



Wittgenstein Centre

FOR DEMOGRAPHY AND
GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL



WIC Colloquium

Thursday, 22 October 2026

11:00–12:00 (CEST)



Location:

Meeting Room 5, 4th floor, PSK, Georg-Coch-Platz 2, 1010 Vienna & online via zoom

Please register [here](#).

The Hidden Toll of Violence: Parental Loss Across the Americas

José Manuel Aburto,

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Abstract:

Violent mortality causes profound demographic disruption, yet its consequences for children and families—particularly violence-related parental loss—remain poorly quantified across the Americas. Using mortality, fertility, and population estimates within an established parental-loss framework, we estimated paternal and maternal loss due to violence in 27 countries from 2000 to 2023. Over this period, ~17.4 million children lost a father and ~2.2 million lost a mother; paternal-loss rates were approximately eight times maternal-loss rates. Cumulative losses were highest in Brazil, with substantial variation across countries. On average, children were 0.5 years younger when they lost a father than when they lost a mother. Our findings reveal a large, previously undocumented burden of violence-related parental loss and show how violent adult mortality disproportionately removes fathers, reshaping children's parental ties and family relationships across the Americas.

About the presenter:

José Manuel Aburto is Brass Blacker Associate Professor of Demography at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, where he leads the Mortality and Inequalities Research Group. His research develops demographic methods to study longevity, mortality inequalities, and the effects of violence and other major crises on population health.

This WIC Colloquium is organized in collaboration with the Demography Working Group of the Austrian Statistical Society (ÖSG).



The Wittgenstein Centre is a collaboration among the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and the University of Vienna.

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