The Effects of the Mexican Drug Trade over the Past Sixty Years

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The Mexican economy purportedly boasts "solid foundations for future growth and social progress"[1] according to the Economist. Yet, following his 2012 election, the new *'Partido Revolucionario Institucional'* (PRI) President Enrique Pena Nieto declared, "despite these positive developments [...] too many Mexicans remain trapped in poverty and afflicted by high levels of violence"[2]. Under his predecessor's tenure 70,000 people were killed in drug related conflict, 30,000 have disappeared and "extortion and kidnapping are an everyday menace"[3]. In short Mexico faces a genuine threat of federal deterioration into civil conflict, under the rubric of an international 'War on Drugs'. To this end the legacy of the post-1945 drugs industry has manifested itself in proliferating criminal insurgencies, a cannibalised institutional apparatus and in the erosion of national sovereignty, with a transition from state to transnational cartel supremacy. Such a meta-narrative has led to fears of a potential "Colombianization" of state[4], presenting a direct threat to fledging Mexican democracy, and national legitimacy, in the face of proliferating "narco-enclaves"[5]. However, due to the inherent clandestine nature of the illicit narco-trade, the limited quantitative analysis of trafficking and the real-time fluidity of its developing legacy, the effects of Mexico's drug industry are difficult to holistically examine.

Embryonic narratives- fundamentally underpinned by comparative politics and international relations orientated scholarship- seems to epitomise such inherent epistemological limitations, and frame contemporary analysis strictly within entrenched americentric parameters. In reality, the socio-economic and political legacy of the drugs trade cannot be homogenised at the national level nor confined within the boundaries of the Mexican domestic polity. 'Alarmist' historiography has a tendency to ignore the genuine assimilation of narco-culture and commercial opportunities into certain sectors of society. While by no means universal, illicit-actors have traditionally occupied local vacuums in areas disenfranchised by the federal state, integrating themselves into the societal fabrics of rural communities and providing an unorthodox form of positive social justice and economic amelioration. Similarly, in affiliating the narco-contagion purely within the structural deficiencies of Mexican institutions, exogenous agencies fundamental in catalysing the detrimental effects of the drug trade are overlooked. In this context research must be extended to include the pretext of the industry as a vehicle in facilitating external interventions, rather than purely limiting observations to the organic legacy of the trade in and of itself. In this context, the proliferation of neoliberalism and the hegemonic concerns of Washington have been critical in exacerbating the violence associated with contemporary cartels. Indeed, mafia capitalism and the development of the criminal-paramilitary complex archetype is in many respects the by-product of US neo-imperialism, under the guise of securitisation and bilateral counternarcotic operations. Trafficking has therefore produced the erosion of Mexican sovereignty internally and externally.

Primarily, the 'alarmist discourse' purported by the US-dominated fields of comparative-politics argue the principle manifestation of Mexico's drug contagion has been the threat of "Colombianization": a transition from state to cartel supremacy and the "spectre of ungoverned dystopian enclave"[6] proliferation. The conflation between the state and drug traffickers has allegedly not only produced the intense violence of contemporary Mexico, but more importantly directly challenged state legitimacy by generating a "normalization of impunity",[7] and prospect of a developing "narco-democracy."[8] Javier Sicilia argues:

I don't know where the state ends and organised crime begins […] the insecurity and violence that the country is living through is the result of […] corruption that has become a cancer[9].

The aggregate Mexican drug industry has been estimated to generate between US$6.6 billion[10] to over US$30 billion[11] annually trafficking cocaine, marijuana, heroin and crystal meth into North America. In this context, Monica Serrano believes that approximately US$500 million per year is invested in bribery and the capturing of substantial elements of the state apparatus[12]. Such is the scale of the illicitly funded drug-patron monolith that in the last decade alone five national antinarcotic agencies, have been purged due to narco-infiltration.[13] The arrests of the head of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) in Mexico, the chairman of the National Institute to Combat Drugs in tandem with accusations of corruption against President Salinas, and the purported capture of nearly half of judicial police to drug money,[14] all amalgamates into a sphere of normalised impunity. Seemingly permeating every level of Mexican government, from the municipalities to the executive branch of the federal state itself, cartel profits have "eroded the capacity of the judiciary to contain lawlessness and violence."[15] With an estimated two percent conviction rate[16] and only five percent success rate of murder investigations despite the 16,000 drug related homicides between 2007 and 2010[17], the capability of Mexico's judicial institutions to maintain Webber's maxim of statehood- a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence- has undoubtedly deteriorated to the extent that, "citizens believe they cannot resolve their problems through legal channels."[18] Nor is the corruption pandemic restricted to the legal sphere as, "many powerful smugglers have been able, through corruption, to establish […] their businesses within Mexico's political system."[19] The 1994 assassinations of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, and the injection of narco-funds into political campaigns[20], seem to imply a disintegration of the Republic into a "narco-democracy": in the same fashion as its Latin American counterparts in Colombia and Bolivia[21]. The implication is that the drugs industry may "become […] more of a shadow state, the real muscle and power behind the façade of elected officials."[22] Paternostro argues, "politicians are at the service of drug traffickers" to such a degree that "they have been able to create a state within the Mexican state."[23] There is no decisive binary between *'poli-narcos'*[24] and mainstream federal authorities but a conflation of interests, much to the detriment of Mexico's sovereign legitimacy. It is perhaps hyperbolic to suggest a complete parallel with 1990s Colombia; at present there is no Mexican equivalent of FARC's 'narco-army', nor is the current homicide rate near the same level of its southern counterpart.[25] Nevertheless the spectre of further deterioration is a very real prospect, with a seemingly perpetual cannibalisation of the state apparatus and an increasing ascendency of cartel authority. To this end the effects of the contemporary drugs industry are a fundamental legitimacy deficit and the alleged proliferation of anarchy, with state institutions lacking the capacity and motivation to "enforce the law vis-a-vis society and vis-a-vis themselves."[26] In other words the foundations for the 'Colombianization' process have been installed.

However, to present such state deterioration solely as an organic effect of the drug industry is somewhat disingenuous and serves to misrepresent the historical dynamics of Mexican governance. Ben Smith argues that whilst historiography has traditionally, "treated drug trafficking and politics as broadly autonomous, self contained spheres,"[27] the twentieth century has provided substantial precedence for an inherent conflation between Mexican bureaucracy and narco-producers. By the 1920s there was already "the incestuous relationship between criminals and the state apparatus."[28] To this end, narcotic production was paradoxically an asset in providing a stable platform for federal governance, implying the fundamental nucleus translating traditional corruption into the perpetual violence of contemporary Mexico was not necessarily endogenous to the narrow parameters of the drug trade itself. Trafficking cannot therefore be defined purely as the 'Colombianizing' agent of 'alarmist discourses', but as a mechanism for relative stability- insinuating that external stimuli are perhaps responsible for fundamentally transforming such a relationship. Writing in 1995, Paternostro argued:

[…] chronic corruption within the PRI, even at the highest levels is widely accepted- even expected- by Mexicans.[29]

Throughout the development of the post-1910 Revolutionary state, the manipulation of drug industries, first through "narco-populism"[30] and later a more definitive assimilation into the centralised structure of PRI corporatism, provided the party with control over sectors of society. Such governing methodologies were of course delineated along regional contours, principally within the 'Golden Triangle' of domestic opium and marijuana production- comprising "Sinaloa, Durango and Chihuahua."[31] Smoothing over the contradictions of Cardenas' 1930s agrarian

policies in the "day to day engagements with grassroots society"[32], the narcotics industry offered radical peasants "well paid employment" and large landowners "a steady source of income."[33] It was a fundamental mechanism for local PRI officials to maintain a stable social equilibrium in the localities, particularly helping to dilute the tensions between '*latifundistas*' and ascending post revolutionary '*agraristas*'[34]. In this context the drug trade 'developed from within the power structure', under the regulation of state authorities who operated the industry as a series of franchises and protected "narco-caciques" from prosecution[35]. Even with the centralisation of the federal apparatus under the executive branch, and the strengthening of PRI hegemony through a vertical socio-political framework, there remained a 'de-facto' state monopoly over the drug trade and narco-distribution rackets.[36] A key example is the activities of the *'Direccion Federal de Seguridad'* (DFS), created in 1947 as a national intelligence and antinarcotics agency. Watt and Zepeda argue the "DFS essentially co-ordinated, and was embroiled in, the largest trafficking operations in Mexico."[37] In this sense it can therefore be claimed that the state and the narcotics industry have never been separate polar entities, but have traditionally been interconnected through corruption at all levels of governance. Such a narrative suggests that the enormous levels of violence, and the threat of structural disintegration associated with the drugs trade in contemporary Mexico, is not an organic product of industry. The edifice of *'pax PRIista'* maintained relative stability over narcotic related discord, with the revolutionary family running a "fairly stable, predictable and profitable system."[38] Criminal enterprises were treated "as cash cows, to be manipulated and exploited by political authorities",[39] with control monopolised under state organs rather than independent kingpins. To this end the drugs trade has been a staple and essential feature of the Mexican political landscape for the last century, and its conversion into a vehicle threatening Mexico's national sovereignty is therefore not necessarily an inherent effect of the industry itself so much as a mutation of its traditional relationship through the influence of other forces.

In this context, the narco-trade has exacerbated instabilities within the Mexican polity rather than unilaterally constructing them, principally aggravating those associated with the democratisation process of the late 1990s. The inherent fragility of the transition process, and the dilution of state centralisation, has produced an inversion of the PRI's elite-exploitative model, with the state apparatus being superseded by the capabilities of its narco-client base.[40] The fundamental legacy of the narco-industry is therefore not necessarily the manufacturing of contemporary violence so much as the erosion of Mexico's federal legitimacy, revealing democracy's inherent deficiencies in managing the escalating cartel crisis- in contrast to its authoritarian predecessor. Ioan Grillo argues: 'the end of 71 years of PRI rule was a […] political earthquake […] the base system of power was gone. And this was the key to Mexico breaking down.'[41]

He continues, "the *modus operandi* that had regulated the Mexican drug trade for decades was dead, opening the curtains for the coming war."[42] Any form of tacit commercial collusion, particularly within an illicit framework beyond the regulation of conventional market institutions, intrinsically relies on predictability as a main source of economic security. In this sense the PRI "Leviathan was […] a huge machine for the disbursement of patronage."[43] Federal hegemony over the drug industry restrained competition, consolidating a stable oligarchy of narco-cartels at the expense of smaller distributers and regulated violence through a broad system of monetary based clientelism. The plurality of Mexican democracy in the 1990s was, in contrast, simply "unsuited to the continuity of the old regulatory game."[44] Implicit norms and binding agreements between state agencies and criminal enterprises disintegrated under the short-termism and increasing unpredictability generated by 2000 election of Vincente Fox. Relying on electorate support, rather than the institutionalised platform of automatic succession so integral to PRI continuality, ultimately forced a reconceptualisation of "normative guidelines for political actors, state authorities and public policies."[45] Accountability and transparency started to usurp the status quo, leading to the closure of the DFS in 1985 and the purge of 1.2 million police by 2010. [46] Smith concludes:

[…] as state power splintered, the regulation of the drug trade disintegrated. As no political group held sole control, drug gangs […] came into confrontation or took advantage of the vacuum to take on previous state monopolists.[47]

The weakening of traditional corporatist ties and the loss of the system's central lynchpin- "the meta-constitutional presidency"[48]– manifested itself in a proliferation of inter-cartel security dilemmas, with disparate narco-entities circumventing and supplanting the impaired authority of the state[49]. In the words of Watt and Zepeda, as "Mexico's political system switched to a multi party democracy […] a number of cartels used the transition to empower

themselves, moving in to capture elements of the state."[50] The parallel stimuli of self-preservation in an increasingly fractured market, and the surplus of unemployed trained personnel manufactured by purging state institutions, produced an exponential rise in the illicit security industry[51]. In much the same way as the collapse of the Soviet bloc or the end of Gordillo's junta in Colombia manifested in the acquisition of the state apparatus by mafia capitalism or a corrupt oligarchy, Mexico's project of democratisation has facilitated the proliferation of criminal enclaves throughout the country and the surrounding region[52]. To this end, Diane Davis has observed that, "the […] violence increasingly perpetuated by irregular armed forces pose a direct challenge to state legitimacy and national sovereignty."[53] Criminal insurgencies and cartel ascendency were not unilateral, organic products of the drug industry but a rupturing of the pre-existing system under the impaired regulatory capacity of a democratic state. As Grillo summarises "the PRI years featured a delicate dance of corruption in the democratic years it turned to a corrupt dance of death."[54] In this context, the PRI's domination of the 2012 elections in both the legislative and executive branches, and the associated centralisation intrinsic to Nieto's "gendarmerie" policy suggests that the drug industry's ultimate legacy may well be a regression back to Mexico's authoritarian orthodoxy[55].

Furthermore, any analysis of the drug trade's effects cannot be restricted to an endogenous plane; and in this context americentric political scholarship fails to appreciate the trans-national implications of the narco-conflict. The militarised rubric of proliferating cartel monoliths and intra-state discord has provided a pretext for international intervention directed by the US: to the direct detriment of Mexican sovereignty. Securitisation, encouraged by successive presidential administrations in Washington, has artificially projected the drug industry as an existential threat, transcending the issue beyond the transparency of the public sphere and legitimating extraordinary counter-measures. As such, the 'War on Drugs' has become the new vehicle in circumventing the constitutional safeguards of the Mexican Republic, allowing the US to maintain its regional hegemony in much the same way as ideological necessity facilitated previous encroaches during the Cold War[56]. To this end the legacy of the drugs war has not only internally undermined national sovereignty, but also allowed the US to maintain its arguably neo-imperial presence in Mexico. Watt and Zepeda argue:

[…] the line between antinarcotics operations and the […] manipulating of the political economy in Mexico by its […] northern neighbour is […] blurred.[57]

Ole Waever suggested that in the process of declaring a particular subject to be a security threat it could enable "the suspension of normal politics and the use of emergency measures in responding to the perceived crisis."[58] In this context, "the drug war has repeatedly been used as a pretext for intervention" in support of maintaining US economic and geopolitical hegemony[59]. In 2006 President Calderon argued the necessity to protect "the patrimony of Mexican people […] and national security, from the trafficking of narcotics"[60], mobilising over 40,000 troops from the armed forces to spearhead the war effort.[61] In doing so the securitised narrative of counternarcotic strategy facilitated the formation of a more cohesive bilateral relationship between Mexico City and Washington. The Merida Initiative- investing US$1.6 billion between 2007 and 2010 into the production of armoured vehicles and helicopters for the Federal Police- the increasing jurisdiction of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the introduction of American controlled Predator and Global Hawk drones into Mexican airspace[62], were all mandated under the rhetoric of inter-state collaboration.[63] In reality however, the extraordinary measures sanctified under drug securitisation have essentially legalised a steady erosion of Mexican sovereignty. Mike Vigil claims, "it wasn't that long ago when there was no way the DEA could conduct the kinds of activities they are doing now […] the only way they're […] able to […] is by allowing Mexico to have plausible deniability."[64] US intervention has transcended above the normal political sphere under the guise of national security, circumventing the safeguards entrenched in the Mexican constitution and the transparency of mass political discourse.[65] Instead there has been a concerted effort between neoliberal magnates and potentates in "armouring NAFTA", much to the detriment of grass-root social stability and, in many cases, human rights.[66] Such security manipulation is not unprecedented; throughout the Cold War epoch both the US and the PRI '*nucelo duro*' militarised trafficking fears to amalgamate political and social dissent into a single homogenous bloc of criminality. The tenets of global polarisation between communism and capitalism superseded, and integrated, the narcotics trade into a greater ideological narrative, conflating the drugs war and dirty wars into a unilinear discourse. Mercille argues:

Mexico's […] counternarcotics campaigns in the countryside should have been […] described as a war against

peasants, marginalised groups […] setting a precedent for the current situation.[67]

Anti-narcotics discourse constructed "a climate of fear […] which has served to […] legitimise political violence", and been manipulated into a pretext for justifying America's politico-economic regional hegemony. A prime example can be seen in the tacit extension of Operation Condor's parameters in the 1980s. Opium cultivating targets in the rural hinterland were broadened to include socialist guerrilla insurgencies, student protesters, and peasant movements: any perceived threat to the consolidation of 'Pax-Americana'. Such strategies have simply been extrapolated into a post-Cold War epoch, with counternarcotic narratives replacing communism as the rationalising vehicle for US encouraged extraordinary security measures, including its insinuated "internal colonisation" of the Mexican polity[68] through direct coercion. In this context such machinations have fundamentally undermined the legitimacy of the central government, galvanising an increasingly popular alternative form of social justice espoused by the cartels. Michoacán's Knight Templar advertises itself as "protecting the population from the hands of the military"[69], and in 2011 a series of protests from Ciudad Juarez to Cuernavaca "denounced the government's counter-narcotics programme" accusing it of "creating a climate of instability."[70] To this end, US intervention has undermined the legal and sovereign authority of Mexico's political platform. Reports of systematic rape and torture by the federal apparatus[71] and the seemingly permanent presence of the military in the localities not only "runs against the logic and expectations of regional democratic transitions"[72] but undermines Mexican governmental independence. In this sense the pretext of the drugs industry has allowed an erosion of Mexican sovereignty from without.

Indeed, parallel to sovereign encroachments, external agencies have also been fundamental in exacerbating existing endogenous tensions – a by-product seemingly canvased over by americentric analysis- to the extent that the Mexican polity is trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of instability, without the ability to address the underlying mechanics of the conflict. The legacy of the drug industry has manifested itself in an evolution of its composite entities: a transformation of disparate trafficking organisations into multi-faceted cartel-paramilitary complexes. Such a transition has essentially been unintentionally catalysed by US machinations, locking state authorities into a strategy that seems to primarily manufacture counterproductive results.[73] Increasing military crackdowns on transnational criminal organisations, the deployment of counterinsurgency operations in Chiaspas and along the US-Mexican border, and rising inter-trafficking competition, has galvanised a professionalisation of contemporary cartel infrastructure[74]. The emergence of the 'Los Zetas' archetype in 1999- an amalgamation of American trained *'Grupo Aeromovil de Fuerzas Especiales'* (GAFE) defectors, Kaibile mercenaries and former Mexican soldiers[75]– has proved the rule rather than the exception for the industry's development. The US directed closure of the 'French Connection' in the 1970s and the development of tighter regulations over Floridian and Caribbean smuggling routes inadvertently converted Mexico into a transit state- exacerbating a diversification of mafia capitalism through a substantial increase in its monetary base and operational portfolio. Neoliberal privatisation provided cartels with a 95 percent share of America's cocaine market[76], and a strong incentive to capitalise on their profits through rapid horizontal expansion, maximising economies of scale and developing into militarised conglomerates capable of consolidating "narco-states"[77] to secure trafficking routes. Indeed such is the evolution of the industry that the "concentration of violence (is) no longer favouring the state"[78] with US securitisation policies failing to tackle the underlying structural deficiencies at the core of the narco-ascendency, but merely perpetuating the problem. Without tackling American domestic drug demand, or the "iron river"[79] of firearms flowing over the border, Washington has locked successive governments into a futile programme of conflict- with cartel infrastructure being "replaced almost as fast as it is taken down"[80]– to the detriment of the Mexican federal authority, the confidence of its citizenry, and the belief in prescribed counternarcotic multilateralism.

Moreover, in confining the effects of the drug industry purely within a national-political context, there is an inherent tendency to hyperbolise Mexico as deteriorating into a quasi-Hobbesian state of nature, without providing a truly holistic analysis of its affects. The legacy of trafficking cannot be confined purely within the political sphere; but should be extrapolated out to consider socio-economic interactions. Undoubtedly there are elements of correlating instability; alongside homicide increases net-domestic cocaine consumption has risen 375 percent from 1988 to 2002, and the economic losses produced by the drug industry are estimated at 12.3 percent of Mexico's total GDP- although such statistics are plagued with quantitative limitations[81]. Nevertheless a grass-root examination of trafficking does reveal the genuine popularity of "narcoculture"[82] in many sectors of Mexican society, and the necessity of the drugs trade in supporting rural livelihoods:

[…] drug flows may be beneficial for […] less diversified economies such as […] small […] Mexican rural communities […] drug smugglers are a critical […] source of employment, income and investments[83]

On a purely pragmatic basis the drugs trade has been intrinsic to many rural communities, providing opportunities and services otherwise absent in regions marginalised by the federal government. Indeed, the Mexican informal economy incorporated roughly 57 percent of the national workforce into its framework in 2004, the majority employed within the labour intensive narcotics industry[84]. The global proliferation of the neoliberal paradigm initiated a number of structural adjustment programmes particularly under the technocratic administration of la Madrid (1982-1988), instigating a reduction of corporatism and culminating in the trilateral ratification of 'North American Free Trade Agreement' (NAFTA) in 1994. There was essentially a reconceptualisation of the state's relationship with capital, its tenets heavily influenced by the free trade frameworks of Reaganomics and Thatcherism, and a re-orientation of the Mexican economy from the orthodox 'Import Substitution Industrialisation' model to an export centric structure.[85] The resulting income inequalities, and the loss of 2.3 million jobs from competition with heavily subsidised US agribusiness[86] underpins the totems of contemporary mafia capitalism. Rios writes, "the common denominator of all Mexican drug producing counties is poverty"[87] and quotes a reader of El Debate newspaper who states:

Sinaloa is and always has been a state where the money comes from drug traffic […] the fishing and agricultural industries are broken[88]

In this context, the drugs industry is essential in fulfilling a vacuum left by a rapidly reducing state. Knight suggests, "economic elites benefited from narco-investment, but it was for the poor for whom these benefits counted most."[89] Indeed, it is even plausible to invoke images of Hobsbawn's 'social bandit', with some cartels providing a welfare framework in place of the official state. The proliferation of "narcolimosnas", sponsored public works including high schools in Chihuahua and the maintenance of the local infrastructure[90], illustrates "plenty of beneficiaries […] collaborated […] not out of fear but […] self interest and sympathy"[91]. The drug trade is in many respects incorporated into the tapestries of local communities, manifesting itself in an array of positive, if informal, regional externalities. Knight continues:

[…] they enjoy a measure of genuine support, premised on material largesse and […] on popular identification with these […] macho […] social bandits.[92]

Narco-culture similarly adheres to the intrinsically romanticised traditions associated with Mexico's social and historical fabrics. Insurgency and revolutionary activism, the heroism of struggling against orthodoxy and the aspirations of transcending poverty, are themes that have resonated since national Independence in 1821 and the Revolution of 1910. They have been assimilated into the "narco-persona", extrapolating the templates of rebel iconography typified by Pancho Villa and Gregorio Cortez[93] into a contemporary context. Edberg suggests it "offers (a) […] construction of […] a meaningful identity for those in marginalised social categories."[94] Nor is such a phenomenon limited to the Mexican rural hinterland; over the last half century there has been a steady diffusion of the narco-brand into core metropolitan centres, including Mexico City[95]. The development of a thriving narco-cinematic industry in the 1980s, the international dissemination of narco-corridos to the Hispanic diaspora, and the construction of a quasi-narco theology illustrate the genuine popularity 'El Narco' stimulates in the public sphere. The shrines to 'Jesus Malverde' and 'Santa Muerte' have been integrated into the lives of disenfranchised or alienated communities, seemingly answering "the gripe of modern poverty, promising help in everyday struggle"[96]. Undoubtedly such mediums are exploited by the cartels in a superficial attempt to generate their own brand of legitimacy, but as Knight summarises, "the fact that the myth is exploited by […] narco-traffickers and […] corporations only supports the vital existence of the myth itself: if it did not have popular power, it could not be exploited."[97] In the majority of cases mafia capitalism has undoubtedly manifested itself more as a realisation of Blok's 'Sicilian Mafiosi'[98]– daily abductions, murder and extortion are after all daily occurrences. But there is nevertheless a hyperbolic tendency in americentric scholarship to depict Mexico as disintegrating into anarchy. Such a discourse fails to understand the albeit heterogeneous local effects of the drug trade, and how in some cases the industry has provided the welfare framework in a vacuum ignored by the neoliberal paradigm and the Mexican federal government.

To conclude the industry has undoubtedly manufactured a steady deterioration of the federal state, underpinning fears over the spectre of potential "Colombianization" and the proliferation of cartel ascendancy. However such an alarmist discourse suffers a number of limitations in aptly analysing the overall legacy of the drugs trade: conflating heterogeneous local effects with political issues at the national level. It seemingly projects the instability of Mexico as an organic product of trafficking; when in reality endogenous tensions have several stimuli- most of which have been exacerbated rather than unilaterally constructed by the trade itself. Nor should analysis be limited to within the Mexican polity as "it has been the powerful who have set the agenda on the alarmist discourse […] for their own advantage"[99]– a dimension contemporary scholarship increasingly overlooks in analysing the effects of the drug trade. The pretext as much as the actual physical consolidation of cartel infrastructure has been critical in eroding national sovereignty internally and externally- fundamentally challenging Mexico's fledgling democracy.

Footnotes

[1] *The Economist*, "Mexico's Moment", 'The World in 2013', November 2013, p. 66.

[2] Ibid.

[3] *The Economist*, "Working through a Reform Agenda", Vol. 407, No. 8830 (April, 2013), p. 50.

[4] Ted Carpenter, 'Mexico is Becoming the Next Colombia', *Cato Institution: Foreign Policy Briefing*, No. 87 (2005), p 1.

[5] John Sullivan, 'From Drug Wars to Criminal Insurgency: Mexican Cartels, Criminal Enclaves and Criminal Insurgency in Mexico and Central America, and their Implications for Global Security', *Vortex Working Paper,* No. 6 (2012), p. 30.

[6] Sullivan, 'From Drug Wars to Criminal Insurgency', p. 30.

[7] Monica Serrano, 'States of Violence: State Crime Relations in Mexico' in Wil G Pansers (ed),*Violence, Coercion and State Making: The Other Half of the Centaur,* (Stanford, 2012), p. 48.

[8] Silvana Paternostro, 'Mexico as a Narco-democracy', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 1. (1995), p. 41.

[9] Stephen Morris, 'Corruption, Drug Trafficking, and Violence in Mexico' *The Brown Journal of World Affairs,* Vol 18, No. 11 (2012), p. 29.

[10] Patrick Keefe, "Cocaine Incorporated", *The New York Times: Magazine,* 15 June, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/magazine/how-a-mexican-drug-cartel-makes-its-billions.html?pagewanted=all> (Accessed 29 March 2013).

[11] Ioan Grillo, *El Narco: The Bloody Rise of Mexican Drug Cartels,* (London, 2011), p. 7.

[12] Serrano, 'States of Violence: State Crime Relations in Mexico', p. 140.

[13] Ibid, p. 141.

[14] Serrano, 'States of Violence: State Crime Relations in Mexico' p. 143.

[15] Ibid, p. 148.

[16] 'Mexico's Drug War', 'Our World', BBC. 23 April 2010. Date viewed: 21 March 2013.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid, p. 41.

[22] Grillo, *El Narco*, p. 272.

[23] Paternostro, 'Mexico as a Narco-democracy', p. 43.

[24] Ibid, p. 41.

[25] Mauricio Cardenas and Kevin Casas-Zamora, "The Colombianization of Mexico", *Brookings Institution,* 21 September, 2010. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2010/09/21-colombia-mexico-cardenas-casaszamora> (Accessed 26 April 2013).

[26] Morris, 'Corruption, Drug Trafficking, and Violence in Mexico', p. 39.

[27] Benjamin Smith, 'The rise and fall of narco-populism: Drugs, politics, and society in Sinaloa, 1930-1980', Unpublished (2013), p. 2.

[28] Alan Knight, 'Narco-Violence and the State in Modern Mexico' in Wil G Pansers (ed),*Violence, Coercion and State Making: The Other Half of the Centaur,* (Stanford, 2012), p. 120.

[29] Paternostro, 'Mexico as a Narco-democracy', p. 42.

[30] Smith, 'The rise and fall of narco-populism', p. 5.

[31] Knight, 'Narco-Violence and the State in Modern Mexico', p. 143.

[32] Smith, 'The rise and fall of narco-populism', p. 4.

[33] Ibid, p. 4.

[34] Ibid, p. 7.

[35] Ibid, p. 15.

[36] Peter Watt and Roberto Zepeda, *Drug War Mexico: Politics, Neoliberalism and Violence in the New Narcoeconomy,* (London, 2012), p. 26.

[37] Ibid, p. 30.

[38] Knight, 'Narco-Violence and the State in Modern Mexico', p. 124.

[39] Ibid, p. 125.

[40] Grillo, *El Narco*, p. 10.

[41] Ibid, p. 91.

[42] Grillo, *El Narco*, p. 99.

[43] Knight, 'Narco-Violence and the State in Modern Mexico', p. 130.

[44] Serrano, 'States of Violence: State Crime Relations in Mexico', p. 142.

[45] Kees Kooning, 'New Violence, Insecurity and the State' in Wil G Pansers (ed),*Violence, Coercion and State Making: The Other Half of the Centaur,* (Stanford, 2012), p. 272.

[46] Morris, 'Corruption, Drug Trafficking, and Violence in Mexico', p. 37.

[47] Smith, 'The Rise and Fall of Naro-Populism', p. 25.

[48] Knight, 'Narco-Violence and the State in Modern Mexico', p. 129.

[49] Ibid, p. 143.

[50] Watt and Zepeda, *Drug War Mexico,* p. 8.

[51] Serrano, 'States of Violence: State Crime Relations in Mexico', p. 146.

[52] Grillo, *El Narco*, p. 209.

[53] Sullivan, 'From Drug Wars to Criminal Insurgency', p. 31.

[54] Grillo, *El Narco*, p. 104.

[55] The Economist, "Working through a Reform Agenda", p. 50.

[56] Watt and Zepeda, *Drug War Mexico.*

[57] Ibid, p. 20.

[58] Matt McDonald, 'Constructivisms' in Paul D Williams (ed), *Security Studies: An Introduction,* (New York, 2013), p. 72.

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