shown that fear of crime is an important predictor of support for vigilantism (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010), I added fear of crime as a post-treatment control in model 5. Again, there is no significant change in the coefficients of victimization and

trust in the justice system. One could argue that variables such as race, gender, and age are correlated with crime victimization in Brazil. For example, 75% of homicide victims in 2018 were blacks (Ipea, 2020). Then, as the last test, in model 6 I allowed victimization to vary across levels of pre-treatment controls by including interaction terms between them. The associations between victimization, trust in the justice system, and support for vigilantism remained the same as in model 5, providing further evidence in support for hypothesis 3.3.

Table 31 – Mediation analysis

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Support for vigilantism		
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Victimization	0.154 (0.084)	0.134 (0.086)	0.134 (0.086)
Trust in the justice system	-0.084* (0.018)	-0.078* (0.018)	-0.078* (0.018)
Fear of crime		0.124* (0.036)	0.124* (0.036)
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Pre-treatment controls	✓	✓	✓
Moderation by fear of crime	✗	✓	✓
Moderation by pre-treatment controls	✗	✗	✓
Constant	2.504* (0.069)	2.498* (0.069)	2.498* (0.069)
Observations	6,865	6,865	6,865
R ²	0.034	0.037	0.037
Adjusted R ²	0.032	0.033	0.033
Residual Std. Error	2.508 (df = 6846)	2.506 (df = 6837)	2.506 (df = 6837)

Note: * $p < 0.05$

In order to fully analyze the results, I also estimated the controlled direct effect (CDE) and the natural indirect effect (NIE) of victimization on support for vigilantism with the R package *rwrmed* (Zhou and Wodtke, 2019; Wodtke and Zhou, 2020). Results confirmed that victimization has, indeed, an effect on support for vigilantism. Besides, this effect is indirect. The decomposition of the effect found no CDE of victimization on support for vigilantism ($b = 0.29$, bootstrapped 95% CI = [-0.14, 0.69]), and a positive

NIE ($b = 0.045$, bootstrapped 95% CI = [0.002, 0.07]). The NIE fixes the level of treatment for each person and then compare its outcomes under various levels of the mediator, measuring specifically the effect operating through it (Wodtke and Zhou, 2020). Hence, there is enough evidence to buttress the claim that victimization positively impacts support for vigilantism. In addition, this effect is indirect: it flows from victimization to support for vigilantism through trust in the justice system.

4.6. Robustness tests

In order to analyze the robustness of my results, I ran models including three more post-treatment controls that have been found to be associated with support for vigilantism. The first one is punitiveness (Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Since support for harsher punishments is found only in more recent waves of Lapop (2012 onwards) and the question regarding support for vigilantism was dropped after 2014, I only used 2012 and 2014 waves to run the robustness test models. In the 2012 and 2014 waves, Lapop asked respondents whether the government should increase punishments, invest in preventive measures to fight crime, or both. Those who said the government should punish criminals harder were recoded as 1, and the others as 0. Coefficients of model 7 confirm that punitiveness is a predictor of support for vigilantism, but there was no sizeable change in the effect of trust in the justice system.

In model 8, I also added interpersonal trust as a post-treatment control. Studies have found different measures of social capital, such as interpersonal trust and trust in neighbors to be correlated with support for vigilantism (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010; Zizumbo-Colunga, 2017). Counterintuitively, higher levels of social trust are expected to be associated with stronger support for vigilantism. This is not what model 8 shows. In fact, interpersonal trust bears no effect on support for vigilantism. Trust in the justice system's coefficient, on the other hand, continues to be significant.

Finally, right-wing political attitudes, particularly authoritarianism, are, in general, associated with more punitive views of politics and society (Van Damme & Pauwels, 2012; McDermott & Miller, 2016). Hence, as a final robustness test, I added ideology as a post-treatment control in model 9. Higher values reflect political views closer to the right-wing and lower values are associated with left-leaning attitudes. Political ideology, as measured by the self-declared ideology scale of Lapop, did not affect support for vigilantism, while controlling for the other variables in the model. More importantly, the effect of trust in the justice system remained.

Table 32 – Robustness tests

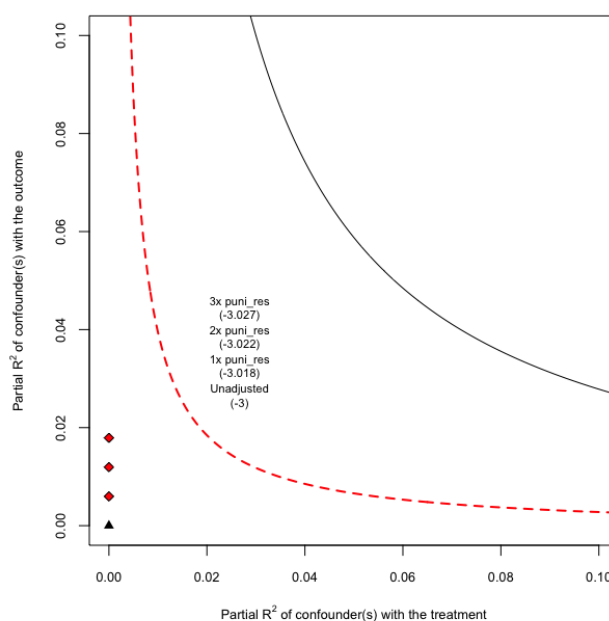
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Support for vigilantism		
	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Victimization	0.140 (0.139)	0.139 (0.139)	0.152 (0.139)
Trust in the justice system	-0.084* (0.029)	-0.085* (0.029)	-0.088* (0.029)
Fear of crime	0.123* (0.057)	0.126* (0.057)	0.131* (0.057)
Punitiveness	0.446* (0.101)	0.461* (0.109)	0.458* (0.109)
Interpersonal trust		0.075 (0.074)	0.069 (0.074)
Ideology			0.023 (0.021)
Year fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Pre-treatment controls	✓	✓	✓
Moderation by post-treatment controls	✓	✓	✓
Moderation by pre-treatment controls	✓	✓	✓
Constant	2.598* (0.074)	2.598* (0.074)	2.598* (0.074)
Observations	2,971	2,971	2,971
R ²	0.054	0.055	0.057
Adjusted R ²	0.046	0.045	0.047
Residual Std. Error	2.619 (df = 2943)	2.619 (df = 2939)	2.618 (df = 2936)

Note: * p < 0.05

As a final test, I ran a sensitivity analysis on coefficients of model 9 using the R package *sensemkr* (Cinelli, Ferwerda, and Hazlett, 2020). Sensitivity analysis is important and should become standard practice in observational studies due to possible unobserved variable bias. Results point that unobserved confounders would have to explain more than 5.41% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome to bring the point

estimate to 0 (a bias of 100% of the original estimate). This effect would be bigger than three times the effect of punitiveness on support for vigilantism. Besides, figure 12 demonstrates that to make the effect of trust in the courts on support for vigilantism non-differentiable from zero, unobserved confounders would have to engender effects more than three times stronger than that of punitiveness. Hence, estimates seem quite robust to unobserved variable bias.

Figure 12 – Sensitivity contour plot of the t-value



4.7. Discussion

Results presented above support our main hypothesis that the effect of victimization on support for vigilantism is mediated by trust in law enforcement institutions. In the Brazilian case, trust in one specific law enforcement institution, the justice system, is the one actually linked to support for vigilantism. These results partially align with previous studies on the relations between victimization, institutional trust, and support for vigilantism.

First, the association I found between victimization and approval of vigilante action is in line with previous studies. Crime victims show, on average, greater support for vigilantism (Nivette, 2016; García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Nonetheless, the causal mechanism I test is novel. I show that the effect of victimization on support for vigilantism is mediated by trust in law enforcement institutions, namely the justice system. Victimization lowers trust in the justice system that, in its turn, increases support

for vigilantism. Available studies analyze the direct association between victimization and support for vigilantism (Nivette, 2016), or propose distinct causal pathways (García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). Even if the results found here are not enough to rule out these alternate possibilities, they contribute to the literature by pointing out the existence of a specific causal mechanism linking victimization and approval of vigilantism through trust in the justice system.

In my models, I applied measures of trust in single law enforcement institutions, instead of building a composite index of multiple legitimacy measures, as some studies did (Zizumbo-Colunga, 2010; Nivette, 2016). In previous tests, I used an additive index of trust in police, trust in the fairness of trials, and trust in the justice system, finding a negative association with support for vigilantism. However, I noticed that the effect was mainly driven by trust in the justice system and decided to use this single measure instead of the additive index.

This choice reflects the perception that legitimacy is a multidimensional phenomenon and should be analyzed accordingly (Norris, 1999; Booth and Seligson, 2009; Tankebe, 2013). Composite measures may be useful in many situations but should be used carefully. Applying a composite measure in this study would have biased the interpretation of the results. One would be misguided into thinking that trust in all law enforcement institutions is negatively associated with support for vigilantism, but this is not true for the Brazilian case. Trust in the police, which is put by available studies as one of the main predictors of support for vigilantism (Haas *et al.*, 2014; Nivette, 2016; Tankebe & Asif, 2016) has no association with it in Brazil. This might be due to several reasons. The foremost vigilante groups in Brazil, the *milícias*, are composed of many former and active police. This might affect the way citizens perceive them. While in countries like Mexico vigilante groups were born apart from the state (Phillips, 2017), *milícias* and death squads in Brazil were created by police agents (Cano, 2013; Misse, 2019). Therefore, many Brazilians might see vigilantes as extraofficial branches of the police, while others may perceive it similarly to citizens in other countries, making the estimates of trust in police on support for vigilantism indistinguishable from zero.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the effect of individual crime victimization on support for vigilantism. It tested not only the direction and size of the effect but also an explanatory causal pathway for the relation between the treatment and the outcome. This causal

pathway works as follows: people who recently were crime victims tend to reduce their trust in the justice system and, consequently, augment their support for vigilantism. The theory behind it is quite straightforward, borrowing from the abundant literature on the association between state inefficacy in fighting crime and the rise of vigilante groups. The idea is that, when citizens are victimized, they deem the state incapable of delivering public safety and, as one of the few available alternatives, they seek the protection of vigilante groups. In Brazil, this finding is especially interesting because the most well-known vigilante groups have many police officers among their ranks. This may explain why trust in the police is not associated with support for vigilantism in Brazil. It may also be the case that Brazilians do not see the police as the main responsible for rising crime rates, but the justice system, which is often perceived as too slow and too soft on criminals. Since *milícias* have ties to the police, citizens might even see them as an extralegal branch of the police that is not limited by due process and human rights concerns. However, this chapter does not bring enough evidence to support this claim and further research on this topic is needed.

This study adds to the available literature on three main points. First, by proving the existence of an until now untested causal pathway between victimization and support for vigilantism. Second, by applying a novel estimation approach to the topic, the RWR. Third, by analyzing a case that, considering its magnitude and unique characteristics, brings new evidence that sheds light on the theoretical debate on support for vigilantism. It relaxes the weak state hypothesis, which takes support for vigilantism and the state as opposites, assuming that the first emerges only where the second is missing. What I demonstrate is that even in a society with a big, complex state such as Brazil, vigilantism can be perceived as an alternative to state inefficiency in fighting crime. Besides, I bring evidence that it is not all kinds of state legitimacy that matters. Depending on the case under scrutiny, different aspects of legitimacy may have stronger associations with support for vigilantism than others. In the Brazilian case, trust in the justice system is a better predictor of support for vigilantism than trust in the police. Other regions and countries may exhibit different relations, and a case-to-case analysis is needed to better understand the big picture of support for vigilantism.

This chapter also complements the study of punitiveness that chapter 2 started. Vigilantism is an unique concept that deserves specific scrutiny due to its differences with legal forms of punishment, yet its correspondent in terms of political behavior, support

for vigilantism, has some similarities to general punitiveness. Some analysts have argued that support for vigilantism and for harsher punishments may stem from the same predictors and psychological mechanisms, as anger and fear (García-Ponce *et al.*, 2019). This chapter, then, expanded on chapter 2 by showing that, in an analogous way that the approval of harsher punishments and the death penalty are associated with fear and trust, support for vigilantism is also related to reported victimization and trust. It is true that the trust variables applied in chapter 2 and 3 are different and that chapter 2 tests a moderation and chapter 3 a mediation, but the mechanisms are similar and the analyzed variables are close.

The interpretation of the results of chapters 2 and 3 also point at the same direction. Fear of crime and reported victimization both enhance punitiveness, but this effect depends on how persons perceive courts and the justice system. In both cases, the crime related treatment impacts punitiveness and this impact is linked to individuals' perception of law enforcement. Interestingly, in both cases lower trust is associated with more punitive views, even considering that chapter 2 analyzes legal punishments perpetrated by state officials and chapter 3 focus on extralegal actions. As I argued in the previous chapter, fearful individuals may regard turning law enforcement more punitive as a form of fixing its "liberal excesses". The mechanism analyzed in chapter 3, in its turn, may be viewed as another way of bypassing states' "liberal excesses". In the first scenario, citizens choose to reform criminal law by making it harsher, whereas, in the second case, they decide to support vigilante activities as a way of ignoring limitations imposed by law. Citizens may also combine these two strategies and demand more legal punishment and vigilantism simultaneously. The fact that the approval of harsher punishments is a predictor of support for vigilantism, found in this chapter's robustness tests, provides some evidence in this direction. If this is indeed true, then both, support for harsher legal punishments and for vigilantism, stem from the same combination of heightened crime salience and diminished trust in the state.

5. Concluding remarks

This dissertation analyzed aspects of the relation between crime and political behavior. In the first chapter, one dimension of political legitimacy, support for democracy, was the dependent variable, and another one, satisfaction with democracy, the mediator. That chapter assessed how fear of crime affects support for democracy, developing and testing a causal mechanism that demonstrated that part of the negative effect of fear on support is due to the decrease of satisfaction with democracy.

The second chapter studied the connection between fear of crime and two elements of punitiveness: support for harsher punishments and the death penalty. Even though in this case there was no formal test of causality, a third variable was included in the models as a moderator: trust in the fairness of courts. This variable, that can also be considered a component of political legitimacy, emerged as a moderator that helped to explain the links between crime salience and punitiveness. Fear affects support for harsher punishments, but this effect is considerably stronger among individuals who present lesser trust in the fairness of courts.

The third and last chapter developed and assessed a causal mechanism that partially explained the effect of reported crime victimization on support for vigilantism. It demonstrated that crime victims are, on average, more supportive of vigilante actions, and that this happens at least in part because victimization lowers their trust in the justice system. To perform this causal mediation analysis, this chapter applied a novel estimation method, the RWR, which enables the inclusion of post-treatment controls in the causal mediation analytical framework.

In the beginning of this dissertation, I discussed the punitive turn that happened in public opinion and in crime policy in the last decades of the 20th century. In this context, crime and fear became central in the political agenda, whereas crime victims emerged as the focus of lawmaking in penal issues. Crime salience turned into a pivotal political matter, influencing the rise and fall of parties and political leaders. It also undermined important advancements in the field of human and civil rights, reducing opportunities for parole and alternative sanctions, such as community services. In addition, politicians explored the high levels of crime salience by promoting populist measures against crime, ranging from laws that reduced the discretion of judges to determine sentences and simplified the

acquisition of firearms by civilians, to the deployment of the Armed Forces in operations against criminal gangs, especially drug traffickers.

Jointly, these three chapters and the scenario described in the introduction unravel an alarming situation for democracy in Latin America. In this state of affairs, heightened fear of crime contributes to the continuous deterioration of legitimacy, increasing demands for *mano dura* policies on crime that undermine civil rights and due process. Politicians exploit this situation by promoting populist penal policies that do not help the fight on crime, but mobilize voters. Simultaneously, victimization fosters support for the action of extralegal vigilante groups by reducing trust in official authorities that could develop more efficient policies on crime. These vigilante organizations then grow and strengthen their ties with the state, supporting politicians who are willing to act on their behalf. This description portrays a dreadful picture which threatens the rule of law in a part of the world where it is already fragile.

To advance on the study of the connections between crime, political behavior, and politics, further studies should focus on how politicians perceive and utilize crime salience, especially fear, to achieve their political goals. Heightened fear of crime may induce voters to choose leaders who adopt a “tough on crime” narrative, but it may also be the case that authoritarian lawmakers use fear as an instrument to mobilize supporters, hence increasing crime salience in public opinion. There is also an open venue for studies that mix a local level approach with quantitative methods. So far, most studies on crime and political behavior, particularly in Latin America, have focused on international comparisons, whereas crime indexes, such as homicide rates, may engender more noticeable effects in the local level. Multilevel approaches with mixed effects models using data from municipalities are, therefore, promising.

Finally, we already know much about the correlations between crime, crime salience, and political behavior, but little about the causal mechanisms behind these correlations. This dissertation expanded on the available knowledge about these causal pathways. Yet, the application of causal mediation analysis tools remains scarce in the area, calling for additional investigations.

6. References

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7. Appendix

Figure A 1 – Correlation matrix (chapter 1)

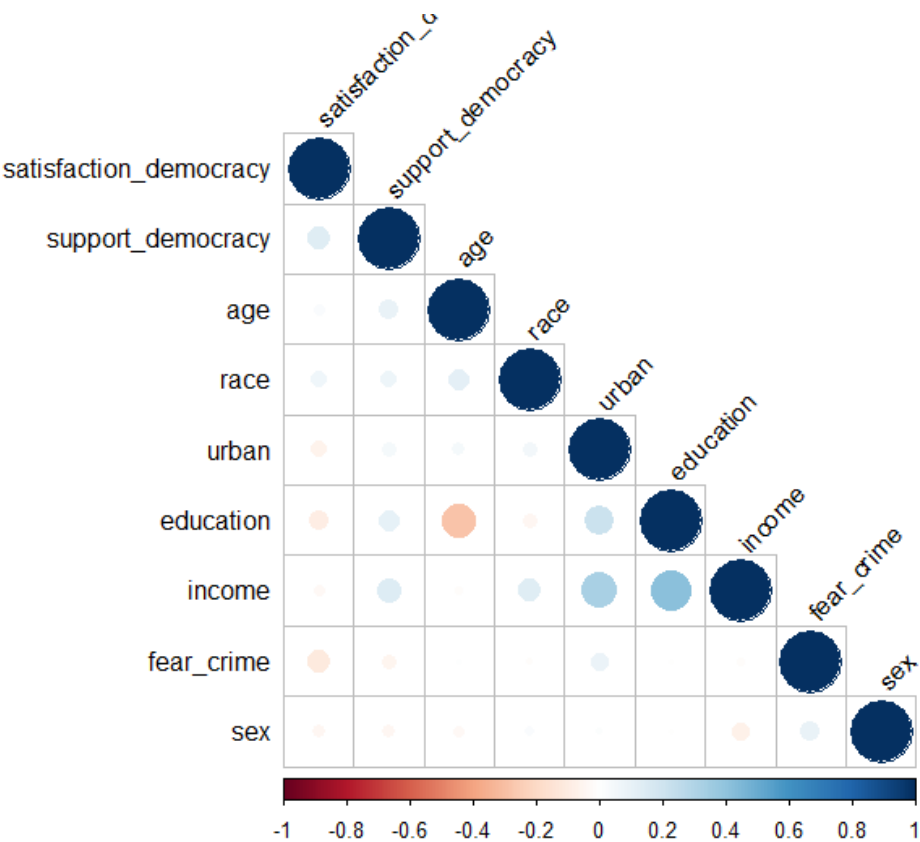


Figure A 2 - Missing data (chapter 1)

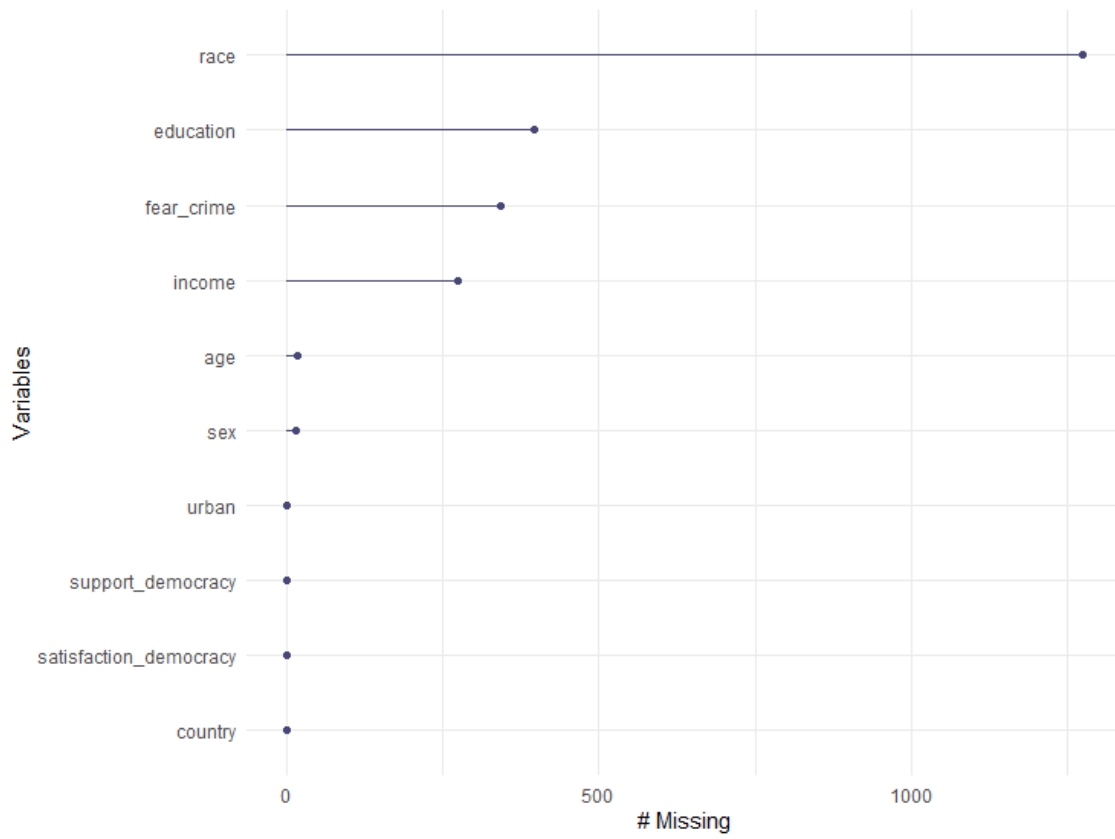


Figure A 3 – Missing data (support for harsher punishment dataframe, chapter 2)

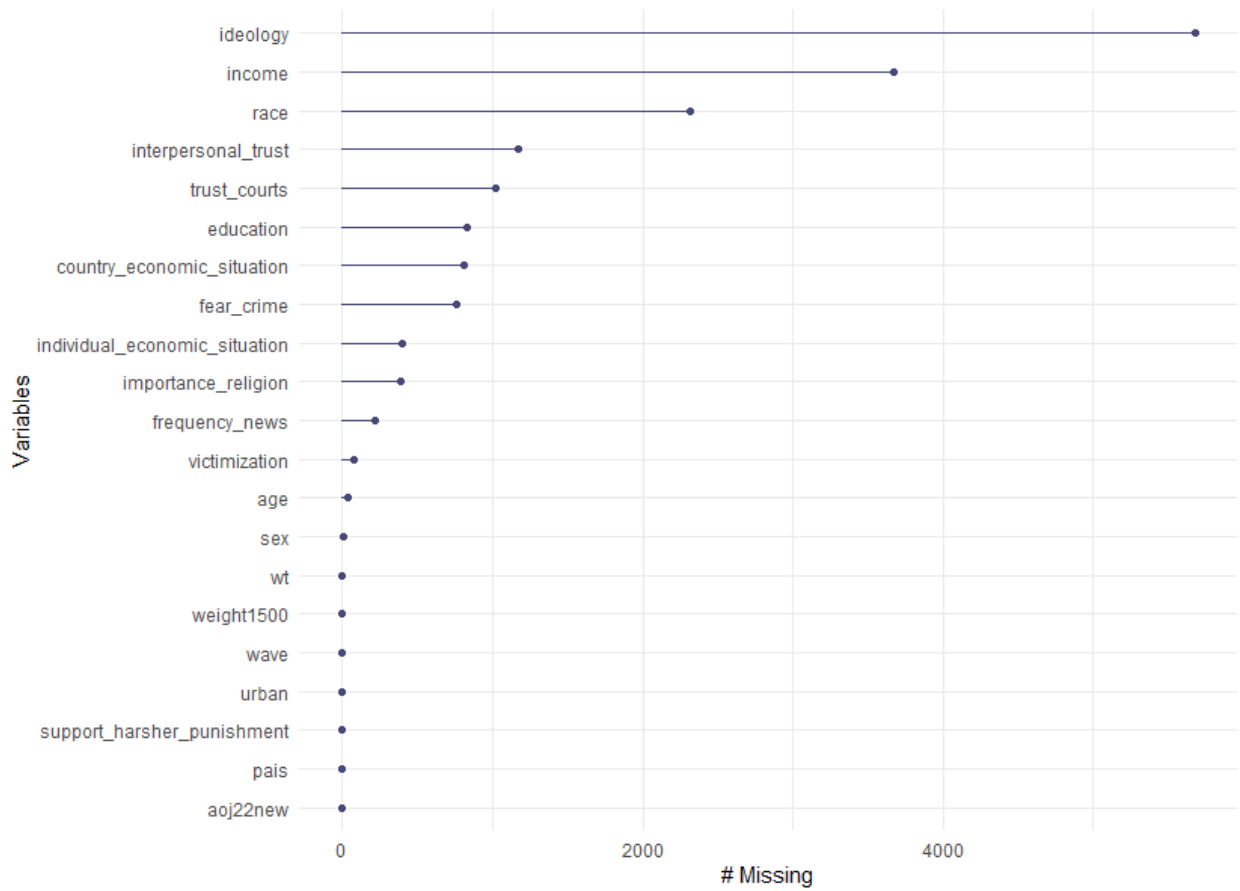


Figure A 4 – Missing data (approval of the death penalty dataframe, chapter 2)

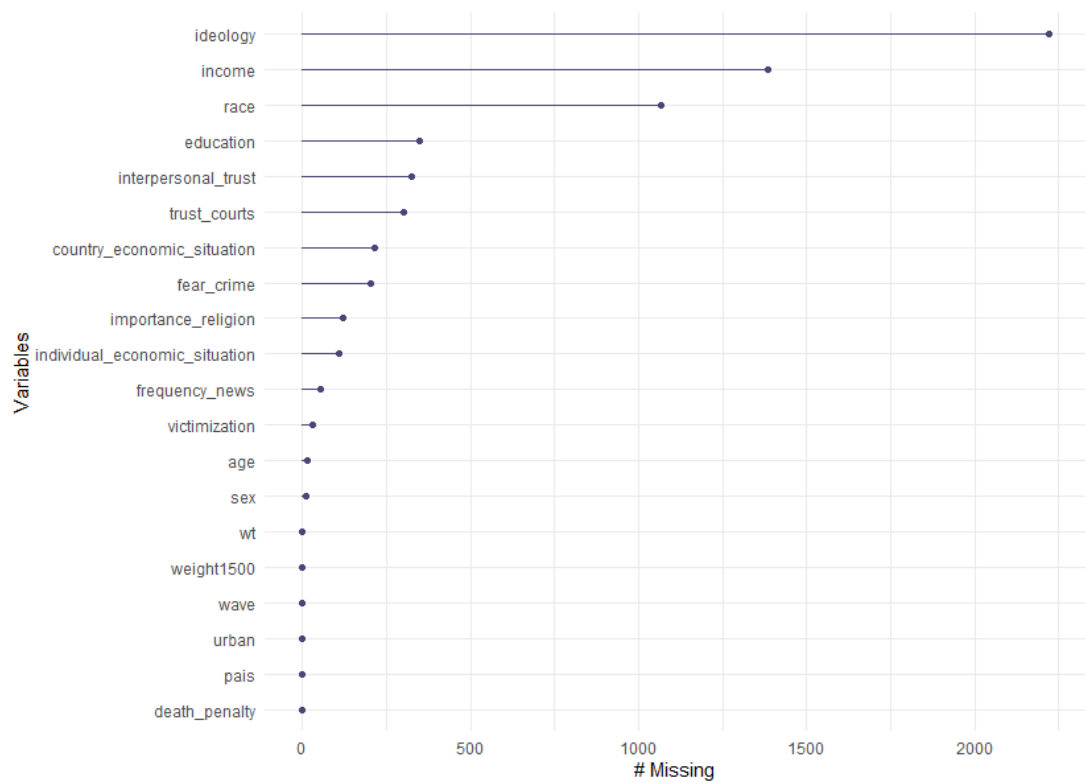


Figure A 5 – Correlation matrix (support for harsher punishment dataframe, chapter 2)

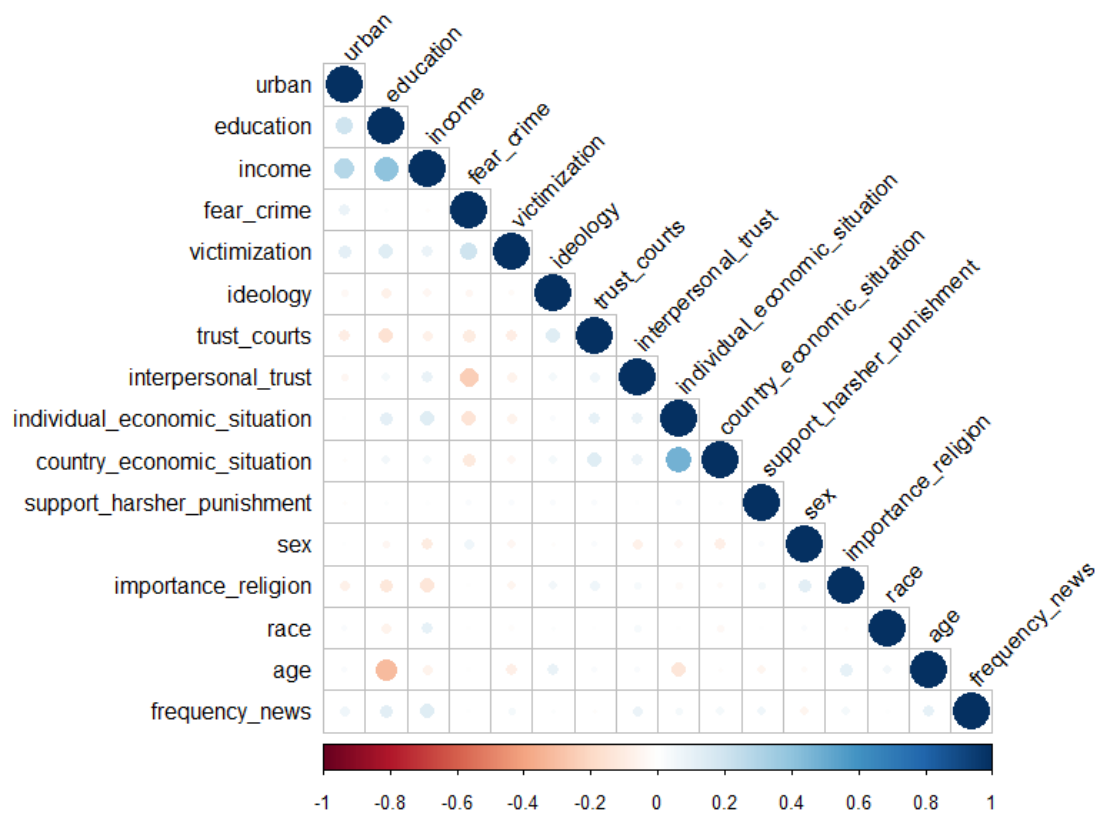


Figure A 6 – Correlation matrix (approval of the death penalty dataframe, chapter 2)

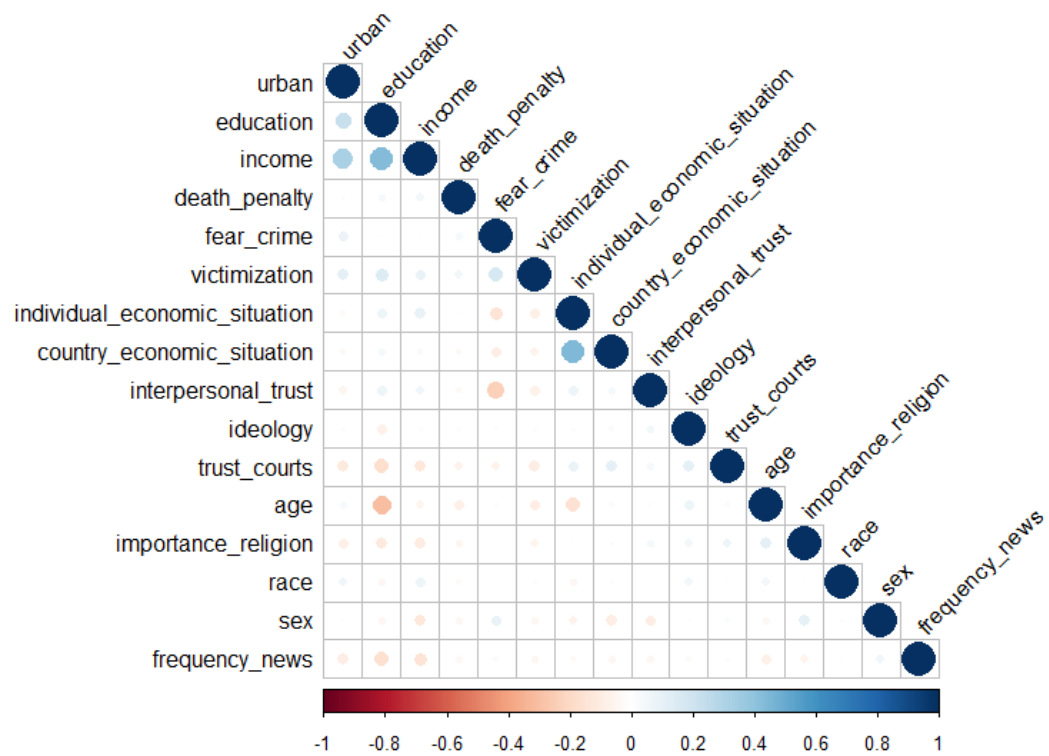


Figure A 7 – Missing data (chapter 3)

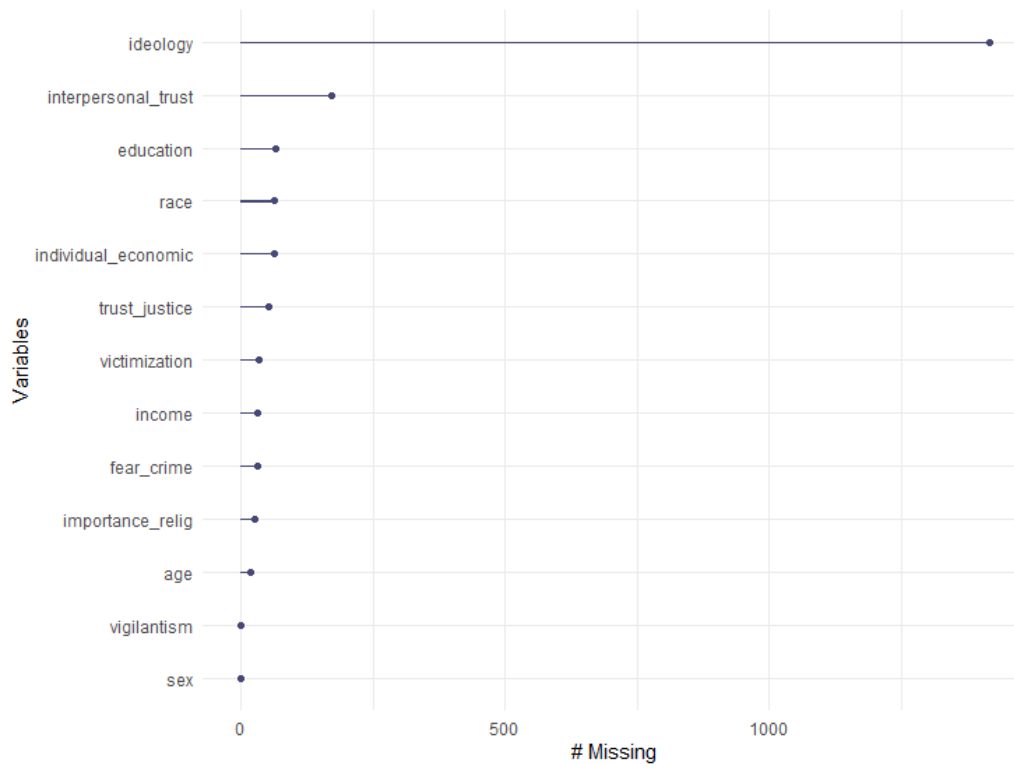


Figure A 8 – Correlation matrix (chapter 3)

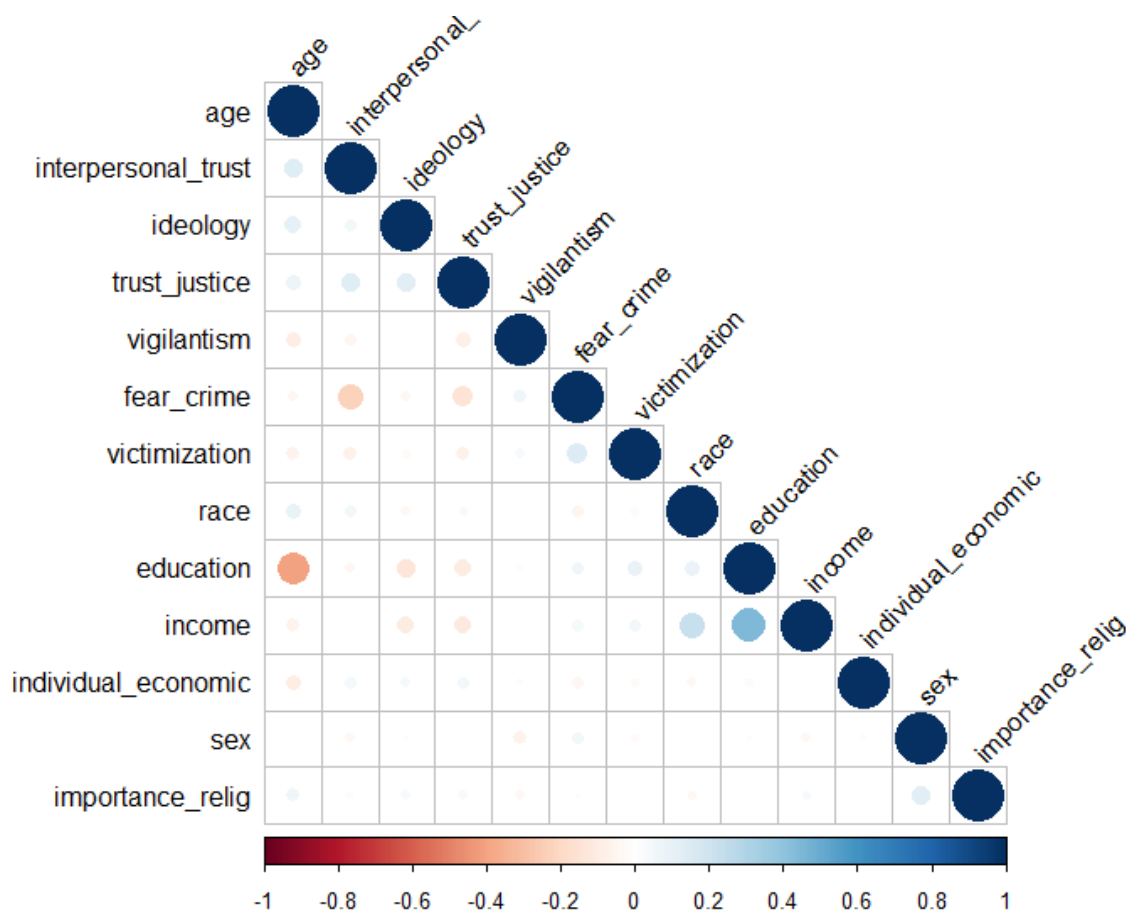


Table A 1 - Question-wording with scales used in the analysis (chapter 1)

Variable	Question-wording
Support for democracy	Changing the subject again, democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (1) Strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree
Satisfaction with democracy	In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in (country)? (1) Very dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Satisfied (4) Very satisfied. Very satisfied and satisfied individuals were recoded as 1, while dissatisfied and very dissatisfied were recoded as 0.
Fear of crime	Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe? (1) Very safe (2) Somewhat safe (3) Somewhat unsafe (4) Very unsafe

Income	Could you tell me if you have the following in your house: 1. Television, 3. refrigerator, 4. landline telephone, 4a. cellular telephone, 5. car, 6. washing machine, 7. microwave oven, 8. motorcycle, 12. indoor plumbing, 14. indoor bathroom, 15. Computer. Each positive answer was coded as 1 and all responses were added to form an additive index.
Race	Do you consider yourself white, mestizo, indigenous, black, mulatto, or of another race? Whites were coded as 1 and non-whites as 0.
Sex	(1) Female and (0) male
Urban	(1) Urban and (0) rural
Education	How many years of schooling have you completed? 0 to 15 years

Table A 2 - Question-wording with scales used in the analysis (chapter 2)

Variable	Question-wording
Support for harsher punishment	To reduce crime in a country like ours, punishment of criminals must be increased. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? (1) Strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree
Approval of the death penalty	Are you in favor or against capital punishment for those guilty of murder? (1) Yes or (0) No.
Crime victimization	Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months? (1) Yes or (0) No
Trust that courts provide a fair trial	To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial? (1) None at all to (7) a lot

Fear of crime	Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe? (1) Very safe (2) Somewhat safe (3) Somewhat unsafe (4) Very unsafe
Frequency of watching to the news	About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers or the internet? (5) Daily, (4) a few times a week, (3) a few times a month, (2) A few times a year, or (1) Never
Interpersonal trust	And speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in this community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy...? (4) Very trustworthy, (3) Somewhat trustworthy, (2) Not very trustworthy, or (1) Untrustworthy
Ideology	On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. The number one means left and 10 means right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale? Tell me the number.
Importance of religion	Could you please tell me: how important is religion in your life? (4) Very important (3) Somewhat important (2) Not very important (1) Not at all important
Country economic situation	Do you think that the country's current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was 12 months ago? (3) Better (2) Same (1) Worse
Individual economic situation	Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago? (3) Better (2) Same (1) Worse
Income	Could you tell me if you have the following in your house: 1. Television, 3. refrigerator, 4. landline telephone, 4a. cellular telephone, 5. car, 6. washing machine, 7. microwave oven, 8. motorcycle, 12. indoor plumbing, 14. indoor bathroom, 15. Computer. Each positive answer was coded as 1 and all responses were added to form an additive index.

Race	Do you consider yourself white, mestizo, indigenous, black, mulatto, or of another race? Whites were coded as 1 and non-whites as 0.
Female	(1) Female and (0) male
Urban	(1) Urban and (0) rural
Education	How many years of schooling have you completed? 0 to 15 years

Table A 3 – Descriptive statistics of imputed and non-imputed datasets (chapter 3)

Non-imputed dataset					
Variable	Number of observations	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Support for vigilantism	6,865	2.698	2.579	1	10
Victimization	6,831	0.168	0.374	0	1
Trust in the justice system	6,811	3.725	1.889	1	7
Fear of crime	6,834	2.247	0.977	1	4
Education	6,798	8.204	4.024	0	18
Sex	6,865	0.514	0.500	0	1
Age	6,847	39.213	15.739	16	94
Race	6,8	0.380	0.486	0	1
Ideology	5,448	5.646	2.462	1	10
Importance of religion	6,837	2.479	1.286	1	4
Individual economic situation	6,8	2.161	0.723	1	3
Interpersonal trust	6,693	2.672	0.892	1	4
Income	6,833	7.315	2.363	0	13
Imputed dataset					
Support for vigilantism	6,865	2.698	2.579	1	10
Victimization	6,865	0.168	0.374	0	1

Trust in the justice system	6,865	3.729	1.889	1	7
Fear of crime	6,865	2.246	0.977	1	4
Education	6,865	8.196	4.024	0	18
Sex	6,865	1.514	0.500	1	2
Age	6,865	39.216	15.744	16	94
Race	6,865	0.380	0.486	0	1
Ideology	6,865	5.660	2.471	1	10
Importance of religion	6,865	2.478	1.286	1	4
Individual economic situation	6,865	2.159	0.723	1	3
Interpersonal trust	6,865	2.673	0.891	1	4
Income	6,865	7.314	2.364	0	13

Table A 4 - Question-wording (chapter 3)

Variable	Question-wording
Support for vigilantism	Of people taking the law into their own hands when the government does not punish criminals. How much do you approve or disapprove? (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) strongly approve
Crime victimization	2008 Now changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? Yes/No
	2010-2014 Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months? Yes/No
Trust in the justice system	To what extent do you trust the justice system? (1) None at all to (7) a lot
Trust in the police	To what extent do you trust the National Police? 1 (1) None at all to (7) a lot
Trust in the fairness of courts	To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial? (1) None at all to (7) a lot

Fear of crime	Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe? (1) Very safe (2) Somewhat safe (3) Somewhat unsafe (4) Very unsafe
Punitiveness	In your opinion, what should be done to reduce crime in a country like ours: (0) Implement preventive measures or (1) Increase punishment of criminals
Interpersonal trust	And speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in this community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy...? (4) Very trustworthy, (3) Somewhat trustworthy, (2) Not very trustworthy, or (4) Untrustworthy
Ideology	On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. The number one means left and 10 means right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale? Tell me the number.
Religion	Meetings of any religious organization? Do you attend them (4) once a week, (3) once or twice a month, (2) once or twice a year, or (1) never?
Income	Could you tell me if you have the following in your house: 1. Television, 3. refrigerator, 4. landline telephone, 4a. cellular telephone, 5. car, 6. washing machine, 7. microwave oven, 8. motorcycle, 12. indoor plumbing, 14. indoor bathroom, 15. computer