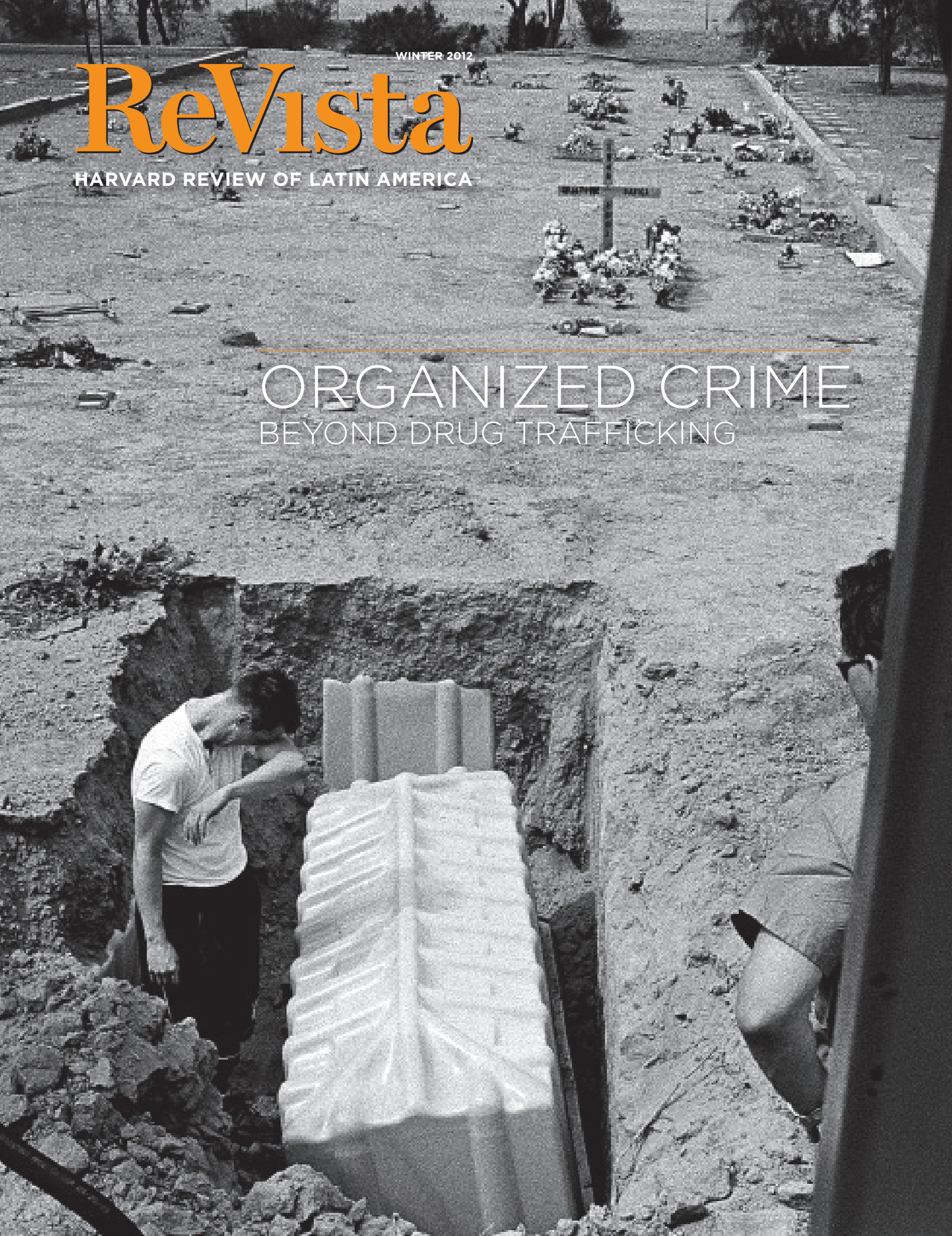


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ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA

ORGANIZED CRIME BEYOND DRUG TRAFFICKING



Reflecting on Organized Crime

The couple had fled their Salvadoran homeland to North Carolina during the brutal war of the 1980s. They learned English, worked hard, started a successful business and became U.S. citizens. They sent money back home monthly, although not much of late because of the recession. Their Salvadoran relatives had also created a thriving grocery store in their medium-sized city. But now these relatives were desperate to come to the United States. For a long time, they had paid extortion money to racketeers. Now these men were demanding more, even though there was less. The storekeepers had relatives in the United States; they must be prosperous; pay or die, they were told. I had met the couple who told me this story by chance, in the Salvadoran airport on my way back to Boston. Their desperation stuck with me long after the details had blurred.

Nevertheless, when I began to work on this issue about organized crime, I focused on mega-issues. In what ways was organized crime a business just like any other? What is the influence of Hezbollah in Latin American crime rackets? Of the Russian mafia? Did law-and-order approaches lead only to a mercury-spill effect, splintering larger groups and displacing crime to other regions and even other countries? What is the role of civil society in combating organized crime?

With excellent advice from Professor Phil Heymann at Harvard Law School and his colleague Morris Panner, as well as from Visiting Harvard Robert F. Kennedy Professor Rafael Fernández de Castro from Mexico, I began to contact authors. One article in particular by Gema Santamaria reminded me that civil society solutions aren't always positive: the lynchings she writes about are attempts by the community to control what law enforcement doesn't seem able or willing to do. Like the Salvadoran couple, many Latin Americans are finding themselves in situations of powerlessness because of the onslaught of organized crime. It permeates daily life in subtle and massive ways.

Mexico—with an organized-crime death toll of more than 47,000 in less than five years—continues to bear the brunt of organized crime. Other countries—Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica and Brazil among them—also feel the impact and yet others will do so in the future, as products and routes vary.

Yet with such wide-ranging subjects, I faced the challenge of how to make the issue resonate on two levels, encompassing the broad issues and the individual tragedies. The compelling, sensitive and evocative photos by Jon Lowenstein, our featured photographer, seemed to do just that. They provide the aesthetic glue to this issue. A professional photographer for more than ten years, Jon has followed the migrant trail from Central America, through Mexico and throughout the United States in an effort to document the real stories of the millions of people who live in constant fear and face stark choices at home. He specializes in long-term, in-depth projects that, in his words, “confront the realms of poverty, power and violence.”

His photos also imbue his subjects with dignity, which brings us again back to the issue of civil society. Throughout this issue, authors grope with possible solutions for the criminal plague: strengthening of state institutions, law and order and citizens' organizations.

And as I write this editor's letter and think of those who value the transformative power of civil society, I can't help but mourn two of those voices, lost to early death in the last year: Fernando Coronil, the 2004 DRCLAS Cisneros Visiting Scholar, and Héctor Silva, the former San Salvador mayor who was a 2006-2007 DRCLAS Central America Visiting Fellow. I dedicate this issue to their memory.



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Merilee S. Grindle

Executive Director

Kathy Eckroad

ReVista

Editor-in-Chief

June Carolyn Erlick

Copy Editor

Anita Safran

Publication Interns

Alicia Zamora

Carlos Schmidt

Jai Chowdhry Beeman

Design

2COMMUNIQUE

www.2communique.com

Printer

P & R Publications

Contact Us

1730 Cambridge Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

Telephone: 617-495-5428

Facsimile: 617-496-2802

Subscriptions and Reader Forum

jerlick@fas.harvard.edu

Website

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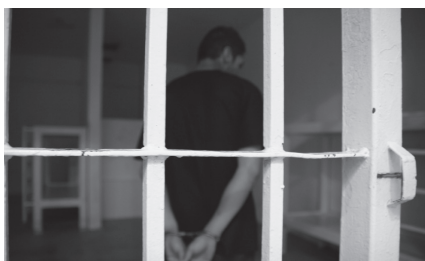
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ON THE COVER

Indigent burial of a Mexican migrant to the United States: human trafficking is a growing source of income for organized crime.

Photograph by Jon Lowenstein/Noor

www.jonlowenstein.com

More about Jon Lowenstein's photography can be seen online at drclas.harvard.edu/publications/revistaonline.

Organized Crime in Latin America

BY PHILIP B. HEYMANN

DEALING WITH TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED crime is now an official part of U.S. security strategy.

A strategy document, issued by the White House in July 2011, speaks of organized crime groups:

- Taking advantage of failed states or contested spaces
- Forging alliances with corrupt foreign officials and some intelligence services
- Destabilizing political, financial and security institutions in fragile states
- Creating the potential for the transfer of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists, and
- Developing other alliances with terrorists often based around smuggling.

Identifying U.S. concerns and those of its Latin American partners—as well as areas of overlap or disagreement—is the starting point for developing a strategy. Beyond the specific fears I cite above, there are three more comprehensive categories of concern. First, the smuggling of illicit drugs into the United States and the subsequent use here has a set of effects that have justified hundreds of thousands of imprisonments and tens of billions of dollars in annual expenditures by the United States. Latin American partners have sometimes shared this concern; sometimes they have not. A number of countries—such as Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala—have also had to worry about kidnapping and extortion, crimes that have not spread into the United States. Moreover, alliances with terrorists may fall into this feared impact of income-producing activities, as we are reminded by the Iranian effort to enlist the Mexican organized crime group, the Zetas, in the assassination of the Saudi ambassador to the United States.

Second, violence has been associated

with large, illegal organizations in friendly nations such as Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Guatemala. In part, this raises a fear that violence will spread into the United States itself. In part, it is simply sympathy for the victims. In part, it acknowledges the harmful impact that violence has on the business and personal relations that U.S. citizens have with the foreign government.

The third and final broad concern is about the governance of friendly neighbors—although organized crime groups, unlike terror groups, have no intention of taking over the government, typically seeking only to neutralize its interference with their businesses. Wanting to cooperate with respected, responsible, honest and democratic governments in Latin America, the United States has a stake in preventing the criminal infiltration of their governmental institutions. Organized crime uses corruption, intimidation, political influence (both through campaign financing and office-holding) and outright armed control of territory to batter away at good governance. Examples—at one time or another—have included Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil.

Dealing with a particular activity from a particular organized crime group in a particular country may accomplish little if the group shifts to a more dangerous form of crime or if it is replaced by a more dangerous substitute or if the cessation of the activity in one location only leads to its springing up in another. The success of U.S. efforts in blocking the maritime routes into the United States for Colombian drugs led directly to the creation of powerful Mexican drug cartels and their land routes into the United States.

From concerns to shared concerns.

The second step is to examine how close-

ly our concerns match the concerns of a Latin American government whom we hope to assist in dealing with organized crime within its borders. Only if there is a substantial overlap are we likely to agree quickly on areas of common activity. It took months for Jamaica to agree to a very bloody attack on, and seizure of, Christopher Coke, whose organization ran drugs into the United States.

From shared concerns to options.

Shared concerns and effective action to reduce them are necessarily mediated by recognizing the steps the allied states can take. The U.S. role and actions depend on basic choices by its Latin American ally among three broad types of measures to address dangerous organized crime groups: first, military and intelligence steps; second, law enforcement steps; third, a change in social conditions to the disadvantage of the organized crime group. The United States, as a partner of a Latin American state, can only assist in one or more such measures, not itself choose the path to be taken.

Tactics that involve the use of military and intelligence resources can be violent and not necessarily conforming even to the practices of war. The United States joined in an extremely lethal Colombian strategy against Pablo Escobar and the Medellín cartel in Colombia, participating through CIA, DEA and special forces. The most sophisticated intelligence-gathering equipment of the time was brought to bear. Alliances were permitted with equally dangerous rivals of the Medellín cartel (the Cali cartel and a vigilante group, Los Pepes). Escobar's family was endangered in order to encourage him to reveal his location. The facilitators, not just the soldiers, of the Medellín cartel, were killed in large numbers. U.S. intelligence coopera-



tion was also important to the fierce, and brutal, battle of heavily armed Jamaican forces against Coke's organization.

A far more restrained use of military and intelligence resources is to create and maintain public security on the streets of cities and towns threatened by an organized crime group too powerful for the police; and support with force efforts to arrest or kill organized crime leaders. Here the role of the United States is likely to be restricted to providing intelligence, training and equipment.

Improved law enforcement is a second option. In its simplest form, if the courts of a Latin American partner cannot safely and effectively try cases, the state may substitute extradition to the United States where the cases can be so tried. We have done that with Colombia and Mexico. If the prosecutors are inadequate, devices can be created to deal with this. Guatemala turned to the United Nations to send a respected foreign prosecutor and a sizeable staff of aides and investigators who operated in parallel with the weak prosecution system.

The creation of elite police and prosecution units—and sometimes courts (Colombia and Peru)—help deal specifically and exclusively with organized crime, through powerful new criminal statutes such as RICO and new investiga-

tive tools such as electronic surveillance. That pattern, used by the United States in addressing La Cosa Nostra, has been followed in Colombia, Mexico, Italy and South Africa. Here too, the United States can provide training and equipment, including advice as to preserving the security of the local personnel, and intelligence or evidence useful to those special units. The far more difficult alternative in the law enforcement category is simply to build all needed capabilities throughout the Latin American state—not just create effective special units.

The final category for the Latin American country is to try to change the social conditions under which the organized crime group has thrived. Terrorists depend upon supportive community; so do organized crime groups. Turning a community against an organized crime group was much of the secret of Italy's dealing with the Mafia after the murder of two of Italy's proudest crime fighters, Falcone and Borsellino. In the United States, while we have attributed our success against La Cosa Nostra to the steps taken by law enforcement, a wise and experienced prosecutor, Oregon Attorney General John Kroger, has pointed out the importance of social, political and economic changes: the legalization of much gambling, the shift in the drug trade from

Rounding up neighborhood youth.

Sicily to Latin America, the loss of power of labor unions and the gradual ending of the sense of social discrimination against Italians in the United States. This third type of effort depends, however, upon having the institutions that can meet the needs of the people, can eliminate a sense of discrimination, can provide physical security, and can substitute a belief in the rule of law for a perception of universal corruption and prevailing cynicism.

From shared concerns and options to realistic goals. A strategy requires creating a "package" of tactics taking into account the vulnerabilities and resilience of the organized crime groups—a portfolio that can significantly reduce our concerns and the more specific risks that create those concerns. The words "significantly reduce" are important. The goals of the strategy may not be to wholly eliminate organized crime structures or groups, but to significantly reduce the threats they pose. Thus the U.S. strategy of 2011 aims at reducing organized crime from a national security problem to a more routine problem of crime. More specifically, the goal could be to significantly reduce the violence of organized crime and the extent to which it has penetrated government institutions. It need not be to elimi-

nate the organization or end all of its illegal businesses.

Huge profits at stake provide serious reasons to worry about the capacity of a partnership between the United States and a Latin American country to completely eliminate organized crime in Mexico or Colombia or Guatemala. That may explain the honest modesty of the U.S. goal. Examining the resilience of the businesses of organized crime and the difficulties of eliminating traditional corruption is important. Consider the sources of resilience of organized crime groups that have major routes into the United States and the capacity of these organizations to strike back.

Organized crime groups rely on the continuing availability of all the resources they need to conduct their business. An organized crime group in Mexico or Colombia or Guatemala needs a flow of money to pay its workers and its suppliers, to corrupt officials, and to provide armed forces to use against its rivals and

high degree of violence from rivals could prevent criminal entrepreneurs from turning readily available resources into a thriving business.

If 47,000 deaths, largely by rival organizations, have not stopped the flow of recruits, the limited success of a weak criminal justice system is unlikely to. We can continue to try to seize a portion of the tens of billions of dollars in retail sales each year that flows back to Mexico, but the great bulk of the profits, after meeting expenses in the United States, is likely to escape into the groups' hands.

The governments can hope to kill or capture many of the leaders, as Mexico has done under President Calderón, but there seems to be no shortage of the skills required for new leadership of an organized crime group. Moreover, killing or capturing the leaders often fragments the group, but whether this reduces or increases violence and the capacity to infiltrate government institutions is unclear and disputed.

Examining the resilience of the businesses of organized crime and the difficulties of eliminating traditional corruption is important.

the government. It can rely on having that flow of money so long as it is able to cross borders and transport drugs to a huge market within the United States. The limited skills necessary to accomplish these tasks are readily available so long as drug dealing and corrupting officials meet a degree of social acceptance and the economy of the Latin American state is poor enough to provide people willing to take great risks.

In other words, our joint efforts are likely to leave in place many of the skills and resources organized crime needs to continue the illegal business in a new way and still remain unable to strengthen the weak capacity of state institutions. Only an extremely harsh deterrent threat by the government or an exceedingly

Sizeable organized crime groups also have the ability to fight back, as Colombia's Medellín cartel showed two decades ago and the Jamaican Coke gang two years ago. While an organized crime group is not likely to have the capacity to meet the military forces of a Latin American state head on, it can strike back through forms of terrorism that may cause its government to relent.

Choice among realistic goals. In the light of crime's resilience and its ability to strike back, we may want limited goals that invite greater concentration on some concerns and focus our expectations of more success on these goals. The U.S. Army has a principle called "mass" which requires the ground commander to "concentrate the effects of combat

power at the decisive place and time" in order to maximize the impact of available resources. A comparable notion in fighting organized crime would focus the efforts in all three categories of military, law enforcement and social tactics on a particular activity of unusual concern, or a particular location, or a particular sequence of criminal organizations.

The United States and Mexico might, for example, agree to concentrate their attention first on violence and then on corruption without ignoring the problems created by illegal drugs. If the two partners could agree on which organized crime group was the most violent, they could "mass" their forces temporarily against that group, for example, the extraordinarily violent Zetas. In the case of the United States, this would mean concentrating both customs inspections at the ports of entry used by the Zetas and DEA forces along their transportation routes. We could take advantage of our capacity to identify which Mexican organized crime group supplies gangs in Chicago, Detroit, or Los Angeles, urging local law enforcement to systematically and publicly increase the risks of arrest and the length of punishment of any American dealing with these groups. By analogy to the Material Support statute we use against designated terrorist organizations, we could make any supportive relation with the named organization a particularly severe crime.

Perhaps these steps would be enough to force that group out of business, although many of its suppliers and members would drift to other groups. More likely, it would simply make clear that there are new rules of the game that impose a very real financial and personal cost on making violence part of the business plan of a Mexican organized crime group. The White House strategy is moving in that direction by focusing on the Zetas. This is a development that Mexico welcomes. It has real promise.

Philip B. Heymann is the James Barr Ames Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and the Harvard Kennedy School.



REFLECTIONS

Should we think about organized crime as a business endeavor or a law and order issue or a human rights challenge?

While Mexico recently has borne most of the brunt of violence associated with organized crime, citizen security is a growing concern throughout the hemisphere. Here, Morris Panner, Joy Olson, Joseph S. Tulchin and Noel Maurer reflect on the nature of organized crime and different ways to confront it.

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Latin American Organized Crime's New Business Model

Beyond Dope...and More Dangerous **BY MORRIS PANNER**

HUMAN HEADS ROLLING IN THE STREET ALONG-side affluent homes. Gory stories of mass graves unearthed in Tamaulipas and Durango. Kidnapping and ransoming of migrants. Paying protection just to transit roads or run a business. Money laundering as dirty money becomes the backbone of the informal economy's banking system. Oil product thefts amounting to three quarters of a billion dollars per year and growing at a yearly rate of 50 percent.

This is the new face of Mexican organized crime, which has become an unprecedented threat for Mexico and the United States. Organized crime is

no longer just the drug business. And as the U.S. drug market slowly but surely changes toward prescription drugs and legalized marijuana, organized crime is much more than the business of shipping drugs to the United States. It is morphing away from Colombia's Cali-cartel style narcotics organizations and into something far more pervasive, far more local and far more dangerous for Mexico and its neighbors.

My focus is on Mexico because the situation there is the more profound and dangerous example of a larger trend throughout Latin America. As a key regional economy with a long democratic

tradition, Mexico has outsized importance for the future of Latin America. Throughout the region organized crime, with its tentacles in vast areas of governance and the economy, threatens to undermine the social order. In nations with a weak central government, organized crime, aligned with rogue elements in the military and corrupt officials, threatens to become a state within a state. In Guatemala, the central government has lost control to such an extent that it invited the United Nations to undertake organized crime investigations, an unprecedented partnership by a sovereign nation. Other Latin American nations,



Left: A Guatemalan boy eats ice cream next to a bus where driver and helper were murdered; above: violence is part of the fabric of everyday life, as bus passengers ignore a bullet hole.

also desperate, are reportedly considering a similar arrangement. Recently, according to *New York Times* reports, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has deployed commando-style squads to assist local law enforcement in nations, including Honduras and Guatemala. Originally, this program, called FAST (Foreign-deployed Advisory Support Team), was designed to investigate drug traffickers linked to the Taliban in Afghanistan, but the mission has been expanded to Latin America.

In some ways, the shift in the operations of organized crime has gone unnoticed in the larger debate. The terms

“organized crime” and “drug-trafficking organizations” are often used interchangeably on both sides of the border. This mistaken terminology obscures an important new reality, one that will be discussed in this article.

Eduardo Guerrero Gutiérrez, a leading Mexican scholar of public policy, refers to the “fragmentation” of criminal organizations. He calculates a ten-fold increase in criminal organizations from 2007 to 2010 with a dramatic dispersion throughout Mexico. These organizations have taken hold in virtually every state. Guerrero’s research tracks the explosion in murder rates, which has accompanied

this fragmentation. In all, more than 47,000 people have been killed in the past four and half years.

Organized crime has become an increasing part of all aspects of Mexican life.

Pemex, Mexico’s state-owned oil company, has reported that it has lost up to 40% of production at times, stolen from its pipelines in areas controlled by criminal groups. Earlier this year, Pemex sued nine oil companies accusing them of buying and selling stolen natural gas.

Ranchers in the state of Michoacán report that local criminals tell them when they can bring produce to market

and are threatened with violence if they do not comply. Experts speculate that criminal groups are splitting up control of the roads on certain days. Mechanics in Guerrero are assaulted by criminal gangs and/or corrupt local police in what appears to be a battle over local control of the stolen auto parts trade.

Migrants transiting Mexico from Central America are subject to kidnapping. The Mexican Human Rights Commission reported that more than 11,000 migrants had been kidnapped in one six-month period during 2010.

Money laundering is also changing dramatically. In his 2010 Wilson Center study, Douglas Farah outlines the path of bulk cash transfers from the United States to Mexico. What is most interesting for the local pattern of crime, however, is how the informal economy is increasingly becoming reliant on these informal sources of financing. Traditional financial crime enforcement has focused on electronic systems, but these new informal networks elude financial regulators and often function completely in cash or barter. Although narcotics proceeds may start the circle, they quickly create an alternative banking system that suits the informal economy.

As criminal groups have multiplied, corruption at local levels has burgeoned. If in the past corruption was relatively top-down as large organizations made grand bargains to ship drugs across Mexico, these more diversified organizations are seeping into the informal economy and governance structure at many levels and without the same level of control. As a result, businesses find themselves confronted by a myriad of local groups seeking payoffs.

Average Mexicans are hit very hard by organized crime throughout the country. Urban areas experience levels of violence previously unknown. Many remote rural areas seem to have a complete lack of government authority. Even the traditional language of social protest and human rights advocacy falls short. "Organized crime is, of course, responsible for so much violence," said one human rights

lawyer working in Tlapa, Guerrero. "Still, how can we protest that? How can we act against that?"

As Brookings Institute Scholar Vanda Felbab-Brown points out, there is much debate in Mexico about President Felipe Calderón's decision to attack the large cartels and speculation about whether that alone is responsible for the fragmentation and expansion of criminal groups. In part, it surely is, as local governments were not ready to cope with the onslaught of mini-cartels, but there is another factor that is potentially more important: a slow, but sure change in the U.S. drug market.

Marijuana legalization in the United States may reduce revenue to the cartels at roughly 20%, and recent studies by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration also indicate that cocaine abuse among young people has been declining since 2006.

It is enormously difficult to come up with a profit-and-loss statement for the

States is an efficient illegal enterprise, and few organizations had any incentive to abandon it. The Sinaloa cartel continues to ship large-scale amounts of drugs to the United States and other smaller organizations do so as well. Still, the real point is that the business is moving away from monolithic cartels toward a series of mercury-like mini-cartels. Whether diversification is a growth strategy or a survival strategy in the face of shifting narcotics consumption patterns, it is clear that organized crime is pursuing a larger, more extensive agenda.

Looking at the situation from this perspective, today's strategy to fight crime appears incomplete. Given Mexico's federal system with 32 separate states, the government effectively lacks the resources to manage the explosion in organizations. The United States, too, has an enforcement and security paradigm largely based on a large cartel model. With narcotics shipments into the United States making the core domestic impact, it has

The changes in organized crime in both Mexico and throughout Latin America will require a move away from cartel-based thinking.

business lines of organized crime. The assessment of the value of narcotics shipments varies from a low of \$6 billion (Rand Corporation data) to a high of many, many times that. The same is true for other lines of illegal business. Pemex may have accurate data when it points to close to \$750 million in fuel theft. Other figures are less reliable. The total value of ransom for migrants may equal roughly \$200 to \$500 million per year, based on the total number of people kidnapped and reports of ransoms paid. With so few crimes reported in Mexico, it is hard to come up with accurate numbers.

As Jaime López-Aranda, a prominent Mexican scholar now with the Federal government, points out, there is no doubt that narcotics trafficking to the United

States made sense to focus on organizations that target the United States from Mexico. Still, even if the fight against the largest cartels makes gains, in many ways it is yesterday's fight. As Felbab Brown argues, there is no going back to an earlier period when narcotics trafficking was largely a problem of Mexican shipment and U.S. narcotics use, where the worst effects tended to bypass Mexico itself. The security policies have to evolve to face this new reality.

Today, Mexican state and local governments find themselves on the front lines. In other parts of Latin America, particularly in Central America, relatively weak central governments have been unable to confront organized crime, which has sometimes managed to

infiltrate the highest levels of the central government. So far, this is not the case in Mexico. Rather, criminal organizations are targeting local governments, which are the weakest links in Mexican governance.

The United States confronts a security problem in Mexico that has become considerably worse, but which is oddly less relevant to the day-to-day concerns in the United States. As organized crime organizations attack local Mexican institutions, the traditional rationale for U.S. strategy becomes much more murky. Up until now, law enforcement and border security have had a leading role because fighting global drug trafficking was the threat. U.S. assistance was designed to enable Mexico to stop drugs flowing into the United States, which meant targeting the largest organizations. Nowadays, however, it is weapons flows from the United States to Mexico that are a serious concern, and border enforcement models are not really equipped to confront this problem.

In U.S. policy circles you hear rumbles of dissatisfaction with the current strategy and even calls for a completely different direction in strategy. Shannon O'Neill of the Council of Foreign Relations has written of Congressional interest in approaching the challenges in Mexico as a counterinsurgency challenge rather than a law enforcement challenge. She highlights the comments of Congressman Connie Mack calling for this shift. There is also a push to classify Mexican drug-trafficking organizations as terrorist organizations by Representative Michael McCaul.

Putting aside all the policy and diplomatic implications of such a shift, it, too, misreads the problem in Mexico. Mexico's problems have everything to do with crime and increasingly less to do with a few dominant criminal organizations.

As much violence and tragedy as the expansion of crime has engendered, there are also the seeds of hope for a much more coherent strategy to be elaborated between Mexico and the United States. Most important, this is a problem

of crime and corruption, which can be fought using traditional law enforcement means. Mexico is not a failed state, but needs to rally at both federal and local level to reassert control.

What should be done?

First, there is an urgent need for institution building in Mexico. Potentially the biggest flaw in the Calderón government's focus on military efforts has been that other institutions have atrophied. Despite a significant legal reform effort, including a constitutionally mandated change to a more modern legal system in 2008, enabling legislation has lagged, being introduced only in 2011. At the state level there has been more progress, with 7 of the 32 states having adopted more modern legal codes, but the implementation has been spotty, with some states almost giving up on the new codes because of difficulty implementing them. Without a functioning justice system, no amount of military intervention will work.

Second, there is an urgent need for increased state and federal cooperation. The debate over the federal government's strategy has obscured the fact that controlling crime and regaining control over public security in Mexico is not an either/or proposition. Joint federal and state task forces will be necessary to overcome the shifting criminal pattern. The very nature of organized crime is its ability to find the weak points in a system and exploit them for profit.

Third, there is a need for a more vigorous response from civil society in Mexico. For too long, Mexican elites largely saw the problem of crime and corruption as removed from their day-to-day lives. That is changing as well. The spike in violence in Monterrey, Mexico's industrial heartland, has caused leading Mexican businesses to realize that there is no simple way to deal with the chaotic criminal pattern. Even if it was not desirable or legal, the old top-down systematic corruption worked in the past to enable smooth operation of business. Now, even that mode is not available, since the groups are too disparate.

Fourth, U.S. policy has to recognize the implications of this shift in business models and criminal structures. Although they are far more violent, the local criminal groups are in many ways easier to deal with as a law enforcement problem, as they are unlikely to have the central command and control structures that characterized traditional cartels. The focus on large-scale multinational investigations, as important as they are, will only be part of the solution. Our models for both financial crime and cyber-enforcement need to change as criminal groups find less centralized ways to communicate, or build altogether alternative financial and communication networks. Imagine the communication flexibility displayed in the protests of the Arab spring turned on its head for evil purposes. Clearly, Mexico's capacity to address local corruption will require a different set of tools.

The last years in Mexico have been a painful and confusing time. President Calderón's strategy of taking on the large cartels, including deploying the military when necessary, was designed to smash their fire power. Partly as a result, overwhelming violence has plagued Mexico. Yet it would be a terrible tragedy if the people of Mexico backed away from a commitment to fight organized crime. True, the current strategy is incomplete and fails to take into account the enormous fragmentation and increasing business diversity of organized crime. The changes in organized crime in both Mexico and throughout Latin America will require a move away from cartel-based thinking. Local criminal organizations are threatening to eat Mexico from within. The assumptions that have driven close to 20 years of enforcement strategy are giving way to a new and in many ways far more dangerous world. The need to adapt new, effective means to combat these dangers is urgent.

Morris Panner, a former Federal Organized Crime Prosecutor, is a Senior Advisor at the Harvard Law School Center for International Criminal Justice.

Organized Crime as Human Rights Issue

Where is the Outrage? **BY JOY OLSON**

IT WAS A HORRIFYING SCENE— 72 PEOPLE murdered all at once. One survivor bore witness to the massacre. The dead were migrants, mostly Central Americans; 58 men and 14 women trying to make their way to a better future. It was August of 2010 when their bodies were found in Tamaulipas, Mexico. They were apparently killed by Mexico's most feared drug trafficking organization, the Zetas, who have diversified into other criminal activities like kidnapping and extortion.

This story made news for a few days. But the massacre shook me and made me start asking a lot of questions. Official reports said that the migrants were kidnapped off of buses. How could 72 people be kidnapped and no one notice? Bus drivers must have known something. The bus company must have noticed. Other travelers? Government authorities? How was this possible? Where is the outrage?

The human rights community and others, myself included, made statements about the massacre, but it did not become a central focus of coordinated human rights work. Most of us continued to work on our previously established agendas.

But why did it not have more impact?

Between 40,000 and 50,000 people have been killed in Mexico as a result of the drug war, drug trafficking, and organized criminal activities since 2006. About 3,000 people were disappeared during Mexico's dirty war (late 1960s – early 1970s), a dark period in Mexican history. While other people have certainly disappeared since then, it is really the last time that “disappearance” was discussed as a phenomena or practice. Today the number is at least three times higher.

Again, where is the outrage? If numbers are any indicator, we should all be a lot more riled up.

Time progressed. Things haven't gotten better.

In April of 2011, mass graves were found in Tamaulipas, near where the earlier massacre took place. Close to 200 bodies were found. In May more mass graves were uncovered, this time in the state of Durango, containing nearly 300 bodies. Who were all of these people? Migrants? Criminals? People who got in the criminals' way?

Then there was the casino fire in Monterrey, Mexico, in which 52 people perished—not the result of faulty wiring, but of criminals tossing gas on a building and setting it ablaze. In September, 35 bodies were left along a city road in Veracruz, Mexico—near a shopping center—in broad daylight! Word got out fast because motorists started tweeting about masked men abandoning bodies.

These are just the really big cases.

Again, where is the human rights community, and what is our role? Or better yet, what should it be?

I think I know at least in part why the violence in Mexico today has not been the focus of the human rights community. It is because this kind of violence doesn't fit the traditional human rights framework.

countries in Latin America and beyond are suffering from violence associated with organized crime.

The work of human rights groups is based in international human rights law. That law, originating in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is focused on the responsibility of the state. It states that sign and agree to abide by the treaties coming out of the Universal Declaration. Killings, torture, and disappearances carried out by the state are violations of human rights. On the other hand, killings, torture and disappearances carried out by the Zetas and other criminal organizations are crimes.

Yet there is a right to personal security. And even if the state is not directly violating that right, doesn't it have an obligation to protect its citizens? The Mexican state is not fulfilling that mandate, whether by commission or omission; it is not successfully arresting and prosecuting criminals. So where does the fundamental right of the citizen to security fit into the mandate of human rights organizations?

The fact that confronting organized crime is extremely dangerous work is another reason people have not jumped into this work. If you are a human rights

If you are a human rights organizer on the ground, tackling organized crime is worse than taking on the most dangerous dictator you can imagine.

Mexico is not unique in this respect. The murder rate in Central America was recently described in a UN report as nearing a “crisis point.” Much of this violence is related to organized crime, as well as to gang activity. And while Mexico and Central America are in crisis mode, other

defender on the ground, tackling organized crime is worse than taking on the most dangerous dictator you can imagine. People in the human rights community, again including me, don't know what they are up against with organized crime. We don't know the enemy. We



don't know the rules of the game, so it's hard to know when you are going to get yourself or others into serious danger. We are not unique in this respect. Hardly anyone else does either.

Then there is the question of how do you combat organized crime?

As human rights defenders we know how to influence the state. You hold people accountable. You demand transparency. You meet with officials and name the abuses. You use reason and appeal to common values and humanity. You protest. You name and shame abusers. You take people to court. You seek to change laws.

Few of the strategies we have used in the past seem directly relevant to today's challenge of confronting organized crime. So, how do you tackle violations of human rights and human dignity when the violence is perpetrated not by the state but by non-state actors like organized crime?

Yet an anti-organized crime and a pro-human rights agenda do have something in common: respect for the rule of law. This in turn requires functioning, rights-respecting justice and police systems. If

these institutions work properly, criminals are arrested and prosecuted, and state officials committing human rights violations are similarly held accountable.

But, for whatever reason, the human rights community has not fully embraced an anti-violence/organized crime or institutional reform agenda.

The Mexican state is failing miserably at protecting its citizens and holding criminals accountable. The conviction rate for crime in Mexico is two—yes I said two—percent. And there is rampant corruption and complicity of the state in organized crime. When institutions of justice fail so completely, it should be of central concern to people dedicated to human rights.

Now, there are exceptions to what I'm about to say and this does not apply only to Mexico, but for whatever reason, the human rights community has been stuck in an agenda that was developed in another era when the state was the principal perpetrator of abuse, when non-state actors were armed combatants in wars, and where the international law of war applied. Most human rights organiza-

A victim of organized crime.

tions in Latin America were founded during that era.

The traditional agenda of human rights organizations still reflects that era. It is an agenda that in Mexico includes ending military court jurisdiction over cases of military abuses against civilians (which has been absurdly difficult). And as for prosecuting emblematic cases of state abuse, often cases there are over a decade old (again because of the justice system taking an absurdly long time).

While these are important issues, violence related to organized crime is the proverbial elephant in the room.

In Mexico this conceptual division between organized crime and human rights violations is one reason that people have not come together to confront the violence, and certainly not under the human rights framework.

This is starting to change.

Earlier this year, the son of Mexican poet Javier Sicilia was murdered by those involved in organized crime. Sicilia went public with his pain and called

on the nation to stop the violence. He helped organize the Movement for Peace and Justice, marches across Mexico and silent protests against the violence. This movement has given voice to the victims and forced the President to dialogue with them. They have put the victims—not the criminals—at the center of the debate. Indeed, they are advocating for human rights.

Does the violence facing Mexico originating in organized crime technically fit the legal definition of human rights? Is it a human rights issue because there is corruption and state complicity with organized crime? Or is it a violation of human rights because of the state's failure to protect the victims?

Does that really matter?

Whether your son or daughter is killed by a drug trafficker or a corrupt police official, your pain is the same. Either way, you want and deserve justice. Confronting traditional human rights violations and criminal activity both require the same thing—functioning police and judicial institutions.

The human rights community is a vital resource for change. Today, the challenges to human rights are coming from different forces than those in the past. If our community doesn't change its agenda to address issues related to organized crime, an enormous opportunity for impact will be missed. If we do not act, victims will continue suffering in obscurity, the state will be threatened by criminals, and the concept of human rights will no longer be relevant.

Organized crime is a human rights issue and needs to be taken up by the human rights community—my community.

Joy Olson is the executive director of WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America). Olson is a leading expert on human rights and U.S. policy towards Latin America. She considers this article a self-critique.

Citizen Security in Latin America

Toward a Long Term Solution **BY JOSEPH S. TULCHIN**

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THROUGHOUT Latin America crime and violence have become one of the most important subjects of public debate. And, while it is also beyond question that across the region there are important differences in the patterns of crime from country to country, differences that affect the framework within which the public policy response to criminal activity is formulated, nevertheless, there are crucial similarities in the regional experience which help to understand the nature of citizen insecurity and help to suggest appropriate public policy responses to it.

First the chronology. The concern with crime and violence began to stir public opinion in the 1990s, as the transition to democracy extended throughout the region. Citizen demands, sometimes in the form of demonstrations in the streets, focused on getting the state to use stronger methods to prevent crime—policies known as *mano dura* o *tolerancia cero*. In the most extreme cases, Argentina and Colombia, as measured by data from *Latinobarometro*, citizens expressed doubts about the efficacy of democratic government to provide the protection they wanted. In Colombia, drug trafficking was the excuse to join with the United States to use military force against insurgents and drug cartels. In Central America, conservative elites cited the dramatic increase in gang activity to justify their continued control over the state after the peace process and as a justification for restoring the military to its role as keeper of the domestic peace.

During this period, studying crime and violence became a means to strengthening democratic governance. Throughout the hemisphere, a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

focused on the prevention of crime and police reform by emphasizing the need to protect civil and human rights in the process of preventing crime. For example, the work by the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the more recent work by the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), which began in 2005 and is ongoing.

Throughout the decade of the 1990s, in addition to the focus on how to make sure that citizen insecurity did not undermine new, fragile democracies, there were two other major currents of concern and study. One was an institutional approach that put its emphasis on the reform of the police and the judiciary. The second was an economics-based perspective that examined the high cost of crime with its impact on development, as well as whether crime rates had anything to do with the level of economic development or of poverty. By the end of the decade, the broad consensus among multilateral agencies and students of the subject was that institutional reform was necessary but not sufficient to reduce citizen insecurity; and, that poverty does not cause instability, nor is it associated with poverty in any meaningful manner. The most recent World Bank study reiterates the ambiguity in the data. The preponderance of cases of street or petty crime pits a relatively poor thief against a relatively wealthy victim. However, most of violent crimes involve criminals and victims of the same socioeco-

March 9, 2009, Juárez, Estado de Chihuahua. A state police commando guards a neighborhood in Juárez. The neighborhood is the scene of a turf war between the Juárez and Sinaloa Cartels over a valued smuggling route to the United States through El Paso, Texas.

omic stratum. And, most compelling, the overwhelming majority of victims of violent crimes are young males. In other words, the Dickensian nightmare of crime caused by poverty, which inevitably led to proposals for a security state that isolated the poor from the less poor, could not be justified. Even so, the media obsession with crime in shantytowns or rumors spread about pockets being picked in middle-class neighborhoods kept the focus of policy-makers on economic questions, which kept zero tolerance policies in the public eye, despite the mounting evidence that such policies in Latin America did not make citizens feel more secure.

Then, in the early years of this century, there was a convergence between studies of police reform and the studies of democratic governance. This led to a more fruitful approach that combined the social and the economic to focus on the phenomenon of exclusion in the society. To get to this multidisciplinary ap-

proach and the multi-sectoral response that it suggested for public policy, it was necessary to study the relationship between inequality or income disparities and instability that might provoke criminal behavior. Recent studies suggest that public policy responses are most successful in containing crime or forestalling criminal activity over the long term if they can be aimed at including segments of the population or mitigating their exclusion. The key to understanding how economic factors can drive criminal activity is the difference between inclusion and exclusion in the society.

What are the causes of exclusion and what kind of policy responses would mitigate exclusion, thus reducing the level of criminal activity over time? The most effective policies in reducing the rate of crime will be those that deal with one or more of the following sectoral issues—policies that bring marginal groups or vulnerable groups in the population into the broader society and give

them the sense that they have access to the services of the society and can participate more fully in its activities.

Geography and infrastructure are important: there tends to be a powerful geographical manifestation of income disparity. That is, there is a clear separation in the city between the rich and poor, although even in the United States there are pockets of the poor living amongst the super-rich. Policy responses to this situation obviously include infrastructure, especially transportation, and the provision of public (and private) services. Because of space limitations in this article, I will offer only one very simple example. If you examine the metro or subway systems in Santiago, Chile, and Mexico City, D.F., you will find polar opposites in the social impact of the two urban transportation networks. In Mexico, the system is spread throughout the vast expanse of the Federal District and is subsidized so that even the poorest residents of the city can use it. As a consequence, there is no rush hour in



the Mexico metro – it is jammed to capacity literally on a 24-hour basis. In Santiago, the metro covers the middle and upper middle class neighborhoods quite well. The cost to use the system is so high that, except for the small morning and evening rush hours when government and financial sector workers go to their offices from their homes in the outlying suburbs and back, the subway cars rarely are crowded.

To take a middle ground, it is interesting to look at Washington, D.C.'s metro system. The planning for the system was begun while the city was still essentially segregated; the first lines performed a social and economic function similar to the system in Santiago. As the city achieved self-government and then a seat without vote in the House of Representatives, the metro system was modified to take the demographics of the city better into account. As a consequence, the usage of the system looks more and more like the system in Mexico with each passing year.

Access to public services is one of the easiest ways to measure the pattern of exclusion in the society, and education is one of the most basic public services. Unequal access to education or unequal quality of education across the space of a city will have a profound impact on the labor market and on social stability. Providing quality education only to a portion of the city's population certainly would affect the labor market and exacerbate conditions of inequality. When access to quality education is purely a function of the market, the conditions of exclusion become structural and inter-generation-

al poverty is all but guaranteed. Aside from the obvious implications for anger on the part of the excluded, such discrimination also serves as an obstacle to national development. The most successful national policy to reduce the inequality that results from exclusion from education is Brazil's famous *bolsa de familia*. Begun during the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and continued by Lula and Dilma, this policy more than any other effort by the state in Brazil, has reduced the degree of inequality and facilitated police reform policies that now allow more active cooperation between those who live in shantytowns (*favelados*) and the forces of law and order. The current issue in Brazil's cities (and elsewhere in Latin America) has more to do with organized crime and drug trafficking, which will be discussed below.

Access to the labor market is crucial in preventing crime or, at least, reducing the temptation of vulnerable populations, particularly youth, women, ethnic, indigenous, other minorities, of turning to criminal activity. Informality, so common in poor neighborhoods, especially after the neo-liberal reforms of the 1990s, makes it hard for vulnerable groups to find work that actually keeps them and their families out of poverty. Transportation plays an obvious role in making the labor market accessible to the poor.

Over the past decade, drug trafficking and organized crime have grown significantly. While the production of drugs in Latin America and the transportation of those drugs to the major consumer markets in the United States and Europe are

not new, the criminal activity associated with those drugs has spread geographically to the point where every country in the region is affected. Colombia and Mexico suffer more from the activity of drug cartels and traffickers than other countries. However, as criminal activity becomes more organized, it becomes more international and more variegated. Gangs involved in the traffic in drugs tend also to become involved in the illegal traffic in people, especially children and women, arms trafficking and money laundering.

The final chapter of this argument deserves an article of its own. For the purposes of this general survey, suffice it to say that to the extent that criminal activity becomes organized, it tends to become international. And, as the criminal activity becomes international, it requires policies that are international—regional and hemispheric and even global. Increasingly, the traffickers in drugs are using drugs as payment for their activities. This has resulted in exploding consumption of drugs in countries that before had little or nothing to do with the traffic, which makes the exclusion problem more serious than ever.

And, most complicated of all, the traffic in drugs and arms involves dealing with the United States. The hegemonic presumption of the United States makes any mode of hemispheric cooperation difficult. The traffic in arms is sensitive because of the power of the so-called gun lobby. And, the United States is the principal consumer of illegal drugs in the world and yet persists in treating drug consumption as a criminal activity, not a question of public health. Until these complications are mitigated or the nations of Latin America come up with a means of collaborating among themselves without the United States, dealing with illegal organized criminal activity will continue to be a serious problem.

One particular facet of the international dimension of criminal activity



A law enforcement officer searches a poor neighborhood in Guatemala.

concerns all of the nations of the hemisphere. Since the end of the Cold War, realists in the United States and the geopoliticians have been looking for threats to U.S. security. For a while, during the George W. Bush administration, people in the Pentagon thought that the regime of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela was a threat to the United States because of Venezuela's ties to the rogue regime of Iran. That is no longer a popular view in Washington. However, studies done in Washington and elsewhere speculate that criminal gangs, now focused on the traffic in drugs, or gangs that now earn money committing crimes in the cities of the hemisphere will, at some point, offer their services to terrorists. In such a case, the gangs would make available to terrorists their transportation networks, their services as couriers, and their services as launderers of money to help those whose goals are to wreak destruction in the United States or in some other country of the hemisphere. One such case involving the Mexican-based Zetas and an assassination plot was described in the press in October 2011. The experts are beginning to recognize the linkages between domestic crime and international or transnational crime. In the next few years, the policy proposals must meet the demand for more imaginative approaches.

In order not to close this article on a note of pessimism, I would like to return to the original issue—citizen insecurity in Latin America. In recent work on police reform, experts have come up with the concept of proximity and participation. In dealing with police reform, the policies should focus on mechanisms to reduce the space or distance between citizens and the forces of law and order. It goes without saying that this concept of proximity is another facet of the broader concept of inclusion.

Joseph S. Tulchin, an Associate at Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, was director of the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington for 16 years.

Criminal Organizations and Enterprise

A Business of Scale **BY NOEL MAURER**

THERE IS NOTHING NEW ABOUT ORGANIZED crime. Nor is there anything new about criminal violence. What is new—at least for Mexico—is the scale. In Mexico, homicide had been falling steadily for a decade, from 17 per 100,000 in 1997 to a little under 10 in 2007. Since 2007, the rate has steadily grown to 22 per 100,000, with several states in the north of the country spiking above 40. Violence appears to have peaked in the northern cities, but now also seems to be spreading throughout the country.

The question, then, is why has violence spiked now? I believe the necessary condition was a change in business strategy prompted by changes in drug markets and the market for political protection in Mexico. The primary change in drug markets was the successful U.S. attack on Colombian mobsters, combined with an effective shutdown of the Caribbean drug route. This opened the way for Mexico's organized crime organizations—increasingly known by the unfortunate acronym of MOCO—to vertically integrate both upstream and downstream. It also opened the way for them to develop local drug markets within Mexico, since they now controlled more of the product. Vertical integration and horizontal expansion, however, meant a greater need for market intelligence (including the movement of rival shipments) and contract enforcement both within and without the organization. The political change was the increase in political competition engendered by democratization. Democratization disrupted the mechanisms that made the drug trade an actual cartel (thus opening opportunities for violent competition) while simultaneously making it worthwhile

for criminals to attempt to violently intimidate local governments.

The sufficient condition for the violence explosion, however, was the Calderón administration's crackdown on the cartels. The crackdown drove up the costs of the drug trade, and caused the cartels to expand horizontally into new drug routes and new criminal markets. Moreover, the arrests of cartel leaders caused internal organizations to break down, allowing specialized divisions (such as the Zetas or La Línea) to go into business for themselves. The result has been an escalation of violence and a widespread growth in extortion.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Mexico's first smuggling rings emerged as vertically integrated enterprises under political protection. As far back as 1916, in the middle of the Mexican Revolution, U.S. customs officials in Los Angeles reported that Esteban Cantú, the governor of Baja California, was selling leases to smuggle opium into United States. Cantú didn't last—he became involved in a bizarro-world attempt to cleave Baja from Mexico as an independent state, which led to his exile—but the governors who followed him continued their involvement with drugs. Once the federal government of Mexico banned marijuana in 1920 and opium in 1926, they needed more government protection than before—and that protection was quite forthcoming from the old Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) machine. Moreover, they relied on U.S. crime rings to market their product.

Smuggling soon spread away from Baja. In 1931, President Pascual Ortiz Rubio (who was actually not the true

head of government at the time—that position being occupied by the Jefe Máximo de la Revolución, Plutarco Calles) expressed worry over “the increase in national and international narcotics trafficking along the rail line joining Mexico City and Ciudad Juárez.” He went on to state that he was sending three “secret agents” who were “currently in Torreón” to combat the traffickers.

The head secret agent, Juan Requena, sent back a report stating that Torreón was the “main center for narcotics trafficking in the towns linked by the rail line from Mexico City to Ciudad Juárez and for the international trafficking carried out in this city.” It went on to say the main kingpin was a man of Chinese descent named Antonio Wong Yin, who was in contact with the mayor of Torreón (Francisco Ortiz Garza), a close friend of the governor of Coahuila (Nazario Ortiz Garza), and the head of the federal Army in the state, General Jesús Garza Gutiérrez. (It was good to be a Garza!) He went on report that the traffickers “have a complete espionage service prepared to do anything.” At that point Requena was transferred to Los Angeles.

The next year, General Rodrigo Quevedo became governor. His brother became mayor of Juárez. They shot the head of the smuggling cartel there, who fled to Mexico City, where gunmen killed him in a tiny little park that used to be next to the Casa de Azulejos in 1937. That same year, the head of the federal Department of Public Health, José Siurob, called Juárez “possibly the most dangerous center where traffickers operate who ... defend their trafficking with gunfire.”

The Baja criminals were under the thumb of the Mexican government on one end (which controlled the violence needed to enforce contracts inside Mexico) and a group of Americans who both controlled the supply channels on the other. By 1947, Harry Anslinger, the head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, declared Mexico to be U.S.’s main opium supplier. He also accused state officials in Sinaloa (where it was grown) of being in the drug business, including Governor Pablo Macías Valen-

zuela. Surprisingly, the Mexican press picked up the accusations. There must have been some sort of infighting between Macías and President Miguel Alemán, because once the President made a trip to Sinaloa, the accusations stopped. Macías finished his term and became head of Military Camp No. 1 in Mexico City. The feds made a show of capturing one of the traffickers Macías was accused of protecting—Miguel Urías Uriarte—but he was soon released.

Over the next three decades, heroin and marijuana smuggling grew as America’s drug habit took off. Opium was grown in Sinaloa, and the “narcotraficantes” began to move from the highlands to new subdivisions in Culiacán. In 1975-85, under the name Operation Condor, the Mexican government sent an Army division into the Golden Triangle around the intersection of Sonora, Sinaloa, and Durango.

Operation Condor, however, wasn’t really about breaking up the drug trade as it was about establishing “plazas.” A plaza did not refer to a public square, but rather the area under the control of particular political authority, who would monitor all the drugs passing through their jurisdiction. Those controlled by traffickers who made payoffs would be allowed to continue. The authority would then insure that the payoffs flowed through to the beat cops, soldiers, and low-level officials whose cooperation was needed.

With the new stability, the Mexican smugglers integrated backwards into production. The reason was simple: there are scale economies to be had in marijuana and opium cultivation. Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo was particularly good at this: the El Búfalo ranch, raided in 1984, covered two square miles, employed 10,000 farmworkers at harvest time and held drying marijuana worth (in 2010 dollars) somewhere between \$3.2 and \$8.0 billion <<http://www.theatlanticwire.com/global/2011/07/are-we-sure-mexicos-largest-marijuana-farm/40015/> and <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/64919.html>>. The emerging “cartels” could not retroactively integrate into cocaine—that was



produced in the Andes, not in Mexico—but as the United States succeeded in shutting down the Caribbean corridor (mostly by getting the Bahamas to agree to allow U.S. law enforcement to freely operate in its territory) more cocaine traversed Mexican territory.

The agreement between the Colombian producers and the Mexican wholesalers was stable because the Mexicans lacked distribution channels in the United States. The Colombians sold cocaine to the Mexicans at one end of the value chain and bought it back from them at the other. The “cartels” didn’t consider themselves to be particularly cartelized: as Félix Gallardo himself wrote in his diary, “In 1989, the cartels didn’t exist ... there started to be talk about ‘cartels’ from the authorities assigned to combat



Confiscated knives, among the weapons used by organized crime.

retail trade. A similar process occurred in Tijuana, taking up that city's homicide rate. The creation of a retail market combined with three other factors to move the border cities to a new, higher level of violence: a large population of transient young men, an economy that offered few economic opportunities, and continuing connections with U.S. prison gangs that could not freely operate in San Diego or El Paso but could easily coordinate their activities south of the border from their American redoubts. Yet, outside of Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana, the rest of the country remained relatively peaceful.

A STRATEGY OF VIOLENCE

The peace began to break down in 2005, when the Sinaloa Federation began to try to take control of the Nuevo Laredo plaza away from the Gulf cartel after the 2003 arrest of Osiel Cárdenas. Under the leadership of Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán and Arturo “El Barbas” Beltrán Leyva, the Sinoloans meticulously planned to seize the plaza. They did not, however, realize that Cárdenas's network of enforcers was fully capable of fighting back. The “Zetas,” originally a group of former Mexican special forces who had gone to work for Cárdenas, fought brutally to take control from the Gulf Cartel and keep out the Sinaloans.

What does it mean for a cartel to “control” a plaza? In short, it means two things: intelligence and enforcers (called “sicarios”) who can intercept such cargoes and (given good intelligence) punish those responsible. In addition, if there is a retail drug market, control means having a monopoly over sales. Seizing control over a plaza is therefore a violent business, since it requires destroying the other cartel's intelligence network. Violence is also useful to terrorize the other side. Since so many local cops were on cartel payrolls, federal and local police forces at times shot at each other.

After coming to office in 2006, the Calderón administration declared war

them” (The diary can be found in Diego Osorno, *El Cartel de Sinaloa* [Mexico City, 2009, pp. 207-57]). Félix was correct in the current sense of the word “cartel” as an organized crime ring, but wholesale distribution via Mexico was in fact cartelized in the technical sense. Two mechanisms served to control the market: the Mexican government insured that there would be no fighting over possible routes inside Mexico, and the U.S. Coast Guard (with the full cooperation, it should be noted, of the Bahamian government and the de facto help of the Cuban one) insured that Mexico would be the cheapest route for cocaine transshipments into the United States.

The above business model collapsed in the 1990s because the U.S. government refused to quietly play its role and

went after the Colombian-controlled distribution networks. The U.S. and Colombian governments took down Pablo Escobar in 1993. Soon, three Mexican organizations controlled the drug trade, and succeeded in seizing most of the rents from their Colombian suppliers.

In Ciudad Juárez, a mid-level drug dealer named Amado Carrillo Fuentes took the opportunity of Escobar's death to shift the traffic to his city. He also began to sell retail inside Mexico. Juárez became littered with “tienditas,” where drugs sold for less than a quarter of the U.S. street price. In theory, the tienditas were under police protection. In practice, the police functioned as just another gang. Homicide in Juárez jumped from 5 per 100,000 to a shade under 30 as Carrillo's men tried to take control of the

on the cartels. There is evidence that the Calderón administration's attack contributed to accelerating the explosion of violence. Melissa Dell, in a recent study of the effects of political change on violence in Mexico, found that whenever a PAN mayor was inaugurated, violence jumped by more than half. Moreover, violence

likely divert more resources into *narcomenudeo*—local retail sales.

Research by Viridiana Rios (see p. 26) indicates that the breakdown of PRI control had an effect on cartel strategies, even independent of Calderón's crack-down. Is there any evidence that the government's efforts have in fact raised the

The cartels have branched horizontally into new businesses, in particular extortion (including kidnapping) and human trafficking.

also jumps in the surrounding counties. (Mexico has no municipal governments as known in the United States; the basic political unit is the county; each county has an elected mayor.) More tellingly, female labor force participation and wages in the informal sector fell in all the affected counties. In a more direct test of a similar hypothesis, Eduardo Guerrero found that federal enforcement actions (drug seizures, crop eradication, dismantled meth labs, and arrests) all increased the probability of homicide in the county.

The interpretation of the results is based upon the assumption that PAN mayors are able to call in federal resources to combat drug trafficking in their counties. The application of federal power disrupts the operations of the local cartel—which depend, crucially, on intelligence in order to control their territories. The cartels then react to the higher costs that they face in two ways. First, they displace their smuggling activities to nearby routes. Inasmuch as those routes are contestable territory, it triggers inter-cartel violence. Second, as costs rise in the trafficking business, the cartels move into other profit sectors: among them protection rackets aimed at small businesses. As rents on small businesses increase, wages and female labor force participation fall (the latter under the unfortunately but probably true assumption that women are the last hired and first fired). The cartels also

costs of trafficking drugs to the United States? The answer to that question is yes. After a long period of decline that took retail cocaine prices down by 80% since 1981, the price of cocaine started to escalate in late 2007, doubling by the middle of 2008 and remaining at that level thereafter. The implication is that the supply of drugs to the U.S. market (and the cost of getting them there) increased dramatically over the first few years of the Calderón crackdown.

OUTSOURCING VIOLENCE

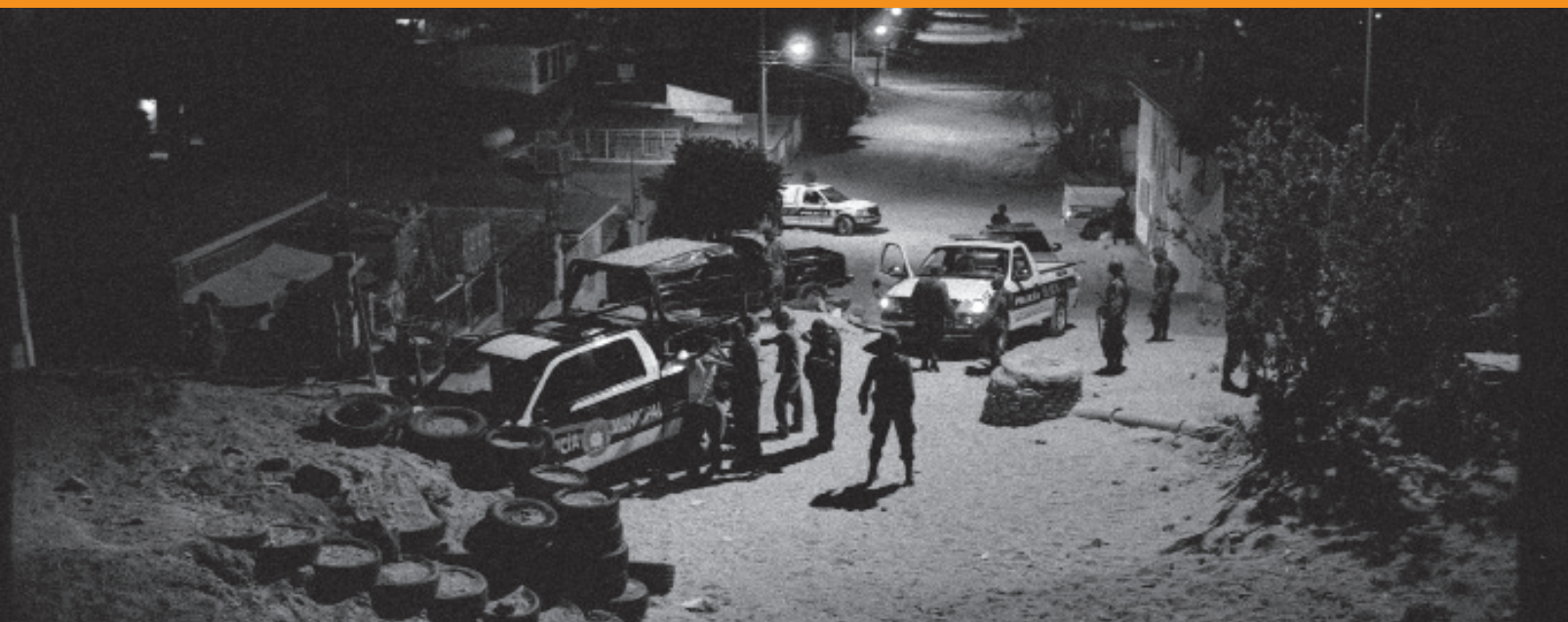
The cartels have branched horizontally into new businesses, particularly extortion (including kidnapping) and human trafficking, but this change in strategy has been accompanied by a disturbing change in organization. First, the cartels themselves have fragmented under pressure from the federal government. Second, the cartels have increasingly outsourced various functions to local gangs. The rationale follows the same logic as business outsourcing. First, the smaller organizations often have a comparative advantage in a specialized function, be it enforcement, transport, retail distribution, or marketing. (The Zetas, most prominently, were born as the enforcement arm of the Gulf Cartel.) The gangs also have local knowledge. In addition, they give the cartels flexibility: there is no need to maintain “a bloated bureaucracy of gunmen” (in the words of Eduardo Guerrero). Finally,

gang members, when arrested, cannot give away information about internal operations, for the simple reason that they are not internal to the cartel.

The problem, of course, is that the cartels cannot always maintain control over their outsourced branches. When top leaders were arrested, the heads of these secondary organizations were tempted to go their own way. Similarly, when federal enforcement created an opportunity (by, say, shutting down a smuggling route or a kidnapping ring) the leaders of the secondary organizations engaged in entrepreneurialism. The cartels became less stable, and needed to use violence to control challenges from their outsourced arms as well as from other cartels. In the long run, fragmentation will lead to less violence, as small gangs lack scale economies, but the transition will be long and bloody.

Calderón's crackdown may have triggered the increase in violence, but the seeds were set far before then. The correct MOCO business model is certain to provoke violence, particularly as the cartels disintegrate. Moreover, cocaine consumption and prices in the United States seem set to continue their secular decline, which will push more criminals out of trafficking and into other lines of work. In the long-run, Mexico will likely get a handle on its law enforcement problem as the economy grows and the MOCOs disintegrate into street gangs... but without a proactive strategy, the long-run could be some time away.

Noel Maurer is an associate professor at the Harvard Business School in the Business, Government and the International Economy (BGIE) unit. His most recent book is The Big Ditch: How America Took, Built, Ran, and Ultimately Gave Away the Panama Canal, co-authored with Carlos Yu. He is also the author of The Power and the Money and The Politics of Property Rights (the second co-authored with Stephen Haber and Armando Razo) and Mexico Since 1980 (co-authored with Herb Klein, Kevin Middlebrook and Stephen Haber).



MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Mexico and Central America are experiencing the impact of organized crime more than any other region of Latin America at the present time. This section focuses on a diagnosis of the situation, as well as much reflection on solutions. Eduardo Guerrero, Alejandro Poiré, Viridiana Ríos, Gabriel Aguilera, Alfredo Corchado, José Miguel Cruz and Julie López offer a wide variety of perspectives.

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Mexico's Challenges

Lessons in the War against Organized Crime (2007-2011) **BY EDUARDO GUERRERO**

WHEN FELIPE CALDERÓN TOOK OATH AS MEXICO's president, he identified security policy—particularly a struggle against criminal organizations—as the flagship policy of his administration. Like millions of Mexicans, I was enthusiastic, expecting that his initiative would establish the foundations for a stronger rule of law through much needed reform and professionalization of police and the judiciary.

While the President has been praised for his determination to face a challenge bypassed by previous administrations, after almost five years the outcomes of

his anticrime strategy are far from satisfying. From December 2006 to October 2011, there were about 50,000 organized crime-related deaths (see chart). In addition to increasing levels of violence, criminal incidence has risen dramatically, especially regarding high-impact activities (*i.e.*, extortion and kidnapping) related to organized crime in regions where government interventions have focused. In some areas, criminal organizations' violent response to the government have brought a further decline in the rule of law, and deeper intervention of criminal

organizations in public affairs, including some attempts to rig local elections. These outcomes proved wrong some of the optimistic expectations many Mexicans had around what seemed to be a brave and fair resolve by their president.

Given the disappointing performance of the Mexican government's security strategy, I started collecting data and analyzing the origins and dynamics of the current crime and violence epidemic.

A Madonna watches over broken glass and a corpse in Mexico.

ics. Calderón's strategy has certainly had some positive features, and some adjustments have already been implemented. However, the security situation in Mexico calls for major corrections in government strategy that the next president—to be elected in July 2012—will have to address. Much can be learned from the recent experience of trial and error. The following are lessons that stem from my analyses:

Government intervention must be based on a sound diagnosis of the criminal organizations—their force, structure, internal cohesion, etc.—as well as a thorough assessment of the government's own resources.

As violence spreads and becomes epidemic throughout the country—and criminal organization attacks pose ever more daunting threats to public security institutions, political processes, and civil society—it has become evident that President Calderón did not have a thorough understanding of the resources and dynamics of Mexican criminal organizations. An evidence-based diagnosis (including data, for instance, on the strength and level of reliability of police forces, and the recruitment capacity, location, hierarchy and internal cohesion of criminal organizations) could have informed the strategy and saved much pain. Following a bald strategy without such diagnosis, the Federal Government soon found itself between a rock and a hard place.

The first large-scale intervention against a drug-trafficking organization was launched in December 2006 in Michoacán (a state where violence had reached unprecedented levels during the previous months) only a few days after the beginning of the administration. This first "joint operation" was launched in response to an explicit request by Michoacán's governor, and rendered good short-term results. During 2007 and 2008, however, the Federal Government launched seven additional large-scale joint operations. These joint operations were not a response to clear security crises; the army and navy had to spread their resources too thin. De-

spite the intensive deployment of forces, violence and criminal activity reached record levels by mid-2008.

The main explanation for such an outcome is that the non-selective arrest of leaders of drug-trafficking organizations during the joint operations splintered the cartels and brought bloody conflicts among organizations. During these conflicts criminal organizations have shown the ability to continue recruiting members and to establish alliances with gangs, to bribe authorities and to diversify to a new set of criminal activities. The government has not been able to stop any of these activities. Moreover, unlike rigid bureaucratic structures, criminal organizations are flexible, adapting to the new context (even though they fragment and incur in large losses, they hardly ever disappear completely).

Regarding the government's own resources, it has become clear that the forces deployed to tackle criminal organizations—and to develop public security duties in several regions—were ill-suited for this task. The large increase in the number of human rights complaints against the army and the navy during this administration are a consequence of this mismatch. Even though the security budget has increased substantially during this term, this expenditure remains largely unaccountable, and there are insufficient reports or indicators that assess the effectiveness of these expenditures. Nevertheless, the development of a 35,000-strong Federal Police—that boasts substantially better levels of professionalization than most state and local police departments in the country—is certainly an asset that will contribute to the implementation of a more effective security policy in the years to come.

Another obstacle for the implementation of government strategy has been the high turnover in police departments, likewise in the national and state attorneys' personnel—constant changes due to dismissals, resignations, arrests and homicides. For example, on August 1, 2011, 21 state delegates of the Attorney General's office resigned simultaneously.

Widespread violence fosters crime and weakens the stability of law-abiding citizens vis-à-vis criminal organizations.

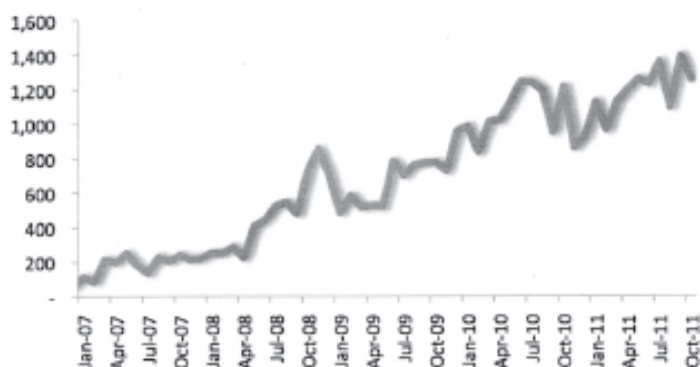
In the early years of the current administration some analysts, as well as some senior public officers, seemed to be convinced that widespread violence was a necessary by-product of successful interventions against organized crime, and even a hallmark of success.

In a situation of widespread violence, however, it is easier for criminals to engage in predatory activities that hurt citizens the most, such as kidnapping and extortion. In addition, violence itself creates a market for illegal protection, so that businesses and individuals are not only forced, but in some cases are willing to pay organizations that have the ability to provide them protection (since criminals have shown that they have both weapons and the resolve to use them if necessary). Thus, widespread violence has brought new rents, which are available for criminal organizations. In some cases these rents have substituted for drug-trafficking profits (especially in the case of organizations which have been displaced from the major trafficking routes). However, the new criminal business model has proved to be more damaging because it relies more heavily on predatory activities.

It would have been naive to expect that the powerful Mexican cartels could have been tackled without a substantial deployment of force and without casualties. Nevertheless, it is important to maintain public support for government intervention as well as avoid the perverse effects that violence epidemics have brought to several regions throughout Mexico (such as migration, decreases in investment and tourism, and political instability). During 2011, some subtle changes in the official communication as well as a large scale operation that narrowly targets Zetas (the most violent large Mexican drug-trafficking organization) suggest that the Federal Government may finally be shifting the strategy in order to focus on the most violent organizations and increase deterrence.

MONTHLY ORGANIZED CRIME-RELATED DEATHS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

(DEC. 2006-OCT. 2011)



SOURCE: AUTHOR ELABORATION BASED ON FIGURES FROM THE BASE DE DATOS DE FALLECIMIENTOS OCURRIDOS POR PRESUNTA RIVALIDAD DELINCUENCIAL. PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC. [HTTP://WWW.PRESIDENCIA.GOB.MX/](http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/) FOR DECEMBER 2006-DECEMBER 2010. DATA FOR 2011 WAS ESTIMATED BASED ON DATA COLLECTED FROM NATIONAL AND LOCAL NEWSPAPERS.

Adequate incentives must be offered in order to obtain the necessary support from state and local authorities.

Originally, President Calderón did not build broad coalitions with governors and mayors to support his aggressive security strategy. Interventions against organized crime, starting with the “joint operation” in Michoacán in December 2006, were publicized as an endeavor of the Federal Government, and construed by the media as a response to ineffective state and local authorities. Hence, governors and mayors had little incentive to effectively collaborate with the Federal Government.

Moreover, the Federal Government has set no limits to the amount of time that the army and federal police forces would remain in states facing a critical security situation. This means that state governments have no incentive to seriously start a much-needed purge, expansion and professionalization of their public security forces. A large number of municipalities—including several with the highest criminal incidence and violence levels—have police-to-population ratios well below recommended thresholds (defined using a methodology that takes into

account police and military casualties). Additionally, only 8.6 percent of state police officers and 34.3 percent of municipal police officers were evaluated between 2008 and 2010. On the other hand, the fact that organized crime is deeply entrenched into local police departments implies that governors and mayors would face strong resistance (and would take a substantial risk) if they engaged in effective action against organized crime.

It is noteworthy that Baja California is the only state within a large-scale joint operation where violence did not increase in 2009 and 2010 (even though it can hardly be described as a model of safety). This state and its joint operations are frequently showcased as a success story by government officials. Unsurprisingly, Baja California is also the only state with a large-scale joint operation where the governor belongs to President Calderón’s party.

In the long run, public opinion may push state and local governments to engage more actively and effectively in the struggle against organized crime. In Nuevo León, the arson-fire at a casino in August 2011 caused the death of 52 people. In the aftermath of this event the

state government, under strong pressure (including requests for the governor to resign), finally started what seems to be a full-fledged purge of local police department in the state municipalities.

Two additional steps to foster stronger coalitions of all authorities in the struggle against crime have been implemented lately, with mixed results. The first step has been the publication of information related to compliance with a set of security policy “commitments” signed by all 32 Mexican governors. For instance, a report by the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System shows that by October 2011 half the states failed to fully comply with the commitment to perform polygraph examinations to senior staff in security agencies (including two states which did not perform such polygraph examinations at all). A second step has been to establish transfers conditional on performance and compliance with security policy commitments (such as uploading security data to a national database which should allow better coordination of security policies across states).

Nevertheless it has proved difficult to accelerate the pace of coordination between the Federal Government and the states. It is even suspected that some state governments are doctoring data—such as crime incidence—in order to remain unaccountable, to avoid electoral losses, and to elude budget cuts. The task of making state and local authorities responsible for security, along with the Federal Government, will remain an important one in the next administration’s agenda.

Eduardo Guerrero studied Political Science at El Colegio de México, the University of Delaware and the University of Chicago. Currently he is a consultant on security affairs at Lantia Consultores (www.lantiaconsultores.com). His articles on security, violence, and drug-trafficking are published regularly in the Mexican magazine Nexos. He recently published “Security, Drugs and Violence in Mexico: a Survey” available at <http://bit.ly/uduAQz>.

Fighting for Security in Mexico

Between the “Alternatives” and the Right Way **BY ALEJANDRO POIRÉ**

THE LAST TIME I COLLABORATED WITH REVISTA

I wrote the introduction of an edition dedicated to *Latin America's Year of Elections* (Spring/Summer 2006). In those days, the most important academic efforts around Latin America focused on elections, ballots and voters. Consolidation of democracy appeared to be the only issue on Latin America's agenda, perhaps because it was an imminent priority. Five years later, the main subject of the academic discussion is “the fight for security.”

The evolution of drug trafficking organizations, the changes of the illegal market, the debate around regulation of drug consumption, even explanations about violence are increasingly filling academic—or non-academic—journals. I celebrate that many people are trying to understand this very complex phenomenon nowadays because it is the most important challenge that our region has today.

In this article, I describe some alternatives Latin American governments apparently have in order to deal with this

problem. But first, it is necessary to define clearly the kind of crime we are trying to neutralize; it will then be easier to show why not all the alternatives lead us towards the right path on the way to a genuine, long-lasting security. Therefore, I'll review some of the factors that explain the transformation of drug trafficking into organized crime in the Mexican case.

THE CHANGE FROM DRUG TRAFFICKING TO ORGANIZED CRIME

Until the 1980s, Mexican drug trafficking was mostly the business of some producers of marijuana and poppy seed usually exported to the United States. Business changed dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s, due to several transformations affecting the entire drug market.

The closure of the Caribbean route for drug trafficking (between the 1980s and early 1990s) managed to diminish the flow of most cocaine produced in Colombia, but this policy did not avoid great quantities of cocaine traveling through

Mexican territory. Consequently, a large number of producers that had been exporting marijuana to the United States joined the international trans-regional drug trafficking scheme that sent South American cocaine through Mexican territory into the United States.

Colombian cartels started paying Mexican organizations not only in cash but in kind; thus, an increasing amount of cocaine crossing towards the United States stayed in Mexico, generating a real domestic market in the country. The existence of such a market implies a deep transformation of crime. What used to be just international trafficking with no need for territorial control and almost no confrontation with domestic authorities became a violent race to control routes and territories for distribution.

The new face of business made it indispensable for cartels to have distribution

The “fight for security” is a priority in Mexico today.



networks, and beyond, to co-opt, corrupt, or inflict fear upon local security authorities in order to guarantee the distribution of their products. It also explains the diversification of business: if the cartels had already assumed the costs of crime, their incentives to add extortion, kidnapping or human trafficking to their list clearly increased.

In addition, during those years efforts to improve and transform institutions were not successful enough. The absence of investment and little attention paid to local police institutions generated a structural damage, making them incapable of confronting changes in organized crime.

To complete the scene, the expiration of the assault-weapons ban in the United States generated an arms race between criminal organizations that made their disputes more and more violent (see *Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act*: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-103hr3355enr/pdf/BILLS-103hr3355enr.pdf>).

Thus, while cartels were becoming stronger and more complex, local security institutions not only lacked improvement, but were progressively being weakened and damaged by this phenomenon.

President Felipe Calderón took office facing a hard scenario: more powerful criminal organizations, increasing criminal rates, weak local institutions, defective laws, and a damaged social fabric. His choice among the alternatives was definitely a structural transformation, but had he really many options?

THE ALTERNATIVES DON'T COME EASY

One key element regarding organized crime is the set of alternatives both government and society have to face. The first and most important decision to be made by authorities is whether to take action on the matter or simply ignore it. The answer may seem obvious and simple, particularly given the state's fundamental obligation to provide security to its citizens. Unfortunately, acknowledging the problem of criminal gangs and

taking the appropriate action is not always the most popular choice. Many governments have washed their hands of the problem because there seems to be too much at stake with no immediately visible reward.

Yet when the choice is made to address the criminal phenomenon, it seems like there are some alternatives on the table. Which one has proven to be more effective? And beyond, which one is really an alternative? Well, it depends on the scope and depth of the results each one allows us to achieve. There is one true thing about the fight against organized crime: false solutions abound and are often disguised as straight and smooth paths towards a long-lasting security; nothing more than magic recipes for complex problems.

Making a pact with organized crime contravenes the law and undermines one of the state's most basic functions—the obligation of providing security.

Diverse alternatives have been subject of debate among security experts, policy makers and society. For that reason, it is important to examine briefly the main options discussed as well as some of their premises.

OMISSION

This alternative is based on the idea that criminal organizations will naturally come to unwavering agreements with one another. So why act as an authority if criminals themselves will not represent a major problem? Omission fails to consider that organized crime, being an illegal market, is unable to reach stability. Any agreement made between criminal gangs is always fragile and at jeopardy. You never know when some kingpin's brother will be killed by a rival or when drug market transformations will bring on incentives for fighting against each other for bigger earnings. Hence, historical disputes between criminal organizations, whether

they respond to economic reasons or personal vendettas, break up all kinds of settlements and end up in cartel excisions and fights for controlling “*plazas*.” Mexico, along with other countries in the region and the world, has experienced the grave consequences of tolerance to crime.

MAKING A PACT

Negotiating rests on the assumption that ceding ground to criminals allows preserving order in the rest of the country. The logic—by the way, wrong and tricky—is that if authority gives away control of a certain territory, criminal organizations will in turn, concentrate their criminal activity there, leaving the rest of the country undisturbed: that is, a criminal gang will be satisfied just with the earnings obtained from this

ceded territory. Without a doubt, this is a very fragile assumption that has proven to be wrong.

Making a pact with organized crime contravenes the law and undermines one of the state's most basic functions that in fact justifies its own existence: the obligation of providing security to its citizenry. Making a pact with organized crime does not guarantee the end of violence; instead, it gives drug traffickers, kidnappers, extortionists and human traffickers license to harm society. Besides, no criminal organization settles for a delimited territory. Their own business model calls for expansion, and that is when they should have to meet authority and not impunity.

A good example is the breakup of the alliance between the Gulf Cartel and the Zetas criminal gang, in part due to the ambition of the latter to become the “boss” instead of being the “employee.” Why share the profits? All the incentives are for rivalry.

DISCRETIONAL INTERVENTION

Some of the main detractors of the National Public Safety Strategy chosen by the Calderón administration argue that a frontal combat against organized crime increases violence because of the cartels' internal fragmentation that results in instability and disputes among their own members and against other criminal organizations. To prevent this, some suggest as an alternative the focalization of law enforcement, that is, fighting a particular criminal organization or a specific part of their structure.

There are several risks and false assumptions surrounding this proposal. First, the alternative is comparable to a "selective" concept of justice where a fundamental human right is not promoted equally but discretionally, since not all criminals would be equally investigated and prosecuted, but only some of them, based on subjective criteria. Furthermore, available evidence demonstrates that capturing or killing a criminal leader does not necessarily trigger violence. On the contrary, many case studies show a deceleration of criminal homicide rates. Besides, it is impossible to know accurately which target, in terms of criminal organizations' structure, will detonate more violence because there is no pattern that indicates, for example, if focusing an attack on financial operators is more effective than concentrating efforts against criminal organizations' lieutenants.

Unless we have a crystal ball or criminal organizations adopt systematic behavior, it will continue to be practically impossible to embrace this alternative without provoking more harm than benefits.

In contrast, evidence confirms that fighting only a bunch of criminal organizations and leaving others to their criminal activities generates the most perverse effects. By weakening just one criminal organization, necessarily another one comes out stronger. The outcome is having some criminal organizations profiting from the state's tolerance to their expansion and their winning control of "plazas" over other criminal gangs that

are being effectively targeted with law enforcement actions.

PUBLIC FORCE AS THE ONLY TOOL

Fighting criminal organizations with federal force alone was the central policy in Mexico during the late 90s. Nonetheless, this alternative carries a huge inconvenience: the use of federal force to contain criminal organizations is merely a step in the path towards a long-lasting security. The Armed Forces may play a provisional role in providing security, especially in communities where the police corps has to build capacities in order to fulfill its obligations regarding security. If local security institutions don't engage in structural transformation processes, Armed Forces deployment would have to be permanent in order to maintain the containment and weakening of criminal organizations, and that is simply impossible. No army in the world has either the capacities or the human resources to work as a civil security corps. Thus, the role of Armed Forces must be understood as subsidiary, temporary and as a part of a comprehensive public safety strategy.

STRUCTURAL REFORM

Organized crime and its accompanying violence is a multi-causal phenomenon. A public policy seeking to address all its possible fronts is not only ambitious but complex. The National Public Safety Strategy, implemented by the Mexican government, includes comprehensive actions with expected effects in the short, medium and long term. This governmental plan aims to contain and weaken criminal organizations, but also to transform Mexican legal framework and Mexican security institutions. In addition to these two components, the strategy also works on a third one, which focuses on strengthening the social fabric. How can we aspire to save communities without expelling tolerance to crime from our own cultural practices? Our goal, thus, is not only to reverse society's vulnerability as a target of criminal activities, but to go further in promoting the culture of rule of law that

finds its roots in society itself. That way, the first obstacle crime will find in the future will be strong communities that easily reject any illegal activity no matter how "insignificant" it appears to be.

If what a society wants is to establish genuine, long-lasting security, then it must choose the path of institutions, law and the reconstruction of the social fabric. This may be more difficult and costly or unpopular, but it will also be more effective and permanent.

Certainly, public policy aiming for long term results is not the most attractive one, given that its outcomes are hardly visible and don't come easy. As Federal Government spokesman for security, one of the highest challenges I faced was that of effectively communicating the achievements of the National Public Safety Strategy. For example, it was difficult to explain that education coverage was also part of the strategy, or that vetted policemen do not grow in trees but require the full commitment and shared responsibility of federal, state and local governments.

In the end, President Calderón's administration is building bridges. Even if they are not visible right now, one day Mexicans will cross over to the other side of the road, where a corrupt policeman is the exception and not the rule; where peace and quiet is an everyday occurrence in our communities; where the underlying transformations that we have undertaken will have rendered their fruits.

Alejandro Poiré was appointed Mexico's Minister of Interior on November 17, 2011, by President Felipe Calderón. Previously, Poiré served as head of Mexico's National Security Agency and as Secretary of the National Security Council and Cabinet and Spokesman for the National Public Safety Strategy. He holds a Ph.D. in government from Harvard University and is the author of Towards Mexico's Democratization: Parties, Campaigns, Elections, and Public Opinion. He was the 2006-07 Antonio Madero/Fundación México Visiting Scholar at DRCLAS.



Keys to Reducing Violence in Mexico

Targeted policing and civic engagement **BY VIRIDIANA RIOS AND GABRIEL AGUILERA**

SOME REGIONS OF MEXICO NOW SEEM LIKE WAR zones. Nineteen out of the 50 most violent cities in the world are expected to be found in the country by the end of 2011. Yet severe violence is concentrated in a handful of key transit regions near the border and coasts. The crucial cocaine corridor from Ciudad Juarez into the United States experienced homicide rates of 216 victims per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010.

During the last four and a half years, 41,648 killings have been officially linked to drug trafficking organizations, a dramatic increase from the previous five years when only 8,901 were registered. In 2010, the grisly sum reached a record 15,273 or 47 percent of all violent deaths (Rios, Viridiana and David Shirk 2011 “Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2011” Trans-border Institute (TBI) February 2011).

Taming violence is a daunting task for the Mexican authorities. Nonetheless, President Calderón’s policies have had some success, such as the precipitous reduction in violence recorded in Tijuana and ongoing challenges in Juarez. Mex-

ico and other states that have reduced violence offer lessons. Governments obviously need to improve the capacity of law enforcement institutions, provide adequate human and material resources, and garner political support to sustain targeted policies through the ineluctable setbacks that plague even the best campaigns. We focus on some less obvious lessons drawn from efforts to reduce violence in Mexico and beyond. In particular, we stress the effectiveness of targeted hot spot tactics and collaboration between state authorities and civil society. It appears, too, that the criminal community itself must have organizational cohesion for policies to produce fast effects.

In Mexico, Tijuana is the most vivid example where government policies contributed to a successful decrease in drug-related bloodshed. Violence spiked in the border town when a faction of the Tijuana cartel separated and joined forces with the Sinaloa cartel to take over the territory. This turf battle caused 408 homicides in the final three months of 2008, which

made Tijuana one of the nation’s most violent cities. However, by the first trimester of 2009 homicides dropped dramatically. Conditions in Tijuana improved while those in Juarez deteriorated.

Observers attribute improved conditions in Tijuana to coordinated enforcement efforts by federal, state, and local forces to regain control of the city’s most dangerous areas. Critically, this strategy promoted trust between civil society and government authorities. Officials purged the municipal police and encouraged anonymous tips about criminal events by members of the public to the army. This decision promoted good will with the populace that distrusted the police and held the army in higher esteem. With information flowing between the populace and authorities, officials targeted the newly separated cartel fraction. Tijuana was divided into quadrants and the government implemented tactics to pacify them piecemeal. The leader of the renegade faction fled Tijuana to La Paz, a resort town at the southern end of the Baja peninsula, where authorities arrested him.

A bullet casing at a murder scene in Guatemala City.

The tactics adopted in Tijuana parallel successful efforts elsewhere in the world. Authorities in Tampa, Florida, deployed similar methods to reduce violence by 75 percent between 1986 to mid-1988. With the help of civil society, the police department acquired the capacity to track drug-dealing operations that were moving too fast for authorities to monitor with conventional patrolling and intelligence. As in Tijuana, a just-in-time communication system of anonymous denunciation contributed to the reversal, as did focusing on visible key hot spots of criminal activity.

About a decade ago, civil society participation was also crucial in Colombia with its policy of “hometown soldiers” (*soldados de mi pueblo*) policy. Soldiers were assigned to serve in their home communities rather than random locations. This approach boosted trust in the security forces and increased citizen cooperation, which in turn facilitated enforcement and contributed towards dramatic reductions in violence. In Rio de Janeiro, targeted enforcement efforts—considered important innovations in policing. They helped to reduce violent deaths from 44 per 100,000 habitants to 15 between 1999 and 2007. The combination of targeted hot spot tactics and promoting trust between civil society and the authorities were also instrumental in obtaining significant reductions of violence in Bogotá and Medellín, as well as in Boston in the United States.

These examples suggest that success depends on enforcement strategies and, crucially, on the structure of criminal organization. They indicate that the effects of hot spot tactics and civil society cooperation were effective when the authorities faced cohesive criminal groups. Rapid reductions in violence occurred in environments where criminals were organized enough to respond to government tactics as groups rather than in a piecemeal fashion. Leaders of cohesive criminal organizations are de facto enforcers

of rules among their followers and can respond to law enforcement incentives when they calculate that it is in their organization’s interests. This is crucial because the success of hot spot tactics depends on a multiplier effect and a targeted policy does not need to saturate the entire crime area to have the desired effects on criminal groups who, in turn, will respond to incentives. Paradoxically, then, criminal organization is useful to the authorities in certain efforts to fight crime.

However, evidence suggests that extremely high levels of criminal cohesion and dominance make it more difficult to combat crime. Where cartels are especially powerful, the incidence of violence is probably lower, simply because violence disrupts criminal business. Low levels of bloodshed are likely to imply pacts among dominant criminal groups and sectors of the government. As a result, confidence in the state will erode and criminal syndicates are likely to pervade and weaken civil society.

The likelihood of reducing violence with hot spot tactics and civil society cooperation is greatest where criminal groups are cohesive but lack the power to forge credible pacts with each other and with the government. Government policies targeted at hot spots must focus on reducing violence. Other laudable objectives such as mitigating the drug trade, breaking up cartels, or eliminating kingpins may or may not aid the grand strategy of reducing violence. These policies can take sundry forms but all are focused on reducing incentives for violent acts through governments’ demonstrated ability to inflict costs that resonate in criminal communities.

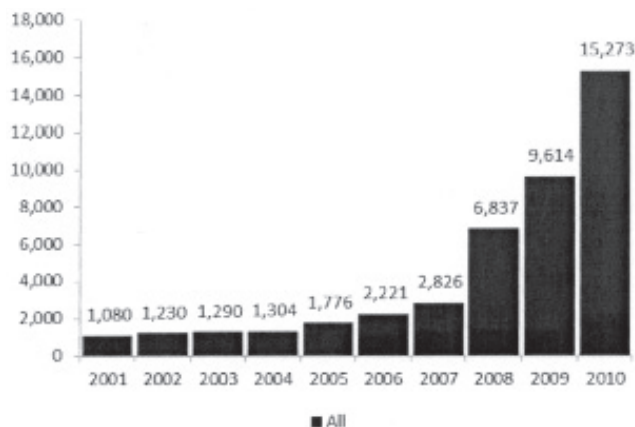
Successful hot spot tactics also depend on complementary policies designed to boost social trust. When citizens develop confidence in government policies and tactics, they are more likely to aid these by providing information to the authorities who are then able to respond quickly. Citizen participation and cooperation increased the effectiveness of targeted hot spot tactics. Citizen cooperation is elicited by offering certain public goods

with a view to improving the image of the authorities relative to the criminal groups. This insight was appreciated by U.S. General David Petraeus, coauthor of the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* whose precepts were implemented in Iraq. He understood that the authorities needed to win over the population and that a key to achieving collaboration was to make citizens feel secure. Soldiers would have to be seen as state-builders and partners rather than an alien force.

The importance of engaging civil society in efforts to reduce violence can be observed by contrasting efforts in Tijuana and Juárez. In Juárez as in Tijuana, the government implemented a program designed to elicit anonymous information from the public. The system was significantly underused and traffickers brazenly trumpeted on billboards that it could be broken. In Juárez, moreover, civil society deeply distrusted the military, which had arrived suddenly and in a disruptive fashion. In Tijuana citizens were accustomed to the military since it had operated in the region since the early 1990s. The Juárez deployment was poorly planned and executed, with thousands of soldiers sent in after the police department was eliminated. Confined to makeshift camps with inferior accommodations, soldiers were seen to break into civilian houses to steal food and fans to mitigate the discomforts of the blistering Juárez heat. The men were poorly trained and ill equipped for their tasks, including policing activities that required daily interactions with civil society. Citizens protested and rallied against military deployments.

More generally, the existence of civic organizations is more likely to encourage public policies designed to strengthen ties between citizens and the authorities. Juárez shows that poorly executed policies can backfire and undo efforts to reduce violence. The evidence also suggests that hot spot and trust-building policies are mutually reinforcing because citizen participation is critical for policing efforts. Promoting social trust and hot spot policies, then, is less likely to work in at-

DRUG RELATED HOMICIDES



SOURCE: RIOS AND SHIRK (2011)

omistic societies with low levels of trust and social capital. This approach is also less likely to work in settings where the cost of cooperating with the authorities is extremely high, that is, areas with dominant criminal organizations that have permeated civil society and the state. In the short and medium run, these policies can work in contexts with robust civil societies and criminal organizations that are cohesive but not dominant.

The news for Mexico is not altogether grim. Cartels wield excessive market power relative to the central government in only a few places. The government offensive has also intensified competition among the cartels. In confronting adversity, their tendency has been to splinter. The capture of drug lords by Mexican government, rather than impose discipline-by-fear among the remaining members of the criminal organization, has produced battles among the second tiers of cartel leadership. Rather than agreeing on a new leader, well-armed middlemen have preferred to work independently and branch out into profitable alternative illegal activities, including kidnapping and extortion, to subsidize their operations and turf battles. The availability of alternative sources of income for newly formed criminal cells, and the lack of loyalty to criminal lead-

ership, inhibit Mexican enforcement efforts against cartels because targeted policies require groups to coordinate and respond to incentives.

Mexican society offers mixed responses to the violence and government policy. Seven out of every ten Mexicans believe that the battle against drug trafficking organizations must continue. However, only 26 percent believe that the government has a winning strategy (CIDENA 2011). Protests and criticisms have increased against what pundits have painted as the main causes of the mayhem: the militarization of law enforcement and the seemingly chaotic selection of enforcement targets. Mexicans have begun to vigorously protest the sharp rise of drug-related homicides. They are also furious at the cartels and are seeking to reclaim their public spaces from the hands of criminal organizations. And they are frustrated at the slow pace of reforms and congressional gridlock.

Rapid and widespread progress in reducing violence associated with the Mexican war on drugs is unlikely. The successful episodes and also the missteps in Juárez indicate that civil society must be systematically incorporated into strategy as the government goes about the difficult business of razing and restructuring municipal, state, and federal police

institutions to complement the military campaign. Likewise, the government will need to implement hot spot and civic engagement tactics into environments where the structure of criminal organizations is fragmenting. Policies targeted at enhancing trust and partnerships with civil society are particularly urgent.

Altogether, strategy will require significant fresh resources and institutional restructuring—impossible without political consensus from at least two of the three major political parties. In contrast to successes in Colombia and elsewhere, this will be hard in a federal Mexican electoral system where public officials remain in power for single terms and have strong incentives to follow the preferences of party leaders at the expense of their districts. Nonetheless, the winners of the 2012 elections should focus their energy on how to build on the legacy of President Calderón's strategy.

Viridiana Ríos [link: <http://www.gov.harvard.edu/people/viridiana-rios-contreras>] is a PhD candidate in Government at Harvard University and a doctoral fellow in Inequality and Criminal Justice at the Harvard Kennedy School. She is a leading expert in the study of recent spikes in drug-related homicides at Mexico. Her work explores violence, corruption dynamics, and the industrial organization of crime and has served as a foundation for several academic and journalistic pieces. She can be reached at vrrios@fas.harvard.edu.

Gabriel Aguilera is Assistant Professor of International Security Studies at the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, AL. His research is on the politics of policymaking in Mexico and Latin America and the consequences of weak and failing states on U.S. national security policy. He can be reached at Gabriel.Aguilera@maxwell.af.mil. The views expressed here belong solely to the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the US Government, Department of Defense, or Air War College.

Daily Life on the Border

A Façade of Innocence **BY ALFREDO CORCHADO**

CIUDAD JUAREZ. FROM HERE, AMERICA LOOKS very much like the innocent bystander, dressed in a nice Teflon suit.

Nothing seems to rattle it, not the killings that brought this city to its knees, nor the body count fast reaching 50,000 from the drug violence ravaging my native Mexico, a country that for better or worse shares a 2,000-mile border with its northern neighbor and my adopted homeland, the United States, otherwise known as America.

For border residents like myself, the innocence is but a façade. When I was a young man, my parents owned a restaurant called Freddy's Café, named after me. It was through that rare opening that I came face-to-face with the issue that now haunts Mexico and my own work as

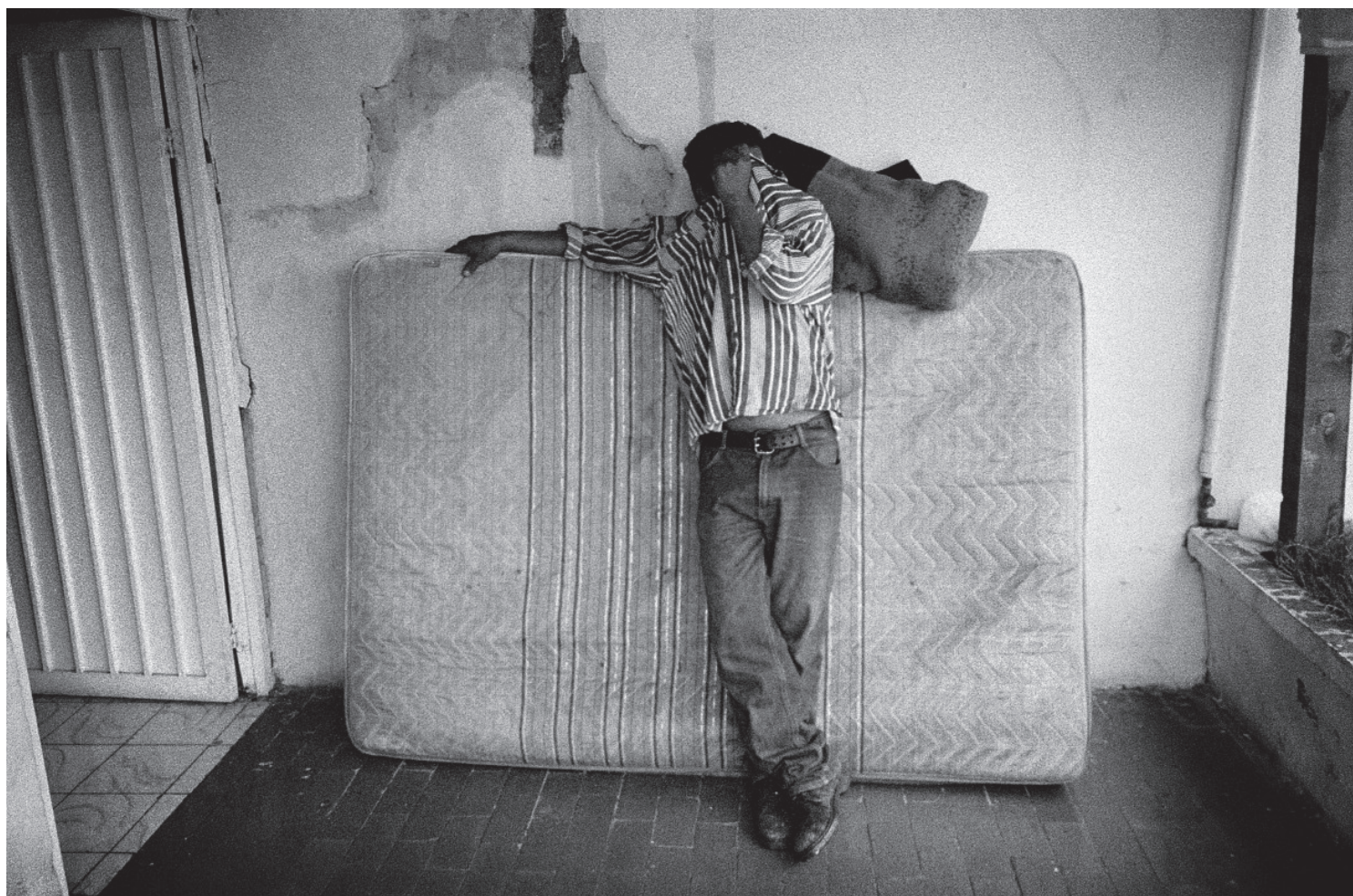
a journalist: organized crime.

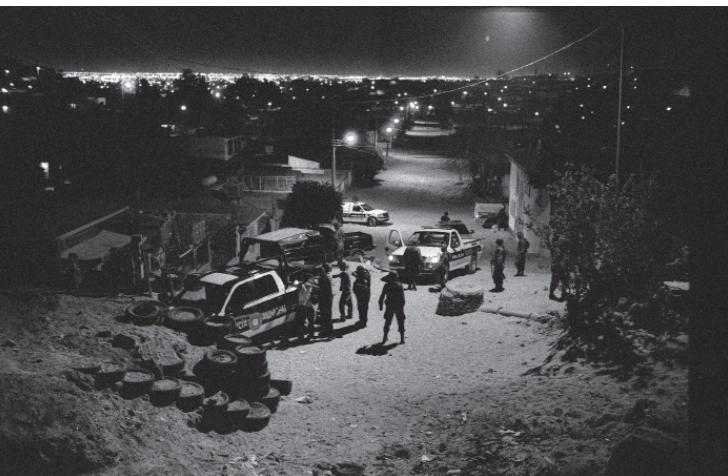
Our favorite customers were named *Chano*, *Perica*, *Pilín*, *Neto*, *Memo*, *Botas*, *Chapulín* and *Chiquilín*. All nicknames alluding to parrots, grasshoppers, boots and other objects—names to hide identities. No one ever gave their real name. These people would trust us with their mysterious packages overnight or for a few hours. We learned quickly that, on the border, it was best to keep our mouths shut about what we saw and heard. We too acted as unwitting collaborators. We never asked questions. These characters roamed South El Paso Street, hustling and bustling on an avenue that seemed like an extension of Ciudad Juárez, crammed as it was with vendors of cheap goods, T-shirts, lipsticks and other trinkets.

One of our most loyal clients was a tall, attractive woman with long black hair. I knew her only as *Paisana* (countrywoman), because she came from my native Durango. She was a businesswoman who began her career as a smuggler in El Paso and Juárez. She came from a middle-class family but had traded stability for the raw excitement of the border—which she loved—and where she found it easy to make a fast buck.

One day she brought in several bottles of Malbec wine in sacks. She stood them up on one of our white chairs with light green plastic cushions. As I balanced a heavy bowl of my mother's *caldo de res* soup and a plate of red *enchiladas* stuffed

Deportee served some time in U.S. jails.





Along the border between the United States and Mexico

with cheese and topped with cream, I tripped and busted one of Paisana's bottles. Wine spilled. Amid the shards were thumb-sized balloons stuffed with something white.

Paisana was one of the several so-called *fayqueras*, small-time smugglers, who catered to demands on both sides of the border. I knew she moved goods either unavailable in this country or banned by the U.S. government, whether Argentine wines, fruits, cigarettes, Cuban cigars, illegal drugs—anything U.S. clients wanted but couldn't get legally or cheaper. She carried electronics, TVs and microwaves with her on her trips back to Mexico. That was before NAFTA.

Clients at Freddy's had left their bags behind before this incident, and sometimes the scent was enough to give away the contents: pot or cash. They'd return for them nervously. But Paisana's white balloons were something I hadn't seen before. I had a hunch—after all, I watched "Miami Vice" and heard the talk on the streets. But discretion was a must at my parents' café, so close to the border and its veil of secrecy and hypocrisy.

"Oops, sorry," I said. "What is this stuff? Sugar, salt, flour?"

"I don't really know, but Americans love it," she responded edgily.

El Neto was the neighborhood drunk, and, like Paisana, a known smuggler of

all kinds of contraband—TVs, wines, refrigerators and God knows what else. He was also a notorious lover of women. He loved every *mujer* who would let him.

Sometimes I listened to him in disbelief, like when he'd start naming the businesses in El Paso that were known money-laundering outlets. Places we knew, places we shopped. Neto was dismayed at my naiveté. We had spent much of our youth in the fields of the San Joaquin Valley so border dynamics were new to us. Look around, he said. Freddy's is a few blocks from the Chihuahuita neighborhood where La Nacha once lived, the woman who ruled the Juárez smuggling business for nearly 50 years. She shaped the drug trade, taught small-time smugglers like Neto every way to sneak drugs into a country with more than 50 million consumers, stoners and cokeheads who represented billions of dollars. One common game was flooding the border with smugglers while sliming the wheels of some cars with marijuana so that dogs would sniff them out. While border agents were preoccupied with one vehicle, two or three more packed with bricks of weed would pass by with relative ease.

"This is the border," Neto said. "Open your eyes."

El Neto was always the first one at Freddy's for breakfast. He staggered in at 6 a.m. just about every morning as my mother was just heating up the ovens. He spent nights loading mysterious bundles



from the business next to ours, and occasionally, when he needed extra space, from our own restaurant attic, onto trucks headed for L.A. When the trucks returned, he'd unload the bundles headed for Mexico. I knew that the southbound bundles were filled with used clothes from California. But what the heck were they shipping from Mexico north? One day I asked Neto that question.

He shook his head, pressed his index finger to his mouth and kissed it.

"Freddy, don't ask questions you don't want to know the answers to, especially if you want to be a reporter. All legitimate trade," he said. But he gave me a line in Spanish gently reminding me that curiosity killed the cat. Whatever it was he carried, the demand among millions of Americans was huge and payoff of tens of billions of dollars even greater because those trucks kept on roaring north year round.

Somewhere along the way Mexico, with the latest laws on books but no rule of law to speak of, got a mess on its hands and America once again managed to look the other way.

Alfredo Corchado is the foreign correspondent for The Dallas Morning News, based in Mexico City and working on his first book with the working title, Midnight in Mexico. He's a 2009 Nieman fellow and a 2010 fellow at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.



The Transformation of Street Gangs in Central America

Organized crime, *mano dura* policies and lost opportunities **BY JOSÉ MIGUEL CRUZ**

I MET FRANKY APPROXIMATELY TEN YEARS AGO, when he came to my office at the University of Central America in San Salvador. Franky (his name has been changed here to protect his identity) was a newcomer in a non-governmental organization working to help gang members and former gang member to abandon violence and drugs, and to train them in job hunting in different fields. He had been recently deported from the United States, and he showed up at the meeting featuring the full attire and gear of his new job as a guard in a private security company. Franky was a large man, too hefty and mature for the average gang member— who would be scrawny and very young. Yet, he

was a “*calmado*” gang member and also a private security guard. While in the United States, he had joined the Eighteenth Street Gang, one of the main street gangs in Southern California enrolling children of Salvadoran migrants and political refugees from the twelve-year-long civil war. As did many of his peers in the United States, Franky found an unreceptive environment. The gang, full of fellow countrymen by then, became his best milieu for growing up and thriving.

When he was deported to Central America, he decided that he did not want to have more problems, and using some connections, landed a job in one of the largest private security companies in El

Salvador. He also found out about this NGO comprised of former gang members and decided to spend part of his time to help other deported and stranded youth to find jobs and abandon violence. However, after some months doing shifts guarding bank branches, Franky was fired when his supervisors found out that he had tattoos informing about his allegiance to one of the major gangs. After many unsuccessful attempts to find a new job, he devoted his full-time to the NGO, where he quickly became the director of rehabilitation programs and a key active member.

Beyond the jailhouse doors

As the person responsible for helping other gang members to “calm down” and get jobs, Franky became one of the most successful members of the organization. He is in constant meetings with government officials, funding agencies and private company representatives. Youngsters from different gangs look up to him, as he was always ready to lend a hand, help their families in distress, and get them a job or a training seminar spot. One of his insignia projects was the establishment of a small bakery in one of the most gang-besieged neighborhoods. The bakery, entirely run as a business cooperative by gang members in the process of rehabilitation, quickly became a sanctuary for young gang members who wanted to stay away from violence and drugs, as they could make money and maintain their families from the bakery’s austere wages. The experiment was not easy, but the small business managed to survive. Gang members who wanted a change finally started to believe that rewarding—although modest—life outside the gang was possible without facing suspicion, discrimination, violence and death.

As Franky and his organization were preparing to open similar projects in other troubled neighborhoods in the city, the Salvadoran government announced the launch of the *Mano Dura Plan* (Heavy Hand Plan), a crackdown program on gangs modeled after a similar plan in Honduras. The national crackdown was announced from one of the neighborhoods where another bakery project was planned; the existing bakery quarters quickly became ground zero for the onslaught against gangs and marginalized youth. Overnight, and under an all-out-war-against-gangs atmosphere, the bakery lost its clientele: people from the neighborhood did not want to be seen helping gang members. It also lost its labor force: most of the young apprentice bakers were detained or subjected to constant harassment by the police. The bakery itself endured several raids that ended in nothing but lost products and frustrated staff. After some months of constant harassment and declining

sales, it went broke. Following the fate of many other gang prevention and rehabilitation programs, the project was closed, the equipment sold, and the participant youth had to deal with the prospects of going back to the streets and facing both rival gangs and the police.

Franky also had to face the street in a way. Confronted with the waning support for non-repressive programs, the constant police persecution to his pupils and peers, and his organization in near disarray as a result of the *mano dura* crackdown, he started to spend more time on the street, at the edge of the dynamics that were turning the gangs more cohesive and violent. While doing this, he found himself involved in a homicide. Although he claims innocence to this day, he was indicted and sentenced for complicity in the murder of a fellow gang member. He was sent to a national prison, full of young people coming from gangs all over the country. That penitentiary, as well as many others overcrowded by gangs affiliated with the same criminal network, ended up being a transnational node for criminal activities, from where extortion rackets, drug trafficking, and murder rings were conducted.

I have not seen Franky since his detention some years ago, but according to press reports, he has become one of the national leaders of the second largest gang network in El Salvador from his internment site.

The story of Franky illustrates the complexities of the rising phenomenon of organized crime in the region. It suggests that the violence and crime that are overwhelming the battered Central American nations are the result of many complex conditions, many lost opportunities, and also very bad security policies. Youth gangs, locally known as *maras*, have evolved to become intricate racketeering networks that are taking the violence to civil-war levels, and devastating the poorest countries in the Latin American region. To be sure, *maras* are not the only criminal groups operating in the region, but they have become one of the most pervasive and overpowering organizations.

Central American *maras* are a vast network of groups of people associated with the identity franchises of two street gangs that had their origins in the city of Los Angeles in the United States: the Mara Salvatrucha Thirteen (MS-13) and the Eighteenth Street gang (*Barrio 18*). However, the development of these groups in Central America never depended upon American dynamics or directives. In El Salvador, as well as in Guatemala and Honduras, they went on to develop independently and form transnational networks involving powerful crime rackets.

According to police figures, an estimated 21,000 young Salvadorans belong to these transnational gangs, as well as 30,000 in Guatemala and Honduras. They are responsible for a significant share of the surge in criminal violence in the region since the late-1990s. As gangs have become institutionalized in Central America, the violence they exercise has increased and turned more complex and organized. During most of the 1990s, the *maras*’ criminal activities could be described as mugging, pickpocketing, shoplifting, brawling and other rather low-level felonies. Occasionally, they would engage in deadly assaults and robberies. Drug consumption was limited to marijuana, and early gangs used industrial glue as an inhalant to get high. Cocaine and other hard drugs did not seem to be in the repertoire. Since the late 1990s, however, gangs got involved in more serious types of crimes. Research reports point out that gangs were involved in murders, rapes, assaults, and robberies; some of the cliques started to collaborate systematically with drug trafficking cartels, began to consume hard drugs and got involved in the firearm trade more regularly.

However, the definite push for the organization of gangs into big-time mafias came from the governments. The states’ repressive policies, designed to crack down on gangs, contributed unexpectedly to their further expansion across the region in the early 2000s. During those years, governments implemented



Gang members in El Salvador find that prisons can be a new center of gang life.

a series of zero tolerance programs. They reformed penal laws to ban groupings of young people and to permit the imprisonment of suspicious-looking youth. For instance, in El Salvador alone more than 30,000 arrests of gang members were made in a two-year span, which had the unintended effect of transforming prisons into new centers of gang life. The overall murder rate rose from 40 to 62 per 100,000 people between 2003 and 2006. By 2010, homicide rates have reached 71 assassinations per 100,000 inhabitants.

Gangs, in response, prepared for an all-out war against the governments. The *mano dura* crackdown moved youth gangs toward a more organized type of violence and the development of complex command structures. From prisons, gangs developed the connections that allowed them to get resources, drugs, and money. *Maras* started to extort people at the schools, local convenience stores, transport unions, informal vendors in the streets, and neighborhood clinics. In fact, according to the Salvadoran police, 70 percent of the arrests under the charge of extortion in 2009 were carried out against gang members. During the same year, the Guatemalan police reported that gangs collected four million dollars just in the suburban community of Villa Nueva in Guatemala City. Gangs were able to raise that amount just from “taxes” imposed on small businesses and public transport units that operated in the area.

With the move and settlement of Colombian and Mexican drug cartels in Central America, disputes for new domestic drug markets increased, as well

as the need for “criminal labor.” Gangs took over the local “leftover” marketplaces and worked as *sicarios* for groups such as the Mexican Zetas and the Familia Michoacana. According to a survey conducted among gang members in Salvadoran prisons as early as 2006, 27 percent of gang members who had collaborated with drug cartels have worked as hit men, 21 percent have smuggled arms into the country, and 17 percent have participated in car hijacks.

The transformation of gangs into organized crime groups has also changed the dynamics in the neighborhoods they control. Law enforcement specialists and community workers complain that most communities affected by gangs have turned into what they call the “social base” of gang cliques. That is, they have become non-gang groups that support and protect local mobs from anti-crime initiatives and police operations. Because youth gangs have accumulated resources and influences, they have also become the new patrons and benefactors of the deprived barrios where they dwell. Despite the criminal activities and the violence that are usually staged by the criminal gangs, people are collaborating and sheltering these organizations because they provide job opportunities in the criminal economies (extortion collectors, couriers, watchmen, storeroom guards, etc.) as well as in the legal circuits (bus drivers, clerks, secretaries, etc.). They also assist dispossessed neighbors to make ends meet, and even finance small local development projects such as corner stores serving the community, or the

repairs of the sports court and the main community roads.

In so doing, gangs have created buffer groups that not only act against police activities, but also function as a competition for underfunded prevention and rehabilitation programs that abound in the impoverished Central American slums. Gang-funded small businesses expand the economic activities of the gang, serve as money-laundering sites, and erode the community commitment to the law.

Despite the resounding failure of the *mano dura* programs, governments in the region keep investing their main efforts in suppression and zero-tolerance programs. They keep militarizing the responses to the organized-crime problem, creating special operations squads, and empowering their arsenal over the underfunded community policing units. Although organized-crime suppression strategies ought to be a part of the portfolio in the struggle against crime, recent history has shown that plain repression policies have made things worse. For most of the youths and the people who work with them, the responses coming from the governments should not be putting them in the overcrowded and corrupting penitentiary system, but expanding the economic opportunities presented by the national institutions and the private sector.

Franky and many other people working against crime were right then, when they committed themselves to a modest but promising bakery in the middle of gangland. Governments were in the wrong when they pledged to crush part of their own youth.

José Miguel Cruz is a visiting professor at Florida International University in Miami. He was the director of the University Institute for Public Opinion at the University of Central America in San Salvador, where he conducted a number of research projects on gangs in the region.

The Zetas' Bad Omen

From Mexico to Guatemala **BY JULIE LÓPEZ**

IN ORGANIZED CRIME, THE ZETAS ARE LIKE CANCER. Once bad cells take a hold of an area, their metastatic nature soon spreads them in all directions. The Zetas defy smaller countries like Guatemala, where they reckon with weaker security forces than in neighboring Mexico. The new Guatemalan administration (which took office in January), led by a retired general, President Otto Pérez Molina, must now face this challenge.

Osiel Cárdenas Guillén, former head of the Gulf Cartel in Mexico, never envisioned the birth of a monster when he recruited Mexican military forces to watch his back. In 1998, he had got into fights with his closest business partners, some of whom he ordered killed, sometimes over women, sometimes over money. It didn't come as a surprise that his nickname was *Mata-amigos* ("Friend killer.") Osiel's ally against his enemies was Arturo Guzmán Decena (a.k.a. Zeta 1), a member of the Mexican Airborne Special Forces Group (Grupo Aeromóvil de Fuerzas Especiales, GAFES). GAFES was set up to fight the Zapatista guerrillas in Chiapas, in the early 90s, and was allegedly trained by the Guatemalan elite military squad, the Special Kaibil Forces.

Feeling rather vulnerable, Osiel asked Zeta 1 (an expert in military intelligence, espionage and explosives) to recruit a group of trustworthy men to keep him safe. Guzmán Decena turned to his peers in GAFES. Osiel soon trusted them with several *plazas*, or posts, along the Mexican Atlantic coast and the border with the United States. The Zetas took on the challenge like bullets fitting into a gun.

Osiel was not the product of a traditional organized crime family, but he had muscled his way into the empire built by one: the Gulf Cartel. By 1997, he owned

the crime franchise in Tamaulipas and the Gulf of Mexico, and picked up South American drug shipments from his contacts in Chiapas, Mexico, and Guatemala. One year later, he was armored by Zetas. But in 2003, Osiel was arrested.

According to Mexican author Ricardo Ravelo, the Zetas turned the Gulf Cartel into a strong rival of the Sinaloa Cartel, expanding toward Central America. Osiel nodded approvingly in jail. Shortly after, in late 2006, President Felipe Calderón took office in Mexico. The following year, Osiel was extradited to the United States, and the Zetas began branching out from the Gulf Cartel. By then, Eduardo Costilla, a.k.a. *El Coss*, shared the cartel's leadership with Osiel's brother, Antonio Ezequiel Cárdenas, a.k.a. Tony *Tormenta* ("Storm," killed in 2010).

The Zetas worked for the Gulf Cartel and operated on their own. In 2007, one of their actions went awry in Honduras. An ambush ended in a stolen shipment and two of their own were killed, according to military intelligence sources in Mexico and Honduras. The Zetas tracked down the culprit and found Juan José León, a.k.a. Juancho in Zacapa, a Guatemalan province bordering Honduras. He was married to Marta Lorenzana, from a family that the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) links to the Mexican Sinaloa Cartel. Months later, Juancho realized—too late—that he had made a fatal mistake.

ZETAS RULE

The decapitation of 31 victims at the hands of the Zetas in May 2011 produced international news headlines announcing Mexican traffickers' move to Central America. However, the Mexicans had operated in Guatemala since the late 80s, and grew stronger a decade later, after the demise of the large Colombian cartels.

Prior to 395 BC, Greek historian Thucydides wrote that a stricken empire must retaliate (even if not against the aggressor) to prove it's not defeated. In 2007, after the Honduras fall out, the Zetas had a lesson to teach—and territory to colonize.

They raised their first colonization flag in Zacapa, after allegedly persuading the Lorenzana family to turn Juancho in. Juancho, a source of trouble because of his habit of stealing shipments, was then tricked into willingly walking to his death. Ten others killed included his bodyguards and several aggressors. The police eventually arrested 14 Zetas (all convicted in 2010). Half were Mexican; the rest, Guatemalan. It also found revealing evidence about their operations.

Mexican Zetas had entered Guatemala through Huehuetenango (on the border with Chiapas) in 2007. Flight plans showed they boarded charter planes to Alta Verapaz, a province with access to northern and southern Guatemala. That destination proved critical for their partnership with a strong local trafficker, Walther Overdick, known for moving up to two tons of cocaine at a time.

After raiding their hideouts, authorities found a trail of invoices describing the Zetas' roadmap to Juancho's murder. From Alta Verapaz, they had gone to the southern coast, where several municipalities issued them Guatemalan identification cards. They continued on to the capital, to buy motorcycles and cars. Two men stayed in the Intercontinental Hotel, seven blocks away from the U.S. Embassy. Another one stayed in the Panamerican Hotel, two blocks from the National Palace and the presidential offices. Others stayed in rented houses in the outskirts of the city.

The March 25, 2008, attack caught authorities off-guard, and landed the

Zetas their first headlines. The weapons seized from them included grenade launchers, an anti-tank weapon, assault rifles and two Beretta 92FS 9mm pistols—among other handguns—whose purchase was tracked down to a store in McAllen, Texas, in December 2007.

AN INVISIBLE HEAD

The killing of Juancho interested the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala. One cable dated March 28, 2008 (Ref #08GUATEMALA387), warned that one of the arrested Mexicans, Roberto Rodríguez Cárdenas, was “associated with Miguel Angel Treviño Morales of the Gulf Cartel in Mexico.” The document revealed

nito even after a bloody Zeta-Sinaloa Cartel shootout left 17 dead in November 2008 in Huehuetenango.

In February 2009, a U.S. Embassy cable (Ref#09GUATEMALA106) reported that police found three checks made out to Guatemalan Army Colonel Carlos Mancilla (now former Deputy Chief of Staff) while searching Overdick’s home. Unofficial government sources also identified a retired defense vice-minister allegedly responsible for supporting Zeta logistics in the area.

In March, authorities found a Zeta training camp in Quiché, a province neighboring with Alta Verapaz. “It was only accessible by helicopter,” then presi-

was the strongest man in drug trafficking in Guatemala.”

Once the Zetas became a liability, the Gulf Cartel partnered with the Sinaloa Cartel. But the Zetas reproduced a model that the Gulf Cartel had practiced for decades in Mexico. The organization was a toll booth of sorts, collecting fees from criminals who operated in its turf. It also extorted and kidnapped. Some targets included undocumented migrants, a trend grossly exposed when 72 Central and South Americans were found dead in Tamaulipas in August 2010.

Violence is used in the absence of power, in the words of Hannah Arendt, and the Zetas did just that. Lacking popular authority of traditional narco families (which bought communities’ silence by building clinics or paving streets, using selective violence when needed), the Zetas took territory by force.

In October 2010, a caravan of 20 cars and some 60 men caused havoc in Petén, in the north of Guatemala, engaging in a long shootout with a military and police patrol. The caravan entered through Belize, continued onto an El Naranjo ranch—allegedly searching for a cocaine shipment—and headed west to Mexico. According to authorities, the ranch’s owner was the widow of an alleged Juancho successor. The Zetas also vandalized property of rival traffickers. They were testing the waters for future actions.

Before October was over, a top government official admitted off-the-record that Treviño was (still) “the number one [man] in drug trafficking in Guatemala.” Despite mounting evidence, counternarcotics prosecutors insisted on never having heard of *Comandante* Forty.

A LONG ZETA ARM

The Petén events didn’t prompt a state of siege like the discovery of 27 decapitated peasants did, on May 15, in a ranch near the Mexican border—a gruesome Zeta message to the property’s owner for allegedly trafficking for the Gulf Cartel. Ten days later, another bloody discovery ensued: the remains of prosecutor Allan Stowlinsky left in several plastic bags

Lacking the popular authority of traditional narco families, the Zetas took territory by force. Some believe they pose a national security threat to the region.

that “DEA sources suggest[ed] that this attack could signal a possible move by Mexican drug trafficker Treviño Morales to take control of Central American drug trafficking, specifically in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.” He was the second head of the Zetas, after Heriberto Lazcano, a.k.a. *El Lazca*, in Mexico.

Guatemalan prosecutors and police instead focused on Mexican-born Daniel Pérez Rojas, a.k.a. *Cachetes* (“Cheeks”), arrested in April 2008, in connection with the Zacapa massacre. But by July 2009, Treviño Morales—a.k.a. Zeta-40, or *Comandante* Forty—was placed among the most “significant traffickers” under the Drug Kingpin Act, by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). The list included *El Lazca*, *El Coss*, and, one year later, Pérez Rojas.

Treviño is wanted on drug trafficking charges in a Washington D.C. court since March 2008, and several murder charges in Texas since 2007. The U.S. Department of State offered a reward of \$5 million for information leading to his arrest. Yet, *Comandante* Forty remained incog-

nitent Álvaro Colom said. The Zetas used it for shooting practice, and had left behind grenades, ammunition and firearms.

In April, five counternarcotics detectives were gunned down in a Zeta bodega in Amatitlán, 11 miles from the capital. Immediate retaliation followed. More than 500 grenades, ammunition and weapons were seized, some of military manufacture that had been illegally extracted from a military warehouse.

DOMINO EFFECT

By January 2010, *El Lazca* led the Zetas in Mexico after Guzmán Decena and other leaders were killed. That month *El Coss* had ordered the execution of Victor Peña (a.k.a. *Concord 3*), the cartel’s financial operator, and also a *compadre* of Treviño. *Comandante* Forty took it personally and demanded that the killers be turned over to him. After *El Coss* refused, Treviño declared war against the Gulf Cartel and took over its *plazas* in Mexico and Guatemala. In April 2010, a former federal agent confirmed the U.S. Embassy’s earlier suspicion: “Treviño

strewn around downtown Cobán, Alta Verapaz's capital.

Written messages left near the bodies were signed by "Z-200," whom Mexican authorities identified as Flavio Méndez Santiago after his January 2011 arrest in Oaxaca. Méndez was known to have visited Alta Verapaz in late 2010, and was linked to the kidnapping and murder of migrants in his native México. The written messages indicated that he ordered the killings in Petén and Alta Verapaz, even while imprisoned.

In mid-March Stowlinsky had helped to count 453 kilos of cocaine seized from the Zetas in Alta Verapaz, only weeks after a two-month state of siege in that province. One police officer, assigned to the area two days before the seizure, stopped the truck carrying the shipment. Minutes later he was threatened over his cell phone by what sounded like a Mexican male voice, according to former Minister of Interior Carlos Menocal. Before that, the phone had been kept only at police headquarters in Cobán.

In June 2011, Menocal said that one ton of cocaine was seized from the Zetas that year. It was 25 percent of the total amount seized by December, but didn't necessarily reflect the Zetas cut in the market.

Michael Vigil, former Chief of International Operations for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), said "It will be extremely difficult to immobilize [the Zetas] once they spread their tentacles into the political, social, and economic processes of Guatemala." But some accounts indicate the Zetas might have done just that already.

In December 2010, a group claiming to be the Zetas barged into three radio stations in Cobán, and forced employers to read a message on the air. They accused President Colom of not keeping his word after receiving \$11.5 million in late 2007 to protect the Zetas, and demanded an end to the state of siege. Coincidentally, the same former federal agent who spoke of Treviño earlier also recalled receiving information on the alleged deal with a \$1.5 million difference. The source heard

that the Zetas paid \$13 million to an influential Guatemalan government official for protection, between 2007 and 2008. He didn't know whether this money reached someone else—if anybody at all. Colom denied the allegations. However, it was puzzling that eight months before the radio announcement was heard in Alta Verapaz, the former federal agent had already heard about the alleged bribe.

By July 2011, authorities realized that the Zetas were partying in the training camp discovered in 2009, left without surveillance for two years. Police arrested 14 people, including Overdick's son, Kevin. Videos found at the ranch showed that his father, other Guatemalan Zeta associates and one Mexican, had barely escaped the raid.

The same month, a financial operator for the Zetas was arrested in Antigua Guatemala—a touristic town, 30 miles from the capital, where Treviño also owns a home (as well as in Alta Verapaz), according to the former federal agent. To this day, Guatemalan authorities have yet to publicly identify Treviño as a Zeta leader and arrest the Zetas on the U.S. extradition request list.

The new administration of President Otto Pérez Molina faces two main security challenges. One is the Zetas. The second is increasing methamphetamine production in Guatemala, geared toward the Mexico, U.S. and Europe, and pushed mostly by the Sinaloa Cartel. So far, only Sinaloa Cartel Guatemalan associates requested in extradition by the United States for drug trafficking have been arrested in the last two years. Among the five more prominent are Waldemar Lorenzana Lima and his son Elio Lorenzana Córdón.

President Pérez Molina's request for an increase in U.S. assistance to fight drug trafficking was met by conditions to improve performance and progress in human rights issues. But the new administration also expects that cracking down on corruption, and a tax reform, can generate more funds to fight crime—a feat in itself. Several members of the elite Kaibiles military squad (now totaling 1,600

active or retired graduates, according to a Kaibil instructor) have even joined the Zetas, but Pérez Molina intends to use the good ones left.

Menocal claims that the states of siege, and the arrest of nearly 100 alleged Zetas since 2008 (one third of them Mexican), cut crime rates in half. However, one military high official said the Zetas "became a threat difficult to control....[and] now it's too late to tackle them directly with Guatemala's poor technical resources and the poorly trained personnel." According to Vigil, who is also an adviser for Mission Essential Personnel in Washington D.C., the Zetas have the potential of becoming a "national security threat to the region."

Last October, the Zetas remained active in Petén, where Overdick has a strong operation base, the former counternarcotics military official revealed. In December, they were also visible in Alta Verapaz, according to Adela de Torrebiarte, current Commissioner for Police Reform. "They recruit idle youngsters dubbed *Zetititas* (little Zetas), who stand at street corners and warn them when outsiders enter Zeta territory," she said. A civilian intelligence source said the Zetas also await to decide who they are going to do business with, or go to war with, in the new government.

One military official who led counternarcotics operations in the last administration said that the Zetas are good at "learning their lessons well." And now, as in the Osiel days, authorities have difficulties to keep up the pace.

Julie López, a freelance journalist in Guatemala who writes frequently for Plaza Pública, recently wrote a report for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC titled "Guatemala's Crossroads <<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/events/docs/Lopez.Guatemala.pdf>>." In 2011, she was the recipient of a Woodrow Wilson Center-Washington Post Fellowship. In 2010, she won the Félix Varela Award for print journalism for her series "The Narco Empire," published by El Diario La Prensa in New York.



SOCIETAL RESPONSES

What do lynchings, an enterprising journalism website, regional cooperation, sports facilities, better lighting and improved schools have in common? Not much, if one just reads through the laundry list. Yet, they all have been societal responses to organized crime. Jeremy McDermott, Ralph Espach, Gema Santamaría and Lucía Dammert analyze some of these responses.

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Investigating Organized Crime

InSight Crime **BY JEREMY MCDERMOTT**

MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA, FEBRUARY 2009. TWO journalists, with more than twenty years of experience between them covering Latin America, were engaging in a familiar lament over a couple of beers. Nobody was paying for serious investigation of organized crime in Latin America on the ground. Coverage was now limited to gory decapitations in Mexico. One of the journalists had just returned from Itagüí prison, where he had chalked up hours of interviews with former right-wing paramilitaries on the drug trade past and present. He fretted about whether anyone would ever be interested in publishing it. The other, after ten days in the Colombian mountains, had just sought to pitch a story about Marxist rebels adapting to the new conditions of the civil conflict, only to be told by a London newsdesk that they were certain the fighting was pretty much over in Colombia. Thus, InSight Crime <www.insightcrime.org>, was born.

In 2001, there were at least sixty foreign correspondents writing in English, most of them staffers, reporting on the Colombian civil conflict and drug trafficking. Today you would be hard pressed to name ten decent freelancers here. The story is the same across the region, even in Mexico. Coverage of organized crime and the drug trade in the Americas is now largely confined to the bitter fighting between rival drug cartels in Mexico and the violence this generates. Yet Mexico is only the last stage in a story that starts with coca crops of the Andes and spreads in every direction across Latin America. Now perhaps more than ever, a real understanding of the threat that organized crime presents to Latin America is necessary and somebody has to put all

of this in a regional context as the very nature of transnational organized crime is that it infects many different countries with the same plagues. InSight Crime believes that with study you can anticipate what is going to happen in one place by looking at what has already occurred in another.

The violence in Mexico is what is making the headlines, and the debate about whether there is some kind of “criminal insurgency” on the U.S. doorstep. Yet the homicide rate in Mexico, 18 per 100,000 of the population in 2010, does not compare to Colombia (38), or Venezuela (48), let alone the Northern Triangle of El Salvador (66), Guatemala (41) or Honduras, the latter with a staggering 78 homicides per 100,000.

The murder rate does not tell the whole story, but certainly indicates levels of criminality, impunity and the effectiveness of the security forces. Latin America has the highest homicide rates in the world, and the situation in many places is getting worse. Pressure on organized crime in Colombia and Mexico has simply squeezed transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) into Venezuela and Guatemala and further afield. Northern Guatemala already has an established presence of Mexican TCOs <<http://www.insightcrime.org/specials/zetas-in-guatemala>>. with Colombian TCOs having set up shop in Panama and Venezuela.

As security forces pressure certain drug trafficking methods or routes, the TCOs find new ones. Transshipment nations like Honduras and Belize in Central America are under serious threat, while several Caribbean nations are seeing their levels of criminality and violence

increase as they become staging points for cocaine heading northwards (Trinidad and Tobago, for example). Whereas in the 1980s and early 1990s planes carried up to ten tons of cocaine each trip, aerial interdiction has forced the cartels below the waves, with the use of drug submarines.

Yet there is little research being done on the TCOs or the effects they are having region-wide. Here in Medellin, one of the InSight Crime bases, everyone can tell you about Pablo Escobar, who turned this vibrant Andean city into one of the criminal capitals of the world in the 1980s. However today few people would be able to tell you anything about Maximiliano Bonilla Orozco, alias Valenciano, or Erick Vargas Cárdenas, alias Sebastián, Escobar’s successors, who are slugging it out for control of the Medellin underworld. The Colombian TCOs, among them the Marxist rebels of the





Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), are working directly with Mexican cartels.

The real threat at a local level is the fact that the TCOs pay their local partners not in cash, but in cocaine, feeding the local consumption of drugs, and the violence that inevitably accompanies it. In every place that the TCOs operate they develop alliances with local criminal gangs, which with time increase in sophistication and power. Many make the leap into serious organized crime and develop into threats to local law enforcement and even national security. Every country the drugs pass through see elements of the security forces corrupted, the justice system put under pressure and politicians bribed.

InSight Crime is attempting to trace the major players in organized crime, profile the leaders, study the evolution of the groups and networks they lead, follow

the response of the different states that are threatened and where possible, send up warning flares. Our current warnings are to keep an eye on tiny Belize and be prepared for yet more violence in Honduras. The Caribbean is another growing hot spot, as indications are that TCOs are again looking to exploit routes through the network of islands here.

InSight Crime is celebrating its first birthday. Without the help of Open Society Foundations, we would not have got off the ground and be heading into a second year, but this money is running out and we are scrambling, through consultancy work, to be self sustaining, something which will be an endless struggle. That there is interest in the challenges of organized crime in the region is clear, but it is limited to experts and international law enforcement. We have been surprised by the high number of the visits to the site (just over 3,000 per day), and

A bullet penetrates a Medellín cityscape with a Botero image of a couple dancing on a local building.

the constant barrage of emails asking for more information, advice or simply thanking us for the work we are doing. We in turn thank the local journalists, academics and contributors, most of whom are living in the trenches of the drug war. They take risks every single day to report on this never-ending war, and suffer the same frustrations as we do: reader apathy and bankrupt media organizations that prefer to run the latest Hollywood divorce story rather than to investigate how organized crime is placing an entire region under siege.

Jeremy McDermott is the co-director of InSight Crime; he lives in Medellín, Colombia. www.insightcrime.org
jmcdermott@insightcrime.org

The Fight Against Drug Trafficking and Crime in the Americas

Stunted Regional Cooperation and Failing U.S. Partnership **BY RALPH ESPACH**

IF YOU LIVE SOMEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA, chances are that what you worry about is not your paycheck or the near-constant corruption scandals, but that you or family members may be robbed, kidnapped or attacked on the street. Each month tens of thousands of Latin Americans suffer criminal attacks, often by organized gangs, and have no effective recourse from incompetent or corrupt local police and courts. In the worst cases, such as in Guatemala and El Salvador, residents sometimes respond by arranging revenge killings themselves, which can cost as little as a hundred U.S. dollars. Wealthier citizens pay much more for 24-hour private security and armored cars and even protective clothing.

Organized crime is a threat both internal and external. Most large criminal organizations are rooted locally. Their success at smuggling, extortion, kidnapping, and other crimes requires extensive local knowledge and reliable networks of families and partners. As they grow, however, they find it more efficient and profitable to move beyond just trafficking and branch out into the buying and processing of cocaine and other drugs, and then to goods beyond drugs. Colombia's drug cartels dominated regional production and trafficking through the 1990s. More recently, Mexican cartels have expanded their operations southward into Central America and beyond. Operations of the Mexican Sinaloa and the *Zetas* cartels have been uncovered from the United States to Brazil and Argentina. As these organizations expand, they link up with criminal organizations from the United States, Russia, the Middle East and China, and occasionally even with terrorist organizations including Colombia's FARC and Middle Eastern Hezbollah.

International security cooperation in the Americas has traditionally been crippled by conflicting security interests and visions, and the lack of a region-wide threat. Historically, such cooperation has flourished only when external threats forced an alignment among most governments of the region and the United States, as for example during the Second World War and the Cold War following the Cuban revolution. Most hemispheric institutions such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Summit of the Americas process, or the recently formed South American Union (UNASUR), promote economic relations and democratic norms rather than cooperative security. Rhetoric about shared interests in building peace rarely leads to binding agreements or meaningful cooperation. Tensions over borders and ideological differences undermine trust and transparency. As a result, despite numerous attempts to build a hemispheric or Latin American framework for security dialogue, confidence building, and cooperation, in practice regional security consists mostly of episodes of crisis response, most often led by the United States.

In the 1990s, most Latin Americans felt little effects from drugs or drug trafficking. These were U.S. problems, caused by U.S. consumption. However, as narcotrafficking become the source of funding for violent insurgents and paramilitaries in Colombia and Peru, and as drug use and drug-related gang activity has exploded around the region, that view grew untenable. Organized crime affects daily life. Today, the central questions are whether the drug traffickers and organized crime should be fought with militaries or with weak police forces, or even whether current governments

are capable of fighting them at all.

Though most governments agree that organized crime and drug trafficking pose critical threats to regional security, they disagree on how to respond. They disagree even on the identity of these actors. In Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Chile and most countries of Central America criminal gangs are perceived as serious threats to the state. On the other hand, left-wing governments in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Brazil have been reluctant to take a firm position. This is due to ideological affinity within these governments with insurgents like the FARC, who are involved in narcotrafficking, and because these governments generally oppose the cooperation with the United States that is central to anti-drug efforts. Again, regional security relations are fragmented. Governments which perceive drug trafficking and organized crime as security crises have turned to the United States for support, while others denounce U.S. cooperation as imperialism.

Since Mexico in 2006 joined Colombia in waging a full-out war against local drug cartels—both with significant support from the United States—the costs of the lack of regional cooperation have become painfully apparent. Colombia's success at pressuring the drug industry in its territory pushed it into Mexico. Now Mexico's campaign has pushed the industry into Central America, Venezuela, Guyana, and Brazil. Ever more cocaine and other drugs are being shipped to Brazil, now the world's second largest drug consumer, or across the Atlantic to West Africa and Europe.

This is not to say that regional cooperation against crime is nonexistent.

Fighting organized crime in Mexico



Institutions for security cooperation at the regional level (e.g., among Caribbean island states, Central American countries, or the Southern Cone) have made some progress. The Caribbean community is relatively effective at sharing police information and working with the United States, Canada, and European partners on security issues. The Andean community, likewise, has tried to formulate policies and reach agreements on security matters, though these efforts have been undercut by contention over Colombia's counterinsurgency campaign and the meddling by Hugo Chávez in his neighbors' political affairs. Central America has two institutions for regional security cooperation, its Sys-

ments, and because they are conducted by military, police, and intelligence divisions who can focus effectively on operational and technical issues.

Brazil's efforts are notable, because it seldom dedicates significant attention to affairs in its hinterlands. Recently, though, its drug and crime epidemic and especially the power and ruthlessness of its drug gangs in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and other cities have become issues of national frustration and public action. Like the United States before it, this regional power has discovered the importance of trying to stop the entry of drugs at its borders, and the utility of helping its neighbors improve their own law enforce-

ment, the countries of Central America still lack professional, well-equipped, reliably effective police and security forces.

Conversely, Guatemalans and Salvadorans have good reason to question the future of U.S. commitment. The United States is cutting its assistance to Colombia, even though its closest partner is still at war against the FARC and a host of violent narco-trafficking groups. Exhausted by fruitless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Washington has little stomach for supporting Colombia-style security campaigns across Mexico and the whole of Central America, costing billions per year. Unlike Colombians, Mexicans have not widely supported U.S. cooperation in their struggle. Indeed, many Latin Americans blame the United States for the disastrous strategy of militarizing the war against drug producers and traffickers, a strategy that has done nothing to stanch the northward flow of cocaine but has cost the region hundreds of thousands of lives and huge economic damage.

Worse, Latin Americans and increasingly U.S. citizens too perceive that there is no end-game to this strategy. The best the U.S. government can hope for is to continue to push drug trafficking routes, and the crime and violence they create, from one region to another every decade or so: from Central America, perhaps to Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname; perhaps through the Amazon, or via submarines in the Pacific. This is not a strategy Latin Americans can accept. And as U.S. attention to and influence in the region wane, they will increasingly seek other options for better or worse, such as the legalization of drug trafficking.

***Ralph Espach** is an analyst and director of the Latin American Affairs program at CNA's Center for Strategic Studies, in Alexandria, Virginia. He has authored and co-authored several books, including Private Environmental Regimes in Developing Countries, Latin America in the New International System, Combating Corruption in Latin America, and Security in the Caribbean Basin.*

Latin Americans and increasingly U.S. citizens too perceive there is no end-game to this strategy of militarizing the war against drugs.

tem for Integration (SICA) and its Armed Forces Council (CFAC). However, these efforts are undermined by conflicts of interest among member states, by the lack of importance member state governments give to SICA and CFAC initiatives, and by the lack of integration between civilian governments and their armed forces. UNASUR has created a South American Anti-Drug Council, though to date this council exists mostly on paper.

More progress has been made via bilateral coordination between mutually interested partners. Several pairs of countries have begun to coordinate their border control efforts and to share intelligence on activities and operations in their border zones. For example, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil cooperate to monitor their Amazonian borders; Colombia also cooperates with Ecuador and Panama; Guatemala and Mexico cooperate; and Brazil and Bolivia do so even via the use of Brazilian unmanned surveillance drones. These efforts are relatively successful, in part because in being bilateral they avoid political grandstanding over broader strategic disagree-

ment capabilities. Predictably, however, these initiatives have opened complicated new dimensions in Brazil's relations with its smaller, poorer neighbors.

Americans know all about complex, mutually frustrating neighborly relations. Along with the European Union, the United States today is eager to help the Central American republics improve their capacities and link their efforts to those of Mexico and Colombia. At a July 2011 regional meeting, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pledged over \$300 million in assistance for Central America. The EU, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank also pledged hundreds of millions more.

Washington would like to do so via SICA, in order to create and support shared regional policies. The U.S. government is not yet convinced, however, that its partners in the region are truly committed to, or capable of, implementing the reforms necessary to improve security under the rule of law. Despite a slew of reform programs and hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance over the last de-

Taking Justice Into Their Own Hands

Insecurity and the Lynching of Criminals in Latin America **BY GEMA SANTAMARÍA**

FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS, FIVE MEXICANS were tortured and threatened with hanging and death. This October 2010 lynching did not take place in some remote corner of the country, but just one and a half hours away from Mexico City in the small community of Tetela del Volcán in the state of Morelos. Several town residents carrying flaming torches beat the woman and four men, tied them to poles and threatened to burn them alive. This lynching took place in the town's main plaza in front of hundreds of witnesses, some of whom videotaped the event. The five individuals were accused of belonging to a criminal organization specializing in kidnapping and extortion, whose members allegedly included former and current members of the local police forces. Local citizens uncovered evidence against the alleged criminals and got the local police to arrest them, but then decided to break into the police station to "take justice into their own hands."

Like many viewers, I became a virtual "witness" of this event through videos posted on the Internet by some of the perpetrators. This is not the first lynching in Mexico to be videotaped and made available for a broader audience. Six years earlier, in 2004, Televisa, Mexico's largest television network, broadcast images of a lynching as it was happening. That lynching, in the small town of San Juan Ixtapoyan in Mexico City's Federal District, also involved similar accusations of kidnapping. The accused turned out to be police officers of a highly ranked security unit meant to combat the country's organized crime and terrorism.

Similar lynchings have proliferated in Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Brazil during the last



A dummy hung outside La Paz, Bolivia, threatens lynchings for criminals.

20 years. Reliable statistics on violence and crime in the region are hard to come by. Since the 1990s, however, media and specialized reports have documented an increase in the frequency of lynchings. Indeed, there may be more of them happening because crime tends to be underreported in many Latin American countries. The United Nations Mission to Guatemala (MINUGUA) documented more than 400 cases from 1996 to 2002. In Mexico, Antonio Fuentes Díaz identified 294 cases of lynching from 1984 to 2001 in his work *Linchamientos: fragmentación y respuesta en el México neoliberal*. Scholars working in Bolivia, Guatemala and Ecuador have identified a growing tendency in the media to depict these acts as expressions of indigenous forms of justice. In my own research in Mexico, I have come across similar observations in both media and official accounts. Nevertheless, many lynchings take place in mestizo and urbanized communities, and scholars have documented that indigenous forms of justice and lynchings have little in common.

Lynchings may be best described as a form of vigilante justice, characterized by collective, public and extra-legal use of violence against alleged criminals. In contrast with past forms of Latin American vigilantism—such as the death squads in 1980s Central America and paramilitary groups in Colombia and Mexico—these more recent lynchings have high visibility and are of a communal nature. They are closely tied to social claims for justice in response to perceived fundamental threats to the security and well-being of the community. Lynching perpetrators do not hide from authorities. These vigilantes choose public and open spaces to punish alleged wrongdoers. In this sense, beyond the illegal and immediate form of punishment they enact, lynchings ought to be understood as having a dual purpose. On the one hand, they seek to eliminate criminals in the community; on the other, they put into question the effectiveness of legal and institutional means in the provision of justice and security.

Current Latin American lynchings

must be assessed against a backdrop of high victimization rates and increasing perceptions of crime. According to the 2010 Americas Barometer, levels of victimization by criminals and perceived insecurity have remained significantly high since 2004. Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico are among the countries that show some of the highest levels of perceived insecurity. However, the increase of delinquency and organized crime—whether real or imagined—cannot suffice to explain the rise in lynchings in the region. The rejection of legal means of punishment by lynching perpetrators also expresses a demand for effective justice and is a cry against a political system marked by corruption, ineffectiveness and injustice. As the 2010 Americas Barometer also illustrates, the perception of corruption amid public officials is consistently high in Latin America. For instance, in countries where lynchings have become more frequent, such as Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Guatemala, the average perception of corruption is higher than 73 points on a 0–100 scale survey.

Lynchings of alleged members of organized crime are a response to both perceived insecurity and to the perceived corruption of public officials, particularly members of the police. Furthermore, lynchings of individuals associated with organized crime have begun to gain greater attention and we may expect an increase in their occurrence. There are at least two reasons to support this prediction. The first is that the capacity of organized crime to penetrate social and economic activities is steadily increasing in several communities. For instance, drug trafficking has spread out into forms of micro-trafficking (*narcomenudeo*), as well as into other illicit and informal economic markets. The second is that the formal division between organized crime and other forms of common delinquency is increasingly invalidated by their intricate connections on the ground. In the last five years, for instance, criminal groups associated with drug-trafficking activities have started to carry out other

criminal offenses such as kidnapping, robbery and extortion.

In the Mexican context, lynchings of members of organized crime usually relate to organizations that specialize in kidnapping and extortion. Some of these groups appear to be connected to drug-cartels such as *Los Zetas* or involve the participation of former or current police officers. The lynching in Tetela del Volcán, Morelos, is just one example. It was a response to an attempted kidnapping of a community member. The members of the criminal organization accused of the attempt—including former and current local police officers—allegedly planned other kidnappings in the state of Morelos, as well as in Mexico City, Puebla, and in Estado de México. In order to contextualize this lynching, it is worth mentioning that the state of Morelos has experienced several thousands kidnappings since the mid-1990s. In 1994, a specialized anti-kidnapping unit was created within the state judicial police. It was dissolved just four years later, when the chief as well as other officers were found guilty of directly participating in a criminal organization accused precisely of kidnapping. This case, involving the participation of former or current state agents in criminal organizations, has resonance with the *Zetas* cartel, originally formed by deserters from the Mexican army special forces.

State agents who are supposed to protect citizens often fail to do their job; indeed, some have been linked to criminal organizations. That fact may explain why, when confronted with representatives of the state authority, community members sometimes attack them, precisely because the authorities are perceived as being allied with the criminals, rather than with the pursuit of justice. In Tláhuac, the community decided to lynch and kill two of the three police officers believed to be part of a band of kidnappers in spite of—or perhaps because of—the men's attempt to identify themselves as police officers. In Bolivia and Guatemala, newspapers have also reported cases in which police officers have become lynching victims after they were accused of participating in acts

of extortion or kidnapping. In these countries, lynchings may also involve the destruction of police patrols or local police stations (*comisarías*), whenever police officers “interfere” with the attempt of these communities to take justice into their own hands.

Lynchings in contemporary Latin America are one of the most dramatic examples of the issues affecting justice and security in the region. These events reflect the citizens’ lack of trust of the legal means to secure their well-being and point to the vulnerability of state institutions to corrupt and criminal practices within their own structures. Lynchings comprise a story of failure. Yet this form of violence is still a relatively localized phenomenon. Most Latin American citizens continue to resort to legal means despite their frustration and overall distrust of the penal and legal systems. Those who can afford it have found other ways, non-violent and legal, to safeguard themselves, such as hiring private security guards or building gated communities. Still others have organized to protest publicly through non-violent means the inefficacy and corruption of state justice and security institutions.

Lynchings will most probably fail to deter or diminish the pernicious effects of organized and non-organized forms of crime. Their occurrence and their potential proliferation will, at most, continue to highlight the state’s inability to fulfill its mandate—to protect the security and well-being of its citizens.

Gema Santamaría is a doctoral student in Sociology and Historical Studies at the New School for Social Research. She holds a Master’s in Gender and Social Policy from the London School of Economics. She works on social, political and criminal violence in Mexico and Central America in relation to concepts such as legitimacy, sovereignty and justice.

The Chilean Experience

Civic Responses to Crime **BY LUCÍA DAMMERT**

WHEN I MOVED TO CHILE MORE THAN A DECADE ago, I experienced a professional crisis. What would a security expert do in Chile, one of the safest countries in Latin America? For a long time I had lived in Argentina and Peru, where increasing problems of violence and crime had shaped my interest on issues of police brutality, corruption, organized crime and community participation in crime prevention initiatives. However, Chilean society didn’t seem to be facing any of these problems: Chile had one of the lowest homicide rates in the hemisphere and its police institutions were regarded as highly professional.

Upon my arrival in early 2000, however, I started reading surprising newspaper editorials highlighting Chile’s “horrific security crisis.” The main debate in the media centered on escalating levels of street crime; many considered the government was too soft to tackle this social phenomenon. Paradoxically, while most everyone was worried about crime, no one really accepted that organized crime was a problem in Chile. In fact, at the end of the 90s, Chile was considered to be safe due to geographical and institutional features; police institutions did not even have a special office in charge of organized crime.

For my part I was amazed to find a country with few traditional problems of violence and crime but high levels of fear. More than 60% of Chileans believed that they would be victims in the following year, a percentage as high as that of residents of Brazil or Honduras, countries that, at the time faced greater levels of crime and violence. Given this national perception, I focused on a new agenda of research in which community participation and civic responses to crime were key. Interestingly, my work in the government and at several research institutions helped me realize not only that citizens were active in crime prevention initia-

tives, but also that organized crime started to become an important problem.

I have to mention that when organized crime is discussed in Chile, it is limited to the topic of drug trafficking. Although there is some concern about money laundering, it is not really part of the public policy agenda or citizen concern. In that context the line that divides local drug trafficking and organized crime is really blurry. Most agree that the drug problem originates in neighboring countries such as Bolivia and Peru, blaming alleged regional cartels and local branches in charge of distribution.

Many initiatives have been designed to tackle street drug trafficking. Civil society organizations and citizens movements are not requesting more democratic institutions, however, but rather an iron hand. Drugs are perceived as a direct threat to everybody and—particularly in lower income neighborhoods—many worry that youth involvement will bring even more violence.

In Chile, most civic responses to crime have developed with the financial support and even with the participation of governmental institutions in charge of security policies, rather than through community activism or non-governmental initiatives. Those that developed (such as victims’ associations) were rapidly inserted into specific governmental programs. Public-private partnerships to combat insecurity are not common either. In that sense, the Chilean experience of civic responses is very different from social movements that generate specific security agendas in countries such as Mexico or Argentina. At one time I was studying the reform of the security forces in Mexico and can confirm the importance of civic responses, government commitment and, of course, political will in order to develop and sustain crime-fighting initiatives.

The presence of organized crime greatly impacts community activism: citizens tend to shift from organizing general and cooperative initiatives to demanding state effectiveness, less corruption and more attention to the plight of the victims. Even in Chile, where this problem is not as acute as in other countries in Latin America, the perception has developed rapidly that crime is becoming more sophisticated and more challenging to security institutions. I am amazed how fast we moved from general conversations of crime and violence to considering drug trafficking as central.

In the last months, social conflicts have arisen in Chile due to growing frustration over the quality of education and lack of social inclusion. Those movements have no relationship whatsoever to crime, but every public protest has been linked to social disorder, destruction of public spaces and a general fight with police officers. Although only a small group of protesters demonstrate in such a fashion, the show of violence has expanded fear of crime and a general perception of impunity.

Civil society involvement in organized efforts to control or prevent crime is minimal, but in the past two decades several governmental programs have been developed to include citizens' participation at the local level. I was personally involved with the evaluation of the most important public policy initiative aimed at increasing community involvement in crime prevention. Here are some lessons:

1. LONG-TERM INTERVENTIONS ARE NEEDED

Many initiatives require time to develop. It takes a long while to establish enough trust among neighbors to get them to collaborate with one another and also with the police. I have seen many failed initiatives of local public security councils that meant to increase participation and accountability and to enhance possible links with the police or the public prosecutor office. Given these difficulties, the temptation to buy infrastructure or technology for police activities is hard to resist, and

for many politicians, especially those running for reelection, it seems like the best and fastest solution.

2. COMMUNITY IS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE

Who makes up a community? Many initiatives developed in Chile targeted the involvement of community leaders without much analysis of the people they represent. Especially in neighborhoods with high levels of organized crime, defining the community is a challenge since many neighbors are part of the intricate network of different crime groups. In some places whole families are dedicated to the drug business; it then becomes impossible to define the community without increasing fear and distrust among neighbors. I have learned that it is not useful to focus on crime control exclusively since eventually it increases insecurity and violence. A better strategy is to understand the importance of community needs such as sports facilities, better lighting or improving school infrastructure. Such initiatives tend to unify citizens not involved in crime related activities without increasing conflict or violence.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD PLAY A KEY ROLE

Civic activities that foster crime prevention should be designed and implemented at the local level in order to have greater impact. Much involvement of local governments is needed to ensure coordination with other public policies, as well as with an array of institutions deployed at the local level. The places that had excellent results in Chile have always had the local mayor's personal involvement and support from local government leaders. I am a direct witness of how social agendas regarding crime are developed at the local level, while more punitive approaches play a more important role at the national government level.

4. CRIME PREVENTION IS EXPENSIVE

Crime prevention initiatives with community involvement as well as civic ini-

tiatives with no governmental support are expensive, and results are generally slow in coming. Keeping that in mind is key in order to manage expectations of progress, impact and direct results. Most cases I have analyzed in the Chilean experience showed me that impatience is a common flaw, not only from public officials, but also from community leaders. An interesting example is the use of technological solutions for crime in specific areas, such as closed circuit surveillance or community alarms. Some people expected that the implementation of the program would almost immediately change behavior and danger, which was not the case. In areas where organized crime prevails, crime prevention is more difficult since there is a direct competition between incentives of the formal and the alternative economy.

5. SITUATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION BY ITSELF IS NOT ENOUGH

Many initiatives of community involvement in crime prevention are clear on the social roots of insecurity and crime, but due to the lack of funding, the proposed solutions tend to concentrate on situational crime prevention. Those initiatives concentrate most efforts in improving neighbors' capacity to react against a possible crime (community alarms, neighborhood watch) and also to improve quality of public spaces (street lighting, better design of public spaces, close TV circuits).

It is impossible to evaluate whether the initiatives implemented in Chile played a role in preventing the rise of organized criminal activity. It is certain, however, that stronger communities are needed in order to tackle a fundamental challenge for peace in the region.

Lucía Dammert is a sociologist with a PhD in Political Science from the University of Leiden in Holland. She served as the director of the Program for Security and Citizenship at FLACSO Chile for five years. Currently, she is executive director of the Global Consortium for Security Transformation.



ACROSS BORDERS

Mexico and Central America may be the region suffering the most from the effects of organized crime today. Yet throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, organized crime has left its imprint. There are also valuable lessons to be learned from several countries' experiences. Here are glimpses of Colombia, Brazil, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

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Lessons from Colombia for Mexico?

Caveat Emptor **BY VANDA FELBAB-BROWN**

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT STRUCK ME MOST ON my last trips to Colombia in January and June 2011 was the great level of optimism regarding the country's security accomplishments after several decades of civil war. Many of my interlocutors were brimming with confidence that Colombia was the model to be emulated by other countries facing the witches' brew of insurgency, organized crime, poverty, and marginalization of social sectors. Government officials especially have been touting the many things Colombia can train other countries in, offering to teach Afghanistan how to conduct counternarcotics operations, the Philippines how to demobilize former fighters, the countries of Central America how to carry out police reform, Mexico how to

suppress organized crime.

Mexico especially has been an eager believer, as I discovered during my research in March 2011. The mood there was the opposite: people were gripped by fear of criminal groups and communities ached from the drug-related violence that topped 47,000 dead since President Felipe Calderón came to power and declared a war on Mexico's drug trafficking groups (DTOs). Despite a steady parade of arrested drug traffickers displayed to TV cameras, few believed that Mexico was making progress against organized crime. But from government offices in Mexico City to NGO meetings in Michoacán and business conferences in Ciudad Juárez, many were latching onto the Colombia model. Businessmen in Ciudad

Juárez and Monterrey have hosted delegations from Medellín; Colombian intelligence and police officers have been advising the Mexicans on police reform and intelligence gathering.

Los Pinos, Mexico's White House, was among the very early buyers of the Colombian way. Its strategy against Mexico's organized crime had been based on the premise that the threat posed by organized crime will be reduced from one of national security to one of public safety if Mexico's drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) are broken up into smaller groups as they were in Colombia and that the way to accomplish this was to arrest the groups' key leaders—the so-called high-value targets. As part of the strategy, Mexico's law enforcement institutions



Left: Bystanders at a crime scene; above, migrants stuck at the border resort to shelters

were to be reformed, cleansed of corruption and strengthened in their capacity. Meanwhile, the military was sent to the streets of Mexico to replace or reinforce the overwhelmed police.

But drawing incomplete or distorted lessons, glossing over the complexities of the Colombian story and ignoring particular contexts can deeply undermine the effectiveness of the emulated policies and at times even backfire. To some extent, that has already happened in Mexico.

Take, for example, the central premise of the Mexican strategy that if the DTOs are broken up into smaller entities, security in Mexico will improve. The effect of Colombia's anti-crime policies in the early 1990s was indeed the emergence of many small groups instead of the two

large Medellín and Cali cartels that until then had dominated Colombia's and the Western Hemisphere's drug trafficking. None of the smaller groups has managed to accumulate the same level of coercive power and corruption capacity that the Medellín and Cali cartels had. But Colombia's context was different from Mexico's, and the break-them-up policy came with different, but in each case highly negative side effects.

The Colombian government finally decided to go after the Medellín cartel with its gloves off in the early 1990s after a decade of on-and-off confrontation and negotiations with its leader, Pablo Escobar, and his cohorts. During the decade, Escobar progressively escalated violence—killing scores of judges and

prosecutors, assassinating leading politicians, and blowing up an airliner and major government security agencies.

Critical to the success against the Medellín cartel was cooperation from the Cali cartel, which provided intelligence and eliminated many of Escobar's people. Although neither DTO was a true "cartel" in the sense of controlling the market price of cocaine, and both operated more as two large franchises under whose umbrella smaller DTOs and traffickers functioned, the market was essentially dominated by the two groups. The Cali cartel, always far less violent and far more integrated into Colombia's political and business circles than the Medellín cartel, expected that after the demise of its rival, it would be able

to take over most of Colombia's drug market. The Cali cartel was in fact for a while the unchallenged cocaine supplier. It was only the revelation that the Cali cartel contributed vast sums of money to the presidential campaign of Colombia's President Ernesto Samper and the great pressure from the United States on the Colombian government that ultimately motivated the Samper administration to target the Cali cartel as well.

When President Felipe Calderón decided to take on the DTOs, the Mexican drug market did not have such a neat "bipolar" structure of being divided into two predominant groups. Instead, there were at least six large DTOs. Thus Mexican law enforcement moves against the groups weakened them but did not clearly transfer power to either the state or another criminal group. Instead, the state's actions disturbed the balance of power among the DTOs and their ability to control territory and smuggling routes and project power to deter challengers. This lack of clarity about the balance of power on the criminal market tempted the DTOs to try to take over one another's territory and engage in internecine warfare. It has also given rise to highly fluid and unstable alliances among them. Continuing hits by the state against the DTOs without much prioritization have also led to the splintering of the DTOs, giving rise to many new offshoots and new DTOs. They too have been drawn to the fight to survive and expand their power and territorial control. Many have also diversified their operations into other illegal rackets and extortion. The groups may be smaller but the criminal market is far more violent.

Moreover, in neither Colombia nor Mexico did the state effectively fill in the vacuum. In Colombia, the state continued to be unable and often uninterested in providing security and other public goods to its many marginalized citizens. The deficiencies in multifaceted state presence in large parts of country and the power vacuum on the criminal market were filled by other violent non-state actors—the paramilitaries who later in the 1990s created an umbrella political

organization, Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), and the leftist guerrillas Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The two groups were able to take over Colombia's cocaine market, with many independent drug traffickers buying positions of power and military commander titles in the AUC. They also escalated Colombia's civil war to one of its bloodiest phases ever during the latter half of 1990s and early 2000s.

The lesson that Mexico should have drawn from the Colombian case is that merely breaking up the cartels is insufficient; the state needs to increase its presence in a multifaceted fashion and strengthen not only its authority, but also its legitimacy.

Similarly, the simplistic notion that the Medellín cartel was destroyed when Escobar was dramatically shot on the city's rooftops reinforced Mexican security officials' fondness for high-value-target (HVT) decapitation. Also practiced in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and elsewhere, HVT interdiction is based on the assumption that the destruction of a group's key leadership will make the group lose its operational capacity. Yet there are two flaws present in this assumption and its application to Mexico's anti-crime efforts. One is that the ability of DTOs to replace fallen leaders is far greater than the ability of insurgent and terrorist groups to do so, in part because the leadership requirements for a drug trafficker tend to be far lower than for a terrorist or insurgency leader. A DTO's capacity to regenerate leadership is great. Second, the Medellín cartel was destroyed well before Escobar died. Colombian security forces, the Cali cartel, and *Los Pepes* (an anti-Escobar militia and a core of the future paramilitaries) killed hundreds of Escobar's lieutenants and foot soldiers before they got Escobar. Essentially, the entire middle-level of the Medellín cartel was eliminated beforehand.

Focus on the middle layer is highly prominent in U.S. and British interdiction operations precisely to prevent an easy and violent regeneration of the lead-

ership of the targeted criminal group. Thus, U.S. interdiction operations often run for months or years and the goal is to arrest as much of the middle layer at once as possible—often hundreds of people are arrested in one sweep. But the Mexican government has been deeply challenged in conducting interdiction in this way—lacking both tactical and strategic intelligence on the DTOs and fearing that sitting on any intelligence piece or asset too long risks its leaking out and going cold.

The story of the so-called Medellín Miracle of using socio-economic policies to combat organized crime that several Mexican cities seek to emulate is also complicated. During the 1980s reign of Escobar and the 1990s reign of the paramilitaries and the FARC, Medellín was one of the world's most violent cities. In many ways, it was the epitome of drug violence. Colombian president Álvaro Uribe made restoring Medellín a key priority and sent the military to the city in 2002 to retake the poor *comunas* (slums) ruled by the FARC. The success of "Operation Orion" in defeating the FARC in Medellín was followed by the adoption of a set of progressive social policies by mayors Sergio Fajardo and Alonso Salazar. They took advantage of the greater security in the city and extended a host of development activities to the poor comunas, including infrastructure and public spaces such as libraries. Homicides and kidnapping dropped dramatically.

The policies that Fajardo and Salazar implemented deserve a lot of praise. They connected the poor neighborhoods to the economically productive center, increasing access to jobs and education for the poor population of the crime-ridden comunas. They also restored some hope among the comunas' residents in a better future and increased the bonds between those marginalized areas and the state that had long ignored them.

But for all these accomplishments, the effect of the policies on violence reduction should not be overstated. More than reducing violence, the policies were enabled by a prior reduction in violence.

The FARC defeat in Medellín allowed the crime-lord-cum-paramilitary leader Don Berna to consolidate his control over the city's criminal markets. His firm grip on the poor *comunas* and on the city's criminal rackets drove the significant drop in homicides during much of the first decade of the 2000s. In the latter part of the decade, Don Berna was imprisoned and extradited to the United States, ending his narco-peace, as emerging criminal groups began to fight over drug smuggling and other criminal enterprises in Medellín and the surrounding state of Antioquia. Homicide levels rose close to the pre-Don Berna era. Socio-economic policies have been unable to fully compensate for the persisting lack of public safety in the city and the continuing deficiencies in police capacity to go after the city's criminal groups.

Over the past decade, also reflecting the results of U.S. assistance, Colombia has experienced very significant progress. Nonetheless, the success is incomplete. It is thus important not to be blinded by the achievements and uncritically present policies adopted in Colombia as a blanket model to be emulated in other parts of the world, including Mexico. While its accomplishments, including in police reform and strengthening of the judicial system, need to be recognized and indeed may serve as an example, the limitations of progress equally need to be stressed. And as with all public policies, molding anti-crime strategies to local institutional and cultural context continues to be a critical determinant of their effectiveness.

Vanda Felbab-Brown is Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution and author of *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* and *Calderón's Caldron: Lessons from Mexico's Battle against Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Michoacán*.

After the UPPs

The Hearts and Minds of Rio's *Favelas*

BY BERNARDO WEAVER

GROWING UP IN COPACABANA, RIO DE JANEIRO, I was constantly aware of serious public safety problems. That probably played a big role in my choice of profession and specialization. Rio is a microcosm of Brazil, and Copacabana is even more so. Not far from where I grew up, on the Cantagalo Hill, sit three of the hundreds of slums of Rio, the *favelas*. From my living room window I could see one of the city's most beautiful beaches, but sometimes poverty and crime were even more apparent.

I grew up close to, surfed with, and even had friends who lived in the neighboring *favelas*. These areas are the sad nationwide manifestation of income inequality in a country that, despite all efforts to redistribute income, remains one of the most unequal in the world. However, Rio's *favelas* are special; the largest in the country, they are a startling embodiment of failed government policies.

Part of early education in Rio is learning about crime, for some how to avoid it and for others, sadly, how to perpetrate it. I had my first practical lesson at 11 after being robbed on the way back from school. As part of crime avoidance instruction, I quickly learned where to go and not go. Many areas of the city were off limits not only for me, but for most government services including those providing sanitation, trash collection and more importantly policing.

It is true that police do not wander around very much in Compton or south central Los Angeles in the United States, but the magnitude of our Brazilian problem is much larger. Apart from brief incursions, security forces would sometimes be entirely absent from many large portions of the city. For instance, until November 2011, Rocinha, the larg-

est slum in Latin America with approximately 120,000 residents, was not under government control.

Most *favelas* are controlled by large organized crime factions such as the *Comando Vermelho* and *Terceiro Comando*. Like Mexican or Colombian drug cartels, these organizations are mostly involved with drug trafficking. However, as Brazil is neither a producer of cocaine nor a major drug route, that description may understate their power. Given that my country is the second largest consumer of cocaine in the world and that Rio is its second largest city, these organizations are very powerful criminal enterprises.

To my amazement, instead of contempt for cartel members, I frequently perceived a feeling of admiration and sometimes even respect for the crime lords among my acquaintances living in the *favelas*. As I came to learn, the Brazilian drug cartels used their financial power not only to corrupt public officials, but also to provide a minimum safety net (or the appearance of one) as well as sponsor events for the local community. Think Pablo Escobar with less money. Of course these social policy offerings were not selfless, as drug dealers ruling the *favelas* know that even if they rule by fear in general, respect and admiration from their subjects are also necessary.

As I learned at 15, after successfully pleading for the return of my stolen bicycle before the head of a nearby *favela*, the cartels would also be the arbitrators of disputes and judges of a proto criminal justice. Though it may look like it, I was not the victim of property crime every other week. Indeed, the "Tribunais do Tráfico," Cartel Tribunals, exacted swift (and frequently capital) punishment to anyone involved in traditional

offenses, such as robbery, rape and murder in addition to unorthodox ones such as “snitching,” losing a firearm or stealing from the proceeds of drug sales.

Do not worry; the guy who robbed my bike didn’t suffer any consequence at all, much less capital punishment. Crimes in the wealthy areas, however, could prompt very harsh punishment if scandalous enough to attract police attention and disrupt regular drug businesses.

So what exactly was the policing strategy towards the *favelas*? Police would only enter them for two reasons: arresting drug dealers or capturing criminals accused of committing shocking crimes in wealthy areas. In both cases it took the

the policing they needed and too much of the one they did not. As his student, I frequently sat in class thinking not only how insightful he was, but how his words applied to the people living in the *favelas* of my city.

Not surprisingly, the immediate result of police raids was not to weaken the cartels, as criminals would return (or be replaced) as soon as the police left. It served two other purposes. The incursions shaped *favelas*’ perceptions of police as that of an outside aggressor that would disrupt normality, fail to solve the criminality problem and charge a high price in innocent lives. These raids also brutalized the way policemen discharged

consists of a dramatic shift from the historic trend. Instead of occasional police raids with high collateral damage, police would now be a permanent presence in *favelas*. The implementation started timidly in the areas close to Rio’s wealthiest areas such as the ones on the Cantagalo Hill. After an initial warning for drug dealers to leave or suffer the consequences, police would occupy the territory, set up a physical base (the UPP) and maintain a contingent of men in the area.

Innovations in policing were not only restricted to permanent police presence in the *favelas*. To address corruption concerns, UPP forces were mostly comprised of newly hired recruits, who were allegedly untainted. Further, policemen detached to the UPP areas receive financial incentives and, in a way very similar to CompStat, some policemen in Rio receive bonuses of up to U.S. \$3,500 if crime reduction targets are achieved.

Two years after the initial launching, according to my friends, Rio’s taxi drivers, and government statistics, the results of the UPPs were positive. People living outside of the pacified *favelas* are indeed feeling more secure. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of more distant outskirts and upstate Rio are not that happy, as fleeing criminals have made these areas less safe.

From the perspective of state-building and rule of law the initiative also seems to be a very positive experience. With territorial control, other branches of government are able to enter the communities and basic services such as trash collection and electricity can be more easily provided and paid for. Land registry reform is also under way, so that citizens obtain formal title for their *de facto* property.

Even with all the improvements mentioned, the road ahead is full of challenges for the UPPs, starting with the quality of policing services offered by the new occupiers. After decades of fighting a war, Rio’s police neglected its regular community policing and investigative roles. It only solves 14% of homicides, whereas its American and European counterparts are closer to 70 percent.

Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) are a permanent presence in favelas. Innovations in policing in Rio also address corruption concerns.

form of armed incursions culminating with the arrest or death of alleged criminals and the seizure of guns and drugs. Curiously, money was a much rarer find in these operations.

As infrequent and short as the police raids were, they were not harmless. The government forces faced strong resistance in the form of shootouts to enter *favelas* guarded by heavily armed drug dealers. The government’s answer to the cartels’ firepower was to equip its officers with big caliber rifles and armored vehicles only found in war zones.

With both sides brandishing war equipment, confrontations started to look more and more like urban warfare, and the intrinsic collateral damage of rifle shootouts in very densely populated residential areas became exponentially more obvious. Children, women and men were frequently injured on their way to and from work or school.

William Stuntz, a recently deceased Harvard Law professor, used to argue in his courses that poor people in the United States seemed to get too little of

their duties. Even the Public Safety Secretary of Rio de Janeiro, José Mariano Beltrame, recently conceded it can be challenging to adapt the mentality of police officers trained to fight a war into protecting and serving a community. The challenge is particularly difficult in the case of my city, especially when considering a 2009 Human Rights Watch publication claiming our police are amongst the most lethal in the world.

But Brazil has improved drastically as a country in the last five years, from a sleeping giant to a rising superpower with major oil reserves. Recently it also won the bid for the two largest sport events in the world, the World Cup and the Olympics. With Rio hosting both, the government is gathering considerable momentum for major infrastructure and public safety reform. New roads and subway lines are being built as well as a new policing strategy set up to make *cariocas*, Rio’s population, and the many future visitors safer.

This new strategy is called Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora (UPPs), which stands for Pacifying Police Units and

Unfortunately, inefficiency is not the most serious concern for the newly occupied *favelas*. The same lack of accountability involved in the creation of one of the most brutal police forces in the world allowed police officers to start running criminal rackets specializing in extortion, sale of illegal firearms and narcotics as well as other crimes. These are the *Milicias*, “not so paramilitary” groups formed by active and expelled police officers that have been driving the cartels out of *favelas* even before the UPPs were conceived. But instead of bringing the rule of law, these corrupt policemen would become the new tyrant, charging “security fees” and monopolizing crucial commercial activities such as cooking

Above: a favela; below, a sign advertises an Afro-Reggae group, a youth activity.



gas sales and pirate cable television.

The Brazilian government minimized the *Milícias* problem at first, dismissing it as a legitimate self-defense initiative used by communities to get rid of their oppressors. Perceptions changed drastically, however, as alleged *Milícia* leaders won seats at the municipal assembly by extorting votes, while the head of a police battalion (and a militia member) allegedly ordered the assassination of a judge. The member of the State congress who publicly denounced them fled the country after repeated threats on his life.

If the forces that now have territorial control of the *favelas* prove only to be the new oppressor, and one that provides worse services in some cases, this will shatter people's hopes of liberation and perpetuate their long history of victimization. We risk obfuscating a well conceived democratic police strategy with the legacy of corruption, violence and inefficiency.

But there still is a way to the hearts and minds of the *favelas*. It is a challenging one for Rio's police, paved with reformed internal accountability mechanisms and revised spending priorities favoring training and community partnership in place of weapons and armored vehicles. If police seize this precious opportunity to serve and protect its new clients, the *favelas* will certainly associate it with justice and liberation instead of the old feelings of fear and oppression.

Bernardo Weaver received his law degree from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro and his Master of Laws from Harvard Law School. In his career as a lawyer, Weaver worked in the Brazilian criminal justice system and now works at the Anti-Corruption mechanism of the Inter-American Development Bank, as the Secretary to the Sanctions Committee. His areas of interest are phenomena of criminality with widespread repercussion such as organized, white-collar and war crimes. The author's views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of the Inter-American Development Bank.



The 2010 Emergency and Party Politics in Kingston, Jamaica

Towards a Less Violent Democracy

BY ENRIQUE DESMOND ARIAS

ON MAY 18, 2010, THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICAN PRIME MINISTER BRUCE GOLDING ISSUED A warrant for the arrest of Christopher “Dudus” Coke, the reputed leader of the powerful Shower Posse gang. Coke, a political strongman in Kingston’s western constituency, faced an extradition request from the United States, and Golding needed to comply with Jamaica’s treaty obligations. The arrest of Coke and his subsequent extradition offered Jamaica an opening that perhaps could bring to a close the history of political-criminal ties that has marked the country since its independence.

The move came at a high cost in terms of bloody violence and political capital, leading to 72 deaths and government resignations. Three days after the warrant was issued, large groups of women wearing white turned out to demand that the Prime Minister not arrest their “president.” The May 21 protests demonstrated the strength of Coke’s local support; soon, gangs from around the island sent armed

A Jamaican scene

men to defend Coke against the Jamaican Defense Forces, according to media reports. On May 23, gunmen surrounded and burnt several police stations in western Kingston. Seeing the impossibility of a negotiated solution and fearing that further delay would only increase the risk of civil disorder, Golding declared a state of emergency and ordered the military to arrest Coke.

In a televised address, Golding urged citizens to flee the area prior to the start of military operations. A bloody conflict ensued that left many civilians dead and accusations of summary executions and abuse by the security forces. Coke and most of the other high-ranking gang leaders escaped the area. One month later, police arrested Coke in a car with a clergyman who served as an adviser to Golding. Coke was trying to flee to the U.S. Embassy in an effort to avoid falling into the hands of the Jamaican security forces, in whose custody his adoptive father, Lester Lloyd “Jim Brown” Coke, also a political strongman and gang leader, had died under mysterious circumstances in 1992. The younger Coke did not contest his extradition and, in August 2011, pled guilty to charges in the Federal Court for the Southern District of New York.

The military actions against armed groups in western Kingston go to the heart of the long-standing nexus of political and criminal power in Jamaica. Jamaica’s two dominant parties, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People’s National Party (PNP), have engaged in often violent confrontations since their inception in the 1940s. In the two decades after independence in 1962, both parties armed supporters and used housing policy to create partisan “garrison” neighborhoods and establish hegemony over certain seats in parliament. In Kingston’s western constituency, the JLP government razed pro-PNP shantytowns in the 1960s, replacing them with the modern Tivoli Gardens housing project that the party then filled with loyal supporters defended by armed

gangs that eventually evolved into the Shower Posse.

In the half century since independence, the PNP has never seriously contested that seat. The PNP, of course, used similar tactics to build its own political “garrisons” in several nearby constituencies. Conditions of armed dominance affect elections in twelve of the country’s sixty parliamentary constituencies. In 25 of the 49 years since independence, Prime Ministers representing seats characterized by high levels of armed dominance have governed the country. They include Michael Manley (PNP, 1972-1980, 1989-1992), representing Kingston East Central, Edward Seaga (JLP, 1980-1989), a Harvard College graduate who represented Kingston Western, Portia Simpson Miller (PNP, 2006-2007), the current Leader of the Opposition who represents Saint Andrews Southeastern, who succeeded Seaga in Kingston Western, and Andrew Holness (JLP, 2011-) who holds Saint Andrews West Central. Indeed, since 1972 only Prime Minister P.J. Patterson (PNP, 1992-2004) did not represent a garrison constituency.

Until 1980, the gunmen who controlled Kingston’s shantytowns, poor neighborhoods, and housing projects were tightly tied to the two major political parties. Inter-party violence reached an apogee in the 1980 elections when, after three years of political strife, partisan conflict left 800 Jamaicans dead, including Roy McGann, the PNP’s Minister of National Security in the second Manley government. Fearing the possibility of civil war and perhaps more violence against political elites, the two parties began to slowly distance themselves from the political gangs, though they still looked to them to secure their constituencies and turn out votes. Gang leaders, seeing a loss in revenue from political activities, expanded their operations into international narcotics smuggling, using networks in the Jamaican diaspora to export drugs to North America and the United Kingdom. The Shower Posse, among a handful of other powerful political gangs, took a lead in these activities.

Despite these changes and political reforms that eliminated some of the worst political violence and polling abuses, armed groups continued to play important political roles. Local gang leaders, commonly known as “dons,” engage in an array of political activities, including helping to turn out voters and protecting residents of the neighborhoods they control against possible attacks both during campaigns and on election day. Occasionally, as occurred during the 2007 campaign in the Saint Andrews southeastern constituency, open conflict can break out in some areas where politicians may see an opportunity to flip a constituency their way. In return, local armed leaders often receive public works contracts in their areas and may distribute jobs to favored neighborhood residents. The more sophisticated gangs receive larger sums for the protection of major government enterprises or, as was the case with Coke, obtaining government contracts with legitimate businesses. Important gang leaders also expect a degree of protection from police and the politicians they work with.

When Golding won the 2007 general elections ending seventeen years of PNP rule, he promised a “new approach to governance” that “converts the energy” of “competitive politics into nation-building power” and called for various efforts to control crime and establish a more effective rule of law. Despite these aspirations, Golding did little in his first two years in office to establish a more effective rule of law in his own constituency and made no effort to address the local gang that had helped to secure his election in 2007. In August 2009, the U.S. government requested that Jamaica extradite Coke. Golding then sacrificed much of his political capital, putting his career and government at risk, to avoid taking action. A U.S.-based law firm was hired to lobby Washington to withdraw its extradition request. In general, Golding did not seem to want to bring Coke to justice. When the clandestine efforts to lobby the United States came to light, Golding resigned his leadership of the JLP, opening the door to

his vacating his role as head of government. The JLP's leadership, however, refused his resignation. In this difficult context, Golding, having little political credibility but with no support from the party to install a new leader, ordered the security forces to arrest Coke. A formal parliamentary inquiry took place in early 2011 into the Golding government's activities during the extradition process, focusing on efforts to cover up hiring lawyers to lobby the U.S. government. This led to the resignation of Dorothy Lightbourne, the Justice Minister and Attorney General.

In October 2011, politically exhausted after more than two years of dealing with the Coke extradition request and perhaps not wanting to stand for election again in Kingston Western, Golding announced that he would step down as Prime Minister. On October 23, Sir Patrick Allen, the Governor General, swore in Andrew Holness, the 39-year-old Minister of Education, as Jamaica's ninth Prime Minister. Holness, who has represented one of the JLPs Kingston area garrisons since 1997, has, like his predecessor, spoken of political reconciliation in the run-up to general elections that he is expected to call in the near future.

Despite the violence associated with the security forces actions in Kingston Western in May 2010, the arrest of Coke and the disruption of his gang offered Jamaica an opening that might bring to a close its long history of political-criminal ties. Action against a prominent armed supporter by a Prime Minister suggested that it could lead the way in transforming the garrison constituency he represented into something a bit different, setting up new relations with residents and finding new ways to channel political patronage into the area. Yet despite evident success in maintaining lower levels of criminal violence in the capital since Coke's arrest, ongoing investigations and revelations about how the government mishandled the extradition and, perhaps, a lack of political vision prevented a real effort to restructure state-society relations in Kingston Western.

The choice of a Prime Minister who was too young to have had any part in the conflicts of the 1970s and the 1980 election offers a promise that in the coming years Jamaica can confront the relics of garrison politics and begin to alter the configurations of power in the island's poor urban communities. The fact that Holness and Portia Simpson Miller, his probable opponent in the coming elections, both represent heavily garrisoned areas suggests, however, that change may take some time. Nonetheless, their own experience and exposure to political risk in changing the communities they represent gives them real credibility, should they seek to undertake reforms that can move Jamaica further in the direction of a more open and less violent democracy.

Enrique Desmond Arias is Associate Professor at John Jay College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Organized and Disorganized Crime

Muertos Legales and Ilegales
in the Caribbean **BY LILIAN BOBEA**

IN SOME COUNTRIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, CRIME HAS TAKEN ON A NEW face. It is true that criminal violence can hardly be considered a new phenomenon in the region. Puerto Rico and Jamaica entered a "criminogenic spiral" in the mid-1970s, while corruption and money laundering have earned Aruba and Suriname the unwanted epithet "mafia states." But in the Dominican Republic, where my research is focused, murder for hire (*sicariatos*), kidnappings, score settling, gang confrontations and drug hijacking (*tumbes*) were not "business as usual" until very recently. The surge in this "new criminality" in the past few years triggered a political crisis in a nation where democracy is still in the process of consolidation.

In 2005, as I helped the Dominican government develop a new citizen security strategy called the Plan de Seguridad Democrática, I learned first-hand about the surge of violence in the most densely populated and poorly served barrios of Santo Domingo. In Capotillo, a poor neighborhood with a long history of social protest and a more recent record of criminal violence, I spoke with Teresa, a lifelong resident of the barrio. "When I grew up here in the 1990s," Teresa told me, "there was drug trafficking but no violence. The *tigueres* used to rob and do *their* businesses in other places, never to their people. We knew them. They belonged to the barrio." *Tiguere*, a quintessential Dominican word, refers to young men who will do anything to survive in poor communities. The closest English equivalent is "hustler."

Teresa's feelings that things have changed is substantiated by the fact that today Capotillo ranks among the barrios with the highest rates of victimization and homicide in the National District, which include Santo Domingo (a terrifying 64 deaths per 100,000 for the zone that includes the barrio). Those who die are mostly poor young males, gunned down either by rival gangs or by the police. Incredible though it seems, police killings of suspects account for between 16 and 18% of total violent deaths in the country, an annual toll of 300 to 400 deaths nationally. The police report these fatalities as *muertes legales* or "legal deaths," while the rest of Dominican society recognizes them as extra-judicial executions. In October 2011, Amnesty International released a report on homicides committed by the Dominican national police entitled, "Shut Up If You Don't Want to Be Killed." The *muertes legales* of largely anonymous victims of the police, coupled with other homicides, have con-



Caitlin Visek, who received a DRCLAS grant to go to the Dominican Republic, captured this image of three Dominican citizens on her trip there. A new citizen security strategy is helping ordinary citizens deal with crime.

tributed to the doubling of violent deaths since the year 2000.

Not surprisingly, I found that Dominicans attribute the upsurge in violence to the conspicuous presence of drugs and drugs dealers in the barrios. As Nestor, another Capotillo resident, put it, selling drugs in the streets has become, “normal, a daily activity. Retailing points are so visible that they identify themselves as ‘businesses,’ one right next to another, even near the police station. They are always there.” The ubiquity of drug sales was confirmed by the 2005 Barometer of the Americas survey, which asked Dominicans living in urban areas if they had witnessed drug dealing in the past 12 months; 27% responded affirmatively.

Experts on drug trafficking in the region note that the explosion of drug retailing reflects a change in the country’s position in the illicit international economy. Previously the Dominican Republic primarily served as a stop in drug transit from Colombia and Venezuela and extending to Europe, the United States and Africa. Now Dominicans take part in this drug consumption. As in Puerto Rico, transnational dealers pay local operatives in kind, fomenting the creation of internal micro-markets and making

the selling of drugs a part-time job. For many barrio residents, such work blends with other *trabajitos* that make up the informal sector in which more than half of all economically active Dominicans work. In interviews, it often emerges that these bottom-rung, part-time drug workers do not even think of themselves as involved in narcotrafficking.

As pernicious as these trends are for the stability and security of poor communities, the drug business is becoming embedded in many local economies as a subsistence strategy for poor households. The circulation of drug money stimulates a myriad of other micro- and mid-level enterprises, some of them illicit but others not. When I asked the people of Capotillo about the November 2010 capture of a well-known local drug dealer, el Chino, many responded frankly: “The day that police arrested el Chino, economic activity in the barrio slowed down; many businesses closed for good.”

At the macro-level as well, analysts note that many Caribbean economies are driven by “dark market” capital that permeates the construction, retail and tourist sectors. These investments made it possible for criminal groups operating in the Caribbean to realize an estimated 3.3

billion dollars in 2002, over 3 percent of the regional GDP. Some of these criminal actors are well-known “entrepreneurs” in their countries before they are extradited and placed before a U.S. court. Such was the case of Quirino E. Paulino Castillo, a notorious Dominican drug don who also owned an agribusiness in a free-trade zone, a cement company and many other firms employing thousands of people in his native western province of Elias Pina. A civilian, Quirino had nevertheless been favored by the Dominican government with an honorific military rank. As investigators learned, his illicit businesses had showered benefits on a number of politicians, high-ranking military officers, and members of the national police.

Another case demonstrates how drug lords move freely among the region’s elites as well as how fluid the Caribbean’s borders have become for well-connected criminals. José Figueroa Agosto, a Puerto Rican drug trafficker, became a fugitive from U.S. justice in 1999 after evading Puerto Rican authorities and a 229-year sentence following the killing of a Colombian drug capo. For more than a decade, Figueroa lived in the Dominican Republic, where he readily penetrated various branches of the state and the upper echelons of Dominican society. Vested with multiple identities, each backed with false documents provided by government officials, the capo was *persona grata* at several respected Dominican banking institutions. He became a major player in island real estate, owning some 300 properties, most listed not in his own name but in the names of respectable members of the business and entertainment industries. At the time of his arrest he had security clearances that allowed him to enter restricted areas of the military intelligence and the D.N.C.D. or

National Directorate of Drug Control. These permits facilitated his use of official transportation and allowed him to smuggle drugs and money in and out of the country.

Figueroa was not the kingpin of a vast, hierarchically structured group like Mexico's Sinaloa cartel or the Zetas, but that did not keep him from establishing a ring of traffickers. This ring linked the smug-

Puerto Rico; we have the influence of drug trafficking in all our branches of government, at all levels of our society." Pereira's assertion came after the Federal Bureau of Investigation revealed that in October 2010, eighty-nine police officers were indicted on drug trafficking charges for providing security to drug dealers. In the Dominican Republic, the reach of organized crime can be seen in the still-

organized crime to flourish. At the same time, these criminal entities operate within an already globalized context that promotes the widening, deepening and speeding of illicit trade. The peripheral economies of the Caribbean, located between the points of drug production and consumption, offer unregulated spaces in which organized crime can flourish.

Given this context, what can a relatively poor country like the Dominican Republic do, having limited institutional and intelligence capabilities and lacking consistent public policies, to confront drug lords who command resources that dwarf the government's anti-organized crime budget? I have no simple answer to that question. I can only say that pressure must be brought on political elites to push them beyond rhetoric to embrace democratic security policies that include social welfare as one of their pillars. Only popular pressure, exerted over time, can reform the very discredited police and justice systems of the Caribbean.

Perhaps part of the solution rests at the very local level in barrios like Capotillo. In spite of social fragility, these people still share an instinct for community as well as high levels of resilience. The residents of these barrios are not waiting for miracles; they are struggling to find a new balance within a fragmented landscape as they pursue ways to strengthen what academics call "social capital." I'll give the final word to Teresa: "The barrio doesn't make us, we make the barrio."

Lilian Bobea is a Dominican sociologist and holds a PhD from Utrecht University in Holland. She is a specialist on Caribbean security, citizen security, civil-military relations and police reform. She has written several books and numerous academic articles on those subjects and is a professor and researcher at FLACSO, Dominican Republic, as well as a consultant. She can be contacted at: bobea_1@hotmail.com

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gling of cocaine and heroin from Colombia and Venezuela with its commercialization and the laundering of its profit in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. His criminal activities ranged from drug smuggling, money laundering, fraud and racketeering to murder and kidnappings. More than ten years passed until finally, in July 2010, Puerto Rican authorities informed their Dominican counterparts about Figueroa's whereabouts. Surprisingly, the kingpin was not tipped off. His capture, along with that of 64 other members of his criminal network, culminated in a search that involved the FBI, the D.E.A, the D.N.C.D. and police from both countries.

As the cases of Quirino and Figueroa illustrate, transnational criminals use their wealth to influence "legitimate" private and public actors and gain access to power. They are able to buy judges, launder money, and so on. In the Dominican Republic as in Puerto Rico, drug traffickers have succeeded in penetrating the police and other security forces, a fact admitted publicly by presidents and cabinet ministers. Miguel Pereira, a former head of the Puerto Rico Police Department, recently acknowledged that, "drug trafficking touches all spheres of

unresolved "caso Paya," in which a group of seven Colombians and Nicaraguans were found executed in August 2008. Investigators uncovered the involvement of members of the Dominican Coast Guard, supporting a Capotillo resident's claim that, "narcotrafficking is a force more powerful than the Dominican state."

My current research explores the orientation of criminal actors toward the state, a phenomenon that I call *statetropism* (a neologism based on the concept of heliotropism). Unlike common or "unorganized" criminals who avoid the state, the new criminality builds a network of alliances within and around the state, putting it in the untenable position of trying to deter crime while simultaneously being exploited by an organized criminal elite.

FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL

My work suggests that organized crime is becoming an embedded, rather than an externally imposed, feature of Caribbean societies. Thanks in part to their high and middle-level contacts and their influence in the political and economic arenas, these criminals permeate formal and informal institutions and social groups. They create niches and opportunities for



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

When one thinks of organized crime, one most often thinks of drug trafficking. As we've mentioned before in this issue, organized crime can involve all sorts of contraband—from arms to tobacco—and kidnapping and extortion. But one of the growing areas for organized crime is human trafficking. Jacqueline Bhabha, Rafael Fernández de Castro and David Shirk take a look at the issue.

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Human Trafficking

An Organized Crime Challenge in Contemporary Latin America

BY JACQUELINE BHABHA

IN HIS FOREWORD TO THE 2000 UNITED NATIONS Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan noted the imperative of effective cross-border law enforcement to counter transnational crime: “If the enemies of progress and human rights seek to exploit the openness and opportunities of globalization for their purposes, then we must exploit those very same factors to defend human rights and defeat the forces of crime, corruption and trafficking in human beings.” Annan’s observation highlights one of the central challenges still facing law enforcement agents in an era of globalization, when human mobility is increasingly regarded as central to economic development and the realization of individual opportunity. How can criminal exploitation of vulnerable migrant populations be prevented without excluding them from the potential benefits of international migration?

Kofi Annan’s dilemma presents itself with particular force in contemporary Latin America. The continent has a long history of two very sizeable illegal cross-border phenomena: transnational drug smuggling and irregular border crossing. Both activities take place throughout the continent—from Mexico into the United States; from Guatemala, Colombia and Honduras into Mexico; from Paraguay into Argentina. Though the two phenomena are conceptually independent, there is in practice considerable overlap between them. Irregular migrants complain of duress from drug cartels that force them, under threat of death, to carry drugs on their person as they make their perilous journeys across the desert. U.S. border patrol agents report that children (up to 50 percent of trafficking victims in some parts of Latin America, according to the United Nations Office

on Drugs and Crime, *Global Trafficking in Persons*, 2009) are increasingly used as decoys – “part of a ploy to sneak drugs past [U.S.] Border Patrol checkpoints,” as journalist Angela Kocherga points out in her November 6, 2011, report, “Drug Smugglers Using Children as Decoys” (see <http://www.wfaa.com/news/national/Border-Patrol-says-smugglers-using-children-as-decoys-133341208.html>). Small wonder then that border crossing becomes increasingly arduous and that legitimate migrants, those fleeing persecution or seeking work or family reunification, feel compelled to resort to the services of professional agents to enhance their chances of crossing a border.

Human trafficking flourishes in part because of this sort of exploitation. But what is “trafficking?” Thanks to the UN Transnational Organized Crime Convention just cited, longstanding disagreements about the meaning of the term “trafficking” have given way to a broad international consensus. A section of the Convention, the UN Protocol to Prevent,

the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.” This definition identifies three crucial ingredients for trafficking: first, *some action*, which can include movement (whether across an international border or not) but may also consist of simply harboring or recruiting someone for the purposes of exploiting them; second, except in the case of children (children are therefore to be considered “trafficked” under this definition, even if they agree to it), *some means*, such as coercion or deceit to recruit the trafficked person; and third, *exploitation* as the purpose of the action and the coercion. In short, someone is a victim of trafficking if they are recruited by force or deceit in order to be exploited. The term “exploitation” is intentionally not defined in the Convention since the signatory states could not reach agreement on its scope. For example, there was (and remains) no interna-

The International Labour Organization estimates about 250,000 trafficked persons in Latin America, but others put the number as high as 700,000.

Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, sets out a widely adopted definition of the crime of trafficking in human beings. The definition is complex: “Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of

tional consensus on whether prostitution *ipso facto* is exploitation. Cultural, social, legal and economic variations affect whether conduct is considered exploitation in a particular context.

In Latin America, there is broad consensus on the existence of all three elements within the crime of trafficking in persons in a wide range of contexts. Though the profits from trafficking are



lower in Latin America than on any other continent apart from Africa, the numbers affected are just as significant, as Louise Shelley points out in *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). According to the International Labour Organization, there are approximately 250,000 trafficked persons in Latin America. Other international estimates place the number as high as 700,000, though all agree that reliable data do not exist. Trafficking affects all sections of the population, though the type varies. Child trafficking is endemic and very widespread across the continent. Three types of child trafficking are well documented: for sexual and labor exploitation; for engagement in armed conflict; and for transnational adoption. Thus Central American and Caribbean countries have become renowned sex tourism destinations, with children trafficked from rural areas to border towns, urban centers and tourist destinations to supply the demand (see Alex A. Aronowitz, *Human Trafficking, Human*

Misery: The Global Trade in Human Beings, Westport: Praeger, 2009). According to a 2006 Inter-American Development Bank report, half a million children work as prostitutes in Brazil, while Colombia is a major exporter of girls for sexual exploitation in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. Children are also trafficked for agricultural labor and domestic servitude; in some cases drug cartels are reported to have forcibly recruited young children as beggars. Moreover, for decades Latin American children have been trafficked for use in armed conflict. Colombia's long internal conflict has been a particularly egregious recruiting ground for young boys and girls, for direct engagement as soldiers on the battlefield but also as auxiliaries servicing the sexual, portering or cooking needs of adult combatants, according to the UN Security Council's 2009 report on children and armed conflict in Colombia. Finally, there are longstanding allegations of baby trafficking to service the international demand for adoptees. This

A Guatemalan youth deported from the United States returns home.

is a controversial topic. Some child rights advocates question claims of baby selling and defend poor mothers' rights to give babies they cannot care for up for adoption to loving families. But many others express concern over trafficking connected to the lucrative market in babies that has fostered a flourishing adoption business. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Guatemala, one of the poorest countries on the continent with a large, disenfranchised indigenous population and history of brutal civil war, was a key recruiting ground for adoptive babies. The financial opportunities afforded by this business pushed Guatemala to become one of the top three suppliers of international adoptees and generated massive foreign exchange for the country. Yet persistent allegations of coercion, baby selling and profiteering eventually led to the suspension of international adoption from Guatemala in 2008.

Latin American women and men are also extensively trafficked for sex and labor, both within the continent and further afield. Brazil and Colombia stand out as countries in South America where trafficking is especially pervasive. In Brazil, most notably in the impoverished north and northeast regions, men are trafficked for forced labor particularly in the agricultural sector; women for exploitation in the gold mines, in the sex industry and in domestic labor. Other aspects of trafficking in Latin America are of more recent origin, a response to changing global markets and law enforcement patterns. They include trafficking in persons for organ harvesting at the U.S.-Mexico border, a secretive but increasingly lucrative business, and the exploitation of human “mules” or carriers to ferry illicit drugs across international borders.

Efforts to end or curb human trafficking, linked to the slave trade and to the sexual exploitation of women, date back to the early twentieth century and continue to preoccupy legislators and public figures across the political spectrum. Most anti-trafficking efforts focus on criminalization of traffickers and cross-border law enforcement collaboration to identify transnational trafficking networks. Some recent initiatives, however, have also included more victim-focused measures, including the provision of counseling and “rehabilitation” services, and increased access to health care for trafficking survivors. Unfortunately it is not clear that these measures are reducing the impact of contemporary trafficking in Latin America. A UN study found that the cumulative product of investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases between 2003 and 2007 in Latin America was “a few dozen convictions.” A Massachusetts General Hospital investigation in Brazil revealed that there were “no specific health-care facilities for sex trafficked women and girls” in Rio de Janeiro or Salvador, despite the reputation of both cities as hubs of sex trafficking and sex tourism. Law enforcement and rehabilitative in-

terventions do not appear to be making a significant contribution to curbing the impact of human trafficking in contemporary Latin America.

A more holistic engagement with the trafficking phenomenon would likely yield better results. It is instructive to think of trafficking as the product of two different supply and demand equa-

Traffickers have a ready source of clients for the human services they peddle and the opportunity to become extraordinarily wealthy without the risks that drug or arms smugglers face.

tions. One of the equations, external, is closely related to migration pressures. The demand side comes from would-be migrants who cannot legally access opportunity abroad. The supply side consists of illicit professional border-crossing services to facilitate that access: con men and women who persuade, recruit, harbor and transport people with false promises of jobs or opportunities. As legitimate, safe border-crossing becomes harder, especially for unskilled and uneducated populations, these services become more attractive, even essential. A report submitted to the U.S. Congress highlighted the extent to which border-crossing points had become “the newest trafficking focal points.” This is as true for the Guatemala-Mexico border as it is for the Mexico-U.S. frontier: “women who are unable to enter the United States end up being forced into prostitution in Mexico.”

Most discussions of trafficking focus on another, internal supply-demand equation: the supply of populations exploitable with virtual impunity and the demand for cheap sex, labor, or other products of human exploitation. This equation balances on the huge profits to be made, the low risks attached to this profiteering and the enormous, ready market for the services of ex-

ploited populations. Demand is fueled by human traffickers and their clients: pimps and brothel owners, factory and farm employers, private households in search of domestic workers, child pornographers and sex tourists. Traffickers have a ready source of clients for the human services they peddle and the opportunity to become extraordinarily

wealthy without the risks that drug or arms smugglers face.

In Latin America, as elsewhere around the globe where trafficking flourishes, both types of supply and demand chain exist. Trafficking occurs from the poorer to the richer areas, within the country, the region and across the world. It depends on an absence of survival options for marginalized and impoverished communities, on the aspirations linked to migration and on the profits to be made from exploiting these aspirations. Until more anti-trafficking resources are spent on generating education, training and employment opportunities for the communities vulnerable to trafficking, either within their own countries or through lawful migration options, traffickers will continue to find demand for their services, and criminal deterrents will simply increase the danger of trafficking routes and extortionate demands affecting the victims.

Jacqueline Bhabha is the Jeremiah Smith Jr. Lecturer at Harvard Law School, Research Director at Harvard's FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Adjunct Lecturer on Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, and Harvard's University Adviser on Human Rights Education.

Transmigration in Mexico

The Invisible Victims **BY RAFAEL FERNÁNDEZ DE CASTRO**

"If I stay or go back to Salvador, I die and my family too; there is no work; if I keep trying to go to the United States and something happens to me in Mexico, the only one who dies is me; and if I succeed, we all live."

—a Salvadoran migrant in Mexico.

"Fortunately the Beast only tore off my left arm; I can still write."

—Iván, a 13-year-old Honduran boy who had his arm torn off when he fell asleep and tumbled from a train in his second attempt to reach the United States from Mexico.

"I can't go back to Ecuador. I am close to the U.S. border now. I already paid \$11,000 to a coyote to cross."

—an Ecuadoran survivor of the August 2010 massacre at San Fernando, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

IN APRIL 2010, SALVADORAN PRESIDENT MAURICIO Funes sent an official delegation led by Secretary for Strategic Affairs Francis Hato Hasbún to warn Mexican authorities about increasing abuses against

Salvadoran migrants traveling through Mexico to the United States. In a meeting with Mexican officials, Hasbún expressed his fears: the rise in violence made it likely that serious crimes would be committed against migrants from El Salvador and all of Central America.

Four months after this visit, one of the worst acts of violence against a group of migrants anywhere in the world took place. In San Fernando, Tamaulipas (a state in northeastern Mexico near the U.S. border), 72 migrants—most of them Central Americans—were assassinated, found with their hands and arms tied, some of them shot with a coup de grace. The bodies were dumped in a mass grave a few hours away and located thanks to the Ecuadoran survivor who explained to incredulous marines that he had lived by playing dead.

The San Fernando massacre epitomized the uncontrolled violence perpetrated against migrants going through Mexico to the United States ("transmigrants"). A few months later, another

mass murder was uncovered in San Fernando against migrants, this time with several Mexican victims. On this occasion, 193 bodies were discovered in 43 clandestine graves. Authorities indicated that 120 of the victims were bus riders on their way to the United States and that none of them had links with organized crime. In 2011, in Monterrey, Nuevo León, the third largest city in Mexico, another massacre took place when the Casino Royale was set on fire. Fifty-two people died, most of them elderly women who liked to pass their time at the gambling establishment.

As we look at the collective crimes in San Fernando and Monterrey, we conclude that the increase in violence against transmigrants forms part of the generalized violence that has been sweeping Mexico since 2007, with 50,000 homicides.

But these events do have their own particular explanation. In San Fernan-

Deported men shield their faces.



do, the Zetas—the most violent cartel in Mexico—wished to teach a lesson to traffickers that they could not move people through the country without the cartel's authorization and without paying to cross through the zone. In the case of the Monterrey casino fire, the Zetas ordered the attack after the owners refused to pay (see the article entitled, “Cae ‘El Mataperros’, capo implicado en la masacre del Casino Royale,” *Proceso*, January 6, 2012.)

Migrants seek routes precisely where there is the least state presence in order to avoid deportation, and most of them are afraid to denounce abuses. Two factors motivate this fear: first, they wish to avoid being taken into custody, and second, the rate of impunity is very high, with only 22 percent of crimes reported to authorities, and only 15 percent of these cases leading to an investigation, according to the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) February 2011 special report on the kidnapping of migrants in Mexico.

Nevertheless, the CNDH has made an important effort to understand one of the most frequent abuses against transmigrants in the past five years. According to two special CNDH reports, between September 2008 and February 2009, 9,758 migrants were kidnapped, while between April and September 2010 that figure reached 11,333. That is, according to these reports, some 20,000 transmigrants are kidnapped each year. The motive is ransom payment. Large groups—between 20 and 40 migrants—are kidnapped, and family members in the United States or Guatemala must pay a ransom that ranges between \$1,000 and \$3,000. According to the CNDH, individuals whose family members refuse to pay ransom are murdered. Even more surprising is the fact that only 60 complaints have been filed denouncing these crimes in ten of the most high-risk states for migrants in 2010. These states include Baja California, Chiapas, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Veracruz and Zacatecas.

THE DYNAMICS OF TRANSMIGRATION FLOWS IN MEXICO

Mexico is a country of movement: emigration, immigration, transmigration, return flows and also internal flows caused by fluctuating labor markets and displacement due to violence. According to the National Migration Institute (INAMI), the flow of Central Americans passing through Mexico to the United States has increased, peaking in 2005, the year that experienced the most transmigration, counting 433,000 events (the word “event” is used because the same person may have been deported more than once) and 232,157 deportees. INAMI estimates that Mexican authorities detain about 50 percent to 55 percent of transmigrants; U.S. authorities capture 20 to 25 percent along the border; between 15 and 20 percent of the transmigrants manage to make it through to the United States successfully. From 2005 to 2010, there has been a 70 percent decline, from 433,000 down to 140,000 events. This drop is explained by the same motives that have reduced Mexican emigration to the United States: unemployment and economic recession in the United States coupled with the tightening of the U.S.-Mexico border. In the case of the Central Americans, increasing violence in Mexico has also discouraged transmigration. One of the most vulnerable groups of transmigrants—women—has considerably

diminished. In 2007, they made up 22.7 percent of the deportees; in 2010, they were only 13.8 percent.

INAMI estimates that this transmigrant flow is largely made up of 90 percent—Central Americans from the so-called northern triangle—Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The remaining 10 percent include all sorts of nationalities: Cubans, South Americans, East Indians, Chinese, and even some Africans. Of the Central Americans returned by Mexico between 2005 and 2010, 47 percent were Guatemalans; 35 percent Hondurans and 17 percent Salvadorans. In this same period, Central Americans represented 89 percent of the total irregular non-Mexicans detailed by the U.S. Border Patrol on the border.

WHAT EXPLAINS THE VIOLENCE AGAINST THE TRANSMIGRANTS?

Migration scholar Rodolfo Casillas points out that they constitute a new crime market niche—migrants who cross through Mexico to get to the United States. In particular, mass kidnapping has turned into a very lucrative activity for organized crime. The emergence of this niche market can be explained by five related factors: spiralling violence in Mexico since 2007-2008, an unexpected consequence of the head-on fight against organized crime by the government of Felipe Calderón; the transmigrants' sta-



Leaving the shackles behind

tus as invisible victims; the decision of the United States to seal off the border with Mexico, and inadequate legislation and coordination with Mexican authorities to prosecute these abuses.

This context helps explain two elements in the increased abuses against transmigrants: first, Mexican authorities are overloaded and lack additional resources—federal police, intelligence officials and operatives—dedicated exclusively to prevention of crimes against migrants. Second, illicit activities have taken over large areas in the states of Tamaulipas and Veracruz, and criminal organizations such as the Zetas operate there with impunity.

At the beginning of his term in office, President Calderón decided to escalate the battle against organized crime and drug trafficking. The Army and Navy, which had already participated discreetly in the area of citizen security, came to play key roles. The government offensive has accomplished much, such as the increase in the confiscation of weapons—more than 100,000 in five years—and has caught 20 of the 39 most wanted criminals. It is unquestionable that the governmental offensive had increased the cost of operating for the criminal organizations. Since it has become more difficult for these groups to carry out other types of crimes such as the extortion of Mexican merchants or even drug trafficking to the United States, the organizations have found a new niche market: transmigrants.

The great advantage of this market is that it is made up of invisible victims, who are not likely to complain. They are afraid of being detained and deported. When a Salvadoran rape victim was asked why she did not use a humanitarian visa offered by the Mexican government in order to denounce the abuse to which she was subjected she replied that she did not know of the existence of this visa, but that she would not use it in any case because she did not have the resources to survive in Mexico for several weeks: “Thanks to God, I still have the strength to keep on my way to North Carolina” (the story was told by scholar Ro-

dolfo Casillas in *Central American, Asian and African Transmigrants in Mexico: The Workings of International Migrant Smuggling Networks*, Human Smuggling and Organized Crime in Mexico: Three Case Studies, Woodrow Wilson Center and Arizona State University, October 2011).

Mexico is only the corridor of intense migration that stretches from Central America to the United States. About 75 percent of undocumented migrants in the United States at the present time are Mexicans and Central Americans. Nevertheless, there has been practically no regional vision and dialogue on the issue of migration among the governments of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and the United States. Moreover, as a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and in the face of the impossibility of achieving immigration reform, the governments of George W. Bush and Barack Obama have developed a immigration policy in which *enforcement* takes priority.

A great part of this *enforcement* has been the strengthening of the southern border. To prevent a terrorist and an undocumented migrant from entering U.S. territory, Washington has beefed up the budget for the Border Patrol; it has constructed more than 500 miles of fences, and has even called out the National Guard. As a result, the border is more difficult to cross. Mexican migrants, Central American and other transmigrants end up spending several days on the Mexican side of the border, where they become easy victims for organized crime. They need to wait on the Mexican side of the border to contract *coyotes* or *polleros* to take them across and to wait for the money to pay for these “services.”

The need to contract a *pollero* is now so great (previously some people tried on their own) that the fee has increased considerably, varying according to country of origin. For example, in 2010, a Central American paid between \$6,000 and \$7,000 to be taken across the border in a relatively efficient and secure fashion, while someone from India would pay

\$13,000, and a Chinese person would pay up to \$60,000, according to Casillas.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that Mexican legislation makes it difficult to go after human traffickers efficiently and in general to apply the law against such abusers against transmigrants. However, during the Calderón administration, there have been two relevant advances in legislation: in 2008, it ceased to be a crime to be an undocumented migrant in Mexican territory and, most important, in 2011, the Congress approved and the President signed into law a new migratory law that puts special emphasis on the human rights of the transmigrant.

In conclusion, as a part of the generalized climate of violence and impunity of the past four years, there has been a dramatic increase in the abuses against migrants seeking to get to the United States. Central Americans are the main victims, not only because they are the great majority of the migratory flow, but because they undertake their journey in zones of the country where Mexican authorities are weak or absent.

The decrease of migration flows to the United States in the last five years opens a window of opportunity for Mexico to provide practical implementation in its new migratory law and to dedicate the resources and political will to make the protection of transmigrants a priority in its security efforts. The participation of Washington and the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in a renewed regional migratory dialogue would be an important incentive to assure that Mexico pay special attention to the plight of transmigrants.

Rafael Fernández de Castro is Founder and Chair of the International Studies Department at the Technological Autonomous Institute of Mexico (ITAM). From 2008 to 2011, he served as the Foreign Affairs Advisor to the President of Mexico. He was a Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor at Harvard University and visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution and the Inter-American Dialogue.

A Crooked Gauntlet

The Plight of Migrants in Mexico **BY DAVID A. SHIRK**

MORE THAN A HUNDRED CENTRAL AMERICANS—including 21 minors and three infants—had been trapped in a forced labor camp in the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez until discovered by Mexican authorities in November 2010. Seven months later, three truckloads of gunmen stopped a train traveling north from Oaxaca and reportedly forced sixty Central American migrants into their vehicles. Mexican federal police rescued 12 migrants (eight Central Americans, three Brazilians, and an Iranian) from their captors in Tamaulipas. All told, in the last half decade, the Mexican Human Rights Commission estimates that at least 20,000 Central and South American migrants were kidnapped each year, or more than 50 a day. Many did not survive: at least 150 clandestine grave sites have been identified in over 22 Mexican states, many of them containing the remains of migrants and other victims of the country's ruthless organized crime groups. The best-known incident was the discovery of 72 murdered migrants in mass graves in San Fernando, a number that soared to the hundreds after further investigation.

At first, San Fernando, a small farming community of about 60,000 people, located about 100 miles south of Brownsville, Texas, may have seemed exceptional. However, over time, greater scrutiny revealed a broader pattern of violent organized crime groups targeting migrants.

The proliferation of violence in Mexico adds a new and unwelcome peril for the migrants who have traversed Mexico over the last three decades in search of a better life in “El Norte.” During that period, the volume and pace of migration from Mexico and Central America had grown to unprecedented levels, due to economic instability, internal displacement, and various forms of violence

in their home communities. The wave began during the so-called Lost Decade of the 1980s, when Mexico and its neighbors were bedeviled by crushing debt, hyper-inflation, unemployment, and various degrees of internal strife. The wave continued during a new era of economic reform, globalized trade, and newfound prosperity in the 1990s. Even as the wave began to wane over the last decade, due largely to a sputtering U.S. economy and changing demographics in migrant-sending countries, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Central Americans continue to flee from misery each year.

Migrants fleeing violence add another layer to an already existing situation. According to figures tracked by the Trans-Border Institute's Justice in Mexico Project (www.justiceinmexico.org), by year's end the number of drug-related killings in Mexico since 2006 will reach nearly 50,000 dead: more than one every hour. Violence has grown so pervasive that tens of thousands of people within Mexico have been uprooted from their com-

locations severely affected by violence among drug trafficking organizations. These violent spaces include key corridors for domestic and transnational migration in the transit states of Coahuila, Chihuahua, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Tabasco, Veracruz, Oaxaca, and Chiapas.

In response to the waves of migrants, U.S. authorities started introducing tougher border security measures in response to demands from citizens disturbed by the latest tide of “new Americans”—even before the added pressure came from those fleeing escalating violence. The number of Border Patrol agents grew from 2,900 in 1980 to around 4,000 at the start of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. Fears that NAFTA would facilitate more immigration and drug trafficking brought new concentrated border enforcement measures, such as Operation Hold-the-Line and Operation Gatekeeper, which poured millions of dollars into new fencing and high-tech surveillance systems intended to gain operational control

There is a broad pattern of violent organized crime groups targeting migrants—a new and unwelcome peril for migrants traversing Mexico.

munities, seeking refuge in other parts of Mexico or abroad. In March 2011, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre issued a report stating that there are an estimated 230,000 people displaced within Mexico. While a range of factors contributes to displacement, including political violence in southern states like Chiapas, most of these internally displaced people have been driven from

of strategic corridors along the border. By 2000, the size of the Border Patrol more than doubled to more than 9,000 agents. In the new millennium, the 9/11 attacks placed new urgency on homeland security and led the Bush administration to continue efforts to beef up southwest border enforcement. Additionally, southwest governors sent hundreds of National Guard troops to the border for



extended deployments throughout the 2000s to shore up federal immigration controls and counter-drug efforts. Under the Obama administration, the Border Patrol grew to more than 20,000 agents, and more than 3,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were sent to the border to bolster efforts to combat arms and cash smuggling by drug traffickers.

Ironically, tougher border enforcement unwittingly encouraged the development of more sophisticated organized crime networks, including both powerful drug-trafficking organizations and a new generation of professional smugglers or *coyotes*, who promised safe passage for higher fees. In fact, there is increasingly little distinction between the two modes of smuggling, since the organized crime groups have conglomerated and diversified significantly in recent years. The implication for migrants is that their *coyotes* are no longer part of “mom and pop” smuggling operations, but increasingly involved with more extensive and ruthless illicit business operations.

People who are poor and dislocated are easily exploitable. Criminal groups take whatever money migrants and their families can muster, or demand future payment in the form of indentured servitude. Moreover, as border security measures have disrupted once circular patterns of patriarchal migration, women and children have become ready and vulnerable targets of predation. While it is true that migrants have long been the targets of bandits, corrupt authorities, rapists and other criminals, the gauntlet of predation that migrants navigate from Tapachula to Tijuana has become even more terrifying in recent years. One major source of danger is the *Mara Salvatrucha*, a transnational Central American gang that has gradually expanded into several states throughout Mexico, including the Federal District, Baja California, Tamaulipas, and Nuevo León.

In addition, migrants now face well-armed and highly trained organized crime groups like the Zetas, founded by elite Mexican military operatives. The Zetas broke with their former employers

Guatemalan migrants nap in Tenosique, Mexico, before boarding freight trains.

in the Gulf Cartel in 2010 and began to work with former Kaibiles—Guatemalan special forces—to support their operations in both Guatemala and Mexico. They have earned a reputation as one of Mexico’s most dangerous organized crime groups, in part because of their calculated exploitation and killing of migrants. In April 2010, in the northeastern border state of Tamaulipas, a young man from Ecuador escaped from captivity on a Zeta-operated ranch in the town of San Fernando, leading authorities to a mass gravesite, or *narcofosca*, where they identified the remains of 72 people, mostly migrants. In April 2011, authorities found 193 more bodies at over 40 different locations in San Fernando. In both cases, many of the victims originated from Ecuador, Honduras, Brazil and El Salvador, and were reportedly killed for refusing to work for the Zetas.

If drug trafficking is so lucrative, then why have poor, desperate migrants be-



As migrants head north through the Peten jungle, they still face a treacherous journey.

come a key source of revenue for organized crime groups? Part of the explanation is that, as these groups have begun to splinter and fight among themselves, they have had to supplement drug-trafficking revenues by diversifying into other forms of illicit activity. Migrants are a multi-purpose and often reusable commodity. When treated as paying customers by smuggling organizations, they can be charged for passage to the United States. Even after paying between \$3,000 and \$7,000 for “safe” passage, migrants are forced to call their families to beg for additional money to pay their captors. Based on its interviews, Mexican human rights authorities found that ransoms demanded by kidnappers ranged from \$1,500-\$5,000 (USD), with an average of \$2,500 (USD). When kidnapped, the victims can be used for forced labor or sexual exploitation, even as their families at home or in the United States are paying ransom. According to a United Nations estimate, aggregate revenues from the smuggling and kidnapping of migrants traveling through Mexico probably amount to as much as one billion dollars, not counting the more than six billion in revenues for smuggling migrants across the U.S.-Mexico border.

Would that these vulnerable migrants could turn to authorities for help. Groups like Brothers Along the Road (Hermanos

en el Camino) and Step by Step Towards Peace (Paso a Paso Hacia la Paz) have urged authorities to devote greater attention and protection to address the plight of these and other migrants travelling through Mexico. Unfortunately, many authorities are actually in league with organized crime groups or directly involved in exploiting migrants themselves. In March 2008, a group of Central American migrants was attacked by officials of the Instituto Nacional de Migración (INM) and naval officers in the community of Las Palmas, Oaxaca. In July 2010, Mexico’s National Human Rights Commission found that federal agents of the national Public Security Secretariat stopped a train traveling from Chiapas to Oaxaca, forced 50 migrants to descend, and robbed them.

Recent developments suggest that there has been some progress on the part of the Mexican government. In April 2011, soon after the discovery of new mass graves in San Fernando, the Mexican army captured Martín Estrada Luna, “El Kilo,” the alleged Zeta cell leader believed to have carried out the mass killing of migrants in Tamaulipas. Authorities also made dozens of other arrests, including 16 San Fernando municipal police officers that allegedly offered protection to the Zetas and assisted in hiding the mass homicide. The following month, Presi-

dent Felipe Calderón signed legislation to effectively “decriminalize” migration, eliminating criminal penalties for unauthorized immigrants to make it more difficult for corrupt authorities to exploit them. In October 2011, the Mexican government fired over 120 corrupt agents of its National Immigration Institute after revelations of their involvement in the abduction, rape, prostitution, and murder of migrants in the states of Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, and Veracruz, and the Federal District.

Efforts to reduce the threat posed by corrupt officials are a good first step, but additional measures could be taken. Mexico should consider bilateral agreements with Guatemala and its other Central American neighbors to develop shared approaches to managing immigration flows, more effective management of border entry points, and protections for the basic safety and human rights of migrants, regardless of their immigration status. Doing so would provide a precedent and a model for the United States to do the same, perhaps as part of a grand bargain to increase visa quotas for Mexican citizens, who represent the vast majority of undocumented immigrants in the United States. More realistically, the United States would also do well to ensure that the deportation of undocumented immigrants back to Mexican border cities does not put them at risk to victimization or recruitment by organized crime. The development of bilateral agreements with local Mexican authorities to reduce the risks factors for returning migrants (e.g., alerting Mexican authorities, returning deportees at safe times of day, interviewing migrants regarding victimization in Mexico, etc.) would be a step in the right direction.

David A. Shirk is assistant professor of Political Science and director of the Trans-Border Institute at the University of San Diego.

Brazilian Animal Game

A REVIEW BY JAMES N. GREEN

Laws of Chance: Brazil's Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life, by Amy Chazkel (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010, 356 pp.)

Anyone who has visited Rio de Janeiro for more than a few weeks inevitably hears about the *jogo do bicho*, an illegal gambling activity that has been roughly translated into English as the animal game. One might notice a man or woman permanently stationed at the same location next to an apartment building or at a newsstand. Throughout the day, hundreds of people will approach him or her, quickly engage in a short conversation, pass on some small bills, and exchange a slip of paper. A bet has been placed in an underworld of petty commercial exchanges known as the *jogo do bicho*. It is regulated by the reputation of the person on the street corner and the trust in her or him by the client who risks some cash for a chance to multiply a small wager into a sum that might pay off bills or even allow for an extravagant purchase.

This clandestine game of chance, in which sets of numbers are linked to twenty-five animals and the outcome of a bet follows the winning numbers of the official national lottery, constitutes a century-old tradition in Bra-

zil's former capital. How did a simple lottery devised at the turn of the twentieth century by a real estate entrepreneur to encourage residents of Rio de Janeiro to visit a zoo in the outskirts of the city become a ubiquitous underground game of chance widely played by both the popular and middle classes? Why did the state quickly outlaw this numbers game? In what ways did it criminalize informal popular practices, such as small-time gambling, a part of the development of modern, urban public life in the aftermath of slavery's abolition in 1888 and the establishment of a republican regime fourteen months later? How can historians explain the fact that the police spent considerable time policing the practice in the first decades of the 20th century, when the game of chance assumed such widespread popularity, yet so few people were convicted of engaging in this illicit pastime even when the organizers of the *jogo do bicho* were caught red-handed with proof that they were receiving bets? To what extent is the *jogo do bicho* an early example of the informal economy that has expanded so significantly in twentieth-century Brazil?

In this theoretically rich and meticulously researched work, Chazkel examines Brazil's most famous game



of chance as a means of understanding the complexities of public sociability and its relationship to everyday forms of petty economic exchanges. She argues that a form of enclosure operated in urban Brazil in the late 19th century, as consumer capitalism took hold and the state privatized many forms of public life. Freed slaves, urban poor, and recent immigrants to Rio de Janeiro all faced a rising cost of living and were surrounded by new social controls. Earning a living as a petty street vendor or part-time laborer was one of the numerous livelihoods that the lower classes engaged in as a means of surviving in the nation's capital. Yet, the new republican regime closely regulated the right to occupy the streets, participate in minor commerce, or even live in the city's center. The *jogo do bicho*, which offered those of modest means a chance to improve their lot, was one of the dozens of economic transactions that circulated small amounts of money among the poor beyond the purview of the law. Restriction-

tions on this illicit form of betting served as yet another means of affirming the state's right to control the quotidian activities of its citizens at a moment of intense urbanization and modernization.

For a historian to document the social history of an illegal activity is no easy task, as those engaged in the pursuit are unlikely to leave much evidence that authorities (to say nothing of modern-day scholars) might uncover that could link them to an outlawed transaction. Moreover, documentation about bribes to authorities to avoid harassment of those participating in banned activities is rarely found in state archives. Historians do have some leads to follow, and Chazkel diligently has pursued all of them. Arrest records, evidence retained in investigations, and the statements made after official interrogations reveal an interaction between the police and the persecuted that constituted a cat-and-mouse dynamic of insistent accusations of crime violations and evasions of prosecution through at times far-fetched denials of any participation in the game. As this work carefully documents, prosecutors and police made great efforts in their attempts to control this form of gambling, yet failed to get many convictions, even when authorities captured people with wads of money and notations that clearly indicated their involvement in the practice. Chazkel persuasively shows that although officials at all levels might have been

involved in receiving betting kickbacks in exchange for protecting those organizing the underground game, many also actively participated in repressing this popular form of gambling entertainment. After all, an officer of the law could not expect to receive protection money if there were no threat that the police might arrest a lawbreaker. So the *jogo* was both repressed and permitted. Yet, the court system was quite lenient in sentencing those held under suspicion of running the game, with a conviction rate as low as four percent of those arrested. The heavy hand of the law was so harsh in its pursuit of violators that many judicial officials sided with defendants even when circumstantial evidence pointed to their involvement. Chazkel argues that the tension between agents of the state tasked with repressing this form of gambling and those responsible for deciding the guilt or innocence of those arrested reflected the consolidation of a judicial system based on arbitrary and informal implementation of the law both on the street and in the courthouse.

Chazkel draws on a wide array of theoretical models to help contextualize the lasting importance of the *jogo* as it became embedded in popular culture. In addition to its varied social meanings, the game was a surprisingly successful and stable economic enterprise. Those making a wager could count on the fact that the bet taker's word was trustworthy and the person placing some money on a given number/

animal would get paid should her or his luck play out. As the author poignantly points out, in a world in which so many aspects of everyday life were unpredictable, the *jogo* remained a secure and reliable undertaking. Chazkel convincingly lays out how, rather than symbolizing a remnant of a pre-modern folk tradition, a fetishized popular practice, or an irrational economic endeavor, the game of chance reflected modernizing trends among the poor and working classes, who became integrated into the money economy and circulated freely in the interstices of urban Brazil under the watchful gaze of representatives of the state that alternately turned an eye, collected a bribe, or carried out an arrest.

This unique optic on early twentieth-century Brazil is beautifully written and originally argued. Surprisingly, it is the first comprehensive and meticulous study of the animal game in Portuguese or in English. It stands as an important contribution to understanding modern Brazilian history and culture.

James N. Green is a Professor of History and Brazilian Studies at Brown University. His books include *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Duke, 2010) and *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-century Brazil* (University of Chicago, 1999). He is currently working on a biography of Herbert Daniel, a Brazilian guerrilla leader, political exile, and AIDS activist.

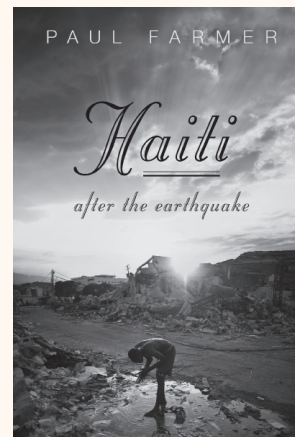
The Haitian Quake

A REVIEW BY PATRICK SYLVAIN

Haiti After The Quake, by Paul Farmer, et al (*Public Affairs*, 2011, 429 pp.)

There is always movement in Haiti. The political, social and ecological terrains are ever-shifting, yet they remain intrinsically connected. Thus the island's tropical ecology once lured European wealth-seekers to its shores to pursue pernicious economic transactions and install a modern system of colonial slavery. Later, Haiti's strategic location in the Caribbean brought nineteen years of U.S. occupation, adding misery to the lives of the already long-suffering Haitian people and further destroying the ecological landscape. Most recently, governmental negligence birthed by corrosive and ineffectual dictatorial regimes rendered Haiti vulnerable to, among other things, natural disasters, as evidenced in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake.

Haiti After the Quake travels a detailed journey through the country's problems before, during, and after the January 12, 2010, earthquake, exposing Haiti's tragic past, the myriad roadblocks to development, and its contradictions of governance, ecology, and society. Additionally, it presents formidable accounts of the tragedy, leaving the reader open to a plethora of emotions. Since this book was



edited by Dr. Paul Farmer, one of the founders of Partners-in-Health (PIH), the focus is largely on their work and how the organization has succeeded where others have failed or simply were not resolute enough to be sustainably effectual.

Farmer's book is not for the faint of heart; its blunt truth and descriptive narratives chronicle the real experiences of the compassionate souls who entered the battered Haitian landscape to make a lasting difference. Farmer writes, "I didn't want to write a dispassionate study of the Haitian earthquake. Instead, I wanted to offer an account of a difficult time; to bear witness" (2011: 2). Bearing witness as such is indeed a passionate and deliberate form of testimonial that portrays subject-to-subject relations in a humanistic way, enabling the reader to absorb events with his or her own subjectivity, and locate within the human

geography of knowledge the “personal and place-specific narratives.”

The catastrophe that the January 12, 2010, earthquake wrought upon Haiti’s capital and its immediate surroundings was simply one of many that had plagued the country for centuries. This book is, above all, a reminder of the vulnerability of deprived human beings who inhabit political and economic spaces where the very notion of social justice is absent. In it Farmer keenly expresses his rationale for creating PIH: “[the] dire need of Haiti’s destitute sick for even basic medical services was the reason we’d founded Partners In Health and Zanmi Lasante a quarter century ago... [for] many poor Haitians, these hospitals had become a last line of defense, and we tried never to refer patients to other facilities unless absolutely necessary” (2011: 8). If, perhaps, the leadership of Haiti had been as committed to the care of its people, Haitians would refrain from taking to the sea on leaky boats or crossing over to the Dominican Republic to work on sugarcane plantations. And perhaps, if the elite of Haiti had cared, destitute Haitians would not have to work for less than \$3.00 a day in their own country.

The magnitude of the earthquake can be accurately measured by the damages incurred as a result of the structural weaknesses that are embedded in the Haitian economy. Unattended needs render living spaces utterly vulnerable to natural disaster. Farmer’s reading is correct

when he claims that Haitians have for so long been “excluded from any meaningful discussion of their fate.” And exclusionary politics have created substantial failures, “the failure to provide basic services—health care, education, water, sanitation—had reached a parlous state” (43). In *Haiti After the Quake*, Farmer provides a realistic panorama of Haiti’s man-made disastrous environment and an equally disastrous unresponsive government. Farmer’s humanism, exasperation and transparent style of reporting, along with accounts of the suffering of Haitians prior to and after the earthquake, provide some of the most accurate personal accounts of Haiti that a reader will likely encounter.

Farmer’s position of significant authority allows him unfettered access to the spectrum of power, from those who make decisions about Haiti to those whose suffering he has attended to or at least witnessed. Although his voice has not been correct on all things that are Haiti-related, his overall credibility and healthy passion for Haiti cannot be disputed. His pain is transparent, and his practical sense of purpose as a physician is more than palpable. “My experiences in Mirebalais that first brutal and instructive year inspired a life-long desire to see, in Haiti, a hospital worthy of its people” (184). Farmer acknowledges his good fortune of having friends, colleagues and former students who wanted to contribute to the building of a hospital in Mirebalais that “was three times the size of

anything we’d ever attempted to build before” (186). His uncompromising drive and passion are his imprimatur, and such a book could have only been written by such an impassioned individual and his colleagues.

To my surprise, the person in the book who brought me to tears was Nancy Dorsinville. Her piece, “Goudou Goudou,” was effortlessly explicit and utterly poignant. She writes of the time immediately following the earthquake: “In some neighborhoods, people sat in front of their destroyed homes, with their dead neatly wrapped, for the most part in pristine white sheets, by their side. They sat there as if waiting for something big to happen, even though the big event had already occurred” (277). Upon reading this passage, I immediately thought of my cousin, who died in the quake and was also wrapped in a white sheet with an attached tag number reading 33.

Dorsinville also brings us from the chaotic airport to the diplomatic salon where she encounters the newly arrived peacekeepers from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security as they were greeted with flowers by their counterparts who were already stationed in Haiti. She tells us that they “displayed a kind of synchronicity of movement that could have been choreographed” (274). Sadly, the choreography displayed by the Chinese was probably in contrast to the disorder that is regularly found in the Port-au-Prince airport. In another frame of this montage, she acquaints with us with the shared pain

of two strangers:

“Walking in log base on afternoon, foggy from sleep deprivation, I noticed an Asian man walking deliberately toward me. I made eye contact as he approached, an unspoken question stuck in my throat. He walked with purpose, yet his face was shrouded with grief. When he reached me, he simply put his head on my shoulder. He did so in a familiar way, as if he had rested his head on my shoulder many times before; ...Existentially, we did know each other; our souls were united by sorrow” (2011: 278).

Haiti After the Quake is a must read; its contributors pinpoint overriding concerns and suggest how to build better and give Haitians the dignity they deserve. This book, while largely anecdotal, should also serve as a principled and thoughtful policy-making tool that would place health, education and food security at the pinnacle of an uncompromising agenda. Indeed, Haiti must be rebuilt better and more humane.

Patrick Sylvain is an academic, poet, writer, photographer and social critic. He teaches at Brown University’s Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and is a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University’s African and African-American Studies Department. He is working on two collections of poetry Spirit Chaser and Windows of Exile, as well as two multidisciplinary books on Haiti entitled Framing Structural Violence and Framing Discourse: Metaphors, Poetics and Representation.

Grassroots Educational Change in Mexican Public Schools

BY SANTIAGO RINCÓN-GALLARDO

MIDDLE-SCHOOL TEACHER MIGUEL Hernández, from the state of Querétaro in Mexico, is learning math. Surprisingly, his teacher is Blanca de la Cruz, a ninth-grade student from a small rural community in the state of Zacatecas, also in central Mexico. Hernández and other visiting educators from Querétaro are part of the Education Ministry's nationwide strategy to transform instructional practice in 9,000 public schools across the country.

Adults like Hernández are not only surprised to encounter middle-school students as their tutors, but also amazed by the level of confidence their young tutors demonstrate. Through their work, students like de la Cruz gain experience in learning independently as they guide others to solve math problems, interpret texts or translate English writings. Students like de la Cruz can now be counted in the thousands. Hundreds of adults like Hernández—teachers, school supervisors, educational officials, researchers, and organized members of the civil society—have been involved in similar experiences. Each has visited schools involved in an initiative called Integral Strategy for the Improvement of Educational Achievement (EIMLE).

EIMLE's origins can be traced back to the work that Gabriel Cámara (Ed.D.'72, HGSE) and his colleagues in Convivencia Educativa, A.C. (CEAC, now Redes de Tutoría, S.C.) have been promoting for several years. EIMLE seeks to radically transform teaching and learning in thousands of public middle schools through the creation of social networks whereby a new pedagogical practice is showcased, learned and disseminated. In 2004, CEAC launched the Learning Community Project (LCP), a small-scale educa-

their mastery of academic content and develop pedagogical skills to transform instructional practice in their classrooms.

Between 2004 and 2008, the core practice promoted by LCP expanded to about 60 schools through outreach and networking. The project was then adopted as a pilot by the Mexican Ministry of Basic Education and eventually expanded to about 300 schools. Recently, EIMLE adopted LCP's model with the intention of expanding its core practice to 9,000 schools across Mexico.

Powerful learning occurs when the learner's interests are matched with the capacity of the teacher.

tional initiative that aimed at transforming instructional practice in a handful of public middle schools in historically marginalized communities (small, far-off, scattered communities with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants). Volunteer teachers from eight schools in two states received the support of CEAC coaches. One week of every month, coaches worked with teachers to improve

has mastered well, and each student will choose among those topics the one he is most interested in. The students then begin individual lines of inquiry and, with the support of the teacher/tutor, build on previous knowledge through thoughtful questioning. Once a student masters a topic, she prepares a public demonstration to present what she has learned and her learning process to her peers. The student is then expected to become a tutor to other students (and even adults) interested in learning the topic she has mastered. This way, students learn both the content they study and the instructional practice as tutors. The knowledge generated here becomes the common property of all the parties involved and is made available to tutors and students in other schools.

The Learning Community Project members believe that powerful learning occurs when the learner's interests are matched with the capacity of the teacher. In practice, this belief takes the form of a basic agreement. Teachers present students with a list of topics that they have previously studied in a network of tutors. An LCP teacher will offer her students only the topics and themes she

I have been involved in LCP in different capacities for the past 11 years, first as a teacher coach and a leader of CEAC, then as a consultant to the Mexican Ministry of Education, and currently as a doctoral student. I seek to explore how and under what conditions actors on the margins of the public educational system (teachers, local leaders and a small NGO) are able to catalyze and



Above: Researchers, administrators, and teachers visiting an LCP school in Zacatecas; below: The teacher becomes a student, the student becomes a teacher.

expand educational change across the country. DRCLAS support in the form of Summer Internship Grants in the past years and, more recently, through a Summer Research Grant has allowed me to continue learning about and supporting the development of LCP.

LCP's simple yet profoundly countercultural practice is currently being showcased, learned, refined and expanded throughout Mexico. The process is fostered by the creation of social networks,

such as the one that connected Miguel and other teachers from Querétaro with LCP schools in Zacatecas. We hope you can visit us too!

Santiago Rincón Gallardo is a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a visiting scholar at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

For more information about EIMLE visit <http://logro-educativo.wordpress.com>, or contact santiago_rincon_gallardo@mail.harvard.edu



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
1730 CAMBRIDGE ST.
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

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CONTRIBUTORS

26 Gabriel Aguilera is Assistant Professor of International Security Studies at the Air War College. **54 Enrique Desmond Arias** is Associate Professor at John Jay College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. **60 Jacqueline Bhabha** is s Jeremiah Smith Jr. Lecturer at Harvard Law School. **56 Lilian Bobea** is a Professor and Researcher at FLACSO, Dominican Republic. **29 Alfredo Corchado** is the foreign correspondent for *The Dallas Morning News* based in Mexico City. **31 José Miguel Cruz** is a visiting professor at Florida International University. **45 Lucía Dammert** is the executive director of the Global Consortium for Security Transformation. **40 Ralph Espach** is an analyst and director of the Latin American Affairs Program at CNA's Center for Strategic Studies. **48 Vanda Felbab-Brown** is Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution. **63 Rafael Fernández de Castro** is Founder and Chair of the International Studies Department at the Technological Autonomous Institute of Mexico. **20 Eduardo Guerrero** is a consultant on security affairs at Lantia Consultores. **69 James N. Green** is Professor of History and Brazilian Studies at Brown University. **2 Philip B. Heymann** is the James Barr Ames Professor of Law at Harvard Law and the Harvard Kennedy School. **34 Julie López** is a freelance journalist in Guatemala who writes frequently for Plaza Pública. **15 Noel Maurer** is an associate professor at the Harvard Business School in the Business, Government, and the International Economy. **38 Jeremy McDermott** is the co-director of InSight Crime. **10 Joy Olson** is the executive director of WOLA. **6 Morris Panner** is a Senior Advisor at the Harvard Center for

International Criminal Justice. **23 Alejandro Poiré** is Mexico's Minister of Interior. **72 Santiago Rincón-Gallardo** is a visiting scholar at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. **26 Viridiana Ríos** is a doctoral fellow in Inequality and Criminal Justice at the Harvard Kennedy School. **43 Gema Santamaría** is a doctoral student in Sociology and Historical Studies at the New School for Social Research. **66 David A. Shirk** is assistant professor of Political Science and director of the Trans-Border Institute at the university of San Diego. **70 Patrick Sylvain** is a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University's African and African-American Studies Department. **12 Joseph S. Tulchin** is an Associate at Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. **51 Bernardo Weaver** is the Secretary to the Sanctions Committee for the Inter-American Development Bank.

WITH FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHY BY: **Jon Lowenstein**

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS: **Caitlin Visek**, **Stephen Ferry**, **Eilish Hansen**, **Lorne Matalon**, **Winifred Parker**, **Edu Ponce**, **Fernando Ramírez Novoa**, **Annette Santos**, **Carlos Sebastian**, **Gregg Scruggs**, **Antonio Suárez**, and **Sara Vogel**.

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