Hartmut Keil and Michael Riekenberg*

➲ Violence in the United States and Latin America in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Approach[1]

1. Introduction

This essay will compare the patterns of collective physical violence in the United States and in Latin America during the 19th century. Its main purpose is to identify the differences in the practice of collective violence despite similar developments on the two continents and to uncover the underlying reasons for these distinctions. The comparison is not based on definitive theoretical assumptions or hypotheses, and therefore it will neither be systematic nor present "certified" results. Rather we select specific issues while neglecting others. Nowadays adolescents from Central America, for example, after living in the United States for several years as illegal immigrants take their "notions of street gangs" back to their countries of origin[2]. We do not discuss this transfer of behavior or structures, which certainly could be included in a comparison, but instead we focus on distinguishing aspects and primarily on collective –not on individual– acts of violence, analyzing them in their specific historical contexts rather than in a normative framework of accepted and deviant behavior. In accordance with the sociologist Heinrich Popitz (1992: 48) we understand violence as an exercise of power which leads to physically injuring other persons, recognizing that this general definition includes various and quite distinct forms of violence.

The following considerations provide some guidelines for this comparison. In contrast to the traditional constitutional law approach to state formation we find societies in the United States as well as in parts of Latin America which in comparison to the state were clearly excessively armed in the 19th and 20th centuries. In both cases –with perhaps the exception of Chile– in the 19th century, the state's monopoly of violence was not, or only partly, enforced or the state was unable, or able only in exceptional cases, to keep effectively social actors from using physical violence high-handedly and arbitrarily. However, there were also significant differences.

* *The authors: Hartmut Keil is Professor of American Studies, Michael Riekenberg is Professor of Comparative History and Latin American Studies, both at the University of Leipzig, Germany. Their email addresses are: hkeil@rz.uni-leipzig.de resp. riekenbe@rz.uni-leipzig.de*

1 We want to thank Michael Bellesiles of Emory University for his close reading of the paper and for his valuable critical comments. Furthermore we want to thank the members of the academic study group "The United States and Latin America in the 19th Century" for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this text.

2 The migration of structures of violence can be found in completely different areas as well, like the training of Latin American officers in the United States.

In the United States there existed a tradition of popular approval for the use of force nurtured by several sources: the frontier experience; the institution of slavery, not only in the Southern colonies and states but also in the North until the early 19th century; the emergence of local autonomy and colonial conflict with the imperial center of power in London; finally also by the Old Testament doctrine of retribution. Settlers usually had to be prepared to contribute personally and materially to protecting the frontier in the ongoing process of pushing back the indigenous population. Participating in the border guard and militia was common given the absence of military protection by the imperial power –merely some 800 English soldiers were stationed on the North American continent in the mid-18th century (Shy 1965: 34 ff.)– although the modest deployment of troops may also reflect the absence of major conflict during this period. Yet as a matter of principle the colonies also relied on the Rangers and the militia for their own security, even if guns and equipment were often deficient (Bellesiles 2000). In the slave economy of the South slaveowners were determined to fully control and discipline the slave population, devising increasingly complex law codes in the nineteenth century which entitled them as well as privately organized local police patrols to use force. Individual application of violence and punishment as a strategy of intimidation was also generally recognized as a legitimate means of defending and restoring one's personal and family's honor in the antebellum South (Wyatt-Brown 1982, Gastil 1989). The tradition of autonomous self-rule was established by the need to maintain order on the local level given the absence or inadequacy of English authorities in the colonies' extensive backcountry and on the frontier. This sense of administrative autonomy was strengthened in the course of the escalating tensions between the colonies and the English government from the end of the French and Indian War (1756-1763) until the onset of the War of Independence, engraining in the country's political culture a tradition of persistent distrust of an all-powerful federal state. When confronted with the need to equip the new government with viable mechanisms of power and authority, Federalists as well as many Republicans did favor a standing army. On the other hand the notion that it was the citizen's duty to keep a watchful eye on the federal government in order to prevent it from abusing its power was invoked as well. Thus militant groups nowadays defend the right to the private ownership of firearms, supposedly guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the Constitution, arguing that it is also meant to protect the social order against the potential abuse of power by the federal government itself (Wills 1995).

Nowadays only in such exceptional cases is the state's prerogative to use force jeopardized and violence directed against the government itself. Influenced by the Old Testament doctrine of retribution ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth") as propagated by fundamentalist denominations originating in folk revivalist traditions, a majority of the American public continues to support the death penalty. Yet today it sees its execution as exclusively within the state's authority; racist motivated lynchings by illegal mobs frequently occurring in the segregated South as late as the 1940s, are no longer tolerated and fortunately gone. Instead institutionalized mechanisms of criticism, like the right to free speech, assembly and religion as guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution, serve as an important safety valve by legitimating political and social protest, thereby often helping to diffuse it. This in turn results in a high degree of moral support to the state's claim that it has the exclusive right to use force, which has been delegated to it by consent and therefore is seen as legitimate.

In Latin America, on the other hand, the attitude toward violence has been charged with increasingly negative connotations both in the public political sphere and probably among large segments of the population as well since about the second half of the 19th century, after a period of relative approval among the political elites in the early 19th century during the movement for independence and its accompanying revolutionary rhetoric. Thus we roughly see the opposite tendency to developments in the United States. Today this tradition of non-state violence, or the excesses of illegal violence produced by the state itself or by paramilitary forces tolerated by the state, has led to the resigned view in Colombia, Peru, and El Salvador that these countries are plagued by endemic "cultures of violence"[3]. Today in Latin America, violence is seen less as an instrument of power politics to be used rationally or to enforce peace and order than as a perpetual factor of social and political reality, whose menacing presence could not yet be controlled adequately. Maybe this perspective still reflects Iberian-Catholic concepts of violence, and ultimately an understanding of mankind as being condemned by the Fall to exert or suffer violence, whereas in the United States notions of violence have prevailed which are more closely related with the idea of progress or more "secularized" notions of power. It is noteworthy, however, that reports from Latin American regions especially afflicted with violence, like the town of Medellín in Colombia, show that even today youth gangs exploit religious beliefs, e.g. the symbolic approval of violence by a permissive female godlike figure, the Holy Virgin, to both legitimize and repent their acts of violence (Salazar 1992: 118 f.). Anyway the negative concept of violence reflects Latin America's historical experiences from the early 19th century to the excesses of so-called state terrorist violence in the most recent past.

This does not mean, however, that violence in Latin America is a "traditional" phenomenon. Quite on the contrary we find new actors or the highest rates of violence in contemporary Latin American societies for clearly economic reasons –not because cultural traditions or ritual prescriptions call for the use of violence in order to symbolically reproduce a community. Colombia's colonization areas resp. drug economies nowadays are an especially obvious example of this combination of violence and commodity economy. The average level of violence in that country is significantly higher than in the United States. A study published by the "Inter-American Development Bank" in August 1999 argued that the rate of violence as measured by various indicators (crime and homicide rates, losses to the national economy by the economic cost of violence) is five times that of the rest of the world. In Colombia the economic causes of violence became more significant when beginning around 1970 "illegal" markets mushroomed in regions and colonization areas beyond the state's control. If we assume certain continuities of development, we find that state and private protagonists in Colombia (as in other Latin American countries) were on a par since the beginning of the 19th century and that they were not clearly separated from each other. A kind of segmented organization of violence prevailed to which the excesses of Colombian federalism contributed. The participation of a substantial part of the population in violent conflicts also supported a broad diffusion of violence. Theories of violence tell us that violent action happens when strong opponents face each other on a roughly equal footing, i.e. in a "symmetrical" relationship, not when one side is clearly superior

[3] For the critical discussion of this concept cf. Riekenberg 1999a.

(Elias 1977). Colombia seems to serve as empirical evidence for the theory's validity. Although the collapse of the state in Colombia which had been announced by social scientists in 1980 did not happen, this danger is still not averted. In 1999 the Colombian government officially renounced the claim of control over the whole country, and in a treaty it recognized the FARC guerilla as administrator of part of the state's territory.

These preliminary thoughts direct our comparative endeavor to the "long" 19th century, which lasted until about 1915 in the United States, and until about 1930 in the large Latin American countries. For it was in the 19th century that the state as the central authority for the organization of violence acquired "firm" outlines both in the United States and in Latin America as a result of independence movements, and this development had lasting repercussions on the structure of violence. Focussing on this period, we single out three topics for the comparison discussing their interrelationship in the following order: Regions characterized by the absence of legal authority, protagonists of violence, and the institution building process.

2. "Empty Spaces": The Absence of Legal Authority on the Frontier

Today social spaces in which legal institutions and authorities are absent are rather symptomatic of urban environments both in the United States and in Latin America, whereas in the 19th century they were predominantly rural phenomena. Many historians point out specifically the role of the frontiers as typical social and cultural learning grounds both of violence and order: Since the state could not guarantee the maintenance of order on the frontiers, where the threat of violence was especially great because of ethnic and racial conflict, people, they argue, had to help themselves and take the execution of law in their own hands. Thus separate "cultures of violence" emerged. This interpretation, however; has been challenged by other historians who argue that in the case of the United States the level of violence was markedly higher in eastern towns and cities or in the Southern States during the period of Reconstruction, than on the western frontiers[4]. In addition there are substantially divergent historical evaluations of the frontier in North and South America. Historians of the U.S. frontier traditionally have emphasized its dynamic character and its enormous potential for economic and demographic growth. For these reasons the frontier was systematically developed and finally integrated politically into the national territory. In Latin America on the other hand frontiers are often described as borderlands on the margins of western civilization and without a clear-cut potential for development. Historians emphasize the importance which illegal economies or openly violent forms of economic management (kidnapping, blackmailing, gang organized contraband, etc.) could assume on the frontier. We can therefore ask if "markets of violence" developed on particular frontiers in Latin America in the early 19th century. The notion of a market of violence was developed for analyzing the commercialization of violence in contemporary African societies. In this view markets of violence emerge when commercial interests enter areas susceptible to the exercise of violence, where firm

4 *Cf.* Brown 1983, Dykstra 1968, Hollon 1974, McGrath 1984, McKanna 1997, Reid 1980 and 1997, Williams 1990.

state-imposed limits for the use of violence are lacking. Using violence then becomes the most important form of economic management, whether by violently controlling and exploiting the resources and the markets, or by transforming the exercise of violence into a good in and of itself (Elwert 1997, François/Rufin 1996). Markets of violence erode the state order or assume its disintegration. In the early 19th century rudimentary "markets of violence" that fostered inter-ethnic alliances resp. networks between Indian *caciques* and Spanish-Creole or Mestizo merchants or militia officers apparently existed temporarily in the Southern La Plata region or in parts of Northern Mexico where their development was fostered by commercial scalp hunts (Riekenberg 2000).

When comparing the frontiers in Latin America and the United States, one has to take into account that they usually showed significant structural differences. It is therefore questionable anyway from the outset to draw simple parallels. But for this very reason the territories which Mexico surrendered to the United States in the mid-19th century are worth looking at for comparative purposes. For they can serve as a telling example of changes which, as a result of changes of the political system, did, or did not, happen on the frontiers beyond the indolent structures of traditional social and cultural organization. This approach allows for better evaluating the impact of the state's structure on frontier development. Jill Mocho's study of the development of crime and justice in New Mexico before and after 1848 is an example for such an approach. She argues that it was only the North American state which secured a firmer hold over controlling violence on the frontier, whereas the Spanish colonial government resp. the state of Mexico had failed to do so (Mocho 1997: 9 f., 180 f.). Mocho attributes this difference primarily to the fact that the Mexican judges were embedded in the local power networks and had little backing from state authorities. Furthermore other state institutions were absent which could have represented the state's authority, or they were hardly reliable. For long periods in the 19th century, the government also was unable permanently to station army units on the so-called military frontiers, like in northern Mexico, because the soldiers –frequently former gang members– usually deserted.

By comparison violence could be better controlled in the towns, and the Spanish-Mexican administration of justice was more effective there than in rural communities. New Orleans is a case in point; legal authorities apparently saw their task less as fighting crime, however, than as maintaining the social barriers between elites and the lower classes resp. the slave population (Kerr/Felony 1993). This does not mean, however, that there was less violence in the towns than on the frontier. In the late 19th century urbanization led to increasing violence in North America's towns, and similar developments occurred in Latin America's urban centers. There not only was crime on the rise but the anarcho-syndicalist movement made inroads into the laboring class and produced new forms of collective violence or violent conflicts with state authorities or vigilante groups, for example the "Liga Patriótica" that was founded in Argentina in 1919 by business men and supported by police forces and army officers who did not trust the Radical's government. Urban spaces and the frontiers thus differed primarily as to the forms of violence. The relatively greatest correspondence of violence in the towns and on the frontier probably was that of gangs resp. vigilante groups.

These observations lead us to ask which impact towns had on frontier development and on the containment of outlaw violence in frontier areas. Again substantial differences are obvious: In Latin America there were hardly urban centers (with the possible

exception of Buenos Aires) which could have had a thorough social and cultural effect on their rural hinterland. In the United States things were different. There, cities like Chicago and St. Louis influenced the hinterland and had a deep impact on the entire Midwest. In addition social elites in these frontier towns maintained close ties with the elites on the Atlantic seaboard for economic reasons. Thus the San Francisco "Vigilante Committee", which was established in 1856 and exerted firm control over violence during California's anomic gold rush period, was recruited from Protestant trade interests and their followers and had close ties to the Northeast and its political and social elites (Senkiewicz 1985: 223 ff.). These connections account for the absence of regional conflicts between "state" and "frontier": In the United States towns like Chicago and San Francisco helped bridge such conflicts, whereas the Latin American frontiers often represented regions whose local "elites" distrusted or even rejected the state. This example shows also that the state's influence on the frontier cannot simply be measured by the number and effect of state institutions but that social and cultural processes have to be born in mind as well, including the "mentalities" of people. However, vigilantes played an ambivalent role in this process. They could act in lieu of the state and guarantee law and order, or they could use their power for their own purposes and thus contribute to the spread of lawlessness. Likewise, in Latin America local bosses guaranteed order with the help of client groups but in countless cases this "order" exclusively served the interests of powerful local clans, and it was often defended even against the law.

In the United States efforts by the federal government to secure its monopoly of violence during the process of opening up the frontier and integrating new territories into the Union date back to the period before the Constitution was drafted and adopted. This early decision followed the increase of territory granted in the Treaty of Paris 1783 which extended the area of the United States from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. The new United States government defined the principles for opening up the new territories north of the Ohio River in the so-called "Northwest Ordinances" of 1784 and 1787, which set precedents for the country's further expansion after 1803. Earlier another important fundamental decision in favor of the central government had been made: The member states had ceded their (partly overlapping) claims for territories west of the Appalachians to the new central government, and it was this new central (i.e. federal) government, not the individual member states, which came to own the new territories and would order and control their use and sale. They were to be subdivided successively and be accepted as states into the Union "on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever." (Commager 1963: 131). The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 explicitly mentions the necessary steps for establishing and approving political institutions which were to be established on the precedent of republican government on the state and the federal level. The federal government was also given sole authority (first by the Northwest Ordinance, then by the Constitution of 1787 which became law of the land in 1789) in the delicate question of how to deal with the indigenous population. Responsibility for the federal government's Indian policy, which initially rested with the War Department, was transferred to the Department of the Interior at the middle of the 19th century. In reality it was the army which as the most important federal institution on the spot assumed the tasks of protecting the frontier and guaranteeing public order (Tate 1999; Prucha 1953, 1969). In principle, if not in everyday practice, this precluded the predominance of regional special interests. Territorial and state governments,

however, did collaborate with the federal government in opening the frontier to settlement. Selective recruiting of European immigrants by new states was encouraged by relatively liberal immigration and naturalization laws (Schöberl 1990). Steady population growth in turn led to the increase of federal, state, and local government institutions, strengthening the presence of the state in those former frontier areas.

In contrast to the United States, the opening and settlement of frontiers in Latin America did not occur as a result of continuous and extensive immigration from Europe (plans along those lines during the period of Bourbon reforms were not, or only party, carried out) but mostly because of sporadic and random internal migrations. There was no demographic factor of similar weight on the Latin American frontiers as in the North American case, or only in an inverted, negative sense: e.g. Mexico hardly received European immigrants in the 19th century, and "typical" immigration countries like Argentina are described for the 1860s as extremely underpopulated (Jones 1994). This meant that the state often had an insufficient social basis to establish its presence on the frontiers, i.e. state institutions and the principles or "ideas" represented by the state had no backing in the loosely structured, dispersed, and sparsely settled frontier societies[5]. Thus there were great differences inside Latin America, too: State organization on the frontier was scattered rather than broken by segmentary forces, as was often the case in the interior, where the state had to compete with ethnic and local communities or family-based networks in the 19th century and often was unable to prevail –or able to prevail only on condition of accepting compromise– against powerful groups which were regionally or locally bound but nevertheless firmly established and compact (Mallon 1992). This is also true for the United States as a temporary condition: The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 linked the progressive establishment of governmental authority to a demographic factor. Initially the federal government was in control of a territory. Upon reaching a male adult population of 5,000 a legislature was to be elected and a delegate (without the right to vote) sent to the Congress in Washington. A population of at least 60,000 then was necessary to apply for statehood[6].

It must be pointed out, however, that contrary to the situation in Latin America the contest over power on the North American frontier was defined and limited from the beginning by a process in which the area would be continuously developed toward greater institutional density and completeness. So long as the state was inadequately represented by institutions (in this context legal institutions and police authorities are particularly pertinent), pioneers and settlers, applying internalized legal norms of the communities in the East which they had left, and at times vigilante committees as well, filled these gaps and took on functions of public order, indictment and enforcement[7].

---

5 There were regional as well as time differences, however. E.g. in Northern Mexico there were relatively densely settled mining areas in which the state tried to increase its control in the late colonial period, among other measures by a consciously initiated policy of settlement.

6 The Northwest Ordinance specifies: "So soon as there shall be five thousand free male inhabitants of full age in the district ..., they shall receive authority ..., to elect representatives from their counties or townships to represent them in the general assembly ..." and "whenever any of the said States shall have sixty thousand free inhabitants therein, such State shall be admitted ..., into the Congress of the United States, on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever...", Commager 1963: 129 and 131.

7 *Cf.* Reid 1980 and 1997, Huggins 1991: 14 f., Abrahams 1998, Culberson 1990.

3. Some Remarks Concerning Agents of Violence

In a recent study David Courtwright has drawn attention to the development of violence in the United States, in which he, too, primarily deals with the frontier areas during the 19th century. He essentially sees demographic factors as decisive for the pattern of violence in the U.S.A., arguing that it was single and transient young men who were the agents of violence on North America's frontiers: "As an immigrant society America experienced a more or less continuous influx of youthful male workers... Insofar as young, single men are any society's most troublesome and unruly citizens, America had a built-in tendency toward violence and disorder" (Courtwright 1996: 3). The typical environment in which these acts of violence occurred were the mining towns and the camps of the Union Pacific Railroad. Often violence was triggered by conflicts over honor and status. This violent behavior of single young men preceded in certain ways those urban "subcultures" of violence which were described –and defined– by the Chicago School of Sociology for the first time in the 1920s. Courtwright's hypothesis, which is not new but empirically better documented than before, can be blamed with being monocausal, because he disregarded other factors of violence. One can also doubt if family structure based on the nuclear family and individual relationship and anchored in religious beliefs really contributes to a reduction of violence, as Courtwright claims (Levinson 1989). Nevertheless Courtwright's hypothesis is interesting for comparative purposes, because the type of violent single young men he described was less prevalent in Latin America in the 19th century where even gangs were sometimes organized as separate, inter-generational communities in distant areas as occasions arose. Even in rural areas gangs were not "a predominantly male group but a complete society that included males and females of all ages" (Merrill 1994: 143), as one author describes the situation in Northern Mexico for the time around 1780. Since these gangs could be migrating communities, the possibility cannot be ruled out that in these Latin American gangs "…forces were unleashed which in Anglo America could be absorbed by the frontier" (Hellwege 1976: 24).

The separation of young violent actors from structures of violence dominated by ties of kin or clan tended to happen much later in parts of Latin America than in the United States. While in Mexico such processes apparently occurred in the early 1930s, in Colombia male youngsters did not begin to organize youth gangs in the towns until the 1950s (Betancourt/García 1991: 120). It seems that the perpetrators of violence in the 19th century in the United States whom Courtwright had in mind were primarily individuals who united into autonomous groups on a more or less voluntary basis. While they did not pose a threat to the state's authority, in Latin America –and in the United States' Southern states during the period of Reconstruction as well– a type of violent actor predominated who was integrated into hierarchically organized social systems and performed acts of violence on the basis of corporate ties, client oriented groups or clan loyalties and who could therefore be integrated into particularistic local power networks and used against the state as well. An indicator of this different objective is the fact that violent actors in ethnic areas and neighborhoods and in the isolated rural communities usually were part of a kinship network. This by the way could lead to severe generational conflict: Repeatedly skirmishes occurred between groups of violent youngsters on the one hand and the established local socio-religious hierarchy on the other hand in Indian villa-

ges of the high plains of Central America in the 19th century. The state tried to take advantage of this antagonism by recruiting young men into the militias and defining these militias as "ladino" institutions, i.e. as an ethnic based institution. By intentionally separating them from the Indian population, it tried to break up the local and ethnic solidarity of the highland communities and to increase its own influence in the villages (Carmack 1990).

Often family ties were extended by ritual forms of kinship relations (*compadrazgo*)[8]. In the early 19th century, when state structures in Latin America were essentially weakened or even disappeared temporarily or completely in isolated or war areas, or in turn, when old community associations and corporate relationships were successfully destroyed by the state's liberal policies, whenever it was in a position to do so, these kin and client oriented networks were able to fill the vacuum of power and function as political and social power brokers "in [their] own right" (Balmori et al. 1984: 4). People's loyalties and confidence thereby remained linked to the principle of kinship, not to the comparatively abstract "idea" of the state. The organization of violence was often controlled by powerful family clans –unlike in the United States, where only a few such clan and family based structures emerged. For example, the *gamonalismo* originated in the Andes Mountains, "… a regional tradition of coercive local power... based on both the use of physical violence and the manipulation of certain racial and aesthetic distinction, gender and authority" (Poole 1994: 5). Of course, this also included violence directed against women. Its rates apparently were very high even in colonial times, "...astonishing observers again and again and filling court archives" (Bernand/Gruzinski 1997: 43).

An additional observation needs to be made at this point. Although we focus in this essay on the type of violent actor bound into client relationships in Latin America in the 19th century, this does not mean, of course, that all persons participating in collective acts of violence not sanctioned by the state were integrated into such a framework of client commitment, corporate organization or kin networks. It was especially processes of institution formation that redirected young men's violent actions. Certainly the beginning professionalization of the military in the late 19th century played a major role. The goal was to create "new" European-style armies which by the way had not been needed until then. Thus "[n]ineteenth-century Brazilian history demonstrated little need for such an army" (McCann 1997: 43). The importance of new "modern" political movements which emerged at the end of the 19th century has already been pointed out. Even in the 19th century these violent actors were able to leave behind such ties and loyalties in a different social environment, especially in the towns, where the organization of violence followed other patterns. One example are the various "revolutions" which occurred in Buenos Aires in the second half of the 19th century (Sabato 2001). Mobilizing the urban population was especially important in that city since 1852, since its liberal political elite based its power not primarily on landed property and personal dependence but on its ability to form a coalition of "freely" available groups among the urban population and to demonstrate to its political rivals in election campaigns and political conflicts that it had sufficient numbers of followers. Because of the close, almost seamless transition between civil and violent-military behavior –which was partly due to the city's frontier tradi-

---

8 *Compadrazgo* is a dense "network of mutual support, solidarity, and dependence ...to guarantee the economic and political survival" of a group (Bernand/Gruzinski 1997: 250).

tion, partly the result of the revolutionary rhetoric and which manifested itself most clearly in the institution of the militia resp. the "national" guard– these mobilizations consistently escalated into violent conflict, even in election campaigns. In these political conflicts violent actors in the urban environment were recruited in part from the city's lower classes and later increasingly from immigrant groups, especially Italians (who by the way officially were not entitled to vote), in part from the "citizens". Political opponents generally called them mob or rabble. Although these persons were also mobilized through client favoritism and promises, they could always shift their loyalties. The degree of voluntary commitment which entered client relationships was therefore greater, and it became even more pronounced when political competition in urban environments increased and populist movements emerged since around 1890 (Sabato 2001).

Although several factors tend to support Courtwright's hypothesis and suggest different types of violent actors in Latin America and the United States, we must make some qualifications. In the United States regional variations were important. For instance, in the antebellum South we also find the type of violent actor who was involved in feuds as a member of a kinship network and who was very similar to his Latin American counterpart (Brown 1994: 81). For in the South of the United States a patriarchal, semifeudal slave society emerged with its own traditional code of ethics and values firmly rooted in the racial divide and often based on kinship ties –in distinct contrast to individual and egalitarian concepts. The elevated notion of honor, in part derived from English and Scotch-Irish traditions, in fact a downright "cult of honor" on the one hand and the lasting impact of the frontier on the other, especially in the South, where government institutions were traditionally weak[9], meant that the state was regarded as irrelevant when it came to solving personal conflict:

> Honor thrives in a rural society of face-to-face contact, of a limited number of relationships, of one system of values. Honor depends upon a hierarchical society, where one is defined by who is above or below him. Honor grows well in a society where the rationalizing power of the state is weak; an adherence to honor makes the state, at best, irrelevant in settling personal disputes (Ayers 1989: 1483).

In this situation a "culture of violence" (Reed 1982: 141) developed, finding different expressions in the social strata, like fist fights in the lower class or duels in the elite. Its legacy was carried into the 20th century; statistics show for instance a disproportionately high rate of capital crimes like homicides and of ownership of firearms in the South (Reed 1985: 45-55, Lundsgaarde 1989: 1478). Violence was not applied indiscriminately, however, but was primarily directed against African Americans, first to maintain slavery, and, after emancipation, to cement segregation; also against other white Southerners in order to defend one's honor and that of one's family, or after the Civil War, when organizations like the Ku Klux Klan were founded, even the honor of the whole South. In certain cases –like defending the honor of Southern women– killing the suspected perpetrator was seen as justified and often had no penal consequences[10].

---

9 *Cf.* Redfield 1880, cited in Gastil 1989: 1473.

10 *Cf.* Raymond D. Gastil's comments on John Sheldon Reed's analyses: "Reed suggests that the concept of justifiable homicide is at the heart of the southern tendency to violence. One carries a gun or a knife

On the other hand we also must make several qualifications for Latin America. This applies for regional variations as well as for demographic tendencies. In Latin American towns kinship structures of lower social groups were often deficient; in rural areas migrant labor contributed to dissolving firm family ties. Thus "lo transitorio", i.e. the transient whom Courtwright identifies as contributing to violence in the United States, was also common in at least parts of Latin America (Cacopardo/ Moreno 1997: 28). There was a surplus of young and also semi-nomadic men on the frontiers anyway. Thus this comparison qualifies Courtwright's hypothesis and leads us away from narrowly demographic considerations to the social and cultural context of the organization of violence. To sum up: It was *not* the demographic and age structure per se that was decisive for the predominance of a certain type of violent actor. It was rather the social structure and the cultural context which mattered and which in the Latin American case forced vagrant young men to accommodate themselves to hierarchically structured social systems to a much larger degree than in the United States and to pursue their options within these frameworks. In certain respects it was these conditions which channeled young men's willingness to resort to violence. This propensity to violence at the same time was available to special interests which could become dangerous even for the state. In particular powerful regional groups were repeatedly able to attack the state itself in the 19th century. In addition we have to bear in mind that a comparatively strong anti-state tradition had been existing in Latin America since colonial times, whereby local communities or ethnic groups or Messianic religious movements, on the basis of village-oriented, "localocentric" cosmologies (Young 1989: 111) resisted the state's encroachment on what they believed to be their "traditional" territories and rights.

In the United States by contrast "traditional" rights, which stood in the way of the state's claim of power during the period of rapid westward expansion, were more strongly tied to the individual, and less to "organic" communities and their demands, i.e. local violent actors could not avail themselves to the same degree as in Latin America of an historically evolved territorial support and a strong sense of local identity. Various factors, like the predominance of individual settlement in the course of westward migration and the establishment of family farming, favored the individualization of violent actors in the United States, although individualism as later glorified by Hollywood in the person of the lone "western hero" taking action in the face of weak, or even absent, government institutions should be read as an image that barely reflected reality. In the United States, too, violence was often initiated by groups, not by individuals.

4. Institutions

In the United States long-term and fairly consistent structures of state development encouraged the activities of violent agents of a more egalitarian bent who either established so-called "cultures of violence" of single young men or, conversely, who feeling

---

because one might have to use it, and one uses it because the occasion merits it. ... violence ... is often viewed in a neutral or even laudatory way... For southerners, murder in defense of honor, after sufficient provocation, is more often tragic rather than simply wrong" (1989: 1475).

more like "citizens" formed vigilante organizations supposedly to enforce law and order. Reference has already been made to the mechanisms which were devised early on to integrate new territories politically. One assumption, i.e. the equal participation of all citizens, was better realized when political participation was widened to include a greater part of the population in the 1830s (Ueda 1980, Keil 1988). This expansion was accompanied at the same time by a notion of settlement which aimed at individual land holding. Individuals played an important role indeed in the long-term strategy of recreating social and political structures which had been tried out in other parts of the country in order to progressively integrate the new western acquisitions. At least for limited periods of transition individuals and groups of law-abiding citizens were needed to fill the vacuum of power by taking initiative and standing up for the law. Typically a myth has been constructed around the history of westward expansion and the pacification of the frontier: Despite many obstacles –outlaw gangs terrorizing an intimidated population ("High Noon"), lynch law being practiced by vigilante committees– state authority is progressively developed and established, and it finally prevails. In the end the lone hero becomes the representative of law enforcement (Sheriff), while vigilante citizens' groups have to dissolve. Thus ultimately a check is put on individual violence, which had been tolerated as indispensable for a time, and publicly sanctioned authority replaces individual power (Slotkin 1973).

While the "embourgeoisement" of the organization of violence was encouraged by the impact of individual actors in the United States, such a development hardly occurred in Latin America. Witness even today the wide ignorance of the systems of law in Latin American countries, the basic distrust of the police and judiciary as well as the inclination to arbitrary justice and to taking the law into one's own hand. Frequently it was simply the law of the jungle which prevailed, while below this surface of "formal" institutional instability and discontinuity "informal" institutions, which had emerged from cultural and traditional habits, showed a remarkable degree of continuity. Not only did the above-mentioned clan and client violence replace the state's authority in many cases but often state institutions themselves were incorporated into this kinship network of violence and redefined by local rules and conditions. We find reports of the organization of a "local violence" not or only partially sanctioned by the state as late as in postrevolutionary Mexico in the 1930s (Knight 1997: 114 f.). This meant that the European model, according to which the organization of violence would be progressively bureaucratized, did not apply to Latin America, because even in cases in which "the state" controlled violence in the 19th century, it was often personal interests, like revenge or family feuds, instead of what we consider as genuine state concerns, which directed the use of violence. E.g. Lewis Taylor describes how the clashes of interest between the political parties in Northern Peru, which were settled in small gang wars until 1930, really originated from old family feuds. The local police was either powerless against such "mutual vendetta struggles" (Taylor 1980: 45) or was involved in them itself. This is one reason why the social status of the police was low in Latin America, because many people agreed that the police primarily served the interests of individual families and powerful groups. In fact in many cases powerful families determined the police personnel in the rural areas at least until the 1930s so that formal and informal structures of violence as well as legal, semi-legal and illegal forms of seizing power were closely interlocked (Nugent 1999). Because social forms, which were related to the organization of violence, penetrated the

state and blurred the lines of distinction between the two, it is not surprising that state institutions like the military, which were extended and "modernized" in the late 19th century, continued the concepts of violence that were derived from traditional values and notions of gender utilizing them for their own construction of what Beattie calls a "military culture" (1997: 67). Here we encounter the problem of "hybrid" orientation so hotly debated at the present time in the cultural studies, in this case with respect to the organization of violence.

In contrast to the United States the movement for independence in Latin America after 1810 did not transfer sovereignty to the citizens –or did so only in a limited way– but rather to corporate organizations, the *pueblos* or towns. Some historians regard this as an expression of the tradition of Latin America's authoritarian political culture. They argue that the establishment of patrimonial, client oriented, inherently authoritarian structures, of what they call coercive patron-client relations, was supported in the socio-economic as well as in the political sphere as a result of Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule (Adelman 1999). Therefore we are confronted with the paradoxical situation in the 19th century that the state made a comparatively sweeping claim for power on the basis of its traditional self-definition. Thus in Argentina it continued to follow enlightened absolutistic views in criminal law even in the last third of the 19th century, whereas it paid no attention to "the citizens' legal protection" (Duve 2000: 846). On the other hand, however, it was unable to realize this claim because of the actual power relationships and the force and influence of segmentary structures, regional interests or local bosses in Argentine society in the 19th century. In the United States, in comparison, the relationship was rather reverse and the principle of individualism which predominated in the political culture prevented authoritarian claims to power from the start. This difference can be tracked down even in patterns of urban settlement: In Latin America the predominant view since the early colonial period was that the towns should be laid out around a center and take shape from there, whereas in the United States efforts were made "to do away with a public center" (Sennett 1991: 72), as plans for Chicago in 1833 or San Francisco in 1849 demonstrate.

The police offers a particularly good example of the state's attitude toward the control of violence. In the United States the police was organized as a local institution in the middle of the 19th century. For the remainder of the century it remained socially "integrated" and a "spoils" for the parties and machine politics (Knöbl 1999: 171). The state had hardly any means to intervene in local affairs and for a long time it was barely able anyway to contain social conflict, like strikes. The political public also had a comparatively large degree of control over the state's use of violence. In his analysis of the guerilla war in Missouri which occurred during the Civil War Michael Fellman has described how the press prevented the Union army from imposing draconian measures against the civilian population, like compulsory resettlement (1997: 523 f.). It was only in the last third of the 19th century when state militias were quickly organized after the railroad strike in 1877 that the federal states assumed wider authority for repressive measures (Whisker 1999, Cooper 1997). By and large the development of the police in the United States –in contrast to Latin America– reflects the absence of patrimonial and bureaucratic traditions, a solid "balance of central and centrifugal resp. federal elements" and a high degree of the citizens' participating in political affairs (Knöbl 1999: 171 f.). In Latin America the collective capacity for participation of wider groups of the population in the

towns was impeded by ethnic differences, demographic fluctuations, and by the impact of patriarchic and client ties on political behavior for a long time. It was only social changes toward the end of the 19th century which led to increased organized social conflict in the big Latin American countries and their emerging urban centers and to more insistent calls for the extension of the state's repressive powers under the guidance of the political elites (Arrom 1996).

Although the Latin American (urban) police developed in a direction similar in some respects to developments in the United States, its structure differed considerably in other ways. We refer to tendencies toward the militarization of "internal security", already apparent in the 19th century, which resulted from the state's inherent weakness rather than its strength. This led to a police force which was prone to acts of severe repression as soon as the opportunity arose, acting without being adequately controlled by the judiciary resp. the public. Since the police had a low social status in Latin American countries, and its staff was either recruited from marginal social groups or supplemented by conscription to reach its authorized strength, the state's principles and "modern", i.e. Weberian rationalist views did not gain acceptance in the police forces. Instead corruption, arbitrary acts, or indifference prevailed, and specific and separate "subcultures" emerged which practiced their own brands of semilegal violence. It was therefore the police itself which frequently appeared as the agent of unlawful violence and often counteracted its "true" function to protect the citizens. This type of indifferent violence employed by the police in the 19th century which resulted from ignoring the law, however, was substantially distinct from the terrorist violence which parts of Latin American police forces practiced during the most recent periods of state despotism in the 1970s and 1980s. Police reform generally did not occur until the 1920s. Paul Chevigny claims that the "modernization" of the police forces happened primarily because the "elites" pushed for better training and control of the police in order to contain unrest and strengthen the social order (Chevigny 1995: 261). Still in most cases Latin American countries have not –or have only temporarily– succeeded in transforming the police into a reliable representative of legal state power. This becomes especially apparent when we look at the intimate network of police cadres or complete police forces on the one hand and various forms of vigilantism –for social control or the control of crimes– on the other hand. This interconnection between the police and semi-illegal or unlawful vigilantism is by the way different from developments in the United States. For there vigilante committees usually were

> social groups who took the law into their own hand, whereas in South America most vigilante initiatives originated from the state sphere. It was not a coalition of radicalized citizens but the state security forces who as the agents of state authority, or in informal functions, were responsible for the majority of vigilante acts of violence in the southern part of the Americas (Waldmann 1995: 64).

The history of state formation in Europe since 1500 demonstrates that the development of the state's control of violence was closely connected with its capacity for waging wars. In Europe historically these wars between states were very important for the extension of tax systems and state bureaucracies, and later for consolidating the resources of violence in respective institutions. What were the developments in the Americas? In the United States as well as in Latin America we find a preponderance of inner wars resp.

civil wars, as against wars between states in the 19th century. However, there were also substantial differences. In addition to the wars which the United States waged against Great Britain (1812-1814), Mexico (1846-1848), and Spain (1898), the Civil War in the United States from 1861 to 1865 also had the dimension of a genuine war between two nations: About three million soldiers served in this war between the Northern and Southern states, of whom 600,000 died. Especially the Union conducted the war on the basis of an industrializing economy. The Civil War caused a considerable increase of violence, which continued after the war had ended, particularly in the South where racist motivated forms of violence as well as violent feuds between family clans increased. However, the Civil War had considerable consequences for state formation in the United States, such as the extension of the suffrage to male Afro-Americans in 1870 (Berg 2000) –which Southern states severely restricted and, as it were, generally withheld after the end of Reconstruction through various laws and intimidation campaigns. The state not only basically settled the problem of regionalism, so virulent in Latin America, in favor of federal, i.e. central authority– although its actual realization would have to await the 1930s and 1960s. The success of the liberal capitalist economy on the basis of free labor including the former slave states, the resolution of conflicting concepts of the role of the (federal) state, state intervention in the economy, the introduction of conscription (though limited to a few years during the Civil War), and the impact on the political public –all these developments "led to first steps toward transforming the state into the modern 'leviathan'" (Förster/Nagler 1997: 4). These "first steps" were followed by measures of pacification after the Civil War when the state employed similar warfare strategies on the Western frontier which remained contested by Indian tribes; i.e. the army was not only deployed in the Southern states to introduce the rule of order, but increasingly on the frontier as well to impose the state's territorial claims on the Indian reservations which had been guaranteed a special status until then. According to Chief Justice John Marshall's interpretation of the Constitution in 1831 and 1832 Indian tribes were regarded as domestic dependent nations (Hobson 1996). Therefore they had a special relationship to the federal government and were not subject to individual state authority, legislation and jurisdiction. In 1871, however, this policy including the recognition of relative territorial and legal independence was terminated. Using military force, the (federal) state rigorously eliminated the last remaining loophole that challenged its monopoly of violence.

In comparison to the United States most wars which were waged in Latin America seem to have weakened, instead of strengthened, the state –with perhaps the exception of Chile, as we indicated before. Several times in the 19th century the Chilean state was able to decide wars against neighboring states in its favor. In the first place interstate wars were the exception and inner wars predominated; in the case of Colombia there were no other but internal wars in the 19th century. These internal wars had the effect of fragmenting the state, however, especially since the military did not always represent the state's interests. Frequently the military resembled gang armies, which were organized as "family based patron-client networks" (Holden 1996: 445) and served local *caudillos* resp. "regional warlords" (Depalo 1997: 157, Riekenberg 1999b) rather than the state. Networking between the gangs and the military also occurred frequently. In Mexico for instance large gangs dominated the economies in several provinces in the middle of the 19th century, extorting protection money and de facto maintaining order in these "markets of violence" which they controlled. The state succeeded only gradually –and only

when more favorable economic conditions developed– in controlling the situation by "assimilating the gangsters into a police corps" (Vanderwood 1992: 54) in the second half of the 19th century.

An analysis of these wars reveals that Messianic religious movements could emerge among ethnic or other groups in rural areas in Latin America in the 19th century who contributed to the overall extension and escalation of violence by introducing an ethically legitimated "sacralized" version (Vanderwood 1998). Yet the phenomenon of ethnic wars which generally played such an important role for the increase of violence was lacking in these cases (Riekenberg 2000). Except for several larger military clashes on the frontiers in Northern and Eastern Mexico (Yucatan) resp. in Cono Sur in the south, which became more sharply ethnicized in the course of the 19th century and finally culminated in efforts to exterminate the indigenous population through the use of troops, violent conflicts for ethnic reasons were rare. Completely absent as well were in Latin America the ethnically motivated national wars so common in Europe –except when we want to characterize Paraguay's war against the "triple alliance" as an ethnic interstate conflict. An important reason for this absence of ethnic wars may be that the Latin American countries did not pursue the ethnicization of "national" identity in the 19th century because of the diverse origins of their populations, but tried to define their identity by political categories (citizenship) instead, according to the French model of "political" nation-building. Nationalist movements including ethnic groups were absent in this period as well. The movement for independence itself had been organized still by the representatives of the client oriented Creole "patriotism", and "modern" nationalist movements did not emerge in Latin America until the Mexican revolution 1910-1920 resp. until the rise of populist middle class political currents in the towns of the Cono Sur (Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires) at the beginning of the 20th century. Since the state did not act as an agent of ethnic violence in the 19th century in Latin America, the ethnicization of violence by and large did not occur on the same scale that we know from other regions in the world where the symbiosis between state and ethnicity could (and can) lead to enormous excesses of ethnic violence.

In the United States national identity was similarly established by political identification and citizenship. In the –often violent– contest for access to political and social participation ethnic, racial, and religious divisions were absolutely important, not only with respect to groups which were not part of society, like the indigenous population, who faced repeated attempts at extermination, subjugation, or finally (since 1887) Americanization, but also with respect to the Afro-American population to whom citizenship was finally accorded in 1868 after emancipation, whose rights as citizens, however, were decisively curtailed by a policy of racial discrimination in the Southern states (Franklin/Moss 1988: 231-38). Ethnic and racial violence also entered the urban centers since the 1830s, when the old immigrant elites reacted with nativist slogans and violence against the new masses of immigrants –e.g. Irish Catholics and German immigrants– who brought with them alien cultural traditions which were perceived as threatening cherished WASP ("White Anglo-Saxon Protestant") values. Repeatedly these immigrant groups themselves triggered urban riots –usually against other ethnic and racial groups, above all against Afro-Americans competing in the labor market– in their efforts at establishing themselves in, and being recognized by, American society (Jacobson 1998).

5. Conclusions and Further Questions

In the case of the United States the diffusion of violence which we described in the beginning seems to derive from a basically different relationship between the individual and society, in certain respects also from individual legal rights vis-à-vis the state. It does not stem, however, as it does in Latin America in many cases, from segmentary powers questioning the state's authority. Although violence used by other agents than the state is mostly the domain of young men (to put it simply) in the United States (with the exception of the South at certain periods) as well as in Latin America (though there were also other violent actors including women), in the United States these young men tended to form separate egalitarian groups and to found so-called "subcultures of violence" in the mining centers on the frontier. These forms of violence appear to be the precursors of urban ethnic subcultures of violence in North American cities after 1920 in several respects. Likewise the tradition of individuals joining voluntary associations in order to safeguard their interests –a habit which Max Weber also drew attention to– and to act on their own initiative and responsibility, thereby restricting the state's power from the start, also had consequences for the organization of violence. Here "citizens" cooperated in vigilante groups united by the belief in the individual's social responsibility. In comparison violent actors in Latin America were often (but not always) part of a hierarchical, client and clan oriented power structure representing local interests. Numerous violent actors in Latin America were so to speak "local heroes" to begin with, although in a very limited way, because they were deprived of their autonomy at the same time or were able to restore it only by withdrawing to geographic border areas or to marginal social and cultural spaces and by organizing into gangs.

Influential theories of society taking European developments as their model support the argument that a society will become increasingly civilized when the state attains the monopoly over physical violence. This view must be qualified in the case of the Americas. In the United States the principle of individualism so firmly embedded in constitutional and social thought and the general acceptance of the rule of law favored "civil" structures of violence in the society and the economy, whereas in Latin America we find a structure of violence whose character we can describe more accurately as segmentary. This did not only result in the building up of violence between more or less equal antagonists, as Norbert Elias has discussed in detail from the perspective of sociological theory. Other than in the case of the so-called subcultures of violence in the United States the state's capability of influencing the control of violence was apparently limited to a much larger degree by these segmentary structures in Latin America. They eventually provoked the state –often a weak agent of violence among others –to act in an arbitrary and uncontrolled way when it tried to extend its authority, supporting the diffusion and transgression of violence "from above" by the excessive use of force. The state's erratic use of violence can be pursued to the present when tendencies toward liberalization lead to limiting its civil functions on the one hand while at the same time expanding its repressive capacities (Pereira/Davis 2000). Thus contrary to theoretical models even a temporarily "strong" state in Latin America had only a limited civilizing impact, because when it held a monopoly of violence, as in periods of terrorist authoritarian regimes, it refused its citizens any reliable protection against the arbitrary application of force. Therefore the theoretical model which postulates the reduction of violence in the course of the extension of the state's power fits developments in Latin America only partially.

When analyzing societies –and examining violence– the new social history has employed the categories "above" and "below". It was thus able to focus on social protest movements, economically motivated unrest or various forms of state repression. It also developed several theoretical models, like the theory of relative deprivation, behavior and imitation approaches to violence, models of social exclusion, which are to provide plausible explanations for the development of violence from the perspective of social history (including allegedly the view from "below"). In close alliance with theories of modernization social historical approaches have asked if violence increased or decreased in the transition from "traditional" to modern societies. Equally fruitful is an approach, however, which applies cultural theory models to the comparison of violence in the United States and Latin America, using the categories "internal" and "external". This perspective illustrates that in the United States violence had a clear purpose, being directed against "strangers". Social and cultural hierarchical structures could be intimately involved, as is evident in the organization of racist motivated violence in the South of the United States. The significance of "the stranger" for the organization, legitimation and direction of violence probably also helps to account for the importance of ethnic resp. racial as well as religious violence (Newton 1991). One example would be the phenomenon of vigilantism which primarily resulted from ethnic, racial and religious conflict and was directed against real or imagined minorities as well as against immigrants. This tradition in the United States to link the legitimation of violence against "foreigners" to notions of spatial as well as social and ethnic separation may account for the later occurrence of ghettoization in North American towns. In Latin America on the other hand violence was preferably applied in internal conflicts, from the war of independence against Spain –which many Creoles saw as a "war between brothers" because of their close historical, cultural and language ties– to the gang and "civil" wars of the present time. This undermined the state's ability to control violence, to distance itself from society and to establish itself as a center of power in and of its own right.

This stronger tendency in the United States to direct violence against "external" groups as against the application of violence in "internal" conflicts in Latin America helps to explain characteristic differences of patterns of violence. For there was a noticeable predominance of various forms of vigilantism, "Indian wars" and race riots in the United States in the 19th century, whereas violence in Latin America was characterized by "civil wars" (this term not always is very accurate to describe violent conflicts in sometimes more or less stateless societies), rebellions, *caudillo* uprisings and gang wars. In order to avoid misunderstanding, however, we must emphasize that no conclusions can be drawn as to the amount of violence, ruthlessness, or cruelty applied in cases of violent conflict. Violent ethnic or racial conflicts are characterized by a particularly ruthless use of force, holding the opponent in contempt and prohibiting an impartial view. This is equally true, however, of the internal resp. civil wars which can also be conducted in an especially intense way –not least because of the spatial proximity and "mutual familiarity of the combatants" which in turn force the protagonists to distance themselves from each other by using violence (Waldmann 1997: 484). In addition we have to take into account that similar violent phenomena can have completely different origins. Thus the practice of arbitrary law in the United States tends to derive from natural law and individualistic traditions of controlling state power, whereas in Latin America it originates from a deep-seated distrust of the state and its ability to administrate the social order properly and impartially.

We have hardly addressed the relationship between violence and the economy in this essay, although it should be submitted to much closer scrutiny. In the case of Latin America e.g. the question would be pertinent if the historically older forms of non-state systems of violence nowadays help to establish a new relationship between informality and violence in illegal markets. For the purpose of rough orientation, violence can be divided into violence which occurs in "closed" resp. in "open" economies (we adopt this distinction as made by Rufin 1999). In the first case the organization of violence is exclusively dependent upon utilizing local resources; therefore its potential for escalation is limited from the beginning. In the second case resources and funds are supplied from outside, the organization of violence is market oriented, in extreme cases it is completely organized as a business, i.e. violence becomes a commodity resp. service to be sold. On the basis of this distinction we can assume that in the 19th-century United States violence usually occurred in "open" economic regions and in the context of commercial relations because of the country's greater economic potential and dynamics. A poignant folkloristic example is the figure of the highwayman who left the towns of the west coast for sporadic raids and attacks in the trans-Sierra frontier in order to enrich himself (McGrath 1984: 247 f.). In Latin America on the other hand we often find violent actors operating in "closed" economic areas. The reasons for this difference were regional isolation, the absence of supra-regional markets or low degrees of monetarization. Labor and property conditions further facilitated the integration of violent actors in these closed economic regions, because in Latin America –in contrast to the yeoman farmer in the United States– ranchers and land owners with large holdings were able to maintain armed clientilistic forces with their own funds. In contrast, in those parts of the United States where medium-sized farms dominated, violent actors could only organize on a voluntary basis, e.g. into vigilante associations, which were, however, often tolerated by the state authorities in the South. In Latin America economically isolated violent actors prevailed in areas where subsistence economies and closed local economic systems predominated. Their range was limited, however. If they acted beyond their local territory they were dependent on additional proceeds in the long run, like the regionally based *caudillos* in Peru who were paid by the large merchants in Lima (Gootenberg 1989: 107).

This comparison entails several methodological problems. It risks simply affirming the familiar when trying to explain different developments of violence in the United States and Latin America by referring to more general political or social developments as described in other historical studies. At the worst the comparison can reinforce research stereotypes instead of demolishing them. For example, is the individualistic orientation of violent actors in the United States which we have noticed perhaps the result of a specific "bourgeois" identity which we projected on the object of our inquiry ourselves? We must also ask if such a comparison between the United States and Latin America should be broken down into a comparison between different sub-phenomena, like the *gamonalismo* in the Andes region or the specific pattern of violence in the U.S. South. It may be that general conclusions are too broad. Differences between urban and rural areas are also important. In sum the greatest correspondence between violence in the United States and Latin America could be found in the more limited field of culturally motivated patterns: The feeling of violated honor, rituals of masculinity, the transitions between playful competition and violent acts –all these can be found on both continents. As the impact of social change and institutional action on the organization and use of violence

grew in the course of the 19th century, differences in the patterns of violence between the United States and Latin America apparently widened as well.

Bibliography[11]

Abrahams, Ray G. (1998): *Vigilant Citizens. Vigilantism and the State*. Malden, MA.

Adelman, Jeremy (ed.) (1999): *Colonial Legacies. The Problem of Persistance in Latin American History*. New York/London.

Arrom, Silvia M. (1996): "Introduction". In: Arrom, Silvia M./Ortoll, Servando (eds.): *Riots in the Cities. Popular Politics and the Urban Poor in Latin America, 1765-1910*. Wilmington, pp. 1-16.

Ayers, Edward L. (1989): "Honor". In: Wilson, Charles Reagan/Ferris, William (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Chapel Hill/London, pp. 1483-1484.

Balmori, Diana et al. (1984): *Notable Family Networks in Latin America*. Chicago.

Beattie, Peter (1997): "Conflicting Penile Codes. Modern Masculinity and Sodomy in the Brazilian Military, 1860-1916". In: Balderston, Daniel/Guy, Donna J. (eds.): *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America*. New York/London, pp. 65-85.

Bellesiles, Michael A. (ed.) (1999): *Lethal Imagination: Violence and Brutality in American History*. New York.

Bellesiles, Michael A. (2000): *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture*. New York.

Bercovitch, Sacvan (1986): *Puritan Origins of the American Self*. New Haven.

Berg, Manfred (2000): "Soldaten und Bürger: Zum Zusammenhang von Krieg und Wahlrecht in der amerikanischen Geschichte". In: Knöbl, Wolfgang/Schmidt, Gunnar (eds.): *Die Gegenwart des Krieges. Staatliche Gewalt in der Moderne*. Frankfurt/Main, pp. 147-173.

Bernand, Carmen/Gruzinski, Serge (1997): "Die Familie in Mittelamerika und den Anden". In: Burguière, André et al. (eds.): *Geschichte der Familie.* Frankfurt/New York, vol. 3, pp. 195-268.

Betancourt, Dario/García, Martha L. (1991): *Matones y cuadrilleros: Origen y evolución de la violencia en el occidente colombiano*. Bogotá.

Brown, Richard Maxwell (1977): *Strain of Violence. Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism*. Oxford.

— (1983): "Historiography of Violence in the American West". In: Malone, Michael P. (ed.): *Historians and the American West*. Lincoln, pp. 234-254.

— (1994): "Historische Muster der Gewalt in Amerika". In: Joas, Hans/Knöbl, Wolfgang (eds.): *Gewalt in den USA*. Frankfurt/Main, pp. 75-121.

Cacopardo, María C./Moreno, José L. (1997): "Cuando los hombres estaban ausentes: la familia del interior de la Argentina decimonónica". In: Otero, Hernán/Velázquez, Guillermo (eds.): *Poblaciones argentinas. Estudios de demografía diferencial*. Buenos Aires, pp. 13-28.

Carmack, Robert M. (1990): "State and Community in Nineteenth-Century Guatemala". In: Smith, Carol (ed.): *Guatemalan Indians and the State: 1540 to 1988*. Austin, pp. 116-136.

Chevigny, Paul (1995): *Edge of the Knife: Police Violence in the Americas*. New York.

Commager, Henry Steele (ed.) (1963): *Documents of American History*. New York (7th ed.), vol. 1, pp. 128-132.

Cooper, Jerry M. (1997): *The Rise of the National Guard. Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920*. Lincoln.

[11] For editorial reasons we have confined ourselves to a sharply limited list of works.

Courtwright, David (1996): *Violent Land. Single Men and Social Disorder from the Frontier to the Inner City*. Cambridge/London.
Culberson, William C. (1990): *Vigilantism. Political History of Private Power in America*. New York.
Depalo, William A. (1997): *The Mexican National Army, 1822-1852*. Austin, TX.
Duve, Thomas (2000): "Feuerbach auf Feuerland? Das Strafgesetzbuch für das Königreich Baiern von 1813 und die Strafrechtsentwicklung in Argentinien". In: *Grundlagen des Rechts. Festschrift für Peter Landau zum 65. Geburtstag*. Paderborn, pp. 817-850.
Dykstra, Robert R. (1968): *The Cattle Towns*. New York.
Elias, Norbert (1977): "Theorie sozialer Prozesse". In: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 6, 2, pp. 127-149.
Elwert, Georg (1997): "Gewaltmärkte. Beobachtungen zur Zweckrationalität der Gewalt". In: Trotha, Trutz v. (ed.): *Soziologie der Gewalt*. Opladen, pp. 86-101.
Förster, Stig/Nagler, Jörg (eds.) *On the Road to Total War. The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871*. Cambridge.
François, Jean/Rufin, Jean-Christophe (1996): *Economie des guerres civiles*. Paris.
Franklin, John Hope/Moss, Jr., Alfred A. (1988): *From Slavery to Freedom. A History of Negro Americans*. New York (6.ª ed.), pp. 231-238.
Gastil, Raymond D. (1989): "Violence, Crime, and Punishment". In: Wilson, Charles Reagan/Ferris, William (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Chapel Hill/London, p. 1473.
Gootenberg, Paul (1989): *Between Silver and Guano. Commercial Policy and the State in Postindependence Peru*. Princeton.
Hackney, Sheldon (1969): "Southern Violence". In: *American Historical Review*, 74, pp. 906-925.
Halpern, Thomas (1996): *The Limits of Dissent: The Constitutional Status of Armed Civilian Militias*. Amherst, MA.
Heideking, Jürgen (1999): "'Ableger' Europas oder historischer Neubeginn? Britisch-Amerika und die USA". In: Reinhard, Wolfgang (ed.): *Verstaatlichung der Welt? Europäische Staatsmodelle und außereuropäische Machtprozesse*. München, pp. 1-18.
Hellwege, Johann (1976): "Frontier und Conquista". In: *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv*, 1, 24, pp. 1-37.
Hobson, Charles F. (1996): *The Great Chief Justice: John Marshall and the Rule of Law*. Lawrence.
Holden, Robert (1996): "Constructing the Limits of State Violence in Central America". In: *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 28, 2, pp. 435-459.
Hollon, W. Eugene (1974): *Frontier Violence: Another Look*. New York.
Huggins, Martha K. (ed.) (1991): *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America*. New York.
Jacobson, Matthew Frye (1998): *Whiteness of a Different Color. European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, MA.
Jones, Kristina L. (1994): "Southern Frontier". In: Szuchman, Mark/Brown, Jonathan (eds.): *Revolution and Restoration. Argentina 1776-1860*. Lincoln, Nebraska, pp. 103-123.
Keil, Hartmut (1988): "Einbürgerung und Kommunalwahlrecht". In: *Gulliver*, 22, pp. 36-44.
— (1991): "Die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika zwischen kontinentaler Expansion und Imperialismus". In: Reinhard, Wolfgang (ed.): *Imperialistische Kontinuität und nationale Ungeduld im 19. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt, pp. 68-86.
Kerr, Derek/Felony, Petty (1993): *Slave Defiance and Frontier Villainy: Crime and Criminal Justice in Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1803*. New York.
Knight, Alan (1997): "Habitus and Homicide: Political Culture in Revolutionary Mexico". In: Pansters, Wil G. (ed.): *Citizens of the Pyramid. Essays on Mexican Political Culture*. Amsterdam, pp. 107-129.

Knöbl, Wolfgang (1999): "Pfadabhängige Entwicklungen und Gewalt. Die Genese staatlicher Herrschaftsstrukturen in Preußen-Deutschland, England und den USA im "langen" 19. Jahrhundert". In: Neckel, Sighard/Schwab-Trapp, Michael: *Ordnungen der Gewalt: Beiträge zu einer politischen Soziologie der Gewalt und des Krieges.* Opladen, pp. 161-179.
Levinson, David (1989): *Family Violence in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Newbury Park.
Lundsgaarde, Henry P. (1989): "Attitudes Toward Crime". In: Wilson, Charles Reagan/Ferris, William (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Chapel Hill/London, p. 1478.
McCann, Frank (1997): "Origins of the New Professionalism of the Brazilian Military". In: Loveman, Brian/Davies, Thomas (eds.): *The Politics of Antipolitics. The Military in Latin America*. Wilmington, pp. 41-51.
McGrath, Roger D. (1984): *Gunfighters, Highwaymen & Vigilantes. Violence on the Frontier*. Berkeley.
McKanna, Jr., Clare V. (1997): *Homicide, Race, and Justice in the American West, 1880-1920*. Tucson.
Mallon, Florencia (1992): "Indian Communities, Political Cultures, and the State in Latin America 1780-1990". In: *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 24, pp. 35-53.
Merrill, William (1994): "Cultural Creativity and Raiding Bands in 18th Century Northern New Spain". In: Taylor, William B./Pease, Franklin (eds.): *Violence, Resistance and Survival in the Americas*. Washington, pp. 124-152.
Mocho, Jill (1997): *Murder & Justice in Frontier New Mexico 1821-1846*. Albuquerque.
Newton, Michael/Newton, Judy (1991): *Racial and Religious Violence in America: A Chronology*. New York.
Nobles, Gregory (1997): *American Frontiers. Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest*. New York.
"Northwest Ordinance" (1963): In: Commager, Henry Steele (ed.): *Documents of American History*, New York (7th ed.), vol. 1, pp. 128-132.
Nugent, David (1999): "State and Shadow State in Northern Peru circa 1900. Illegal Political Networks and the Problem of State Boundaries". In: Heymann, J. M. (ed.): *States and Illegal Practices*. Oxford/New York, pp. 63-98.
Pereira, Anthony/Davis, Diane (2000): "New Patterns of Militarized Violence and Coercion in the Americas". In: *Latin American Perspectives*, 27, 2, pp. 3-17.
Poole, Deborah (1994): "Anthropological Perspectives on Violence and Culture – A View from the Peruvian High Andes". In: Poole, Deborah (ed.): *Unruly Order. Violence, Power, and Cultural Identity in the High Provinces of Southern Peru*. Boulder, pp. 1-30.
Popitz, Heinrich (1992): *Phänomene der Macht*. Tübingen.
Prucha, Francis Paul (1953): *Broadax and Politics. The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Norhwest, 1815-1860.* Madison
— (1969): *The Sword of the Republic. The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783-1846*. New York .
Raczynski, Dagmar (1998): "The Crisis of Old Models of Social Protection in Latin America". In: Tokman, Víctor E./O'Donnell, Guillermo (eds.): *Poverty and Inequality in Latin America*. Notre Dame, pp. 140-168.
Reed, John Shelton (1982): *One South. An Ethnic Approach to Regional Culture.* Baton Rouge/London.
— (1985): *The Enduring South. Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society*. Chapel Hill/London.
Reid, John Phillip (1980): *Law for the Elephant: Property and Social Behavior on the Overland Trail*. San Marino.
— (1997): *Policing the Elephant: Crime, Punishment, and Social Behavior on the Overland Trail*. San Marino.
Riekenberg, Michael (1999a): "Fuzzy Systems, Max Horkheimer und Gewaltkulturen in Lateinamerika". In: *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv*, 25, pp. 309-324.

— (1999b): "Warlords". In: *Comparativ. Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung*, 9, pp. 187-205.
— (2000): "Mikroethnien, Gewaltmärkte, Frontiers". In: Höpken, Wolfgang/Riekenberg, Michael (eds.): *Politische und ethnische Gewalt in Südosteuropa und Lateinamerika*. Köln/Wien/Weimar, pp. 109-130.
Rufin, Jean (1999): "Kriegswirtschaft in internen Konflikten". In: François Jean/Rufin, Jean (eds.): Ökonomie der Bürgerkriege. Hamburg, 15-46.
Sabato, Hilda (2001): *The Citizen in Arms. Political Violence in Buenos Aires 1852-1890*. Paper given at the University of Eichstätt.
Salazar, Alonso (1992): *Born to die in Medellín*. London.
Schöberl, Ingrid (1990): *Amerikanische Einwandererwerbung in Deutschland, 1845-1914*. Stuttgart.
Senkiewicz, Robert M. (1985): *Vigilantes in Gold Rush.* San Francisco, Stanford.
Shy, John (1965): *Toward Lexington. The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution*. Princeton, NJ.
Slotkin, Richard (1973): *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. Middletown, CT.
Steinmetz, George (1999): *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn*. Ithaca/London.
Tate, Michael L. (1999): *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West*. Norman.
Taylor, Lewis (1980): *Bandits and Politics in Peru: Landlord and Peasant Violence in Hualgayoc, 1900-1930*. Cambridge.
Ueda, Reed (1980): "Naturalization and Citizenship." In: Thernstrom, Stephen (ed.): *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Cambridge, MA., pp. 734-748.
Vanderwood, Paul (1992): *Disorder and Progress. Bandits, Police and Mexican Development*. Wilmington.
— (1998): *The Power of God Against the Guns of Government. Religious Upheaval in Mexico at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century*. Stanford.
Waldmann, Peter (1995): "Vigilantismus, Demokratisierung und die Rolle der Polizei". In: Mols, Manfred/Thesing, Josef (eds.): *Der Staat in Lateinamerika*. Mainz, pp. 59-74.
— (1997): "Bürgerkrieg – Annäherung an einen schwer fassbaren Begriff". In: *Leviathan*, 5, 4, pp. 480-500.
Ward, George B. (1989): "Outlaw-Heroes". In: Wilson, Charles Reagan/Ferris, William (eds.): *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Chapel Hill/London, p. 1492.
Whisker, James Biser (1999): *The Rise and Decline of the American Militia System*. London.
Williamson, Joel (1990): *After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1977*. Hanover/London.
Wills, Gary (1995): "The New Revolutionaries". In: *The New York Review*, August 10, pp. 50-55.
Wyatt-Brown, Bertram (1982): *Southern Honor. Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*. New York.
Young, Eric Van (1989): "Messianism and Mystical Kingship in Mexico 1800-1821". In: Rodriguez, Jaime (ed.): *The Independence of Mexico and the Creation of the New Nation*. Los Angeles, pp. 109-127.