

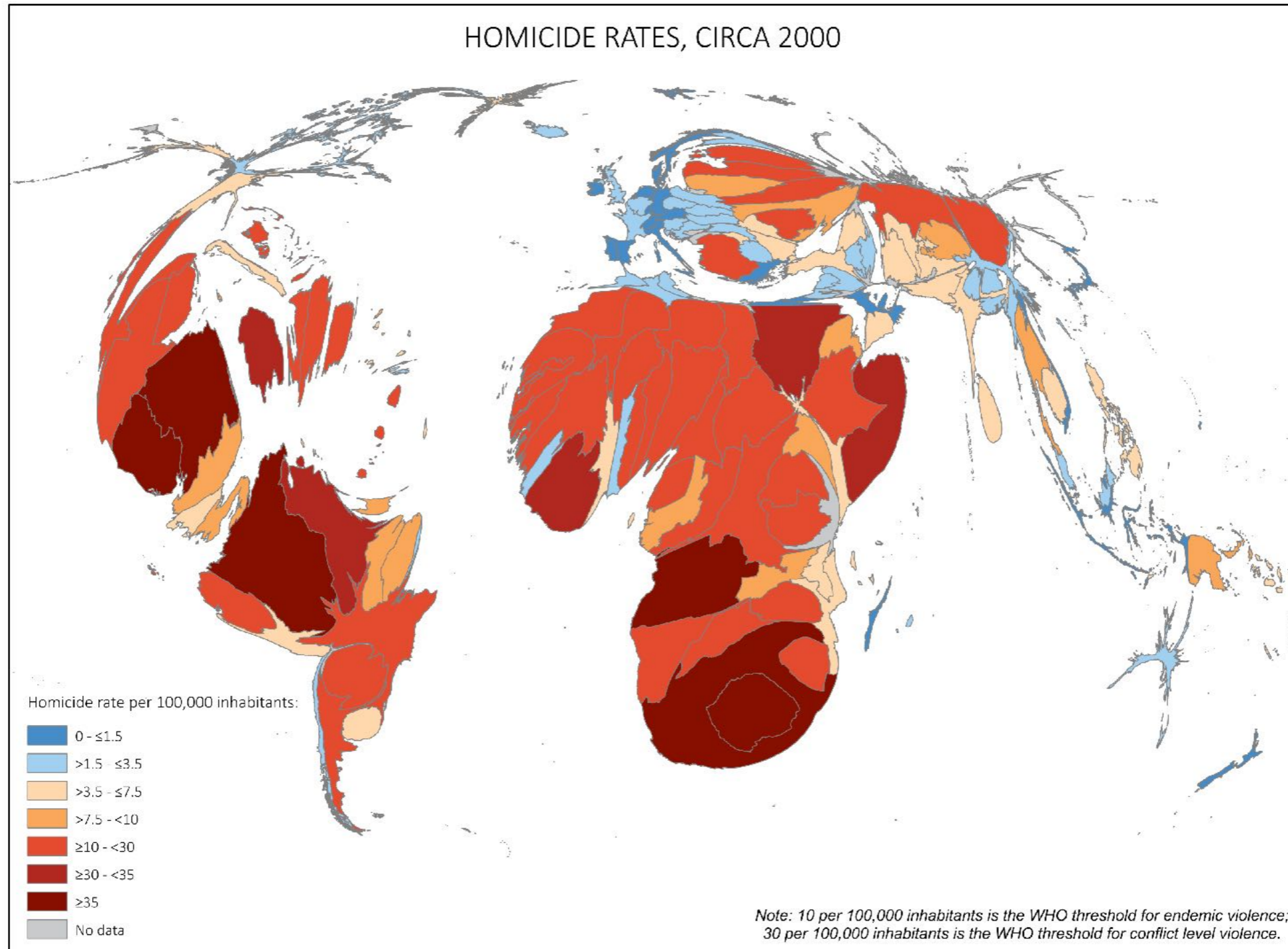


STOP THE VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

A look at Prevention from Cradle to Adulthood

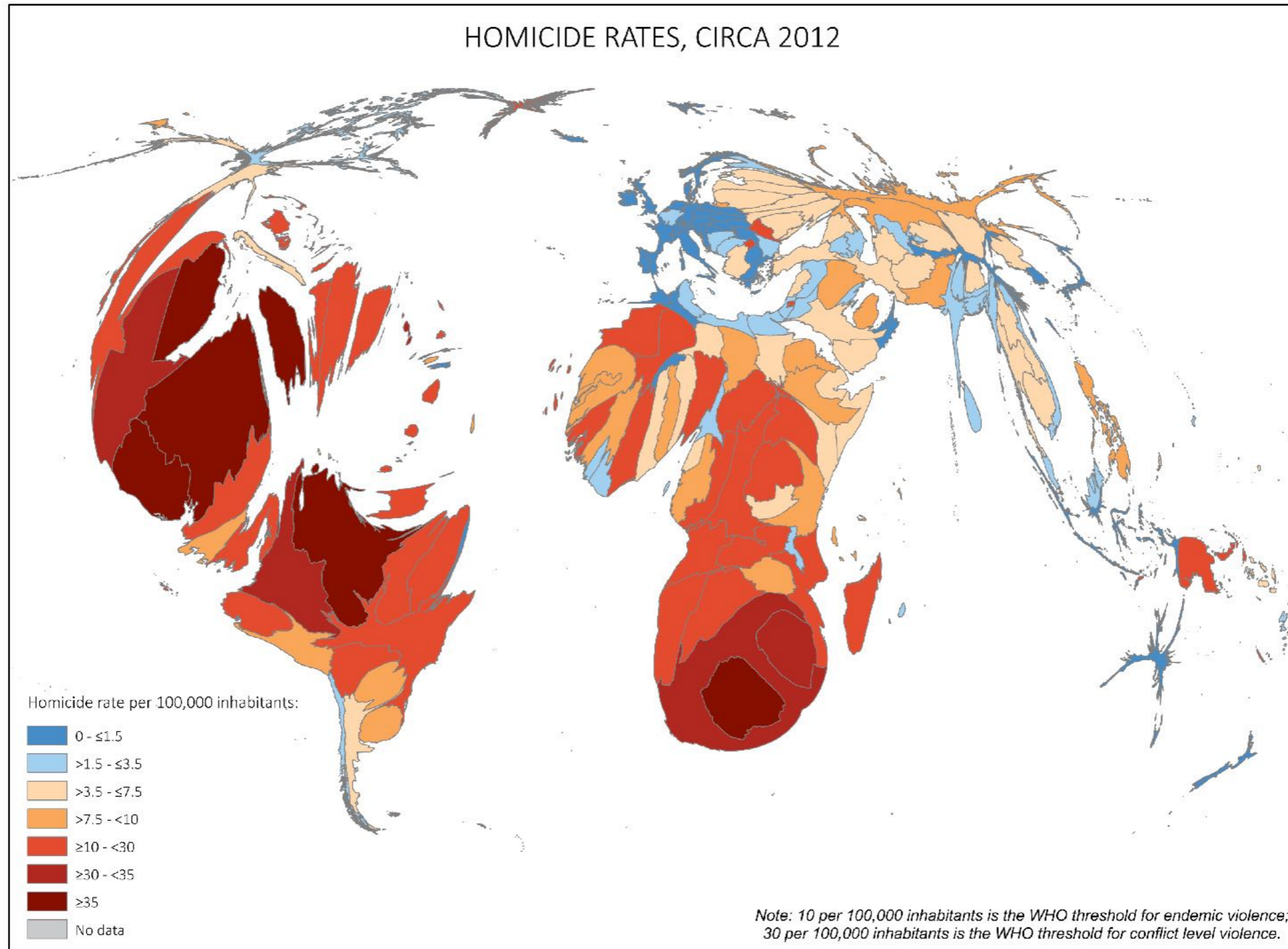
by Laura Chioda

2000: THE WORLD IF COUNTRY SIZE WERE PROPORTIONAL TO HOMICIDE RATES



- Homicide rate in Africa: **26.6** per 100,000
- Homicide rate in LAC right behind: **22.8** per 100,000

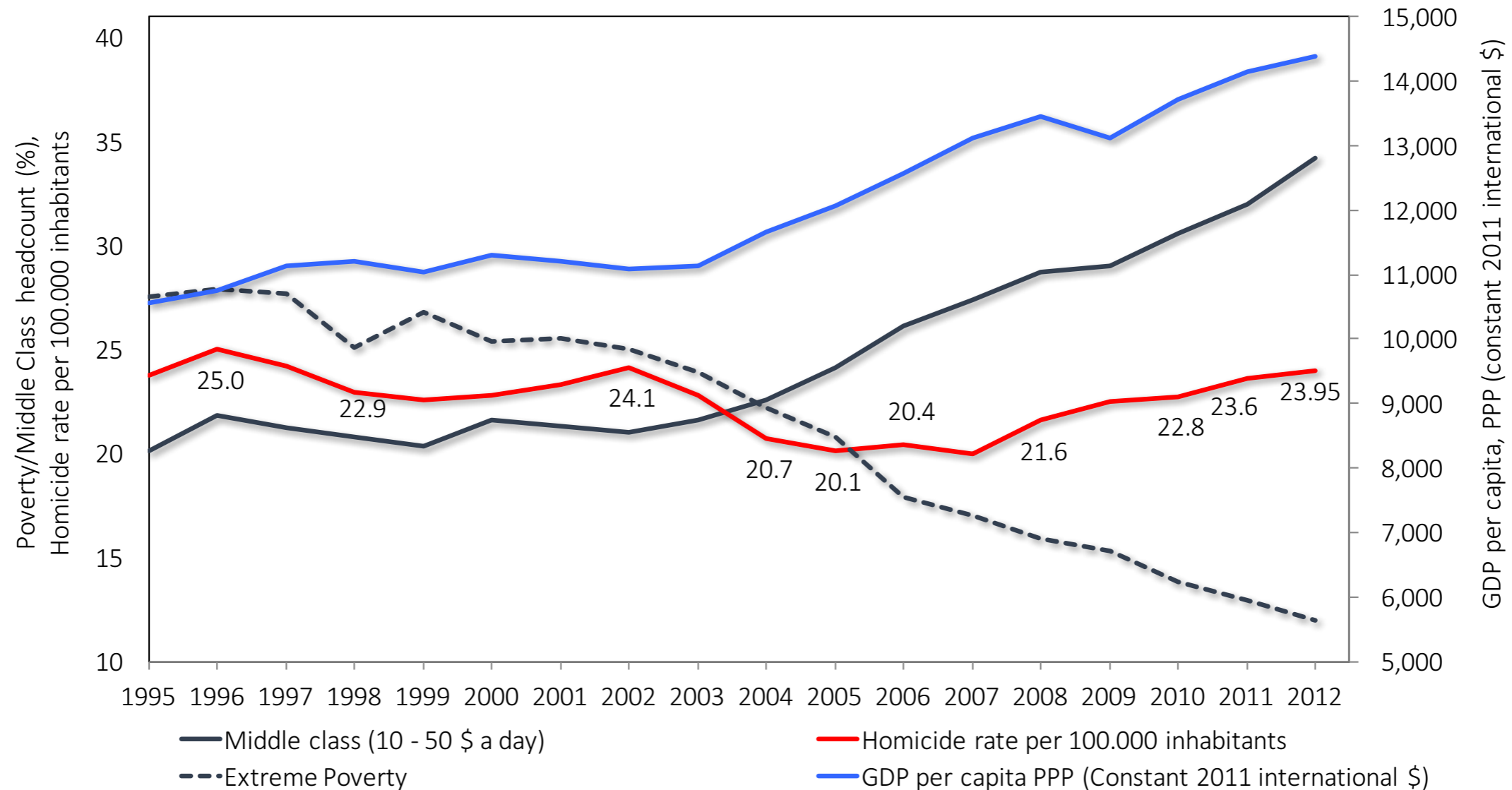
2012: LAC ACCOUNTS FOR 8% OF THE WORLD POPULATION, BUT 37% OF HOMICIDES



- 8 out of the 10 most violent countries are in LAC
- Of the 50 most violent cities in the world, 42 are in the region, including the top 16

THE HISTORY OF VIOLENCE IN LAC CONTRASTS WITH ITS SOCIAL PROGRESS

Homicides, Poverty, and Middle Class in Latin America over the 15 years



Note: PPP = purchasing power parity.

- Relationship b/w development and violence is complex and nonlinear (especially in presence of weak institutions)
- Calls into question standard view that violence is a byproduct of early stages of development

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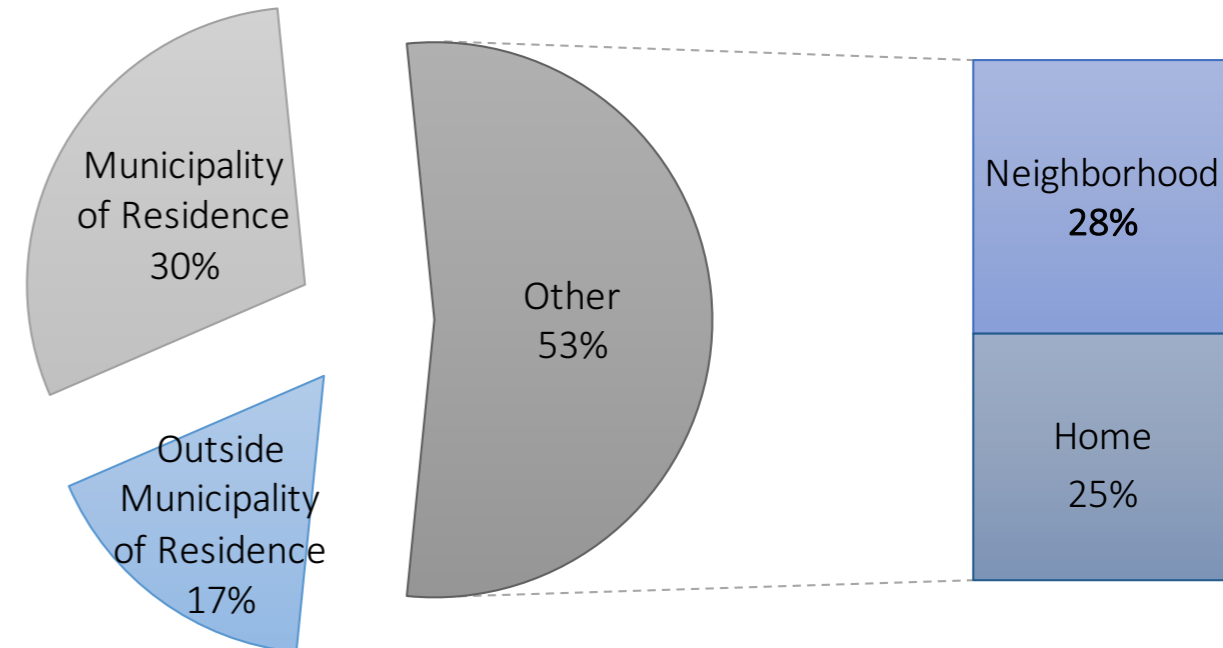
- **Geographically clustered:**
 - Few municipalities and even street segments account for the majority of crime
 - Where data are available, **15-25% of street segments account for 60-75%** of crime (Guatemala City, Antioquia, Medellin, Mexico, Seattle, Tel Aviv, Minneapolis)
 - **Proximal:** 53% of crime occurs at home or in neighborhood
 - 45% of LAC's population felt unsafe in their neighborhood

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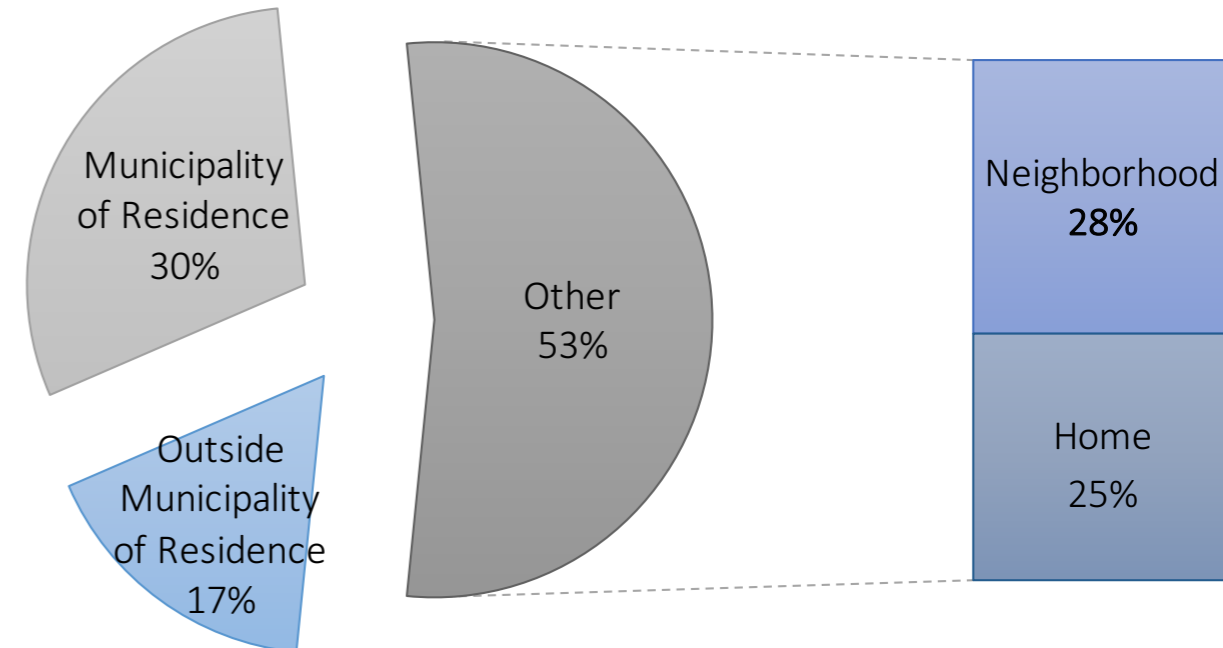


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➤ Persistent & Contagious:

- In LAC, 1 homicide in the current year predicts **0.68** additional homicides in the following year
- E.g., in Mx, 1 homicide in a municipality predicts **0.6** in neighboring munis within the same state

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➤ **Over the life cycle**

(Age-Crime profile)

- 10% of individuals account approximately 70-80% of crimes
- **Adolescent & young adult males are at high risk** of being victims and of perpetrating)
- Homicide rates (per 100,000) among young males:
 - LAC: 93 (age 20-24)
 - Honduras: 300+ (age 20-24)
 - U.S.: 91 among African Americans (age 18-24)

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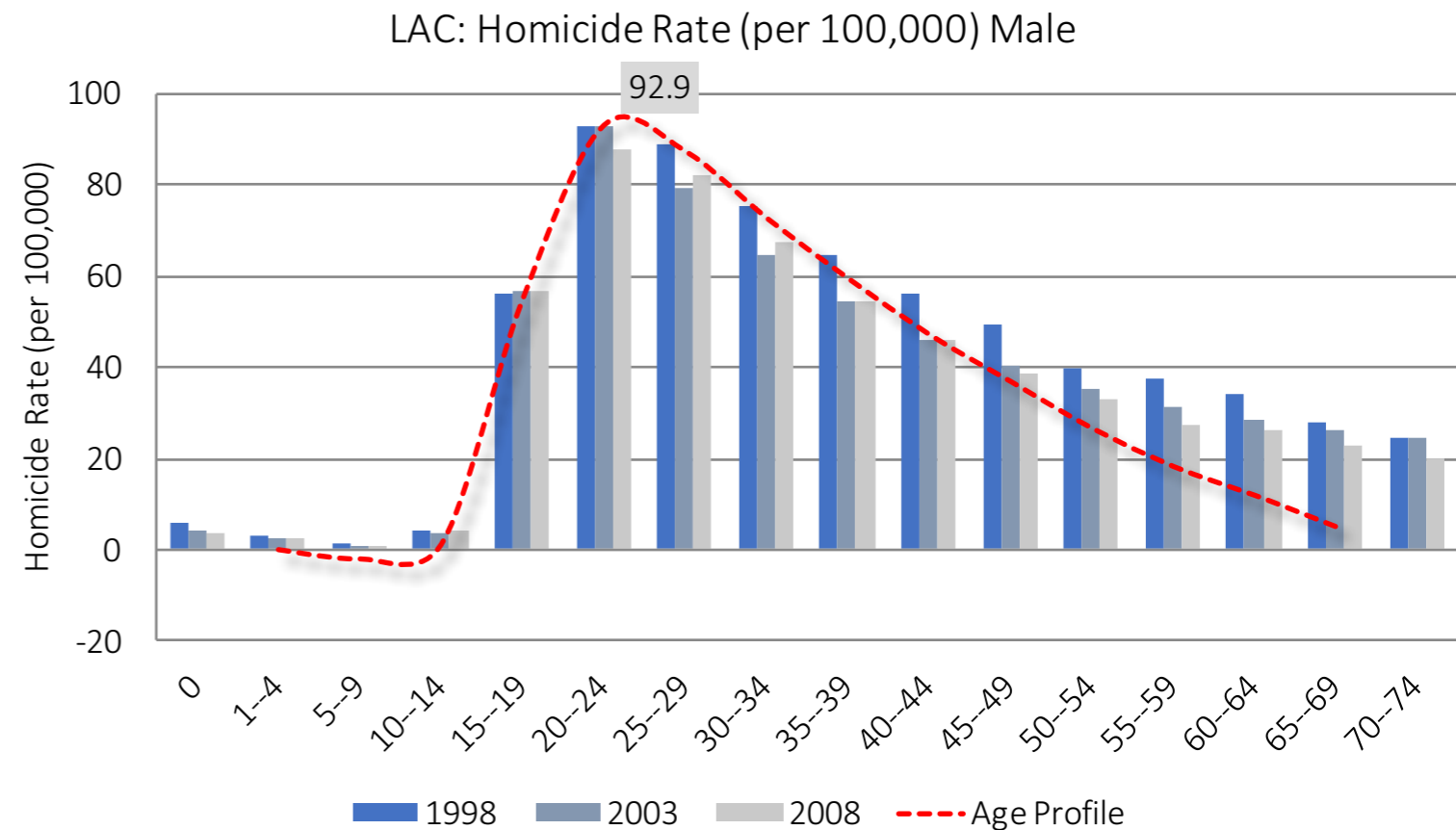
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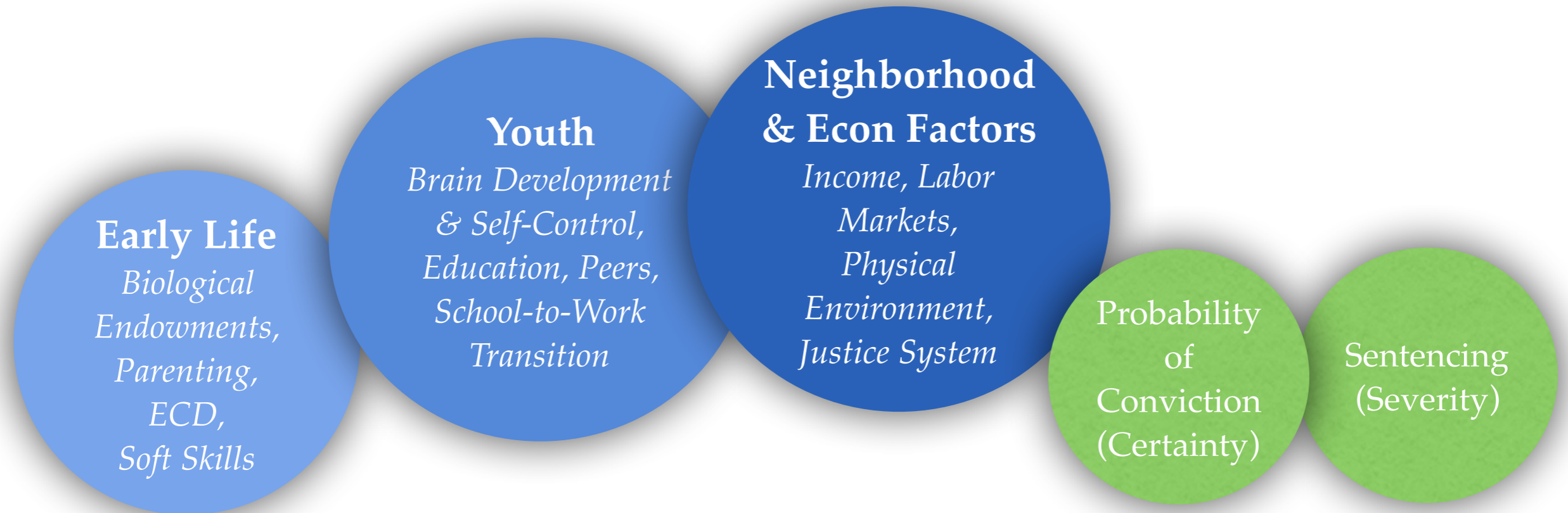


FOCUS OF THE STUDY: PREVENTION

- Identify relevant policy margins throughout the **lifecycle**
- Shed light on novel policies whose impacts have been validated by **rigorous empirical evidence**
- Beyond what works and what does not, **emphasis is on mechanisms** underlying the success/failure of interventions
 - Biology
 - Nutrition
 - Brain development
 - Environmental factors
 - Socio-economic and socio-emotional channels
 - The role of “incentives” set by the judicial system

ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

BECKER (1968), ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (WHO), DEVELOP. THEORIES (BRONFENBRENNER, 1979, LOEBER & FARRINGTON, 1997, 2003)



Family → Schools → Neighborhood → Communities

- As individuals progress through stages of their lives, **different sets of risk factors arise**, their prominence evolves, and interdependencies among them mutate
- These interactions and changes in the relative importance of risk & protective factors shape behavior and identify relevant margins for policy

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➤ Never too early, never too late...

- Effective prevention starts even before birth & reap benefits in adolescence and adulthood (long term)
 - biological factors, environmental factors (*lead*), parental behaviors
- **BUT** effective policy interventions can also be successful later in life (shorter-term)
 - Education (quantity and quality) and preventing dropouts, in particular
 - Interventions directly targeting executive functions & soft skills, emotional regulation, & automatic triggers of violent behavior
 - Economic incentives as well as those set by the justice system (even in a boundedly rational world)

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➤ **Never too comprehensive**

- **Substantial spillovers across space, time, and across generations.** The success of crime prevention strategies may rest on the ability to exploit such interdependencies
- Importance of a comprehensive approach to crime prevention (the sum is greater than its part)

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- **Importance of quality and legitimacy of institutions**
 - The study by design does not consider institutional reforms & their preventive role, but several results indicate central roles for the quality of policing, the judicial system, and trust in institutions
 - e.g., all else equal, police officers asking for bribes (a proxy for the quality of policing) is associated with 50% increase in probability of being victim of crime
 - e.g., community and hot spot policing can be effective prevention strategies