

The Hunger Games in Mexico. The havoc of crime within the framework of structural violence

Jesús Acevedo Alemán
César Arnulfo de León Alvarado
Irán Barrera

semblance Acevedo Alemán is a professor at the School of Social Work at the Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila.

De León Alvarado is a professor at the School of Social Work at the Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila.

Irán Barrera has a PhD in Social Work from the University of Texas at Arlington: Arlington, Texas. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico); a Master's in Social Work, Concentrations in Children, Families and Youth and School Social Work (PPSC), California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, California; BA, majoring in Psychology from California State University, Long Beach Long Beach, California. Fresno State Social Work Department. Associate Professor: Graduate practice courses; University of Texas–Pan American, Social Work Department, Edinburg, Texas, Assistant Professor.

Abstract

Like the novel [The Hunger Games](#) by Suzanne Collins, which tells an epic adventure of a post-apocalyptic country in which its characters must fight to the death, while they are watched on national television, in Mexico this macabre game has moved out of the realm of science fiction and books and materialized in every corner of our country. Upon reflecting on the subject of the havoc of crime this analogy comes to mind. Nowadays Mexicans, when leaving home, must compete, not so much for finding conditions of well being, but of survival. The presence of a violent culture, added to the increase and diversification of criminal activity produces a scene straight from the imagination of Leigh Whannell, author of the series *Saw* or better known as *The Game of Fear*, in which "Jigsaw", the architect of evil, more than killing his victims, traps them in situations he calls "games" or "tests" in order to test his victims' will to live, faced by all kinds of physical and psychological torture.

To venture into the havoc of crime, it is necessary to understand the conditions which exist in our context, especially to try to identify the adverse social architecture, or, the scenarios in which we have been trapped and which challenge us to prove our will to live. In this sense, the present essay points to the reflection of so called *structural violence*. In reality this is not a "macabre game" or "Hunger Games" but a crucial component for understanding the violent dynamics of our country. The referential frameworks which provide the structural conditions make it possible to produce a macro vision of the various variables which come together in the violent dynamics of subjects, and the way in which these detonate accelerated increases in episodes of extreme hostility, presented by criminal, violent activity of organized crime, which directly affects the most vulnerable, such as children and young people.



Introduction

Identifying violent culture

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2003) defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation." Said definition is broadened by Amemiya, Oliveros and Barrientos (2009), who add that "today violence represents a daily component in our lives, reflected at all social, economic and cultural levels and especially in family dynamics and schools." Oliveros, Figueroa, Mayorga, Cano and Barrientos (2008) also acknowledge that this violence has been hidden, negated and silenced for many years by educators and authorities, but avoiding and suppressing this violence has only made things worse, making it necessary to face the problem firmly and treating its whole magnitude and evolution.

That is why that when speaking of violence, precisely due to its magnitude and evolution, two closely related perspectives must be confronted, *indirect violence* and *direct violence* (Arrelano, 2007). The former relates to practices of indifference to violent acts or not denouncing them, has an impersonal nature and represents great apathy. The latter has a personal nature, face to face, and is when physical force or words are used as a means of settling frustration and differences, being visible in various ways, as can be on the corporal, psychological or moral level, also expressed against objects and the environment.

Within this order of ideas, Barbeito and Caireta (2005) state that direct violence taken in the same way, as an attitude of behavior which is a violation or privation of something which is essential to a person, such as his physical, psychic or moral integrity, his rights and freedom.

Other authors such as Rodríguez and Palomero (2001) coincide in affirming that violence is indirect or structural and therefore, incorporated into the social-economic system, showing up in social injustice, such as the case of the existence of the difference in the distribution of income, along with marginality, illiteracy, lack of welfare medical services and difficulty in climbing the socio-economic ladder for a large percentage of the population. On the same note, Arellano (2007) points out that it is necessary to consider violence to be the cause of the difference between what people could be, but aren't; between what is true now and what is possible in the future, with respect to a minimally human life.

In the face of these reflections, Luciano, Marín and Yuli (2008) conclude that violence is not an unequivocal concept nor does it designate a sole phenomenon, but rather it involves the existence of *multiple violences* with implications at the individual, family, institution and social level, which act by moderating or maximizing their manifestations. Bringuiotti (2000) suggests that while there are historic and cultural forms which characterize violence in our times, its practice is a product of specific configurations of different scenarios. Along these same lines Arellano (2007) points out that for example, within today's educational context is where so called

school violence has increased, this being understood as all situations of physical, verbal and emotional aggression by students, teachers and the institution itself, which in turn, is immersed in a society which has violent expressions, expressed by different channels and modalities depending on the relationship (political, institutional, communicational and personal) (Alegre, 2004). All of this together makes up the so called *culture of violence* which is displayed differently depending on the social context and its actors, reflected in a special way within the context of schools with various practices of aggression which include bullying and any other form of intimidation or coercion between schoolmates (Acevedo, 2013; 2015); Luciano, Marín and Yuli, 2008).

According to Acevedo (2015), in order to understand this culture of violence different theoretical models must be designed, as well as appropriate instruments for measuring, which would broaden the variables and measurements. Magenzo and Tchimino (2010), in this sense, suggest that different approaches must be used rather than the concept of violence, and that this may be achieved by using an *ecological approach or model* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), in which the relationship between individual and contextual factors is explored, and which analyzes violence as a product(s) of many levels of influence on behavior. The authors themselves point out that individual type levels must be identified as biological factors and the result of an individual history which influences the behavior of one person. At the level of social relationships (friends, partners, members of the family) the risk of becoming victims or aggressors must

be analyzed. On the other hand, at the collective level, the contexts of the community in which social relations take place, such as school, the workplace and the neighborhood must be examined. This approach makes it possible to identify the characteristics of this environment which are associated with being a victim or aggressor. Finally on the social level the social factors which most frequently determine the high levels of violence must be examined.

This ecological vision has inspired authors like Acevedo (2015), who acknowledges that violent culture begets subjects with ethical-moral formation plagued with anti-values, understood to be behavior which damages and threatens life itself or the integrity of others, representing those individuals who are notorious for having a profile high in Negative Social Activators (NSA), generated by situations lived in adverse family environs,¹ hostile educational scenarios² or precarious urban

¹ Family disintegration (problems of couples, indifference), dispersion of family members, lack of attention to children of the family, teaching of anti-values, educational methods based on permissiveness, socio-economic difficulties (unemployment, insufficient salaries), family unity with moral fragility (increase in necessary divorces and separations) and the presence of practices of punishment/abuse of children.

² Loss of credibility in authority figures (teachers, government workers), discipline problems (teacher-student, student administration conflict), teaching of anti-values, vandalism and damage to school property, institutional inability (they are not capable of attending to the problems derived from school violence) and abuse between classmates and peers (bullying) (physical, verbal, psychological, social, sexual harassment).

contexts or prone to violence.³ These features are begotten within hostile environs which may be the home, the educational scenario or urban contexts. Above all they are the result of living in violent societies or societies of extreme social hostility, which day after day envelope the most vulnerable subjects, such as children and young people who are then trapped within the new macabre game, which is ever more violent and with perverse dimensions which convert them into direct victims of the new representations of crime and ever more hostile structural violence.

³ Presence of an antisocial culture (hit men instead of military officers are admired; dishonesty and impunity instead of honesty and rectitude are idolized), living conditions with no or insufficient public services (street lights, sewage systems, streets and good roads), absence of qualified policemen, a chaotic world (social psychosis and paranoia, catastrophism, social plunder, challenges in the face of climate change, natural disasters), increase of delinquency (robberies, kidnappings, damaged property), the presence of organized crime with evermore "qualified" cells (paramilitary or guerilla preparation with better weapons and top of the line arsenals), evermore bloody armed confrontations between military forces and criminal groups with collateral damages (deaths of civilians and harm to citizens), institutional crises (loss of credibility in social institutions, such as the church, institutions of social security), corrupt civil society (civil society has not been able to influence the design and instrumentation of alternative actions in the face of real problems, they have become political escapes or figures of unilateral interest), lack of job security (unemployment, insufficient salaries, precarious jobs), presence of individualistic culture (centered on the wellbeing of one, far from the group or community vision of collaboration or concern for other's problems), an increase in excesses (drug consumption, alcoholism, gambling, lewd entertainment) and media circuses (based on entertainment without thematic content).

Development

The new rules of the macabre game.

Identifying structural violence

It is well known that talking about violence has caused various controversies throughout history, ranging from semantic-conceptual matters to theoretical-methodological issues. The truth is that there is no one term which really does justice to the various representations in which violence materializes in society. What we can mention is that, based on scientific consensus, we cannot talk about violence, but rather "violences," referring precisely to its multiple representation, reaches, faces, actors, magnitudes, among other aspects. Said mutable conditions, or evolution, result in recognizing that the rules or conditions by means of which violent culture may be generated, may change. This phenomenon may be expressed in traditional or classic forms such as domestic violence, abuse/punishment of children, or violence in educational contexts (bullying). Then there are contemporary forms of violence such as cyber-harassment of children and adolescents, mobbing in work contexts or burnout, perverse violence, of structural violence—the latter stands out as new faces given to extreme hostility—, typologies which together give witness to the evolution of the violent phenomenon itself (Acevedo, 2015).

In particular, it may be said that the macro scenario in which various manifestations of violence may take place, so-called structural violence, is the term applicable to those situations in which damage to basic human needs (survival, well-being, identity or freedom) take place

as the result of processes of social stratification, that is to say, without the need for the existence of direct violence. In the same way, the term refers to a conflict between two or more groups of society, characterized in terms of gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, age and other aspects, in the distribution, access or possibility to use resources. In the same way, the term has allowed for illustrating the existence of other kinds of conflict such as those derived from the presence of extreme hostility: criminal culture, organized crime, terrorism, among other social practices which bring about social instability (Tortosa and La Parra, 2003).

The faces of structural violence

Structural adjustments, as well as social answers which emerge in Mexico and the world as a result of social inequality, are key elements which intervene in the analysis of structural violence. Poulantzas (1978) notes that various countries in the world are unable to socially and politically negotiate with sectors of the population who have mobilized. They have had to enact growing measures of violence and control which have resulted in the subtle but aggressive presence of coercion of the subjects, this being a kind of "legal" violence used to keep order and social peace.⁴

⁴ As an example, we can point out the Educational Reform in the country during President Peña Nieto's government which strengthens the role of education in reducing social inequalities, with the promise of being inclusive and spending more in the poorest areas of the country, based on the promise to guarantee free secular, obligatory ed-

The application of force by the State is inherent in the application of policies of austerity,⁵ accompanied by economic markets which display unconformities among citizens, giving privileges to small sectors of the population, which brings on growing resistance from these sectors along with other minority segments which have historically been segregated and excluded. Sánchez (2005) indicated that the paradoxical consequence of the structural reforms most of the time detonates the use of force by regimes, as a way of keeping "democratic order" in the face of the application of unpopular political measures of fiscal adjustments and austerity. In other words, "democratic" States exert violence as a way to keep political control and maintain stability, in contradiction to their own ideology of democracy and human rights and as a last resort, subordinating their legitimacy.

ucation. This law has resulted in demonstrations and strikes by the educational sector in various regions of the country.

⁵ For example, the newspaper *El Heraldo* (2014) presented the situation faced by Venezuela, where unpopular economic measures of President Nicolás Maduro have created a vicious circle in which economic structural adjustments have caused more inequality, exclusion, poverty and alienation which in turn brings about growing criminal and radical violence, which in turn has led to the formation of a militarized elite which confronts a hostile coalition made up not only of the unemployed or urban impoverished, but also of middle class technicians, managers and professionals which are the sectors who have watched their levels of living deteriorate, eroded by the devaluation of their incomes and accompanied by a decrease in their purchasing power.

These expressions of violence, or urban violence, result in growing inequality and social exclusion, and the persistence of poverty. These phenomena are the result of imposing neo-liberal economic policies, and according to Sánchez (2005) may be identified as two types of violence: one political and the other criminal. That is to say, as far as the urgency of circumstances faced by middle sectors and workers grows, many of them take on radical violence which brings about repeated strikes, demonstrations and insurrection throughout the region. Simultaneously, the situation of the poor and the young has deteriorated and many of them join bands of young people, criminal mafias, drug-trafficking cartels.

In this sense, it is true that the new protagonists of extreme hostility within this violent panorama are without a doubt, organized crime in Mexico and its various regions (Gutiérrez and collaborators, 2010). According to the *Semanario Zeta de Tijuana* (Zeta Weekly of Tijuana) (2012), the violence of drug trafficking increased between 2006 and 2012 to 83,191 deaths related to organized crime, figures which bear witness to the presence of organized groups of cells which are better and better "qualified," who have paramilitary or guerilla training with improved weapons and top of the line arsenals, people with hostile personalities and the presence of anti-values (Acevedo, 2013).

In the face of this essence, and despite the efforts of the federal government⁶ to

combat it, criminal groups and associations have grown and permeated various corners of the social framework, producing ever more violent profiles, with inhumane practices of cruelty to human beings and histories full of criminal activities from ever earlier ages. Criminal cells which due to their direct armed confrontations with other criminal groups and military forces have left rivers of blood and uncountable collateral damage (civilian deaths and harm to citizens). Kaldor (2004), in this sense, acknowledges that drug trafficking represents the main activity of organized crime in the world and is facilitated by two tendencies, one socio-cultural and the other economic, indicating that due to the expansion of alternative culture through the mass media, and the opening of borders which is the result of the expansion of free trade, and is the way in which all of these criminal practices have been strengthened.

Chronicle of criminal groups in Mexico

To talk about the origin of cartels in Mexico and their criminal practices would mean telling the evolution of our society itself. In this respect, Astorga (2005) proposes the origin of Mexican cartels began with the consolidation of the market for the use of marijuana and heroin in the United States after WWII. As a result the State of Sinaloa rose to the occasion, with the highest rate of production of both drugs, producing a symbiosis among drug traffickers, politics and commercial

⁶ Through arrests of members of organized crime such as: Gulf/Zetas, Pacífico, Beltrán Leyva, Are-

llano Félix, Milenio and the Familia Michoacana, among others.

and entrepreneurial activities. In this respect Tello (1997) tells how, between the 50s and 90s of the XX century a transition took place in the tolerance of the control, and since the 70s there has been moderate growth in bi-national cooperation between Mexico and the United States, with a moment of crisis in this cooperation being the murder of Enrique Camarena, an agent of the *Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)* in Guadalajara in 1985 and again in 1997 in the case of corruption of General Gutiérrez Rebollo, who opened up suspicion of ties of the armed forces with organized criminals.

In other words, drug trafficking becomes globalized due to the transnational relation among production, commerce and use (Stephen, 1995). As a result, in Mexico there are seven large drug trafficking cartels, the most important in Sinaloa led by "El Chapo" Guzmán —recently recaptured by federal forces— (Astorga, 2009), considered by *Forbes Magazine* to be one of the richest and most powerful men in the world, with an estimated fortune of one billion dollars, ranking 41st on the list of the world's most powerful men (*Forbes*, 2009).

In second place in order of importance is the Cartel del Golfo (Gulf Cartel), which at first made armies of hitmen, the Zetas, to wage war on the Cartel of Sinaloa. The forces were made up of Mexican military and Guatemalan Kaibiles at the beginning of the first decade of the XXI century. The third most important, established in Tijuana, Baja California, is the Familia of Arrelano Feliz, which controlled the exportation of marijuana, cocaine and heroin to the major world markets, in the

state of California. The fourth criminal organization, the Cartel del Milenio, or Cartel of Ciudad Juárez, headed by "el señor de los cielos" (the lord of the skies), Amado Carrillo, exported cocaine to the United States in low flying airplanes over the border in the desert where there was no radar. These four cartels had accumulated great power and shared the territory at the end of the 90s (Blancornelas, 2002).

At the beginning of the XXI century the two largest cartels divided: Sinaloa and Golfo Cartels. Competitors appear in their midst and a war for territories, shipment and connections begins with Colombian suppliers and the exporters to the United States. A fifth organization appears: the Beltán Leyva Cartel in Sinaloa, which expanded into the state of Jalisco. On the Gulf Coast, the Zetas split off from the Cartel del Golfo and declare war to the death, this becoming the sixth mafia linked to drug trafficking. To this must be added the birth of a new organization, the seventh, the Familia Michoacana, which opens a new vein of drug trafficking, trafficking pseudoephedrine, the raw material for its production coming from China to the Pacific ports. These seven powerful mafias dominate the sale of cocaine, heroin and ephedrine in over 300 cities in the United States, and battles between them has raised the number of homicides in Mexico to previously unheard of levels (Aguilar and Castañeda, 2009; Villalobos, 2010).

Due to the consolidation of criminal activity in Mexico, in the first decade of the XXI Century, relations between Colombian and Mexican cartels are strengthened,

the latter dominating. According to Bagley (2009), said consolidation takes place because Mexican territory was the ideal space for introducing drugs into the United States, as well as carrying out trafficking of arms, this situation proving to be a threat to national security (*National Survey on Housing, 2009*).

Impacts of the macabre game

In the year 2000 throughout the world 71,365,270 crimes were committed. Mexico held the sixteenth place in this list. Gutierrez and colls. (2010) says that of the total crimes committed in the country 12.09% are considered to be violence, crimes like murder, rape, intentional injuries, robberies with violence and kidnappings. In this sense, according to the federal government, in 2010 22,701 homicides were reported and the magazine *Proceso* (2012) reported that violence in Mexico had been occurring for at least five years at this high rate, pointing out that up to September 2011 the government acknowledged 47,515 homicides related to the conflict.

Moreover, the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI, 2010) reported for the period 2004-2009, 200,000 people processed per year for some crime, either common crimes or federal crimes. The same organism indicated that in 2009 the five most common crimes were: robbery with 66,489 cases; assault and battery with 29,796; damage of other's property with 13,282 cases; manslaughter with 6,264 case and criminal acts with weapons 4,933 cases. In this same order of ideas, for 2010, the federal government held 81,128 criminals associated with crimes against



Foto: Marlon Flores

public health, criminals who belonged to various criminal organizations; it also arrested 34,350 people with no affiliation to any organization, making a total of 115,478 people detained for crimes against public health.

Over the past years, insecurity in Mexico has not improved entirely. At the national level the incidence of crime, according to the latest *National Survey on Victimization and the Perception of Public Safety* (ENVIPE, 2015),⁷ it was estimated that there were 22,800,000⁸ victims⁹ 18 and over, which represented a rate of 28,200 victims for every 100,000 inhabitants during 2014, a figure statistically equivalent to the estimate for 2013 (Graph 1).

The same study shows that the rate of criminal prevalence for every 100,000 inhabitants in 2014 was 28,200, being sim-

ilar to 2013, when 28,224 cases were reported; while the rate of criminal incidence per every 100,000 inhabitants in 2014 was 41,655, being similar to the levels for 2013 with a rate of 41,563: Extortion represented the second most frequent crime with 23.6% of the total of crimes which took place during 2014. The unrecorded crime rate was 92.8% at the national level during 2014 and 93.8% during 2013 (ENVIPE, 2015).

ENVIPE estimated that the main reasons that lead victims to not denounce a crime are circumstances attributable to authorities, as 32.2% consider denouncing to be a waste of time and 16.8% because they distrust authorities. The perception of insecurity in the states at the time the survey was taken (March-April 2015) was 73.2% of the population over 18 years of age, levels similar to those of 2014 (Table 1).

The same survey shows that during 2014 33,700,000 crimes¹⁰ took place associated with 22,800,000 victims, which represented a rate of 1.5 crimes per victim (the same as the estimate for 2013) (Graph 2); while at the national level 102,883 kidnappings of a member of a household with 99,747 victims during 2014, making the rate of 41,655 crimes per one hundred thousand inhabitants during 2014. The three main crimes that stand out for 2014 at the state level are

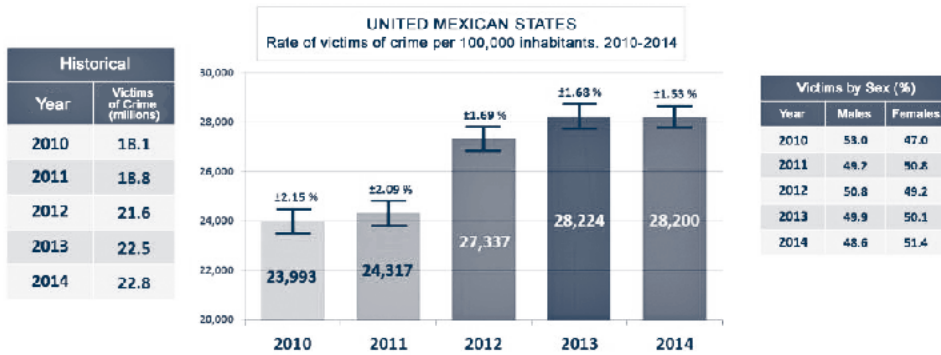
⁷ The *National Survey on Victimization and the Perception of Public Safety* (ENVIPE, 2015) gives information related to the level of victimization and crime, denouncing of crime, characteristics of victims of crime, the crimes and damages caused, perception of insecurity, institutional performance and characterization of domestic crimes, among other information.

⁸ In the ENVIPE 2014 with year of reference being 2013, this figure represented 22,500,000 victims.

⁹ The ENVIPE measures crimes which directly affect victims or households, such as: car theft, partial car theft, burglary of a home, robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation, robbery other than the previously listed (such as pick-pocketing, forced entry, cattle theft and other kinds of robberies), fraud, extortion, verbal and physical threats, injury and other crimes (such as kidnapping, sex crimes and others). Note: Indicator IVV.1.2 "Rates of Victimization" of the National Plan for Development 2013-2018.

¹⁰ ENVIPE 2015 measures the most representative state crimes. Crimes such as organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal possession of arms exclusive to the Armed Forces, trafficking undocumented workers, among others which are not possible to measure in a survey of victimization such as the ENVIPE.

Graph 1 Rate of victims of crime



Fuente: ENVIPE (2015).

Table 1 MAIN RESULTS OF THE ENVIPE 2015

Households with at least one victim of crime in 2014	Absolute	10,800,000
	Percentage of homes	33.2
Victimization in 2014 (18 years and older)	Absolute	22.8 millones
	Rate (per 100,000)	28,200
Crimes in 2014 (18 years and older)	Absolute	33.7 millones
	Rate (per 100,000)	41,655
Dark number (crimes for which preliminary investigations were not undertaken)	Percentage	92.8
PPerception of Insecurity between March and April, 2015 (% of population 18 and over who perceived insecurity in their state)	Percentage	73.2
Estimated national cost as a consequence of Insecurity and crime in 2014		226,700,000,000 Pesos (1.27% of PIB)

Source: ENVIPE (2015)

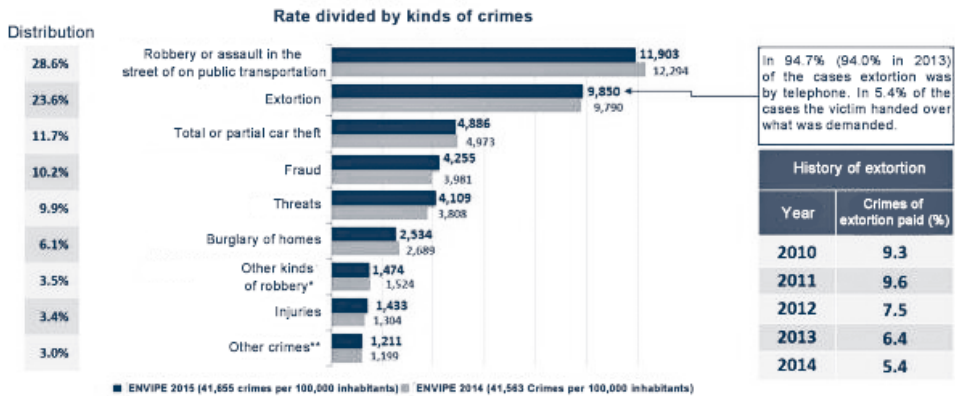
robbery or assault in the street or on public transportation, extortion and fraud (Table 2) (ENVIPE, 2015).

With respect to the main concerns of the population, ENVIPE 2015 estimates that at the national level 58% of the population over 18 years of age think that

insecurity and crime are the most important problems today in their state, followed by unemployment for 44.1% and increase in prices for 33.2% (Graph 3).

Finally with respect to changes of behavior and social cohesion at the national level, the daily activities which the

Graph 2 INCIDENCE OF CRIME—TYPES OF CRIME



* Refers to crimes other than robbery or assault in the street or on public transportation, total or partial car theft and burglary of homes.

**Includes crimes such as kidnapping and express kidnapping, sex crime and other crimes.

Source ENVIPE (2015)

Table 2 INCIDENCE OF CRIME

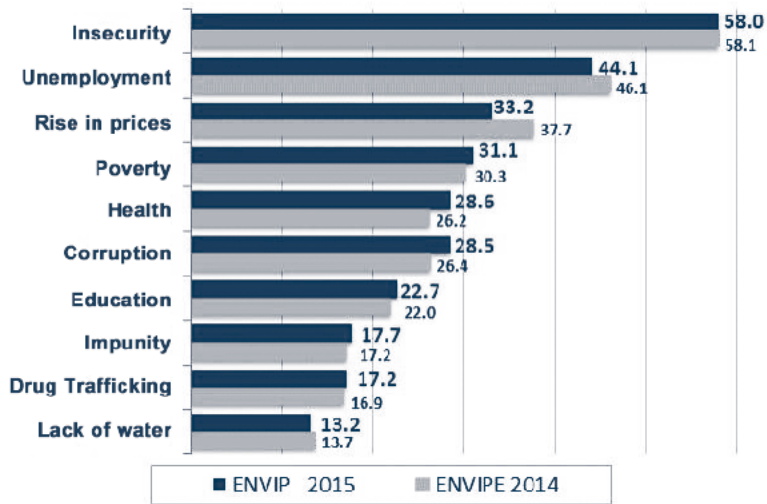
Entity	Most frequent	2 nd most frequent	3 rd most frequent
NATIONAL	Robbery or assault on the street or on transportation	Extortion	Fraud
Aguascalientes	Partial car theft	Extortion	Threats
Baja California	Extortion	Partial car theft	Burglary of homes
Baja California	Fraud	Partial car theft	Extortion
Campeche	Extortion	Threats	Fraud
Coahuila	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Partial car theft	Fraud
Colima	Extortion	Threats	Fraud
Chiapas	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Threats
Chihuahua	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Partial car theft
Federal District	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Extortion	Fraud
Durango	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Partial car theft
Guanajuato	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Extortion	Partial car theft
Guerrero	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Fraud

Table 2 INCIDENCE OF CRIME (continuación)

Entity	Most frequent	2 nd most frequent	3 rd most frequent
Hidalgo	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Fraud
Jalisco	Extortion	Partial car theft	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation
State of Mexico	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Extortion	Threats
Michoacan	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Partial car theft
Morelos	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Threats
Nayarit	Extortion	Threats	Partial car theft
Nuevo León	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Partial car theft	Extortion
Oaxaca	Threats	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Extortion
Puebla	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Partial car theft
Querétaro	Extortion	Fraud	Partial car theft
Quintana Roo	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Fraud
San Luis Potosí	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Other crimes
Sinaloa	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Fraud
Sonora	Other forms of crime	Partial car theft	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation
Tabasco	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Extortion	Other forms of crime
Tamaulipas	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Threats
Tlaxcala	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Threats
Veracruz	Extortion	Robbery or assault on the street or on public transportation	Fraud
Yucatán	Extortion	Other kinds of crime	Fraud
Zacatecas	Extortion	Threats	Partial car theft

Source: ENVIPE (2015)

Graph 3 CONCERN FOR PUBLIC SECURITY



Fuente: ENVIPE (2015).

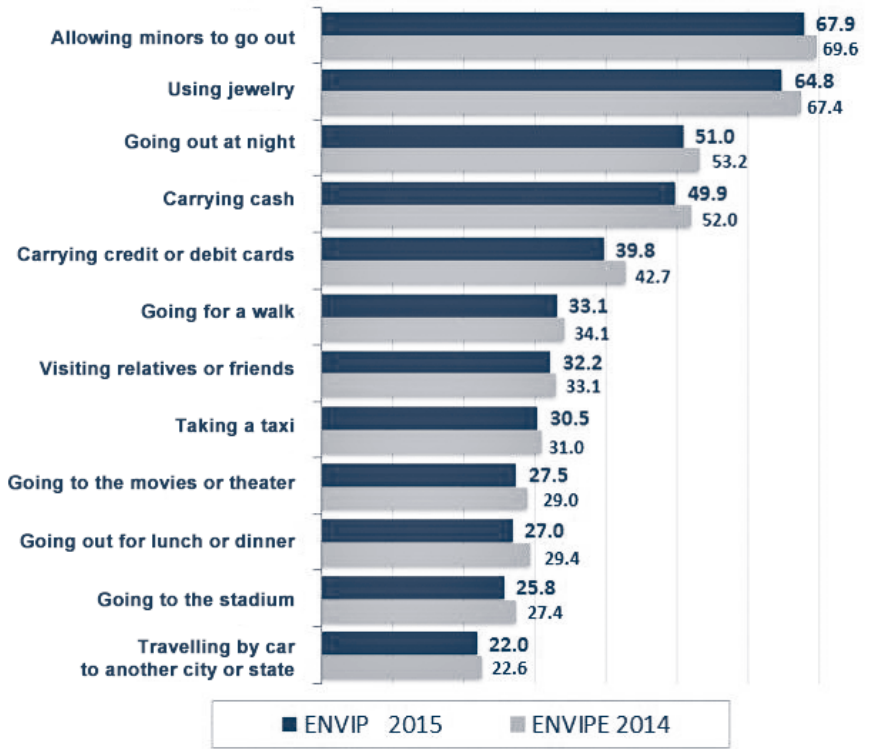
population over 18 years of age stopped carrying out in 2014 were allowing young children to leave the house and use jewelry, with 67.9% and 64.8%, respectively (Graph 4). The population 18 years and older said that there was a problem in their community and they were unable to agree on a solution. The most common problem in their communities was robbery, with 54% of the population telling of its existence. However, of these 54.3%, only in 29.6% of the cases were they able to agree on a solution (Graph 5).

On the other hand, in the light of these results, the Center for Investigation for Development (CIDAC, 2015) indicates that the last two years have been the most severe, adding that the policy for combating violence headed by the Mexican State has acknowledged organized crime to be the main axis of violence. In other words, children and young people are exposed to

increased crime in all its dimensions (robbery, kidnapping, damage to other's property, among others), within the framework of an extremely hostile and violent culture. Their only scenario for work and growing up is everything related to criminal activity, such as robberies, kidnappings for the extortion of large sums of money, hired murder, robbing cars and in general subjugation which has become the big business, along with security and protection services to protect wealthy people from threats.

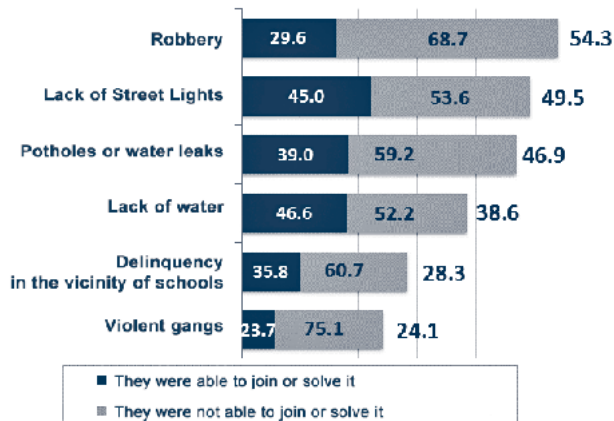
Therefore, it is impossible at this time, according to Kooninngs and Kruijt (2004), to determine the precise dimensions of today's situation with respect to illegality and crime. What is true and important to point out is that activities connected to the production and distribution of drugs, as well as arms trafficking, interact dynamically, increasing violence and

Graph 4 CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR



Source: ENVIPE (2015)

Graph 5 SOCIAL COHESION



Note 1: The interviewee may have given more than one answer.

Note 2: For every problem the option "not specified whether they were able to join or solve it" is excluded.

Source: ENVIPE (2015)

insecurity in various scenarios of social life. Private groups move in worlds between formality and informality, as well as legality and illegality, thus constituting new nexus of power in Latin America.

My Epilogue

Besides common robbery, kidnappings, assaults and car theft and the other practices mentioned earlier, a new form known as "sicariato" has been institutionalized. The name is derived from the Latin "sicarios", which in ancient Rome referred to young people who killed with a knife or dagger. Sicariato was established as a social form in Medellin, Colombia during the 80s by the drug lords of the Cartel de Medellin, establishing schools and training fields where sicarios were trained as hired hitmen. Sicariato has extended throughout the region as a form of hired killing. Street children become sicarios, since they know that death is right behind them like a shadow and that the only future that exists is the present (Acevedo, 2012; Salazar, 1992).

Generations who have grown up on the streets, with no future and the total rejection of a conventional world of work and family, put their energy into productive activities which earn fast money to live a dream which never comes true. The terrible circumstances of poverty in which young people live in the periphery neighborhoods give them a sense of urgency and lead them to the alternative of socialization associated with the street (Bourgois, 1998; Pedrazzina and Sánchez, 1992). Anderson (1999) points out that the corner substitutes the classroom and is better than the traditional model of family, school and work. Formal education

is irrelevant for children who do not have practical opportunities in the formal sector and who see many more possibilities in the "perverse" illegal economy.

On the other hand, people who escape violence and persecution, as pointed out by Sánchez (2005), not only seek refuge in the cities, but some of them try to emigrate to other countries, seeking legal asylum, or cross the borders illegally into other countries. The same author adds that many of the people who leave his country due to the growing levels of violence do not necessarily move to neighboring countries, but rather to more developed countries in Europe or North America, the United States being the main destination. Those who migrate in search of better luck in the north, despite the multiple obstacles which they face, visualize great opportunities in their new homes. Due to the urgency of the circumstances in their country of origin, they see the metropolitan areas of the United States as the ideal places which provide significant opportunities for getting ahead, as well as an immediate way out of criminal situations (Rivera and Acevedo, 2014).

Violence and exclusion are not the only factors which explain migration to the United States, as argued by Hernandez (1999), but rather that in the information age the values of the north massively spread southward, offering young people in situations of despair, a way to make their dreams come true, known as the American Dream. However, attempting to enter the United States as undocumented immigrants brings with it another form of violence on our northern border.

Finally, some immigrants exchange one form of concentrated poverty for another,



Foto: internet

since they may be trapped in areas of poverty on the Mexican border in cities like Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez. Caught up in the best of cases in forms of traditional violence such as kidnapping and exploitation by organized crime or local gangs of extortionist, or in the worst of cases they are murdered so that their organs may be sold or used in some kinds of blood rites. For example, Ciudad Juárez, the city on the Mexican border across from El Paso, Texas, in 2013 registered the murder of 300 women in keeping with an unchanging ritual: kidnapping, torture, sexual cruelty, mutilation, strangling. Inhuman crimes which restate today's understanding of violence, in which not only the results of poverty take victims, but also matters of misogamy, perversions and

various forms of killing as ritualistic expressions, such as those used by the "narco satánicos" (Satanic druglords) (Mujeres de Juárez, 2013; Condición Humana, 2014).

To sum up, structural violence has been installed within the scenarios of the study of violence not only as a "macabre game" or "hunger game", but also as a crucial component for understanding peoples' violent dynamics. The frames of reference which provide the structural condition allow for creating a vision in which various variables come together in violent dynamics of subjects and how these detonate the accelerated increase in aggressive episodes which we have described. This criminal, violent scenario falls directly on the most vulnerable sector of the population, children and young people.

For Mexico these conditions represent an enormous challenge for social actors and public institutions. Today, the greatest challenge is trying to solve theoretic and practical problems for the generation of the so-called "profiles of evil" or in other words: children and young people with anti-values who form and are attracted by organized crime and who are educated –most of the time– within households which use various forms of punishment as daily methods for bringing up children. These young people grow up in an atmosphere of antisociality, which in the long

run, materializes in the culture exposed to violence, as well as various practices of extreme hostility (Acevedo, 2013).

It is the job of professionals in social science to create more and better models of study derived from a strategy of timely intervention –on different scales– in the face of those situations of risk; aimed at improving behavior and social cohesion of the inhabitants of the various states of the Mexican Republic, faced by the matter of public insecurity and all types of criminal activity, in favor of a culture of peace.

Bibliography

- Acevedo, J. (2015). "Los rostros de los perversos. Porque no todo es lo que parece". México: UNAM-ENTS.
- Acevedo, J. (2012). *¡Tengo miedo!, el bullying en las escuelas*. México: Trillas.
- Acevedo, J. (2013). *Infierno en casa. Cuando el amor mata*. México: Trillas.
- Alegre, L. P. (2004). *Violencia escolar, un síntoma de toda la sociedad*. Buenos Aires: Buenafuente.
- Aguilar, Rubén y Castañeda, Jorge (2009). *El Narco: La Guerra Fallida*. México: Santillana.
- Amemiya, I., Oliveros, M. y A. Barrientos (2009). "Factores de riesgo de violencia escolar (*bullying*) severa en colegios privados de tres zonas de la sierra de Perú". *Anales de la Facultad de Medicina*, 70: 255-258.
- Anderson, Elijah (1999). *The Code of the Street*. Nueva York: Norton.
- Arellano, N. (2007). "The Violence in School and the Prevention of the Conflict", *Revista ORBIS*, 3: 23-45.
- Astorga, L. (2005). *El Siglo de las Drogas. El narcotráfico, del porfiriato al nuevo milenio*. México: Plaza y Valdés.
- Astorga, L. (2009). *El poder y la sombra. Seguridad, traficantes y militares*. México: Tusquets.
- Bagley, B. (2009). La conexión Colombia-México-Estados Unidos. En Benítez, Raúl M., Rodríguez, Abelardo y Rodríguez, Armando (editores) (2009). *Atlas de la Seguridad y la Defensa de México*.
- Barbeito, C. y Caireta, M. (2005), "Introducción de conceptos: paz, violencia, conflicto", *Cuadernos de Educación para la Paz*. Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Recovered on November 4, 2010 at: <<http://www.pangea.org/unescopau/img/programas/educacion/publicacion002e.pdf>>.
- Blancornelas, J. (2002). *El Cartel. Los Arellano Félix: la mafia más poderosa en la historia de América Latina*. México: Plaza y Valdés.
- Bringuioiti, M. (2000). *La escuela ante los niños maltratados*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- Bourgois, Philippe (1998). *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in el Barrio*. Nueva York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Condición Humana (2014). "Los narco satánicos", Recovered on May 5, at: <<http://condicionhumana-uacm.blogspot.mx/2009/05/narco-satanicos.html>>.
- CIDAC (2015). Centro de investigación para el Desarrollo. Recovered at: <<https://www.google.com.mx/search?q=CIDAC%2C+2015&toq=CI->

- DAC%2C+2015&taqs=chrome..69i57.480j0j7&sourceid=chrome&tes_sm=122&ie=UTF-8>.
- El Heraldo* (2014). "Conflicto en Venezuela". Recovered on February 10 at: <<http://elheraldosp.com.mx/2014/03/17/venezuela-conflicto-social-afecta-finanzas/>>.
- Encuesta Nacional en Vivienda* (2009). Datos de viviendas en México. Recovered on October 7, 2015, at: <www.simomexico.com>.
- ENVIPE (2015). *Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción de la Seguridad Pública*, Boletín de Prensa Núm. 395/15, Aguascalientes, Ags. Recovered at: <<http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/proyectos/encuestas/hogares/regulares/envipe/envipe2015/default.aspx>>.
- Forbes* (2009). *El Chapo, uno de los hombres más ricos y poderosos del mundo*. Recovered on October 12, 2015 at: <<http://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/>>; ABC News (April 4, 2009). "Drug lord 'El Chapo' Guzmán on Forbes' most powerful list".
- Gutiérrez, V., Toledo, M. y Magenzo, A. (2010). *Relación entre intimidación (bullying) y clima en la sala de clases y su influencia sobre el rendimiento de los estudiantes*. Recovered on October 12, at: <<http://udp.cl/investigacion/repo>>.
- Hernández León, R. (1999), A la aventura: jóvenes, pandillas y migración en la conexión Monterrey-Houston (pp. 115-43). En Mummert, Gail. *Fronteras Fragmentadas*. Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (Inegi) (2010), *Censo de Población y Vivienda, 2010*. México: Inegi.
- Kaldor, M. (2004). *Las nuevas guerras: violencia organizada en la era global*. Barcelona: Tusquets.
- Koonings, Kees y Dirk Kruijt (2004). *Armed Actors: Organized Violence and State Failure in Latin America*. Londres/ New York: Zed Books.
- Lederach, J. (1998). *Construyendo la paz: reconciliación sostenible en sociedades divididas*. Gernika, España: Gernika Gogoratzuz, Centro de Investigación por la Paz.
- Luciano, G., Marín, L. y Yuli, M. (2008), "Violencia en la escuela: ¿un problema y un desafío para la educación?", *Enseñanza e Investigación en Psicología*, 13: 27-39.
- Magenzo, A. y Tchimino, M. (2010), *Violencia escolar*. Recovered on November 2, 2015 at: <http://www.emol.com/encuestas/educadores20/pdf/segundo_periodo/04/Abraham%20Magenzo%20Clase_4_Violencia_escolar.pdf>.
- Mujeresdejuarez (2013), *Asesinos de mujeres en ciudad Juárez*. Recovered on May 10 at: <<http://www.mujeresdejuarez.org/category/mujeres-asesinadas-en-ciudad-juarez>>.

- Organización Mundial de la Salud (oms) (2003). *Informe Mundial sobre la Violencia y la Salud*. Ginebra, oms.
- Oliveros, M., Figueroa, L., Mayorga, G., Cano, B. y Barrientos, A. (2008), "Violencia escolar (*bullying*) en Colegios Estatales de Primaria en el Perú". *Revista Per Pediatría*, 61: 215-220.
- Poulantzas, N. (1978). *L'Etat, le Pouvoir, le Socialisme*. París: Presses Universitaire de
- Portes, Alejandro (1996). Globalization from Below: The Rise of Transnational Communities (pp. 151-158). En William P. Smith y R. Patricio Korzeniewicz (eds.). *Latin America in the World Economy*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Pedrazzini, Y. y Sánchez, M. (1992). *Malandros: Bandas y Niños de la Calle, La Cultura de Urgencia en la Metropoli Latinoamericana*. Caracas: Vadell Hermanos.
- Proceso (2012). "México en guerra". Recovered on October 5, at: <<http://www.proceso.com.mx/?p=296996>>.
- Rivera Ríos, A. K. y Acevedo Alemán, J. (2014), *Estesores y duelos de los migrantes centroamericanos en Saltillo, Coahuila. Notas para una reflexión mayor*. En: Chávez, M. A. *Esclavitud del siglo xxi: el comercio de seres humanos*. UAdeG.
- Rodríguez, M. y Palomero, J. (2001). "Violencia en las Aulas". *Revista Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, núm. 41, Recovered on November 2 at: <<http://www.aufop.org/publica/reifp/02y5n2.as>>.
- Salazar, A. (1992), *Des Enfants a Tuers a Gage. Les Bandes d'Adolescents a Medellín*. París: Ramsay.
- Sánchez Magaly, R. (2005), El ciclo "perverso" de Violencia e Inseguridad como relación de poder en América Latina. *Violencia, Criminalidad y Terrorismo*. Varios autores. Fundación Venezuela Positiva Caracas. Recovered on May 15 at: <http://www.princeton.edu/~magalys/files/el_ciclo_perverso.pdf>.
- Semanario Zeta de Tijuana* (2012). *83 mil 191 muertos en el sexenio de Calderón*. Recovered on October 10, 2015 at: <<http://www.animalpolitico.com/2012/11/83-mil-muertos-por-el-narco-en-sexenio-de-calderon-semanario-zeta/>>.
- Stephen, E. Flynn (1995). "Globalización del narcotráfico: las drogas y el crimen organizado", *Revista Occidental*, year 12, no. 3.
- Tortosa Blasco, José María y La Parra Casado, Daniel (2003). "Violencia estructural, una ilustración del concepto" (Ejemplar dedicado a: Violencia y sociedad): 57-72.
- Tello, J. (1997). "El control del narcotráfico: operaciones estratégicas e intereses nacionales de México y Estados Unidos en el periodo posterior a la Guerra Fría". En Aguayo, Sergio y Bailey, John (coordinadores) (1997).

Las seguridades de México y Estados Unidos en un momento de transición. México: Siglo XXI.

Villalobos, J. (2010). "Doce mitos de la guerra al narco". *Nexos*, enero. Recovered at : <www.nexos.com.mx/?P=leerarticulo&Article=72941>.