Uncovering the Role of Education in Citizen Security: a Peace Education Research Agenda for Latin America

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Abstract

This article calls for educational research in Latin America to investigate the relationship between education and insecurity. Drawing on youth violence research in the region and literature on education in conflict zones, it offers orientations for such a research agenda, including: (1) the need to characterize the nature of child and youth involvement in insecurity in Latin America and identify the potential implications this condition carries for education; (2) the need to examine how formal and non-formal education is oriented to support the needs of children and youth in such contexts; and (3) the need to consider the complex and systemic nature of educational practice and the variety of issues that educators may need to engage with in order to offer a learning environment that counters child and youth involvement in insecurity. This research agenda implies critical consideration of the ways in which education can at times be complicit to violence and further enhance the vulnerability of children and youth. It also calls for analysis of cases where educational design is responsive to the specific needs generated by insecurity and contributes to the strengthening of citizen security. The article argues that education is an essential component of a citizen security framework to counter crime and violence in Latin America, and as such requires further research.

Keywords: *Latin America, Education, Citizen Security, Youth Violence.*

Introduction

A little over a year ago, *El Faro*, a Salvadoran online newspaper, published a news story about a young woman that had been sexually assaulted by over fifteen of her classmates in San Salvador.[1] The narrative, a harsh illustration of the normalization of violence in Central America, followed Magaly Peña through her experience, detailing the circumstances of the assault and how she handled it. Magaly did not tell her parents for fear of being kicked out of her home. She turned to her school principal, who helped her to enrol in a distance education program so she would not have to return to the school and face her assailants. The crime was not reported to the police. In the article, the principal explains how

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[1] Valencia, R. "Yo Violada", El Faro. Published July 24, 2011.Retrieved from: http://www.salanegra.elfaro.net/es/201107/cronicas/4922/?st-full_text=0. I want to make note of my caution in using this individual story as an object of analysis. I chose to use it because I believe that having a personal perspective of the issues helps to keep the discussion grounded in the very real difficulties at hand. I do not mean to desensitise the pain and suffering of Magaly, and all others involved in this event.

teachers and administrators in schools in San Salvador are aware that these events are taking place, but have little option except to keep silent due to the risks entailed with living in neighbourhoods controlled by the *Barrio 18* and *Mara Salvatrucha* gangs.[2] A rare first-hand account of the difficult realities of urban insecurity, this story raises an unsettling set of questions regarding the role and limits of education in the face of crime and violence in Latin America.

Through this article I aim to draw attention to the need to extend educational research in Latin America to include questions that investigate the relationship of education with insecurity and prompt systemic analyses of education within a framework of citizen security. I draw on research on youth violence in the region and literature on education in conflict zones to outline three components of such a research agenda. The first is to characterize the nature of child and youth involvement in insecurity in Latin America and identify the potential implications this condition carries for education. The second is to examine how formal and non-formal education is oriented to support the needs of children and youth in such contexts, and the third is to consider the complex and systemic nature of educational practice and the variety of issues that educators and researchers may need to engage with when analysing the possibilities and limitations of education in countering child and youth involvement in insecurity. This research agenda implies critical consideration of the ways in which education can at times be complicit to violence and further enhance the vulnerability of children and youth. It also calls for analysis of how actors and structures may converge to produce educational design responsive to the specific needs generated by insecurity and to contribute to the strengthening of citizen security.

Rooted in a peace education paradigm, I consider how educational content, structure and pedagogy respond to direct, cultural and structural forms of violence, signalling that education can become a site for protection, prevention and transformation, if it is intentionally set up to be so. Without intentionality, education instead stands the risk of becoming part of the problem, fostering violent norms and increasing child and youth exposure to risk. It is my hope that this discussion serves to illuminate the intersection between security and educational development, and stresses the need for an educational lens of analysis to the phenomenon of violence and insecurity in Latin America.

Where are the Educators?

Given its prominent and influential role in the lives of communities, education should be considered a key dimension for peace research in the region, and yet, while violence research in Latin America has become a vibrant and critical sub-field, educators are largely left out of the conversation. Scholars from a variety of fields have sought to understand the many facets of the phenomenon of insecurity in the region, as made visible by the growth of a significant body of literature.[3] The literature

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[2]*Barrio 18* and *Mara Salvatrucha* are armed gangs that originated in Los Angeles in the 1980s within communities of refugees from the wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. They are now transnational gangs that extend throughout North and Central America and are known to be involved in violence and crime.

[3]Seeforexample: Briceno-Leon, R., Avila, O. &Camardiel, A. (2012). *Violencia e institucionalidad*, Venezuela: Editorial Alfa; Duenas, G., & Rueda, M.H. (eds.) (2011). *Meanings of violence in contemporary Latin America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.; and Jones, G. & Rodgers, D. (eds.) (2009). *Youth Violence in Latin America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Also a cursory perusal of the Latin American Studies Association conference program shows plentiful emergent scholarship on violence in Latin America.

tends to follow three broad thematic areas: *causes* of violence, such as structural factors, circumstantial factors, and individual or interpersonal factors; *impacts* of violence, such as economic costs or effects on political participation; and relevant *policy action*, such as crime prevention, security sector reform, and social programs.[4] Within this growing sub-field, educational analyses of the phenomenon of insecurity are limited in reach and scope.

To-date research that takes into account the intersection of insecurity and education in Latin America has tended to be limited to two areas: research on school violence and research on attacks on education. The school violence literature explores how and why violence occurs within the school, focusing on specific issues such as bullying, corporal punishment and conflict resolution programs.[5] Only a few studies have contextualized school violence within the broader trend of insecurity.[6] The research on education-related attacks examines targeted violence against educational actors and resources, namely through the 2007 and 2010 *Education under Attack* reports commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).[7] The reports evince violence as a threat to the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) goals, and call for building a knowledge base about the causes, means and impacts of attacks on education in order to enhance prevention and response strategies. Several Latin American countries were surveyed, including Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela. While both of these areas of study contribute to understanding of the particular dynamics of education in contexts affected by urban insecurity in Latin America, they remain largely de-contextualized from other violence research in the region and do not situate educational research within the study of causes, effects and policy action for insecurity.

There is a strong body of scholarly work that looks at these issues in reference to education in conflict zones. This literature explores the scope, challenges and possibilities of addressing the educational needs of children and youth in conflict-affected areas, and examines the importance of education as a part of humanitarian and peace-building efforts.[8] Though it is inappropriate to simply equate the situation of crime and violence in Latin America to situations in conflict-affected countries, there are several important parallels in terms of the impacts on children and youth as exemplified by Magaly's story, including: involvement of children in armed violence (as foot soldiers of the drug-trade), exposure to traumatic experiences and loss of parents and loved ones, increased vulnerability due to the absence of protective institutions, and interruptions or limited access to schooling as a result of violence. Likewise, parallels may be drawn regarding educational impacts on these situations. Important insights can be

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[4]Davis, D. (2012). Urban resilience in situations of chronic violence.Report. May 2012. United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

[5]Seeforexample: Elijach, S. (2011). *Violencia Escolar en America Latina y el Caribe: Superficie y* Fondo. Panama: UNICEF; Perdomo, G. (2012). *Violencia en las escuelas*, Venezuela: Publicaciones UCAB; Saavedra, E., Villalta, M., Muñoz, M. (2007). "Violencia escolar: La mirada de los docentes". *Límite*,2:105, Chile: Universidad de Tarapacá; Hernandez&Sanchez, 2001; and Santander, 2010; Das Grac□asRua, M. (2002). Violence in Schools.UNESCO.

[6]See for example: Perdomo, 2012; and Abramovay& Das Grac□asRua, 2002.

[7] O'Malley, B. (2007). Education under attack: A global study on targeted political and military violence against education staff, students, teachers, government officials, and institutions. Paris: UNESCO.; O'Malley, B. (2010). Education under attack: A global study on targeted political and military violence against education staff, students, teachers, government officials, and institutions. Paris: UNESCO.

[8] See for example Mundy, K. & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2011). *Educating children in conflict zones: Research, policy and practice for systemic change*. New York, USA: Teachers College Press.

drawn from education research in conflict zones to inform education research in Latin American settings affected by insecurity, but more research is needed to uncover specific dynamics and processes.

Insecurity and violence in Latin America is marked by high numbers of youth involvement, both as agents and victims of violence.[9] Schools and educators are uniquely situated to play a role in the prevention or perpetuation of this reality. It is time educators joined the conversation.

Defining Urban Insecurity

One of the challenges in the study of urban insecurity is the difficulty of zeroing in on its exact manifestations given its variance across contexts. Furthermore, the task of defining terms such as violence and insecurity requires cautious engagement due to the political nature of definitions. Discourses of insecurity and violence have been used to justify a myriad of actions, including the direct violation of human rights by state actors.[10] Bearing this in mind, for the purposes of this article I use the term "urban insecurity" to refer to a situation marked by manifestations of direct violence in urban settings. I refer to "violence" as the manifestation of harmful actions and impacts, and to "insecurity" as the situation or environment in which these manifest.[11]

This definition acknowledges different categories of urban violence. Drawing from their work in Colombia, Guatemala and Ecuador, Caroline Moser and Cathy McIlwaine propose categorizing according to the conscious or unconscious motivation behind acts and distinguish between political, institutional, economic and social manifestations of urban violence.[12]*Political violence* is motivated by the aim of obtaining or maintaining political power and may include acts such as political assassinations or conflict between political parties. *Institutional violence* is motivated by the aim of exercising institutional power and may include acts such as extrajudicial killings by police or abuse in contexts of incarceration, education or health institutions. *Economic violence* is motivated by the aim of achieving economic gain or to attain or keep economic power, and may include acts such as theft, drug-trafficking, extortion or kidnapping. *Social violence* is motivated by the aim to attain or keep social power and control, and may include acts such as interpersonal violence due to escalated conflicts or gender-based violence in the home or in the public arena. Contextual specificity will determine which types of violence are present in a

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[9]Jones & Rodgers, 2009.
[10]For further insight to trends in human rights violations associated with repressive security discourse and policies, see Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). (2009). "Report on citizen security and human rights." OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 57 31.December 2009; Jutersonke, O., Muggah, R., & Rodgers, D. (2009).Gangs, Urban Violence and Security Interventions in Central America.Security Dialogue. 40(4-5), p.373-397; Moser, 2006.; Rodgers, D. (2009). Slum Wars of the 21st Century: Gangs, Mano Dura and the New Urban Geography of Conflict in Central America. *Development and Change*, 40(5), 949-976; Carrión, 2011; *Comisión Económica para América Latina*y el Caribe (CEPAL). 2008. Panorama Social de América Latina. Santiago; Human Rights Watch. (2005). In the dark: Hidden abuses against detained youths in Rio de Janeiro. http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2005/06/08/dark; Ungar, M. (2009)."Policing Youth in Latin America".In Jones, G. & Rodgers, D. 2009; Adams, T.M. (2012). Chronic violence and its reproduction: Perverse trends in social relations, citizenship, and democracy in Latin America. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Report.http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Chronic%20Violence%20and%20its%20Reproduction_1.pdf
[11] Many scholars have reviewed the varied nuances of these terms. See for example Scheper-Hughes, N. &Bourgois, P. I. (2004). Preface. In Scheper-Hughes, N. &Bourgois, P. I. (Eds.) (2004). *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, Malden, MA, Blackwell Pub..; and Jackman, M.R. (2002). Violence in social life.Annual Review of Sociology, 28, 387 415.
[12] Moser &McIlwaine(2006)

given city and how they interrelate with each other. This categorization highlights the range of forms of urban violence that may exist and converge to produce severe social and economic costs for a city, such as diminished economic productivity, erosion of trust and co-operation between communities, and limited governance capacities.

In my treatment of these issues I use the term urban *insecurity* (in contrast with the term urban *violence*) for two reasons. Firstly, I aim to encompass the types of violent acts delineated above while also extending inclusion to *perceptions* of their potential manifestation (the fear that they could occur). Perceived insecurity can have many detrimental effects on an urban population, including impacts on freedom of movement, modes of commerce and psychological wellbeing.[13] It can also alter relational dynamics and influence the kinds of security measures that people view as necessary.[14] These dynamics are visible in the conceptualization of insecurity put forth in the Inter-American Development Bank 2012 conceptual framework on citizen security, which differentiates between crime, violence and fear of crime and violence, as depicted in the graphic below.[15]

Figure 1. Three Key Dimensions of Citizen Insecurity: Violence, Crime, and Fear of Crime
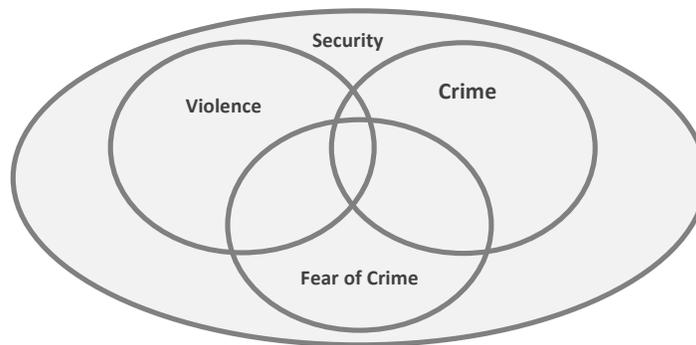
Source: IDB, 2012, p.11

Secondly, by using this term, I situate the analysis within debates about security, in other words about the *protection from* and *prevention of* violence. This includes debates about who is responsible for security and how it may be achieved, both central questions to a discussion of the role of education. Social, political and institutional responses to urban insecurity are highly relevant given the intense politicization of security policy and discourse across the region and the trends toward privatization and

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[13]Costa, G. (2012).*Citizen Security in Latin America* (pp. 1-14). Working Paper. Inter-American Dialogue: Latin American Working Group. Peru; and Howard, D., Hume, M. &Oslender, U. (2007). "Violence, fear and development in Latin America: A critical overview." *Development in Practice*, Vol. 17. No. 6, (Nov 2007). Pp. 713-724.
[14]Kessler, G. (2009). El Sentimiento de Inseguridad. Sociología del temor al delito. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
[15] Inter-American Development Bank. (2012). Citizen Security: Conceptual Framework and Empirical Evidence. Discussion Paper. No. IDB-DP-232.

heavy-handed repressive tactics, which in turn generate further forms of violence, often targeting youth, and can conspire to exclude targeted preventive measures such as increasing social services, including education.[16]

Throughout Latin America *citizen security* has been used to frame security policies, proposing multi-sectoral approaches to violence and crime reduction and prevention.[17] Citizen security is a concept that emerged in Latin America during the transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic governments.[18] It emphasizes individual and group rights to security, marking a distinction with the security of the state, and is oriented toward the building of a democratic citizenry and fostering of a social and institutional situation governed by the rule of law and the respect of human rights.[19] According to a recent study commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank, citizen security involves "pedagogical strategies" that aim to build a "civic culture" to "increase voluntary compliance with the law based on cultural and moral motivations".[20]

Citizen security is a framework that involves identifying context-specific risk factors at the individual, relational, community and societal levels in order to design targeted interventions. Such an approach to security is consistent with the more widely used framework of "peace-building", adopted into international vocabulary in the 1992 UN *Agenda for Peace*, which describes peace-building as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict... which can prevent the recurrence of violence among nations and peoples".[21] Peace-building has since become incorporated as a framework of action geared toward building comprehensive peace by addressing the structural roots of conflict and violence.[22]

Drawing from the above definition of urban insecurity as a situation marked by manifestations of direct violence in urban settings, and contextualizing it within citizen security policy frameworks, educational analysis in contexts of urban insecurity in Latin America must be rooted in identifying the risk factors present in a given setting and the measures taken to respond to these. This involves consideration of risk factors relevant to students, educational practices that support their social and academic development, and the social and material contexts that support such practices.

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[16] Jutersonke et al, 2009.
[17] IDB, 2012; IAHCR, 2009.
[18] IACHR, 2009.
[19] IACHR, 2009; UNDP, 2010.
[20] IDB, 2012, p.13
[21] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1992, II.21
[22] *Comprehensive peace* refers to a situation that encompasses both *negative peace*, the absence of war and direct violence, and *positive peace*, the presence of justice and absence of structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1971).

Child and Youth Involvement in Urban Insecurity in Latin America

It is common to find the marriage of youth issues with insecurity in Latin America.[23] This union in analysis does not come without reason: youth are significant both as victims and perpetrators of homicides and crime across the region; there is evidence of considerable membership in transnational youth gangs; and there are large youth populations coupled with high levels of unemployment.[24] While the link between youth and insecurity cannot be ignored, treatment of this phenomenon in the media and political discourse is often sensationalist, and many myths and stereotypes emerge in relation to it.[25] Nuanced and evidence-based understanding of the complexity of this relationship is needed if responses are to be effective and relevant.

Child and youth involvement in urban insecurity in the Latin American context can be characterised as a multifaceted and heterogeneous condition that includes a continuum of engagement ranging from indirect exposure to direct participation in violence and crime. This situation carries implications for their development and life choices. As posited by ecological systems theory, the material, social and cultural contexts in which children and adolescents grow up shape their development. Urie Bronfenbrenner referred to these contexts as nested structures of influence, and signalled the influence of the immediate setting (such as the home, classroom, street, etc.) and of 'proximal interactions' (with parent, teacher, peer, etc.), as well as the influences of the interaction between immediate settings, and of settings beyond the immediate (such as the national or regional context, or cultural values and norms).[26] The norms and relational dynamics exercised through these settings form the options and examples that children draw on when making their own decisions about how to live, engage and cope with their environment.

In Latin American cities affected by insecurity, children and adolescents develop amidst settings where violence is present in diverse forms. Luke Dowdney's case study on children in favela-based drug factions of Rio de Janeiro, and the subsequent edited volume that explored other contexts, including Ecuador, Colombia and El Salvador, shed light on the social ecology through which children and adolescents are drawn into micro-trafficking and other forms of organized violence in Latin America.[27] Dowdney describes a progression of gradually incremental 'stages of involvement', that range from

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[23]See for example: Briceño-león, R., &Zubillaga, V. (2002). Violence and globalization in Latin America.*Current Sociology*, *50*(1), 19–37.; Koonings, K. &Krujt, D. (Eds.) (1999).*Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*. London: Zed Press.;Imbusch, P., Misse, M., &Carrión, F. (2011). Violence Research in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, *5*(1), 87-154; and World Bank. 2011. World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development. World Bank: Washington DC.

[24]Krug, E.; Dahlberg, J; Mercy, J.; Zwi, A. & Lozano, R. (Eds.).(2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization; Jones & Rodgers, (2009); UNDP. (2006). Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis? New York;CEPAL, 2008.

[25]Jones & Rodgers, 2009; Benvenuti, P. (2003).Youth Violence and Delinquency in the Latin American Region.London School of Economics.Thesis. London.

[26]Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[27]Dowdney, L. (2003). *Children of the drug trade: A Case Study of Children in Organised Armed Violence in Rio de Janeiro* (Online., pp. 1 - 265). Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras.;Dowdney, L. (2005). *Neither War Nor Peace*. Children in OrganisedArmedViolence (COAV-VivaRio). Rio de Janeiro.

exposure by setting to processes of induction and full participation in armed groups.[28] Not all children and adolescents in insecure contexts experience all of these stages, yet risk factors and influences remain, impacting their development and increasing the salience of attention to vulnerability and resilience.

Some children and youth turn to the use of violence as a means of safeguarding themselves against threats. Drawing on ethnographic research with male youths from popular sectors in Caracas, Veronica Zubillaga proposes to understand youth involvement in violence as related to experiences of social exclusion, or what she refers to as anti-respect in the process of constructing social identities.[29] Zubillaga found that youths kept referring to a "demand for respect" in relation to their participation in violence, and she suggests that what is needed to make sense of this is an analysis rooted in "the subjective management of a threatened and negated identity".[30] She proposes distinguishing between four types of demands for respect, each associated with particular motivations and types of violence, such that youth involvement in violence can be understood as an attempt to achieve personal recognition. In other words, violence offers an "identity dividend" to youth.[31] The four demands for respect include: *life preservation*, related to the protection of one's physical integrity from attack; *affiliation*, related to the need to be accepted and recognized by a group or community; *economic participation*, related to the possibility of becoming providers and consumers as well as obtaining recognition for some professional expertise; and *ascendance*, related to masculine identity as someone that carries command over others. Zubillaga's work offers insights into the complex social realities that influence youth involvement in violence.

Taking a social ecology understanding of child development as a nested and context-guided process, and drawing from the work of Dowdney, Zubillaga and others who have shown the manifold ways that children and youth are drawn into crime and violence in Latin America, we can describe child and youth involvement in urban insecurity as a continuum which includes the potential (cross-cutting) roles of children and youth as observers, receivers and/or agents of incidents of urban violence. This multifaceted and dynamic involvement in insecurity engenders complex and varied needs. All of these potential roles carry psychological, emotional and physical affects, and may limit future prospects. Returning to the example posed by the report of Magaly's experience, it is clear to see that she faced physical and psychological affects, as well as interruption of her studies. We can also conclude that her fellow students, both those directly involved in the assault and those that witnessed or were aware of it, were affected in all of these ways as well. Child and youth involvement in insecurity in Latin America is as widespread and entrenched as the phenomenon of violence itself. Thus confirming the urgent relevance of building awareness about how to respond to the complex needs that accompany this situation, and as Magaly's story again demonstrates, education is a critical site for response.

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[28]Dowdney, 2005, p.72.
[29]Zubillaga (2009)."Gaining Respect": The logic of violence among young men in the barrios of Caracas, Venezuela.In Jones, G. & Rodgers, D. 2009.
[30]Zubillaga, 2009, p.83.
[31]Zubillaga, 2009, p.100.

Educational Impact on Child and Youth Involvement in Urban Insecurity

The school is a key institution in the social ecology of children and adolescents. Given the high value placed on education as a human right and as a vital resource for economic and political participation in society, it is not surprising that there is a commonly held belief that the provision of education is "fundamentally good" for children and youth despite the many studies that reveal how schools and education systems can reproduce and reinforce structural and cultural inequities, and even carry out direct violence.[32] Researchers of education in conflict zones refer to these contrasting potential impacts as the "two faces of education", and several studies have demonstrated cases where education exacerbated root sources of violence and instability, for example by fostering negative ethnic relations and intergroup divisions.[33] Similar assumptions are visible in the context of urban insecurity in Latin America, where education is commonly named as a resource for citizen security without specific reference to *what* education and *how* it is delivered. Acknowledging both potential positive and negative educational impacts on child and youth involvement in urban insecurity, urges critical analysis of educational design and delivery.

Extending beyond a simple either/or dichotomy, Lynn Davies in a study of the relationship between education and fragility proposes viewing educational impacts along a spectrum and describes five levels of educational impact, ranging from active reinforcement of conflict and fragility to making small inroads to a state of fragility.[34] She also allows for the possibility of multiple simultaneous effects. Davies' model can be adapted and extended to suit a research agenda on the study of child and youth involvement in urban insecurity in Latin America, making note that educational efforts may (a) actively or inadvertently reinforce, justify or normalise violence and violent interaction, (b) support children and youth to live with violence (offer protection and build resilience), or (c) 'make inroads' to urban insecurity and contribute to the generation of peaceful orientations and interaction (effect prevention and rehabilitation processes). Table A describes these different possible levels of educational impact.

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[32]Kirk, J. (2011). Education and fragile states. In Mundy, K. & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2011). *Educating children in conflict zones: Research, policy and practice for systemic change.* New York, USA: Teachers College Press. 15-32.
[33]Bush, D. and Salterelli. (2000). The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict. UNICEF, New York; King, E. (2005) Educating for conflict or peace: Challenges and dilemmas in post-conflict Rwanda.*International Journal*. 60:4. Autumn. 904-918; and Spink, J. (2005) Education and politics in Afghanistan: the importance of an education system in peace-building and reconstruction, Journal of Peace Education, 2(2), 195–207)
[34]Davies, L. (2011). Can education interrupt fragility? Toward the resilient citizen and the adaptable state. In Mundy, K. & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2011).

Table A. Spectrum of Educational Impact on Child and Youth Involvement in Urban Insecurity[35]

Impact on Child & Youth Involvement in Urban Insecurity	*Description*	*Examples*
Actively encourages or propagates child and youth involvement in urban insecurity	Participates in urban violence and reinforces, justifies and/or normalises violence and violent interaction.	Corporal punishment and/or sexual abuse; Recruitment of children and youth to armed groups; Inciting violence.
Maintenance of status quo	Neglects and/or normalises violence and violent interaction.	Ignores impacts of urban insecurity; Violence as a means for resolving conflict is considered normal.
Counterproductive efforts	Attempts to address child and youth involvement in urban insecurity, but reinforces inadvertently.	Superficial or ineffective programming.
Supports children, youth and communities to cope with urban insecurity (Protective)	Support children and youth to live with violence (offer protection and build resilience). Supports physical & mental health & safety.	Measures to reduce vulnerability to sexual abuse, recruitment, & exposure to other risks and influences; Normalcy and consistency; Psycho-social programming; Provision of information for survival; Referral to other needed social services.
Prevents child and youth involvement in urban insecurity (Preventive)	Supports children & youth that might otherwise enter or remain in situations of high involvement in violence to enter alternative options and modes of living; Contributes to the generation of peaceful orientations and interaction.	Mentorship; counselling; alternative after-school activities; accelerated learning programs; apprenticeships/job placement; distance learning.
Supports children, youth and communities to participate in addressing root causes of urban insecurity (Transformative)	Contributes to the generation of peaceful orientations and interaction; Encourages critical analysis of root causes; Fosters transformative agency.	Critical peace education; Collaborative problem-solving; PAR; Political participation.

As depicted in Table A, negative educational impacts on child and youth involvement in urban insecurity can be categorised as active encouragement, maintenance of the status quo, and/or counterproductive efforts.[36] *Active encouragement* refers to educational actions that perpetuate urban insecurity, such as corporal punishment, sexual abuse or intimidation, or those that reinforce, justify or normalise violent interaction, such as inciting children and youth to use violence to resolve conflicts. *Maintenance of the status quo* refers to educational action that maintains situations of violence by neglecting or normalising violence in context. This may include ignoring the impacts of urban insecurity or

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[35] Adapted from: Davies, 2011.

[36] These categories are directly drawn from Davies model on education and fragility. See Davies, L. (2011).

maintaining cultural norms where the use of violence as a means for resolving conflict is treated as an accepted course of action. Finally, *counterproductive efforts* refer to those educational actions that are geared, at least rhetorically, to the addressing of child and youth involvement in urban insecurity, but which inadvertently reinforce or maintain insecurity. Superficial or ineffective programming is a common example of this, where efforts remain in rhetoric but fail to carry any immediate impacts on the experiences and options of children and youth in a given setting.

On the other hand, positive educational roles in response to child and youth involvement in urban insecurity can be exercised through protective; preventive; and transformative practices. *Protective* practices are those that support learners to cope with the effects of urban insecurity. This may include psycho-social programming and deliberate measures to reduce vulnerability to sexual abuse, recruitment, and exposure to other risks and influences. Schools can establish normalcy and consistency, hence supporting healing and resilience for students experiencing destabilising situations. They can also provide information relevant to survival, such as sexual health and human rights education. Finally, they can serve as a space of referral to other needed social services, such as psychological counselling, child welfare services, etc. Protective practices can be associated with the concept of *resilience*.[37]

Preventive practices are those that support children and youth that might otherwise enter or remain in situations of high involvement in violence to enter alternative options and modes of living. These might take shape in deliberate pedagogy and practice aimed at generating peaceful orientations; activities geared to occupy time, such as afterschool programs; and programs designed to support entry into college or to gainful employment. Some powerful examples of the possibility for education to be a mechanism of violence prevention can be found in non-formal education programs such as the SerPaz movement in Guayaquil that supported youth involved in gangs to generate livelihoods and renounce the use of violence, culminating in the establishment of a "Barrio de Paz" (neighbourhood of peace).[38] Another example is the work of VivaRio and Luta Pela Paz programs in Rio de Janeiro that have supported generations of youth to avoid or leave drug factions through the creation of accelerated school completion programs, recreational activities, and supported job placement.[39]

Finally, *transformative* practices are those that engage learners in transforming violent conditions by identifying and addressing the structural and cultural dynamics that generate violence. Such practices are rooted in popular education and critical pedagogy approaches that call teachers and students to carry out critical context-based analyses of the root causes of violence, and to generate and implement potential solutions. Efforts to build critical pedagogy and popular education pedagogies into curriculum and instruction, build collaborative orientations into school culture and discipline systems, and develop social action projects rooted in collective problem analysis, are all examples of transformative actions.

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[37] For more on resilience, see Boothby, N., Strang, A., &Wessells, M. (Eds.) (2006). A world turned upside down: Social ecological approaches to children in war. Kumarian Press; and Henderson, N. & Milstein, M. (2003). Resiliency in Schools: Making it Happen for Students and Educators. Corwin Press.
[38]Seisdedos, B. (2009). "Discovering gangs".*Conflictology*.Num 1.September 2009; Small Arms Survey. (2010). *Small Arms Survey 2010: Gangs, Groups, and Guns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/?id=286
[39]Dowdney, 2003;United Nations Development Programme.(UNDP). 2005. Evaluation of Viva Rio Projects "Security and development: Actions at local and regional levels" funded by DFID & "Human Security Partnerships with the Third Sector: Learning from and Multiplying Local Experiences" funded by UNDP. 6 June – 20 June 2005. Report.

Such practices aim to develop transformative agency and collaborative capacities in order to move beyond only learning to cope with urban insecurity as the status quo.

Research regarding these diverse educational roles may help to increase critical self-awareness for educators. Analysis of education from the perspective of protective, preventative and transformative roles emphasises the role of educators to undertake the tasks of understanding the impacts of insecurity on their students and generate targeted strategies in order to build a supportive eco-system for the student's psychological, emotional and physical development. In this way, education may play a role in safeguarding communities and contributing to the prevention and transformation of contexts of urban insecurity. In other words, it can become a critical site for peace-building.

Multi-layered Educational Practices for Peace

Considering the formal school environment as a prime site for countering child and youth involvement in urban insecurity requires analysis and preparation along multiple layers of practice such that school climate, content and pedagogy are all aligned to this aim. These multiple layers of practice were explored in a US-based study on the practical adaptation of schools as cooperative systems.[40] In this study, rooted in the field of social-psychology, Peter Coleman and Morton Deutsch argue that reorienting the school towards peace-building necessitates the transformation of patterns of social interaction throughout the institutional framework.[41] They distinguish five levels through which to examine how relational concepts, skills and processes are developed in schools, including: (1) disciplinary system, (2) curriculum, (3) pedagogy, (4) school culture, and (5) community. Examining each of these levels below, I draw from their work, and that of others, to outline the range of educational practices through which schools can exercise influence on child and youth involvement in urban insecurity.

The *disciplinary system* of a school (or classroom) consists of rules, consequences and behavioural strategies to achieve order and coexistence within the school context. It encompasses a range of interactions, including the construction of community norms and the management of conflicts. There are several ways that schools can adapt to achieve a cooperative disciplinary system, including for example intentional classroom management strategies and mediation programs.[42] There are creative ways that educators can reorient their disciplinary practices to build positive relations of social interdependence within the school, but the implementation of such strategies requires skills and

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[40]Coleman, P. T. & Deutsch, M. (2001). Introducing cooperation and conflict resolution into schools: A systems approach. In Christie, Wagner & Winter (Eds.) *Peace, Conflict and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century* (223-239). Prentice Hall.

[41]Coleman & Deutsch, 2001.

[42]For research on diverse classroom management strategies or school-based mediation programs, see Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R. (1999). *Learning together and alone: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning*. (5thed.) Boston, USA: Allyn& Bacon; Jones, T. S. (1998). Comprehensive Peer Mediation Evaluation Project finds support for impact of peer mediation programs. The Fourth R. Cited in Coleman, P. T. & Deutsch, M. (2001). Introducing cooperation and conflict resolution into schools: A systems approach. In Christie, Wagner & Winter (Eds.) *Peace, Conflict and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century* (223-239). Prentice Hall; Lieber, C.M. (2002).*Partners in learning: From conflict to collaboration in secondary classrooms*. USA: Educators for Social Responsibility; among others.

resources. Often such strategies also require a reorientation of deep-rooted beliefs about the nature of discipline and authority. As the Andean saying, *"la letra con sangre entra"* (literacy is achieved by drawing blood) denotes, there is a history of corporal punishment in the Latin American context that reflects a philosophy of discipline based on punishment. While corporal punishment may no longer be the common-place practice in schools in the region, school disciplinary systems still tend to be hierarchically-established and punishment-oriented.[43]

Some innovative efforts with mixed results have been made to introduce participatory and agreement-based disciplinary systems, such as Ecuador's introduction of *"Códigos de Convivencia"* (Coexistence Codes). In July 2003, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education and Culture passed a Ministerial Agreement (No.1962) establishing the requirement that all educational institutions are responsible for elaborating a *Código de Convivencia,* which should become the new parameter regulating school life. These were to be achieved through participatory consultations with students, parents, teachers, administrators and community members. Since then, another ministerial agreement (No-182, May 2007) was put forth regarding what a coexistence code should include and schools are now expected to present their codes for official records. However, little else has been done at the official level to support this process to go forward as intended, and often the *Códigos* submitted for official records are simply the old rulebooks with a new cover page, without any corresponding changes in the practice of discipline in the schools. These experiences show that political will and on-going professional development are indispensable to achieve changes in practice.

Alongside disciplinary systems, educators can also bring developmentally appropriate protective, preventive and transformative concepts and skills into the curriculum. This can be achieved either by creating new stand-alone courses dedicated to the study of relevant issues or through the integration of units and concepts to the teaching of other subjects. Several studies have analysed, for example, how history education can be oriented to de-emphasise militarization and violence as the predominant means for resolving conflicts, and introduce mechanisms of cooperation and coexistence and examples of nonviolent struggle.[44] Curricula could include conflict resolution concepts (such as diverse conflict types, differentiating between needs and positions, alternatives to violence, cultural difference, interdependence, etc.); cooperative skills and competencies (mediation, active listening, brainstorming, collaborative problem-solving, etc.); and case studies or examples that reflect cooperative social relations (these will differ across subject areas). The curriculum could also be geared toward human rights education, and other life-skills that may support children and youth in insecure contexts to better understand and withstand their experiences and surroundings.

Instrumental to the application of the curriculum, the design and delivery of instruction is a significant aspect of how students are engaged in the school environment. Choices about *pedagogy* can be geared towards peace by involving the instructional use of cooperative learning or exercises

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[43] Corporal punishment in the school setting is outlawed in most of the region, though there is little empirical evidence regarding the persistence and/or cessation of such practices. See: Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children. (2013). Progress towards prohibiting all corporal punishment in Latin America.http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/pdfs/charts/Chart-LatinAmerica.pdf

[44] See for example: Harris, I., & Morris, M.(2002). Peace Education. 2nd Edition. USA: McFarland & Company.

such as academic controversy to generate critical and cooperative capacities.[45] Educators can also use participatory approaches and a practice of care to demonstrate to their students that they are valued and have voice. Furthermore, the extent to which schools are relevant for students is a part of keeping children and youth in school. It falls on educators to find ways to practice pedagogy that makes learning relevant for students and supports dignity and transformative agency.

Directly linked to the practices of discipline, curriculum and pedagogy, the *school culture* and *climate* refer to the relational environment of the school. *School culture* comprises the shared beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of social interaction in the school.[46] This involves the extent to which members of the school community feel included and appreciated. It also includes rituals and traditions, such as school assemblies, school spirit activities, etc. Patterns of social interactions observable through symbols and commonly held beliefs reveal elements of the school culture. The *school climate* refers to the "feel" of a school, and is related to how the physical and social environment of the school is experienced by members of the school community. This includes the quality of interactions, feelings of safety and trust, experiences of belonging and self-perception, and academic encouragement.[47] Efforts to generate a school culture and climate based in principles of cooperation and nonviolence will involve strategies geared to impact the quality of social interactions as built through symbols, rituals and co-constructed meaning. One sample strategy in this area of practice could be the establishment of violence as a social taboo in both discourse and practice within the school context. Another example might be the way that teachers, students and families are inducted to the school community.

A final area of educational practice signalled by Coleman and Deutsch is the manner in which educators generate and manage their relationship with the broader *community*. Coleman and Deutsch argue that the school system should be viewed as embedded within (and influenced by) other systems, and needs to view change processes as related to this broader dimension. This may require educators to create strategic partnerships with other institutions or groups in order to have ripple effects beyond the school community, and also to garner support from other areas of influence to the school. Coleman and Deutsch propose viewing the school as an "open system" and advocate for the extension of educational peace-building initiatives beyond the school walls. This refers to the manner in which the school staffs reaches out to involve families and other members of the community in participating in the school space. It also refers to relationships with other actors beyond the immediate community, such as education supervisors, district administrators and ministry of education representatives, or media, police and other institutions.

These five dimensions of educational practice – discipline, curriculum, pedagogy, culture and climate, and community – serve to illustrate the complexity and potential of educational work to carry out protective, preventive and/or transformative roles in relation to child and youth involvement in

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[45]For more information about academic controversy and cooperative learning practice, see Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R. (1989). *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company; Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R. & Smith, K. (1993). *Academic controversy: Enriching college instruction through intellectual conflict*. USA: Graduate School of Education and Human Development, George Washington University.
[46]Phillips, G. (1993).*The school-classroom culture assessment*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Eduserv. British Columbia School Trustees Publishing.
[47]Freiberg, H.J. (1998). Measuring School Climate: Let me count the ways. *Educational Leadership*.56(1). 22-26.

urban insecurity in Latin America. Scholarship exploring the intersections of education and insecurity will need to pay attention to all of these layers of educational practice.

An Agenda for Peace Education Research in Latin America Today

Returning to Magaly's story, it is important to take note that in the cease-fire brokered in El Salvador last year, it was declared that all scholarly centres in the country would be considered zones of peace.[48] This declaration constitutes a commitment on the part of the *Barrio 18* and *Mara Salvatrucha* gangs to desist any violent activity in and around school premises. It also served to stave off the proposed militarisation of the country's schools by the national government. This was a positive development that hopefully led to increased safety for students and teachers. However, as the above discussion suggests, we need to go several steps further if we are to truly call schools "zones of peace".

If educational interventions are to support comprehensive peace and citizen security in Latin America, greater understanding of the day-to-day realities of education in settings of urban insecurity is needed. Through the above discussion, I have developed some orientations for peace education research in Latin America, emphasizing the following points:

- Schools represent a site where norms and discourses of security are shaped and enacted, and yet education remains an under-examined security scape.
- Children and youth are involved in urban insecurity as observers, receivers and agents of violence, generating complex needs.
- Education can respond by furthering risk factors, or by carrying out protective, preventive and/or transformative functions.
- Educational practices that respond to the complex challenges of child and youth involvement in urban insecurity are multi-layered and varied. They may be exercised through discipline systems, curriculum design, pedagogical practice, school culture and climate, and community relations.

These reflections call for educational research in the region to engage in a comprehensive study of the intersection of education and insecurity, generating analyses that consider education as an essential part of a broad framework of peace-building responding to the alarming levels of crime and violence. Such a research agenda is rooted in an acknowledgement of the multi-layered nature of education provision and is best suited by employing systemic analyses that consider the structural and cultural construction of education.

As this article has sought to demonstrate, the situations of urban insecurity rife throughout Latin America represent important challenges for education, and likewise education represents an important site of response. How does child and youth involvement in urban insecurity vary across contexts? What are the opportunities and obstacles for educational reform to respond to these needs? How are educators currently negotiating the impacts and demands of urban insecurity? How could Magaly's

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[48]Looft, C. "El Salvador Gangs Expand Truce to School Zones", May 3, 2012, InSight Crime, retrieved from: http://www.insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/2579-el-salvador-gangs-expand-truce-end-forced-recruitment

school be redesigned such that she and her peers are safe, learning, and building capacities to participate in transforming their cities to become true zones of peace?

There is much research to be done.