Reshaping the Forces of (Dis)Order
US-Sponsored Security Sector Reform in Colombia and Mexico

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I, Paul Angelo, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information

has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

The inability of governments to deliver human security to their citizenries has often driven ambitious programmes of security sector reform (SSR). SSR programmes hold effectiveness and accountability of the security sector (military, police, and judicial agencies) as the central pillars of their design, and Colombia and Mexico represent two recent instances of SSR in Latin America. In both cases, national governments and their top international donor, the US government, invested considerable resources into military, police, and judicial agencies to reform and professionalise security sectors struggling to contain formidable threats to security. Notwithstanding similar challenges and programme designs, however, the Colombian effort, known as Plan Colombia, contributed to an increasingly professional security sector that demonstrated improved capabilities to deliver enhanced citizen security, whereas the Mexican government, via the Mérida Initiative, struggled to improve the effectiveness and accountability of its security sector. This study explores that disparity in outcomes. Employing the comparative method, the author identifies three independent variables that exhibit a positive relationship with improvements on the dependent variable of this study, security sector governance, in Colombia but negative values in Mexico. Specifically, the study points to private sector support, inter-party consensus, and the centralisation of security bureaucracy as key factors. In doing so, the author highlights both successes and failures in the design of reformed security regimes and considers how other governments might learn from these lessons.

Impact Statement

In recent decades, pervasive and daunting insecurity in Latin America has inspired a wave of reformism focused on systems of law and order. However, the weakness of governmental institutions in many countries of the region has only exacerbated the security crises confronting these young democracies as they chart a course toward democratic consolidation. SSR, in particular, has not been the remedy initially anticipated by early scholarship on the topic, and most recent literature demands a reconceptualisation of SSR based on empirical successes and failures.

This study explores the disparity in SSR outcomes between two of the most comprehensive and well-financed SSR efforts in the Americas, Colombia and Mexico. Employing the comparative method and process tracing, the author identifies three independent variables that exhibit a positive relationship with improvements on the dependent variable of this study, security sector governance. Chiefly, SSR under Plan Colombia was more successful than under the Mérida Initiative due to buy-in from national economic elites, partisan consensus on the SSR effort, and the centralisation of the security sector bureaucracy. By identifying these factors, this study contributes to the nascent body of literature on the domestic factors that impact the successful adoption of externally supported SSR (in this case, by the United States) and, more broadly, on the domestic power arrangements that encourage SSR. Furthermore, it advances understanding of the relationship between democracy promotion efforts encouraged from abroad and local politics—a theme at the heart of recent academic and policy debates on democratic consolidation. Indeed, restoring the agency to local actors in SSR processes, an oft-underappreciated and little-explored facet, is central to the analysis of the Colombian and Mexican cases and one of the crucial contributions of this study.

On a practical level, these results elucidate the domestic conditions under which SSR may have better odds of success and, thus, in what contexts international donors might see greater returns on their investment in SSR. In an era of fiscal constraints, global donors such as the US government and the European Union must make difficult decisions that prioritise some international engagements over others, and political leadership would benefit from an understanding of the circumstances that enabled SSR in Colombia and, likewise, undermined its adoption in Mexico. The insights of this study about generating support for the implementation of SSR offer policymakers a meaningful panorama of the most important veto players that can bolster or constrain reform-oriented activities. These conclusions reaffirm the wisdom that such interventions should, above all, embrace a "whole-of-government" approach and suggest prescriptive measures for tackling citizen insecurity through SSR.

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List of Acronyms

ABD   Air Bridge Denial
ACI   Andean Counterdrug Initiative
ACP   Andean Counterdrug Program
ADRP   Army Doctrine Reference Publication
AFEUR   Urban Counterterrorism Special Forces Group
      Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Antiterroristas Urbanas (Colombia)
AFI   Federal Investigative Agency
      Agencia Federal de Investigación (Mexico)
AI   Integral Action
      Acción Integral (Colombia)
ANAP   National Academy for Penitentiary Administration
      Academia Nacional de Administración Penitenciaria (Mexico)
ANDI   National Association of Businesspersons
      Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia
ARI   Andean Regional Initiative
AUC   United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia
      Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
BACRIM   Criminal Bands
      Bandas criminales (Colombia)
CARSI   Central America Regional Security Initiative
CCAI   Centre of Integral Action Coordination
      Centro de Coordinación de Acción Integral (Colombia)
CCSPNL   Citizen's Council for Public Security of Nuevo León
      Consejo Ciudadano de Seguridad Pública de Nuevo León
CEDEF   Strategic Committee of the Design of the Army of the Future
      Comité Estratégico del Diseño del Ejército del Futuro (Colombia)
CETI   Strategic Committee of Transformation and Innovation
      Comité Estratégico de Transformación e Innovación (Colombia)
CIA   Central Intelligence Agency
CISEN   Investigation and National Security Centre
      Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional (Mexico)
CNDH   National Commission for Human Rights
      Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (Mexico)
CNMH   National Centre for Historic Memory
      Centro Nacional para la Memoria Histórica (Colombia)
CNS   National Commission of Security
      Comisión Nacional de Seguridad (Mexico)
CREI   Committee of the Strategic Revision and Innovation
      Comité de Revisión Estratégica e Innovación (Colombia)
CSDI   Colombian Strategic Development Initiative
DAC   Development Assistance Committee
DAS   Administrative Security Department
      Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (Colombia)
DDR   Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
DEA   Drug Enforcement Administration
DFS   Federal Directorate of Security
      Dirección Federal de Seguridad (Mexico)

DNI	National Intelligence Directorate
	Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia (Colombia)
DRMR	Defense Resource Management Reform
DTO	Drug-Trafficking Organisation
ELN	National Liberation Army
	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (Colombia)
ENSI	National Poll about Insecurity
	Encuesta Nacional sobre Inseguridad (Colombia)
ENVIPE	National Survey on Victimisation and Perception of Public Security
	Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad (Mexico)
EPM	Public Enterprises of Medellín
	Empresas Públicas de Medellín
ESF	Economic Support Fund
ESMAI	School for International Missions and Integral Action
	Escuela de Misiones Internacionales y Acción Integral (Colombia)
EU	European Union
EUM	End-Use Monitoring
EZLN	National Liberation Zapatista Army
	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Mexico)
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FASP	Public Security Support Fund
	Fondo de Aportaciones para la Seguridad Pública (Mexico)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FECHAC	Business Foundation of Chihuahua
	Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense, A.C.
FGJ	National Prosecutor's Office
	Fiscalía General de Justicia (Mexico)
FICOSEC	Trust for Competitiveness and Citizen Security
	Fideicomiso para la Competitividad y Seguridad Ciudadana (Mexico)
FM	Field Manual
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FUDRA	Rapid Deployment Force
	Fuerza de Despliegue Rápido (Colombia)
GAFE	Airmobile Special Forces Group
	Grupo Aeromóvil de Fuerzas Especiales (Mexico)
GAULA	Groups of Unified Action for Personal Liberty
	Grupos de Acción Unificada por la Libertad Personal (Colombia)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEA	Economic Group of Antioquia
	Grupo Económico de Antioquia
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HI	Historical Institutionalism
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IACtHR	Inter-American Court of Human Rights
ICESI	Citizens' Institute of Studies on Insecurity
	Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la Inseguridad (Mexico)
IMET	International Military Education and Training

IMF	International Monetary Fund
INCD	National Institute to Combat Drugs
	Instituto Nacional para el Combate a las Drogas (Mexico)
INCLE	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
INEGI	National Institute of Statistics and Geography
	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (Mexico)
INL	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
INPEC	National Penitentiary and Prison Institute
	Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario (Colombia)
JEP	Special Peace Jurisdiction
	Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (Colombia)
LASO	Latin American Security Organisation
LC23S	23 September Communist League
	Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre (Mexico)
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MORENA	National Regeneration Movement Party
	Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (Mexico)
MSSD	Most Similar Systems Design
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NADR	Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NORTHCOM	US Northern Command
OADPRS	Prevention and Social Re-adaptation Agency
	Órgano Administrativo Desconcentrado de Prevención y Readaptación Social (Mexico)
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PAN	National Action Party
	Partido Acción Nacional (Mexico)
PDLP	Party of the Poor
	Partido de los Pobres (Mexico)
PFM	Federal Ministerial Police
	Policía Federal Ministerial (Mexico)
PFP	Federal Preventive Police
	Policía Federal Preventiva (Mexico)
PGR	Attorney General's Office
	Procuraduría General de la República (Mexico)
PJF	Federal Judicial Police
	Policía Judicial Federal (Mexico)
PNCRT	National Policy of Consolidation and Territorial Reconstruction
	Política Nacional de Consolidación y Reconstrucción Territorial (Colombia)
PNCT	National Territorial Consolidation Plan
	Plan Nacional de Consolidación Territorial (Colombia)
PRD	Democratic Revolutionary Party
	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Mexico)

PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Mexico)
PSI	Party System Institutionalisation
SEDENA	Secretariat of National Defence
	Secretaría de Defensa Nacional (Mexico)
SEGOB	Secretariat of the Interior
	Secretaría de Gobernación (Mexico)
SIEDCO	Statistical Information System for Delinquency, Coexistence, and Operations
	Sistema de Información Estadístico, Delincuencial, Contravencional y Operativo (Colombia)
SEMAR	Secretariat of the Navy
	Secretaría de Marina (Mexico)
SETEC	Secretariat for Justice Sector Reform
	Secretaría Técnica (Mexico)
SGI	Security Governance Initiative
SOUTHCOM	US Southern Command
SSA	Security Sector Assistance
SSP	Secretariat of Public Safety
	Secretaría de Seguridad Pública (Mexico)
SSPC	Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection
	Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana (Mexico)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STCSN	Technical Secretary of the National Security Council
	Secretariado Técnico del Consejo de Seguridad Nacional (Mexico)
SUBSEMUN	Municipal Public Security Subsidies
	Subsidio de Seguridad Pública Municipal (Mexico)
UN	United Nations
UP	Patriotic Union
	Unión Patriótica (Colombia)
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USCAP	US-Colombia Action Plan

Introduction

Citizen Security and Democratisation: A Growing Need for Security Sector Reform (SSR)

The end of the Cold War ushered in a period of dramatic political and economic transition. Absent a stable and predictable international order, new sources of insecurity, many non-state or transnational in nature, quickly replaced those associated with the inter-state and proxy conflicts of the previous era. Democratisation surged across the globe, generating optimism yet uncertainty for the resource-strapped and inexperienced democratic governments of the world. Meanwhile, economic transitions in these countries, rooted in pro-market governmental reforms, resulted in spikes in unemployment, a growing informal economic sector, and greater wealth disparity. These trends introduced new economic motives for crime and its associated violence (Bailey and Dammert, 2006, p. 6). However, as state capacity to address citizen concerns diminished during political transitions, threats to citizen security expanded. And globally, indicators of homicide, robbery, and organised criminal activity steadily climbed as the world entered the twenty-first century (Bailey and Dammert, 2006, p. 1).

The concept of citizen security emerged in the 1990s to describe the challenges posed by increasing "threats to public, social, and political order posed by rising common crime and fear of crime" in transitioning societies (Neild, 1999, p. 1). This new focus on governmental responsibility to provide "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" is tied closely to the concept of human security, which shifted global attention from national security threats posed by other states to threats affecting freedom and human rights posed by domestic and transnational sources (*Human Development Report*, 1994, p. 23).[1] As noted by Gasper and

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[1] Given the complexity of security threats, the line between citizen security and national security has become blurred (Ospina Restrepo, 2010, p. 140). In the Latin American context, threats to citizen security and domestic threats to national security, often posed by non-state armed actors, are often one in the same, and given that

Gómez, the citizen security concept arose as a component of transition to democracy and emphasises eliminating state repression, reinventing security forces, and addressing legacies of citizen distrust of state institutions (2015, p. 107). Citizen security, which entails measures that reduce criminal violence and the fear of victimisation, assumes that the democratic state has a responsibility to protect its people and understands security as a public good (Casas-Zamora, 2013, p. 2).[2] However, in many democratic contexts, citizen security remains "a precarious entitlement" (Luckham, 2009, pp. 3–4).

Early theorists such as Hobbes (2012 [1651]) and Locke (1980 [1690]) insisted that the state derives its power from its capacity to assure the safety and security of its citizens, for those protections are at the heart of why citizens submit some of their freedoms to government in the first place. Weber referred to this principle as "the monopoly of the legitimated use of force" (2004 [1919]). The state achieves legitimacy to the extent that it serves as the sole source of societal violence, administered principally by police and military forces to establish order as a collective benefit to its citizenry. Put succinctly, "citizenship involves an exchange: more security in return for less freedom of action," and even today, citizen security continues to be one of the most significant challenges of government and, by extension, one of the biggest obstacles to democratic consolidation (Whitehead, 2002, p. 167).

Democracy is premised on the principle that state institutions structure competition and conflict to play out on peaceful terms.[3] Citizen security is a necessary precondition for the full enjoyment of democracy, as citizens must feel empowered to engage and participate

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regional governments tend to conflate national security and citizen security, the author understands state strategies to address the former as a component of the latter (Acero Velásquez, 2004, p. 169).

[2] The internal security policies of the Cold War practiced by Latin American governments to root out guerrilla insurgencies necessitated an overhaul of citizen-state relations in the region, making it fertile ground for the concepts of citizen security and SSR (Ruiz Vásquez, 2004b).

[3] Citizen security policies are institutional interventions that are designed to prevent and control crime and violence (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, 1998).

in the political process without fear of being intimidated into silence by the threat or perception of violence. Costa states, "Perceived vulnerability to violent acts and theft undermines values that are essential for democratic life, especially tolerance for differences and adherence to human rights" (2012, p. 133). This tendency, in turn, affects public loyalty to democracy and, thus, a society's ability to consolidate newly formed democratic institutions. "Feeling insecure" alienates individuals from their societies, undermining a sense of community and the legitimacy of the state to act on behalf of the larger community (Frühling et al., 2003, p. 5). Tackling insecurity is particularly daunting for the world's newest democracies, which often face resource constraints and harbour undemocratic political traditions. What often results from this scenario is what Pearce refers to as a "fragmented security state," one in which security services offer fractured, selective security in ways that protect and promote the interests of elites (2018, p. 5).[4] However, even the world's most established democratic governments, today challenged by the threat of transnational terrorism, are engaged in ongoing policy debate over how best to strike the appropriate balance between protection of the citizenry and the maximization of personal freedom.[5]

      In many countries, pervasive citizen insecurity is due, in part, to institutional weakness. The narrative for addressing this challenge focuses on strengthening the capacity of democratic institutions to provide for the public good. The inability of governments to protect their citizens has routinely driven the international community, particularly the established democracies of the world, to help fledgling and vulnerable democracies meet their most fundamental obligation to their citizenries. Since the 1990s, international

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[4] According to Pearce, Weber, who was influenced by interstate war and intrastate uprising, was not necessarily concerned with violence that did not challenge the political order as such. Likewise, Latin America has not exactly embraced Weberian security orders. She states, "Democratisation cannot be equated with commitment to the Weberian state in Latin America" (2018, pp. 13, 18).

[5] Security should not be understood as an endpoint but, rather, as a project under constant construction (Sánchez David and Rodríguez Morales, 2007, p. 18).

interventions to halt violent conflict, keep the peace, and rebuild post-conflict or fragile states have burgeoned. Governments, global development banks, and international and multilateral organisations alike have sponsored international assistance programmes to reform systems of law and order. In these instances, the security sector—principally consisting of police, military, and judicial bodies—has come under scrutiny, and to address citizen insecurity, international donors have routinely (but not consistently) encouraged security sector reform (SSR) as the cornerstone of their engagement strategy. Indeed, SSR is at the core of conflict prevention and peace-building strategies aimed at reducing the likelihood of internal conflict and curbing the effects of instability that may have spillover effects in the developed world (Chandler, 2013; Mancini, 2005; Schnabel and Ehrhart, 2005).

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which published the primary reference text on SSR in 2007, SSR refers to efforts:

> [to develop] a clear institutional framework for the provision of security that integrates security and development policy and includes all relevant actors; [to strengthen] the governance of security institutions; and… [to build] capable and professional security forces that are accountable to civil authorities. (*The OECD DAC Handbook*, 2011, p. 13)

SSR is a process that takes place within a country undergoing democratisation but that almost inevitably involves the intervention of international actors and donors to verify and shape the outcome in accordance with liberal democratic norms. SSR programmes hold effectiveness and accountability of the security sector as the central pillars of their design and recognise a security sector reformed along these lines to be a necessary condition for democratic consolidation. As the theory suggests, a security sector that can provide for citizen security by employing its monopoly of the legitimate use of force discerningly and proportionately while remaining answerable to the law contributes to a public order that maximises the citizenry's exercise of democratic rights.

SSR initiatives have taken place in dozens of countries, in every region of the world, yet mixed results on its effectiveness have encouraged a rethinking of strategies. The resulting body of policy and academic literature on the topic has accordingly shifted attention to the causes of success or failure in contemporary cases, and "lessons learned" from places as far afield as Indonesia, Kosovo, and Liberia serve as guiding wisdom for emergent SSR initiatives. Despite some disagreement about what factors most decisively influence the effectiveness of an SSR effort, analysts concur that the existence of political will to undertake SSR by stakeholders in the country undergoing reform has a considerable impact on the results of a given process—an underexplored theme that this study will evaluate in greater depth.[6]

Furthermore, there remain some glaring empirical omissions in the analysis on the effectiveness of SSR. Notwithstanding the persistence of public debate on citizen security in Latin America, examples from the Western Hemisphere are severely underrepresented in the body of research. This study seeks to address this oversight by evaluating comparatively SSR in two Latin American countries, Colombia and Mexico. In doing so, the author aims to enrich the discussion on enhancing the organisation and implementation of SSR programmes globally, while also shedding light on recent security trends in modern Latin America.

The Security Sector in Latin America

SSR has been especially pervasive in Latin America, where insecurity and crime are among the top obstacles to democratic consolidation.[7] According to Latinobarometer polling,

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[6] Ball, 2014; Caparini, 2010; Gordon, 2014; Jackson and Bakrania, 2018; Mobekk, 2010; Sedra, 2010.

[7] Despite the prevalence of reform initiatives in the region, many Latin American militaries are reluctant to use the specific term "SSR" to describe processes of modernisation, transformation, and professionalisation of the security sector due its politically charged nature in some contexts (Grabendorff, 2009). Some security sector actors associate it with the democratic transitions in El Salvador and Argentina, where the term was employed to describe a downsizing of the security sector. Nevertheless, in recent decades, the range of activities undertaken by governments in the region to improve the operational performance and accountability of security sectors, including those of the two cases in this study, constitute SSR. The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces endorses this view in stating that "[d]ifferent actors sometimes prefer different terms to describe

public opinion indicates high levels of perceived insecurity, which respondents across the region consistently believe to be the number one challenge confronting their societies since 2008 ("Informes Anuales," 2008-2017). These concerns appear not to be unfounded, given that the region ranks as the world's most murderous. The Igarapé Institute finds that the average regional homicide rate for Latin America is 21.5 homicides for every 100,000 inhabitants, putting Latin America well ahead of all other world regions and significantly above the global average of 6.2 homicides for every 100,000 inhabitants (Muggah and Aguirre Tobón, 2018; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014). In fact, Latin America is home to only 8 percent of the world's population yet registers 33 percent of the world's homicides.

Despite a surge of important perspectives on civil-military relations in Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s, new scholarship on the role of the security sector in addressing citizen insecurity in the region is insufficient.[8] Many recent studies on the security sector in the region tend toward profiling the security challenges in a narrative fashion rather than evaluating security strategies systematically or comparatively. Furthermore, scholars have yet to link empirical examples from Latin America with the literature on SSR. By evaluating the attempts to professionalise the security sector in two Latin American countries, this study bridges this gap and explores the efforts of regional governments, empowered by US assistance, to pursue an SSR paradigm that boosts effectiveness and accountability in the provision of security.

The tension between effectiveness and accountability of government institutions is inherent in any democracy, but in societies beleaguered by authoritarian or praetorian

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SSR…because the word 'reform' is politically sensitive…. [A variety of] terms serve as different names for the same SSR agenda when they share a commitment to the principles of good [security sector governance]" (*Security Sector Reform*, 2015).

[8] Davies and Loveman, 1997; Fuentes, 2009; Loveman, 2006a; Mares and Martinez, 2013; Muggah and Aguirre Tobón, 2018; Pion-Berlin, 2001; Prevost et al., 2014; Youngers and Rosin, 2004a.

traditions, responses that are perceived as efficacious often occur at the expense of democratic norms (Dammert, 2013, pp. 82–88; Mainwaring, 2003, p. 4). Today threats to democracy in Latin America include crippling levels of criminal violence, persistent and widespread economic inequality, and endemic corruption—all trends that have elicited decidedly illiberal reactions from state actors in the region. Specifically, the military and police continue to be a "pillar of veiled uncivility" in society and politics (Kruijt and Koonings, 2013, p. 16). Even though militaries have forfeited their role in governance in every country of the region except Cuba and Venezuela, the military's removal from direct rule was "conditional and partial" (Kruijt and Koonings, 2013, pp. 17–18). Across Latin America, military leadership succeeded in securing a compulsory advisory role to elected politicians and shielded security sector actors from transitional justice for atrocities committed during military rule (Agüero, 1992). In some countries, the military and police even retain judicial autonomy to try and punish their own members in specialised judicial procedures that often result in impunity for crimes committed.[9] Security sector actors also continue to influence politics by controlling state intelligence apparatuses and by engaging in local development tasks in areas bereft of a strong governmental presence. The orientation of the Latin American security sector has historically been toward internal security matters, and today civilian political leaders routinely command militaries, untrained in law enforcement practices, to partake in public order missions against perceived domestic security threats such as gangs, organised crime, and even popular protest.

Unresolved tasks for many regional governments include doctrinal reform, the reorganisation of management and oversight structures, and the re-evaluation of the technical needs and operational capabilities of security sectors (Tomesani, 2018). Meanwhile, real-

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[9] Webb (2005) articulates a dichotomy of military autonomy that insists that not all autonomy is incompatible with democracy. Whereas political autonomy has a negative effect on democratic consolidation and civilian control of the military, professional autonomy over day-to-day administrative and operational functioning enhances the institution's professional mission and encourages democratic consolidation.

world security challenges have forced regional militaries and police to adapt and assume new missions to fulfil their protective and defensive roles against citizen security threats. These dual hurdles have proven particularly burdensome for governments along drug and migration corridors like Colombia, Mexico, Honduras, and Haiti. Not surprisingly, these countries have become the targets of major externally supported SSR missions in the twenty-first century. The two most prominent and well-resourced efforts, Colombia's and Mexico's, offer a window into the recent trajectory of the security sector in Latin America and, therefore, serve as useful reference points for further conversation about an under-analysed aspect of democratic consolidation in the region.

An Outline of the Study

As explored more fully in the following chapter, Colombia and Mexico represent two instances of SSR that prominently feature linkages between domestic reformers and international donors, namely the US government. The US assistance packages to the governments of Colombia and Mexico, respectively known as Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative, infused billions of US dollars into the security sectors over more than a decade in each case to professionalise military, police, and judicial agencies struggling to contain formidable threats to citizen security. Central to US strategies in both countries was a commitment to enhancing the security sector's respect for democratic governance, rule of law, and human rights. Notwithstanding similar challenges and programme designs, however, Plan Colombia resulted in a professional and increasingly accountable security sector that, while not without problems, has proven capable of delivering enhanced citizen security. The Mérida Initiative failed to produce a similarly effective and accountable security sector in Mexico. An exploration of this disparity is the focus of this study, and in particular, the

author seeks to identify the domestic variables in Colombia and Mexico that facilitated or impeded the successful implementation of SSR.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 outline the main concepts, definitions, and theoretical debates in the literature on SSR and international democracy promotion and lay out the study's methodological and ontological frameworks.

Chapter 4 surveys the history of US involvement with the security sectors in Colombia and Mexico. A detailed description of the SSR programmes under analysis—Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative—follows, and in Chapter 5, the author evaluates the degree to which the SSR efforts accomplished the intended objectives for two dimensions: effectiveness and accountability.

Upon identifying a discrepancy in impact between the two SSR processes, the author highlights the critical junctures and path dependence that contributed to success in Colombia and undermined SSR efforts in Mexico through process tracing. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 call attention to the most consequential factors that explain the difference in outcomes. The three independent variables in question pertain to the larger objective of this study, which is to understand how domestic power configurations affect support to undertake and sustain SSR, and the actors under consideration are business elites, political parties, and security sector bureaucracy.

First, this study argues that SSR was more successful in the case of Plan Colombia because of significant financial contributions from national business elites to fund a reformed security sector. Given that national budgets ensure the sustainability of SSR after the drawdown of international donations, the state's ability to implement enduring programmes hinges on the buy-in of national business elites. The case of Mexico, in which business elites did not support SSR to the extent that their Colombian counterparts did, demonstrates that the absence of big business engagement on SSR can have a deleterious effect on the outcome.

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Second, because SSR requires time to implement, democratic systems that exhibit major political alternation are vulnerable to incomplete implementation of SSR. Colombia achieved stability of strategic vision over more than a decade because SSR benefitted from inter-party consensus. In Mexico, however, security became a polarising partisan issue, and as such, SSR was vulnerable to modification and reorientation when the executive changed party hands in 2012. In this vein, party polarisation undermined the continuity of reform efforts in Mexico.

Third, the centralisation of security bureaucracy in Colombia, to include the subordination of the Colombian National Police to the Ministry of Defence, streamlined the adoption of US-sponsored reforms, practices, and equipment. Conversely, in Mexico, the proliferation of security institutions and the dispersal of responsibility and authority encouraged by the country's decentralised, federal system undermined SSR during the Mérida Initiative. Contrary to the belief that decentralised states exhibit more responsive governance, a highly centralised security bureaucracy that links national-level security providers to local communities appears better equipped to neutralise spoilers of SSR than a decentralised bureaucracy (Aligica and Boettke, 2009).

This study concludes with an analysis of the importance of these three variables for governments contemplating support for SSR initiatives abroad and the implications of the results for the literature on SSR and democratic consolidation.

Chapter 1: Democratic Consolidation and the Security Sector

The aim of this chapter is to define SSR and its relationship to the key concepts of the literature on democratic consolidation. Accordingly, the author explores the bodies of literature on the international dimensions of democratisation and international democracy promotion and specifically situates this study in the recent scholarly work on SSR. Importantly, the conclusions of this thesis help clarify a prominent deficiency in the current literature: the agency of local actors in defining SSR outcomes. The focus on the domestic factors that facilitate or impede SSR is an underexplored yet critical aspect of determining why some SSR interventions succeed while many others fail.

Concepts and Definitions

The concept of SSR is oriented toward democratic consolidation and takes place within larger government assistance efforts to promote democracy. In the words of Sedra, SSR is "a device of the liberal peace" that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union and represents an effort to project liberal democratic values emanating from the "West" on the periphery (2016, p. 20). Meharg and Arnusch define SSR as "the set of policies, plans, programs, and activities that are undertaken by a series of stakeholders to improve the way a state…provides safety, security, and justice to its civilian population within the context of the *rule of law*" [emphasis in original text] (2012, p. 3). The range of activities undertaken in the name of SSR is diverse. According to the US government:

> SSR is an umbrella term that might include integrated
> activities in support of: defense and armed forces reform;
> civilian management and oversight; justice; police,
> corrections; intelligence reform; national security planning
> and strategy support; border management; disarmament,
> demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); and/or reduction
> of armed violence. (US Agency for International
> Development et al., 2009, p. 3)

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SSR is distinct from other security sector assistance (SSA) in that its focus is two-pronged. While SSR endeavours to increase the operational effectiveness of security forces like other SSA initiatives, it goes beyond these approaches by also demanding improved governance of the security sector. One of the primary preoccupations of governments engaged in SSR is strengthening the accountability and oversight of security institutions and, thus, the rule of law.

Rule of law, taken generally, refers to a system in which "the laws are public knowledge, are clear in meaning, and apply equally to everyone," but rule of law in the context of SSR is a fundamentally democratic concept (Carothers, 1998, p. 96). According to the UN, rule of law is a legal principle of governance in which all individuals, institutions, and public and private entities—to include the state—are accountable to the law, which is "equally enforced and independently adjudicated" (United Nations Security Council, 2004, p. 4). Rule of law also requires measures to guarantee the "supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency." These values contrast with governance in autocracies, dictatorships, oligarchies, and theocracies, which elevate select individuals or groups above the law, rendering the rule of law a uniquely democratic requirement. Whereas other forms of government can persist without the rule of law, the survival of a democratic regime is predicated on the permanence of the rule of law (Janda, 2012; O'Donnell, 2004). By definition, SSR seeks to inculcate among the actors of the security sector a respect for democracy, for the independence of the law, and for its equal application to citizens and state agents alike (Bleiker and Krupanski, 2012; Donais, 2017).

With the aim of identifying the conditions that facilitate successful SSR, the author considers variation on the dependent variable of this study, security sector governance.

Security sector governance is not a dichotomous variable, but rather, cases should be understood to fall along a spectrum between good governance and bad governance (Schröder, 2010). This characterisation echoes the continuous quality of measures of democracy, which address democratic governance as a question of degree instead of in relation to its presence or absence.[10] The objective of SSR is to promote a shift within underperforming security institutions and the bodies that oversee them toward good security sector governance. Schnabel describes good security sector governance as consisting of an "effective, affordable, and efficient security sector" that exhibits civilian democratic control and oversight by government ministries, legislatures, and civil society (2010, p. 8). Schröder identifies the two dimensions of security sector governance as the "quality of security provision," referring to the delivery of security to the citizens of a state, and the "quality of security sector governance," or the quality of the governing bodies and mechanisms that oversee the security sector (2010, p. 14). Accordingly, the two criteria by which this study evaluates security sector governance are effectiveness, or the ability of security institutions to fulfil their designated functions (i.e., provide security), and democratic accountability to civilian authorities and to the law, or the ability of oversight bodies to govern the security sector efficiently and transparently.

Furthermore, because SSR pertains to the state's monopoly of the legitimate use of force, the analytic approach most appropriate for evaluating SSR is the macro-level. Moncada (2016, pp. 6–9) extols subnational approaches in his work on urban violence in Latin America because they permit greater appreciation for the linkage dynamics among local actors, but sweeping SSR efforts and the international support that they often entail are mostly framed, funded, and implemented by national-level actors. Accordingly, this study

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[10] Alvarez et al., 1996; Beetham, 1994; Besançon, 2003; Bollen, 1990, p. 13; Collier and Adcock, 1999; Coppedge et al., 2011.

focuses on central governments and their linkages to international actors pushing a reform agenda. Even so, as Durán-Martínez (2017, p. 7) posits, SSR invariably involves negotiation with subnational actors, including local governments and civil society, and the author has made every effort to highlight both horizontal and vertical linkages where appropriate. This is especially true of crime and violence prevention initiatives, which target structural and proximate factors associated with violence and typically require persistent consultation between authorities in the central government and municipal actors (Moncada, 2016, p. 10).[11]

Linking Democratisation, Democracy Promotion, and SSR

In the 1990s, the rapid expansion of capitalist markets and the technological revolution contributed to an emerging complex global interdependence. The movement of people and products across national borders occurred with unprecedented ease, and the concurrent proliferation of multinational and supranational organisations—both public and private—to govern these transactions led to greater intertwinement between the international and domestic realms. In this context, "intermestic" issues, or those with international and domestic political dimensions (e.g., terrorism, trade, migration, organised crime, infrastructure integration, energy), materialised as the era's defining challenges, and the developed countries of the world have opted frequently for cooperative solutions to the policy dilemmas posed by such intermesticity.[12] One of the policy realms for which this is most apparent is international security. Specifically, Western powers have vigorously pursued democratisation and SSR in the developing world as means of addressing sources of instability with potentially global ramifications. Recent interventions to reshape the security

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[11] Security strategies and, by extension, SSR address insecurity through two tactics, control and prevention. Control policies stipulate the use of the security services and the criminal justice system to prosecute individuals and social groups that cause insecurity, whereas prevention policies entail deterrence strategies to stop violence and crime before they occur.
[12] On the interplay between domestic and international politics, see Putnam, 1988.

sectors in Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Mali, and Libya suggest an aggressive and at times pre-emptive strategy to contain security threats and advance democracy where it is absent or at risk (Cox et al., 2003, p. 5; Shultz et al., 2011). Indeed, SSR is merely one component of the much larger phenomena of democratisation and international democracy promotion, and the academic and policy relevance of these three fields impels an exploration of their related bodies of literature (Kümmel, 2003, p. 68).

Democratisation and the International Dimensions of Democratic Consolidation

The early literature on the "third wave" of democratisation focused almost exclusively on the domestic causes of transition from authoritarianism to democracy in Europe and Latin America. It was not until the mid-1980s that Whitehead introduced the international element to the scholarly discussion on democratisation. He pointed out that nearly two-thirds of the democracies in the world in 1990 owed their origins, at least partly, "to deliberate acts of imposition or intervention from without" (1986, p. 9). Huntington (1993) advanced this observation and solidly refocused the debate by highlighting the impact of international context and foreign actors, particularly the European Union (EU) and the United States. In the early 1990s, multilateral organisations such as the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) conditioned the admission of new member states to their ranks on the existence of certain democratic institutions. A surge in scholarship on the impact of international variables on democratic transitions soon followed (Pravda, 2001; Remmer, 1996; Robinson, 1996; Teixeira, 2008).[13]

Despite ever-increasing analysis of the role of international factors in democratic transitions, the scholarship on the nexus between the international community and democratic

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[13] According to Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2014), the domestic factors that have influenced processes of democratisation tend to happen across longer spans of time (e.g., political culture shifts, increase in development, reduction in income inequality, etc.). For this reason, it is unlikely that domestic factors alone—or even mostly—accounted for regime change from authoritarianism to democratisation in Latin America.

consolidation is less complete. After all, the transition phase abides by a different logic than the consolidation phase, and stability and the long-term prospects for regime survival improve dramatically when democracy becomes consolidated (Whitehead, 2001b, p. 5). Broadly speaking, a consolidated democracy is a democratic regime in which elites and civil society share a consensus about the legitimacy of rules and codes of political conduct that govern the exercise of collective decision-making via formal institutions and informal networks (Burton et al., 1992b, pp. 3–4). Under consolidated democratic regimes, rules are respected, institutions are deemed legitimate by the country's major stakeholders, and conflict is resolved peacefully through institutionalised channels (Burton et al., 1992b, p. 30). Consolidation means, above all, that the rule of law is supreme and unchallenged.

Identifying a prescriptive path to consolidation, however, has proven an elusive task for theorists (Schedler, 2010). Reaching consensus on what even constitutes democracy is a principal challenge. Disagreements over the conceptualisation, operationalisation, and measurement of democracy are fundamental to the debate over how best to support democratisation, if only because the subject remains vulnerable to redefinition over time and across space (Dahl, 1973; Sartori, 1987; Schumpeter, 1976). Whitehead asserts that for theorising it is necessary to work with a moderately "constructivist" approach to democracy, and consequently, political scientists generally limit their analysis of democratisation to the prevailing model of contemporary experience: liberal representative democracy (Burnell, 2000, p. 4; Whitehead, 2002, p. 7). Especially during the twentieth century, liberal democracy— grounded in the rule of law, constitutional order, free and fair elections, and a separation of powers—evolved into the "ideal-type" model of democracy for Western leaders

encouraging democratic expansion across the globe and the primary focus for political analysis.[14]

Even consolidation in the liberal democratic context remains a contested concept (Higley and Burton, 2006). Early scholars of the subject related consolidation to the duration of a democratic regime's existence—a limited understanding that confused stability for consolidation (Bollen, 1980; Cutright, 1963; Lipset, 1959). Later studies, however, sought to identify institutional and behavioural criteria that significantly reduce the risk of democratic degradation or backsliding to authoritarianism (Clark, 2002, p. 66). For example, Linz and Stepan suggest that, once a transition to democracy is complete and a government rules democratically, consolidation occurs only when a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives has become "the only game in town" (1996b, p. 15).[15] In a similar fashion, Almond and Verba (1989, pp. 350–352) identify civic culture, rooted in values and education, as the essential factor underpinning consolidation. Fukuyama (1995) furthers this idea by insisting that democratic consolidation requires shifts in ideology, institutions, civil society, and political culture. He ascribes a primacy to political culture as the deepest and most elusive of the levels of democratic consolidation.

Morlino develops this notion more fully in his exploration of "anchoring" (2012). He hypothesises that consolidation occurs when institutions that "hook and bind" civil society become the de facto mechanisms to mediate interactions between the state and its citizenry (e.g., political parties). His argument not only understands a role for institutions in developing a civic culture that is conducive to democratisation, but it also extends the debate

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[14] In this tradition, the literature turned toward identifying the features that constitute liberal democratic systems. Schmitter and Karl (1991) insist that institutionalisation and civil society are necessary and minimal components. Diamond et al. (1995) and O'Donnell (1999) argue that the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary distinguish democracy from other regime types.

[15] Linz and Stepan borrow this term from Przeworski, who defines "the only game in town" scenario as one in which "no one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions, when all the losers want to do is to try again within the same institutions under which they have just lost" (1991, p. 26). Przeworski also suggests that consolidation occurs when democracy becomes "self-enforcing."

into the international dimensions literature by suggesting that international actors have an important role to play in helping develop anchoring institutions that, even in the absence of international pressures, will act democratically. According to Morlino, "external anchoring" serves as an apt framework for understanding the international, transnational, and supranational influences on consolidation and points to the philosophy that informs international democracy promotion and SSR, the focus of this study (2012, pp. 112–114, 144–149).

International Democracy Promotion

The term "international democracy promotion" describes the set of assistance policies assumed by an external actor that aims to influence a process of democratic transition or consolidation within another country (Burnell, 2000; Leininger, 2010).[16] As Elliot (2016, p. 12) specifies, democracy promotion is understood as a commitment to a liberal democratic identity and the protection of it from threats through state-based programmes to build liberal democratic institutions beyond conventional domestic borders.[17] Despite the prevalence of democracy promotion policies like SSR, some disagreement remains about the extent to which democracy promotion can be isolated as a causal variable in processes of democratic consolidation. Pridham and Vanhanen contend that, notwithstanding a growing recognition of the importance of external factors, it is challenging to establish a causal relationship with democratic consolidation due to the complexity of international relations; boundaries between external and internal variables are increasingly blurred (Grugel, 2002, p. 157; Pridham, 1994; Pridham and Vanhanen, 2002). Although democracy promotion efforts are credited with contributing greatly to democratisation in Eastern Europe and Latin America, recent attempts

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[16] Democracy promotion is also referred to as democracy assistance, democracy-related assistance, political aid, political assistance, political development aid, and support for democratic development.
[17] On non-Western approaches to democracy promotion, see Carothers et al., 2014.

of Western nations to encourage democratic reform in the Arab world have proven less successful (Selim, 2015).

Some scholars emphasise that the import of democracy from abroad is conceptually contradictory, as democratisation depends on domestic conditions such as collective self-determination and the will of the people. Nevertheless, optimism for the positive relationship between democracy promotion and democratisation persists (Agné, 2014, pp. 49–71; Elliott, 2016, pp. 22–23, 30; Smith, 2001, p. 33). Burnell (2000, p. 5) claims that in some cases democracy promotion may even be a necessary (but not sufficient cause) of democratisation, and specifically, Schmitter (2001, p. 40) posits that external interventions can have a more lasting effect on the consolidation phase than on democratic transition, given that the transition phase often develops so rapidly that external actors are without sufficient information to shape the process. During consolidation, international actors can be more deliberate about their programming, and domestic political forces, no longer facing questions of legitimacy, are likely to possess a mandate to negotiate democratic reforms introduced from the outside. Furthermore, contending with themes such as accountability, rule of law observance, anti-corruption enforcement, and citizen security is oftentimes much harder than the "institutional design" focus of the transition phase—and an arena in which international support can make a considerable difference (Agné, 2014, p. 65; Whitehead, 2001c, p. 445).[18]

This belief informed the democracy promotion efforts of Western governments during the "third wave," a period that inspired the important work of Linz and Stepan (1996a). They were among the first to theorise democracy promotion and isolated three international influences that shaped processes of democratisation: foreign policies that incentivise or sanction local elites in ways that favour democracy; *zeitgeist*, or cases in which a particular

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[18] Agné concurs that when democracy is defined in terms of institutions (i.e., the consolidation phase) instead of in terms of "collective self-determination" (i.e., the transition phase), democracy promotion from the outside is not necessarily a contradiction.

ideology, like democracy, becomes the spirit of the times; and international diffusion effects, which depict democracy as an ever-expanding "contagion." They provided an early window into understanding how international actors encourage democratisation in other states. Drawing from decades of new empirical evidence, Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán refine these classifications and identify four additional mechanisms through which international actors influence regime outcomes: the demonstration effects of external democratisation processes that model the feasibility of regime change (related to international diffusion effects), the provision of material aid to empower specific pro-democracy domestic actors, the integration of external or transnational actors within the domestic context (e.g., the Catholic Church, UN peacekeeping missions), and outright removal of undemocratic regimes by external actors (2014, pp. 45–46, 271–272; Tansey, 2009).[19] Collectively, these activities serve as the core strategies that states and multilateral and supranational organisations employ to promote democracy today (Heine and Weiffen, 2014).[20]

Countless studies seek to explain why international actors promote democracy, and foreign policy analysts continually debate over whether or not it makes good sense for governments to encourage democratic expansion across the globe.[21] Kissinger, for instance, sees democracy promotion as "an unnecessary intrusion into the otherwise normal conduct of diplomatic relations," whereas Tansey argues that democracy promotion has been adopted to advance human rights protections and encourage stability, reconciliation, and peace building in post-conflict societies (Cox et al., 2003, p. 6; Kissinger, 1999; Tansey, 2009, p. 23). Kennan (1985) famously insisted that democracy promotion was simply moralism that could prove disastrous for governments that pursued it as a foreign policy objective.

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[19] Whitehead (2001c) refers to these mechanisms more broadly as contagion (international demonstration effects), control (interventionism), and consent (transnational social and political linkages). Schmitter (2001, p. 29) complements Whitehead's analysis by including conditionality.
[20] Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative primarily featured demonstration effects and material aid.
[21] Burnell, 2000; Huber, 2015; Kim, 2014; Miller, 2010; Schmitter, 2001, p. 47; Walker et al., 2015; Zanotti, 2011.

Fewer analyses, though, focus on what makes democracy promotion efforts successful (Hyman, 2010; Wollack, 2010). Identifying the variables that contribute to successful democracy promotion and, likewise, undermine it is an unresolved task for researchers. This holds true, as well, for SSR, given that many of the lessons and theories about effective democracy promotion apply equally to the SSR literature. In the existing work on the subject, the predominant themes suggest that the nature of transnational linkages between domestic actors and international networks holds the clue to more effective democracy promotion strategies. Wolff (2015), for instance, underscores the relevance of power dynamics between external donors and the domestic political processes of the target country. When the pro-democracy policies of an external actor favour existing domestic balances of power, local political elites tend to embrace them, bestowing upon donors the power to shape democratisation processes.

Conversely, Leininger (2010, pp. 64, 71) believes that international democracy promoters in many cases actually become part of the struggle for power and influence within the domestic system they seek to affect, inadvertently undermining local and organic democratisation processes. A growing body of literature on the importance of external support for popular empowerment stresses collaboration and coordination with local civil society. In her comparative piece on US human rights policy, for instance, Sikkink (2001) finds that successful democracy assistance efforts were those that supported well-organised domestic civil society in the target country. This variable highlights a view shared by Beichelt, Merkel, and Schimmelfennig (2014). Although this proposition is not necessarily controversial, governments with limited resources for democracy promotion must often prioritise among competing domestic entities in recipient countries. In this context, theories that emphasise the importance of elite sectors and those that assign greater weight to the popular sectors in democratisation processes may represent competing paradigms.

Even when democracy promotion efforts are comprehensive, all-inclusive, and well resourced, other considerations may ultimately undermine democratisation. Chiefly, the contradictory priorities of the donor countries oftentimes distract or invalidate democracy promotion strategies. For example, the US government's preference for anti-communist regimes in its sphere of influence overrode US democracy promotion ambitions throughout the Cold War. Equally, many analysts have paid considerable attention to the tension between the political and economic dimensions of liberalisation. Whereas political liberalisation endeavours to empower the masses and channel power through state institutions, the neoliberal economic policies preferred by the world's leading democracies tend to have an opposite effect—reducing sovereignty, exposing domestic policies to external control, and undermining state institutions (Beate, 2012; Smith, 2003a).[22] In the case of SSR, stabilisation of a tenuous and dangerous political environment often takes priority over the promotion of democratic accountability. Thus, the "competing objectives of democracy promotion" has emerged as a field that links theories of politics, economics, and international relations.

Grimm and Leininger (2012, p. 398) distinguish between extrinsic conflicts (i.e., democratisation versus peace building or regime stability) and intrinsic conflicts (i.e., local ownership of reforms versus donor control, free and fair elections versus negotiated power-sharing, top-down institution building versus grassroots empowerment) in democracy promotion. Extrinsic conflicts tend to be the most intractable, and in practice, when democracy promotion and foreign policy goals conflict, the foreign policy goals of external actors almost invariably take precedence—particularly when those goals relate to national security objectives (Grimm and Leininger, 2012, p. 408; Whitehead, 2001c). However, Shaw (2007, p. 79) suggests that in the post-9/11 period, the objectives of democratisation, regional

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[22] These consequences are not necessarily unique to neoliberalism and, in fact, are characteristic of dependency economics in general.

security, and economic stability increasingly overlap in such a way that the pursuit of security does not necessarily conflict with democracy promotion efforts. She describes a political strategy that seeks to harmonise "extrinsic" foreign policy objectives. Building on the work of the "democratic peace" theorists, Smith (2003a) regards this fusion of objectives as "national security liberalism," or the complementary nature of US self-interest in security and stability, an expansion of US influence across the world, and morally correct foreign policy that promotes liberalisation and human rights.[23] The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) undertaken by US President George W. Bush (2001-2009) had at its core a belief that democracy promotion was in the strategic interest of the United States, and given the perceived nexus between democracy promotion and security, it is not surprising that SSR has figured prominently in US foreign policy in the twenty-first century (Nuñez, 2002).[24]

Security Sector Reform as International Democracy Promotion

Democratisation and SSR are logical strategies to create a stable international order that is conducive to a donor country's own interests in an interdependent world where spillover effects of instability can have far-reaching consequences. Like democracy, SSR is a normative concept shaped by Western political development that, by virtue of its implementation in many non-Western contexts, remains contested (Kümmel, 2003, pp. 68,

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[23] Seidelmann (2001) highlights that security is generally perceived as a necessary but not sufficient condition for democratisation. Even so, the relationship between security and democracy is not a direct causal link, as the democratic process within a state sets the conditions for security policy. Regardless, the link is in most cases one of high political relevance. These ideas are central to the literature on "democratic peace," in which theorists such as Doyle (1983) and Russett (1993) make arguments in favour of democratisation as a means of reducing incentives for conflict between governments; historically, there has been a strong correlation between democratic governance and peaceful relations with other democracies.

[24] According to US government figures, US legislators have authorised the spending of more than US$2 billion annually on foreign assistance funds dedicated to democracy promotion from 2006 to 2016 (Lawson and Epstein, 2017, p. 1). The administration of President Donald Trump (2016-20??) unsuccessfully proposed reducing this assistance, and democracy promotion has persisted as a nonpartisan US foreign policy objective for more than four decades.

87).[25] As such, there are a number of conceptual considerations about SSR worthy of mention, particularly because actors' normative attitudes about democratisation and SSR are highly influential in determining democratic regime survival or failure (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán, 2014, p. 6; Oosterveld and Galand, 2012).

First, SSR emerged as a new policy approach in the 1990s in response to a global re-conceptualisation of the term "security." Traditionally, political and economic development and security were considered separate policy spheres, but the global discourse at the end of the Cold War developed around the idea that the foundations for statehood are linked to a notion of "people-centred security" (Chappuis and Hänggi, 2009). Human security, which considers the wellbeing of individuals within states, became the new basis for Western military and political interventions in the 1990s, and the lines between state security and development ambitions became increasingly blurred. The 1994 *UN Human Development Report* defines human security as "safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression….and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life— whether in homes, in jobs or in communities" (p. 23). Human security defines the citizen experience of insecurity and injustice as the benchmark for SSR because, as Hänggi stresses, SSR differs from traditional security assistance and foreign aid by focusing on the effective provision of state and human security to democratising societies (Bakrania, 2014, p. 1; Hänggi, 2004, pp. 8–9).[26]

A second definitional consideration pertains to the complexity and politically charged nature of conceptualising the security sector. Drawing on the Westphalian roots of the international order, Chalmers defines the security sector as: "all those organisations which

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[25] Krempel (2014) notes that the export of Western standards to societies with different legal and cultural contexts may stall or stunt SSR objectives.

[26] Whitehead (2002, p. 172) posits that security is fundamentally a construct and that citizens of a democratic society must have a say in defining the parameters of the term, be it physical, economic, or environmental in nature. However, as Hernandez (2014, p. 45) concludes, the overwhelming task of addressing all of a society's major sources of perceived insecurity is what makes successful SSR so difficult.

have authority to use, or order the use of, force, or the threat of force, to protect the state and its citizens, as well as those civil structures that are responsible for their management and oversight" (2000, p. 6). In practical terms, these structures include statutory forces, nonstatutory forces, formal and informal justice institutions, oversight institutions (executive, legislative, judiciary, constitution, local government), and civil society (Perito and Kraut, 2016, pp. 41, 53–55). The literature refers to programmes that target this collection of actors as a "whole-of-government approach," and each of the principal actors theoretically has an important role to play in the adoption and implementation of SSR. The theory also emphasises the inevitable link between security and justice institutions; the strength and professionalism of these elements independently dictates the overall durability of the rule of law and the degree of democratic consolidation.

In a variety of contexts, though, donors and recipient governments also empower non-state armed actors such as paramilitary groups, private security companies, and civil militias to enact reforms and stabilise uncertain political environments (Heiduk, 2014b, p. 6; Rivard Piché, 2017). Non-state actors have contributed in inconsistent ways to SSR processes across the globe, and for this reason, Meharg and Arnusch express reservations about the inclusion of non-state armed actors in the conceptualisation of the security sector. In addition to being prone to criminalisation, predatory behaviour, and human rights abuses, these actors, if legitimised by SSR donors early on, may prove to be a risk to a long-term SSR agenda by undermining the state's authority and ownership of an SSR process (Abrahamsen, 2016, p. 288; Meharg and Arnusch, 2012).[27] In other instances, however, local non-state actors, such as informal justice providers or community watch groups, have contributed to stabilisation of contentious environments (US Agency for International Development et al., 2009, p. 4).

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[27] Abrahamsen suggests that donors pursue a "benign neglect" approach to non-state armed actors until the state can take over service provision fully or incorporate them formally into the security sector (2016).

Because the term "non-state armed actors" embraces a wide array of potential groups with varying degrees of legitimacy, researchers should exercise caution in including such actors under the SSR paradigm and evaluate their legitimacy to act on behalf of the state on a case-by-case basis.

A final conceptual point relates to the ultimate goal of SSR: an effective and accountable security sector that advances the consolidation of a liberal democratic model. Ironically, the desired result of SSR is an idealised outcome that even the security sectors in advanced liberal democracies have yet to achieve fully. For this reason, much of the literature has shifted in recent years to questioning whether SSR should be broadly liberal or even "post-liberal" in character (Donais, 2018, p. 32; Finkenbusch, 2016). Given such an elusive objective, SSR should, above all else, be understood as a component of a larger process of democratic consolidation, not an absolute end-point (Edmunds, 2003, p. 24). Treating democratic consolidation and SSR as dichotomous variables is inconsistent with the practical aims of these endeavours.[28] The relative open-endedness of democratisation is due, in part, to the normative and even relative understanding of the desired result; consolidation is an outcome that is neither fully stable nor entirely predetermined (Whitehead, 2002, pp. 28, 32). For this reason, security sector governance is so difficult to measure: threats and reform priorities are contextually dependent constructs and are shaped by the informal actions undertaken by local actors (Stojanović, 2012, p. 78). A more specific discussion of measuring the progress of SSR will be explored in Chapter 5, but as Von Bredow (2003, pp. 175–188) asserts, the aim of SSR should be to increase the protective role of the security sector to a maximum, while reducing the risk of endangering democracy to a minimum. This

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[28] Sedra points out that three competing schools of thought on the ambition of SSR have emerged: the monopoly school (state-centric, liberal norms), the "good enough" school (meets the minimum criteria of Weberian statehood), and the hybrid school (embraces informal and non-state authority) (2018, p. 58). Pearce (2017), for one, explores the logic of the hybrid school and offers a theory for violence reduction that relies not on the centralised monopolization of violence but rather on social action and on a recognition of the social dynamics that reproduce violence over time.

philosophical approach, while underscoring the inherent tension in SSR, is a useful standard by which to judge the success of such efforts.

This tension extends beyond the conceptualisation of SSR and is apparent in the real-world implementation SSR activities. According to Schröder and Kode (2012, p. 33), SSR fuses two strategies that the international community has traditionally pursued separately: fostering stable and strong security sectors in states with limited enforcement capacity and promoting checks on arbitrary executive power by enhancing the rule of law (i.e., effectiveness and accountability). They insist, however, that the simultaneous pursuit of these two goals results in a paradox that is difficult to overcome: SSR, which sets out to achieve the state's monopoly of force, requires a legitimate legal system to be in place to manage societal conflict, which in turn requires peace and stability—both the overarching SSR objectives in the first place (2012, pp. 38–42). This "chicken-or-egg" dilemma leaves SSR donors answering the question of whether they should pursue security/stabilisation first or institutionalisation first—or more frequently about how to pursue both objectives in concert with finite resources. In practice, as Heupel points out, external donors tend to follow a "train-and-equip" strategy of security assistance that elevates the security priority over efforts to bind it to good governance principles such as accountability and civilian control (2012, p. 166). Likewise, Sedra (2010, p. 102) concludes that SSR has yet to produce any total success stories because there exists a gap between the policy and practice of SSR. Resolving this conflict—or at least finding the right balance between or sequencing of the two priorities—may very well be the key to promoting successful SSR.

Given a proliferation of international state-building missions and democracy promotion efforts since the 1990s, much of the current SSR literature focuses on donor designs of SSR programmes in evaluating the success of SSR initiatives (Brzoska, 2006; Heiduk, 2014b, p. 8). Consistent with the international dimensions of democratisation

literature, the body of scholarship on SSR suggests that reform efforts are also impacted indirectly by a number of external contextual factors, including the international security order, the international economic and monetary order, and the time horizons set out by donor entities (Kümmel, 2003, pp. 71–73). According to Kümmel, these factors serve as background variables that enhance or restrict the options of donor and recipient actors during SSR.

Kümmel (2003, p. 70) acknowledges, though, that the international element alone has little explanatory value. Modifying the predominant donor-driven narrative, he explains that the prospects for SSR improve when a favourable internal context and a favourable external environment coincide, thereby creating the conditions that encourage local ownership of SSR processes. In the literature's discussion of development policies broadly speaking, researchers ascribe a central role to "political will" as a critical determinant of success or failure (Giraldo, 2017, pp. 75–76; Moderan, 2015). Paul et al. emphasise the importance of this factor—and particularly the commitment of both senior ministerial and mid-level operational officials— for the success of a given engagement, and as Biddle et al. note, the most successful instances of US-sponsored SSR occurred when there was sufficient "interest alignment" between US goals and political forces in recipient nations (Biddle et al., 2017; Paul et al., 2013, pp. 18– 19). Political will, although a contested and often vague concept, refers to "[a] sufficient set of decision makers… [w]ith a common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda [who are]…committed to supporting…[a] commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution" (Post et al., 2010, p. 671).[29] One of the principal objectives of this study, then, is to unpack what elements constitute "sufficient" decision-making authority and

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[29] Keane and Downes emphasise, "Perhaps it is better to understand ownership in terms of building a constituency in support of reform, as a means of ensuring that it remains high on the agenda and that there is domestic political and public pressure to implement proposed reforms" (2012, p. 2).

commitment to engage in SSR—or, rather, how to encourage coalitions that permit reform policies to prevail and succeed (Giraldo, 2017, p. 80).

A focus on local ownership and domestic conditions in recipient countries as the keys to SSR has become the majority opinion in the literature today (Ball, 2014; Caparini, 2010; Gordon, 2014; Mobekk, 2010). Despite this widely held belief, surprisingly little scholarship focuses on the internal factors that create a context conducive for SSR and specifically the development of political will to develop and sustain SSR long term in ways that enhance security sector governance. The literature has largely ignored the agency of the governments and civil societies undergoing and implementing reform (Donais, 2018; Jackson and Bakrania, 2018). Although the research on domestic factors and broader democracy promotion strategies and international aid is relevant, the security sector demands special treatment given its unique position as a guarantor of order and an arbiter of state power through its possession of the means of state violence (Boone, 1996). At present, only a handful of scholars has assessed the local factors that improve the efficaciousness of SSR, and Schröder and Chappuis identify "local agency and domestic power constellations" as the frontier of the research agenda on SSR (2014, p. 133).

Some of the initial theories regarding the domestic factors that affect SSR point to the impact of social conditions in destabilising SSR efforts. Meharg and Arnusch indicate, for example, that global economic and food crises, high poverty and unemployment rates, HIV/AIDS epidemics, the availability of small arms, and land disputes impede SSR processes (2012, pp. 56–57). Other authors ascribe the failure of SSR to a donor's inability to alter the local structural impediments for the adoption of reforms (Heiduk, 2014a, p. 234). Berg (2012) finds that political resistance, weak state capacity, instability, and ongoing violence—factors that undermine SSR—are tied more specifically to two structural variables: the breadth and fragmentation of the ruling party coalition and the distribution of the state's

revenue base. He theorises that democracy promotion and SSR are most likely to take root when ruling parties have a wide, diverse base and restricted access to revenue. Under these conditions, a recipient government, feeling constrained, is more likely to develop inclusive institutions to accommodate competing factions and to make democratic compromises to secure much-needed financing.

Conversely, Kocak and Kode (2014) determine that in some fragmented political systems partisan division actually affords military and law enforcement actors opportunities to maintain and strengthen their internal role as arbiters of disputes between opposing political forces. Powell et al. (2018) find that maintaining moderate to high defence budgets and authorising the acquisition of new military technologies are ways to reduce the risk that security forces challenge or undermine civilian democratic rule. This line of thinking complements another prevalent conclusion in the literature: authoritarian institutional cultures are rarely conductive to SSR (Hanlon, 2016, p. 91). Similarly, SSR has struggled to take root in political systems that feature clientelism.[30] In societies conditioned by authoritarian legacies or patronage politics, domestic actors tend to determine the outcomes of externally supported SSR by "borrowing selectively from external models of security governance instead of adopting them wholesale" (Schröder et al., 2014, p. 216). According to Schröder et al., the results of these "hybrid security orders" are largely unexplored, and the manner in which they shape democratic consolidation remains unclear.[31]

The Centre for Security Governance undertook a multi-year, comparative research project of "orthodox" SSR cases—rather, those that by design primarily conform to the

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[30] On how inequality contributes to clientelism and undemocratic governance, see Ziegler Rogers, 2016.
[31] Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 4) argue that the assumption that states should move in a democratic direction—one that underpins the literature on democratic consolidation—lacks an empirical foundation. Regimes referred to as flawed, incomplete, or transitional were actually "hybrid regimes," and more often than not reverted or stagnated along the path to full democracy. However, they found that hybrid regimes with strong linkages to the West experienced greater democratic consolidation—an argument that further underscores the importance of international diffusion effects and democracy promotion.

OECD model of SSR—with the aim of identifying successful, alternative approaches to reform that played out in the production of hybrid security orders ("Exploring the Transition," 2016).[32] However, much work remains on this front, particularly as some of the major theorists in the field recognise the need for a reconceptualisation of SSR based on empirical successes and failures—prompting Sedra to call for a "second-generation SSR" ("Exploring the Transition," 2016; Sedra, 2010).

The most recent academic work on SSR emphasises the role of indigenous state institutions in the process of SSR (Detzner, 2017; Egnell and Haldén, 2009; Jackson, 2011; Kurtenbach, 2018). It is within this line of inquiry that the author situates the research of this study. As Detzner describes, ensuring sufficient "political demand for SSR" among local actors is the most pronounced commonality among successful cases (2017, p. 123). This approach captures the agency of local actors in the formulation, implementation, and success or failure of SSR. Jackson continues:

> As such, many within this field have a tendency to *over*estimate the transformative abilities of powerful external actors acting on very different local structures. SSR appears unable to explain resistance to programmes beyond discussions around "spoilers" since it only truly recognizes itself as being a technical process. For all the discussions in the literature on politics being paramount, the emphasis here is very much on finding "entry points, and those who would be sympathetic to the aims of SSR…." [emphasis in original text] (2018, p. 5)

Jackson and Bakrania recognise the importance of hidden politics and linkages between different stakeholders and, especially, of "non-linear approaches." Such SSR designs understand the role of external actors as one of assisting in establishing a framework within which local societies can pursue SSR on their own terms (Chandler, 2013; Jackson and

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[32] The project website highlights, "In spite of the SSR model's mixed record, SSR stakeholders and observers are not calling for its jettisoning, but rather a refashioning of the model's core methods and good practices to make it more applicable in conflict-affected environments."

Bakrania, 2018; Welch, 2015).[33] Some of the principal questions this study seeks to answer include: How does a political actor (e.g. the executive branch, international donors) convince other relevant stakeholders to support SSR or, at the very least, not impede SSR (Department for International Development, 2004, p. 4)?[34] Which stakeholders represent the best opportunities or risks for national leadership engaged in SSR? Can hybrid security orders produce reforms that are perceived as legitimate domestically and satisfy Western liberal democratic standards for security sector governance?

Conclusion

As this chapter demonstrates, SSR figures as a central part of democratic consolidation and of the democracy promotion efforts of external actors. Despite these links, much of the SSR literature to date ascribes inordinate responsibility to the external dimension, underappreciating the agency of domestic actors on SSR outcomes. One of the most significant gaps concerns an understanding of the dynamic between democracy promotion efforts encouraged from the outside and local politics (Grimm and Leininger, 2012, p. 395). This study seeks to help fill that gap.

Furthermore, this study proposes an underutilised methodological approach in evaluating SSR. The bulk of knowledge on SSR comes from case studies, which offer only a limited capacity for generalisation and theoretical development; the wealth of conceptual work on the subject, while prescriptive, tends to be too abstract to fit the often messy post-conflict or post-authoritarian contexts in which SSR is likely to take place (Baranyi, 2019; Coppedge, 2012, p. 115; Heupel, 2012, p. 163). As explained in the following chapter, this study embraces the comparative method. Comparative histories are useful for identifying and

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[33] Jackson and Bakrania state, "A non-linear approach recognizes that externally imposed liberal structures sit on top of the real underlying politics of states, rather than being neutral arbiters" (2018, p. 21).

[34] Post et al. (2010, pp. 659–662) shift the discussion of political will to mapping veto players. They encourage researchers to focus on legislatures, bureaucracies, judiciaries, and parties.

testing possible causes for the incidence of particular phenomena and for isolating macro-causes in highly complex causal relationships among observable cases (Coppedge, 2012, p. 140). The themes explored in this thesis will prove a valuable addition to the nascent body of literature on the domestic factors that facilitate or impede SSR and to the larger, more established scholarship on the relationship between democracy promotion and democratic consolidation.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Ontological Approach

In formulating research design, scholars should take into consideration the strengths and limitations of the various approaches to political analysis. Methodological trade-offs are characteristic of social sciences research design, and as Brady and Collier (2010, p. 22) maintain, both quantitative and qualitative methods have shared standards of inference, suggesting that neither approach possesses a monopoly on scientific truth. The ultimate test for the researcher, then, is to select an approach that is appropriate for the phenomenon under examination, taking into account the goals of the research, the current state of theory, data constraints, and the extent of the universe of cases. This chapter explores these themes by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the primary methodological tools available and by explaining the suitability of the comparative method for explaining variation on the dependent variable of this study. This chapter also reflects on the use of the principles of historical institutionalism (HI) as a means of processing the qualitative data used in comparing outcomes in Colombia and Mexico and concludes with a discussion of the potential biases inherent in the research design.

A Survey of Research Methods

Although King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) intended for their influential work *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* to serve as a bridge between quantitative and qualitative approaches, the discipline's continued preference for statistical regression studies has sustained a methodological divide. Their provocative attempt to provide a common language and a unified logic to the social sciences—albeit one rooted in an inherent bias for quantitative approaches—elicited a deluge of responses in the years that followed, and a number of these rejoinders have affirmed the value of qualitative methods as a distinct but equally valid approach to social research. The debate over methods is unlikely

to reach meaningful conclusion, but political scientists overwhelmingly agree that both methodological approaches have limitations with respect to their ability to explain causality and inter-variable relations. While quantitative and qualitative studies both attempt to test and hone theory, George and Bennett (2005, p. 6) remind researchers that the two approaches diverge on case selection strategies, the operationalisation of variables, and the application of deductive or inductive logic. These differences suggest that researchers can expect to make trade-offs in the pursuit of causal inference between generality and specificity, parsimony and nuance, and theory generation and hypothesis testing.

Quantitative studies rely on a large number of cases (i.e., large N) to test hypotheses about political outcomes, and as with experimental research designs, the underlying logic of quantitative methods is deductive. Because quantitative studies often consider the whole universe of applicable cases to improve generalisability, researchers can better avoid case selection bias, which potentially distorts results. The broader scope of quantitative studies also improves a researcher's ability to refer to phenomena in more parsimonious terms. Ragin (1989) lauds large-N studies for their replicability across contexts and greater capacity to achieve universality. Correlation, after all, demonstrates probabilistic relationships, which provide a basis for causal inference. Furthermore, large-N studies are especially useful for identifying deviant cases—those cases that do not conform to the line of regression and which can be analysed qualitatively with the aim of refining theory.

However, large-N statistical analysis presents some notable drawbacks. Chiefly, large-N studies sacrifice depth and richness—qualities that have implications for theory development (Tarrow, 1995, p. 472). George and Bennett highlight the importance of "thick" descriptive analysis for examining concept formulation and causal complexity (2005, pp. 12-13, 21). In assuming unit homogeneity, quantitative studies, in fact, fail to account for equifinality (which occurs when different causal patterns lead to similar outcomes) and

interaction effects (linkages between cases, intervening variables, etc.). Regressions estimate an average of the causal logics in play rather than capture the central causal logic in a relationship among variables (Collier, et al., 2010a). Thus, a commitment to generality stunts the discovery of new observations that are useful for the generation of theory, and statistical methods do not possess an inherent means of identifying new hypotheses to account for anomalies. Large-*N* studies are also highly susceptible to conceptual stretching, a tendency to categorise cases by vague conceptualizations that fail to account for differences of degree and diminish the actual attributes of the concepts under consideration. Statistical studies are further limited by a researcher's access to equal data for the universe of cases under consideration—a tall order that often results in the presentation of indicators that approximate but do not directly reflect the phenomena under observation. Significantly, these implicit assumptions make quantitative studies susceptible to problems of measurement validity (King, et al., 1994, p. 44).

Indeed, although the quantitative study is a robust test of existing hypotheses, it has limited value in the construction of new theory. Qualitative methods help fill this gap by allowing researchers to consider causality in deviant or nonconforming cases, which aids in the identification of new variables and hypotheses. Bennett and Elman (2006b) recommend case studies, in particular, for phenomena that exhibit causal complexity such as interaction effects and equifinality. Whereas statistical methods indicate correlation between variables, case studies permit the examination of causality in detail, encouraging inductive scrutiny of suspected causal mechanisms and ruling out spurious causal mechanisms (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 21). Nevertheless, case studies, by focusing intensively on a single instance of an outcome, are an inadequate approach to test hypotheses systematically—the overriding ambition of social sciences research.

The small-*N*, or comparative, methodological approach addresses some of the main shortcomings of its rivals. Comparative research designs endeavour to provide substantive analysis of political outcomes through case studies, while explaining similarities or differences in outcomes across units. Small-*N* comparisons facilitate conceptual specificity, while achieving lower levels of abstraction than statistical studies and broader contingent generalisations than single case studies (Mair, 1998, p. 17). When theory does not fit an unexplored context, small-*N* comparativists endeavour to modify theory to account for new findings and operationalise complex concepts—tasks for which statistical approaches are not well suited. Lijphart asserts that the comparative method is an "imperfect substitute" for the statistical method, as researchers must contend with too many variables and a small number of cases (1971, p. 685). Nevertheless, he recognises that some phenomena do not lend themselves to statistical analysis—for which he offers small-*N* researchers guidance on case selection.

Case selection is the principal challenge in qualitative methods, as researchers must select cases that support the goal of understanding causality in a larger class of similar cases. Seawright and Gerring (2008) recommend maximizing diversity of outcomes when deciding upon cases to include in small-*N* designs. That is, a researcher can make the strongest case for representativeness by using cases that include a full range of variance on the variables under consideration. However, Geddes (1990) warns against selecting cases based on the perceived outcomes on the dependent variable to avoid biasing conclusions. Such selection bias is an inherent risk in small-*N* studies, but selecting cases on the dependent variable can be useful to the extent that a researcher aims to determine whether variables are necessary or sufficient conditions for the replication of an outcome (Bennett and Elman, 2006b, pp. 461-463). Qualitative studies should avoid the selection of cases for which independent and dependent variables relate according to a prescribed hypothesis (i.e., a researcher selects cases that

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conform to theoretical expectations), but informed case selection allows researchers to build intentionally studies that would seem to challenge existing theory. Careful and deliberate case selection can even function as a substitute for the experimental control of large-*N* studies. As explored more fully in Chapter 3 of this study, the universe of cases of U.S.-sponsored SSR is limited, but informed case selection nevertheless proved critical to eliminating cases of U.S. security cooperation that failed to meet the threshold for SSR or failed to match other cases on important contextual and background variables.

Methodology

The Comparative Method and the Most Similar Systems Design

To identify the domestic conditions that shape the level of support required to pursue successful SSR, this study centres on a comparison of two cases of US-supported SSR that meet the selection criteria for SSR but diverge in terms of their outcomes on the dependent variable, security sector governance. The author employs the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), which, like Mill's Method of Difference, requires that comparative cases be as similar in as many ways as possible to control for extraneous variance (Mill, 1843 [1882], p. 455). According to Przeworski and Teune (1970, pp. 32–34), inter-systemic differences constitute explanatory factors for variation on the dependent variable in an MSSD study. The MSSD is appropriate for comparisons that produce different outcomes despite similar contexts and thus helps researchers eliminate potential sufficient causes, or those that when present meet the threshold for producing a given outcome. In this tradition, Lijphart (1971, p. 690) recommends matching cases with comparable contexts so that background variables may serve as controls. Although it is impossible to keep constant all potential explanatory factors, this logic remains useful for examining cases where variations occur at the systemic

level and for qualitative studies that permit researchers to address causal complexity thoroughly (Anckar, 2008, pp. 390–395).

As highlighted previously, the small-*N* comparative study facilitates the conceptual specificity and intensiveness of the case study method, while achieving lower levels of abstraction than statistical studies (Mair, 1998, p. 317). Moreover, the inductive reasoning associated with small-*N* cases that make use of MSSD is invaluable for concept formation and in generating hypotheses for under-theorised phenomena like SSR; having more variables than cases is not a problem if seen through this lens (Collier et al., 2010a, p. 10). Comparative histories tend to generate probabilistic, partial, conditional, and provisional theories, but for some concepts, conclusions of this sort are an acceptable and a best compromise (Coppedge, 2012, pp. 5, 129–141). More specifically, qualitative comparison is a useful methodological approach for understanding "long-term, complex, dynamic, and partially open-ended" processes such as democratisation and SSR (Whitehead, 2002, p. 204).

Interviews

The author identified the three independent variables examined in this study—the degree of private sector support for SSR, the extent of inter-party consensus on the issue, and centralised (versus decentralised) institutional design for the security sector—inferentially. As with most inductive approaches, fieldwork was central to the development of the variables examined in this study and to the identification of the critical junctures and path dependencies exhibited by the Colombian and Mexican cases. The author conducted 94 semi-structured elite interviews with government officials, civil society representatives, consultants, and academics in Colombia, Mexico, and Washington, D.C. from August 2017 to March 2018

(Bryman, 2012, pp. 415-429, 468-499; Dexter, 1970).[35] These individuals were selected for their expertise on security and justice issues in Colombia and Mexico, and the author made use of "snowball sampling," or a sampling method in which one interviewee provided the researcher with contact information for other potential interviewees (Patton, 1990; Atkinson and Flint 2001; Cohen and Arieli, 2001).

Critics of snowball sampling argue that the method is unable to ensure sample diversity, as such samples may underrepresent those groups least keen to cooperate with a study or may exclude voices that lack integration into large social networks (Kirchherr and Charles, 2018). However, for this study, the author ensured via "purposive sampling," or intentional selection of interviewees on the basis of their relevance to the research questions, that the views herein represent a wide gamut of philosophical, ideological, socioeconomic, demographic, geographic, and professional perspectives (Bryman, 2012, pp. 415-416). Such non-probability sampling is especially useful in exploratory, inductive research, and to overcome potential researcher bias and ensure maximum diversity of opinions, the author relied on expert elicitation. This study features quotes and ideas from political figures from ruling and opposition parties; experts from government, academia, the private sector, and civil society; combatants and ex-combatants from opposing sides of conflict; perpetrators of human rights abuses and their victims; and experts in capital cities and provincial cities alike. Taking these perspectives into account, the independent variables of this study were among the most frequent facilitators of and obstacles to SSR mentioned by the individuals interviewed.

All interviewees consented to participation in this study in writing after receiving a thorough explanation of the purposes of the study and of how the author intended to protect

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[35] "Elite" does not refer to the high social or economic status of an interviewee but rather points to the fact that an individual was selected for an interview due to his or her experience or position in relation to the research subject (Hochschild, 2009).

personal data, in accordance with a review by the UCL Research Ethics Committee. The author did not utilise a recording device during interviews and, instead, transcribed quotes and information in notebooks that were then transferred to electronic documents. Interviewees are identified throughout this study by name and position, unless they specifically requested anonymity, in which case the author protected their data in password-protected Word documents held in UCL systems. In instances of anonymity, interviewees are identified only by a general title, position, or profession. A complete list of interviewees is available in the Appendix.

Process Tracing and Historical Institutionalism

The dearth of scholarship on the domestic factors that influence SSR outcomes necessitated an inductive approach, and after evaluating the two cases preliminarily through the lens of the MSSD, the author relied on process tracing to compensate for the imprecision of the MSSD. Process tracing is an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic evidence (Collier, 2011, p. 824). In light of real-world complexity, process tracing permits researchers to test for causality in ways that simple correlation precludes, and it "is particularly effective when a researcher anticipates that the potential interaction of terms would be difficult or impossible to theorise upon deductively before developing intimate knowledge" of cases (Bennett and Elman, 2006a, p. 263). Process tracing also helps small-N researchers mitigate the risk of mistaking a spurious correlation for a causal relationship by requiring that they identify event sequences and intervening mechanisms (Bennett, 2010, pp. 208-209). Such an approach allows scholars to identify previously unconsidered variables while adjudicating among alternative hypotheses.

By conducting a close examination of several cases of SSR in Latin America, the author recognised a pattern of correlation between positive values on the three independent

variables of this study and a positive value on the dependent variable of this study, security sector governance. Despite the overall correlation, it is possible that each of the independent variables had a differentiated impact on the two elements of security sector governance (effectiveness and accountability), and in particular, process tracing facilitated the author's ability to identify the interaction effects among the three independent variables. These two facets are addressed in this study's conclusion. Capturing such causal complexity is, indeed, one of the great strengths of comparative inquiry, and as such, a prominent sub-field in qualitative methodological approaches centres on a theoretical approach known as historical institutionalism (HI).

HI is a framework that understands social and political causality as a function of historical contingency and institutional arrangements. The original theorists in this field—Thelen, Steinmo, Pierson, and Skocpol—borrow from economic theory in professing that institutions, bound by their own internal histories and moulded by externalities, shape political conduct and change across time (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002; Thelen, 1999; Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). The HI approach sees institutions as the mediating bodies that absorb "exogenous shocks" and react according to institutional logic, thereafter determining political outcomes. This approach rests on a theory of path dependence, which explains that previous historical events determine the options of an actor (i.e., institution) in the present and consequently constrain its behaviour. Pierson refers to one interpretation of this principle as the idea of "increasing returns," also known as self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes (2000, p. 252). He states, "In an increasing returns process, the probability of further steps along the same path increases with each move down that path. This is because the relative benefits of the current activity compared with other possible options increase over time."

In sum, HI scholars seek to explain how the same causal mechanisms yield distinct results across time and space through an investigation of the historical roots of institutional

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behaviour. This quality makes HI a complementary framework for comparative histories. The assumptions of HI dictate that political institutions take on a life of their own according to their historical acquisition of rules, norms, routines, and conventions. For this reason, HI is often associated with the expression "history matters." Arthur summarises that path-dependent processes are unpredictable and potentially inefficient—that is, outcomes produced by an institutional decision may generate lower pay-offs than other choices—but inflexible to change the further down a path they move; early events and even accidental events, no matter how small, progressively constrain institutional options (Arthur, 1994). Contingency is the defining quality of path dependent arguments: relatively small events, if they occur at the right moment or "critical juncture," can result in significant and enduring consequences (Pierson, 2000, p. 263). The timing and sequencing of events, as well, affect the path and, therefore, the outcome.

Democratisation studies is a field devoted to understanding a continuous process of institutional change, and given the causal complexity and open-endedness of democratic consolidation, process tracing can serve as a meaningful tool for researchers attempting to explain discrepancies in the outcomes of normative and indefinite processes like SSR (Barrenechea et al., 2016). As Falleti (2010, p. 20) notes, the comparative sequential method uncovers and specifies the causal mechanisms that link main events to the process under study and compares the resulting sequences to explain the sources of variance in the outcomes of interest. This study employs the HI research design as a means of understanding why SSR in Colombia and Mexico resulted in distinct outcomes for security sector governance despite similar exogenous influences (i.e., domestic pressure for reform and US support for SSR). The conclusions of this study do not seek to predict future SSR outcomes, yet there is rich explanatory value with abundant policy relevance in identifying the specific

factors that reinforced the path toward a positive outcome in Colombia and a suboptimal one in Mexico.

Like all theoretical approaches in the social sciences, HI is not a panacea for social and political understanding and is prone to limitations. One of the most striking shortcomings of HI is that casual complexity and contingency make the replication of casual pathways empirically unlikely (Steinmo, 2008, p. 175). The predictive value of HI studies is, by design, low. Moreover, in understanding political outcomes as the result of socially constructed sets of rules and norms, HI can tend toward constructivist arguments that rarely result in bold theories of universal application. At best, HI permits researchers to arrive at middle-range theories about social and political phenomena. In this aspect, it mimics the theoretical ambition of the qualitative comparative method. Furthermore, the self-reinforcing tendencies of path dependence are often more helpful in explaining political stability than change or transformation. HI relies quite heavily on external influences to account for institutional change and does not readily accept internal characteristics of institutions that generate change internally (Hay, 2002, p. 15). Capoccia agrees with this view and notes that the literature is increasingly coming to terms with the role of agency in institutional development in a way that seeks to understand how institutions learn to renegotiate their rules and norms (Capoccia, 2016; Thelen, 2003). Bridging this gap between social change and institutional change is no longer necessarily a limitation but an opportunity for HI scholars.

Research Philosophy

Research bias is an inherent risk in the social sciences. Although some bias may be introduced in the research design through case selection or in operationalising and measuring variables, another more obvious but challenging bias is that which the researcher brings to his or her subject of inquiry (Hammersley and Gomm, 1997). Though researchers may never be

able to extinguish fully the unconscious subjective treatment of their research interests, it is necessary to identify potential sources of prejudice and incessantly question the assumptions that such bias may introduce. In this study, one potential source of researcher bias relates to the author's privileged access to the phenomena under analysis. As an active duty US naval officer from 2002 to 2015, the author represented the US government in places as far afield as Mindanao, Brussels, and Bogotá. Military deployments in support of Plan Colombia objectives in 2010, 2015, and 2017 and a yearlong Council on Foreign Relations fellowship at the US Embassy in Honduras in 2015 provided the author with direct exposure to the democracy promotion policies and SSR programmes under evaluation. Additionally, internships at the US Defense Intelligence Agency—Counternarcotics-Trafficking Division (2005), the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics (2005, 2006), and the US Southern Command (2007) afforded him insider information that was critical for understanding of the complexities of SSR. These experiences collectively enriched and nuanced the author's perspective, but they also shaped his relationship with the subject matter at hand. For instance, the author found Department of Defense interventions on behalf of SSR to be more efficient than civilianised programming implemented by the Department of State—even though he recognises the long-term importance of more methodical and deliberate interventions focused on institution building. The author takes his responsibility of objectivity seriously and vigorously questions his assumptions throughout this work but would be remiss not to mention this potential source of bias.

Perhaps the most fundamental bias these experiences bring to bear on this study is a normative belief in the ability of government to deliver solutions to social problems or dilemmas. Such faith, however, is customary in political and international relations research and, in fact, philosophically undergirds the work of much political theory. Nau summarises the potentially fruitful relationship between academia and policymaking. He states:

> New academic ideas have come out of public service as
> often as academic ideas have influenced policy-making….
> Scholarship and statesmanship, theory and practice, the
> academy and policy worlds, while they are different, are
> nevertheless joined at the hip, and neither can succeed,
> even within its own realm, without the other. (2010,
> pp. 635–636)

The aim in this study, as in others like it, is to provide prescription to inform strategies for more efficacious administration and implementation of SSR policies. Although this guiding principle, too, remains open for contestation, not capitalising on the inevitable link between scholarship and the policy dimension in this way risks missing an opportunity to influence the imperfect designs and processes that drive political science research agendas.

Conclusion

This chapter clarifies the methodological and ontological approaches utilised in this study on SSR. Given the theoretical gaps highlighted in Chapter 1 and the limited universe of cases that meet the conceptual specificity of the phenomenon in question, a small-*N* research design and, in particular, the MSSD are the most apt methodological tools for isolating the domestic circumstances in countries undergoing SSR that most affect outcomes on security sector governance. The following chapter explores more fully the author's strategy for case selection in light of such limitations and underscores the suitability of the MSSD for an evaluation of SSR under Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative.

Chapter 3: Taking on the Security Sector: US Support for Democratic Consolidation in Colombia and Mexico

The objective of this chapter is to explain why SSR in Colombia and Mexico, as framed by Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative respectively, represent compelling cases for comparison. First, the author highlights the importance of selecting two cases with the same benefactor, the US government, as a means of controlling for contextual variables that might otherwise skew variation on the dependent variable, security sector governance. The chapter then turns to why, among all of the instances of US-sponsored SSR in the twenty-first century, Colombia and Mexico are ideal for a small-*N* comparative study. Then, the author qualifies the theoretical ambition of this analysis by summarising the main similarities and differences between the two cases, concluding that Colombia and Mexico match on the most relevant background factors and that process tracing in these "most similar systems" helps illuminate the variables that most significantly affected support for SSR.

US-Sponsored Security Sector Reform in the Twenty-First Century

International organisations like the UN, EU, and the OECD originally articulated multilateral SSR agendas, yet national governments have been the principal implementing agents of SSR initiatives. The governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, in particular, created specialised intra-governmental coordinating bodies to engage in SSR abroad in places like Moldova, Sudan, Somalia, and Haiti. Additionally, the extent of the United States' bilateral security relationships and wide-ranging economic and political interests worldwide is unrivalled by those of any other government, making the United States an important sponsor and implementer of SSR programmes. In the US government's lexicon, "building partner capacity" and "defense institution building" have become especially salient missions for the US Department of Defense since 2010 (Blair, 2017; Giraldo, 2017, pp. 75–76). The

Security Governance Initiative (SGI), established by the US government in 2014, is one global programme that formalises the effort to "align partner priorities with US national interests, resources, and expertise to enhance the management, oversight, and accountability of the security and justice sectors" (Chalfin and Thomas-Greenfield, 2017, p. 183).

Three characteristics render the US government an especially attractive partner for states engaged in SSR. First, the magnitude of US investment in SSR dwarfs the contributions of other governments, thereby improving the likelihood that dramatic changes take root in a country's security sector. Although funding is not the only critical factor in SSR initiatives, resources are fundamental to success. Second, the United States has the means to intervene in SSR on a large scale without a broad, multilateral coalition of international partners, which facilitates more rapid implementation of programming by reducing obstacles to consensus and the bureaucratic hurdles inherent in multilateral efforts (Magen and McFaul, 2009, pp. 23–24). Third, the US government has been willing to pursue continuous security sector engagement with partner nations over extended periods, affording US agencies the time and flexibility to renegotiate reforms to account for local context in ways that would make the reforms more sustainable. Thus, US-supported SSR efforts represent a promising research field for scholars interested in SSR, and in addition to featuring fragile states beleaguered by internal threats to security and legitimacy, the cases considered for close examination in this study have a common benefactor, the US government. This commonality will also help control for contextual variables that could potentially skew analysis of variation between cases.

The United States as a Security Sector Reformer

In addition to a focus on a security sector's effectiveness and accountability, there is broad consensus that SSR initiatives must exhibit certain other features. These key principles

include sustainability of efforts over time; a holistic approach involving coordination among security providers, justice institutions, and civil society; technical knowledge; and local ownership of the reform process (Hanlon and Shultz, Jr., 2016b, pp. 23–26; *The OECD DAC Handbook*, 2011). SSR must also, unequivocally, emphasise and enhance the rule of law in recipient countries. Where these conditions exist, SSA constitutes SSR. Where one or more of these elements is missing, an SSA initiative will have a more difficult time meeting democratic objectives. Hanlon and Shultz (2016e, p. 196; see also Sedra, 2018, p. 53) contend that, despite having the capabilities to implement SSR, the US government has chiefly pursued capacity-building missions in the post-9/11 context to improve operational effectiveness of the security sector without demanding accountability. However, regardless of the US government's reluctance to use the term SSR, the reality is that recent US engagement with many security sectors overseas has amounted to SSR ("Fact Sheet: US Security Sector Assistance Policy," 2013). The authors of the Presidential Policy Directive on Security Sector Assistance admit that a principal reason US policymakers opted for the term "SSA" over "SSR" is because it would be more acceptable to political leadership in partner nations (Hanlon and Shultz, Jr., 2016b, p. 9). Nevertheless, US-sponsored SSA approaches across the globe have prominently featured the characteristics of SSR and should be evaluated as such.[36]

Although imperfect, coordination among a variety of national and international actors—a "whole-of-government" approach—is typical of US-sponsored SSR initiatives (Hanlon and Shultz, Jr., 2016e, pp. 23–26). The sum of US efforts across the bureaucracy and interagency coordination with a diversity of state and non-state actors in partner nations constitute what for other governments is plainly labelled as SSR. Furthermore, the design of US SSR programming involves the contracting of subject-matter experts with technical

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[36] For US policy guidance on SSR, see *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-07 Stability Operations*, 2011, *Field Manual (FM) 3-07 Stability Operations*, 2008; Ball, 2005a; US Agency for International Development et al., 2009.

knowledge to guide processes and train national actors who assume local ownership for

reforms and are responsible for "nationalising" processes following a drawdown of major US

assistance. Additionally, the provision of equipment and training to foreign military and

police forces is invariably conditioned on the host nation's demonstration of progress on

respect for human rights, democratic governance, and combatting corruption.[37] To this point,

support for rule of law construction is one of the key lines of bilateral engagement for all US

aid agencies operating overseas. US engagement also generally takes place over the span of

several years, if not decades, underscoring the US government's ambition to make SSR

sustainable (US Agency for International Development, 2010). In short, as the US

interagency guide for practitioners of SSR outlines, the United States possesses an SSR

mission and the essential capabilities to implement SSR, and in recent years, the US

government has pursued SSR in a variety of global contexts and to varying degrees of

success (US Agency for International Development et al., 2009).

Defining the Parameters of SSR: Recent Instances of US-Sponsored SSR

The following are the most important examples of US-supported SSR in the post-9/11

period, listed in order by the total money invested: Israel, Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, Lebanon,

the West Bank and Palestinian Territories, Colombia, Mexico, the Philippines, Liberia,

Georgia, Poland, Indonesia, Morocco, and Vietnam ("Congressional Budget Justification for

Foreign Operations," 2016; "Peace and Security Sectors," 2016).[38] Aid to the security sector

in each case was sustained over more than ten years, exceeding US$100 million total per

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[37] The so-called Leahy amendments (in reference to their sponsor, Senator Patrick Leahy [Democrat-Vermont]) are one such example. These amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the annual Department of Defense appropriations bills stipulate a prohibition on the furnishing of assistance to any foreign security force unit where there is credible information that members of the unit have committed gross violations of human rights and have not been held to account. A digital database of all foreign military and police recipients of US SSA, managed by the Department of State, facilitates human rights vetting requirements that support the implementation of the Leahy amendments. For additional information, see Serafino et al., 2014.
[38] This collection of recipient countries excludes instances of US crisis response and sustained US military operations overseas such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Ukraine.

country. Given that continued support over several years and hefty resource allocations are crucial to the success of a given SSR initiative, the level of investment in these 15 cases signals the high priority that the US government assigned to engaging the security sectors of these countries. These cases also represent a departure from standard assistance packages to dozens of other countries that range from US$50,000 to US$10 million annually. The financial threshold of US$100 million over ten years, albeit arbitrary, is a useful baseline for analysts interested in the countries where US policy makers made SSR a top priority among the competing aid objectives (e.g., economic development, environment, humanitarian assistance, etc.) in bilateral assistance. In the following section, the author explains why, from among these possible case studies, Colombia and Mexico represent a particularly instructive pairing for comparison.

Table 3.1: Planned US Foreign Assistance for Stabilisation Operations and Security Sector Reform (Fiscal Years 2006-2017) in Millions of US Dollars

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Israel	2,257	2,340	2,380	3,105	2,775	2,994	3,075	2,943	3,100	3,100	3,100	3,100	34269
Egypt	1,289	1,301	1,292	1,563	1,302	1,299	1,304	1,240	1,301	1,302	1,302	1,301	15796
Pakistan	327	317.6	317.1	1,849	444.5	711.5	803.4	325.6	326.2	292.8	297.8	291.3	6303.8
Jordan	210.9	244.1	352.8	428.4	290	123.7	124.1	289.6	303.5	389.3	354.2	354.4	3465
Lebanon	49.3	287.2	9.4	103.5	117.8	83.8	88.3	92	93	98.1	94.2	117.7	1234.3
Palestinian Territories	91.2	0	50	289	96.5	133.5	60.4	49.3	49.2	59.9	50.3	20.3	949.6
Colombia	129.3	124.9	72.5	87	89	79.8	72.2	53.3	50.1	35.6	47.3	82.5	923.5
Mexico	0.008	0.057	120.6	360.8	266.2	8.9	8.1	7.8	7.9	6.5	8.5	4.5	799.865
Philippines	35.2	43.9	34.3	31	31.5	15.3	30.7	28.8	57.1	57.8	49	49	463.1
Liberia	17.2	58.9	56.4	55.7	25	21.7	21.6	16.8	13.8	14.1	14.9	11.1	327.2
Georgia	30.3	21.7	18.7	50.9	21.1	22.1	19.3	20.7	16.4	35	24.5	24.9	305.6
Poland	31.8	30.5	29	29.2	49.1	36	26.2	20.8	16	11	8	5.5	293.1
Indonesia	5.8	14.2	15.2	21.5	30.4	29.4	24.4	22.3	23	23.6	24.6	19.7	254.1
Morocco	15.2	14.8	5.8	6.5	10.7	11.7	18.3	10.4	11.8	16.8	10	12	144
Vietnam	3.4	2.8	2.7	2	5.9	3.7	6.8	15.1	14.7	16.2	22.1	21.2	116.6

Source: Author's compilation of data from the US Foreign Assistance website, http://beta.foreignassistance.gov/explore.
Note: These figures represent planned congressional appropriations for the security sectors in recipient countries that did not involve large-scale US-supported crisis stabilisation operations (e.g., Ukraine, Libya). The database does not include figures prior to 2006, and figures of obligated funds, or actual monies expended, to specific programmes per year vary substantially based on the conditionality of aid, the timeline of expenditure, and the funding lines utilised. The data contained within this table are most meaningful for comparative purposes and provide relevant insight into the US government's geo-strategic priorities with respect to SSR.

Case Selection

Researchers must avoid the temptation to select only cases for which the independent and dependent variables relate according to a prescribed hypothesis, but informed case selection allows researchers to build intentionally studies that would seem to challenge existing theory. Careful and deliberate case selection can function as a meaningful substitute for the experimental control of large-N studies. To avert selection bias in small-N studies, scholars should build contrasts into research design by identifying cases that maximise variation on outcomes (Collier and Mahoney, 1996, p. 74). Seawright and Gerring (2008, pp. 300–301) posit that diverse cases that represent the full range of values in relationships among variables have the strongest claims to representativeness among the potential configurations of cases for small-N samples. Two cases that meet this standard, as well as the requirements of the MSSD, are Colombia and Mexico.

This study focuses on instances of US-supported SSR that occurred primarily during the administrations of Presidents George W. Bush (2001-2009) and Barack Obama (2009-2017)—a period of expanding US-funded SSA interventionism worldwide. The author envisioned including additional cases beyond Colombia and Mexico in the study to maximise variation on the dependent variable, but other options, even within Latin America, eliminated many of the background controls that make the comparison of Colombia and Mexico so compelling.[39] For instance, cases from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East reflect different strategic priorities for the US government, particularly as they pertain to the threat posed by Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank and Palestinian Territories receive vast amounts of US security aid, but encouragement of democratic reforms more often than not has been occluded by sensitive objectives like keeping the peace in a region known for cross-border animosity. Likewise, in Poland and Georgia, strategic priorities for the United States pertain to missile defence and deterring Russian aggression—circumstances that represent a small minority of countries undergoing SSR.[40]

Additionally, of the other 13 cases of US-sponsored SSR in Table 3.1, more than half feature undemocratic political systems and legal pluralism (i.e., the existence of parallel governmental and informal, often tribal, legal mechanisms that are often in competition with one another), factors which impede the adoption of democratic reforms to the security and justice sectors. Given that democratic political transitions are a pre-requisite for successful SSR, cases that feature undemocratic rule such as Pakistan and Jordan are unsuitable for evaluation as instances of bona fide SSR (Gompert et al., 2004, p. 10; Seawright and Gerring, 2008, p. 294). Finally, US-sponsored SSR elsewhere has not amounted to the sustained,

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[39] On the diversity of US cooperation initiatives in the region and the geopolitical context, see Lowenthal, 2009; Piccone, 2009.

[40] The prospect of NATO membership for Georgia generated new incentives for authorities to enact democratic reforms in line with SSR objectives.

holistic, and well-funded approach of Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative. SSR

contributions to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Liberia over ten years of investment represent

less than half of what Colombia and Mexico received over a similar time frame. Simply put,

as post-9/11 bilateral SSR, Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative are unique with respect

to their scope and scale of engagement (Muggah and Szabo de Carvalho, 2014, p. 14).[41]

Even the other possibilities for inclusion in the MSSD framework, the countries of

Central America, failed to match Colombia and Mexico satisfactorily on several contextual

variables. US support for security sector reform in the "Northern Triangle" countries—

Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras—surged during the first two years of the Mérida

Initiative and resurfaced as a priority for the US government after 2014, in the wake of the

child migrant crisis (Galen Carpenter, 2014).[42] The total amount of assistance is considerable,

at roughly 1 percent of the region's GDP, and the Northern Triangle is a collection of

democratising countries beleaguered by organised crime, much like Colombian and Mexico.

In fact, the lessons learned during the implementation of Plan Colombia and the Mérida

Initiative have informed the design of similar efforts in Central America (Shifter, 2012).

However, the Northern Triangle's relatively undiversified and poorly integrated economies

and weak central governments, even by Latin American standards, make the region's

countries inapt comparative examples ("The Tormented Isthmus," 2011).[43] Additionally, the

region's security forces have assumed an overtly political role in recent decades, a trend that

contrasts with the Colombian and Mexican security sectors' customary respect for civilian

governance. According to the logic of SSR theory, these hurdles suggest that successful

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[41] Rochlin makes a convincing argument for comparing Colombia and Mexico and dissects the social forces historically that precipitated a "revolution in military affairs" in both countries (2007, p. 2).

[42] The 2014 migrant crisis refers to the surge in women and unaccompanied and undocumented minors from Central America seeking entrance to the United States.

[43] On international cooperation for citizen security in Latin America, see Muggah and Szabo de Carvalho, 2014.

implementation of SSR will require longer time horizons and greater resource contributions, from both domestic and external sources, than in Colombia and Mexico.

In sum, by employing the comparative case-study approach to evaluate Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative, the author seeks to isolate the independent variables that contributed to disparate results in SSR in Colombia and Mexico. In doing so, this study explains the circumstances under which SSR advanced security sector governance in Colombia with the aim of identifying conditions that would improve the likelihood that SSR investments bear their desired fruits in other contexts.

The Origins of Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative

During the administration of Colombian President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002), the US government answered a Colombian government appeal for international support by providing significant training and equipment contributions to the Colombian military and police starting in 2000. Although Pastrana's original programme was conceived as an economic and political development strategy to address the root causes of drug violence and the persistence of Marxist-inspired guerrilla insurgencies, the US government insisted that improved state capacity to provide security was the essential foundation for other development goals. It subsequently awarded upward of 75 percent of its assistance to the Colombian security sector (Ramírez Lemus et al., 2004, p. 108).[44] With the infusion of US$1.3 billion into Colombian security and justice institutions, Colombia became the largest recipient of US security assistance outside of the Middle East and the third-largest recipient of US military aid worldwide. Plan Colombia, which was extended under a variety of US

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[44] Pastrana originally billed his quest to attract foreign investment as a "Marshall Plan" for Colombia (Rojas, 2015, p. 28). Other countries, particularly in Europe, supported Pastrana's development focus, but when the US government made clear that its hefty support of Plan Colombia was contingent on a strategy that focused on security, Pastrana conceded to the Clinton administration, and much of the originally pledged European support dissipated.

funding authorities until 2011, focused on improving the operational effectiveness of the

Colombian military and police to combat drug trafficking organisations, to enhance the

Colombian government's ability to extend justice and the rule of law throughout national

territory, and to "make governance more transparent, participatory, and accountable" (US

Department of State, 2016). By 2011, the US government had contributed more than US$8

billion to the Colombian government toward this end.[45]

Although a number of analysts consider Plan Colombia to have fallen short on the

accomplishment of counterdrug and human rights objectives, to date no exhaustive,

comprehensive analysis of SSR in Colombia exists.[46] The literature on Plan Colombia has

only superficially addressed the relationship between Plan Colombia and democratic

consolidation, even though by many accounts Plan Colombia was a successful instance of

SSR (Benítez Manaut, 2014; Ramírez de Rincón, 2014). For instance, DeYoung notes,

"Three administrations and US$10 billion later, what is known as 'Plan Colombia' is widely

considered one of the most successful US assistance efforts in history" (2016). Petraeus and

O'Hanlon also herald Plan Colombia as a "success story," and former US Ambassador to

Colombia William Brownfield asserted, "Colombia has been the most successful nation-

building exercise by the United States this century" (Petraeus and O'Hanlon, 2013; Tate,

2015, p. 225). According to the US Embassy in Bogotá, President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-

2010) oversaw a significant period of reform, and in 2004, the government established, for

the first time in recent history, the state's presence in all of the country's 1,099

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[45] Following major battlefield victories against Colombia's most lethal insurgencies, the Obama administration sought to de-emphasise security assistance after 2011, and Plan Colombia ceased to appear in budget requests and administration policy documents (Rosen, 2014, p. 4). By this juncture, the US government had reduced its assistance to levels consistent with other partner governments across the globe, as policymakers on both sides of the relationship expressed satisfaction with the strength of the country's security institutions and progress in reducing coca yield (Beittel, 2012, p. 27). Mejía (2016) finds that Plan Colombia reduced the net supply of cocaine by more than 50 percent, even affecting the street price of cocaine in the United States for the first time ever.

[46] Hylton, 2010; Isacson, 2011; Lindsay-Poland, 2018; Oehme, 2010; Rosen, 2014; Tate, 2015. The indicators of analysis for most of the existing work on Plan Colombia focus on counterdrug measures, not on measures of institutional change.

municipalities. "Attacks conducted by illegally armed groups against rural towns decreased by 91% from 2002 to 2005. Between 2002 and 2008, Colombia saw a decrease in homicides by 44%, kidnappings by 88%, terrorist attacks by 79%, and attacks on the country's infrastructure by 60%" (US Department of State, 2016). Although the data presented are certainly incomplete, they do paint a picture of considerable progress. US policymakers—Democrats and Republicans alike—cite these improvements as evidence of positive foreign policy intervention. In 2016, US Secretary of State John Kerry remarked:

> The key to Plan Colombia's success was its comprehensive vision of how security is established and maintained. Law and order is only part of the equation. With support from the United States, Colombians moved ahead on multiple fronts to improve governance…. Just as important, the government came to terms with the fact that human rights abuses were committed not solely by rebel groups, but also by its own forces—and that those abuses, too, must be stopped. (Kerry, 2016)

Inspired by these accomplishments, the administration of President George W. Bush endeavoured to replicate Plan Colombia's SSR model in Mexico, another Latin American partner in the war on drugs that faced crippling rates of crime and violence by the mid-2000s (Cepeda and Tascón, 2015, pp. 149–155). Following the declaration of a war on the country's drug cartels by newly elected President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (2006-2012), the US Congress approved funding for Mexico and Central America under the Mérida Initiative in 2008. The Mérida Initiative represented a multi-year strategy to combat narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and transnational organised crime through US$1.4 billion geared at Mexico's struggling security sector, and the US Department of State listed the programme's principal objectives as providing "equipment and training to support law enforcement operations and technical assistance for long-term reform and oversight of security agencies" ("Mérida Initiative: Myth vs. Fact," 2009). From its inception, the Mérida Initiative pushed US government aid commitments to the Mexican security and justice agencies upward of

US$3 billion. This high level of support was sustained through Fiscal Year 2017. It is unclear whether President Donald Trump will deliver on his promise to wall off Mexico, but even so, there is little doubt that the Trump administration marks a significant renegotiation of the United States-Mexico relationship and an inauspicious conclusion to the generous bilateral assistance of the Mérida Initiative (Borger, 2017). For this reason, analysis of the Mérida Initiative in this study covers the period from Fiscal Years 2007 to 2017.

Unlike its Colombian equivalent, the Mexican security sector struggled to institutionalise the reforms encouraged by the US government through the Mérida Initiative. During a congressional hearing nearly five years into the assistance plan's implementation, the US House of Representatives Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Chair, Representative Connie Mack (Republican-Florida), described the Mérida Initiative as a complete failure (Graham, 2011). From 2007 to 2015, more than 164,000 Mexicans were killed, a vast majority at the hands of cartel and gang violence, and despite unprecedented strides in US-Mexican partnership on a common security framework, levels of crime and violence for most indicators rose in the decade following the signing of the agreement (Ashby, 2015; Breslow, 2015). In 2018, the Mexican government registered more annual homicides than at any point since the Mexican Revolution. Likewise, media coverage of a string of high-profile security and justice failures have made it difficult for either government to defend the Mérida Initiative's record. As addressed in Chapter 5, the missing students from Ayotzinapa, extrajudicial killings by the Mexican Army in Tlatlaya, and the escape of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán from maximum-security prison underscored the Mexican state's incapacity to crack down on human rights abuses, impunity, and corruption—in other words, its inability to deliver a reformed security sector. Hernández describes the legacy of the Mérida Initiative's approach to insecurity: "While drugs continued to flow north and US government weapons and cash laundered by major global banks flowed south, the Calderón security strategy

remained basically unchanged over the years. Its effect was a catastrophic expansion of violence and a crime-solving rate of nearly zero" (2012). Noting Mexico's 250,000 missing persons between 2006 and 2019, poet Javier Sicilia solemnly declared "a crisis of civilization in Mexico"—one that SSR failed to contain (Córdoba et al., 2018).

Most Similar Systems: Colombia and Mexico

SSR programmes in Colombia and Mexico match on many relevant contextual variables, allowing for control of background factors that might otherwise distort inter-variable relationships. Most significantly, the two cases exhibit comparable criminal threats, political systems, and capacity challenges in the security sector—all variables that are key to the comparative analysis of this study. In addition, the US government identified analogous strategic priorities with respect to Colombia and Mexico. As such, Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative benefitted from similar US programming and funding mechanisms and were preceded by more than a decade of relevant engagement with the security sector in each country.

First, Colombia and Mexico represent two Latin American countries of Spanish heritage that, prior to SSR, featured failing security sectors overwhelmed by internal organised crime threats with transnational reach. Colombia and Mexico both exhibit "cartel-state conflict—sustained armed confrontation between sophisticated and well-armed drug trafficking organisations (DTOs) and state forces" (Lessing, 2017, p. 2). In fact, some of the same illicit trafficking networks operate in both contexts. The US government's announcement of a concerted effort to revamp the Colombian and Mexican security sectors occurred when insecurity and state incapacity had reached such staggeringly high levels that some analysts considered the two countries to be on the brink of state failure (Friedman,

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2008; Mason, 2001).[47] In both instances, illegal armed actors used drug profits to control territory, arbitrate community justice, enforce some version of the law, co-opt political actors and parties, and establish governance institutions in parallel to those of the state.

Both Colombia and Mexico exemplify a "vulnerable democratic environment," which Hanlon and Shultz describe as a political setting in which multiparty electoral democracies exhibit an inability to deliver fully civil liberties, rule of law, and civilian oversight of security forces (2016b, p. 6).[48] As Jackson and Bakrania find, "emerging policy themes of urbanization, counterterrorism and organized crime are almost absent" from the existing literature on SSR, making the case selection of this study a fruitful contribution to the academic debate (2018, p. 14). Furthermore, Colombia and Mexico are large, substantially industrialised nations with upper-middle-income economies and long histories of electoral politics ("World Economic Outlook Database," 2016).[49] They, alongside Costa Rica, are credited with having the longest-running civilian-led governance in Latin America—a region where military dictatorships took hold of power in nearly every country during the Cold War. Whitehead identifies Colombia and Mexico as an ideal paired comparison for democratisation studies because democratisation emerged out of "liberalising reforms within a long-standing civilian constitutional tradition of restricted or controlled electoral contestation" (2002, p. 202).[50] Nevertheless, regionalism, rooted in patronage and clientelistic

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47 Rodríguez Pinzón (2015, pp. 22–23) explains how the Colombian government used the state-failure discourse to paint state institutions as the real victims of the Colombian conflict in a convincing bid to attract international attention and aid. Forero Ángel (2017) explores the legacy of this narrative in the construction of institutional identity in the Colombian military. On state failure in Colombia and Mexico, see Kenny and Serrano, 2012b.

48 Arias and Goldstein refer to these states as "violent democracies" (2010). The literature on state building holds that conflict is a principal driver of state capacity and institution building, which makes the "vulnerable democratic" context an especially fruitful case to study (Hanlon and Shultz, Jr., 2016b; Thies, 2005; Tilly, 1975).

49 In 1999, the Colombian gross domestic product (GDP) totalled US$252.7 billion. In 2007, just prior to the signing of the Mérida Initiative, the Mexican GDP topped out at US$1.69 trillion. Although Mexico's economy is significantly larger than Colombia's, the per capita GDP has consistently ranked the two economies as upper middle-income countries.

50 Whitehead identifies the parallel processes of democratisation in Colombia and Mexico as sufficiently similar to one another but unique within Latin America to warrant a paired comparison.

relationships, has become a defining political feature in both contexts, albeit the political

power of subnational authorities is more formalised and historically more entrenched in

Mexico's federalist model than in Colombia (Kaufman and Trejo, 1997; Ocampo, 2015;

Reding, 1995).[51]

Moreover, the security sectors in Colombia and Mexico have confronted similar

capacity challenges. Judicial institutions, which have their roots in an inquisitorial model of

criminal justice, have traditionally been plagued by backlog, corruption, and intimidation by

state and non-state actors.[52] Similarly, Colombian and Mexican police forces have a

reputation for being inept, unprofessional, and corrupt, and the institutional capacity to

perform basic police functions, such as aiding stranded motorists or securing the scene of a

crime, has been limited. The police in Colombia and Mexico have both been utilised for

partisan ends on occasion throughout history, but the armed forces, on the other hand, have

largely remained at the margins of national politics in exchange for institutional autonomy

(Camp, 2005, pp. 1–3; Freeman and Sierra, 2004, p. 268; Ramírez Lemus et al., 2004, p. 123;

Rath, 2013).[53] This tradition of relative autonomy has, in turn, rendered civilian oversight of

internal military matters minimal in Colombia and Mexico, and a notable lack of interference

in the political sphere had contributed to a public perception of the military as considerably

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[51] The Colombian experience as a decentralised unitary state that features limited autonomy for subnational governments dates to the Colombian Constitution of 1991. Conversely, Mexico's federalist system was introduced in the Constitution of 1824 and was reiterated in the 1917 Constitution, which remains in effect.
[52] The inquisitorial system differs from the adversarial or accusatorial system used in Common Law legal cultures.
[53] The autonomy of the Colombian Armed Forces dates to the 1940s and 1950s—a period of intense partisan violence in Colombian history known as "La Violencia." The widespread perception of neutrality of the military in that period, when the armed forces reluctantly assumed power at the request of the Conservative and Liberal parties, convinced civilian reformers in the aftermath of "La Violencia" to grant the armed forces authority to design and implement national security policy without much civilian oversight. This autonomy was reinforced throughout the Cold War, as the military retained extraordinary powers during states of siege. In Mexico, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI), which governed Mexico for nearly 71 years, struck an agreement with the military in the years following the Mexican Revolution that afforded the armed forces significant prerogatives in exchange for non-interference in political affairs (Rath, 2013). The Mexican Congress has traditionally exerted little control over military budgets and acquisitions, and military courts have historically handled offenses against military discipline and crimes committed by military members. Furthermore, the armed forces retain autonomy over their budgets and have privileged access to national security decision-making (Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017a).

more trustworthy than all other state institutions in both countries ("Confianza en instituciones," 2016; IPSOS, 2016). It is for these same reasons that the armed forces have been the preferred state agent to take on threats to public order until reformed and newly capable police forces can assume a public security role across their national territories (Cadena Montenegro, 2011).

The architecture and objectives of US programming in Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative were also fairly consistent (Delgado-Ramos and Romano, 2011). Although these features are explored in depth in Chapter 4, it is worth making a brief mention of the similarities here. Principally, the US agencies responsible for the implementation of SSR measures in both countries remained constant (Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, and USAID), and the primary funding lines for US assistance included Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE). Given these parallels, the overarching US strategies and objectives for partner nation institutions across contexts did not vary significantly. US policymakers additionally recognised the regional nature of the security threats addressed by Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative and therefore enhanced funding and training to the security sectors in neighbouring nations to deter the displacement of criminal outfits to bordering countries. The Andean Regional Initiative (ARI) and the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), although modest in relation to the resources contributed to Colombia and Mexico, were deliberate efforts to prevent a displacement of insecurity across Colombian and Mexican borders, respectively (Millett, 2002).

Finally, noteworthy US involvement with the security sectors in Colombia and Mexico preceded Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative for at least a decade in both cases. Even though this tradition of working with Colombia and Mexico generated scepticism

among some members of the US Congress who questioned why so little had been achieved in the war on drugs, familiarity with the challenges and deep cross-national relationships paved the way for the broad bipartisan support (Feeley, 2013b; Hanson Bond, 2016; Traficant, 1998; Vacius and Isacson, 2000). Plan Colombia, a component of the Military Construction Appropriations bill H.R. 4425, enjoyed a 306-110 vote in the House of Representatives and a 96-4 vote in the Senate. Similarly, the Supplemental Appropriations bill H.R. 2642, which contained appropriations for the Mérida Initiative, passed with a House vote of 409-2 and in the Senate with a vote of 92-6.[54]

The Limits of Comparing Colombia and Mexico

However similar the Colombian and Mexican contexts may be, this study does not assume unit homogeneity, and in acknowledging differences where they occur throughout the analysis, it endeavours to draw more nuanced conclusions about SSR processes (Bailey, 2008). In fact, these very differences may ultimately lead to crucial insights that help explain outcome disparity. One of the most significant departures between the two cases pertains to national attitudes toward the United States: whereas the Colombian government has long considered the US government a strong ally, Mexican leaders, with some notable exceptions, have historically viewed the United States with deep suspicion. The US and Colombian security forces have a trusted relationship commencing around the time of the Korean War and revived during the 1980s and 1990s to combat Colombia's Medellín and Cali cartels. Tokatlian describes this relationship as one of Bogotá's "spoiled subordination" to the United States, citing the Colombian government's perennial aspiration to curry Washington's favour by aligning policies with those of the United States (2000). The Mexican military and police, conversely, are characterised by mistrust of the US government, and Mexican authorities

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[54] On US congressional deliberations surrounding Plan Colombia, see Rojas, 2015, pp. 40–52.

consistently pursued autonomy from the United States even into the early years of the North

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a symbol of growing cooperation between the

United States and Mexico. For instance, from 1993 to 1995, Mexico refused all US

counterdrug assistance outright in an attempt to chart its own antidrug strategy.[55] Nationalism

and anti-US sentiment run deep in the Mexican national psyche, dating back to the 1845 US

annexation of Texas and the subsequent Mexican-American War—so much so that some

analysts consider the relatively positive counterdrug relationship between the United States

and Mexico altogether surprising (Freeman and Sierra, 2004, p. 265).

Additionally, even though both cases represent consolidating democracies, Colombian

and Mexican political institutions developed in distinct historical contexts, which has

implications for state capacity to respond to insecurity. Colombia's democracy, however

weak or besieged, witnessed decades of sustained inter-party electoral competition prior to

the commencement of SSR. In Colombia, the main problem of governance has been the total

absence of state authority in vast stretches of the national territory. The lack of institutions to

collect taxes, arbitrate disputes, enforce the law, and provide security kept the state

historically weak in many regions—a factor exacerbated by difficult physical geography and

a tradition of decentralised political power (McDougall, 2009). Conversely, in Mexico, state

authority, however corrupt or weak, was rarely absent (Paul et al., 2014, p. 41). A former

Mexican Ambassador to the United States remarked, "In Mexico, the state has always been

very present. Mexican villages have schools, clinics, highways, and commercial spaces.

There may have been gaps in terms of the provision of security, but the state is present in

terms of social and physical infrastructure" (Author interview with a former Mexican

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[55] In financial terms, the capacity of the Mexican government to fund and direct its own reforms, with a GDP more than three times that of Colombia, was greater than that of the Colombian government ("World Bank Open Data," n.d.). Mexican Congressman Waldo Fernández asserted, without wanting "to appear ungrateful for US assistance," that Mexico really did not need money or equipment under the Mérida Initiative, but US technical support was essential (Author interview with Fernández González, 2018).

Ambassador to the United States, 2017). Although the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) dominated Mexican politics for 71 years, the capacity of the state to respond to the needs of its citizens was not traditionally in question. In Mexico, the PRI routinely silenced opposition through corrupt electoral practices, co-optation of would-be dissenters, and repression of opponents—all while ensuring the government collected taxes, albeit irregularly, and reinvested in communities via party-driven clientelism (Anderson and Cockcroft, 1965; McCormick, 2016; Reding and Whalen, 1993).

It is for this very reason that Mexico mostly averted the proliferation of large-scale, national-level armed insurgencies that have come to define Colombian politics since the 1960s (Pinzón, 2015, p. 14).[56] Indeed, the persistence of the Colombian armed groups, which finance their political activities through crime and delinquency, is perhaps the most significant dissimilarity between Colombia and Mexico relevant for this study (Benítez Manaut, 2014, p. 58). Although both Colombia and Mexico face similar security challenges, the actors that comprise the principal security threats are distinct. Despite comparable practices (e.g., control of territory; supplanting state authority; kidnappings, assassinations, and massacres), Colombia's insurgent and paramilitary groups are not identical to Mexico's drug gangs. Colombia's non-state perpetrators of violence have been political actors, a characteristic not traditionally exhibited by Mexican cartels (Idler, 2019).[57] The post-Cold War survival of Marxist guerrilla insurgencies, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) and the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN), has necessitated a standing counterinsurgency mission for the Colombian security sector that overlays other public order

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[56] Mexico has a long history of local armed insurgencies, most recently the National Liberation Zapatista Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) in the Chiapas state, but seldom did these outbreaks of revolutionary activity gain national traction like the Colombian insurgencies did throughout the 1980s and 1990s.
[57] The 2018 election cycle in Mexico was marred by a triplication of political killings from the 2015 elections, reflecting a growing involvement of cartels in the political realm (Sieff, 2018).

operations in a way that Mexico has generally avoided. Political accommodation of demobilised opponents of the state through nine peace processes from the 1980s, including the DDR of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, AUC) paramilitary group in the midst of SSR, has become a defining feature of Colombian political life.[58] This reality also pushed the Colombian government's SSR effort toward a strategy of governance consolidation in the territories affected by guerrilla and paramilitary violence, and Colombia became a laboratory for how the US government could export a model of "clear, hold, build" counterinsurgency (Hylton, 2010, pp. 107–110).[59]

Such considerations were not a prominent part of the operational strategy encouraged by the US government in Mexico, and Mexican authorities were significantly more constrained to treat the threat posed by drug cartels as a matter of public order and primarily a responsibility of law enforcement. Some scholars refer to the situation in Mexico as one of a "criminal insurgency," which suggests that criminals fight to remove the influence of the state in their zones of control but do not go as far as attempting to override the state (Paul et al., 2014, p. 18). However, it is not clear that the government's strategy focused on reasserting political control in contested areas. One observer remarked, "The Mexican army does not have a hearts and minds mindset and is uncomfortable operating domestically, being seen as a political actor; it is focused on eliminating the enemy and occasionally providing humanitarian relief" (Author interview with Furszyfer, 2017). Bailey concludes, "In

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[58] The DDR of the AUC (2003-2006), sanctioned by the Justice and Peace Law (Ley 975 de 2005, Ley de Justicia y Paz), occurred in the midst of SSR, leading to a reduction of arms available to criminal actors and likely contributing to the drops in violence seen in Chapter 5 of this study. The process led to the collective demobilisation of some 32,000 paramilitary fighters. Even though there was ample recidivism among ex-combatants, many of whom joined new criminal bands (*bandas criminales*, BACRIM), tens of thousands of demobilised fighters abided by the terms of DDR and pursued legal livelihoods (Ávila and Valencia, 2018; Salazar, 2011). Mexico, on the other hand, experienced no such détente with any of the country's criminal groups during SSR.

[59] This is an operational approach that emphasises extirpating an insurgent threat from a geographic area, ensuring that the threat does not return by establishing state presence, and thereafter investing in development projects that incorporate civilian populations into the national life of the country (US Government Accountability Office, 2008; Ucko, 2013).

summary, Colombia is a case of a complicated internal war in which drug production and trafficking play a significant role; Mexico is a case of hyper-violent criminal organisations that use terrorist-like methods to challenge the government and society" (2011b).

In fact, when US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton commented in 2010 that parts of Mexico resembled Colombia twenty years prior, Mexican authorities, forever cautious of US interventionism, protested the unwelcome comparison. That the US military could enter Mexico in large numbers in the same way it did under Plan Colombia was an alarming prospect for nationalistic Mexicans. Although some Mexican politicians agreed, Calderón's spokesperson, Alejandro Poiré, rejected Clinton's remarks (Wilson and Kornblut, 2010).[60] "We do not share these findings, as there is a big difference between what Colombia faced and what Mexico is facing today" (Carroll, 2010). From that moment forward, the administration of President Obama struck from the bilateral conversation any hyperbolic rhetoric suggesting the "Colombianisation" of Mexico (Casas-Zamora and Cárdenas, 2010). Although the reluctance to draw parallels between Colombian and Mexico may be more rooted in political sensitivities, this anecdote serves as an instructive reminder of the inherent dissimilarities in government attitudes between the Colombian and Mexican cases.

Lastly, proximity plays a central role in differentiating between the bilateral relations under consideration. This geographic distinction is evident in the US government's own distribution of bureaucratic responsibility for the two countries. Whereas the US Department of Defense's Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Miami, Florida implements security and defence policies for Colombia and the rest of Latin America, responsibility for Mexico falls to the US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Indeed, Mexico's 1,981-mile-long border with the United States dictates that a spectrum of diverse

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[60] Mexican Senator Alejandro Gonzalez (PT-Durango) remarked, "We are on our way to Colombianisation" (Wilson and Kornblut, 2010).

issues dominates the bilateral agenda. The free flow of goods and services, undocumented migration, and arms-trafficking networks are among the most pressing topics of interest for both governments. Insecurity related to organised crime is just one of a host of mutual concerns. Conversely, the bilateral relationship with Colombia was defined for decades almost entirely by the drug war and, specifically, a concerted effort to stem the supply of cocaine to the US market. Geographic separation renders a host of other bilateral issues, such as free trade, as otherwise optional for the United States. Even during the negotiating phase of Plan Colombia, President Pastrana reluctantly accepted the US government's stipulations that the vast majority of US assistance be utilised for the accomplishment of counterdrug objectives (Ramírez Lemus et al., 2004, p. 108). Pastrana originally hoped that Plan Colombia would serve as a catalyst for a more diversified political agenda between the two countries, but this aspiration would not come to fruition until several years after Pastrana's departure from public office.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the suitability of the paired comparison and HI as methodological approaches for evaluating variation on security sector governance following the implementation of SSR programmes in Colombia and Mexico. Given the similarities between the cases with respect to their security challenges, democratic political systems, and capacity deficiencies, Colombia and Mexico meet the threshold for comparison under the MSSD, and importantly, the US government was the principal external supporter of SSR in both cases. As the next chapter explores in more detail, this latter factor ensured that the goals and designs of SSR were largely consistent in both contexts—a quality that enables the author to identify with greater accuracy the specific elements of SSR implementation that affected performance in each case.

Chapter 4: Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative: A Paired Comparison of Approaches to SSR

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the suitability of the MSSD for the cases of Mexico and Colombia by highlighting similarities, particularly with respect to the goals and design of US-sponsored SSR. The following discussion delves into the history of US security relations with the Colombian and Mexican governments, depicting a sustained history of coordination with elements of the security sectors in both countries. The focus thereafter pertains to the programming, material components, and beneficiary institutions that constituted SSR via Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative. The broader goals and designs of the SSR initiatives were comparable, so alike that US authorities even cited Plan Colombia as a successful template for engagement of the security sector in Mexico (Paul et al., 2014). The author recognises that the US government is not a unitary actor—that is, the objectives of Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative represented different opportunities for interested parties in the US government. Nevertheless, the mechanics of aid and the objectives of reform remained consistent across the two cases, and in controlling for these background variables, Chapter 5 then evaluates the degree to which reforms resulted in improvements across the two dimensions of security sector governance: effectiveness and accountability.

A History of Coordination: US Security Relations with Colombia and Mexico

US-Colombian Security Relations Prior to Plan Colombia

As early as the 1930s, the US government expressed interest in cultivating a security-focused relationship with the Colombian government when it opened the first US Naval Mission office in Bogotá (Coleman, 2008, pp. 5–7) .[61] A stable if restricted democracy with Caribbean and Pacific coastlines, Colombia presented unique opportunities for US investors,

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[61] On the origins and early structure of the Colombian military, see Vargas, 2002.

and the country's geographic proximity to Panama rendered Colombia essential to the defence of sea-lanes flowing into the Panama Canal. US-Colombian links expanded during World War II, when the Colombian government backed US plans for the defence of the canal and eventually joined the Allies in 1943 following German submarine attacks on Colombian cargo vessels.

Although the Colombian Navy collaborated with its US counterparts in limited antisubmarine operations during the 1940s, it was not until a decade later during the Korean War that US-Colombian relations flourished. The Colombian military, eager to assume a larger role globally and to upgrade its weaponry, was the only Latin American force to contribute troops, numbering more than 5,000, and a naval frigate to the UN mission on the Korean Peninsula. This experience exposed the Colombian military to US training, synchronised the force's weapons systems with those of the United States, led to the structural reorganisation of the institution, and strengthened the anti-communist convictions of the military's leaders (Forero Ángel, 2017, pp. 94–98; Rodríguez Hernández, 2005; Scheina, 2003, pp. 75–103). The exchange also harmonised US and Colombian strategic visions for hemispheric security, and these ties proved advantageous for the Colombian security forces in the decades to come, especially as US interest in communist agitation in Latin America surged following the 1959 Cuban Revolution (Randall, 1992, pp. 201–219).

Despite the Colombian military's exposure to external and international defence missions in the Korean War, the country's own political reality ensured that its military doctrine and operational activity would focus almost entirely on internal security for the rest of the century.[62] Throughout the 1950s, armed conflict between the Liberal and Conservative parties culminated in a period of civil unrest known as "La Violencia," and during the brief

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[62] One Colombian military officer concluded that from 1951 the Colombian military divided into two factions: those who practiced the doctrine of "active defence" as learned in Korea, a conventional, regular war, and those who practiced the doctrine imported from French counterinsurgency in Algeria (Author interview with Captain, Colombian Army, 2017).

but consequential rule of Army General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957), the main Colombian parties ceded political control to the military's high command in an attempt to quell partisan violence. Striving to depoliticise the military and the police, which had become embroiled in the inter-party fray, Rojas Pinilla issued a decree to reorganise the security forces during his first week of rule. The reform granted the Ministry of War (Ministerio de Guerra; later renamed Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, or the Ministry of National Defence) administrative and operational jurisdiction over the National Police force and reaffirmed the Ministry's control of the armed forces—a configuration that persists to the present day. The change ensured that the country's security institutions would serve the interests of the state over their previous party allegiances and streamlined the sector's focus on tackling the wanton banditry and gruesome violence devastating Colombia's rural regions.[63]

Although the Liberal and Conservative leadership eventually agreed to end hostilities and restore civilian rule in 1957, a power-sharing arrangement called the National Front (Frente Nacional) did not put an end to political discontent (Leal Buitrago, 1994, pp. 133–137; Vargas, 2002, p. 145). The accord, which stipulated that the Liberal and Conservative parties alternate control of the presidency and legislature every four years, closed opportunities for alternative political movements to achieve national power. As in much of Latin America, communist groups, excluded from political life, began to organise militarily in the countryside and set out to take power by force. Colombia's most enduring guerrilla insurgencies, the FARC and the ELN, both emerged in this period as Marxist-inspired armed

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[63] The apolitical posture of the Colombian Ministry of Defence is central to the organisation's identity. For much of the institution's early history, there was a permanent tension between the search for a professionalised, competent military, the military's partisan usefulness, and the tendency to employ the military as an impartial guarantor of constitutionality and legality (Vargas, 2002, p. 103). Today, however, "[t]he soldiers, regardless of their ranks, construct strategies on the battlefield that guarantee their survival, while the high ranks give birth to narratives that guarantee the survival of the imagined tradition of the institution as one that is neutral, apolitical, and a friend of the Colombian people" (Forero Ángel, 2017, p. 14).

groups, and against the backdrop of the Cold War, Colombia became an important theatre for US security aid and partnership (Pécaut, 2008, pp. 33–39).[64]

The US government endeavoured to make Colombia a "showcase for capitalist development and modernisation" under President John Kennedy's Alliance for Progress; the country received US$833 million in loans and more US Military Assistance Program (MAP) funding than any other Latin American country in the 1960s (Crandall, 2002, p. 24). In 1961, the first of several dozen US mobile training teams (MTTs) arrived in Colombia to assist the military and police in improving their intelligence capabilities, conducting psychological operations, and monitoring guerrilla movements from helicopters (Crandall, 2002, p. 24). Awash in international assistance, the Colombian Armed Forces expanded markedly from 1960 to 1966, growing from 20,800 service members to 53,500 (Maullin, 1973, p. 73). The Colombian military and police also experienced an unprecedented integration under the leadership of General Alberto Ruiz Novoa, who oriented the security forces to sponsor economic and social development projects through a US-supported programme known as Plan Lazo.[65] As rebel groups proliferated, "winning hearts and minds" became a vital mission for the Colombian security sector, and in 1964, the Ministry of Defence issued the Joint Counterinsurgency Plan, which built upon the principles of Plan Lazo and formalised the military's counterguerrilla doctrine until the late 1970s (Leal Buitrago, 1994, p. 148; Valencia Tovar, 2006, p. 51).

The nature of Colombia's armed conflict transformed when insurgents and other criminal organisations gained strength and resources from their expanding involvement in drug trafficking. Beginning in the 1970s, Colombia's geographic location, fertile soil, and lawless countryside facilitated the country's first largescale marijuana and cocaine

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[64] On the National Front era and the political exclusion of communist movements, see Karl, 2017, pp. 182–218.
[65] According to Leal Buitrago (1994, p. 140), several military professionals consider Plan Lazo to be an exclusively Colombian innovation, ignoring completely the influence of the US government's anti-guerrilla doctrine.

production, and not long after, the prohibitionist polices of the US and Colombian

governments gave rise to heavily armed and well-organised drug trafficking cartels. As the

immense profitability of the drug trade became apparent, the 1980s saw the rapid expansion

of the illicit industry and the outbreak of the country's fierce cartel wars, pitting drug

syndicates against each other and against the Colombian state. At the height of their power,

the Medellín and Cali cartels ruthlessly murdered and kidnapped thousands of Colombians,

including politicians, police officers, and journalists. Intent on demonstrating their political

reach, they indiscriminately bombed public spaces in an intimidation campaign aimed at

strong-arming politicians to ban extradition for drug criminals. In response, the Colombian

government declared a state of siege 139 times between 1984 and 1989, thereby suspending

some legal rights and granting the military powers to investigate and judge civilians for

crimes (Ramírez Lemus et al., 2004, p. 123).

US President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989), facing a growing crisis of domestic drug

abuse and concerned about the vulnerability of Colombia's longstanding democratic

institutions, took a renewed interest in the country during this period. In 1986, the

administration issued National Security Decision Directive 221, declaring drugs a US

national security threat (Reagan, 1986). Under this pretext, the US government definitively

"securitised" relations with Colombia.[66] US security assistance to the Colombian government

expanded notably: in 1984, the Reagan administration released more than US$50 million in

arms to the Colombian security forces and increased training for military personnel, 4,844 of

whom received instruction between 1984 and 1990 (Stokes, 2004, p. 71). Security ties

between the governments were especially robust during the administration of Colombian

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[66] The concept of "securitisation" refers to how speech acts and political rhetoric can shape public perception of an issue as a threat to security, whether or not it actually constitutes a threat to international security (Buzan et al., 1998). During the Reagan administration, the 1988 creation of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), which coordinated national strategies to combat drugs, solidified the governing philosophy that drugs were a pressing matter of national security.

President César Gaviria Trujillo (1990-1994), whose presidency coincided with Colombia's inauspicious distinction as the world's most dangerous country (Tokatlian, 1994).

By the early 1990s, the cartels had managed to infiltrate many of Colombia's democratic institutions through threats and bribery, and the Colombian National Police, even its Elite Force (Cuerpo Élite), were among the most vulnerable to these tactics (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 79). Ghastly crime rates and pervasive police corruption had led to a crisis in public trust (Casas Dupuy, 2005, p. 5). From 1993 to 1998, the US government laid the groundwork for its later intervention during Plan Colombia by supporting a major overhaul of law enforcement via Law 62 of 1993 (Ley 62 de 1993) (Torres Velasco, 1994, pp. 192–202). Under the leadership of National Police General Rosso José Serrano, the police force implemented its own Cultural Transformation Programme (Programa de Transformación Cultural) from 1995 to 1998, carried out a highly publicised purge, created vetted counternarcotics units, and expanded benefits and promotion opportunities for personnel to improve retention and curb corruption (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 81; Tate, 2013, p. 219).[67] Serrano's efforts and commitment so impressed US policymakers that, even "[a]t a time when US officials trusted no one else in Colombia," Serrano continued to work closely with US agencies in toppling the cartels (Darling, 2000). In this fight, the US government and the Colombian National Police targeted cartel command and control and pursued a "kingpin strategy" to arrest or kill cartel leadership.[68] A specialised Colombian military-police unit (Bloque de Búsqueda)—supported by US Special Forces, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—killed Colombia's most

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[67] The transformation of the National Police in the 1990s occurred in two distinct periods. Starting in 1993, the reform endeavoured to professionalise, decentralise, and civilianise the police force by implementing more community-based security strategies. However, Serrano's appointment as the Director General of the institution in 1994 reoriented the force away from this model in a bid to militarise its roles against the Medellín and Cali Cartels. According to Llorente (2006), this militarisation had the paradoxical effect of creating distance between the police and the citizenry at a time when the organisation was trying to boost its image among the public.

[68] The US government pursued a similar strategy to similar effect against cartels in Mexico and terrorist organisations in North Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan. Seldom has the "kingpin strategy" resulted in an elimination of terrorist groups or criminal organisations.

wanted drug trafficker, Pablo Escobar, in 1993, and by 1995, Colombian authorities had

captured the seven leaders of the Cali Cartel. These successes boosted the morale of the

National Police and vindicated those who had pushed for institutional reform. The violence,

however, did not disappear. In fact, the "kingpin" approach inadvertently generated a power

vacuum in the drug industry—a circumstance that spawned some 300 mini-cartels by the

early 2000s (Rosen, 2014, p. 15).

While Colombia's cartels atomised, guerrilla and paramilitary groups also wrested

control of the cultivation and transport of coca leaves and paste, facilitating the armed

factions' numerical and territorial expansion throughout the decade (Llorente and

McDermott, 2014, p. 23).[69] The Colombian government's ability to counter this rise was

dubious. At this crossroads, the Colombian Armed Forces, which did not enjoy as robust a

relationship with the US government as did the National Police, were poorly organised,

demoralised, and ill equipped (Forero Ángel, 2017, p. 119).[70] The strengthening of illegal

armed actors came at a time when the Colombian military, while numerically at its highest

force size in history, had failed to train and equip soldiers for the battlefield reality in

Colombia, instead largely maintaining an organisation aimed at regular warfare (Leal

Buitrago, 1994, p. 155).[71] From 1996 to 1998, the military endured its most humiliating

defeats, as hundreds of soldiers surrendered to the FARC on the battlefield (Pastrana Arango,

2005b, p. 83). These inauspicious developments coincided with an unexpected souring of

US-Colombian relations, as evidence surfaced implicating the 1994 campaign of the then-

President of Colombia, Ernesto Samper Pizano (1994-1998), in the receipt of drug money

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[69] Although some guerrilla groups demobilised during the 1980s, the FARC, ELN, and some smaller
insurgencies outlasted the Cold War and, in fact, expanded. The FARC used drug profits to facilitate its
expansion from 3,600 members in 1986 to more than 17,000 insurgent fighters in 2001 (Rosen, 2014, p. 17). On
the FARC's ascendancy, see Steele, 2017 and Pécaut, 2008.

[70] On the state of military affairs in Colombia at this juncture, see Leal Buitrago, 2006a, pp. 150–151.

[71] According to Patiño Villa (2010, p. 203), Colombia historically lacked the capacity and the force size to
defend its national territory, which is why it often resorted to diplomatic and legal resolutions to border disputes.

from the Cali Cartel during his election campaign.[72] A Republican majority in the US Congress insisted on a hard-line counterdrug stance, forcing the hand of Democratic President William J. Clinton (1993-2001), and in 1995, the US government decertified the Samper administration as a partner in the war on drugs. This drastic measure, reserved for the most non-compliant drug-supplying countries in the world, resulted in the suspension of most foreign development assistance to Colombia and undermined the authority of the Colombian state at a time when guerrilla and paramilitary groups were gaining strength (Rosen, 2014, p. 24).

Notwithstanding this reversal in relations, some counterdrug money continued to flow to Colombia, as the South American country came to dominate the chain of cocaine production and distribution. During the 1990s, the US government spent an estimated US$1 billion to fight drug trafficking and cultivation in Colombia (Rosen, 2014, pp. 11–13).[73] Even the Colombian military, which had not traditionally benefitted from counterdrug support, received excess defence articles from Operation Desert Shield and technical advice in standing up counterdrug riverine forces (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016). Although the Samper government failed to convince the US government to resume non-counterdrug aid during his tenure, the Colombian president attempted to curry favour with the United States—and a disapproving Colombian military high command—by supporting anti-drug legislation and a maritime agreement to pursue drug-trafficking suspects at sea, increasing the Ministry of Defence's budget, and revamping military promotion criteria (Leal Buitrago, 2006a, pp. 146–147; US General Accounting Office, 1998, p. 3). The

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[72] The scandal, known as the 8,000 Process (Proceso 8.000), also tied 21 members of Congress, hundreds of police officers, private companies, and national-level government authorities to the Cali Cartel (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 80).

[73] The Air Bridge Denial (ABD) programme sponsored by the US Department of Defense in the 1990s targeted planes carrying coca paste from Bolivia and Peru to Colombian cocaine laboratories. The relative success of this programme had the unintended effect of driving coca paste production northward to Colombian territory to minimise the risk of detection and seizure.

departure of Samper from office in 1998 offered a welcome respite from the frustration and at times hostility that came to define US-Colombian relations in the mid-1990s, and his successor, President Pastrana, successfully campaigned for office on two vital issues: opening a peace dialogue with the FARC and improving relations with international benefactors. The cornerstone of his government's renewed relationship with the United States was Plan Colombia.

In 1998, Pastrana confronted emboldened insurgencies, an unprecedented economic crisis, and a humanitarian disaster provoked by one of the most damaging earthquakes in the country's history. The FARC, which had amassed an armed force of 20,000 insurgents, had captured more than 500 Colombian soldiers and police and enjoyed an armed presence in every one of Colombia's continental departments. The weakness of the security sector to control the national territory became evermore apparent with the growing influence of the AUC paramilitaries, as well (Cristo, 2016, p. 52; Garrido, 2001, p. 33).[74] Pastrana originally issued a document entitled "Plan Colombia" in December 1998, calling for public, private, and international investment to help solve the country's uncontrollable violence and drug production. The strategy consisted of five components: a peace process with the FARC, economic growth, anti-drug repression, justice reform and human rights, and democracy promotion and social development. Cognisant that a monopoly of the legitimate use of force underpinned the accomplishment of these larger objectives, however, Pastrana insisted that the reform of the Colombian security sector was the only way out of Colombia's morass. For this, he concluded, Colombia needed US support (Cristo, 2016, p. 70).[75]

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[74] AUC leader Salvatore Mancuso stated, "[The AUC] taught the population [of 35 percent of the country] how to vote because there was no presence of the state and we, the AUC, supplanted official authorities" (Caracol Radio, 2005).

[75] The Colombian government's aims were institutional strengthening and economic development in the most conflictive regions of the country with support from the United States, the EU, and international lending and development banks. Some European countries opposed the initiative once the US government declared its preference for SSR, as they argued that it altered the military balance between the government and the FARC in the midst of peace negotiations. In the end, the only international benefactor that delivered fully on Pastrana's

Plan Colombia Onward

US interest in Colombia in the late 1990s was abundant, which ensured that actors from across the US policymaking world could justify to their constituents major investments to reform the Colombian security forces (Romero, 2004, p. 85). Most importantly, the issue of the drug trade had been long "securitised" by the start of Plan Colombia, and President Clinton believed Colombia to be an essential arena in which to prove that his party was "tough on drugs" (Hurst, 2002, p. 3). In the run-up to the 2000 US presidential race, the Democratic Party dodged criticism from Republicans for having paid inadequate attention to the menace of drug abuse—a potential electoral liability to Vice President Al Gore, who stood as the party's nominee for the election. The Democrats found a forceful response in Plan Colombia. In "A National Strategy for a Global Age," President Clinton proclaimed that "the most effective counterdrug operations are mounted at the source where illegal drugs are grown and produced," and he set the goal of reducing illegal drug access in the United States by 50 percent by 2007 (Clinton, 2000, p. 26).[76] As Tate notes, counternarcotics aid and militarisation became a solution to the Clinton administration's political vulnerability, and boosting immediate assistance to the Colombian military instead of to the Colombian police, long championed by Republican voices in Congress, allowed the Democrats to contrast themselves with their political rivals (Tate, 2015, p. 31; US General Accounting Office, 1998, p. 18).[77] President Clinton proclaimed that Plan Colombia was a "visionary and audacious effort to deepen democracy, extend prosperity, end the prolonged internal armed conflict, and combat the production and trafficking of drugs that, similar to narcoterrorism, had cut short

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request was the United States (Cristo, 2016, pp. 63–66) . On the delicate balance between pursuing peace and SSR and the military's displeasure with Pastrana's peace bid, see Pastrana Arango, 2005b, pp. 198–200.

[76] The US drug control strategy focuses on drug supply reduction through drug crop eradication in source countries and interdiction in transit countries and demand reduction through educational initiatives, penalisation of domestic drug possession, and rehabilitation of drug users.

[77] Colombian Army Generals Jorge Enrique Mora and Fernando Tapias Stahelin were initially unenthusiastic about the military's assumption of a counternarcotics role. The Colombian Army was focused on "winning hearts and minds and did not want to be seen as an oppressor of peasants" (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016).

so many lives and obstructed for so long progress in Colombia" (Pastrana Arango, 2005b, p. 14).

Republican support for the aggressive plan eventually ensued, as the party found its own justifications for supporting militarisation of the counterdrug fight in Colombia. As President Pastrana asserted, it was not necessarily SSR that initially convinced Republican opposition but rather a message that Colombia, a country three hours by plane south of Miami, was on the verge of collapse into a narco-state (Cristo, 2016, p. 66). In fact, the strategic ambiguity of Plan Colombia—that is, the multiple strategic justifications for intervening in Colombia—enabled institutional alliances to coalesce in support of the aid programme (González, 2014). Plan Colombia was "a domestic counternarcotics policy intended to address the Clinton administration's moral crisis, a peace policy to support negotiations with the guerrilla forces, a counterinsurgency policy that would strengthen the security forces, and an economic development policy to spur development in remote regions," all at once (Tate, 2015, p. 137). For many members of Congress, as well, Plan Colombia presented an opportunity for the US government to reward profitable government contracts to US-based military hardware and technology companies, and contractors lobbied hard to generate support for military assistance to Colombia on Capitol Hill (Lindsay-Poland, 2018, p. 11; Tate, 2013, p. 227).[78]

Similarly, a focus on the supply side of the drug trade enabled US politicians to minimise US casualties by enlisting the Colombian security forces to fight the war against drug-trafficking organisations (Hurst, 2002, p. 3). Regardless, this strategy entailed an expansion of Department of Defense personnel in the country to monitor the introduction of

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[78] Tate explores in detail the deliberations surrounding the purchase of helicopters for the Colombian military and police and the influence of "material politics" on congressional decision-making (2013, p. 227). Lindsay-Poland, as well, suggests that constructing military facilities and providing US equipment via Plan Colombia was "a circular business" in which US investments benefitted the US government and private firms (2018, p. 85).

new technology and the implementation of SSR programmes. Plan Colombia's focus on the security forces also meant an upswell of funding for the US government's principal interlocutor, SOUTHCOM (Tate, 2015, p. 141). SOUTHCOM, a regionally focused entity with jurisdiction over the military's Latin American operations, readily accepted the influx of resources, and the Department of Defense averted post-Cold War budget reductions by embracing the counterdrug mission (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016).

However, Department of Defense involvement was subject to strict restrictions by the US Congress. US law prohibited the involvement of US service members in combat operations in Colombia, and Plan Colombia appropriations bills capped the number of personnel authorised in the country at any given time to a maximum of 400 US military advisors and 400 US civilian contractors (Vaicius, 2003). Even so, the executive branch tested these limits to protect one of the US government's other principal interests in the country: Colombian oil reserves (Leal Buitrago, 2006a, p. 235; Lindsay-Poland, 2018, p. 57; Murillo, 2004, pp. 137–138). This enlargement of mission took place during the administration of US President George W. Bush, at a time when US and Colombian relations with the oil-producing government of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frias deteriorated (Romero, 2004, p. 59). US authorities perceived the conservative, pro-US government in Bogotá to be a counterweight to a growing tide of leftist governments in the Andean region in the early 2000s, and ensuring that the country could thrive economically by protecting its principal extractive industries became a top priority. In 2001, 170 guerrilla bombings on the Caño Limón-Coveñas pipeline forced the shutdown in the flow of oil for much of the year (Isacson, 2007). As the GWOT permitted the US government to expand its counterterrorism footing across the world, the Bush administration cleverly used persistent attacks against

Colombia's oil pipelines by guerrilla groups to paint the FARC and ELN as a direct terrorist threat to US interests (Forero, 2002b).[79]

For their part, leaders at the US Department of State, the US Department of Justice, and USAID—the other principal actors involved in the SSR effort—offered compelling justifications for their support of Plan Colombia in its early years. Senior Foreign Service Officers at the US Department of State noted the "success" of US policy in El Salvador as a conflict resolution tactic and argued that the Department could play a similarly supportive role in ongoing peace negotiations in Colombia (Tate, 2015, p. 145-148).[80] The US Department of Justice and its subsidiary organisation, the DEA, also resoundingly supported an expansion of law enforcement support to Colombia, welcoming a deeper relationship with the Colombian Ministry of Justice to facilitate extraditions of drug traffickers and eventually a sweeping reform of the judiciary. Extradition of Colombian nationals had become a heated political issue in Colombia, and under pressure from the violent Medellín Cartel, Colombian authorities enshrined a ban on extraditions in the 1991 Constitution. Pastrana's conciliatory tone with the United States and commitment to bringing drug traffickers to justice reassured Clinton's Department of Justice that Colombian political leadership was amenable to resuming extradition talks.

USAID was originally expected to assume a substantial role in the implementation of Plan Colombia; the agency's lines of engagement in Latin America include drug crop substitution, rule of law construction, and conflict resolution programmes. Moreover, the

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[79] On February 4, 2002, *HR 4775 Supplemental Appropriations Act for Further Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States* was signed into law and gave the Colombian government authority to use Plan Colombia contributions to fight insurgents, especially those endangering oil infrastructure (Rosen, 2014, p. 50). The National Defense Authorization Act of 2005 rectified these personnel limitations, raising the military cap from 400 to 800 and the civilian contractor cap from 400 to 600.

[80] The Plan Colombia Interagency Task Force included representatives from INL (Department of State), Western Hemisphere Affairs (Department of State), USAID, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). For one observer, Plan Colombia was "where the US government discovered the interagency process and found that collaboration is only possible to the extent that leadership encourages it" (Author interview with a senior US development official, 2016). On the impact of departmental cultures on policy formulation in state building, see Waldman, 2014.

accountability aspect of SSR falls squarely within the traditional scope of activities for

USAID. Nonetheless, disputes with the Department of State and with the US Congress,

which initially funded only those programmes that had a direct nexus with drug repression

(e.g., chemical spraying), resulted in a smaller USAID mission at the outset of bilateral

initiative (Tate, 2015, pp. 155–158).[81] Consequently, the US government's soft-power

objectives, implemented by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), received only

modest resources, had a limited reach, and produced variable results in its early operation in

Colombia (Rojas, 2015, pp. 93–116). Returning the monopoly of the use of force to the

Colombian state was the resolute focus of US assistance during the earliest stages of SSR—a

strategy that demanded, in the minds of those on Capitol Hill, a most aggressive approach.

US-Mexican Security Relations Prior to the Mérida Initiative

Despite an earlier history of US military incursions into Mexican territory, the

security relationship between the United States and Mexico took a more positive turn during

the 1930s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's (1933-1945) commitment to the Good

Neighbour Policy, which renounced the United States' perceived right to military

intervention in the hemisphere under the Monroe Doctrine, improved the willingness of

Mexican authorities to coordinate with the US government on common matters of security.

Roosevelt wagered that improved hemispheric relations would help consolidate alliances and

economic opportunities in the event of war in Europe, and the country's long border with

Mexico furthermore demanded that the two countries cooperate on bilateral issues ranging

from agricultural practices and petroleum access to contraband and banditry (Jones, 1939).

Notably, the 1940s witnessed increased military-to-military cooperation, as the Mexican

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[81] This arrangement shifted in the later years of Plan Colombia. When institution building and alternative development became central objectives of US support after 2006, USAID became the lead agency to coordinate US Embassy activities in areas of the country reclaimed by the Colombian state.

government joined the Allied effort in 1942. In addition to intelligence sharing and an expansion of economic relations with the United States, the Mexican military sent a flight squadron to support the US effort in the Pacific theatre, and at least 250,000 Mexican citizens living in the United States donned US uniforms and deployed with the US Armed Forces during World War II (Mitchell, 2018, p. 109). Mexico's mineral wealth supplied the US arms industry with much-needed silver, copper, lead, zinc, and iron during the war years, and in 1941, the Mexican and US governments settled an economic dispute that resulted from Mexico's 1938 expropriation of the oil industry, thereby providing the northern neighbour with expanded access to petroleum (Paz, 1997, pp. 74–102). As was the case with Colombian participation in the Korean War, Mexico's involvement in World War II enabled a modest process of military modernisation through US military training, and after a contentious military history between the two countries, this period opened the door to future forms of military-to-military cooperation (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, p. 6).

The post-Revolution Mexican military underwent a largely endogenous process of modernisation and reform in the 1930s and 1940s, which made the force an increasingly attractive partner for the US Department of War (renamed the US Department of Defense in 1947).[82] According to Rath, the revolutionary army of the 1920s was comprised of "a diverse coalition of armed peasants, ranchers, middle-class professionals, *caudillos*, former federal soldiers, cowboys, miners, and a smattering of urban workers"—an often unwieldly group which consumed 50 percent of the federal budget, engaged in sporadic revolts, and lacked the discipline expected of professional armies (2018).[83] After 1935, however, President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) embarked on a reformist campaign to improve the image and composition of the military by encouraging physical fitness, punishing soldiers for

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[82] The Departments of War and State supported providing Mexico the means to defend itself against external aggression (Paz, 1997, p. 48).

[83] A *caudillo* refers to a personalist leader or strongman wielding military and political power in the Iberian and Ibero-American contexts.

unbecoming social vices, and normalising military family life by introducing a system of social insurance and housing.

Mexican involvement in World War II permitted the government to drive additional organisational reforms, including mandatory conscription until 1948, and between 1941 and 1945, the Mexican military, eager to obtain modern weapons and training, welcomed increased security cooperation with the United States—a stark departure from the anti-US sentiment of the institution's "old guard" (Paz, 1997, pp. 6–7). The Mexican government was reluctant, however, to permit the establishment of US military bases in the country, and the Mexican presidency, still in a process of consolidating power, considered that greater exposure to the highly autonomous officers of the US military might ultimately undermine the PRI's efforts to rein in the army's political wing. Indeed, following the war and during the administration of President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), the government firmly established civilian control of the force by disbanding the military's General Staff, asserting presidential prerogative in selecting the institution's leadership, and enfeebling the curriculum at the Military College (Rath, 2018).[84] The protracted demilitarisation of Mexican politics, at least in formal terms, had concluded by the 1950s (Rath, 2013).

US-Mexican collaboration on the counterdrug front dates back to this era, as well (Astorga, 2005). Drawing from a long tradition of repressive approaches to combat drug consumption, militarised anti-drug policies appeared on both sides of the border in the 1940s. Pérez Ricart notes, "The punitive paradigm [sponsored by the United States] could not have been applied in Mexico had Mexican policymakers not seen the competitive advantages offered to them by the policies proposed, and if those policies had not reflected traditional Mexican attitudes" (2018, pp. 47–48). Said attitudes prompted the founding of new security

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[84] Prior to President Alemán, Mexican presidential candidates were traditionally selected from the military's high command. In 1946, then-President and former General Manuel Ávila Camacho selected Alemán, a university professor, career bureaucrat, and civilian, to succeed him (Camp, 2005, p. 25). Ávila Camacho was the last presidential selectee to come from the ranks of the military.

institutions with a counternarcotics mandate, and in 1947, the Mexican government created

with US assistance the Federal Directorate of Security (Dirección Federal de Seguridad,

DFS), similar in design and authority to the US government's Federal Bureau of Investigation

(FBI). The DFS, often in coordination with the Mexican Army and sometimes with the

advisory input of the FBI, was charged with pursuing criminal groups specialising in the

production and transport of marijuana and opium products (Kenny and Serrano, 2012c, p.

32). In short order, drug contraband became a defining issue in the bilateral security

relationship.

Mexican efforts to centralise some of the country's law enforcement and intelligence

capabilities continued to benefit from FBI and CIA support into the 1950s, and given these

ties, the US government hoped for the ideological support of the Mexican government in the

early years of the Cold War (Navarro, 2010, pp. 121–149). However, the Mexican ruling

party, the PRI—itself a product of social revolution—disappointed US leadership when it

offered its unconditional recognition of the Cuban Revolution. Although US-Mexican

diplomatic relations cooled in the aftermath of Mexico's backing of the new communist

regime, domestic developments in Mexico in the 1960s gradually led to greater ideological

parity between the neighbouring countries. As Marxist political groups such as the 23

September Communist League (Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, LC23S) and the Party of

the Poor (Partido de los Pobres, PDLP) gained traction in Mexico, PRI authorities grew

concerned about internal challenges to their autocratic rule, and like in Colombia, the security

sector assumed a more active role in repressing left-wing movements, some of which

developed into small-scale insurgencies.[85] Even though the US government did not provide

significant material or training to Mexico during this period, shared anti-communist

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[85] Knight (2010, pp. 264–265) highlights the irony of the PRI's revolutionary slogans and decades of polices that promoted regressive capitalism and growing inequality. Although a number of social and agrarian movements challenged the regime's "public transcript," the PRI, with the help of the army, won the war of ideas and successfully contained armed revolutionary threats to the regime.

sentiment ensured that both countries worked, albeit mostly in isolation, toward the same

goal of containing revolutionary fervour on the North American continent.[86] Ojeda describes

bilateral relations during this period in the following fashion:

> The United States recognises and accepts the necessity
> of Mexico to dissent from US policies in everything that
> is not deemed fundamental to Mexico, even though it may
> be important to the United States but not fundamental. In
> exchange for that, Mexico lends its cooperation on all
> fronts that are fundamental or even important for the
> United States, even if it is not for [Mexico]. (1976, p. 93)

The 1960s additionally marked the growing involvement of the Mexican military in

counterdrug missions, especially the eradication of marijuana and poppy crops.[87] In 1969, the

US government embarked on a massive border-entry drug interdiction programme known as

Operation Intercept, which pressured the Mexican government to enhance its counterdrug

measures (Weintraub, 2010, p. 68). The Mexican government, facing declining tourism and

reduced exports, begrudgingly agreed to pursue drug traffickers with greater vigour, enlisting

the support of the Mexican military to destroy drug crops in a bilateral aerial spraying

campaign called Operation Condor.[88] Although the military, historically oriented toward

external defence, cautiously took on these operations, this new role exposed an institution

that prided itself on its professionalism to the corrupting influence of criminal enterprises.

Gangs often cultivated drug crops with the permission of military zone commanders, and

police forces, which controlled highway checkpoints and border crossings, were known to

accept bribes to let product pass onward to the United States (Camp, 2005, p. 117; Kenny and

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[86] The US government recognised the importance of Mexican nationalism as both a foreign policy stance and as a factor in sustaining public support for the PRI's political regime domestically (Loaeza, 2013, p. 38).

[87] The initial involvement of the Mexican military in these roles occurred during a 1948 operation known as the "Great Campaign," subsiding for a time until the 1960s. Nevertheless, given that the military's slow growth occurred in a fashion incompatible with the growth of militaries in neighbouring countries, the second half of the twentieth century made clear that external security has not been the principal focus of the country's military (Sánchez Lara, 2017, p. 49).

[88] The US and Mexican governments launched the programme in 1975, and it lasted until the mid-1980s, as both governments cited diminishing effectiveness and ecological concerns over the use of herbicide (Weintraub, 2010, p. 78). The US government was also concerned about corruption in the Mexican security forces responsible for the aerial spraying (Watt and Zepeda, 2012, pp. 48–54).

Serrano, 2012c, p. 34). By the 1980s, drug corruption in the ranks of the military had become so acute that the institution's leadership increased counterdrug intelligence, expanded phone surveillance, and rotated zone commanders with greater frequency to target corrupt soldiers (Camp, 1992, p. 59).

This vulnerability appears to have had little initial impact on US-Mexican security relations, however, as US officials celebrated in then-classified cables the Mexican military's eradication and interdiction successes against heroin trafficking and lauded the senior-level appointments of officers perceived to be vehemently anti-drug (Defense Intelligence Agency, 1977). The administrations of Mexican Presidents Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) and Carlos Salinas Gotari (1988-1994) also welcomed closer law enforcement coordination with the United States to interdict marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin. Eventually, though, the infiltration of Mexican police forces by drug traffickers undermined Mexico's credibility and precipitated a major diplomatic impasse. A number of high-ranking individuals in the Mexican government, even a director of the DFS, were suspected of close ties to drug gangs. With the 1985 murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena Salazár by drug operatives linked to Mexican security officials, the US government publicly called into question the commitment of the Mexican security sector to confront the drug issue (Murphy, 1988).[89]

Mexican authorities reacted by reorganising the country's principal counterdrug agencies. The government quickly moved to abolish the DFS and created a new federal force with technical advice from the DEA called the Investigation and National Security Centre (Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional, CISEN).[90] The de la Madrid administration

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[89] Camarena was responsible for uncovering a multibillion-dollar drug operation that involved Mexican police, army, and government officials. In 1990, the DEA, leery of providing actionable intelligence to its Mexican counterparts, kidnapped on Mexican soil one of the suspected perpetrators of Camarena's torture and murder—a further setback for bilateral cooperation (Weintraub, 2010, pp. 78–79).

[90] The responsibilities of CISEN include the formulation of strategic, tactical, and operational intelligence to prevent, contain, and neutralise risks to the constitutional order and territorial integrity of the Mexican state. However, CISEN also suffered from debilitating corruption within its ranks starting in 1987, when the Juarez Cartel infiltrated the organization's leadership (Watt and Zepeda, 2012, p. 98). Since the 2005 passage of the National Security Law (Ley de Seguridad Nacional), CISEN has served as the top intelligence agency for the

strengthened the Mexican Army's counterdrug capabilities, as well, by establishing in 1986 the Rapid Response Force (later renamed as the Airmobile Special Forces Group [Grupo Aeromóvil de Fuerzas Especiales, GAFE]), which was equipped to deploy on short notice to supress outbreaks of drug violence (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, p. 15). The Salinas government, for its part, coincided with President Reagan's conviction that drug trafficking represented a national security threat, and by the turn of the decade, the Mexican government had dispatched more than 25,000 military troops in domestic counterdrug missions (Kenny and Serrano, 2012c, p. 38). Even so, US intelligence officials remained apprehensive about how the Mexican military's obsolete equipment, lack of logistical control, over-centralisation, corruption, and inadequate training would inevitably hamper the force's ability to deliver operational results (United States Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center, 1993, p. 5).

Joint concerns about the drug problem persisted into the early 1990s, as traffickers increasingly utilised Mexican terrain to smuggle cocaine into the United States. The land bridge comprised of Central America and Mexico, a region already rife with contraband and trafficking networks, became the preferred path for the Colombian cartels (Schaefer et al., 2009a, p. 22). Mexican drug gangs became more centralised, as well, in a coordinated ploy to negotiate state protection for their illegal activities. Successive directors of the Federal Judicial Police (Policía Judicial Federal, PJF) offered these services to the cartels in exchange for handsome financial rewards, and in the early 1990s, organised crime syndicates reportedly paid more than US$500 million annually in bribes, a sum which represented more than double the budget of the Mexican Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) (Kenny and Serrano, 2012c, p. 41).[91] The relative peace that inter-cartel

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executive branch (Sánchez Lara, 2017, p. 56). For a summary of reforms adopted by the Mexican government in the security realm in the 1990s, see Chabat, 2010, pp. 25–27. For a history of the CISEN, see Herrera-Lasso M., 2010.

[91] Mexico's Secretary of Public Security Genaro García Luna estimated in 2010 that cartels collectively paid more than US$1 billion a year in bribes to the country's municipal police (Keefe, 2012). It should be noted that García Luna, a close ally of President Calderón, has dodged accusations of corruption and collusion with the

collaboration had achieved, however, was short-lived, and the organisations ultimately splintered into warring bands that vied for transit routes. In 1993, such competition resulted in sporadic and sensational outbursts of violence, particularly in border cities, and the 1994 emergence of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) insurgency in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas added to deteriorating security in the country.

The wave of public disorder exacerbated the already-uneasy US-Mexican relationship. The US government, having entered into the NAFTA deal with Canada and Mexico in 1994, became anxious about collapsing trade barriers while its neighbour to the south appeared to neglect its responsibility to combat the drug trade (Ashby, 2014; US Department of State, 1995, p. 11). Relations became unambiguously tense when Mexican authorities admitted in 1997 that the country's Commissioner of the National Institute to Combat Drugs (Instituto Nacional para el Combate a las Drogas, INCD), General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebello, had long-standing ties to drug cartels (Preston, 1997).[92] Fierce debate over decertification of Mexico as a drug war ally ensued in the US Congress, which ultimately eschewed the proposed sanctions, but in an attempt to salvage the bilateral relationship, US interagency actors ramped up pressure on Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) to root out endemic security sector corruption once and for all (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 98).[93]

Sinaloa Cartel throughout his long, successful career in the federal police forces (Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, pp. 697–698). In 2018, during the trial of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, a witness testified that the Sinaloa Cartel had paid US$50 million in protection money to García Luna so that corrupt police officers would be appointed to head SSP operations (BBC News, 2019). The Calderón administration, for its part, repeatedly faced criticism that it was engaged in the nationwide protection of the Sinaloa Cartel, as purportedly evidenced by its preference to repress other criminal organisations more resolutely (Martin, 2013, p. 42).

[92] General Gutiérrez Rebello was convicted and sentenced to 35 years in prison for protecting drug trafficker Amado Carrillo (Weintraub, 2010, p. 80).

[93] To foster greater understanding and coordination between Mexico and the United States on the drug issue, the two governments created bilateral forums like the Plenary Group on Law Enforcement and the High-Level Contact Group for Drug Control. In 1998, those efforts culminated in the publication of the *US-Mexico Bi-National Drug Strategy* (Domínguez and Fernández de Castro, 2013, pp. 45–46).

As in Colombia, police agencies in Mexico were highly susceptible to bribery, and many members of the country's armed gangs, often working at the behest of the cartels, were employed by day as police officers (Kenny and Serrano, 2012d, p. 57). The Zedillo government's attempt to address the corrupting influence of the cartels inspired a campaign to arrest the leadership of the Gulf of Mexico and Tijuana cartels, resulting in an all-out war between the cartels and the security forces (Domínguez and Fernández de Castro, 2013, p. 44). Institutional reforms in the security sector complemented the government's repressive measures. Although the federal government had less leverage to impose reform on state and municipal police forces due, in part, to a devolution of autonomy and authority to municipal governments starting in 1983, the Zedillo administration initially purged more than 1,800 PJF agents, reducing the force by half (Rodríguez, 1993). In 1998, in the face of flagging public trust, the government dissolved the PJF altogether, founded the Federal Preventive Police (Policía Federal Preventiva, PFP), and increased the responsibilities of state governments in the realm of public security (O'Neil, 2013, p. 268). Zedillo's successor, President Vicente Fox, also attempted to professionalise and centralise law enforcement by creating the Federal Investigative Agency (Agencia Federal de Investigación, AFI), which assumed the functions previously ascribed to the PJF, but the AFI, too, succumbed to widespread corruption. By 2005, the Mexican Attorney General's Office reported that one-fifth of the AFI's officers faced investigations into criminal activity, and in 2009, the government once again reorganised the AFI and rebranded it as the Federal Ministerial Police (Policía Federal Ministerial, PFM) (Cook, 2007, p. 9).

The transition to democracy in the 1990s resulted in a further politicisation of the state and municipal police forces, which ascribed to the partisan preferences of the governors and mayors who appointed them. The apparent lack of clarity on how to address a much-needed law enforcement reform in due course opened the door to an even greater public security role

for the armed forces (Kenny and Serrano, 2012d, p. 58). In 1995, the Secretariat of National Defence (Secretaría de Defensa Nacional, SEDENA), comprised of the army and air force, promulgated a development plan that helped guide a transformation and modernisation process. In it, the military willingly accepted a larger mandate in counternarcotics and in supporting law enforcement missions (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, p. 15; US Department of State, 1995, p. 13).

This early iteration of SSR also included a restructuring of the army into smaller, mobile units; a revamping of the military intelligence apparatus; the creation of a body to coordinate joint operations between SEDENA and the Secretariat of the Navy (Secretaría de Marina, SEMAR); the development of new special forces squadrons to address local insurgencies; and the introduction of new technology, equipment, and weapons (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, pp. 16–17). In some ways, SEDENA was reacting to a growing dissatisfaction within the army over the institution's handling of the EZLN insurgency, command structure, promotions, and technical competence (Camp, 2005, p. 38).[94] Desperate for a viable security partner across the border, the US Department of Defense encouraged the reform, and after a series of high-level defence summits, the US government accelerated security assistance for the Mexican military to an unprecedented degree.[95]

From 1996 to 2000, US engagement doubled the number of Mexican trainees at US military schools, and US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) of body armour, Humvees, and night-vision equipment to SEDENA spiked (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, pp. 22–24). The US government also transferred tens of millions of dollars in excess defence articles to the Mexican military, including 73 Vietnam-era UH-1 helicopters. The fallout that ensued from the transfer of

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[94] Many officers in the army and presidential guard resented the promotion of officers who had not participated in campaign against the EZLN (Piñyero, 2001, p. 13).

[95] The Mexican military's historical tendency to keep the US military at a comfortable distance is due to a long-standing calculation that the two biggest risks to Mexican national security were the direct political intervention of Washington in Mexican domestic issues and the deployment of US military troops to US-Mexican border (Martínez Álvarez and Garza Elizondo, 2013, p. 98).

helicopters, however, highlighted the tension underlying the bilateral security relationship and the sensitivity of the Mexican government to perceived condescension by the US (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, p. 24). The donation of outmoded helicopters, many with debilitating maintenance problems, frustrated Mexican Army leadership, and US governmental accusations that SEDENA had deployed the helicopters in counterinsurgency missions, a violation of the terms of their transfer, offended Mexican authorities.[96]

Despite tensions, cooperative security relations expanded in the early years of the 2000s, as cross-border security remained at the forefront the bilateral agenda.[97] Following the 9/11 attacks, the NAFTA community assumed a newfound importance for the Bush administration, and the spectre of terrorist violence on US soil drove an unprecedented urgency to deny would-be terrorists access to US territory via the Mexican border. Mexican notions of "national security" were forever changed in 2001, as the Mexican government could no longer devise defence policy independent of the threat perceptions of its northern neighbour (Martínez Álvarez and Garza Elizondo, 2013, p. 94). In April 2002, the inauguration of the Department of Defense's NORTHCOM, a military command with a mandate to implement regional US defence strategy in North America, signalled the emphasis on continental and border security and US hopes for a growing security-focused relationship with Mexico (Ruiz Pérez, 2011, pp. 322–323).

Much to the delight of US policymakers, President Fox pursed a more confrontational strategy against drug-trafficking organisations (Chabat, 2010, pp. 27–28; Deare, 2017, pp. 211–215). Additionally, Mexican military units participated in US-sponsored exercises and

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[96] In October 1999, the Mexican government decommissioned the helicopters from its arsenal and returned all of the donated aircraft to the United States. Much to the dismay of US policymakers, a more meaningful, sustained security relationship between the two countries did not immediately materialise.

[97] The Mexican government's international security strategy in the 1990s featured the following: a rejection of alliances with any US rival, a rejection of foreign policy interests that the US government could construe as a threat, a commitment to a reduced military capability so as not to threaten the United States, the build-up of military capability to combat drug trafficking, a preference for US weapons suppliers, and extensive cooperation with the US government on international security matters (Domínguez and Fernández de Castro, 2013, pp. 36–37).

implemented a military education curriculum using US training philosophies and textbooks (Camp, 2005, p. 13). In 2005, the three NAFTA governments signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America agreement, which synchronised regional strategies for counterterrorism, border security, and the protection of strategic resources (Carlsen, 2018, p. 85; Watt and Zepeda, 2012, p. 193). The agreement established a series of thematic working groups for the executive ministries of the signatory governments, which increased exposure between US and Mexican leaders. It was out of this pact that the Bush administration sought to design in coordination with the Mexican government a more narrowly focused plan to "[extend] the perimeter of the US homeland security area to the Mexico-Guatemala border" (Benítez Manaut, 2009, p. 226; Carlsen, 2018, p. 85). Doing so would enlarge the United States' protective buffer, while standardising security practices between the US and Mexican governments. Although President Fox remained reticent to the idea during his last year in office, his successor, President Calderón, assumed the presidency in 2006 with a weak mandate and a desire to shore up domestic and international support for his government.[98] In him, the US government found a partner who was eager to enhance the bilateral agenda in this fashion (Lakhani and Tirado, 2016; Olson, 2017).

President Calderón's receptiveness to greater collaboration with the US coincided with an increasingly tense security situation in Mexico. By 2006, a considerable escalation of cartel violence had made international headlines, and Mexican border cities like Tijuana and

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[98] The results of the 2006 presidential election were controversial because the PAN candidate, Felipe Calderón, defeated runner-up André Manuel López Obrador by just 0.6 percent of the vote and achieved only 35.9 percent of the total vote (Deare, 2017, p. 274). Although the Federal Electoral Tribunal recognised Calderón's victory as legitimate, Calderón entered office in December 2006 with a weak mandate, and many Mexicans perceived his early policy decisions, including militarisation of the drug war and the Mérida Initiative, as ploys to boost his legitimacy (Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017a; Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, p. 672). However, one researcher declared, "The decision to deploy the military was too important to minimise by saying it was a way to consolidate power after a heated and contested election. Calderón was shocked and nervous about the threat the drug traffickers posed to the state. When the narcos fled to the mountains after the military intervened in Michoacán, the public applauded him, and he felt that the militarisation strategy was mostly working" (Author interview with Toro, 2017).

Ciudad Juárez became contested turf for the country's principal drug clans.[99] On December 10, 2006, the newly inaugurated president sent 6,500 troops into his home state of Michoacán to quell a spate of violence that had left dozens of people dead in a series of mass killings perpetrated by drug gangs. His unmistakable aim was to rein in the destabilising impact and social ramifications of wanton drug violence (Chabat, 2010, p. 30).

National political leaders recognised the urgency of addressing the security sector's incapacity to stem growing violence (Deare, 2017, p. 276). Of Mexico's 2,438 municipalities, 400 had no functioning municipal police, and 90 percent of the country's law enforcement agencies had fewer than 100 members and salaries of less than US$350 per month (Benítez Manaut, 2013, p. 156). The Mexican government's incapacity to contain the cartels exposed the Calderón administration to international criticism and domestic demands for change, and a creeping sense of political isolation, combined with a belief that the United States and Mexico share responsibility for the drug trade, pushed the Mexican executive to seek help from its neighbour (Olson, 2017). Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Shannon noted, "Never before has a President committed Mexico's military to help and assist police in this kind of battle, and never before has a Mexican President approached the United States, in the manner that President Calderón has, to make the request for assistance that he has" (*The Mérida Initiative*, 2007, p. 20).

The Mérida Initiative Onward

In 2007, these overtures and longstanding US hopes for improved security cooperation culminated in the signing of the Mérida Initiative, the bilateral security agreement named in honour of the seminal meeting between Presidents Bush and Calderón in

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[99] The "real beginning" of the Mexican drug war was in 2004, after Mexican authorities captured the Gulf Cartel's leader, Osiel Cárdenas (Martin, 2013, p. 39). As the Gulf Cartel underwent internal reorganisation, the Sinaloa Cartel attempted to seize the Nuevo Laredo *plaza*, or smuggling corridor, only to be repelled by the Gulf Cartel's armed wing known as Los Zetas.

the Mexican city of Mérida.[100] At the heart of the agreement was a shared responsibility to address common security threats between neighbouring countries (Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, p. 670).[101] The pact naturally entailed counterdrug and border security programmes, but more broadly, the US government committed to helping the Calderón administration build and reform military, law enforcement, and judicial bodies to address the root causes of crime and violence in Mexico (Calderón Hinojosa, 2007). Alejandro Poiré, one of the Calderón administration's architects of the Mérida Initiative, also noted, "Our strategy was based on three elements: weakening organised delinquency through judicial reform, institutional reconstruction in the security sector, and the reconstruction of the country's social fabric through prevention…. It required a certain closeness to the US government" (Author interview with Poiré, 2017). To this end, the Bush administration's initial conception of the plan involved a US$1.4 billion request from Congress, and although 63 percent of the initiative funded immediate counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and border security measures, the remainder focused on long-term programming for SSR, institution building, and rule of law construction (Olson, 2017).

With this unprecedented opportunity, US policymakers and the myriad actors of the interagency process examined how best to support Mexican authorities. The securitisation narrative continued to inform US drug policy, and Plan Colombia provided the Bush and Obama administrations a template for enlarging their mandate in Mexico (Arteaga B., 2009; Carlsen, 2010). However, US policymakers believed that every effort should be made to avoid the perception that the bilateral strategy was mere militarisation, a frequent criticism of Plan Colombia (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, pp. 32–33). To Calderón and US policymakers alike, it was important to deny Calderón's opponents, including President Hugo Chávez of

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[100] The Mérida Initiative was originally labelled the Joint Strategy to Combat Organized Crime (Martin, 2013, p. 40).

[101] "Shared responsibility" illuminates the degree of agency exhibited by Mexico in the formulation of the plan, as the United States accepted co-responsibility for drug violence in Mexico (Lozano Vázquez, 2016, p. 216).

Venezuela, the chance to criticise the reform initiative as a US imposition on Latin America (Roberts and Walser, 2007). Unlike in Colombia, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism concerns—at least as they pertained to domestic actors in Mexico—were not a central component of cooperation. Thus, policymakers perceived military operations as quick fixes to a dire situation but not a long-term solution to Mexico's woes. In this fashion, US and Mexican authorities made deliberate strides to distinguish the Mérida Initiative from Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia, which afforded the US Department of Defense a lion's share of the tools of engagement, was an SSR that focused primarily on the military and secondarily on the police and justice system. For the Mérida Initiative, the US Department of State became the lead agency, which rendered law enforcement and judicial reform top strategic priorities (Ribando Seelke, 2018, p. 16).

Notwithstanding calls to temper the militaristic tone of engagement, early support decidedly favoured the Mexican military. Given the historical unreliability of Mexican police forces, partnership with the military had clear benefits. Compared to the Federal Police (Policía Federal), the armed forces could match the drug cartels in terms of firepower and tactics. Furthermore, the Mexican public trusted the military to be more immune to infiltration by drug gangs than the country's other security forces—so much so that SEDENA formalised its mechanism to aid police forces in the counterdrug fight with the creation of the Federal Support Military Corps (Cuerpo de Fuerzas de Apoyo Federal) in 2007 (Paul et al., 2014, pp. 31–32; Weintraub, 2010, p. 70). Although the Mexican government pursued limited military deployments to contain internal violence from 2003 to 2005, President Calderón deployed a previously unthinkable tally of 50,000 military troops in domestic security roles during his six-year tenure.[102] As in Colombia, US authorities enthusiastically encouraged the

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[102] From 2002 to 2006, the Attorney General of Mexico, Army General Rafael Marcial Macedo de la Concha, facilitated the first major joint operations between military and federal police forces against drug-trafficking targets (e.g., Directiva Azteca XXI, Operación México Seguro) (Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017a). The Calderón government thereafter laid the groundwork for a process of law enforcement

"kingpin strategy," and President Calderón and his party's leadership, who even prior to the Mérida Initiative demonstrated a willingness to go after cartel leaders, welcomed US assistance in this regard (Cook, 2007, p. 3).

The Mérida Initiative entailed donations and purchases of helicopters, light planes, and high-tech intelligence capabilities from US suppliers, as well (Carlsen, 2018, p. 88). In the ten years of the Mérida Initiative, Mexican defence buying increased dramatically (Partlow, 2015). Although Mexican law prohibits US military personnel from "operating" in Mexican national territory, US defence contractors, retired military officers, and private security companies engaged in extensive training of Mexican agencies, and US Special Forces participated in MTTs with the Mexican Army, Marine Corps, and Federal Police starting in 2008.[103] Furthermore, US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates visited Mexico in April 2008, the first high-level ministerial visit from the US defence sector since 1995. On his trip, Gates took advantage of the occasion to reiterate and clarify US support, indicating that the US Department of Defense was committed to its Mexican partners but would follow the US Department of State's directives with respect to the focus and extent of military-to-military engagement (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, pp. 31–32).

Once again, members of the US Congress identified in the Mérida strategy solutions and prospective opportunities for their constituents, despite their initial concerns about the Bush administration's reluctance to consult Capitol Hill during the bilateral negotiations (*The Mérida Initiative*, 2007, 1-2). The Mérida Initiative offered Republicans and Democrats a chance to demonstrate that Washington took seriously the concerns and fears of US voters

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and justice sector reform, with the eventual goal of transferring domestic policing roles to better-trained civilian police forces.

[103] Mexican Army officers even began training in counterinsurgency tactics and travelled to Iraq to observe the implementation of US tactics in the field (Carlsen, 2018, p. 87). However, because of traditional Mexican sensitivities to impingements on sovereignty, NORTHCOM's MTTs passed largely under the radar. One observer noted that US military personnel were not even allowed to leave the bases where they were working alongside their Mexican counterparts so as to avoid public scrutiny of their embedded presence (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016).

and businesses, particularly in border states. The cross-border tourism and manufacturing industries were especially vulnerable to a deterioration in public security, and a large Mexican-American population with strong ties to family members in Mexico made US inaction an untenable position. In 2009, the National Sheriffs' Association even requested that Congress double Mérida Initiative funding, and state governors and political representatives from the southwest border states doggedly pressed national leaders to respond to growing insecurity (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, p. 34). Furthermore, the early emphasis of the Mérida Initiative on military and security hardware afforded US defence companies opportunities to compete for contracts to sell new aircraft, body scanners, and x-ray technology (Olson, 2017). From 2008 to 2010, US assistance included the purchase of US$590.5 million in surveillance aircraft and Black Hawk helicopters alone—a transfer of equipment that ensured continued business for US manufacturers who signed maintenance and training contracts that lasted well into the 2010s.

In addition to the presidency, Congress, and the Department of Defense, other interagency actors seized on the Mérida Initiative to boost relationships with Mexican counterparts. The Department of State oversaw the administration of military aid, channelled through the Department of Defense, but also insisted that it could play a role in training civilian law enforcement agencies by sponsoring polygraph capabilities and vetting criteria (*The Mérida Initiative*, 2007, p. 15). Corruption and human rights concerns had long-challenged the bilateral relationship, and the Department's leadership saw in the Mérida Initiative an opportunity to address these deficiencies (US Department of State, 2008). Department of Justice and USAID leadership, as well, believed that the Mérida Initiative could help strengthen Mexican justice institutions and synchronise US and Mexican judicial practices. President Calderón's commitment to justice reform, approved in 2008, even pushed the Mexican Technical Secretariat for Justice Sector Reform (Secretaría Técnica, SETEC) to

seek US help in revamping Mexico's courts, law school curricula, and criminal code (US Agency for International Development, 2018).[104] The ten-year reform process would in the later years of the Mérida Initiative consume the bulk of resources committed by the US government, as institution building and rule of law consolidation became the emphases of US assistance after an initial period of hardware transfers.

As was the case with Plan Colombia, the fusion of policy objectives encouraged diverse US policymaking actors to coalesce around the Mérida Initiative and SSR (Ashby, 2014, pp. 182–224). Although historically the US and Mexico did not exhibit the same degree of closeness as the US-Colombian relationship, a common understanding of the need to share responsibility for issues affecting both sides of the border prevailed during the second half of the twentieth century. The Mérida Initiative grew out of an oft-guarded yet consistently expanding bilateral security posture, and like in Colombia, the US government recognised an unprecedented opportunity to help a struggling partner reform fragile and unconsolidated democratic institutions in the face of forbidding non-state threats.

The Design of SSR in Colombia and Mexico

Plan Colombia

The US Congress approved legislation in support of Plan Colombia in 2000 as part of the Military Construction Appropriations Act of 2001 (P.L. 106-246) by providing US$1.3 billion for counternarcotics and institution building in Colombia and its neighbouring countries. Although Congress never formally authorised Plan Colombia as a multi-year assistance strategy, US legislators approved annual funding requests from the executive branch under the heading of "Plan Colombia" through Fiscal Year 2011. Given the diversity

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[104] As Kurtenbach (2018) stresses, justice sector reform and the promotion of the rule of law are part of comprehensive SSR, but the implementation of judiciary reform initiatives typically represents a lower priority for governments enduring security crises.

of implementing actors involved in the SSR effort, the US government financed the aid package, which totalled nearly US$8.4 billion between 2000 and 2011, in a piecemeal manner, taking advantage of eight lines of accounting over the period of assistance (Beittel, 2012, p. 38). After the expiration of Clinton-era funding, the Bush administration incorporated SSR programming in Colombia (in addition to eradication, interdiction, and alternative development programmes) via a regional plan called the Andean Counterdrug Program (ACP) (initially known as the Andean Counterdrug Initiative, ACI), the Department of State's Air Wing account, and Sections 1004, 1033, and 1204 of the National Defense Authorization Act. Other governmental funds such as Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) supported the acquisition of military hardware and advanced professional training respectively, and the US government drew from the Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related (NADR) programmes budget to finance counterterrorism initiatives.

As Bailey (2011b) notes, Plan Colombia developed over two phases: from 2000 to 2006, assistance focused on modernising and enhancing the security force's operational posture, and from 2006 to 2011, US commitments emphasised institution building and the consolidation of the gains achieved during the first phase. US interagency partners embraced the Colombian government's 2007 National Consolidation Plan as an opportunity to restructure US assistance, and a US Embassy effort known as the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) aligned US contributions with Colombian programmes to expand security and justice provision across the national territory.[105] Indeed, starting in 2008, the Bush administration reassigned alternative development and institution-building

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[105] By 2008, the US government began to express frustration with the sluggish pace of Colombian "nationalisation" of equipment, maintenance, operations, and funding of US-sponsored programmes (US Government Accountability Office, 2008, pp. 62–70). The US government reoriented aid, in part, to communicate to the Colombian government that the US taxpayers would not fund all programmes indefinitely. On CSDI, see Rojas, 2015, pp. 190–197.

programmes to the Economic Support Fund (ESF), and in 2010, the Obama administration

shifted ACP funds into the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)

accounting line. Table 4.1 presents a yearly breakdown of funding for Plan Colombia and

reflects greater specialisation over time.

Table 4.1: US Assistance for Plan Colombia (Fiscal Years 2000-2011) in Millions of US Dollars

Fiscal Year	ACI/ACP	ESF	FMF	IMET	INCLE	NADR	Air Wing	Defense	TOTAL
2000	60.1						38.0	128.5	226.6
P.L. 106-246	832.0							100.7	932.7
2001	48.0						38.0	190.2	276.2
2002	379.9					25.0	38.2	117.3	560.4
2003	580.2		17.1	1.2		3.3	41.5	164.8	808.1
2004	473.9		98.5	1.7		0.2	45.0	178.2	797.5
2005	462.8		99.2	1.7		5.1	45.0	155.3	769.1
2006	464.8		89.1	1.7			45.0	140.5	741.1
2007	465.0		85.5	1.6		4.1	37.0	129.4	722.6
2008	244.6	194.4	55.1	1.4	41.9	3.7	39.0	119.9	700.0
2009	230.1	196.5	53.0	1.4	45.0	3.2	12.4	127.9	669.5
2010		201.8	55.0	1.7	243.9	4.8	12.9	129.4	649.5
2011		184.4	47.9	1.7	204.0	4.8	3.6	110.4	556.8
TOTAL	4241.4	777.1	600.4	14.1	534.8	54.2	395.6	1792.0	8410.1

Source: Beittel, 2012, p. 38.
Note: See List of Acronyms for programme names.

The US bureaucracy administered the material components of support to a variety of

beneficiary institutions, but not surprisingly, the Colombian Ministry of Defence received the

bulk of assistance. In particular, US defence spending focused on developing the capabilities

of the Colombian Army's Aviation Brigade and newly founded Counternarcotics Brigade

(US Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 27).[106] These important changes included

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[106] Prior to Plan Colombia, the US military limited its engagement with the Colombian Army to four annual MTTs sent to the 12th and 24th Brigades based in the coca-rich south of the country. However, in 2000, the 24th Brigade became implicated in accusations of human rights abuses, resulting in the suspension of US aid. Starting in 1999, the US Army helped build a new 935-person counterdrug battalion, which passed US vetting standards, and allowed for the resumption of aid (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016).

the introduction of night-vision technology to the forces, enabling operations around the clock, and US involvement was especially important for the purchase and maintenance of the 289 helicopters from 2000 to 2011 (Bailey, 2011b; Author interview with Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, 2017).[107] Improved air mobility led to the creation of rapid-reaction units in both the army and National Police—institutions that shifted the advantage in the Colombian conflict decidedly in the direction of the state (Author interview with a demobilised FARC military strategist, 2017). By 2003, this mobile police force, the Carabineros, re-established police presence in 169 municipalities that lacked it a year earlier (US Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 28).[108] The National Police received considerable assistance in the conduct of a drug-crop eradication programme, and during the Bush years, the Colombian Army benefitted from supplies and training that facilitated the security of the country's oil infrastructure. These last two lines of effort specifically addressed US strategic priorities in Colombia: drugs and terrorism. In addition, US advisors helped the armed forces establish joint commands, such as the Joint Task Force Omega (Fuerza de Tarea Conjunta Omega) to target the FARC's stronghold and the Joint Special Forces Command to participate in hostage rescue and the pursuit of high-value targets (US Government Accountability Office, 2008, pp. 34–35).[109] Specialised Army units like the Lanceros, modelled after the US Army Rangers, were top beneficiaries of US resources after 2003, when the US government trained them to track and rescue three US Embassy contractors kidnapped by the FARC (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016).[110]

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[107] The leadership of the Colombian Army was historically at odds with the Colombian Air Force concerning logistical requirements such as flight hours, crew rest, and landing conditions and long wanted to be in control of their own aviation assets (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016).

[108] The National Police also underwent a major structural and oversight reform in 2003 following scandals surrounding cases of illicit enrichment by police officers and the mismanagement of US-donated funds (Casas Dupuy, 2005).

[109] The cultural shift toward jointness was not without dramatic consequences for the armed forces, as 14 generals retired upon the announcement of joint commands because they rejected the notion of taking orders from someone of a different service (Author interview with Hernández, 2017).

[110] On the role of the US military in the founding of the Lanceros during the Cold War, see Rodríguez Hernández, 2005, pp. 75–82. In one of the most brazen rescues, the Colombian military successfully retrieved

The Colombian Air Force, as well, took advantage of new surveillance aircraft and geospatial technology, and the Colombian Navy received two maritime surveillance aircraft, hundreds of riverine and coastal patrol craft, and night-vision and communications equipment through US equipment transfers and purchases (US Government Accountability Office, 2008, pp. 36–38). Ground-based radar sites at Leticia, Marandúa, San José de Guaviare, and Tres Esquinas and maritime radar expansion to Riohacha, Cartagena, and San Andrés gave the Colombian government an upper hand against insurgent and criminal groups (Rochlin, 2007, p. 51). Intelligence fusion, as well, represented a major advance for the Colombian security sector, and the US Department of Defense helped Colombia establish regional intelligence centres, which emphasised the recruitment of informants and geospatial tracking of guerrilla movements (Lindsay-Poland, 2018, p. 88).[111] In 2006, the US government also provided laser-guided munitions to target guerrilla camps and leadership—a tactic that revolutionised the way that the Colombian government pursued its enemies.[112] These operational changes were accompanied by organisational reforms, as well. In 2010, the Colombian government upgraded the Ministry's planning and budgeting programmes through the Defense Resource Management Reform (DRMR), sponsored and advised by the US Department of Defense. This effort institutionalised processes such as estimating future defence costs, linking strategic planning to budgets, and improving investment planning to meet the security needs of the Colombian people (Miklaucic and Pinzón, 2017, p. 280).

Ingrid Betancourt, a former Colombian presidential candidate; three US Embassy contractors; and 11 Colombian military and police officers without firing a single shot (Santos, 2009, pp. 241–263). This was a mortal blow to the FARC, which had in the months prior to the rescue operation seen a number of high-profile deaths and desertions within their ranks.

[111] President Uribe expanded the government's human intelligence capabilities by raising a network of 1.5 million government informants and by equipping highway travellers with panic buttons linked to satellites to report insurgent activity. Real-time intelligence helped prevent attacks on Colombian government infrastructure and military bases and allowed for the deployment of rapid-reaction forces. Raids on guerrilla units surged from 477 in 2002 to 1,784 in 2004 (Rochlin, 2007, pp. 53–54).

[112] Controversially, the Uribe government bombed a FARC camp in Ecuadorian territory in 2008, resulting in the death of FARC Secretariat Commander Raúl Reyes. This incident generated a diplomatic row between Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela over the violation of national sovereignty.

A major criticism of the US decision to provide material aid and training to the Colombian military was the perception of the US government's involvement in another Vietnam-style counterinsurgency campaign (Schemo, 1997). Not until the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the collapse of peace talks with the FARC in 2002 did the US government begin to push specifically for a military defeat of the FARC, ELN, and AUC using assistance and resources from the United States. At this point, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism became legally viable missions for the US government in Colombia. The 9/11 attacks in the US offered Colombian politicians an opportunity to elevate Colombia's decades-old struggle to the international political agenda.[113] Until Plan Colombia, the combat units of the Colombian military possessed an anti-subversive architecture focused on long-term counterinsurgency campaigns; US aid, training, and advisory support enabled a historic reconfiguration of the military as a force also equipped for antiterrorist operations, which emphasised flexibility, rapid reaction, and superior intelligence to disrupt terrorist incidents before they occur (Borrero Mansilla, 2006, p. 130; Boyle, 2010; Niño González, 2015a, p. 57).

The confluence of US and Colombian counterterrorism rhetoric resulted in the inauguration of a number of specialised and highly mobile military and police units. The Colombian Ministry of Defence founded the Rapid Deployment Force (Fuerza de Despliegue Rápido, FUDRA), the Counternarcotics Army Brigade, Groups of Unified Action for Personal Liberty (Grupos de Acción Unificada por la Libertad Personal, GAULA), and the Urban Counterterrorism Special Forces Groups (Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Antiterroristas Urbanas, AFEUR) all during the first years of the assistance plan (Niño

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[113] The first consideration of the guerrilla threat as a terrorist one in Colombia dates to Decree 1923 of 1978, the now infamous Security Statute of the government of President Julio César Turbay. This measure, according to Niño González (2015a, p. 54), transformed the cohabitation of the state, society, and the insurgency into a scenario in which violent actions inflicted by insurgents represented domestic terrorism, a phenomenon detached from the international dynamic of the Cold War.

González, 2015a, p. 59). Armed confrontations between the FARC and the Colombian security forces increased from 150 annually in the late 1980s to 400 annually throughout the 1990s to 1,200 in 2003 (Rochlin, 2007, p. 31). Although Colombian leadership was at the forefront of the development of new units, Plan Colombia provided them with the material support and strategic direction to confront the country's principal armed groups head-on.[114] Additionally, the Colombian government instituted a programme called "Soldiers from My Hometown" (Soldados de Mi Pueblo) that permitted conscripted soldiers to perform military service in their home communities, an effort that sought to boost the army's legitimacy among local populations (Palma, 2019).

Non-military/police assistance provided via Plan Colombia targeted principally the Human Rights Ombudsman (Defensoría del Pueblo), the Attorney General's Office (Fiscalía General de la Nación), and the Ministry of Justice and Law (known during the Uribe administration as the Ministry of the Interior and Justice), including the National Penitentiary and Prison Institute (Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario, INPEC).[115] The main objectives included consolidation of the rule of law, especially in areas of the country reclaimed from illegal armed groups, and judicial reform (US Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 46). The US Department of State, US Department of Justice, and USAID served as the managing agencies, and USAID, in particular, played a critical role in expanding justice opportunities to remote regions of Colombia. With Plan Colombia, the US government refocused its efforts with two goals in mind: helping Colombia transition toward an accusatorial model and creating conflict resolution mechanisms to reduce judicial caseload

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[114] In 1998, the Colombian military's leadership defined the four lines of effort that comprised SSR: strengthening the force through changes in command, control, and structure; transformation of military training; more efficient logistical support; and the modernisation of communications systems (Rojas, 2015, pp. 68–69).
[115] President Uribe merged the Ministries of the Interior (Ministerio del Interior) and of Justice (Ministerio de Justicia) into a single body in 2002, but in 2011, President Santos removed the functions of the Minister of the Interior and renamed the resulting body the Ministry of Justice and Law (Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho).

(Rojas, 2015, p. 111).[116] During this period, USAID provided protective measures for more than 4,500 human rights workers from 2000 to 2008 and contributed to the construction of courtrooms and community conflict resolution centres, known as Justice Houses (US Government Accountability Office, 2008, p. 57). The US Embassy also dedicated considerable resources to familiarising legal professionals with the 2003 criminal procedure code and the transition to an accusatorial justice system (US Department of State, 2018a). The US government was generally reluctant to involve itself too deeply in the reform of the Colombian penitentiary system, which was plagued by corruption and incompetence, but collaboration in the early years of Plan Colombia led to the founding of Colombia's first maximum-security prisons to meet international incarceration standards (Pachico, 2011; Author interview with Tique, 2017).[117]

Notwithstanding the high level of US support for Plan Colombia, the 2010 election of President Santos signalled a change in tone regarding Colombia's principal armed non-state actors (*Análisis de Coyuntura*, 2017, p. 4). For the first time since the Pastrana administration, a sitting Colombian president recognised the political nature of the Colombian armed conflict and abandoned rhetoric that dismissed the FARC and ELN as terrorists and bandits, enticing the insurgent groups into peace negotiations. During the Santos presidency, Colombia's SSR effort, which had run a course of more than a decade, took a backseat to this more pressing political objective once the FARC agreed to a framework for peace in 2012.[118] While the Colombian government negotiated peace with the FARC, culminating in 2017 with collective demobilisation, President Santos and the

[116] On the transition to an accusatorial system in Colombia, see García Villegas, 2006.
[117] A former INPEC official recalled that Plan Colombia helped fund the implementation of a quality control system to ensure that Colombia's maximum-security prisons met international norms (Author interview with Tique, 2017). The first prison to receive international certification was finished in 2000, and by 2018, the Colombian government had financed ten additional prisons built on that model. Unfortunately, the prison system's budget languished. The number of apprehended criminals increased by more than 100 percent from 2005 to 2010, but INPEC's budget grew at a fixed pace of just 3 percent each year.
[118] Upon signing the peace accord in September 2016, the Obama administration dedicated US$450 million for Fiscal Year 2017 to support the implementation of the deal in a gesture known as Peace Colombia.

leadership in the Ministry of Defence were conscious that upsetting the strategic balance between the security forces and the insurgents could have jeopardised the trust required to convince the FARC to disarm (Correa Castañeda, 2006, p. 215). Professionalisation and reform initiatives continued after 2012, as the composition, structure, and doctrine of the security forces were not up for discussion in the FARC talks, but the peace process signalled a philosophical shift in the security sector—one that emphasised preparing the country's major security and justice institutions for post-conflict roles. This study does not cover the still-developing post-conflict stage, but the new context serves as a valuable reminder that SSR, let alone democratic consolidation, is not an end state but an ever-evolving process of contestation and renegotiation.

The Mérida Initiative

Originally announced in October 2007, the Mérida Initiative passed Congressional muster in May 2009, when the House Committee on Foreign Affairs approved Bill H.R. 6028, authorising US$1.6 billion for engagement through Fiscal Year 2010. The Bush administration requested an additional US$500 million for Mexico in a 2008 supplemental appropriations request, thereby rendering Mexico the top recipient of US assistance in Latin America and displacing Colombia for the first time since 1999 (Turbiville, Jr., 2010, p. 35).[119] Notwithstanding this commitment, the initial assistance, which included major equipment transfers, faced a number of administrative hurdles, and a US Government Accountability Office report (2010, p. 15) noted difficulties in tracking the successful administration of funds and the on-time delivery of equipment purchased and donated. In some cases, these inefficiencies resulted in programme implementation delays of up to three or four years, yet

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[119] This assistance package represented more security assistance in one year than in the total assistance of the 12 years preceding the Mérida Initiative (Benítez Manaut, 2009, p. 230).

by the end of the Calderón administration in 2012 the US government had delivered roughly US$873.7 million in equipment and more than US$146 million in training to the Mexican security sector (Seelke and Finklea, 2017, p. 13).[120] By 2016, the US government had expended nearly US$3 billion in assistance to Mexico. The US Congress was equally forward leaning in determining the level and composition of the Mérida Initiative funding as in Plan Colombia, and members of Congress earmarked funds to prioritise specific programmes, particularly those pertaining to institutional reform and human rights (Seelke and Finklea, 2017, p. 11). Accordingly, the preferred lines of accounting were Development Assistance, ESF, and INCLE, and comparatively, FMF represented a smaller percentage of assistance than the allowance earmarked in Plan Colombia. In fact, starting in Fiscal Year 2012, the State Department determined that FMF would no longer fall under the banner of the Mérida Initiative in an attempt to differentiate President Obama's approach from that of his predecessor. However, for the purposes of this study, the author includes post-2012 FMF figures in the assistance totals presented in Table 4.2, as they nonetheless constitute part of the US government's broader SSR strategy (Seelke and Finklea, 2017, p. 11).

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[120] One US State Department representative in Mexico from 2010 to 2015 noted President Calderón's frustration with the torpor of US assistance. Calderón was flummoxed that, despite a promised windfall of assistance, there was an unwelcome lull after the initial delivery of military hardware (Author interview with a US State Department official, 2016). Upon the official's arrival in Mexico in March 2010, Washington charged his office with spending US$800 million by December of that year, but even as his team met the spending deadline, the Regional Procurement Support Office, unaccustomed to such a massive assistance package, could not work quickly enough to disburse the funds and fulfil the requests.

Table 4.2: US Assistance for Mérida Initiative (Fiscal Years 2007-2016) in Millions of US Dollars

Fiscal Year	Dev Asst	ESF	FMF	IMET	INCLE	NADR	TOTAL
2007	9.3	9.0		0.1	36.7	0.2	55.3
2008	8.2	34.7	116.5	0.4	263.5	1.3	424.6
2009	11.2	15.0	39.0	0.8	406.0	3.8	475.8
2010	10	15.0	265.2	1.0	365.0	3.9	660.1
2011	25	18.0	8.0	1.0	117.0	5.7	174.7
2012	33.4	33.3	7.0	1.0	248.5	5.4	328.6
2013	26.2	32.1	6.6	1.2	190.1	3.8	260.0
2014		46.8	6.6	1.4	143.1	3.9	201.8
2015		46.1	4.7	1.5	110.0	2.9	165.2
2016	10.5	39.0	7.0	1.5	100.0	2.2	160.2
TOTAL	133.8	289.0	460.6	9.85	1979.9	33.1	2906.3

Sources: "Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations," 2016; Seelke and Finklea, 2017.
Note: See List of Acronyms for programme names.

As with Plan Colombia, the Mérida Initiative focused initially on improving the effectiveness of the security sector to provide for citizen security and fight organised crime through US equipment transfers and training to the Mexican security forces. The major beneficiaries were SEDENA and SEMAR, as Calderón had delegated responsibility for public security in much of the country to the armed forces until he could raise a newly fashioned Federal Police force (the main branch of the Secretariat of Public Safety [Secretaría de Seguridad Pública, SSP]).[121] To this end, the US government delivered nine UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters to Mexico (three to SEMAR and six to the Federal Police), eight Bell 412 helicopters to SEDENA, and four maritime surveillance aircraft to SEMAR (US

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[121] The Federal Preventive Police (Policía Federal Preventiva, PFP) were rebranded as simply the Federal Police with the Federal Police Law (Ley de Policía Federal), which took effect in June 2009 (Chabat, 2010, p. 33). Some analysts maintain that the Federal Police, equipped with repressive gear and tactics, represent a step further in the direction of militarisation of the internal security sphere in Mexico (Alvarado Mendoza and Zaverucha, 2010, p. 255; Moloeznik, 2006). Additionally, SEMAR expanded its maritime policing capability and boosted recruitment of Marines to handle this role, eclipsing the use of the PFP and later the Federal Police in the maritime domain (Guevara Moyano, 2011, pp. 30–31).

Department of State, 2018b). Because counterinsurgency was not a primary aim of US involvement in Mexico, aviation assets were not as central to US assistance to Mexico as in Colombia, but these acquisitions have enabled counternarcotics operations and criminal justice enforcement, further extending the reach and extent of the rule of law by moving personnel to inaccessible regions (US Department of State, 2018b).[122] Although by pure numbers the aerial mobility contribution in Mexico was negligible compared to the aviation donations to Colombia, the training and maintenance associated with the transfer of US defence articles facilitated the adoption of new norms and "ways of going about business" in the recipient institutions (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016). For instance, the Mexican Army, which historically boasted an arsenal of older French, German, and Italian military hardware, increased its acquisition of US weaponry "100-fold" during the Calderón and Peña administrations (Beckhusen, 2015).[123] This introduction of new equipment, which permitted greater mobility, faster responsiveness, and more sustained interaction with civilian populations, necessitated measures like the creation of a Civil-Military Liaison Unit, a SEDENA-directed effort to strengthen communication and improve relations between the army and civil society (Guevara Moyano, 2011, p. 14).

Improving the intelligence collection capability of the Mexican security forces represented another principal objective for US policymakers, especially because Mexican authorities, many who believed that closer collaboration could be perceived as a betrayal of national sovereignty, were historically hesitant to share information with the US government (Benítez Manaut, 2014, p. 63). More than US$20 million were earmarked for the instalment

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[122] The Mexican government benefitted from more generous financial resources to purchase its own equipment than did the Colombian government at the outset of Plan Colombia—a fact that helps explain why material donations were not as large a component. Between 2014 and 2015, SEDENA purchased 21 additional Blackhawk helicopters and more than 3,000 Humvees from the United States (Lindsay-Poland, 2015). In the same time period, SEMAR purchased five Blackhawk helicopters and four King Air 350ER aircraft to assist in surveillance operations.

[123] The surge in purchases of US-grade equipment, weaponry, and aircraft during the Calderón administration retooled the Mexican security sector away from European providers and guaranteed the renewal of acquisitions, maintenance, and training contracts with US defence industry for decades (Partlow, 2015).

of a secure communications system among national security agencies on both sides of the border, and upward of US$30 million were immediately spent on x-ray scanners and customs inspections equipment (Benítez Manaut, 2009, pp. 231–232). The Department of State funded the purchase of computer equipment and software to integrate Mexican law enforcement intelligence in a unified database called Platform Mexico (Plataforma México), which enabled unprecedented integration among forces that traditionally exhibited scant contact among each other and with US agencies (Cook and Ribando Seelke, 2008, p. 3). One of the principal beneficiaries of this effort was the Federal Police force, which also received help in the establishment of a central command and control facility and a new training academy.[124] Unlike in Plan Colombia, assistance through the Mérida Initiative did not include funding for eradication of marijuana and opium crops due to Mexican sovereignty concerns; instead, US authorities opted for providing interdiction support to deny traffickers the ability to move their product toward the US border (Woody, 2017).[125] For this, the Department of State donated forensic equipment, nonintrusive inspection equipment, and canine teams to help Mexican police seize illegal drugs and weapons (Seelke and Finklea, 2017, p. 14).

During the administration of President Obama, who inherited the Mérida Initiative when he entered office in 2009, a bona fide commitment to institutional reform gained momentum, and non-military aid became the strategic focus of the US government's assistance to Mexico (Fonseca, 2016). Olson remarks, "The initiative has been consistent in its commitment to a shared approach to addressing common security concerns, but it has not been static" (2017). The original announcement of the Mérida Initiative—and its budget— lasted only through 2010, but the Obama administration refashioned US commitments under

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[124] The Calderón government complemented these contributions by expanding the force size to nearly 40,000 police officers, increasing Federal Police salaries, and enforcing more rigorous recruitment standards (e.g., polygraphs, background checks, financial review, competency tests) (Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, p. 696).
[125] Roughly 10 percent of Mérida Initiative funding during the Obama administration went directly to counternarcotics ends; most of the programming addressed anti-corruption, police training, and judicial reform (Author interview with a US State Department official, 2016).

the banner "Beyond Mérida," requesting US$310 million in 2011 and US$282 million in

2012 (Bailey, 2011b). The revamped approach embraced four main pillars: disrupting

organised crime, institutionalising rule of law, creating a twenty-first century border, and

building resilient communities (Seelke and Finklea, 2017, p. 10).[126] The major institutional

beneficiaries of this period of assistance included the SSP (renamed in 2013 the National

Commission of Security [Comisión Nacional de Seguridad, CNS]), the Attorney General's

Office, the Public Ministry (Ministerio Público), civil society organisations, and the

Prevention and Social Re-adaptation Agency (Órgano Administrativo Desconcentrado de

Prevención y Readaptación Social, OADPRS).[127]

The Department of State's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) office

saw in the Mérida Initiative an opportunity to fortify the SSP through equipment and

technology donations, to train municipal police forces in border districts at the International

Law Enforcement Academy, and to advise the Mexican executive branch on streamlining

coordination among police forces. With US assistance, President Calderón established

guidelines and processes for recruitment, selection, training, promotion, and retirement of

federal police personnel, and by 2013, the US government had trained more than 19,000

federal law enforcement officers (Bolaños, 2016, p. 107; Feeley, 2013b). The Department of

State and USAID, as well, prioritised crime and violence prevention programmes in the

communities most vulnerable to criminal activity. These same agencies committed resources

to bridge the divide between the Mexican government and civil society by helping Mexican

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[126] The original four goals of the Mérida Initiative were to break the power and impunity of organised crime; assist the Mexican government in strengthening border, air, and maritime controls; improve the capacity of the justice system; and curtail gang activity, while diminishing the demand for drugs (US Government Accountability Office, 2010). However, the Obama administration adjusted the ambition of the bilateral assistance package to target specific structural drivers of criminality in Mexico (Finkenbusch, 2016).
[127] President Peña subordinated the SSP to the Secretariat of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación, SEGOB) and renamed it as the CNS in 2013. The CNS was a dependency of the Federal Public Administration (Administración Pública Federal), charged with the maintenance of peace and security in public spaces, until López Obrador disbanded it and established the Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection (Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana, SSPC) in its place.

authorities establish a programme of protection mechanisms for vulnerable human rights defenders and by hosting forums to facilitate discussion between government and civil society actors (US Agency for International Development, 2018a). In 2017 alone, USAID granted US$25 million to help Mexican authorities design a national human rights strategy (Seelke and Finklea, 2017, p. 29).

Furthermore, the justice sector reform introduced by the Calderón government in 2008 provided US interagency actors like the Department of Justice and USAID opportunities to grant technical assistance and training to Mexico's judges, prosecutors, and lawyers. The new accusatorial justice system demanded that justice officials gather evidence to build cases against suspected criminals, and after 2010, US interagency work focused on teaching police and judicial authorities how to secure crime scenes, conduct investigations, and prosecute cases. The Department of Justice guided the design and implementation of a national training program for 9,000 prosecutors and investigators called Project Diamante, and more than 30,000 justice sector operators in the new criminal justice system benefitted from USAID training programmes overall (Seelke and Finklea, 2017; US Agency for International Development, 2018, p. 18).[128] Additional support even reached the Mexican Senate, which relied on USAID to assist in drafting legislation to regulate the legal profession in Mexico, and the PGR received more than US$60 million to digitalise records and modernise its forensics processing systems (Benítez Manaut, 2009, p. 233; US Agency for International Development, 2018). Lastly, as in Colombia, the US Embassy helped at least 20 correctional facilities, including four new federal prisons, attain international accreditation and certified correctional instructors from the Mexican National Academy for Penitentiary Administration (Academia Nacional de Administración Penitenciaria, ANAP) (Author

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[128] One major criticism of support for justice sector reform is that the US Embassy over-emphasised the retraining of judges but failed to re-orient the modalities of the public ministries and the police, which represent the initial steps in the chain of custody of evidence (Author interview with a researcher from Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, 2018).

interview with a senior security official, Calderón administration, 2018; US Department of State, 2018b).[129]

Table 4.3: US Interagency Actors and Colombian and Mexican Beneficiary Institutions

PLAN COLOMBIA		MERIDA INITIATIVE	
United States	Colombia	United States	Mexico
Department of Defense	Ministry of Defence	Department of State	Office of the Attorney General
Department of State	Ministry of Justice and Law	Department of Defense	Secretariat of Public Safety
Department of Justice	National Penitentiary and Prison Institute	Department of Justice	State and Municipal Police Forces
US Agency for International Development	Human Rights Ombudsman	US Agency for International Development	Secretariat of the Army and Air Force
Office of National Drug Control Policy	Civil Society	Office of National Drug Control Policy	Secretariat of the Navy
Central Intelligence Agency/Director of National Intelligence		Central Intelligence Agency/Director of National Intelligence	Prevention and Social Re-Adaptation Agency
		Department of Homeland Security	Mexican National Migration Institute
			Investigation and National Security Centre
			Civil Society

Note: Table 4.3 lists, in no particular order, the principal US governmental actors responsible for implementing bilateral assistance in Colombia and Mexico and the main beneficiary institutions of SSR in those countries.

Conclusion

Given the breadth and depth of US assistance, Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative were both whole-of-government approaches to help boost the effectiveness and accountability of the Colombian and Mexican security sectors, respectively. Although the military was an early beneficiary of US aid in both cases, US commitments shifted to institution building and state consolidation from 2006 to 2011 in Colombia, and law enforcement and justice institutions received the bulk of the US government's attention by the early 2010s in Mexico. In this way, Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative evolved to address the evolving security challenges and capacity deficiencies specific to the Colombian

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[129] Between December 2006 and March 2010, 121,199 individuals with links to organised crime were arrested in Mexico, and the surge in arrests demanded greater capacity in the prison system (Moloeznik, 2013, p. 71).

and Mexican contexts, but in the later phases of programme implementation, both assistance packages gave way to broader goals of accountability and rule of law construction. The US institutional actors, the lines of funding, the beneficiary institutions, and the SSR objectives were largely consistent across the two cases, and in both instances, US interventions benefitted state institutions contending with the threat posed by domestic, non-state, illegal armed groups. Given these commonalities and the macro-contextual similarities noted in the previous chapter, Colombia and Mexico represent good candidates for comparative analysis as it relates to SSR.

Chapter 5: Evaluating SSR in Colombia and Mexico

Before turning the reader's attention to the domestic conditions that facilitated more successful SSR in Colombia than Mexico, this chapter seeks to evaluate systematically the impact of SSR initiatives on the dependent variable of this study: security sector governance. Having controlled for important background variables by selecting similar systems, the sections that follow address the degree to which reforms resulted in improvements across the two dimensions of security sector governance: effectiveness and accountability. The author introduces context-relevant indicators to assess these qualities and thereafter gauges progress on the indicators for Colombia and Mexico over more than ten years of SSR intervention in each case. In Colombia, effectiveness significantly improved across the security sector, but the accountability of the security sector to independent, civilian authorities, while somewhat improved, continued to present challenges for democratic consolidation. In Mexico, most indicators of effectiveness and accountability reflected little to no positive change and, in some instances, signalled deterioration despite the introduction of major reforms. Explaining the disparity across the two cases will be the focus of the remainder of this study.

Evaluation Indicators of SSR in Colombia and Mexico

Current assessment frameworks for SSR offer researchers and practitioners broad lines of inquiry and general recommendations, but as OECD guidance on SSR highlights, leading models deliberately exclude comprehensive lists of assessment indicators because evaluation of SSR should be, above all, contextually relevant.[130] The OECD DAC text on SSR reads:

> Some readers may therefore be disappointed to find that this

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[130] Ball et al., 2003; "Exploring the Transition from First to Second Generation SSR in Conflict-Affected Societies," 2016; Popovic, 2008; *Swedish Contact Group Security Sector Reform Assessment Framework*, 2010, *The OECD DAC Handbook,* 2011, pp. 41–62.

toolkit does not contain lists of standard indicators. The reason is that standard indicators are inadvisable because they are not context-specific, are unlikely to be locally owned, and because SSR is too complex to be measured with a simple list of indicators. (*The OECD DAC Handbook,* 2011, p. 10.4)

For example, homicide rate would be an inapt indicator of SSR in a country that has sustained low homicide rates but would be a critical indicator of SSR in the cases of this study, where homicide figures are historically high and are a persistent concern for citizens.

Assessing SSR poses further challenges because relevant, reliable data are oftentimes elusive or incomplete. Some of the principal architects of SSR programmes around the world do not systematically monitor and evaluate their investments and fail to conduct baseline surveys. This holds true for the principal donor in the cases of this study, the US government (Goldenberg et al., 2016; Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, p. 678). The US Department of State has repeatedly faced criticism for its presentation of input ("advice and resources given") and output ("goods, products, and services provided") indicators as evidence of improvement in SSR programming in Latin America (Meyer and Ribando Seelke, 2015, p. 22; *The OECD DAC Handbook*, 2011, p. 10.16). Instead, indicators of outcomes and impacts relating to improvements in security sector governance (e.g., improved professional standards of conduct among the security forces, increased geographic coverage of security services, improved citizen perception of security and the security sector, sustained operational capacity) would serve as more relevant data for the purposes of evaluation (Mertens and Wilson, 2012).[131]

For historic SSR efforts, meaningful baseline data are frequently unavailable. Determining which "dimensions of change" to measure depends largely on the interests of donor and recipient governments, which are prone to renegotiation and modification over

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[131] Mertens and Wilson present a template for programme evaluation that distinguishes between outputs (evidence of service delivery), outcomes (medium-term changes accomplished within five years of investment), and impact (long-term changes accomplished seven to ten years after investments) (Mertens and Wilson, 2012).

time (*The OECD DAC Handbook*, 2011, p. 10.15). In light of the highly political nature of SSR, there is evidence that changes in the Colombian government's statistical compilation practices led to an underestimation of kidnappings committed during the Uribe administration by nearly 40 percent—a move that publicly played to the government's narrative of dramatically improved security (Bermúdez Liévano, 2013; Gurney, 2015).[132] Paradoxically, some critics of the Colombian government charge that the country's security forces inflated crime and violence statistics during the Pastrana government, overestimating figures to attract high levels of international aid (Rodríguez, 2013).

Likewise, the Mexican non-profit México Evalúa reported in 2016 that state attorney-general offices across the country manipulated data to suggest a decrease in high-impact crimes (Lastiri, 2016). Some state governments also underreported homicides and reclassified violent crimes as non-violent or unintentional offenses, and thus, there are no reliable numbers for casualties in the war on drugs (Moloeznik, 2013, p. 66). Another of the difficulties encountered in comparing indicators across the span of a decade is that data collection and computation methodologies are often inconsistent. For example, at the outset of the Mérida Initiative, the National Poll about Insecurity (Encuesta Nacional sobre Inseguridad, ENSI) published by the Citizens' Institute of Studies on Insecurity (Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la Inseguridad, ICESI), an independent civil society organisation, was the standard public opinion poll on perceptions of security and crime ("El ICESI, una 'respuesta al dramático problema,'" 2002).[133] However, in 2010, the Mexican

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132 During the Pastrana administration, a committee comprised of representatives from the Attorney General's Office, the Colombian intelligence community, the army, the President's Office, and civil society reviewed and tabulated the country's official kidnapping figures. However, in 2003, the Uribe government disbanded the committee and officially registered only those kidnappings processed by the Attorney General's Office. This resulted in discrepancies between official numbers and those compiled by the country's National Centre for Historic Memory (Centro Nacional para la Memoria Histórica, CNMH). From 2002 to 2010, official statistics reflect a tally of 9,382 kidnappings in the country, whereas the CNMH reports 15,537 kidnappings during that same period.

133 Conducting opinion polls about violence in the midst of violence is a unique challenge, and evaluating national attitudes regarding crime and violence is a relatively new art in both Colombia and Mexico (Schedler, 2015, p. 25). In Colombia, polling methodologies vary, and public opinion surveys suffer from an urban bias

Congress declared that annual public opinion surveys about insecurity be organised by the government's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, INEGI), giving birth to the National Survey on Victimisation and Perception of Public Security (Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad, ENVIPE) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2011, p. 1). As the now-disbanded ICESI lamented with the first publication of the ENVIPE, it became difficult to draw comparisons between the data collected in the ENSI from 2002 to 2010 and the data presented with the ENVIPE from 2011 forward because of methodological changes, missing crime indicators, and inflated statistics (Torres, 2011).

Deciphering diverse political interests and addressing the nuance surrounding SSR indicators is an essential task for researchers.[134] For this study, the author has made every effort to situate indicators in context and to present as complete of a depiction of citizen security and security sector governance as possible by incorporating governmental and civil society perspectives. Because security sector reform is rooted in the discourse on human security, the public experience of security should be central to indicator selection. Keane and Downes stress, "Second-generation SSR would attempt to redress the state-centric imbalance by putting a much stronger focus on the use of local security-perception surveys, for example, to identify security-sector challenges" (2012, p. 3). As Schedler (2015, pp. 13–14) highlights, public opinion is a highly relevant indicator in that it shapes national debate and public policies, affects the discretion and ease of operation of criminal groups, and has the power to

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(Mejia, 2010). In Mexico, many respondents remain suspicious of the data protections and fear misuse of government polling data by state actors, leading to inaccurate responses (Author interview with Brewer, 2017). This is consistent with the data analysed by the author: trust in security institutions consistently registered higher marks in government polls than in polls conducted by civil society.

[134] In this study, the sensitivity of some subjects, particularly as they relate to human rights abuses, complicated efforts to secure accurate and complete data. Some Colombian and Mexican government representatives rejected the author's requests for data, whereas others provided incomplete responses. These gaps are reflected in Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 as "N/A" (not available).

mobilise and empower civil society.[135] Measures focused on public opinion and the actual delivery of security and justice will be the central grounds for comparison of the dependent variable, security sector governance, across time and space.

The author considers two dimensions of security sector governance: effectiveness and accountability. Effectiveness refers to the ability of security institutions to fulfil their designated functions and institutional missions, and indicators of effectiveness often include operational accomplishments, public opinion, and absolute and relative measures of crime and violence. The indicators listed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 offer valuable insights into any evolution in the effectiveness of the security sector for the two countries under observation.[136] Although the author reports results in the following tables to a single decimal point, which inevitably introduces some imprecision, the most relevant conclusions about the evolution of SSR can be drawn by focusing on trends over time.

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[135] One aspect that is likely to have an important impact on performance indicators but that remains difficult to isolate given the discretion of organised crime is the nature of criminal responses to different state security strategies (Lessing, 2017, p. 5).

[136] The author considered more than 50 indicators, both categorical and numerical, for this study, but data were not available for many. The indicators included represent the most complete data for SSR in Colombia and Mexico and cover the first two years of robust US assistance for SSR, the last two years of US assistance, and a single year halfway through the bilateral assistance plan. Unless otherwise indicated, "respondents" as listed in the tables of this chapter refer to participants in governmental and nongovernmental polling.

Table 5.1: Indicators of Effectiveness for the Colombian Security Sector, 1999-2016

NUMBER	INDICATOR	1999	2000	2005	2010	2011	2016	NOTES
1	Public Trust in Armed Forces	40.0 (1998)	51.3	63.1	55.2	56.6	Female: 49.7 Male: 59.7 Total: 54.8	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
2	Public Trust in the Police	32.1 (1998)	41.2	52.3	46.8	42.0	Female: 38.8 Male: 31.1 Total: 34.9	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
3	Public Trust in Judicial Power	29.0 (1998)	37.9	41.3	34.0	32.2	Female: 28.7 Male: 26.8 Total: 27.7	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
4	Public Trust in Attorney General's Office	N/A	N/A	58.6	58.9	59.52	Female: 29.3 Male: 33.0 Total: 31.2	Procuraduría
5	Public Trust in National Prosecutor's Office	N/A	N/A	61.6	61.9	61.67	N/A	Fiscalía
6	Percentage of Population that Perceives the Country to be Insecure	N/A	N/A	41.7	39.3	40.4	51.2	
7	Percentage of Population that Feels that Insecurity and Delincuency Represent the Country's Most Important Problem	N/A	N/A	4.9	12.9	14.5	18.4	
8	Percentage of Population that Feels that Armed Conflict and the War on Terrorism Represent the Country's Most Important Problem	N/A	N/A	44.1	28.0	28.5	17.0	
9	Colombia Peace Index Score	N/A	N/A	2.8 (2007)	2.7	2.7	2.8	Scale 1 (most peaceful) to 5 (least peaceful)
10	Percentage of Population Victimised by At Least One Crime or Related to a Victim of a Crime	34.5 (1998)	34.0 (2001)	36.7	31.5	37.7	34.0	
11	Reported Homicides per 100,000 Inhabitants	64.7	71.0	42.9	38.9	35.0	25.2	
12	Reported Kidnappings per 100,000 Inhabitants	8.0	8.8	1.9	0.6	0.7	0.4	Based on World Bank population reporting
13	Estimated Kidnappings per 100,000 Inhabitants	8.4	8.8	3.0	2.7	0.7	0.4	Based on civil society statistics
14	Estimated Extortions per 100,000 Inhabitants	2.8	2.9	4.2	2.9	3.9	10.1	Based on World Bank population reporting

Sources:

Ministerio de Defensa, https://www.policia.gov.co/dijin
ECSC 2017, https://formularios.dane.gov.co/Anda_4_1/index.php/catalog/532/overview
Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/informes
Latinobarometer, www.latinobarometro.org
UNODC, https://data.unodc.org/#state:0
LAPOP, https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/index.php
Global Peace Index, http://maps.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/indexes/global-peace-index
País Libre, http://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/en-el-2012-fueron-secuestradas-305-personas-en-colombia-segun-la-fundacion-pais-libre.html

Note: See List of Acronyms for agency names.

Table 5.1, continued

NUMBER	INDICATOR	1999	2000	2005	2010	2011	2016	NOTES
15	Violent Crimes per 100,000 Inhabitants	184.5	176.4	144.7	235.1	240.6	454.8	Based on World Bank population reporting; defined as crimes committed with a firearm
16	Acts of Terrorism	1,194	1,549	612	472	571	224	Attacks conducted against the civilian population and private sector interests
17	Acts of Subversion	437	414	195	131	152	56	Attacks conducted against police personnel and facilities
18	Registered Victims of Conflict	332,932	681,095	530,049	218,161	258,926	105,910	
19	Victims of Terrorist Acts	2,815	3,517	1,953	1,524	3,523	925	
20	Victims of Internal Forced Displacements	275,868	603,231	479,475	196,470	233,696	96,953	
21	Victims of Forced Disappearance	8,499	11,726	6,962	1,400	1,275	70	
22	Number of Victims of Land Mines	82	157	914	933	760	77	
23	Members of Illegal Armed Groups Arrested	1,236	1,556	8,093	1,737	1,976	1,237	
24	Number of Members of Illegal Armed Groups Demobilised	68	173	2,564	2,446	1,528	934	Individual, not collective demobilsation
25	Security Force Personnel per 100,000 Inhabitants	636.8	579.4	863.9	927.7	970.7	996.9	Based on World Bank population reporting
26	National Police per 100,000 Inhabitants	241.7	235.5	296.6	337.1	343.4	376.6	UN reports changes in definitions and/or counting rules.
27	Percentage of Females in National Police	N/A	N/A	6.7	4.8	5.5	9.0	
28	Percentage of Females in Armed Forces	7.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.6 (2013)	3.0	
29	Estimated Percentage of Total Crimes Formally Reported to Government Authorities	20-27 (1985-2003)	N/A	N/A	N/A	18.5 (2013)	24.0 (2017)	Colombian authorities do not routinely track this information.
30	Percentage of Denounced Crimes that Never Advanced Beyond Formal Inquiry/Investigation	N/A	N/A	82.8	86.9	83.6	58.3	

Sources:

Ministerio de Defensa, https://www.policia.gov.co/dijin
ECSC 2017, https://formularios.dane.gov.co/Anda_4_1/index.php/catalog/532/overview
UNODC, https://data.unodc.org/#state:0
Red Nacional de Información, https://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/
Ethos: Descifrando el Gasto Público en Seguridad, https://ethos.org.mx/es/ethos-publications/reporte-ethos-descifrando-gasto-seguridad/
Ministerio de Justicia, http://www.minjusticia.gov.co/
http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-1535599; http://historico.unperiodico.unal.edu.co/ediciones/64/08.htm

Table 5.1, continued

NUMBER	INDICATOR	1999	2000	2005	2010	2011	2016	NOTES
31	Magistrates and Judges per 100,000 Inhabitants	N/A	N/A	8.9	10.0	10.0	10.24 (2014)	
32	Percentage of Prisoners Untried or in Pre-Trial Detention	42.7	40.8	38.5	30.7	27.2	32.6	
33	Penitentiary Overpopulation	43.2	35.6	42.2	24.3	32.2	56.5	Percentage of prisoners beyond the reported capacity of penitentiary facilities
34	Penitentiary Officers per 100 Inmates	N/A	N/A	13.4	17.0	15.8	N/A	Number of prison staff per total adults held
35	Hectares of Coca Cultivation	160,120	163,290	85,750	61,811	63,765	146,140	
36	Hectares of Amapola Cultivation	N/A	4,273 (2001)	1,950	340.8	337.6	462	
37	Departments with Combat Operations	24	25	31	25	22	N/A	
38	Departments with Attacks on Civilian Population Zones	19	19	1	1	1	N/A	

Sources:

Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/informes
UNODC, https://data.unodc.org/#state:0
Ministerio de Justicia, http://www.minjusticia.gov.co/
Observatorio del Programa Presidencial de DDHH y DIH, http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/observatorio/Paginas/Observatorio.aspx

Table 5.2: Indicators of Effectiveness for the Mexican Security Sector, 2007-2016

NUMBER	INDICATOR	2007	2008	2011	2015	2016	NOTES
1	Public Trust in Armed Forces	64.3	57.4	54.9	58.7	64.8 (2017)	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
2	Public Trust in the Police	32.6	23.4	18.9	24.0	31.4 (2017)	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
3	Public Trust in Federal Police	37.0	33.0	55.4	56.2	65.1	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
4	Public Trust in State Judicial/Ministerial Police	16.0	14.0	38.2	42.4	55.5	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
5	Public Trust in Preventive Municipal Police/Local Police	24.0	25.0	36.0	36.0	50.2	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
6	Public Trust in Transit Police	14.0	14.0	32.9	31.3	43.6	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
7	Public Trust in Judicial Power	31.7	25.1	25.6	23.9	36.5 (2017)	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
8	Public Trust in Public Ministry	22.0	22.0	36.9	41.5	49.9	A lot or some trust expressed by respondents
9	Civilians Killed in Relation to the Number Injured during Confrontations with the Armed Forces	1.6	2.8	9.4	7.7 (2013)	11.6 (2014)	Mexican government ceased reporting "lethality index" in 2014
10	Civilians Killed in Relation to the Number Injured during Confrontations with the Federal Police	N/A	2.7	4.7	20.0 (2013)	4.6 (2014)	Mexican government ceased reporting "lethality index" in 2014
11	Percentage of Population that Perceives the Country to be Insecure	45.2 (2006)	39.9	43.1 (2012)	51.6 (2014)	48.1 (2017)	
12	Percentage of Population that Feels that Insecurity and Delincuency Represent the Country's Most Important Problem	12.9	32.6	38.5	27.3	30.0	
13	Percentage of Population that Feels Unsafe in States of Residence	59.0	65.0	66.6	72.4	74.3	
14	Mexico Peace Index Score	2.1	2.3	2.6	2.2	2.3	Scale 1 (most peaceful) to 5 (least peaceful)
15	Crime Victims per 100,000 Inhabitants	10,482	12,000	24,499	28,202	28,788	Defined as crimes committed with a firearm
16	Percentage of Population Victimised by At Least One Crime or Related to a Victim of a Crime or Both	39.1	42.2	41.5	57.2	46.0	

Sources:

ENSI 2008, https://drcureces.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/icesi-5a-encuesta-nacional-sobre-inseguridad.pdf
ENSI 2009, http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/metodologias/est/io_ENSI-6_2009.pdf
ENVIPE 2012, http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/metodologias/ENVIPE2012/
ENVIPE 2015, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2016/doc/envipe2016_presentacion_nacional.pdf
ENVIPE 2016, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2016/doc/envipe2016_presentacion_nacional.pdf
ENVIPE 2017, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2017/
Latinobarometer, www.latinobarometro.org
LAPOP, https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/index.php
Mexico Peace Index, http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/04/Mexico-Peace-Index-2016_English.pdf
MUCD, http://www.mucd.org.mx/

NUMBER	INDICATOR	2007	2008	2011	2015	2016	NOTES
17	Reported Homicides per 100,000 Inhabitants	7.8	12.2	22.6	16.4	16.2 (2016), 22.5 (2017)	
18	Reported Kidnappings per 100,000 Inhabitants	0.4	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.9	
19	Estimated Kidnappings per 100,000 Inhabitants	1.3	2.7	4.6	3.4	3.6	Based on civil society statistics
20	Estimated Extortions per 100,000 Inhabitants	30.5	46.9	43.8	52.7	52.4	Based on civil society statistics
21	Organised Crime Offenses per 100,000 Inhabitants	106.0	115.4	85.3	63.3	63.1	Based on civil society statistics
22	Violent Crimes per 100,000 Inhabitants	4,134	4,258	4,510	3,272	2,972	Based on civil society statistics
23	Armed Forces Personnel per 100,000 Inhabitants	255.8	268.2	276.9	266.9	263.6	Based on World Bank population reporting
24	Police per 100,000 Inhabitants	20.2	29.4	358.3	301.0	231.0	2007 and 2008 reflect Federal Preventive Police; 2011, 2015, and 2016 reflect the total number of police
25	Percentage of Females in Federal Police Forces	N/A	N/A	10.9	13.6	N/A	
26	Percentage of Females in State Police Forces	N/A	N/A	18.4	20.2	N/A	
27	Percentage of Females in Armed Forces	3.3 (2006)	N/A	5.0	N/A	5.8	

Sources:

INEGI Censo Nacional, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/ccpv/2010/
SESNSP 2017, http://secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx/docs/pdfs/
World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/
UNODC, https://data.unodc.org/#state:0
SEDENA, https://www.gob.mx/sedena
CNDH, http://www.cndh.org.mx/Informes_Anuales_Actividades
Mexico Peace Index, http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/04/Mexico-Peace-Index-2016_English.pdf
InSight Crime, https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/insight-crime-2016-homicide-round-up/
https://lopezdoriga.com/sin-categoria/crece-presencia-de-mujeres-en-el-ejercito-mexicano/

NUMBER	INDICATOR	2007	2008	2011	2015	2016	NOTES
28	Percentage of Total Crimes Formally Reported to Government Authorities	21.0	22.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	
29	Percentage of Total Crimes that Result in a Formal Inquiry/Investigation by Authorities	13.0	15.0	8.4	6.3	6.4	
30	"The Dark Figure of Crime" (*cifra negra*)	87.0	85.0	91.6	93.7	93.6	The amount of unreported or undiscovered crime
31	Magistrates and Judges per 100,000 Inhabitants	N/A	N/A	4.0	4.4	N/A	
32	Percentage of Prisoners Untried or in Pre-Trial Detention	70.7	67.3	56.9	50.6	N/A	
33	Penitentiary Overpopulation	28.2	28.2	22.7	25.4	-2.8	Percentage of prisoners beyond the reported capacity of penitentiary facilities
34	Penitentiary Officers per 100 Inmates	N/A	N/A	19.5	16.7	N/A	Number of prison staff per total adults held
35	Hectares of Amapola Cultivation	6,900	15,000	12,000	26,100	24,800	
36	States with Organised Crime Score Exceeding 4 on Scale of 5	9	12	5	2	3	Scale 1 (most peaceful) to 5 (least peaceful) (out of 32 states)

Sources:

ENSI 2008, https://drcureces.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/icesi-5a-encuesta-nacional-sobre-inseguridad.pdf
ENSI 2009, http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/metodologias/est/io_ENSI-6_2009.pdf
ENVIPE 2012, http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/metodologias/ENVIPE2012/
ENVIPE 2015, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2016/doc/envipe2016_presentacion_nacional.pdf
ENVIPE 2016, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2016/doc/envipe2016_presentacion_nacional.pdf
ENVIPE 2017, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2017/
UNODC, https://data.unodc.org/#state:0
SEDENA, https://www.gob.mx/sedena
CNDH, http://www.cndh.org.mx/Informes_Anuales_Actividades
Mexico Peace Index, http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/04/Mexico-Peace-Index-2016_English.pdf

Accountability, on the other hand, relates to the ability of democratic oversight bodies to govern the security sector efficiently and transparently, particularly in the delivery of justice for crimes or abuses committed by members of the security sector. Given the political sensitivity of accountability, historical lack of transparency in undemocratic security sectors, and traditional reluctance of such security sectors to submit to civilian oversight, accountability is more difficult to operationalise and measure numerically. In countries with impunity rates for crime lingering just below 100 percent, slight numerical drops, although reflecting improvement that political actors embrace as evidence of successful reform, tend to

obscure the reality that the security sector still fails to deliver justice for most criminal cases.

For accountability, this study considers the indicators presented in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 5.3: Indicators of Accountability for the Colombian Security Sector, 1999-2016

NUMBER	INDICATOR	1999	2000	2005	2010	2011	2016	NOTES
1	Number of Public Complaints Filed Against Members of the Security Forces for Supposed Human Rights Violations	MOD: 1,273 Other: 32 INPEC: 348	N/A	MOD: 48 Other: 0 INPEC: 25	MOD: 337 Other: 13 INPEC: 33	MOD: 389 Other: 19 INPEC: 46	MOD: 817 Other: 439 INPEC: 416	"Other" refers to state security agencies that are not part of the Ministry of Defense.
2	Deceased Persons as a Result of Contact or Confrontation with the Security Forces	N/A	997 (2003)	1,025	446	324	238	
3	Violations of International Humanitarian Law	1,837	2,487	1,355	909	1,389	N/A	Committed by all armed actors
4	Open Extrajudicial Execution Investigations	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,336	1,622	2,316	
5	Sentences for Extrajudicial Execution Investigations	N/A	N/A	N/A	103	148	133	
6	Extrajudicial Execution Complaints Filed Against the Army	75	194	450	53	N/A	N/A	
7	Municipal Security Consultations	N/A	0 (2003)	0	6,141	6,821	6,467	Local government and citizenry present
8	Justice Houses (Community Conflict Resolution)	N/A	24 (2002)	40	59	77	105	
9	Human Rights Defenders Murdered	N/A	N/A	32 (2009)	32	49	51	
10	Human Rights Defenders Attacked but Not Murdered	N/A	N/A	17 (2009)	10	50	32	
11	Human Rights Defenders Threatened	N/A	N/A	99 (2009)	109	140	225	
12	Journalists Murdered	7	8	2	2	1	0	
13	Business Professionals' Perception of Judicial Independence	N/A	N/A	3.2	3.5	3.5	2.9	Scale 1 (least independent) to 7 (most independent)
14	Uniformed Personnel Receiving Training in Human Rights	N/A	N/A	N/A	118,735 (2009)	346,724 (2013)	250,000	Includes international humanitarian law training
15	Spending on Armed Forces and Police as Percentage of GDP	3.8	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.4	
16	Percentage Increase in Budget for Social Inclusion and Reconciliation	100 (2000)	10 (2001)	47	435	474	806	Relative to 2000 Spending set at 100; includes crime and violence prevention entities and services for conflict victims
17	Percentage Increase in Budget for Armed Forces and Police	100 (2000)	18 (2001)	81	215	230	333	Relative to 2000 Spending set at 100
18	Percentage Increase in Budget for Attorney General's Office	100 (2000)	4 (2001)	35	151	166	400	Relative to 2000 Spending set at 100
19	Percentage Increase in Budget for Judicial Branch	100 (2000)	14 (2001)	52	163	202	395	Relative to 2000 Spending set at 100
20	Percentage Increase in Budget for Ministry of Justice	100 (2000)	27 (2001)	64	394	936	486	Relative to 2000 Spending set at 100

Sources:

Ministerio de Defensa, https://www.policia.gov.co/dijin
Ministerio de Justicia, http://www.minjusticia.gov.co/
World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/
OHCHR, http://www.hchr.org.co/index.php/informes-y-documentos/informes-anuales
CINEP, http://www.cinep.org.co/
Defensoría del Pueblo, http://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/public/Defensor/454/Informes-al-congreso.htm
CCEEU, http://coeuropa.org.co/
Ministerio de Hacienda, http://www.minhacienda.gov.co/HomeMinhacienda/faces/GestionMisional/PresupuestoPublicoNacional/
World Economic Forum, https://www.weforum.org/
http://especiales.semana.com/periodistas-asesinados/

Table 5.4: Indicators of Accountability for the Mexican Security Sector, 2007-2016

NUMBER	INDICATORS	2007	2008	2011	2015	2016	NOTES
1	Public Complaints Filed Against Members of the Security Forces for Human Rights Violations	2,843	3,476	4,378	7,881	7,658	
2	Public Perception of Corruption in the Armed Forces	N/A	N/A	Navy: 15.8 Army: 22.5	Navy: 17.3 Army: 25.1	Navy: 19.7 Army: 25.1	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
3	Public Perception of Corruption in the Federal Police	N/A	N/A	57.0	54.6	55.3	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
4	Public Perception of Corruption in the State Judicial/Ministerial Police	N/A	N/A	69.7	62.4	63.3	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
5	Public Perception of Corruption in the Preventive Municipal Police	N/A	N/A	71.6	66.5	66.7	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
6	Public Perception of Corruption in the Transit Police	N/A	N/A	83.1	77.9	76.1	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
7	Public Perception of Corruption Among Judges as a Percentage	N/A	N/A	66.3	65.6	65.1	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
8	Public Perception of Corruption in the Public Ministry	N/A	N/A	69.7	64.8	65.8	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
9	Public Perception of Corruption in the Attorney General's Office (PGR)	N/A	N/A	N/A	59.2	59.6	Perceived as corrupt or somewhat corrupt
10	Human Rights Defenders Murdered	3	6	20	18	36	
11	Aggressions against Human Rights Defenders	N/A	N/A	224	971	938	
12	Arbitrary Detensions of Human Rights Defenders	23	262	90	570	375	
13	Journalists Murdered	11	13	10	11	13	
14	Business Professionals' Perception of Judicial Independence	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.1	Scale 1 (least independent) to 7 (most independent)

Sources:

ENVIPE 2012, http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/metodologias/ENVIPE2012/
ENVIPE 2015, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2016/doc/envipe2016_presentacion_nacional.pdf
ENVIPE 2016, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2016/doc/envipe2016_presentacion_nacional.pdf
CNDH, http://www.cndh.org.mx/Informes_Anuales_Actividades
Comité Cerezo, https://www.comitecerezo.org/spip.php?article2867&lang=es#Sexto-informe-de-violaciones-de-derechos-humanos-contra-personas-defensoras-nbsp
World Economic Forum, https://www.weforum.org/
http://www.sinembargo.mx/20-12-2017/3360109

NUMBER	INDICATORS	2007	2008	2011	2015	2016	NOTES
15	SEDENA Personnel Receiving Training in Human Rights	48,197	N/A	196,316	64,517	208,004	Numbers reflect fiscal year totals (not based on calendar year); includes international humanitarian law training
16	SEDENA Personnel Dismissed for Improper Conduct	118	89	123	87	69	
17	Spending on Armed Forces as Percentage of GDP	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.6	
18	Federal Spending on Public Security as Percentage of GDP	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.9	0.8	Encompasses budgets for all secretariats and agencies that have a role in public security, including armed forces
19	Percentage Increase in Budget for Crime Prevention and Social Readaptation	96	103	289	671	601	Relative to 2006 Spending set at 100
20	Percentage Increase in Budget for SEDENA	122	126	190	190	181	Relative to 2006 Spending set at 100
21	Percentage Increase in Budget for SEMAR	117	140	164	216	188	Relative to 2006 Spending set at 100
22	Percentage Increase in Budget for Federal Police	163	196	377	456	368	Relative to 2006 Spending set at 100
23	Percentage Increase in Budget for Attorney General's Office	100	88	108	127	133	Relative to 2006 Spending set at 100
24	Percentage Increase in Budget for Judicial Power	102	115	129	144	195	Relative to 2006 Spending set at 100

Sources:

SEDENA, https://www.gob.mx/sedena
World Bank, https://data.worldbank.org/
Centro de Estudios de Finanzas Públicas, http://www.cefp.gob.mx/new/index.html
Grupo GEA, http://structura.com.mx/gea/

Collectively, the indicators in Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 seek to capture improvements or lapses in the performance of the security sector, but the causal link between shifts in adopted reforms and indicator values remains unresolved. The author makes an effort to highlight causality by linking reforms to outcomes when possible, but it is beyond the scope of this study to explore systematically the relationship between the introduction of specific reform mechanisms, aid programmes, and variation on isolated indicator values. Instead, as developed in the conclusion of this study, the author illuminates the impact of the independent variables examined in this study on outcomes of effectiveness and accountability.[137]

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[137] For studies evaluating the impact of security assistance on democratisation, see Ben-Itzhak, 2015; Collier, 2006; Djankov et al., 2008; Gibb, III, 2010; Hartford and Klien, 2005; McNerney et al., 2014; Sullivan et al., 2011. For analysis of the positive impact of SSR, see Busse and Gröning, 2009; Goldsmith, 2001; Jones et al., 2006; Knack, 2004; Moroney et al., 2013, 2011.

Evaluating SSR in Colombia

As depicted in the previous chapter, the Colombian security sector in the late 1990s found itself unable to provide for its own basic security requirements, let alone the security of most Colombian citizens. The FARC killed or kidnapped thousands of military and police personnel in attacks on government installations from 1997 to 2000. One former FARC insurgent proudly proclaimed, "The security forces were confined to their bases, so we had to go to them to engage them in conflict. They were very vulnerable" (Author interview with a demobilised FARC member, 2017). FARC assaults on remote military outposts such as Las Delicias, Patascoy, El Billar, Miraflores, and Mitú became synonymous with the growing power of Colombia's non-state armed groups—and the concomitant weakness of the Colombian security forces. In 1999, US Ambassador to Colombia Myles Frechette acknowledged, "The Colombian military is basically a barracks military, not one that is organised to go after guerrillas. They have some brave and capable people, but they are strictly a reaction force, and not a very mobile one at that" (Rohter, 1999). Many battered army units relied heavily on paramilitary groups to fill geographical areas devoid of state authority (Evans, 2005; Ocampo, 2015).[138] The National Police, for its part, had undergone a limited reform in the early 1990s, but the force lacked a presence in at least 50 municipalities across the country in 2001, effectively ceding control to illegal armed groups or passing military units (Cortés et al., 2012, p. 22). Moreover, it was not even until 2003 that the police consolidated efforts to record crime statistics with the nationwide rollout of the Statistical Information System for Delinquency, Coexistence, and Operations (Sistema de Información Estadístico, Delincuencial, Contravencional y Operativo, SIEDCO).

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[138] "It was a pacification strategy, and it worked. Sometimes the army did not conduct operations because it did not want to follow judicial protocol, so it was easier to leave those tasks to the AUC," said one business leader (Author interview with a representative of the Colombian business community, 2017).

The crime data depicted in Indicators 10 to 22 of Table 5.1 reflect the inadequacy of the security sector in delivering security at the outset of Plan Colombia, as Colombia's cities were among the most homicidal in the world, and the country had earned a reputation as the world's kidnapping capital. Nevertheless, SSR helped the Colombian state reassert its authority in the national territory, and by 2011, most indicators of crime and violence had fallen. Additionally, as reflected in Table 5.3, the security agencies grew more accountable for crimes and abuses committed. Indeed, SSR resulted in enhanced security sector governance for most applicable measures. Although the main objective of this study is to evaluate SSR over the period of Plan Colombia from 1999 to 2011, the historical nature of the case also permits an evaluation of the sustainability of the reforms implemented and gains achieved. For this reason, the author has included more recent data, which aid the reader in contextualising the long-term impact of SSR on citizen security in Colombia. One of the most telling data points is that the military still had not relinquished control over vast regions of the country to the police, even though Colombia's peace process with the FARC came to a close in 2017.[139] According to one researcher, "The National Police is ready for post-conflict, and they have been administratively operating outside of the 'national security' model for some time now. They have a civilian discipline, but they need to be given more territorial authority" (Author interview with Gomis, 2017). Moreover, the police remain an organisational dependency of the Ministry of Defence, and as Bernal Pulido and Correa Henao suggest, a "grey area" remains between where the prerogatives and obligations of the military meet those of the police forces (2016, p. 213).[140] This pending transfer of authority

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[139] A 2016 congressional commission recommended that the National Police be administratively relocated outside of the Ministry of Defence, and President Santos mentioned as early as 2013 the possibility of creating a new Ministry of Citizen Security, which would house the police and other law enforcement bodies (Llorente and McDermott, 2014, p. 17). However, the controversial suggestion faced backlash from military and police leaders alike, who argued that separating the police from the Ministry of Defence would adversely impact interoperability among the security forces (Gurney, 2014). For additional information, see Bernal Pulido and Correa Henao, 2016, pp. 152–153 and Policía Nacional de Colombia, 2017.

[140] Ruiz Vásquez remarks, "Although some officials do have military ranks and the police force is subsumed under the Ministry of Defence, legally it is an armed civilian corps…. [H]igh-ranking police officials have done

suggests that democratic consolidation is an ongoing process in Colombia, regardless of the broader achievements of SSR.

Effectiveness

The Colombian case exhibits steady and sometimes dramatic improvements for indicators of effectiveness, and most observers, even vehement critics of the Colombian security sector, report more proficient security institutions.[141] The country witnessed steep declines for violent crimes such as homicide and kidnapping and a notable reduction in acts of terrorism and subversion committed by illegal armed groups. As documented in Indicators 18 to 22 of Table 5.1, victimisation by violence related to the country's armed conflict also dropped but only after an intensification of violence that coincided with the Colombian military's Plan Patriota offensive against the FARC from 2003 to 2006. Similarly, although the incidence of homicide countrywide decreased, some regions (Valle de Cauca, Casanare, Chocó, and Guajira departments) experienced notable spikes, and during the first years of the Uribe administration, the number of assassinations of city mayors and teachers increased from previous years (Rangel, 2005, pp. 54–56).

During this period of heightened conflict, Colombian authorities also captured record numbers of members of illegal armed groups (Indicator 23, Table 5.1), and the country's main guerrilla insurgencies saw their force size dwindle as many of the rank and file voluntarily demobilised in government-sponsored reinsertion programmes (Indicator 24, Table 5.1). As the principal armed groups experienced unprecedented desertion, they also found their ability to extend their geographic influence across the country severely reduced.

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their best to differentiate themselves from the armed forces both in their training and behaviour, to such a point that in the police academies new recruits are invited to 'think and reason because you are not soldiers'" (2012, p. 52).

[141] The sustainability of improvements fluctuated after 2011, particularly once the Colombian government finalised peace negotiations with the FARC. The removal of the FARC from the criminal underworld generated a power vacuum that spawned a worrisome cycle of violence.

Indicators depicting the national reach of these organisations, such as the acreage of drug crops or the civilian population zones affected by combat (Indicators 35 to 28, Table 5.1), reflect a considerably smaller national footprint by 2011.[142] One demobilised FARC combatant remarked, "When we sensed that the tide had changed, we moved out of the cities to safe zones beyond the government's reach" (Author interview with a demobilised FARC military strategist, 2017). This perspective, in particular, points to an increasing monopoly of the legitimate use of force by the state across the more heavily populated regions of the national territory.

Notwithstanding lower figures for the most extreme acts of violence and crime by the end of the major SSR effort, citizen security remained a major concern for Colombians. The number of victims of crime in Colombia was relatively steady: between 30 and 40 percent of the population reported being the victim of a crime or being related to a victim of a crime over the period of SSR (Indicator 10, Table 5.1). In addition, the number of violent crimes in Colombia, or those crimes in which the offender uses or threatens force, more than doubled, even as Colombia in 2017 reported the lowest number of homicide victims per 100,000 inhabitants in more than 40 years (Indicator 11, Table 5.1) (Diaz and Jiménez, 2018). It would appear that criminal groups, opting for discretion in the face of a robust government campaign to put a halt to kidnapping, replaced their missing profits by escalating extortion activities. As reported kidnappings dropped from 3,572 in 2000 to 199 in 2016, Colombia's reported extortion rate more than tripled over the same period (Indicators 12 to 14, Table 5.1). For this reason, victimisation rates did not fluctuate significantly. The Colombian government, for its part, attempted to shine a more positive light on this trend. Former Defence Minister Luis Carlos Villegas notes, "People are reporting more, which shows

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[142] García Sánchez (2014) reports a negative correlation between the local incidence of illicit drug trafficking and citizen trust in government.

greater confidence in our institutions. And this is reflected in the fact that the authorities, including the judicial authorities, have been able to react better, to be more efficient" (Gill, 2017).

Even if the government's assertions about increased reporting are correct, the public perception of insecurity, which remained steady from 2005 to 2011 with around 40 percent of the population's feeling unsafe in their cities of residence, spiked by 2016 to more than 50 percent (Indicator 6, Table 5.1). As Colombians worried less about the country's armed conflict given the weakening of the FARC and ELN, "insecurity and delinquency" replaced "armed conflict and the war on terrorism" as the country's principal problems in the eyes of the citizenry (Indicators 7 and 8, Table 5.1). This shift may also reflect changes in criminal activity from attention-grabbing crimes like kidnappings, many of which occurred on highways or in rural areas and towns, to the more discreet tactic of telephone extortion of urban businesses (Mejia, 2010). In addition, the increased accessibility of high-value pedestrian items like mobile telephones rendered urban dwellers more susceptible to sidewalk assaults and pickpocketing, fuelling perceptions of insecurity ("Robo de celulares," 2017). A creeping preoccupation with personal safety also contributed to an explosion of registered private security firms in Colombia, from 760 in 1996 to more than 6,000 in 2017 ("La tecnología Supervigilancia garantiza la seguridad de los ciudadanos," 2018). One analyst surmises that this trend creates "a situation that makes one think that there is actually a crisis in the fulfilment of the state's role with respect to one of its inherent functions" (Paz, 2014).

The major security sector institutions fared better in the public eye during the implementation of SSR than the growing sense of insecurity might suggest, though (Indicators 1 and 2 of Table 5.1).[143] Whereas a mere 40 percent of Colombians expressed a

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[143] One prominent human rights defender argued that the security forces are attuned to public opinion and fear losing legitimacy among the citizenry. "Public opinion has been a force for change in the army" (Author interview with González González, 2017).

degree of trust in the Colombian Armed Forces in 1998, public trust peaked at more than 60

percent favourability during the middle of Uribe's term. The state's takeover of the Comuna

13 neighbourhood of Medellín from urban guerrilla groups in 2002 and the dismantling of

FARC fronts near Bogotá were especially salient victories that fuelled urban public support

(Castellanos, 2006, pp. 311–333; Leal Buitrago, 2006a, pp. 231, 243). Unquestionably, major

battlefield victories over the FARC from 2006 to 2008, which the Uribe government

masterfully publicised, helped bolster the military's positive image. One of the secrets to this

newfound success was interoperability. In 2003, the Colombian Army, Navy, and Air Force

established Joint Task Force Omega with US support to pursue the FARC in the group's

traditional zones of influence. The integration of air, ground, and riverine assets under a

single commander delivered some of the most propitious victories against the insurgents and

set a precedent for joint action that has become standard practice among the armed forces

(Corporación Observatorio para la Paz, 2009, pp. 181–195).[144] The incorporation of the

police, as well, into military units facilitated the government's capacity to arrest delinquents

and secure suspected crime scenes, enhancing the government's ability to build successful

judicial cases against criminals (Author interview with Captain, Colombian National Police,

2017).

These operational modifications appear to have paid off, as public trust in the

National Police increased from a low of 32.1 percent in 1998 to 52.3 percent in 2005.[145] In

2011, more than 69 percent of Colombians reported holding a favourable opinion of the

police, but that number dropped again to 48 percent in the wake of a series of salacious

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[144] One observer described, "When Plan Colombia resources began arriving, the Pentagon imposed a new strategy on the Colombian military: go into the mountain and eat shit for six months. This new practice required a cultural shift, as previously the army's doctrine did not call for long, isolating deployments. The military felt like it had to comply and produce real results" (Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017b).
[145] The National Police implemented in 2010 a programme that prioritised police patrols based on the geography of crime hotspots. Plan Cuadrantes was implemented in eight major cities and registered a 22 percent reduction in homicides in the beneficiary communities in just one year of operation (García et al., 2013).

scandals (IPSOS, 2016).[146] These advances are particularly noteworthy given the increased

contact that Colombian security forces have had with the citizenry over the past two decades.

In 2005, Bogotá had three times fewer the number of police proportional to the city's

population than New York, and Colombia had two times fewer the number of soldiers per

100,000 inhabitants as El Salvador during its conflict in the 1980s (Rangel, 2005, p. 65). The

number of police per 100,000 inhabitants increased from 241 to 343 from 1999 to 2011, well

above the UN prescription of 300, and in 2016, Colombia reported 997 uniformed police and

military members per 100,000 inhabitants (Indicators 25 and 26, Table 5.1). As of 2016,

Colombia reported the highest number of security force personnel and police per 100,000

inhabitants in all of Latin America (Donadio and Kussrow, 2016).

Rapid growth, however, has come at the expense of other SSR objectives, such as

gender integration. One Colombian military officer remarked, "Six years ago there was little

talk of gender, but now the army has created observatories and offices dedicated to the role of

gender in warfare—a cultural shift ushered in by a top-down directive" (Author interview

with Lieutenant, Colombian Navy, 2017). Despite making strides in recruitment of women

for the military and police, females represented less than 10 percent of the force size in 2017.

Representation is more notable in the police, a discrepancy which may help explain why

more women than men express trust in the police and why significantly fewer women than

men express trust in the military (Indicators 1, 2, 27, and 28; Table 5.1). These trends

reinforce the wisdom of the literature that gender representation matters, boosts effectiveness,

and should figure as a central element of SSR.

The Colombian central government began to take seriously crime and violence

prevention initiatives throughout the first decade of the 2000s. During the second half of the

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[146] In early 2016, the Colombian media uncovered a cadet prostitution ring in which senior police leaders paired officer candidates with senior government officials. This became colloquially known as the "Community of the Ring" scandal, and the then-Director of the National Police, General Rodolfo Palomino, resigned amid his suspected involvement ("Comunidad del Anillo," 2016).

Uribe administration, the Ministry of Defence, at the time under the leadership of future-President Santos, revived an interagency strategy to address the needs of Colombia's most conflictive communities known as Integral Action (Acción Integral, AI), a component of the Democratic Security Policy (see Chapter 6).[147] In conjunction with government employees of a parallel civilian organisation known as Social Action (Acción Social), the military and police provided humanitarian relief, infrastructure improvements, and medical services in communities historically bereft of central governmental presence and investment. As importantly, AI entities adopted methodologies to prioritise community interventions and engaged in systematic impact analysis of AI programmes (Author interview with Lieutenant, Colombian Navy, 2017). The significance of this mission for the security forces even led to the creation of an entire directorate dedicated to social development and led by a flag officer. For many military commanders, AI was both a practical and moral course of action: the military was the only government entity that could reach some of Colombia's most vulnerable populations, and its interface with localities affected by armed conflict represented an opportunity to "win hearts and minds" while gaining valuable information against insurgent groups (Author interview with a security analyst (government), 2017c). AI, later referred to as the National Territorial Consolidation Plan (Plan Nacional de Consolidación Territorial, PNCT), was a strategy that combined "security, counternarcotics, and development in a sequenced approach targeting remote, but strategically important, areas where illegal armed groups continue to operate" (Beittel, 2012, p. 35).

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[147] The theory of "integral action" dates to the 1950s and is a strategy of civil-military cooperation to complement foreign doctrines such as psychological operations and "political war" (Castillo Castañeda and Niño González, 2015, p. 132). Under President Uribe's Democratic Security Policy, the Office of the Presidency extended these principles to territories and civilian populations recently "recovered" by the Colombian state and set up Centres of Integral Action Coordination (Centro de Coordinación de Acción Integral, CCAI) to attend to the most pressing needs of the communities. On the security sector's pacification and stabilisation strategy during the Uribe presidency, see Brett, 2018; Delgado, 2015.

This new paradigm, which one military officer described as "a shift from total spectrum to total dimension warfare," also marked an important transformation in the Colombian SSR process: the military and police willingly became a primary purveyor of services to Colombia's most disadvantaged populations (Author interview with Captain, Colombian Army, 2017). From 2004 to 2010, AI investment zones increased from 46 to 69 percent of the country's municipalities, whereas red zones, or those in which the military was actively involved in combat, decreased from 15 to 6 percent (Cristo, 2016, p. 233). In the regions of the country where the Colombian government most heavily invested in AI activities, such as the Macarena mountain range, illicit crop acreage plummeted, school enrolment spiked, health outcomes improved, and homicides dropped (Mejía, 2016, p. 13; Santos, 2009, pp. 156–158). When President Santos assumed the presidency in 2010, he pushed to institutionalise and centralise these social assistance efforts in the Department for Social Prosperity (Departamento de Prosperidad Social). From 2010 to 2016, the budget for "social inclusion and reconciliation" experienced considerable and functionally necessary increases (Indicator 16, Table 5.3) ("Información histórica: Histórico Presupuesto," n.d.). The passage of the 2011 Law of Victims and Land Restitution (Ley 1448 de 2011, Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras) and the FARC peace deal, which stipulated social investment in Colombia's rural space, obligated the government to national programming to address the root causes of conflict via the National Policy of Consolidation and Territorial Reconstruction (Política Nacional de Consolidación y Reconstrucción Territorial, PNCRT) (Castillo Castañeda and Niño González, 2015, p. 133).[148]

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[148] The Colombian Armed Forces even created a School for International Missions and Integral Action (Escuela de Misiones Internacionales y Acción Integral, ESMAI) (Castillo Castañeda and Niño González, 2015, pp. 138–139). Crime and violence prevention entities, such as the National System of Young Colombians (Sistema Nacional de Juventud), also received a financial boost from the central government to sponsor recreational activities and community-building events for urban youth.

Although the Colombian Ministry of Defence improved its internal coordination, Colombians still viewed other security sector actors less favourably than the security forces over the period of analysis, as observed in Indicators 3 to 5 of Table 5.1.[149] The country's major justice institutions, which underwent a sweeping transition from an inquisitorial to an accusatorial legal model starting in 2005, registered unimpressive approval among the Colombian population. Whereas 50.1 percent of the population approved of the justice system's performance in 2006, that figure dropped to 30.9 percent in 2015 ("Latinobarómetro," n.d.). Judicial reform only contributed to a slight rise in the number of judges per 100,000 inhabitants, and case backlog remained a debilitating problem, even though productivity increased by an average of 389 cases per judge per year (Avila Ceballos, 2015). Colombian citizens only reported a mere 24 percent of crimes to authorities, reflecting a widespread lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the justice system (Indicator 29, Table 5.1). Of those crimes, only 58.3 percent advanced beyond a formal inquiry or investigation in the legal system in 2016, albeit this number has improved since 2005, when 82.8 percent of reported crime cases remained unopened (Indicator 30, Table 5.1) ("Ministerio de Justicia," n.d.). Even under the new system, legal authorities have cited generous statutes of limitations to explain the system's torpor at investigating, hearing, and prosecuting cases, and as of 2019, judges still took most cases to trial several years after the commission of the crimes in question (Erazo, 2012).[150]

In light of these inefficiencies, Colombian prison populations swelled due to continued overreliance on pre-trial detention. By 2011, the number of pre-trial detainees had

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[149] For a survey of the cost effectiveness of the judicial branch in Colombia, see Clavijo, 2011.
[150] Although many challenges remain, Colombia's justice system in 2019 was in a much better position to administer justice than in the 1980s and 1990s, when the Colombian Congress permitted the creation of "faceless courts," which allowed judges, prosecutors, and witnesses to conceal their identities and thereby protect themselves from defendants in cases of drug-trafficking, rebellion, and terrorism (Alquila Lawrence, 1997). Recent examples of the resilience of Colombian courts include the extradition of paramilitary commanders, the Constitutional Court's imposition of presidential term limits, the prosecution of politicians involved with the narcotics trade and paramilitary groups, and the implementation of recommendations made by the IACHR (Barbosa Castillo, 2016, p. 73).

dropped but remained steady at around 30 percent of the entire incarcerated population (Indicators 33 and 34, Table 5.1). The enhanced operational prowess of the Colombian security forces and "hard-line populist security laws" implemented during the Uribe presidency contributed to record arrests, resulting in overcrowded penitentiary facilities (Bargent, 2016). In 2016, the prison population overwhelmed the system's capacity by more than 56 percent, up from 10 percent in 1995. These developments resulted in inhumane living conditions for inmates. Given the relatively small number of penitentiary officers per 100 inmates (Indicator 34, Table 5.1), which did not increase notably, the state effectively ceded control of many prison facilities to criminals, who have taken advantage of lax rules enforcement to engage in illicit activities from within prison walls (*Informe de auditoría: USPEC*, 2016). A 2016 legal reform, Law 1786 (Ley 1786 de 2016, Código de Procedimiento Penal Colombiano), intended to reduce overcrowding by imposing limits on the duration of pre-trial detention, but judges have tended to apply the law irregularly (Bargent, 2017).

Overall, the security sector made strides with regard to its effectiveness from 1999 to 2011. SSR contributed to improved public perceptions about the major agencies of the security sector, and the Colombian security forces became a globally recognised model of professionalism and reform. Indeed, the Colombian military and police have deployed internationally to places as far afield as Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Afghanistan under a security cooperation program known as the US-Colombia Action Plan (USCAP), which pairs Colombian advisors with local security forces to devise strategies against transnational threats (Baires, 2017; Eijking, 2019; Niño González, 2015a, pp. 65–71). Colombia's military leadership in 2017 asserted that its post-conflict posture and effort to continue transforming the institution would situate the country's security sector as the regional leader in defence and security matters by 2030 (Cadavid, 2017, p. 10). Two analysts

deeply involved in the US-Colombia relationship note, "Any vestiges of 'mentorship' or 'tutorial' dynamics eventually vanished, and the partnership became a collaborative one of sovereign equals in pursuit of common interests" (Miklaucic and Pinzón, 2017, p. 280). The confidence that this statement communicates is very different from the battered and bungling posture of the Colombian military in the 1990s. Nevertheless, Colombia's justice and penitentiary systems still require massive public investment aimed at sustaining reform, and as overall data from 2016 indicates, the positive trends recorded from 1999 to 2011 have proven to be somewhat mutable.

Accountability

Accountability principally refers to the ability of government institutions and civil society to apply coercive pressure on security sector institutions publicly and without interference or intimidation. The 1991 Constitution, an effort to "re-democratise" Colombian society and put an end to the political violence of the 1980s, led to the introduction of measures that reined in the military's traditional autonomy and enforced greater accountability (Porch, 2008, p. 132).[151] The Minister of Defence, previously a general, is now a civilian appointee, and a professional, civilian bureaucracy complements the military staff at headquarters in Bogotá. Furthermore, the Constitution created the Attorney General's Office and a Human Rights Ombudsman to serve as checks on executive abuses or overreach. The Inspector General's Office (Procuraduría General), as well, inaugurated a security division to monitor the administrative and operational activities of the military and police. The major actors of the security forces have grown comfortable with these legal and organisational changes in the intervening decades, and during Plan Colombia, accountability

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[151] Leal Buitrago (2006a, pp. 97–109) argues that the new Constitution did not make substantial changes to the country's security forces but, rather, that President Gaviria's administration introduced a reform agenda that centralised and civilianised the administration of security policy.

of the security sector improved gradually and modestly (Barbosa Castillo, 2016, p. 58; Author interview with a security analyst (government), 2017c). However, as alluded to in the previous section, the justice sector still struggles to enforce accountability to the law, particularly in cases involving other security sector actors, and the Colombian Congress, even with its constitutionally prescribed oversight role, has not fully embraced its prerogative as a check on the country's security agencies. In this context, the accountability of the security sector to the rule of law remained tenuous at the time of writing—and represents an unfinished component of SSR.

During the implementation of SSR, the security sector benefitted from impressive budget increases, authorised by the Colombian Congress, which complemented the billions of dollars in technology, equipment, and training provided by the US government via Plan Colombia. However, this expansion of funding was not accompanied by commensurate monitoring of how the Ministry of Defence was spending its resources (Indicators 15 to 20, Table 5.3). Following the enactment of Law 906 of 2004 (Ley 906 de 2004, Código de Procedimiento Penal), which modernised Colombia's criminal code, more resources permitted the retraining of judges, prosecutors, and employees of the Public Ministry in the accusatorial legal system. To implement criminal justice reform, the budgets of the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Justice also swelled considerably, with a 936 percent increase in the Ministry of Justice's authorised spending between 2000 and 2011.

These changes have not improved public faith in the justice system and have actually coincided with a decline in the perceived independence of the courts (Indicator 13, Table 5.3). Reform exposed deep and systemic corruption in the judiciary, and the 2010s bore witness to a number of major scandals that have tarnished the credibility of the country's high courts. In 2015, Jorge Pretelt, the then-President of the Constitutional Court, resigned after his peers reported him for soliciting bribes in exchange for ruling in favour of an oil

company. Similarly, the former Attorney General, Luis Eduardo Montealegre, is suspected of participating in a US$500 million embezzlement scandal during his time as a legal advisor to a healthcare consortium (Alsema, 2015). The inability of the congressional commissions of the lower chamber to deliver meaningful investigations into these supposed crimes further exasperated a Colombian public fed up with governmental incompetence. Additionally, one security consultant to the Colombian government noted, "In Colombia, unlike in Mexico, there was not a transition timeline for the justice reform, which resulted in a backlog of cases in areas of the country with little technical capacity and a shortage of judges" (Author interview with Chapa Koloffon, 2018). Although the Constitutional Court "is the envy of the rest of Latin America for its quality and independence," levels of impunity from criminal prosecution in the lower courts remain extremely high, and adherence to the rule of law remains incomplete (Shifter, 2009, pp. 71–72).[152] Nevertheless, from 2008 to 2017, the indictment rate for homicides, an indicator of the effectiveness of criminal investigations, increased from 9.7 percent to 25.2 percent, reflecting demonstrable progress (La Rota, 2019).

Like the judiciary, the Colombian Armed Forces and National Police also experienced a more than 300 percent surge in funding as the Ministry of Defence's force size grew from 231,000 personnel in 1999 to more than 481,000 in 2016 ("World Bank Open Data," n.d.). The growing budget funded specialised and technical training for a more capable military, which exhibited impressive advances in readiness and mobility. In 2000, drafted soldiers, who served a mere 12 to 18 months, comprised roughly 70 percent of the Colombian military; of these draftees, 19 percent were high school graduates, a status that exempted them from combat duty (Rabasa and Chalk, 2001, p. 104).[153] By December 2001, the number

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[152] On impunity in Colombia, see Rojas Bethancourth, 2005.
[153] General Jorge Enrique Mora undertook the first major personnel restructuring in the Colombian military to increase the number of professional, non-draftee soldiers by 150 percent and to improve the training for draftees. His effort, "Plan 10.000," was the first major impetus on part of the military to create and enforce a high standard of military recruitment (Author interview with Captain, Colombian Army, 2017).

of combat-exempt soldiers dropped to 2,900 from 35,000 in 1998, while the number of professional soldiers increased from 21,000 to 53,000 and the number of combat-ready draftees increased from 47,000 to 61,000 (DeShazo et al., 2009, p. 14). As the Colombian government devoted necessary resources to sustain a larger force size, the president and his cabinet placed extraordinary pressure on the military to produce results. President Uribe's unconventional approach to dealing with the armed forces entailed public ridicule and undesirable reassignments for officers responsible for battlefield defeats or blunders; in issuing orders, he occasionally skipped the military chain of command and sometimes even the Minister of Defence by dealing directly with subordinate military commanders. Marta Lucía Ramírez, a former Minister of Defence, also shamed the military by exposing a large military contracting scandal during her first months in the post, making public the "mafia that had infiltrated the highest ranks of the institution" (Author interview with M. Romero, 2017).[154] Uribe's successor, President Santos, assumed a more conciliatory management of the armed forces, but the interests of the military remained highly aligned with those of the presidency. In the words of one Colombian officer, the executive today is seen less as a check on the Ministry of Defence and more as "a defender of its institutional privileges" (Author interview Colonel, Colombian Army, 2017).

Furthermore, the legislature tended to cede its oversight authority to the executive in matters of defence, and Congress only sporadically took significant steps to curtail the autonomy of the security services.[155] Most notably, the Senate inaugurated a new Commission to Monitor Intelligence and Counterintelligence Activities (Comisión de Inteligencia y Contrainteligencia) in 2013, following a scandal implicating the Administrative

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[154] The military high command did succeed in convincing President Uribe to replace Minister Ramírez in 2003 after repeated scuffles between her and the military's top brass (Marks, 2005, p. 90).
[155] In 1999, just prior to Plan Colombia, the Colombian Congress extended extraordinary powers to President Pastrana for a period of six months to commence restructuring of the armed forces without legislative oversight (Rojas, 2015, p. 69).

Security Department (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, DAS) in the practice of wiretapping the communications of members of the Supreme Court and civil society ("Comisión legal de seguimiento," 2014).[156] The response to the DAS scandal is the exception and not the norm when it comes to congressional checks on the security sector, though. Former Vice-Minister of Defence Jorge Mario Eastman notes, "The main prerequisite of Congress is to oversee the external debt. They get involved when we ask for money to buy weapons systems abroad. But they don't really say no" (Porch, 2008, pp. 134–135).

Even though the Ministry was more forthcoming with information about spending via a new digital system called the Force-Oriented Cost Information System (FOCIS), one analyst highlighted the indifference of the Second Commissions of the Congress (Comisión Segunda), which oversee national security and defence institutions (Miklaucic and Pinzón, 2017, p. 282). The individual commented that the senators and representatives do not much care to scrutinise or control the security sector because doing so does not translate into votes for re-election (Author interview with a researcher from Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2017). The services do their own hiring and conduct their own institutional audits without much transparency, and the armed forces reportedly engaged in informal agreements with multinational companies to provide security in exchange for private resources and money (Author interviews with Colonel (Ret.), Colombian Army, 2017; a researcher from Ideas for Peace Foundation, 2017).

Moreover, despite the fact that Congress approves all promotions to the rank of admiral or general, there has been a clear absence of debate about security in the legislative chambers (Author interview with Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017). During Plan

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[156] The DAS was replaced in 2011 by the National Intelligence Directorate (Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia, DNI).

Colombia, seldom did legislators examine problems in the implementation of security policy, shortcomings in mission accomplishment, poorly conceived operations, or statistics relating to the handling of military abuses by the judicial branch (Bernal Pulido and Correa Henao, 2016, p. 229).[157] They rarely, if ever, questioned the suitability of the executive's recommendations for promotion, indicating an abdication of authority to check the privileges of the military and police (Author interview with a researcher from Ideas for Peace Foundation, 2017). One police officer even noted that Congress made only a few cosmetic changes to the draft document of the 2017 police code, which greatly expanded the faculties and authority of police officers—in effect, granting the National Police *carte blanche* to devise and implement its own citizen security policy (Author interview with Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017).[158]

Legislative scrutiny has also rarely extended to the human rights record of the Colombian Armed Forces. In fact, the 2016 Congress unsuccessfully attempted to enlarge the role of the country's military justice system by affording it expanded jurisdiction over military atrocities, which could have potentially led to impunity for crimes committed by service members (ISSAT, 2017). The military's criminal justice system has questionable credibility among the general population (Burnyeat, 2018, p. 114; Rosenberg, 1992, pp. 43–44). In accordance with a Constitutional Court decision dating back to 1997, civilian criminal courts retain jurisdiction in cases of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity committed by the military, but as of 2011, the impunity rate for extrajudicial murders attributed to the state still lingered at 98 percent (Centro de Investigación y Educación

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[157] In 2019, the Colombian Senate approved the promotion of General Nicacio Martínez Espinel, the Commander of the Colombian Army, from three to four stars despite protests over his service from 2004 to 2006 as the executive officer of a brigade implicated in at least 23 extrajudicial murder accusations (Manetto, 2019).

[158] The new police code was denounced by human rights groups and was sent to the Constitutional Court for reconsideration in 2019.

Popular, 2011, p. 7).[159] Most worryingly, the state's approach to dealing with the excesses of the security sector on the human rights front has been one of "rejecting the gravity of the phenomenon and hiding it; while presenting the victims [of these abuses] as delinquents or terrorists" (Rojas and Benavides, 2017, p. 53). Notwithstanding increased attention to the subject, as evidenced by mandatory human rights and international humanitarian law training for all uniformed members of the Ministry of Defence (Indicator 14, Table 5.3), human rights protections remain an ongoing task for the Colombian security forces. While the risk of lethal contact with the security forces decreased significantly, signalling a newfound restraint in the use of lethal force, the early years of SSR coincided with a rise in abuses against the civilian population, mostly committed by the army (Indicators 1, 2, 4, and 6; Table 5.3).

Notoriously, the number of extrajudicial executions swelled during the early years of SSR. Major public and international scrutiny emerged out of a 2008 scandal, which implicated dozens of officers and soldiers in the murder of innocent civilians whose corpses were presented as insurgents killed in combat. These executions, which the military tallied to bloat its operational accomplishments, became known as "false positives" (*falsos positivos*), and senior army leadership, having covered up or ignored the practice, rewarded units with promotions, increased pay, and time off (Lindsay-Poland, 2018, p. 157). In 2005, Defence Minister Camilo Ospina issued Directive No. 29, prescribing financial rewards for the capture or killing of members of illegal armed groups, and in the years that followed, accusations of military executions of civilians more than doubled, peaking in 2007 at 1,119 (Colombia Reports, 2017). Table 5.5 depicts the grim results of the decision to incentivise body counts.

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[159] Rojas (2015, p. 84) considers US pressure to reform the Military Penal Code (Código Penal Militar) an important factor in the transfer of jurisdiction. In fact, its passage in 2000 was one of the conditions for the US Congress to approve Plan Colombia, even though the move was resisted by the military's high command (US Department of State, 1998). However, Barbosa Castillo notes, "[I]n Colombia, more than the influence of international decisions, it has been the internal reflection about democratic values and about justice that has given rise to significant changes in the Military Justice System" (2016, p. 57). On the deliberations surrounding the transfer of jurisdiction to the civilian justice system, see Kyle and Reiter, 2013, pp. 395–397; Leal Buitrago, 2006a, pp. 208–209.

Table 5.5: Reported Combat Kills and Extrajudicial Murder Investigations in Colombia, 2002-2011

Year	Deaths Reported in Combat Attributed to the Armed Forces	Investigations by the Attorney General's Office for Extrajudicial Murder	Percent
2002	1,775	167	9.4
2003	2,113	220	10.4
2004	2,282	346	15.2
2005	2,067	349	16.9
2006	2,236	694	31.0
2007	2,703	934	34.6
2008	1,559	378	24.2
2009	635	60	9.4
2010	555	59	10.6
2011	406	52	12.8
Total	16,331	3,259	20.0

Source: Rojas and Benavides, 2017, pp. 65–66.
Note: "Deaths" also include insurgent and paramilitary fighters killed.

From 2008 to 2018, the Attorney General's Office opened more than 4,750 investigations into suspected "false positives" and extrajudicial murders, but the lethargy of the courts delayed the delivery of justice in all but some 800 hundred cases (ISSAT, 2017). According to a 2015 report from the Prosecutor General's Office, 5,137 officials have potentially participated in extrajudicial murders since 1986, of which 923 have faced convictions; 862 members of the army received prison sentences (Colombia Reports, 2017).[160] A 2018 study co-authored by a retired Colombian police colonel contends that the Colombian Army could have committed as many as 10,000 homicides during the Uribe presidency (Rojas and Benavides, 2017).[161] As of 2018, no senior military leaders have faced charges for the abuses, despite the prevailing narrative among civil society organisations that former Commander of the Armed Forces General Mario Montoya Uribe directed them from

[160] Of the accusations of extrajudicial homicides, denunciations against the army are the highest, representing 89.2 percent of all suspected cases (Coordinación Colombia-Europa-Estados Unidos, 2012, p. 85).
[161] This estimate is much higher than other civil society and government calculations. The figure nearly doubles the count proffered by the Colombian-European-US Coordination Group, which reports 5,763 extrajudicial murders. Regrettably, the authors do not detail the methodology employed to arrive at such a high figure (Rojas and Benavides, 2017, p. 30).

the top (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Lugo and Goodman, 2016; Author interview with a representative of the José Alvear Restrepo Law Association, 2017).[162] In 2016, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) referred several cases of extrajudicial murder to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), citing the Colombian government's failure to comply with a series of recommendations to expedite justice for "false positives." Unquestionably, the lack of transparency surrounding the scandal has badly damaged the Colombian military's public image, which helps explain a decline in public support for the armed forces from 2011 to 2016.

Nevertheless, less than 1 percent of the armed forces in the period from 2002 to 2014 was tied to a criminal investigation and an even lower percentage was found guilty for criminal activity, indicating that abusive and criminal behaviour has certainly not become normalised among the ranks of the Colombian security forces (Barbosa Castillo, 2016, p. 82; *Logros*, 2008, p. 83).[163] In a promising turn of events, the "false positives" scandal even led to the creation of new organisational infrastructure to prevent future abuses. In 2010, Congress passed Law 1407 (Ley 1407 de 2010, Código Penal Militar), which reiterates the requirement that all human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law be processed in civilian courts. In 2011, the Colombian government implemented new coordination mechanisms between the Ministry of Defence, the Human Rights Ombudsman,

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[162] From 2015 to 2017, the military purged for misconduct more than 3,600 officers and non-commissioned officers, which represented about 1.5 percent of the total force size (Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017b). According to one security analyst, Colombian General Alberto José Mejía Ferrero polygraphed an entire brigade in 2017 and quietly forced out the soldiers who could not pass the test (Author interview with a security analyst (government), 2017c).

[163] A 2019 investigation by the New York Times found that the administration of President Iván Duque (2018-20??), a protégé of Uribe who campaigned against the FARC peace deal, may not be as committed to human rights protections as President Santos. In December 2018, Duque relieved the reformist high command of the military and appointed some officers with dubious records on human rights. These very men have reportedly reintroduced a system of incentives to "double the number of criminals and militants they kill, capture or force to surrender in battle—and possibly accept higher civilian casualties in the process" (Casey, 2019). This revelation suggests, therefore, that many of the reforms and improvements made on the human rights front may not be firmly rooted yet and that good behaviour on part of at least some elements of the army is contingent on the hyper-vigilance of civilian authorities. Moreover, this anecdote demonstrates the overarching importance of executive political will in setting the strategic and even tactical direction of the security sector to serve as a safeguard against illiberal democratic governance.

and the Attorney General's Office for the handling of suspected violations of human rights ("Gobierno presenta 15 medidas," 2011).[164] As of 2018, the Ministry of Defence counted some 400 judicial advisors working full time to help service leadership and personnel understand rights and responsibilities in the justice system (Author interview with Lieutenant, Colombian Navy, 2017). The Colombian Army also established in 2009 the Graduate School of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (Escuela de Graduados en Derechos Humanos y Derecho Internacional Humanitario), which trained more than 200,000 military personnel during its first five years of operation (ISSAT, 2017). This heightened awareness of human rights appeared to have had an influence on the conduct of the military and police in combat operations, as the number of accusations of extrajudicial murders dropped to double digits annually from 2009 to 2019.

Even members of the FARC noticed a change in the way soldiers conducted themselves in combat. One former FARC leader assessed, "The 'false positives' scandal was a mortal blow for the army because it caught the attention of the world. It was politically and psychologically problematic for the middle ranks operating on the ground, as they were afraid of inflicting civilian casualties. This affected their combat posture" (Author interview with a demobilised FARC military strategist, 2017). One human rights defender concurred, "When President Santos was Minister of Defence, the relationship between the government and the human rights movement improved. The government no longer saw human rights organisations as enemies of the state and recognised that the state had an obligation to its

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[164] The Colombian government has long deliberated about whether "false positives" should be tried in military criminal courts or civilian courts given that the Superior Council of the Judiciary previously characterised such cases as "service-related" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2013, pp. 167–168). The post-conflict peace and reconciliation tribunal that emerged out of peace talks with the FARC, the Special Peace Jurisdiction (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz, JEP), has also permitted the consideration of "false positives" on a case-by-case basis, contributing to a sense of incoherence and confusion about how to deliver justice for extrajudicial murder.

citizenry. Things started to change" (Author interview with a representative of the José Alvear Restrepo Law Association, 2017).

The military's heightened sensitivity to its public image also spurred the institution's leadership to take ownership for its own reform strategy. Starting in 2013, General Alberto José Mejía Ferrero, the then-Director of Planning for the Army and later the General Commander of the Armed Forces, forged an initiative known as the Strategic Committee of the Design of the Army of the Future (Comité Estratégico del Diseño del Ejército del Futuro, CEDEF) to reconceptualise the army's roles and responsibilities (Author interview with Salgado Restrepo, 2017).[165] From 2015 to 2016, the army underwent a complete reorganisation, from 14 administrative commands to three (Planning and Future Plans, Force Generation, and Operations) and simultaneously commenced a process of rewriting its doctrine, strategic vision, administrative policies, and tactical handbooks. From the perspective of one observer close to the reform effort, the military and police had become experts at everything from community policing to anti-kidnapping operations but had never documented their practices or combat behaviours as doctrine. Without a formally published doctrine, they were prone to committing potentially illegal practices on the battlefield (Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017b).

The navy, air force, and police have followed suit and have inaugurated their own reform cells, and officers from across the services insist on distinguishing their current modernisation paradigm, which they bill as "transformation," from traditional SSR (Ciro

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[165] The CEDEF developed out of a series of earlier initiatives known as the Committee of the Strategic Revision and Innovation (Comité de Revisión Estratégica e Innovación, CREI) and the Strategic Committee of Transformation and Innovation (Comité Estratégico de Transformación e Innovación, CETI) (Ciro Gómez and Correa Henao, 2014, p. 25). According to General Jorge Arturo Salgado (Author interview, 2017), the first iterations of these transformation initiatives focused on the army's need to innovate because of a battlefield stalemate with the FARC and ELN, whereas the most recent deliberations of the CEDEF are focused on how the military can be a source for stabilisation and consolidation in the post-conflict era. This latest phase, he insisted, requires that the military participate in joint ventures with civilian authorities, the business community, the National Police, and international partners. On the police perspective of transformation in the post-conflict period, see Policía Nacional de Colombia, 2017, pp. 35–61.

Gómez and Correa Henao, 2014).[166] One military official stressed that the term SSR in Colombia implies that the military's prevailing way of doing business is "dirty and needs to be scrapped" (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), Colombian Army, 2017). Another understood SSR as an "forced imposition from the outside," which was "never the case in Colombia" (Author interview with Lieutenant, Colombian Navy, 2017). Regardless of how the reform is characterised, the ongoing makeover reflects a familiar lack of accountability, and one researcher stated sceptically:

> The military's leadership knows that the interference of civilians in their transformation plan will sidetrack reform efforts, and because the demands to reform are not coming from the civilian chain of command, there are no external auditing mechanisms. The army is transforming without designated funds, without international support, without benchmarks. (Author interview with a researcher from Ideas for Peace Foundation, 2017)

As the "false positives" scandal highlights, holding the security forces to account for their excesses has proven a slow and haphazard process. Even as violations of international humanitarian law and extrajudicial murders peaked from 2003 to 2007 (Indicators 3 to 6, Table 5.3), the number of formal complaints made by members of the public against the security forces remained low (Indicator 1, Table 5.3). Given that abuses predominantly occurred in rural areas of the country, where the Colombian military is often the only permanent interface citizens have with the state, it is plausible that the communities most affected by violations of human rights lacked mechanisms to denounce abuses. Accusations against security sector actors have increased to levels more congruent with other indicators of abuse only in recent years, implying greater access to justice institutions and greater

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[166] One security analyst concluded, "Transformation really is SSR. The Colombian Army is reforming military schools, introducing new doctrine, reallocating resources, tightening budgets, and forging joint operations" (Author interview with a security analyst (government), 2017c). García Covarrubias distinguishes between adaptation, modernisation, and transformation as stages on a scale of military reform and notes that "for the moment in [Latin America, the term transformation] is most synonymous with a process of change, reform, modernisation, or restructuring" (2007, p. 18).

confidence and security to criticise publicly the security sector. One possible explanation for this shift is the sustained attention to outlying communities through routine and emergency municipal security consultations (Indicator 7, Table 5.3), presided over by the president or minister of defence, and the rapid growth of justice houses, which serve as "decentralised service units, information centres, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms" (Indicator 8, Table 5.3) (Méndez, 2015). According to Méndez, "[these] interventions have helped transparently alleviate grievances and enhance citizen confidence in the justice sector, making people less inclined to take the law into their own hands" (2015).

No matter how responsive the security sector has become to formal complaints filed against state actors, its accountability to civil society remained tenuous into the 2010s. This is especially concerning since the two most effective mechanisms of control have been the direct authority of the president and the media (Ruiz Vásquez, 2013). One of civil society's chief concerns was the executive's use of the media to propagandise the successes of the security sector (Rojas and Benavides, 2017, p. 31). The perceived lack of press independence also undermined civil society's ability to defend human rights and engage in activism. Indicators 9 to 12 of Table 5.3 suggest the precariousness of civil society in Colombia. In 2016, 77 percent of Colombians expressed doubt that the Colombian government was doing enough to protect human rights, and from 2009 to 2019, the number of human rights defenders threatened, attacked, and murdered rose ("Latin American Public Opinion Project," n.d.; "Ministerio de Justicia," n.d.). Although the rate of murder of members of the press in the country reduced considerably Plan Colombia, threats and attacks remained a persistent reality for many of the country's journalists, who are among the sole voices to contest official narratives and report from distant conflict zones (AJ+, 2015).

Several civil society actors with whom the author spoke indicated that activism was particularly challenging during the Uribe years, when the country's intelligence services "set

out to destroy the human rights movement" (Author interview with M. Romero, 2017). One human rights defender insisted, "Uribe publicly accused us of abetting terrorism, infiltrated our organisations, intercepted our communications, issued death threats, and cancelled our travel visas. Ours was a fight for survival, and our activism took a backseat" (Author interview with a representative of the José Alvear Restrepo Law Association, 2017). The stigmatisation of the profession in Colombia became so acute that in 2017 conservative voices in the Congress vehemently opposed the candidacy of human rights defenders on a transitional justice tribunal (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz, JEP), one of the institutions created by the peace deal with the FARC, on the grounds that human rights defenders could not be impartial. Despite this antagonism, the tally of homicides of members of vulnerable professions (e.g., unionists, mayors, council members, indigenous, and journalists) dropped notably from 2002, signalling an increased capacity to protect such populations from armed threats through state-provided security details and a permanent presence of the security forces throughout the national territory (*Logros*, 2008, p. 10).

The sustainability of these improvements remains in question. As of 2019, illegal armed groups, in particular the country's resurgent criminal bands (*bandas criminales*, BACRIM), continued to terrorise the press, labour unionists, and the human rights movement. Even though the Colombian Constitution calls for the protection of human rights as a fundamental obligation of the military and police, government officials can in most instances disavow culpability for human rights abuses (Bernal Pulido and Correa Henao, 2016, p. 242). These tactics nonetheless have the effect of silencing opposition voices, thereby relieving pressure on the Colombian government to enforce accountability. The importance of this factor cannot be overstated. Most of the major scandals in the security sector over the past two decades have come to light due to the work of investigative journalists and human rights defenders. One human rights defender noted, "The human rights

community is the only reason the military stopped committing 'false positives.' It is dangerous work because we are calling out the total complicity of the state" (Author interview with a representative of the José Alvear Restrepo Law Association, 2017). Most recently, the Colombian press exposed a series of shocking scandals in 2016 that implicated the highest ranks of the police force in a sex ring and in a contraband smuggling operation. In response, the National Police removed 1,427 personnel from the force due to corruption allegations or underperformance—the first sweeping purge of police officials since the 1995 dismissal of 11,000 members (ISSAT, 2017). Without a media and civil society that can operate freely and openly, it is hard to know how many other opportunities to contest the security sector have been ignored or silenced.

In light of such feeble accountability, one of the most effective checks on the autonomy of the security sector appears to have come from beyond Colombian borders: from inside the halls of the US Capitol building. International pressure to comply with human rights standards and to improve accountability of the security forces was a consistent demand of US legislators in exchange for the robust aid provided under Plan Colombia. Part of the monitoring and oversight of the Colombian military and police was inherent in the US contracting process. Transfers of equipment and technology from the United States to Colombia required an agreement between the two nations on how Colombian units intended to use material, and the US Embassy employed hundreds of officials in the annual verification of transferred defence articles in an end-use monitoring (EUM) programme. More broadly, however, the US government engaged annually in a formal process of human rights conditionality dating back to 2000.[167] The Department of State must certify that the Colombian government meets an acceptable standard of human rights by dismissing military and police members who commit abuses, investigating accusations, and severing ties between

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[167] On US human rights conditionality, see Tate, 2015, pp. 70–71.

the security forces and paramilitary organisations.[168] The US Congress waived this requirement in 2000 on national security grounds, but every year thereafter resulted in a positive certification of Colombia, even though some international civil society organisations challenge the notion that the Colombian government made real progress (Fellowship for Reconciliation and US Office on Colombia, 2010). Tate, for one, asserts that the US government in Colombia created new beneficiaries of aid or shifted it to "clean" units instead of suspending military aid entirely when allegations of human rights violations surfaced (Tate, 2011, pp. 337, 341).

Nevertheless, Adam Isacson of the Washington Office on Latin America observed that Colombian politicians and military leaders, well aware that they are under a very close scrutiny by US policymakers, took vetting seriously and have consistently taken actions to appease their US benefactors on the human rights front (Author interview with Isacson, 2017). When Senator Patrick Leahy (Democrat-Vermont) assumed the Chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee in 2006, certification of Colombia for human rights became hugely controversial. The senator stipulated the release of aid in 2007 and 2008 on the Colombian government's delivering justice in cases of military and police abuses (*Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008*, 2007). Ultimately, the aid was not withheld, but the delay in delivering new equipment sent a strong signal to the Colombian military that its relationship with its closest partner was damaged following the "false positives" scandal.

In sum, formal accountability of the security sector improved somewhat since 1999, and the media's ability to uncover and report abuses has proven an essential check on the security sector's conduct. As of 2019, reported abuses by state actors were down noticeably, and the civilian justice system continued to process thousands of instances of extrajudicial

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[168] At least one critic insists that the use of paramilitary forces as state proxies in a counterinsurgency campaign was the direct result of demands for transparency generated by US human rights conditions (Tate, 2015, pp. 11–12).

murders by state agents, albeit at a phlegmatic pace. Investigators have been unable to link the "false positives" scandal to senior military leadership, even though the UN reported that the abuses were both "systematic" and "widespread" ("OHCHR: Informes Anuales," 2013).[169] Additionally, the Colombian Congress, reluctant to withhold budgets or formally investigate fraud and abuse, was largely an ineffectual check on military and police prerogatives, and civil society remained vulnerable to intimidation tactics by state and non-state actors alike, resulting in a degree of self-censorship. Reflecting on this mixed panorama, one researcher averred, "Colombia has the best military and police in Latin America, but it is not a wholly reformed security sector" (Author interview with a researcher from Ideas for Peace Foundation, 2017).

Evaluating SSR in Mexico

The Mexican case, although characterised by familiar challenges, reflects different trends altogether. While the PRI was at the helm of national politics until 2000, criminal organisations allegedly benefitted from state tolerance in exchange for their non-violent behaviour (Martin, 2013).[170] The security forces and justice system, instead of independently pursuing criminal actors, often acquiesced to this arrangement. As a number of scholars note, state complicity appeared to keep violence levels low for decades (Kenny and Serrano, 2012c; Kleinfeld, 2018, p. 41). Political authorities, backed principally by the police, made the criminal cost of using violence high by enforcing financial sanctions against organised crime groups (Kenny and Serrano, 2012c, pp. 34–35). This period in Mexican history is popularly known as the "Pax PRIista," and save occasional outbursts of cartel violence, the

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[169] On holding senior military officers responsible for criminal acts committed by their subordinates under Colombian law, see Suárez Díaz and Velasco Chaves, 2016, pp. 350–354.
[170] Abello Colak and Pearce refer to this kind of arrangement as "managed security" (2015, p. 201). For more information, see Arias, 2017.

government was largely able to keep a lid on insecurity without the coercive apparatus of the state's military and police (Bolaños, 2016, p. 99).[171]

The transition to democracy led to the collapse of these clientelistic arrangements, and party competition and the decentralisation of political authority after the PAN's 2000 presidential victory contributed to a renegotiation of subnational drug routes, or *plazas*, among the country's criminal groups. As Serrano highlights, "the weakening of presidential authority created a vacuum that was rapidly filled by both legitimate and illegitimate actors, including criminal groups" (Serrano, 2018, p. 54). It was in this context that the security and justice institutions confronted a real test of their abilities to meet the safety and justice requirements of the Mexican people instead of the dictatorial interests of a single-party regime (Bolaños, 2016, p. 100). Not surprisingly, the police and courts were ill equipped to contend with the new wave of insecurity unleashed by a growing and increasingly decentralised criminal threat.

The reconfiguration of the criminal space also coincided with global shifts in narcotics trafficking, and in short order, Colombian cartels, which had long controlled the drug supply chain of cocaine to the US market, found their international reach reduced in the face of dogged pursuit by law enforcement. Mexican drug-trafficking organisations identified in this shifting terrain an opportunity for consolidation and control of the trade, and in the late 1990s and early 2000s, these groups unleashed a violent campaign to exterminate or subdue competing drug clans in Mexican territory. The opening of the cocaine transhipment economy in Mexico raised the stakes for Mexican criminal groups, as profits surged five- to tenfold, and greater control of cocaine distribution enabled Mexican cartels to bribe police, military, and political actors at every level of government (Serrano, 2018, pp. 56–57). A

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[171] According to at least one analyst, the PRI even encouraged the military to participate in the country's illicit economies, as "[a] weak, rich, happy military was unlikely to unleash a coup" (Kleinfeld, 2018, p. 41).

windfall of profits also boosted the coercive capacity of the country's largest cartels, and criminal competition resulted in violence in places like Tijuana, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Juárez.

President Fox expressed a clear preference for sending federal police forces to contain drug violence and criminal activity, but major corruption allegations and lack of leadership in the police resulted in unimpressive achievements. By 2006, the internal dynamic in Mexico changed so dramatically that powerful and heavily armed drug cartels had begun to engage in direct confrontation with the state. The country's police forces were inept and in complete disarray, and the army was in crisis, having suffered more than 100,000 desertions during Fox's term (Kenny and Serrano, 2012d, p. 68). By the time Calderón came to power, it was clear that the only way to address citizen insecurity was reform of the country's security institutions, but one observer pondered, "The only tool left for the government to use against the cartels was the army. How do you reform the only institution that is capable of bringing the state back from the brink while accelerating its operations?" (Author interview with Vázquez Valencia, 2017).

The SSR effort undertaken by Calderón and supported via the Mérida Initiative entailed an unprecedented reconceptualization of Mexico's security and justice bodies. Despite massive investments and a newfound strategic direction, Mexico's SSR failed to improve in a substantial manner the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector over more than a decade of attempted modernisation and reorganisation. The indicators in Table 5.2 suggest a decline in public trust in the major institutions of the security sector and a worsening of crime data and victimisation. The number of abuses ascribed to state agents skyrocketed. Even though the Mexican justice system underwent a dramatic transition to an accusatorial system starting in 2008, the inability of justice officials to hold state actors to account, let alone tackle an unmanageable impunity rate, left many Mexicans feeling

pessimistic about the reforms.[172] One PRI official, who preferred to remain unnamed,

concluded, "Sadly, I admit that there have been zero results in improving security for

Mexicans over the past decade. I am very upset to recognise the reality of security in Mexico,

and I cannot accept a more active role in your study, which highlights this sad reality, due to

my love for the nation" (Author interview with a senior PRI official, Peña administration,

2017).

Effectiveness

Over the period of SSR, rates for most crimes in Mexico increased noticeably,

peaking around 2010 and 2011 and then plateauing at considerably higher rates than those

reported in 2007 (Escalante, 2009). This data is reflected in Indicators 15 to 22 of Chart 4.2.

Alarmingly, Mexico witnessed a surge in violent crimes such as homicide and kidnapping as

President Calderón declared a war on drug cartels, which simultaneously became embroiled

in a violent turf war from 2008 to 2012.[173] This upward trend continued even after the end of

the most intense cartel fighting, and in 2018, Mexico's homicide rate reached its highest level

since the tumultuous years of the Mexican Revolution (Olson et al., 2018). This contrasts

with Colombia, where murders and terrorism increased at the outset of Plan Colombia but

then steadily dropped off over the course of SSR. In fact, in Mexico there were nearly 10,000

more homicides reported in 2018 than in 2017, and kidnappings and extortions also rose,

even as organised crime offenses dropped off (Ángel, 2019; "Why Mexico's Murder Rate is

Soaring," 2018).[174] As in Colombia, when Mexican authorities intensified their campaign

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[172] As with most indicators of security and justice in Mexico, impunity varies by region. The Centre for Studies about Impunity and Justice (Centro de Estudios sobre Impunidad y Justicia) publishes an annual report focused on regional variation ("Índice Global de la Impunidad," 2017).
[173] The reported violent crime rate dropped by 2016, even as homicides reached a new high. The author is unable to determine the reason for this statistical inconsistency.
[174] According to Mexican authorities, the number of estimated kidnapping victims per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015 was 51, a drop from the levels experienced from 2012 to 2014 when the same statistic topped out at 103 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016a). These figures diverge dramatically from the number of

against organised crime starting in 2006, illicit businesses became riskier and costlier, and the reduced profitability of drug trafficking facilitated the cartels' expansion into other lucrative crimes. This disturbance to organised crime syndicates also affected the geographic reach and overall intensity of organised crime activity. High-profile and macabre massacres, which had become commonplace in heavily populated urban centres during the most intense years of the cartel wars, were rare in 2016. According to the Mexico Peace Index, the number of states with particularly visible and violent organised crime activity dropped from 12 in 2007 to three in 2016 (Vision of Humanity, 2017b). Even so, cartels retained significant social and political influence in some regions, and from 2007 to 2016, they nearly quadrupled poppy cultivation in their respective safe havens (Indicators 35 and 36, Table 5.2). A 2011 study of the RAND Corporation found that the Mexican security sector's capabilities to interdict drugs were very low, whereas the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capabilities of the military fared slightly better, ranking as "minimal but functioning" (Paul et al., 2011, p. xv).

Upticks in crime rates are consistent with increased victimisation in Mexico over the period of SSR (Indicators 15 and 16, Table 5.2). Whereas in the mid-2000s the number of crime victims per 100,000 inhabitants remained steady (just above 10,000), that figure nearly tripled by 2016, with 46.0 percent of Mexicans having fallen victim to crime or being related to a victim of crime. In 2016, more than 74.3 percent of Mexicans reported feeling unsafe in their states of residence (Indicator 13, Table 5.2), compared to 59.0 percent in 2007, and the perception of insecurity rose from 39.9 percent in 2008 to 48.1 percent in 2017 (Indicator 11, Table 5.2). The percentage of the population that identified insecurity and delinquency as the

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reported kidnapping victims, demonstrating the confusion of sorting crime statistics in Mexico. Farfán-Méndez notes that underreporting is the biggest problem in the design of effective crime reduction strategies (Olson et al., 2018). In the violent State of Guerrero, for instance, a mere 2 percent of crimes are reported to authorities and mostly only for the purposes of insurance claims, even though the Mexican government notes rampant extortion in the region.

country's most important problems corresponds with this mounting sense of insecurity over time (Indicator 12, Table 5.2). According to a 2016 government poll, 59.1 percent of the population perceived insecurity to be a paramount concern to other social problems, including unemployment, poverty, health, and corruption (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016a). Even with a reduction in violence perpetrated by organised crime since 2012, petty crimes in cities rose, driving a sense of anxiety over personal safety (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016b; Markovits, 2016).[175] Lettieri remarks, "[L]ocal crime has become more predatory in nature. As the balance of power tipped away from state authorities, smaller bands—affiliated to greater or lesser degrees with transnational trafficking organisations—aggressively expanded into kidnapping, extortion, and oil theft" (Lettieri, 2018). As in Colombia, private security firms filled the space left by overwhelmed security forces, and the industry has grown from 173 registered companies in 2005 to 3,977 in 2016 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, n.d.; Markovits, 2016).

Notwithstanding rising crime and an increasing public reliance on non-state security provision, public trust in the Mexican security forces did not change significantly over the period of analysis.[176] This data is displayed in Indicators 1 to 6 of Table 5.2. The armed forces remained the most trusted institutions in the country, according to government polling, and they only saw their popularity among Mexicans affected during the height of their activity against the cartels and in the aftermath of highly publicised human rights abuses (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016a). The Mexican Navy (including the Marine Corps), in particular, stands out among the security forces as the most trusted institution by both the public and political leadership, which has consistently leaned on the navy to carry

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[175] This trend may reflect, as well, a surge in violence associated with domestic drug dealing in Mexico (Weintraub, 2010, pp. 69–71). Drug consumption in Mexico increased dramatically from 2003 to 2017 ("Drug use in Mexico," 2017; Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 101).

[176] Wolff and Celorio Morayta contend that militarisation of the drug war fulfilled its original purpose to rally public opinion around the military, which proved essential to sustaining presidential authority, even though it was a "spectacular failure" in preventing drug trafficking (2011, p. 706).

out its most sensitive and daring operations. One human rights defender suggested that the military owes its popularity to a savvy public relations campaign that highlighted the armed forces' successes, whereas another political analyst asserted that the military's ability to remain above the partisan fray has given it a reputation as an impartial force in a polarised nation (Author interviews with Brewer, 2017; Furszyfer, 2017).[177]

Interoperability among the forces, however, remained low, and there has been a pervasive lack of trust between the army and the navy. Both institutions are reluctant to share intelligence or conduct joint missions, let alone coordinate with police forces. Their mistrust appears not to be unfounded, as international polling bodies recorded a notable decline in public trust in the police over the years of SSR (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016a; "Latin American Public Opinion Project," n.d., "Latinobarómetro," n.d.). Moreover, among the security forces, the absolute level of professionalism and restraint when dealing with suspects and members of the public plummeted (Indicators 9 and 10, Table 5.2). The number of civilians killed in relation to the number injured during confrontations with the armed forces and Federal Police, a figure known as the "lethality index," rose noticeably after 2007, so much so that Mexican authorities ceased reporting this data in 2014 (Schmitt and Ahmed, 2016).

Increased operational activity required an increase in force size, but the number of security force personnel in relation to the population of Mexico remained considerably lower than countries of comparable size and insecurity (Indicators 23 and 23, Table 5.2). Proportionally, the Colombian public security forces claimed more than twice the personnel of the Mexican forces in 2016. Higher standards have accompanied new recruitment strategies for the federal and state police forces, and the number of police per 100,000

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[177] Spending on advertising, recruitment, and public relations SEDENA in 2013 was 22,900 percent more than the figure for 2004; likewise, SEMAR's spending on public relations surged 10,000 percent during the same period (Centro Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez de Derechos Humanos, 2015).

inhabitants actually decreased slightly, perhaps a consequence of more stringent entry standards that have complicated recruitment efforts (Author interview with Rendón, 2018).[178] In response to higher recruitment criteria and in an effort to stamp out corruption, Mexican police agencies have accepted more women into their ranks (Indicators 25 and 26, Table 5.2), representing a much larger percentage of the police than in Colombia (Kahn, 2013). However, the percentage of women in the Mexican Armed Forces remained low and increased only slightly between 2007 and 2016 (Indicator 27, Table 5.2). Transit and community police forces have boosted recruitment of female officers especially, but because of the decentralised recruitment of local police forces, it is difficult to gauge the overall impact of these efforts to diversify the security sector nationwide.

Similarly, some subnational police forces made strides in improving relations with the citizenry through community policing initiatives, but the accomplishments of these forces had a negligible impact on the overall experience of citizen security. Ironically, some analysts argue that trying to expand these models or enforcing a national standard for municipal police forces might actually disrupt the successes of some community police, which derive their legitimacy to some degree from their local origins and identity (Author interview with Brewer, 2017). Building on the momentum of some local initiatives, the Peña administration, in an unprecedented move to tackle the root causes of crime and violence, reoriented federal funding toward crime prevention and social re-adaptation programmes starting in 2013. The newly inaugurated president, who had campaigned so pointedly against Mexico's drug war, conceived of this effort as a way to distinguish his security strategy from the militarised

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[178] Even so, the number of police per 100,000 inhabitants was 317 in 2017, which is roughly the global average. The problem in Mexico, according to one analyst, is not the quantity of police but rather the lack of professionalisation (Presentation by a security analyst (academia), 2017d). One researcher highlighted that background checks and polygraphs have been applied to police forces across the country and especially at the federal level, but the Mexican government has been unable to muster the political will to organise an independent police evaluation body (Author interview with Fondevila, 2017). Prior to Calderón's reforms, police were only paid on average US$600 per month, US$250 short of what was deemed adequate for meeting basic necessities (O'Neil, 2013, p. 267)

approach of his predecessor. In 2013, President Peña assigned an annual budget of US$20 million to implement crime prevention strategies and established a federal-level Subsecretariat for Prevention and Citizen Participation (Subsecretaría de Prevención y Participación Ciudadana).

Disappointingly, clientelistic forces hijacked the plan early in its implementation, and instead of focusing on the most at-risk municipalities in the country, the PRI's leadership ensured that the Subsecretariat spread its limited resources across the national territory to more than 100 municipalities (Author interview with Rendón, 2018). Furthermore, the effort did not involve some of the most important municipal actors in the implementation of the top-down strategy. The federal government only committed resources to local organisations engaged in prevention if they could match government contributions—a requirement that, in turn, excluded most municipal initiatives from the federal programme (Author interview with Ley, 2018). One former employee of the Subsecretariat reproved, "There was no evidence in the country that a national initiative can have results at the local level without involving all of the local actors…. The prevention office was just paying lip service to a problem" (Author interview with Mendoza Bautista, 2018). The dispersal of resources without any evidence-based impact analysis debilitated the first federal programme to take prevention seriously, and corruption at the state level resulted in gross mismanagement of funds. In the face of these challenges, the prevention office achieved very little during its short time in existence, and the Subsecretariat's budget plummeted to zero by 2017 (Author interview with Rendón, 2018). The former Director General for Interagency Coordination of the Subsecretariat, Eunice Rendón, lamented, "Prevention never became a state policy. It remained a presidential policy initiative, and people did not take it seriously" (Author interview with Rendón, 2018).

As in Colombia, the armed forces boast a long tradition of community-oriented service provision, but SEDENA and SEMAR engage in civic action in a more ad hoc fashion

than their Colombian counterparts do. Camp (2005, p. 101) notes that the Mexican military's deployment to outlying communities to deliver health education, infrastructure improvements, medical services, and food aid did not originate as a counterinsurgency measure but rather as a component of the military's revolutionary tradition. Dating as far back as 1921, the government has justified the military's involvement in development whenever such activities have had some connection, however vague, to military objectives, and the armed forces have historically utilised their humanitarian and disaster relief work to boost their public image. Nevertheless, SEDENA has not conducted systematic impact analysis of its interventions or adopted a violence prevention methodology. As such, unlike Colombia's AI, the military's civic action should not be misconstrued as a commitment to crime and violence prevention.

Systemic shortcomings in the criminal justice system exacerbated the frustration felt by many Mexicans as the government pivoted away from prevention strategies. Colombia and Mexico reflect comparable handicaps relating to the infrastructure and functioning of the sector. Like Colombia, Mexico registered an absolute decline in trust in the justice system after the transition to the accusatorial legal model. Whereas 50.6 percent of the population expressed some confidence in Mexican justice in 2006, that figure had dwindled to 36.5 percent by 2017 (Indicator 7, Table 5.2) ("Latin American Public Opinion Project," n.d.).[179] One researcher stressed, "Prosecutors are entirely dependent on the political agendas of state governors. There has never been a transition to democracy in these institutions, and their structures and values are autocratic. Many also have strong ties to organised crime" (Author interview with Ansolabehere, 2017). Mexicans expressed an increasingly negative perception of judicial independence, even as the legal system transitioned from closed hearings to oral,

[179] Curiously, government polling indicates a reverse trend, with support for the judiciary, the Public Ministry, and the Attorney General's Office peaking in 2017, but this seems suspect in light of the harsh criticism levelled by most of the author's interviewees (Indicators 7 and 8, Table 5.2) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016a).

transparent trials and following a high-profile purge of federal prosecutors during the Calderón government (Indicator 14, Table 5.4). Although the federal courts, which are responsible for organised crime offences, grew in their independence, state and municipal courts, which handle the bulk of cases nationwide, have proven to be especially prone to improper political or criminal influence (ISSAT, 2015).

Furthermore, the average of state-level magistrates and judges in 2016 was 3.5 per 100,000 inhabitants, which was proportionally fewer than half of the number in Colombia (*Global Impunity Index Mexico*, 2016, p. 14). The international average stands at 16.2 for every 100,000 inhabitants. The incompetence of the courts to process evidence and issue verdicts in a timely and transparent matter contributes to low reporting rates for crime and, thus, to rampant impunity. As Derbez Bautista remarks, "[i]mpunity is a variable that is the source and consequence of other national problems such as insecurity, violence, corruption, economic development, and even social inequality" (*Global Impunity Index Mexico*, 2016, p. 7). A 2016 report revealed some especially dire statistics: only seven out of every 100 crimes were reported to governmental authorities (*Global Impunity Index Mexico*, 2016, p. 14). This resonates with similar data made available by the 2015 results of a government poll, which found that at least 93.7 percent of all crimes committed in Mexico went unreported, a number known as the *cifra negra*, or "dark figure of crime" (Indicators 28 to 30, Table 5.2) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016a).[180] The report also pointed out that the overall number of perpetrated crimes resulting in convictions was at 4.4 percent (*Global Impunity Index Mexico*, 2016, p. 14).[181] When evaluated nationally and by region, the official impunity figure, taken alongside the *cifra negra*, suggests that the nearly 99 percent of crimes committed in 2016 went unpunished.

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[180] On the perceived futility of citizen denunciations in Mexico, see Schedler, 2015, pp. 195–199.
[181] Only ten states have an impunity level better than the national average, and 24 states are within 10 percent from the lowest ranking state, according to the Global Impunity Index.

The reform of the Mexican criminal code has relieved some pressure on the penitentiary system, as the number of pre-trial detainees steadily decreased since 2007 (Indicator 32, Table 5.2). Nevertheless, the percentage of inmates without conviction in the first instance stayed at 35.7 percent (*Global Impunity Index Mexico*, 2016, p. 14). The cumbersome caseload, coupled with the sluggish pace of the courts, put the average wait time for trial at nearly two years (ISSAT, 2015). In 2011, the Mexican Congress introduced pre-trial release measures for detainees who could post bond, but as of 2015, more than 50 percent of all detainees had still not faced trial (Ross, 2015). The burden that these circumstances place on the country's penal system is immense. The construction of new federal prisons has reduced prison overcrowding at the federal level, but because Mexican law separates federal from state jurisdictions based on the crime committed, the National Commission for Human Rights (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH) found that 33.8 percent of the facilities nationwide still suffered from overpopulation (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos, 2015). As of 2016, overcrowding in prisons lingered around 30 percent, double the worldwide average (*Global Impunity Index Mexico*, 2016, p. 14). As in many countries in Latin America, Mexican prisons are notorious dens of "murders, corruption, and crime," and a 2011 report by the CNDH concluded that crime syndicates controlled 60 percent of the country's penitentiary facilities (ISSAT, 2015; "Murders, corruption and crime," 2017). The increase in jail breaks is the most visible indicator of the level of control exerted by organised crime, as the number of escaped prisoners increased tenfold from 2007 to 2011 (Guerrero, 2013, p. 130).

As this panorama suggests, the effectiveness of the Mexican security sector shifted very little over the period of analysis. Rates for most crimes surged, public perceptions of security deteriorated, preventive measures failed to figure into the national agenda in any meaningful way, and the sweeping judicial reform did not furnish a reduction in impunity or

greater efficiency. By some estimations, Mexico's security sector was more disorganised in 2016 than it was at the outset of the reform effort, and security, at least in the minds of most Mexicans, only worsened (Author interview with a senior security official, Calderón administration, 2018). One US official familiar with Mexico's insecurity put it this way: "The security sector in Mexico is broken. There is no joint staff, no civilian minister of defence, no integrated ministry for coordination among the forces…. The leadership of the sector is in a turf war for influence—all while the Mexican people suffer" (Author interview with a senior US defence official, 2017a).

Accountability

Unlike the Colombian case, Mexico's drawn-out transition to democracy delayed many of the structural reforms that would have engendered greater institutional oversight of the security sector. Whereas Colombia's 1991 Constitution, which resulted from a political compromise with several demobilised insurgent groups, overhauled the institutional architecture of the Colombian government, Mexican political liberalisation was more incremental and involved the gradual introduction of mechanisms to check the autonomy of the security sector (J.J. Romero, 2017).[182] Despite the judicial reform that took place from 2008 to 2016, Mexican courts struggled to curb the excesses of the country's security forces, and executive and legislative bodies have not yet managed to exert their oversight privileges in ways that consistently and forcefully curb the autonomy of the military and police.[183] One researcher highlighted, "The reforms that are occurring are structural but do not have a democratic component because there still isn't an institution that is above the rest and

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[182] The autonomy of the military was particularly acute during the Fox administration. Fox attempted to appoint a Cabinet Coordinator, Rubén Aguilar, through whom he anticipated issuing orders to SEDENA and SEMAR, but leaders in both institutions insisted that they were only constitutionally bound to take orders directly from the president (Author interview with a researcher from Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, 2018).

[183] For a comprehensive legal survey of SSR and justice reform in Mexico, see Contreras López, 2014.

monitors corruption. Mexico is responding to a crisis, not conducting SSR" (Author interview with Furszyfer, 2017).

These inadequacies were sustained against a backdrop of generous and largely unrestricted spending on the security sector starting in 2007, as displayed in Indicators 19 to 24 of Table 5.4. The major ministries and agencies of the Mexican security sector benefitted from a windfall of resources over the period of SSR, despite no concurrent increase in oversight of spending, but contrary to the Colombian case, the spending growth for the military and police significantly outpaced budget expansion for the justice sector. This supports the perception that Mexican authorities emphasised the capture of criminals over the delivery of justice. According to Eduardo Bohórquez, the head of the nongovernmental organisation Transparencia México, the repressive apparatus of the state has grown in recent years, and the judicial infrastructure exists, but the PGR and its team of prosecutors struggled to understand the new system (Author interview with Bohórquez, 2018).[184] The rollout of the 2008 justice reform over a period of eight years required generous funding to standardise protocols across the country, create alternative mechanisms for punishment, and retrain judicial authorities on the new accusatorial system, but most criminals have remained beyond the reach of justice.

Although the new justice institutions were still in their early years of operation at the time of writing, preliminary perceptions were promising. In a 2016 survey of justice sector workers, 90.0 percent indicated that the new system generated more trust in authorities, and 93.0 percent believed that it would increase the speed of judicial processes (Cortés et al., 2016, p. viii). More than 90 percent of judges, prosecutors, and public defenders also agreed that the new oral proceedings provide for more effective, transparent proceedings.

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[184] In Ciudad Juárez, the municipal police detained on average 600 individuals per month during 2017, of whom the district attorney's office only processed between 70 and 80 cases per month. Of those cases, only 10 on average resulted in formal case proceedings, and only three on average resulted in a sentencing (Author interview with a representative of the Citizens' Observatory for Prevention, Security, and Justice, 2018).

Nonetheless, the new system has tended to process misdemeanours more efficiently, while having negligible impact on dealing with more serious crimes (*¿Cómo se juzga en el Estado de México?*, 2016). Additionally, justice sector officials continued to rely on the corrupt practices of the old system, including bribery and political interference, and traditional legal mechanisms such as pre-charge detention (*arraigo*) that violate human rights (Meyer, 2010, p. 4; "Solicita ONU a Senado eliminar figuras de arraigo y prisión preventiva," 2018).[185] Civil society organisations have also denounced the lack of transparency in the dispersal of funding to accomplish justice reform (México Evalúa, 2017, p. 45). Additionally, the Mexican government never committed to a full overhaul of the PGR when it enacted a 2014 constitutional reform that replaced the PGR with a new National Prosecutor's Office (Fiscalía General de Justicia, FGJ). As of 2019, the Attorney General continued to be an executive appointee, a factor that undermines judicial independence.[186] The Mexican Congress also neglected to pass the constitutional and legislative reforms needed to establish and staff an independent FGJ, instead automatically transferring PGR personnel to the FGJ without retraining them (Suárez-Enríquez and Indacochea, 2018, p. 12).[187]

Federal spending on the armed forces and on public security measures also burgeoned alongside increases in judiciary spending, and the Federal Police, in particular, experienced impressive growth in the early years of SSR, as its budget increased by more than 400 percent by 2011. The Calderón administration sought to make the Federal Police the cornerstone of its security strategy against organised crime and devoted considerable resources to the recruitment and organisation of a national-level police force. However, as

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[185] One observer noted that 80 percent of district attorneys are incapable of passing a basic penal law exam or debating in oral trials (Author interview with J.J. Romero, 2017).

[186] Article 102 of the Constitution transferred the power and responsibilities of the PGR to the FGJ, rendering the latter body the new guarantor of a "clientelistic network" that starts with the president (Author interview with J.J. Romero, 2017).

[187] For technical data about the early results of the transition to an accusatorial justice system nationwide, see México Evalúa, 2017.

explored in Chapters 7 and 8, political agendas derailed initiatives to centralise and standardise policing, and the military stayed on as the preferred federal security institution to combat organised crime. Given pervasive corruption among many local police forces, there was considerable distrust among the nation's security services—so much so that when the armed forces or Federal Police entered municipalities, they often detained the local police and seized their weapons before conducting operations (Author interview with Fondevila, 2017). The fact that many police work at the behest of organised crime also implies that central political authority over the police is weak. In one instance, the public prosecutor for Mexico City received a complaint from a group of civil society actors denouncing death threats issued by investigative police officers. The prosecutor's response inspired little confidence in the state's capacity to protect its citizens: he noted that he could merely sit down and negotiate with the judicial police forces but that he did not actually control them. His recommendation to the threatened individuals was that they leave Mexico—and quickly (Author interview with Fondevila, 2017).

Similarly, legislative oversight of the security sector has been scarcely applied (Loeza Reyes and Pérez-Levesque, 2010, p. 139). The two houses of the Congress operate commissions to investigate and check the autonomy of federal agencies, but for the armed forces and Federal Police, oversight in Congress usually only extends to matters of policy, not budgeting or contracting (Author interview with Bohórquez, 2018). The military budget increased year after year from 2007 to 2016, yet the security commissions in Congress never published findings linking the budget increases to improvements in citizen security (Author interview with a researcher from Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, 2018). Congress also lacked mechanisms to sanction security services accused of corruption or human rights abuses (Author interview with Fondevila, 2017). Beyond the approval of a budget for federal security institutions, there has been no transparent way of determining how

SEDENA and SEMAR divide and spend their budgets.[188] One analyst noted, "The Commission of Public Security (Comisión de Seguridad Pública) serves a mere supervisory role. It rarely has an active role in policy formulation, and it only meets to discuss how bills are to be presented to the Senate floor" (Author interview with a political analyst (government), 2018). Another proclaimed, "The Bicameral Security Commission does not have any real power. There is zero accountability. Article 27 of the Constitution asserts that state security requests must first be presented to the Commission and then forwarded to the president for approval, but that just does not happen" (Author interview with J.J. Romero, 2017).

Furthermore, the military often conceals intelligence, personnel information, and operational details from legislators and the public on national security grounds, even though Mexico's Transparency Law (Ley Federal de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública de 2015) is on paper one of the most advanced in the world (Author interviews with Bohórquez, 2018 and Brewer, 2017; México Evalúa, 2017, p. 11). In 2013, army leadership even refused to release information about its purchase contracts for boots, citing a fear that making such information public would allow criminals to determine the total force size. That being said, one observer indicated that civilian leadership in both the executive and the legislature have increasingly required the military to release privileged information and that the debates over the Interior Security Law (Ley de Seguridad Interior de 2017) had a moderate impact on legislative scrutiny of the security sector (Author interview with a political analyst (government), 2018).

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[188] SEDENA retains a corporate structure and operates its own banking system and productive industries, such as livestock, to raise funds for its operating budget. This leads to a "certain informality about raising money" to sponsor reforms (Author interview with Lieutenant Colonel, US Army, 2017). In 2013, SEDENA justified its expansion into the construction industry, completing contracts worth more than US$250 million, on the pretext that in many regions it was too violent or dangerous for construction companies to operate (Aranda, 2016).

Given this lack of transparency, it is not surprising that SSR did not result in improvements of the public's perception of the accountability of the security forces (Indicators 2 to 6, Table 5.4). From 2011 to 2016, the public perception of corruption in the army and navy actually increased, while it remained steady for the Federal Police.[189] According to one source, 62 percent of police forces had links to drug-trafficking organisations, and 57 percent of weapons issued to the police were used in illegal activities (Watt and Zepeda, 2012, p. 202). The high perception of corruption may relate, as well, to an inescapable fact that several human rights cases involving the military and police have yet to be resolved. Public complaints filed against members of the security forces for suspected human rights violations rose from 2,843 in 2007 to more than 7,000 by 2015 (Indicator 1, Table 5.4). This decision to deploy soldiers in domestic security roles resulted in more sustained contact between a military untrained in policing and the civilian population. Between 2006 and 2009, SEDENA experienced a 1,000 percent increase in human rights complaints (Moloeznik, 2013, p. 78). In the lexicon of the Mexican government, human rights violations have been more often than not identified as "collateral damage" (Benítez Manaut, 2014, p. 60).

Reports of torture by the security forces increased by 600 percent between 2003 and 2013, and kidnappings and disappearances implicating members of the military rose since their expanding involvement in the drug war starting in 2006 (Lakhani and Tirado, 2016).[190] One of the most high-profile incidents occurred in the dangerous State of Guerrero on September 26, 2014, when six students from a teachers' training school were killed and

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[189] The perceived corruption indices included in Table 5.4 refer to the percentage of respondents who believed that the institutions referenced were "corrupt" or "somewhat corrupt" (Bajraktari et al., 2006; Centre for Democracy and Governance, 1998; Kinzelbach and Cole, 2007).

[190] One human rights defender explained that, although the number of complaints of human rights abuses rose, the security forces adopted a rhetorical seriousness about being on the right side of the law with respect to human rights (Author interview with Fernández Aguilar, 2018). Illegal detention remained the most common abuse committed, but torture, as well, was a problem among prosecutors and other criminal investigative actors who still regarded it as the most "efficient" way of securing a confession and a conviction (González, 2019).

another 43 students disappeared as they travelled to Mexico City to attend a protest. The

resulting investigation report does not specify the armed actors responsible, but one survivor

maintains that municipal police forces, the mayor of the town of Iguala, and the army

colluded with an organised crime group to murder and dispose of the students' bodies

("Testimonio: sobreviviente," 2014). The Ayotzinapa scandal resulted in intense scrutiny of

the security forces—and the political actors who defend them—in a way that resembles the

aftermath of the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre, in which the Mexican military assassinated as

many as 300 civilian protesters in Mexico City.[191] As of 2018, investigations into the more

recent scandal have not assigned culpability to the security sector. However, the ruling of a

lower Mexican court in June 2018 ordered the state to re-open the case to determine military

and police involvement in the incident and urged the Mexican judicial authorities to deliver a

true and independent ruling on the matter (Deutsche Welle, 2018).

Although composite numbers of extrajudicial murders at the hands of state actors

remain publicly unavailable, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or

Arbitrary Executions noted in 2016 that "extrajudicial killings and excessive use of force by

security officers persisted" (Heyns, 2016, p. 1). Notoriously, the Federal Police executed 22

civilians in a confrontation in Tanhuato, Michoacán in 2016, and in Tlatlaya, State of

México, army soldiers killed 22 civilians in a 2014 massacre. As of July 2016, the CNDH

had filed some 10,000 denunciations of abuse by the army since 2006, finding that in more

than 100 cases military personnel committed serious human rights violations (Human Rights

Watch, 2018).[192] Carlsen asserts, "The pattern that emerged clearly showed that human rights

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[191] Camp summarises, "The consequences [of Tlatelolco] can be broadly categorised: altered views of the military toward civilian leadership, altered views of the political leadership toward the military, the views of younger officers toward older officers within the military, and changed views of the role of the military in Mexican society" (1992, p. 28).

[192] Congressman Waldo Fernández González holds that the military is not nearly as abusive as the media presents it to be. He stated that only 0.03 percent of all military operations in the country result in a reported abuse and that the military's leadership needs to do a better job of defending the institution and boosting its public image (Author interview with Fernández González, 2018).

violations are a strategic and structural part of Mexico's security policy" (Carlsen, 2018, p. 76). Accountability for most military and police abuses was elusive, and many have been shielded from prosecution because of country's judicial incapacity. Federal prosecutors opened 217 homicide investigations between December 2012 and January 2018, obtaining convictions in only 4 cases (Wilkinson, 2018). President Calderón purged 284 police commanders from all 31 states and the Federal District and administered vetting criteria and polygraphs to their replacements, but given the persistence of old practices, the levels of abuse and corruption in the security sector did not drop noticeably (Weintraub, 2010, p. 70).[193]

Part of the problem can be traced to the fact that the armed forces, while technically subordinate to the president's authority, have still never transitioned to civilian leadership or the development of a professional civilian bureaucracy to manage the planning and organisation of the defence institutions. Additionally, one legislative effort, the Interior Security Law, has been the subject of much debate in Mexico for its perceived attempt to enshrine into law protections for the armed forces. Passed on December 21, 2017, the law sought to provide legal cover for the military's continued use in law enforcement roles, for which the military had not previously enjoyed a constitutional mandate, but civil society actors and even the CNDH insisted that the legislation intended to militarise the country and assure impunity for military excesses committed in the line of duty.[194] President Peña acquiesced to demands that the Supreme Court have an opportunity to rule on the constitutionality of the measure prior to its imposition, which resulted in the law's repeal in

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[193] Mexico City, previously known as the Federal District (Distrito Federal), became the thirty-second state of Mexico's federation in January 2016. For a critical view of the PAN's legacy on the human rights front, see Aguayo Quezada and Treviño Rangel, 2010.

[194] The Interior Security Law sought to put limits on the period of intervention by the armed forces to a maximum of one year unless the executive could demonstrate that certain conditions demanded the continued presence of the military in a given state. Indeed, the Mexican Constitution prohibits the military from performing any public functions during peace time—a restriction that civilian leaders have historically ignored (Peschard-Sverdrup, 2005, p. xii).

late 2018. Regardless of public opposition to the measure, though, the Mexican Army still had a public order presence in 27 states at the close of 2017 (Author interview with a political analyst (government), 2018).

One area in which the Mexican government made some progress over the period of analysis was in complying with a 2011 Supreme Court ruling that required military members suspected of human rights violations be tried in civilian courts. Starting as early as 2004, the Supreme Court began a process of reinterpretation of Article 57 of the Code of Military Justice, which protected the prerogative of the military to try its personnel beyond the jurisdiction of civilian courts thanks to a mechanism known as the *fuero militar*. The Court's thinking evolved on this issue partially as a consequence of extensive mobilisation by civil society (Author interview with Brewer, 2017).[195] However, the real impetus for change came in the wake of the IACHR's rulings in the cases of Castañeda Gutman and Radilla Pacheco, which laid blame on the state in two instances of forced disappearance. For one researcher, they represented a "before and after" in the Mexican human rights community, and in 2014, Congress revamped the Code of Military Justice, stipulating that abuses committed by members of the military against civilians be processed by the civilian criminal justice system to prevent bias (Author interview with Ansolabehere, 2017). Although the military code retained jurisdiction involving abuses committed by military members against other military members and still reserved vast powers of search and seizure to military prosecutors and judges, the removal of the *fuero* has been one of the unmistakably positive advances made with respect to the security sector's accountability.[196]

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[195] One expert commented that the *fuero* took so long to challenge because there was a tacit pact between the military leadership and civilian politicians to preserve the status quo. Politicians in Mexico benefit from judicial protections via a constitutionally prescribed *fuero*, as well, and the people protected by it were leery of generating national debate about the *fuero militar* for fear that it might call into question their own privilege (Author interview with Bohórquez, 2018).

[196] According to Poiré, Calderón and the military's leadership agreed from the outset that human rights corrections needed to be a part of the institutional reform of the military and agreed to carry out the recommendations of the IACtHR and administer reparations for a number of high-profile cases (Author interview with Poiré, 2017).

Though these changes have moved security sector governance in a positive direction, one civil society representative concluded that as a practical matter the removal of the *fuero* has not resulted in reductions in impunity or heavier sentences (Author interview with a researcher from Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, 2018). Another concurred, stating that "the modifications to the *fuero* exist only on paper; it is still nearly impossible to prosecute members of the military for the abuses they committed" (Author interview with Isacson, 2017). In fact, the civilian judges have tended to be equally lenient in human rights cases as the military jurisdiction (Kyle and Reiter, 2013, p. 400). Given that prosecutorial teams are dependencies of the presidency or state governorships, they have often defended the preferences of the executive, which has historically obstructed investigations against members of the security sector.

Another major impediment to justice more broadly is that state investigations into human rights abuses have been under resourced. Poorly trained and overburdened local judicial investigators have confronted great difficulty in collecting admissible evidence and building judicial cases. Human rights organisations that help conduct investigations and litigate cases are equally constrained by limited resources and expertise, meaning that only the most emblematic cases make it to trial (Author interview with a researcher from Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, 2018).[197] One researcher remarked that no institution in Mexico is capable of taking on such an intense judicial burden (Author interview with Ansolabehere, 2017). Similarly, in June 2018, the IACHR found the Mexican government's response to the country's most emblematic human rights case, the students of Ayotzinapa, to suffer from "fragmentation of the [judicial] process in a way that hinders the

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[197] Of the more than 300 national-level human rights organisations in Mexico, roughly 50 employ legal staffs to litigate cases. Of these, the three most active organisations have legal teams with no more than five lawyers on staff (Author interview with a researcher from Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, 2018).

investigation and does not permit a complete inquiry of the case" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2018, p. 8).

In accordance with the 2011 Mexican constitutional reform on human rights, the Mexican government increased the mandatory training of military and police forces on human rights protections (Indicator 15, Table 5.4) (Author interview with Fernández Aguilar, 2018; García Castillo, 2015). However, the Mexican government reported record numbers of abuse complaints in 2015, and the 275,000-strong army dismissed on average fewer than 100 soldiers per year for improper conduct (Indicator 16, Table 5.4).[198] Additionally, the security sector's purported intimidation of civil society has not abated, and in from 2015 to 2016, the military and police services conducted more than 900 arbitrary detentions of human rights defenders (Indicator 12, Table 5.4) (Anaya Muñoz, 2012).[199] In 2014, 57.8 percent of Mexicans considered grave human rights violations by the police and army in Mexico to be frequent (Schedler, 2015, p. 183). Attacks on and murders of human rights defenders and journalists nationwide also increased during the Peña presidency, and in 2017, Mexico became the most dangerous country in the world to practice journalism outside of a warzone (Indicators 10, 11, and 13; Table 5.4) (Cosgrove, 2017).[200] Rodríguez Luna remarks, "The risks to journalism and freedom of expression in Mexico are expressed in different ways. There is no doubt that the agents of the state and organised crime groups are the main actors…. Both exercise control over information through violence, corruption, and co-optation" (Rodríguez Luna, 2018, p. 108). Media self-censorship in states wracked by violence and crime has been pervasive, and in this context, non-governmental actors who

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[198] More than 1,000 army members, some of whom present conduct trouble or face investigations into their involvement in abuses, desert the ranks of the institution annually ("Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional," n.d.).
[199] As the edited volume by Shirk et al. (2014) highlights, state-civil society relations vary dramatically across the national territory and, in some regions, are characterised by a high degree of cooperation and even goodwill.
[200] The Mexican media does not have a long tradition of criticising security sector actors, especially not the military. The first instances of major criticism of the military dates to SEDENA's suppression of the EZLN rebellion in Chiapas in 1994 and 1995, when the media published commentary critical of the military's excesses and actively sought out victims of army abuses (Camp, 2005, p. 39).

expose uncomfortable and unfavourable truths about the state do so only at great risk to their own lives (ISSAT, 2015; Reyna García, 2018).

As in Colombia, human rights protections took centre stage in discussions surrounding US assistance via the Mérida Initiative, but US pressure in the case of Mexico appears not to have been as significant a factor in changing the security sector's approach to human rights. Sergio Aguayo, one of the country's leading human rights defenders, insisted, "The human rights protocols related to [Mérida Initiative aid] are ill-defined and ambiguous…. The US government puts money toward a reform that all parties know will not work, and Mexico accepts the money knowing that it will not necessarily be successful in improving human rights" (Author interview with Aguayo, 2017). Leahy vetting applied equally to Mexican military and police units receiving US funding and training, and each year the US Department of State conditioned 15 percent of Mérida Initiative funds on Mexican compliance with international human rights standards.[201] However, given Mexican sensitivities to violations of sovereignty, President Calderón rejected US proposals to "certify" Mexico in exchange for resources and training. Instead, the US and Mexican governments established a series of human rights dialogues that involved civil society actors and representatives of the security sector in the publication of an annual report to inform US decision-making on the annual release of funds to Mexico (Finkenbusch, 2017).[202] The practice of convening roundtables subsided after the early years of the Mérida Initiative, but

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[201] In contrast to Colombia, where the US Embassy refused to work with units found to have committed human rights abuses, in Mexico the US Department of State pushed for the establishment of a remediation process by which "tainted units" could deliver justice for abuses and thereafter re-establish ties with the US government (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2017).

[202] The US Congress initially proposed retaining the right to withhold 25 percent of the Mérida funds if the Mexican government failed to deliver on the following four human rights conditions: the establishment of a commission to process complaints filed against police, an independent monitoring mechanism, the investigation of all military and police involved in human rights abuses by civilian judicial authorities, and the prohibition of torture to obtain confessions (Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, p. 673). However, the reaction of Mexican authorities against "interventionist" manoeuvres succeeded in limiting the scope of US human rights conditions (Velásquez and Schiavon, 2009, p. 94). The Mexican government argued that the US government's contribution of US$400 million, less than 10 percent of Mexico's own expenditures in the counterdrug fight, was too little to warrant such an audacious demand (Weintraub, 2010, p. 74).

civil society organisations continued to submit monthly reports to the US Department of State—sometimes to considerable effect—into 2018.

In September 2010, the Department of State retained US$26 million until Mexico made progress on increasing transparency and decreasing impunity within the security sector, and in 2015, the US government withheld a nominal yet symbolic US$5 million in aid following the Ayotzinapa massacre.[203] The Executive Director of the Americas Division of Human Rights Watch José Miguel Vivanco remarked, "This is unprecedented. [The Department of State] has been systematically reluctant to use the leverage provided by law. What they have tended to emphasise is keeping the bilateral relationship as the principal objective, and human rights normally takes a back seat" (Malkin and Ahmed, 2017). This revocation of aid sent a strong message to Mexican leaders that the eyes of the international community were fixed squarely on the government's willingness to deliver justice in extreme cases of violence and abuse. One observer, in fact, asserted that the US Embassy's signalling that Mexico failed to meet governance targets had a direct impact on public opinion, which had the real potential "to force the hand of the political class toward compliance" (Author interview with Vázquez Valencia, 2017). However, another analyst flatly noted that human rights conditionality has not resulted in system-wide changes in Mexico (Author interview with a researcher from Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, 2018).

Overall, the Mexican government made minor progress on cultivating the accountability of the security sector. The main accomplishment of the reforms enacted over the decade of analysis was the reassignment of jurisdiction for military human rights abuses to the civilian criminal courts, but corruption, inexperience with the new justice system, and bad investigative practices have slowed the momentum in processing tens of thousands of

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[203] Calderón responded to the first retention of funds by submitting legislation to strengthen the National Commission of Human Rights and to transfer jurisdiction of military abuses of human rights to civilian courts (Negroponte, 2013, p. 158).

cases of crime and human rights violations.[204] The decentralised nature of policing in Mexico made it nearly impossible for political authorities to standardise oversight of subnational forces, and Mexico's Congress until recently kept matters of security at the periphery of its legislative agenda. These deficiencies and a culture of secrecy in the security sector fed staggering levels of impunity, and absent any real consequences for crime and abuse, security officials continued to employ intimidation tactics against civil society and the media. Predictably, violence and corruption were the most important themes of the 2018 presidential race, and although outsider Andrés Manuel López Obrador was most vocal in calling for a radical purge and reform of the national security infrastructure, his competitors coincided with him in raising the profile of accountability as a top electoral issue ("Corrupción y seguridad," 2018).

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been to determine the extent of divergence between the evolution of security sector governance in Colombia and Mexico over at least a decade of SSR in each case. For both elements of security sector governance, effectiveness and accountability, the Colombian security sector demonstrated improvements, and by the conclusion of Plan Colombia, the security sector exhibited an enhanced ability to provide for citizen security, even though its answerability to the law and to civilian oversight continued to be inconsistent. Since 2011, the Colombian legal system has managed to sanction errant and abusive elements of the security sector, albeit cautiously, but renewed threats to civil society activism warrant scepticism concerning the security sector's overall accountability. The Colombian case is a moderate success when understood within the broader literature on

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[204] On failed proposals to reform the security forces during the Calderón government, see Piñyero, 2010, pp. 164–165.

SSR and offers valuable lessons for the work on "second-generation SSR." In Mexico, the security sector was little more effective at delivering citizen security in 2017 than it was in 2007, and although some modifications to the military justice system occurred, the judiciary and legislature proved unable to assert institutional authority over the security services. Civil society, as well, faced increasing limits on its ability to hold the security sector account and, as in Colombia, could stand to receive much improved protection from the Mexican state. Simply put, Mexico represents a failure of SSR. Given the divergent trends with respect to security sector governance between Colombia and Mexico, the remaining chapters of this study identify three key factors that contributed to disparate results: private sector support for SSR, party polarisation, and the centralisation of the security bureaucracy.

Chapter 6: Bringing in Big Business: The Role of the Private Sector in Forging Support for SSR

This chapter focuses on the first independent variable examined in this study that helps explain contrasting outcomes in Colombia and Mexico for SSR: private sector support for SSR. Although the SSR literature highlights the importance of civil society involvement in reform initiatives, scholars have devoted relatively little attention to the specific role of the private sector in this regard (Caparini, 2010; Gordon, 2014; Knight, 2009; Kümmel, 2003; Loada and Moderan, 2015). Most of the treatment of the subject touches on the outsourcing of SSR to development and security companies and on the inability of state sponsors of SSR to enforce accountability of privatised interventions (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2006; Mancini, 2005; Perito, 2009; Puck, 2017). The SSR literature has scarcely addressed the needs of economic elites from the "human security" perspective. There is also a well-established body of literature on collective political action and on how big business organises to support broader social goals.[205] However, researchers tend to focus on state welfare programmes and seldom address the logic behind elite support for a public good like security.

Scholars are only just beginning to explore systematically the role of the private sector in supporting citizen security strategies (Flores-Macías, 2014; Moncada, 2016; Pearce, 2018; Rodríguez-Franco, 2016). According to recent scholarship on the topic, business tends to prioritise a larger and more professional police and military presence when the state is unable to establish order in economically vital spaces (Moncada, 2016, pp. 95, 185).[206] Where governments and big business operate in isolation due to historically low linkages between the two sectors, the probability of collaboration on security policy is low due to a lack of

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[205] Boies, 1989; Jacomet, 2005; Martin and Swank, 2012; Mitchell et al., 1997; Olson, Jr., 1971; Ozer and Lee, 2009.

[206] Business refers to the formal sector of for-profit enterprises that engage in the sale of goods and services. The term "big business" refers to the top economic echelon consisting of large profit-making corporations that act as an interest group in the public policymaking process.

negotiating mechanisms and scant trust; conversely, collaborative government-business

relations typically result in a united front that reinforces shared policy preferences to confront

insecurity (Moncada, 2016, p. 19). In this view, the density of linkages between political

authorities and private sector interests determine capacity for governance (Cammett, 2007;

Maxfield and Schneider, 1997; Walton, 1977). Indeed, Jackson (2018, p. 4) notes that the

influence of local elites on shaping the direction and implementation of reforms is a crucial

frontier in the SSR literature that is, as yet, woefully under-researched.

In Colombia and Mexico, the level of cohesion among economic and political elites

differed at the outset of SSR, contributing to disparate levels of private sector support for

national public security initiatives. Whereas in Colombia public-private cooperation on SSR

represented an evolutionary step in an already close relationship between economic and

political elites, Mexican economic and political elites tended to operate in distinct spheres—a

factor that undermined big business' support for federal-led SSR. Furthermore, the cases of

Colombia and Mexico diverge with respect to whether financial elites perceived SSR to be

the best means of providing for citizen security and over how important citizen security was

for business operations (Enders et al., 2006; Frey et al., 2007; *Human Development Report*,

1994; Keefer and Loayza, 2008; Stewart, 2004). At the heart of this difference in calculation

is the critical juncture of the failed peace process with the FARC in 2002, which convinced

economic and political elites alike that SSR was the only feasible solution to Colombia's

security crisis. As a result, economic elites acquiesced and paid a security tax to help

underwrite SSR, thereby creating channels for public oversight of the government's

management of SSR. In the Mexican case, big business harboured distrust of the federal

government and only casually participated in federally managed SSR. The reluctance of elites

to participate more closely, due in part to their relative insulation from the worst effects of the

country's criminality, undermined the process, as SSR lacked specific mechanisms to take the

government to task for declining security. Nevertheless, the Mexican case features some subnational variation, and as this chapter depicts, municipal-led SSR in Ciudad Juárez counted on the support of regional economic elites, who helped design and deliver a security intervention widely perceived as successful. Through the exploration of this case and the Colombian example, this chapter establishes the support of economic elites as a critical variable for the successful implementation of SSR.

Insecurity and the Colombian Private Sector

Elite Stakes in Security and the Failure of Peace

Colombia reached a verifiable breaking point with the security crisis that climaxed between 1997 and 1998. The growing military power and geographic reach of the country's irregular armed groups undermined the state's authority and exposed increasing numbers of Colombian citizens, including economic elites, to wanton violence. The perception of threat among Colombian elite circles dramatically spiked in this period. The FARC's strategy had shifted to the urban sphere and focused on killing and kidnapping wealthy and influential people; doing so gave the guerrilla group an air of national relevance that they had not previously enjoyed (Author interview with Acuña, 2017). The class antagonism embraced by the FARC's leadership, as well, ensured that the FARC's principal targets for kidnapping, terrorist acts, and extortion were members of Colombia's elite class. Between 1996 and 2002, the number of kidnappings increased 85.7 percent (Rettberg, 2009, p. 193). One US official remarked:

> Colombia is a rich country. Elites generally tolerated narcotraffickers like Pablo Escobar until he came into direct competition with traditional elite interests. It was only when the FARC started kidnapping on the highway to Villavicencio and bombed El Nogal [social club] that they finally realised that placating criminals does not work. They knew they had to push back—and they did. (Author interview with a senior US development official, 2016)

The impact of guerrilla violence on Colombia's elite class drove a variety of defensive reactions, ranging from financial accommodation to complicity with paramilitarism (Sánchez León et al., 2018; Stone, 2016).[207] At the national level, however, a coordinated effort among political and economic elites to engage the FARC in a negotiated settlement gained momentum with the election of President Pastrana in 1998 (Rettberg, 2007, pp. 485–490). The urban private sector in Colombia was less directly impacted by the rural guerrilla violence that had characterised the Colombian armed conflict for much of its history. Despite significant financial costs generated by conflict (e.g., high risk insurance premiums, high transaction and operating costs, damaged infrastructure), urban elites perceived the conflict to be an unfortunate but manageable aspect of doing business in the country (Rettberg, 2007, pp. 482–483).[208] However, they grew increasingly concerned about personal security in the late 1990s, suggesting that it was not just the nature of the threat but also its locus that became an important factor in boosting elite support for dealing with insecurity. When President Pastrana placed peace at the centre of his political agenda, the private sector wagered that a negotiated solution would be good for business and supported his bid. Cattle ranchers offered to donate land to peasants as part of a settlement, and the commercial sector purchased government-issued "peace bonds" (Bonos en Solidaridad para la Paz) to collect revenues for social and military investment (Godoy, 2003, p. 5). Pastrana's concurrent effort to solicit international financing to strengthen state institutions via Plan Colombia further reassured big business and solidified the president's support base among the country's top economic echelon (Rettberg, 2007, p. 486).

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[207] There is a substantial body of literature on corporate complicity with illegal armed groups and human rights abusers (Payne and Pereira, 2016; Reno, 1997; Stanley, 1996; Tófalo, 2006; Verbitsky and Bohoslavsky, 2015). On such complicity in the Colombian case, see Duncan, 2006; Grajales, 2017; and Gutiérrez Sanín et al., 2007.
[208] The security costs of doing business in Colombia were immense. Colombian companies in 2006 spent as much as 10 percent on security-related expenses, and according to the Colombian government, the armed conflict cost the country 2 to 4 GDP points per year between 1991 and 1996 and over 7 percent of GDP between 1998 and 2003 (Cárdenas et al., 2005; Rettberg, 2007, p. 483).

Notwithstanding this momentum, the good faith of the Pastrana administration and the Colombian private sector in the possibility of a negotiated peace was put to the test by continued FARC assaults on Colombia's elite (Nagle, 2002, p. 22). In April 2000, the FARC enforced a tax collection on asset holders of more than US$1 million in areas under the group's influence; armed blockades of government highways restricted the distribution of goods to more than 100 municipalities in the country; and airplane hijackings and mass kidnappings did little to convince the private sector that peace talks were leading to improved security (Rettberg, 2007, p. 489). The kidnapping of the daughter of Luis Carlos Villegas, the head of the Bogotá industry association, further tested the patience of the economic elite ("Plajian a hija," 2000). In a 1999 public opinion poll of 498 high-level business executives, a majority favoured the establishment of a Fujimori-style dictatorship if the peace talks failed, and a Gallup poll of more than 500 executives showed that favourable views of the peace process dropped form 70 percent to 11 percent from March to December 2000 ("La paz, Sí, pero sin Víctor G. y sin canje," 1999; Rettberg, 2003, p. 199). By the time the FARC negotiations collapsed on February 20, 2002, the private sector was eager to tack in a new direction—even an undemocratic one—in pursuit of improved security.

Fortuitously, Pastrana's early decision to pursue SSR alongside peace talks had also afforded state security forces the time and breathing room to improve their practices and tactics. When the president ordered the military to retake a 42,000-square kilometre demilitarised zone back from FARC insurgents, it did so with highly trained special forces, helicopters, advanced intelligence, and, most importantly, a new mandate (Delgado, 2015). The breakdown of peace talks was a critical juncture that marked a renewed effort at militarisation and a consolidated commitment to SSR. One observer summarised, "The FARC showed us all that they were not negotiating in good faith," leaving the government with the "*mano dura*" option only (Author interview with a representative of the Colombian

business community, 2017). The absence of alternatives for dealing with guerrilla-perpetrated violence drove consensus among political and economic elites in favour of continued SSR.[209] Nagle asserts, "While Colombians have not forgotten that the military is guilty of many sins, Colombians are willing to support a better trained and much better equipped military to rescue their nation from chaos" (2002, p. 26).

Financing SSR: The Democratic Security Tax

The decision to pursue SSR as a principal component of Pastrana's Plan Colombia was a welcome step for the US government, but US authorities early on stressed to Pastrana that international support for SSR would alone be insufficient. Colombia needed to boost its own contribution and assume local ownership of the effort. US Senators John McCain (Republican-Arizona), Chris Dodd (Democrat-Connecticut), and Fred Thompson (Republican-Tennessee) on a visit to Colombia in 2001 insisted that Colombia shared responsibility for the regional drug problem and contended that the percentage of the Colombian GDP dedicated to security was far too low (Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016). The message was clear: if Colombia wanted a continuing commitment from the US government, Colombians were going to have to complement US contributions. Between 1990 and 2001, the Colombian government increased its security expenditures as a share of GDP from 1.5 to 3.3 percent, but even with such an important expansion of SSR programming, the security sector still failed to keep pace with the equipment and tactical advances of its adversaries (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 484). Especially after seeing how little progress Pastrana made with the FARC in negotiations, discussion of a security tax gained momentum in some elite circles (Rodríguez-Franco, 2016; Stone, 2016, p. 195).

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[209] Even though victimisation by paramilitary violence was as fierce as that by guerrilla violence, historic ties between the AUC and wealthy land and business owners meant that big business was less directly affected by paramilitary-driven insecurity ("Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica," n.d.).

One of the Colombian government's historical weaknesses had been its inability to introduce taxes and enforce tax collection. Richani explains that "large landowners, cattle ranchers and the agribusiness elite conspired to resist the growth of state power," restricting the tax base of the Colombian central government (2007, p. 406). DiJohn (2010) describes an arrangement in which Colombian elites usually succeeded in passing tax exemptions for the wealthy and in reproducing a systematic toleration of tax evasion. The reluctance of the wealthy to pay higher taxes was so acute that in the 1990s Colombia had the second-smallest tax revenue per capita in South America (Stone, 2016). However, as some scholars posit, crisis helps overcome the opposition and administrative inertia that prevents tax reform (Bird, 1992, p. 32; Gracher, 2016, p. 6; Sanchez, 2006, p. 772). Moreover, the government, in the face of mounting debt, could no longer afford to mortgage the security effort on loans and bond sales: taxes had the advantage of relieving stress on the rising fiscal burden (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 486). The economic recession of 1999 left the country without access to international credit markets, all but necessitating an increase in taxation as a component of the economic restructuring encouraged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Gracher, 2016, p. 15). As Rettberg points out, "missing out on the potential gains to be made from the global economy" are often enough to spur big business into real action (2007, p. 465). It is this very impetus that thrust President Uribe, who campaigned on a militarised security strategy, onto the scene in 2002 and allowed him to usher in one of his signature policy legacies: the Democratic Security Tax (Impuesto de la Seguridad Democrática).

In hopes of averting prolonged confrontation with these members of the private sector and their well-positioned allies in Congress over the terms of the security tax, the president assumed power and just days later implemented extraordinary decree measures.[210]

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[210] Rodríguez-Franco (2016, pp. 198–199) describes a scenario of elite solidarity with the state in pushing forward with SSR in Colombia. Despite the reluctance of elites to pay higher taxes, at the annual conference of bankers in 2002, two-thirds of participants responded that they were willing to pay even more of the wealth tax

Immediately after declaring a State of Internal Unrest (Estado de Conmoción Interior) for three months, the newly inaugurated Uribe introduced by decree a special tax to address declining insecurity (Flores-Macías, 2014, pp. 487–488).[211] The Democratic Security Tax, earmarked for defence and security expenditures, targeted high-net-worth citizens, and total sums of revenue represented about 1 percent of the country's GDP and 20 percent of the security sector's budget (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 478). The new tax, enacted in 2002 and renewed on three occasions during the Uribe presidency, facilitated a 120 percent increase in the security sector's expenditures and amounted to roughly 5 percent of the government's tax revenue in the first decade of the 2000s.[212] The government levied the first tax at a rate of 1.2 percent in 2002 against individuals with assets higher than 169.5 million Colombian pesos (US$65,000) to finance the professionalisation of the armed forces.[213] The following year, Congress approved a second tax of 0.3 percent on assets surpassing 3 billion Colombian pesos (US$1 million) for surging recruitment of the security forces during the period of 2004 to 2006.[214] The third round of taxes, passed in 2006, mimicked the second tax in targeting the same echelon of wealthy citizens but increased the rate to 1.2 percent on liquid assets over 3 billion Colombian pesos; these funds helped finance the security sector's consolidation strategy and the acquisition of new aircraft and maritime equipment from 2007 to 2010. Finally, in 2009, the Congress backed one last round of security taxes at a rate of 2.4 percent against all individuals and businesses with liquid assets above 3 billion Colombian pesos (valued at US$1.4 billion in 2011) through 2014.

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to fight insecurity. Additionally, 0.4 percent of the security tax revenues collected between 2002 and 2006 were voluntary contributions from people not legally required to pay the wealth tax.

[211] The legality of the special tax by decree was decided by the Constitutional Court in a ruling that favoured the Uribe administration and permitted the continued collection of security tax revenue.

[212] The first tax applied to some 420,000 taxpayers (roughly 1 percent of the population), 120,000 of which were corporations.

[213] The figures referenced in this section were originally presented by Flores-Macías, 2014.

[214] In 2004, the government exempted the wealthiest individual taxpayers from the new imposition of the Democratic Security Tax via juridical stability contracts (*contratos de estabilidad jurídica*), which provided legal certainty for investors by offering them a reduced investment rate based on the legal framework that existed at the time of a substantial investment (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 491).

The revenue from the Democratic Security Tax was appropriated to fund President Uribe's citizen security strategy, outlined in a 2003 presidential declaration as the Democratic Security Policy (Política de Defensa y Seguridad Democrática) (Presidencia de la República and Ministerio de Defensa, 2003). The Democratic Security Policy identified insurgent groups as the principal threat to Colombia's national interest and set goals for a "whole-of-government" approach to "protecting the population" by denying sanctuary for illegal armed actors (Marks, 2005, p. 77; Presidencia de la República and Ministerio de Defensa, 2003, p. 14). The Democratic Security Policy promised to reduce kidnappings, expand DDR programmes, improve infrastructure, and dismantle illegal armed groups (Brett, 2018, pp. 8–9; Presidencia de la República and Ministerio de Defensa, 2003, p. 8).[215] In this vein, the strategy called for sweeping and coordinated reforms in the administration of the Ministry of Defence's finances, acquisitions, public relations, and operational planning and dramatic improvements in the administration of justice. It identified strategic objectives for each governmental entity and imposed internal mechanisms of accountability for the accomplishment of SSR goals. Furthermore, it endeavoured to build the military's and police's reputations as guarantors of human rights and agents of the rule of law in regions long deprived of state authority. The ambition of the Democratic Security Policy was only outmatched by its price tag: a then-unknown sum that totalled some US$1 billion a year for each year of the Uribe administration (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 481). Prior to the application of the security tax, roughly 92 percent of the government's defence budget was committed to existing operating costs, but after 2003, investment expenditures in SSR more than doubled (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 481).

[215] On the impact of the Democratic Security Policy on state consolidation, see Patiño Villa, 2010, pp. 231–244; Llorente and McDermott, 2014; Mason, 2003; Santader et al., 2012.

Private Sector Conformity with War Taxation

Citizens are generally willing to pay higher taxes in times of conflict because, as Bueno de Mesquita et al. highlight, "the costs and rewards {of war] are spread across the entire population" (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2004, p. 365; Flores-Macías and Kreps, 2017; Tilly, 1992). In the case of the Democratic Security Tax, Macías-Flores finds that three factors in particular contributed to the Colombian business elites' willingness to finance SSR: the combination of fiscal and security crises, improving perceptions of the government's provision of public safety, and cohesion among business and government elites (Flores-Macías, 2014). Central to the successful imposition of taxes was a growing faith among economic elites that the government was finally becoming the preferred security provider for the Colombian citizenry after preliminary successes with Plan Colombia. Indeed, the US government's reputational gamble on supporting Colombia paid off by 2002, as newly inaugurated military brigades and aviation squadrons put the guerrillas on the run after years of humiliating the security forces in brazen attacks and ambushes. Big business in Colombia, accustomed to privatised security provision, finally saw the state as the solution to the country's security dilemma.

There appears not to have been a formal consultation with the private sector's leading associations regarding the initial security tax, but the Uribe administration made private assurances to the business sector's top executives about the tax's renewal after 2002 (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 489). In the view of one observer, most business owners, despite obvious displeasure, accepted the second tax in 2003 without much resistance (Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017b). By that stage, the security forces had demonstrated a winning strategy that financial elites were eager to endorse (Borrero Mansilla, 2006, pp. 132–135; Author interview with a representative of the Colombian business community, 2017). A top business leader from one of the country's principal productive industries acknowledged,

"I believed that the money was being wisely spent toward [the strengthening of the security forces], and the results convinced me of it."

Even progressive members of the opposition supported the tax, which they saw as an opportunity to increase the tax burden of the wealthy, but many elites actually saw the tax as a compromise to avoid more comprehensive tax reform (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 490). The Uribe government consistently defended economic elites against an increase in their overall income tax burden and instead made use of existing budgets by freezing public sector wages and pensions. It also transparently and publicly defended its imposition of the security tax in the first place in high-profile settings to reassure elites that the government was making good on its investment (Carrasquilla Barrera, 2005). Elite faith in the security sector was sustained across a backdrop of much-improved operational prowess and the surge in foreign direct investment, which grew by a factor of seven between 2002 and 2006, helping the government justify its repeated appeals to financial elites to help fund the war effort (CEIC, 2019; Cerritelli, 2005, p. 180). This is reflected in public perceptions of security, which among business leaders spiked from a low just prior to Uribe's election to a new high by the close of 2003 (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 494).

The cohesion of power elite circles in Colombia was another essential factor in the passage of the Democratic Security Tax (Flores-Macías, 2014). There is a large body of literature about the importance of unity between political and economic elites to the creation and passage of policy agendas, and the heterogeneity of an interest group like big business can actually impair success of the accomplishment of a policy objective (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Bull, 2014; Smith, 2000; Vogel, 1989). In Colombia, economic elites, despite the diversity of industries represented in the national economy, have historically maintained a

cohesive and privileged bloc that has successfully defended elite prerogatives in the political sphere (Avilés, 2001a, p. 166; Renon, forthcoming).[216]

Economic elites felt represented in government, as well, because so many from within their ranks and in their families entered government service. Luis Carlos Villegas, President Santos' Minister of Defence, illustrates the strength of these linkages. Having started his career in the Ministry of Foreign Relations (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores), he later served as governor, Secretary General of the National Coffee-Growers' Federation (Federación Nacional de Cafeteros), President of the National Association of Colombian Business Persons (Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia, ANDI), peace negotiator, ambassador, and Defence Minister. Overlap of this kind also means that political and economic elites socialise in the same spaces and understand the interests and pressures facing each group.[217] In fact, one member of Uribe's cabinet noted that the heads of the country's main business groups informally negotiated the terms of the subsequent security tax with the president prior to presenting the initiative to Congress (Flores-Macías, 2014, pp. 490–491). Thus, an important factor that permitted elites to accept higher taxation for SSR was the tight-knit and cohesive nature of elite circles, which sufficiently convinced big-business owners that their political counterparts would make good on investments while protecting class interests.[218]

President Uribe's position in the elite network made the acceptance of the Democratic Security Tax even more palatable to the private sector (Gracher, 2016). As a large landowner and former Liberal Party politician whose family had been directly victimised by the FARC,

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[216] On elite cohesion in Colombia, see Gutiérrez Sanín et al., 2007, p. 32; Hylton, 2003, p. 68; Lee and Thoumi, 1999; Ocampo, 2015; Stone, 2016.

[217] Franz (2018) describes the reaction of economic elites in Medellín when a political outsider became mayor and imposed policies that harmed local elite interests: they organised politically and sought a greater share of political power by placing business elites in political office.

[218] The Colombian economy grew at an average annual rate of 4.8 percent between 2002 and 2009, reassuring elites that their investments in the security sector were well administered (Posada-Carbó, 2011, p. 138). However, elite circles began to fracture during the Santos administration over the issue of the peace negotiations with the FARC (Matanock and García-Sánchez, 2017).

Uribe could speak to the conflict dynamic in a way that few from the echelons of the Bogotá elite could. Furthermore, he was from a region of the country, Antioquia, where business-minded elites typically resisted encroachments by the central government, making his tax appeal all the more unlikely. He derived his initial support from elites with large land holdings along the Caribbean coast and in the coffee-growing regions, where economic interests were most at risk, but his candidacy and presidency were able to unite the interests and audiences of distinct elements of the private sector because of a platform that promised security above all else. Uribe managed to appoint to his cabinet a number of prominent members of the urban business community, including Juan Manuel Santos, who helped assuage the concerns of the commercial and industrial sectors about the rise of an "outsider" to the presidency (Flores-Macías, 2014, p. 489).

Additionally, because the formal mechanism of a tax linked business contributions to the government's delivery of security, economic elites had secured a means of pressuring the government and holding it responsible. Private sector support, thus, represented a boost not only for the effectiveness of the security sector but also for its accountability. Abello Colak and Pearce (2015) argue that although security must remain a public good, it requires a mechanism of participation to ensure both accountability and policy content that reflects the lived experiences of citizens. Likewise, Loada and Moderan (2015, p. 40) stress the importance of citizen-led oversight of security budgets as a component of SSR. The application of the Democratic Security Tax gave rise to the Ethics and Transparency Commission, which granted economic elites a forum through which they monitored state expenditure on security matters (Flores-Macías, 2014; N. Salazar, 2013, p. 489). The private sector's ability to exert control over or monitor processes of policy implementation—in this case, SSR—drove private sector support (Fajardo-Heyward, 2015, p. 11; Rettberg, 2007, p. 466). In fact, because elite-financed resources were at stake, the Colombian government even

expressed a willingness to tackle corruption in the security sector—long seen as a contentious move—by emboldening the mandate of the Attorney General to go after crooked members of the military and police (Author interview with a senior US law enforcement official, 2016). Such measures served to encourage top contributors to the Democratic Security Policy, who sustained their public support for the tax for the duration of the Uribe government.[219]

In sum, Colombian economic elites accepted, however reluctantly, a role in SSR because they had reached a critical level of desperation over the intensification of crime and violence in the late 1990s. The geographic generalisation of insecurity and the susceptibility of the elite class to guerrilla violence forged consensus and galvanised economic elites to endorse a state-building project initiated by President Pastrana that centred on SSR. The failure of peace talks with the FARC in 2002 served to discredit non-repressive national approaches to managing insecurity in the country and was a critical juncture that convinced Colombia's private sector of the necessity of SSR. Although President Uribe subverted traditional democratic channels to introduce the first Democratic Security Tax, the private sector did not actively oppose the imposition of subsequent taxes for security purposes because early improvements in security convinced elites of the return on their investments. The cohesion of political and economic elite networks and the private sector's ability to exert oversight on security spending consolidated a high level of support for the tax regime, which helped sustain an expanded security budget well into the following decade. The Democratic Security Tax was a specific mechanism that directly linked the interests of the economic elite with those of Colombian state institutions—a circumstance that facilitated SSR by ensuring a

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[219] The time horizons for elite support for SSR through taxation were relatively short, especially as regional elites became more intimately involved in security measures implemented by local governments (Abello Colak and Pearce, 2015; Moncada, 2016). Rettberg (2007, p. 490) notes that attempts to make the wealth tax permanent failed, despite repeated renewals of the Democratic Security Tax, and highlights that tax evasion increased in the successive applications of the security tax.

steady stream of resources and that, consequently, contributed to improved security provision.

Insecurity and the Mexican Private Sector

Big Business' Indifference to Federal-Led SSR in Mexico

In contrast, insecurity in Mexico did not meet a critical threshold by the early stages of SSR, and the country's private sector did not reach a meaningful level of desperation over crime and violence to help shape and fund federal security strategies in a coordinated fashion. The first full year of the Calderón administration, 2007, registered Mexico's lowest homicide rate on record (Author interview with Escalante, 2017). When Calderón called for sweeping reforms in the country's security institutions at the beginning of his government, many economic elites, although frustrated by high levels of corruption within the security sector, did not perceive SSR as a pressing national priority—at least not one that would require greater contributions or vigilance from the country's business sector (Olson and Baker, 2015). Unlike in Colombia, where violence was generalised and affected vast stretches of the national territory, violence in Mexico was concentrated in select states and municipalities, and some analysts understood Mexico's security crisis during the Calderón government not as a national problem but as a collection of local crises (Schedler, 2015, pp. 91–93). In Colombia, where the challenge posed by insurgents was seen as a politico-military threat that only a stronger state could combat, the threat in Mexico proved to be mostly localised, apolitical, and private (Schedler, 2015, p. 223). Fernández de Castro notes that for many years it was even difficult for the Mexican public to accept that the country had a nationwide problem with insecurity because the government had created a narrative that the victims of the country's violence were mostly involved in organised crime (Olson et al., 2018).

As crime rates skyrocketed, however, it became less easy to blame the victims. Popular mobilisation against crime, violence, and human rights abuses became prevalent across the country during the last years of the Calderón government. In some regions, vigilante citizens took matters into their own hands in the absence of government action, and in 2012, the emergence of self-defence forces in the states of Michoacán and Guerrero garnered significant media coverage in a way that both alarmed and embarrassed the Mexican government (Schedler, 2015, pp. 16–17). More than five years into the SSR initiative, insecurity was on the rise. The unfolding of events in the country's agricultural south occurred on the heels of an extraordinary surge in violence in industrial border cities like Ciudad Juárez and Monterrey from 2008 to 2012, and the Mexican government endured mounting pressure from civil society to resolve these crises. Even some of the country's top business owners began to organise local support for violence reduction initiatives.[220]

Despite the involvement of the private sector in devising municipal security strategies, no formal mechanisms linking the private sector to the federal government's SSR resulted, thus limiting the leverage of big business over the government's management of the reform. In the Colombian case, the principal means of exacting accountability over the SSR process was the Democratic Security Tax. Even though the private sector in Mexico did not entirely turn its back on the country's security crisis, there was "zero talk of a security tax in Mexico" (Author interview with a political analyst (government), 2017). Part of the hesitation to levy a security tax had to do with a lack of a critical juncture like the failure of Colombia's peace talks with the FARC, which convinced elites that there were no longer any meaningful

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[220] One of the most common avenues for big business to help address insecurity was the founding of citizens' councils, which aim to generate trust between government actors and the citizenry by channelling information and demands from the citizenry to the state. Economic elites in many parts of the country begrudgingly accepted this role. Luis Wertman, the director of the capital's citizens' council, asserted, "Society should not occupy spaces that are actually of the government. This is how you get mafias. And authority should not occupy spaces that are actually of the society. This is how you get a citizens' council. We have to find the delicate balance" (Author interview with Wertman Zaslav, 2018).

alternatives to militarised responses to insecurity. In Mexico, private sector leaders still believed that insecurity and violence could be managed—either by brokering clandestine payments to violent actors or by negotiating the protection of criminal networks via corrupt government officials (Author interview with a senior security official, Calderón administration, 2018).

The Peña government did little to court the private sector to help fund its security policies either. In fact, the former Director of the Colombian National Police, Óscar Naranjo (2007-2012), arrived in Mexico in 2012 to serve as a top security advisor to President Peña and expressly argued in favour of the imposition of a security tax in Mexico (Santaeulalia, 2014; Author interview with a senior security official, Calderón administration, 2018). These overtures met little success, however, as the moment for sweeping, decisive action to engage the private sector—the perception of a bona fide crisis—never really materialised. This became especially true as crime rates dropped during the first years of the Peña administration, convincing many that the worst had passed. Once crime and violence spiked again in 2016, the administration's political capital was severely diminished, undermining the administration's ability to reorient SSR once again and solicit greater support from big business to that end.

Moreover, the US government did not appear to make forceful demands of Mexican economic elites in the negotiation of the Mérida Initiative as it had done in the early stages of Plan Colombia. Concerns about infringing on Mexican sovereignty tempered the US government's negotiating posture (León Hernández, 2011; Author interview with a senior security official, Calderón administration, 2018). The delayed delivery of critical Mérida hardware and resources also constrained the Calderón administration in the early years of SSR and made it more difficult to deliver operational results that would have convinced economic elites that state security institutions were capable of delivering and sustaining

enhanced security (Seelke and Finklea, 2017, p. 13). Whereas Plan Colombia enabled operational successes early on in SSR, Mexico lacked both a critical juncture that discredited other ways of managing insecurity and early SSR successes that would have convinced the private sector that the government could make good on costly investments in the security sector.

Multiple factors help explain the specific reluctance to levy such a tax or build security coordination mechanisms between the federal government and the private sector. Importantly, as one analyst confided, "[t]here is not enough public outrage over insecurity, and the public has become inured to high levels of violence. Also, violence is targeted, and it rarely touches elite circles" (Author interview with a political analyst (government), 2017). Implicit in this argument is a sense that business leaders would only fund SSR if there were a direct benefit to their personal safety or investments. In the words of one researcher, "Business leaders only started caring [about security] when they started to become victims" (Author interview with Chapa Koloffon, 2018). Organised crime has not targeted Mexican economic elites on a large scale since the 1990s. The 1994 kidnappings of well-known executives Ángel Losada Moreno and Alfredo Harp Helú scared the country's wealthiest citizens to invest heavily in private security measures such as bodyguards and armoured vehicles. Following a period of security privatisation, high-net-worth Mexicans were no longer major targets for criminal groups (Author interview with French, 2017). Furthermore, the Mexican private sector typically relies on municipal police forces to protect businesses and operations, encouraging close personal relationships between economic elites and local government and obviating a perceived need to contribute to federal security initiatives (Author interview with a security analyst (private sector), 2017a). In this context, elite groups, insulated from the most damaging effects of criminal violence, had little personal incentive to contribute to massive public-sector security programmes, especially federally

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managed SSR. This position may have been additionally influenced by the temporal horizons of Mexican elites. A top security analyst in Mexico asserted that Mexico has a short history of unmanageable insecurity and relatively little experience in fighting organised crime, but the Colombian government endured decades of violence before settling on a solution proposed by the Pastrana government (Author interview with Tello Peón, 2018).

A complementary factor that reinforced elite reluctance to support a security tax pertained to elite distrust of the government to manage tax revenues transparently and effectively. In the absence of rampant elite victimisation by crime, big business continued to resist tax increases by political elites, which may have something to do with the nature of elite circles in Mexico. One analyst noted that political and economic elites do not often mingle, and in many cases, their ambitions are at odds (Author interview with French, 2017).[221] This quality of elite circles in Mexico is different from the more cooperative spirit that took hold in Colombia, and as Camp emphasises, "Mexico is clearly not characterized by an overlapping power elite" (2012). Middlebrook explores the rupture in traditional class relations following the Mexican Revolution in his influential work on the relationship between political elites and labour, and in a study of power elite circles, Camp finds that only one leading Mexican political figure out of more than 200 from 1970 to 2000 occupied influential roles in both political and economic spheres (Camp, 2002, p. 12, 1980; Middlebrook, 1995). In fact, Smith stresses that the generation of Mexican politicians that dominated politics in the 2010s is predominantly middle class in origin (Smith, 2015).[222]

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[221] This is consistent with the work of Martin and Swank (2012), who argue that large countries like Mexico lack geographically concentrated social networks and, thus, rely on anonymous means of coordination (i.e., the market) to articulate and protect their interests.

[222] Camp (2012) notes, however, that there is growing interest on part of business elites to pursue political careers at the state and local levels, increasing 140 percent from the pre-democratic era to 2012. President Fox, an influential business professional, appointed eight cabinet-level ministers from the private sector (Camp, 2002, p. 270).

Despite a convergence of policy agendas during the neoliberal era of the 1990s, the relationship between career politicians and business leaders in Mexico remains uneasy, and economic elites have found ways to exert pressure on the country's main political parties, even in the absence of direct representation of big business in politics (Middlebrook, 2000, p. 41).[223] The tension inherent in this relationship came to a head in 2013.[224] Following the announcement of new social, economic, and educational reforms, a number of well-positioned voices in the business sector publicly questioned whether the new income generated from additional taxes would "be used effectively, be wasted in a senseless expansion of unproductive bureaucracy, or disappear down the drain of corruption" (Krauze, 2013). According to one researcher, Mexican business elites are more concerned about corruption's impact on profits than they are about the effects of insecurity, which is why anti-corruption watchdog organisations attract generous donations from big business (Author interview with Novoa, 2017).[225] In Mexico, levying new taxes has polarising electoral implications because the business class expresses so little trust in the government's ability to make transparent use of public revenue, and politicians habitually look for ways to expand budgets without raising taxes (Aguilar et al., 2013, pp. 33–35; Author interview with a security analyst (academia), 2017a).[226]

One of the biggest complaints of top private sector executives is that the payment of federal taxes seldom trickles back into the communities or territories that contribute the most

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[223] Middlebrook (2001, p. 8) highlights that sustained support for the PAN from Mexico's entrepreneurial class only dates to the period following the 1982 nationalisation of private banks and the crisis in business-state relations caused by the economic crisis. On PAN party composition, see Wuhs, 2001.

[224] The Pact for Mexico (Pacto por México) was a national political agreement between the PRI, PAN, and PRD signed on December 2, 2012. The pact contained 95 public policy proposals, including educational, energy, fiscal, and telecommunications reforms.

[225] Fernández de Castro argues that one of the biggest hurdles to Mexican SSR has been a reluctance on part of the country's elites to back the full establishment of the rule of law because, under the status quo, elites continue to benefit from corruption and the flexibility of the law (Olson et al., 2018). Pearce (2018) explores this theme in her important paper on oligarchies and violence in Latin America.

[226] Major taxpayers in Mexico have historically enjoyed broad constitutional protections through a legal mechanism known as the *juicio de amparo*, or writ of protection, which allows the courts to shield taxpayers from taxes believed to violate the Constitution (Elizondo and Magaloni, 2009, p. 189).

to federal revenues or where investment is most needed. This is largely a function of peculiar governmental budgeting rules. The monies to finance public security services at the state level are pooled by the federal government in a special budgetary item known as the Fund of Shares for Public Security in the States and Federal District (Fondo de Aportaciones para la Seguridad Pública de los Estados y del Distrito Federal, FASP). Mexican municipalities receive 72 percent of their revenue from federal transfers and do not have the legal faculties to raise funds, unlike in Colombia where cities increased tax revenues to fund crime prevention (Sabet, 2013, pp. 241, 244). Economic elites have grown to resent the way in which federal politicians distribute funds to expand their clientelistic networks instead of prioritising recipient states by demonstrated need (Author interviews with a political analyst (government), 2018; Rendón, 2018). And given the reluctance of the private sector to pay higher taxes, Mexico has one of the lowest taxation rates in Latin America.[227] Without raising taxes—or suspicions—at all, the Mexican federal government increased the budgets for security institutions every year of the Mérida Initiative and over the decade invested more than 50 times the US government's contributions toward Mexican security (Fonseca, 2016).

Still, insecurity convinced economic elites to subsidise some federal efforts—a scenario that led to sporadic private sector involvement in security programmes. However, when the Mexican private sector did contribute to SSR, investments tended to favour effectiveness over accountability. For example, in Tamaulipas state in 2016, business donors paid 800 Mexican pesos (US$40) a day per soldier for hundreds of extra army soldiers deployed in the state at the request of regional landowners. Instead of paying the salaries and per diem of the military from a central account, though, these financial transactions took place directly between SEDENA leadership and local business owners (Author interview

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[227] The Mexican government relies heavily on income generated by oil production to fund public goods. In 2011, oil exports represented 4.7 percent of Mexico's GDP, but this figure dropped during the Peña administration, levelling out at just over 1 percent (Sonnel, 2017).

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with Novoa, 2017). In other instances, local elites collaborated with federal security forces in an ad hoc fashion to build physical infrastructure such as barracks and training facilities in places of intensifying conflict like Coahuila and Guanajuato (Fernández, 2016). At the federal level, private sector contributions focused principally on expanding benefits to security force personnel. The banking sector raised nearly US$100 million over a little more than a decade for a programme called "Sponsor Them" (Bécalos), which provides academic scholarships for children of military and Federal Police personnel, and banks extended larger mortgage credit lines to military members (Moloeznik, 2013, p. 80; Author interview with Poiré, 2017; "Transparencia y Resultados," n.d.). Although these investments are symbolic of elite interest in security, they were poorly coordinated with broader governmental strategies and represented an infinitesimally small contribution given both the country's vast wealth and the magnitude of the security problem. Moreover, one analyst noted that such informality left security forces feeling indebted to private donors, not to the state (Author interview with a security analyst (private sector), 2017b). Poiré, Calderón's national security spokesperson and then Secretary of the Interior, insisted, "Public monies should finance military infrastructure projects through annual budget appropriations, not informal deals brokered with local elites. Where is the accountability?" (Author interview with Poiré, 2017).

The lack of a security tax, on its own, is not a sufficient condition for the failure of SSR in Mexico. However, in the Colombian case, taxation created mechanisms of private sector participation in government policy making and of accountability. According to Poiré, it was not so much that the private sector was uninterested in security policy but, rather, that economic elites lacked a mechanism to hold the government accountable for its failures (Author interview with Poiré, 2017). He remarked:

> The private sector is the most interested party in
> ensuring the success of a security policy, which is why
> economic elites did not question an annually expanding
> security budget during the Calderón government….but

> because of lax participation on part of the citizenry, the Mexican government has never produced a diagnostic of the security threat and has not introduced meaningful evaluation mechanisms.

Schedler (2015, pp. 14–15) also describes how both the Calderón and Peña administrations deliberately side-lined the citizenry in the formulation of security strategy. Calderón's government framed the problem as one of rival drug gangs fighting amongst each other, a challenge for which the government perceived military and police repression to be the only viable solution. The tactic was one of externalisation, which understood delinquents not as Mexican citizens but as wayward individuals operating outside of the concept of the nation. Conversely, President Peña's discourse about Mexico's levels of violence denied the very existence of a national security crisis and endeavoured to minimise the severity of the problem.[228] Despite rhetorical differences, the message to the Mexican citizenry—including business elites—was the same: "We, the government, will handle this; you can all relax" (Schedler, 2015, p. 15). Across both Mexican administrations, the very instruments that kept the Colombian government engaged with and answerable to its citizenry were absent in the formulation of SSR in Mexico.

Subnational Change Agents: The Private Sector in Ciudad Juárez

Although SSR in Mexico at the federal level failed to draw significant backing from the country's economic elite, one subnational case stands out for exhibiting strong ties between financial elites and local government efforts to reform the security sector: Ciudad Juárez. In this case, state and municipal governments enacted sweeping structural changes to the security sector by strengthening security and law enforcement institutions, and to do so, they extracted significant resources from a willing class of economic elites.

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[228] By the end of the Peña administration, the country's business community became increasingly outspoken over deteriorating security (Saldaña, 2018).

Ciudad Juárez shares an international border with the US city of El Paso, Texas—ranked in 2018 among the top ten safest cities in the United States (Edwards, 2018). The answer to how Ciudad Juárez ironically became not only Mexico's but also the world's most dangerous city from 2008 to 2012 is linked to the city's location along a principal drug-smuggling corridor into the United States (*Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad Pública y la Justicia Penal A.C.*, 2011). Ciudad Juárez, which boasts four ports of entry to the United States, has historically served as an important outpost for the Mexican economy, and the proliferation of duty-free manufacturing plants called *maquiladoras* since the 1960s contributed to steady economic and demographic growth. The surge in cross-border movement of goods and people also gave rise to increased narcotics trafficking, and under the leadership of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the Juárez Cartel, founded in the 1970s, consolidated its regional power and came to control one of the primary transportation routes, worth billions of dollars of illegal drug shipments annually.

The group's monopoly on the Juárez *plaza* was not safe for long, however, especially following the 1997 death of its leader.[229] From 1994 to the mid-2000s, violence in the city increased as rival drug gangs disputed the power of the Juárez Cartel. The visibility of the violence, nonetheless, remained low due to the protection of the cartel by state actors, particularly local law enforcement, and public perceptions of security remained favourable, as evidenced by a bustling local economy and robust cross-border tourism (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 204). Circumstances changed in 2007, though, when an armed faction of the Sinaloa Cartel descended upon Ciudad Juárez to confront their local rivals in an attempt to seize control of the *plaza*. The homicide rate in Ciudad Juárez skyrocketed to between 178 and 224 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2009 and 2010, and on average, organised crime groups

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[229] In the decade that followed, some 300 gangs, working at the behest of the Juárez and Sinaloa cartels, formed and committed 200 to 300 homicides per year until 2008 (Campbell, 2011; Serrano, 2018, p. 60).

perpetrated 10 kidnappings a day in 2010 (Conger, 2014, p. 5). In addition to a violent turf war in which innocent people often became collateral damage, the crime syndicates engaged in rampant extortion, a criminal practice that prior to 2007 was virtually unknown in the city. By 2010, roughly 8,000 businesses had fallen victim to routine extortion, forcing many in the private sector to close companies or relocate their operations (Quiñones, 2016).

President Calderón responded to local calls for assistance by deploying the army and Federal Police to Ciudad Juárez, amassing more than 10,000 federal security agents in the city by the end of 2010. This strategy, known as Joint Operation Juárez (Operación Conjunta Juárez), was intended to overwhelm the duelling cartels with federal presence and firepower, but the intervention mostly complicated matters on the ground.[230] Conflicts between municipal, state, and federal authorities disturbed the local government's protection of the Juárez Cartel and fuelled violence between state authorities and organised crime (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 205). One observer noted that the Sinaloa Cartel had infiltrated the Federal Police, yet the municipal police collaborated with the Juárez Cartel—a scenario that occasionally pitted state agents against one another in armed confrontations (Author interview with a representative of the Citizens' Observatory for Prevention, Security, and Justice, 2018). Between 2007 and 2011, Ciudad Juárez reported more than 9,000 murders, peaking at 3,116 homicides in 2010 alone (Valencia and Chacon, 2013). This wave of violence also contributed to an economic recession in the city, as the decline in tourism hit small- and medium-sized business especially hard (Author interview with a representative of an international civil society organization, 2018). Furthermore, as one civil society representative noted, the federal war on drugs exposed the local population to abuses and corruption by federal forces. The individual lamented that the Federal Police even orchestrated a spate of kidnappings and later blamed innocent members of the community,

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[230] The public security strategy was later renamed Joint Operation Chihuahua (Operación Conjunta Chihuahua).

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including municipal police officers, for the crimes (Author interview with a representative of the Citizens' Observatory for Prevention, Security, and Justice, 2018).[231]

By 2010, the population's resentment of the federal government was so palpable that civil society participated in recurring protests against the federal presence, prompting the withdrawal of the army from the city (Meyer, 2010, p. 10; Author interview with a representative of an international civil society organization, 2018). Moreover, it was clear that federal efforts to improve security were failing. In 2010, the explosion of a car bomb and the murder of three employees of the US Consulate demonstrated that "no one was immune from the savage violence" (Author interview with Luján Olivas, 2018). To improve relations with the city, the Calderón government complemented its continued deployment of the Federal Police with a campaign to help "repair the social fabric," and in 2010, the government launched a US$270 million bid to conduct pre-emptive interventions in the city's most troubled and marginalised neighbourhoods (Miroff, 2010). The "We are all Juárez" (Todos Somos Juárez) campaign became the first major impetus in favour of crime and violence prevention in Mexico (Author interview with Ley, 2018).[232] The initiative entailed state and municipal police reforms, educational improvements, public infrastructure projects, and economic stimulation, and central to the strategy was the involvement of civil society and, especially, the local private sector.

The federal government looked to existing community mechanisms in Ciudad Juárez to help channel the wave of investment in preventive measures. To this end, the Calderón administration benefitted from an established relationship between local government and the business community to work collaboratively on security matters. Starting in 2007, a group of

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[231] The civil society representative also noted that when federal forces departed the city in 2012, they did so "with their trucks filled with stolen possessions." On federal abuses in Ciudad Juárez, see Meyer, 2010.
[232] The US Embassy supported the Mexican government's strategy in Ciudad Juárez, and US Ambassador Carlos Pascual (2009-2011) was actively involved in helping shape the city's security strategy (Author interview with Tello Peón, 2018).

the city's top community leaders—many entrepreneurs fed up with a slumping economy and crime that affected their business operations—founded a public safety forum called the Security and Justice Roundtable (Mesa de Seguridad y Justicia) to transmit the community's concerns to the municipal and state governments. The Roundtable, convened on a monthly basis, was an innovative measure to bring the city's top stakeholders—including politicians, police, human rights organisations, and business—together to strategise for improved security. As described by one business leader, "The Roundtable set up different committees based on different criminal trends and assigned relevant authorities to each committee. This was novel because for the first time many public officials were being introduced to their counterparts in other government agencies and were encouraged to work hand in hand" (Author interview with Luján Olivas, 2018).

Nevertheless, the approach to managing community-based problems confronted a major weakness: a lack of resources. The Roundtable did not have a large operating budget of its own, and local authorities depended on a devolution of revenue from federal and state governments to fund the proposed initiatives. Moreover, a spike in extreme violence in early 2010 generated an unprecedented urgency to enact security reforms. The massacre of 15 young people in January 2010 at a party in the Villas de Salvárcar neighbourhood was a tipping point for local business owners, teachers, and human rights defenders, and the event served to unify civil society in a quest to deliver effective solutions to the city's ever-worsening insecurity (Author interview with Ley, 2018).[233] In Ciudad Juárez, the violent events of 2010 represented a critical juncture for the city's economic elites.

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[233] President Calderón's erroneous public comments accusing the victims of the massacre of belonging to a gang infuriated the Juárez community, and between February and March 2010, Calderón visited the city three times as presumed acts of conciliation. The meetings between the president and the parents of the student victims were a critical factor in the massive mobilisation of federal, state, and municipal aid to deal with the city's security crisis (Author interview with Ley, 2018).

Given the local government's marginal budget for public security, the city's business sector responded to the crisis by establishing in 2010 a public-private trust, the Trust for Competitiveness and Citizen Security (Fideicomiso para la Competitividad y Seguridad Ciudadana, FICOSEC), to boost private sector contributions to local strategies to tackle insecurity.[234] At the petition of the Juárez business community, the state legislature introduced in 2011 an additional 0.05 percent payroll tax on all business owners in the State of Chihuahua, earmarking any revenue associated with the tax for crime prevention programmes and SSR initiatives.[235] The FICOSEC tax represented an unprecedented request by a business community in Mexico to raise its tax burden, and the strength of the FICOSEC operating model depends on the premise that the trust, in conjunction with the Roundtable, fully controls the spending priorities. FICOSEC monies were, in essence, public resources administered by a council of private citizens (Author interview with Luján Olivas, 2018).

In FICOSEC's first five years of operation, the government collected more than US$4 million annually, which financed new schools and drug rehabilitation centres, youth sports leagues, vocational training, and the certification of municipal and transit police (Luján Olivas, 2018). FICOSEC also underwrote programmes to complement prevention investments from the federal government via "We are all Juárez," demonstrating an impressive and unprecedented synergy between civil society and the federal, state, and

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[234] FICOSEC's founders cite Colombia as a successful reference for private sector involvement in SSR ("Historia – FICOSEC," n.d.).

[235] Luján Olivas remarked, "FICOSEC emerged in a very specific context, one in which the private sector of the state had previously addressed a public crisis with the establishment of a trust" (Author interview with Luján Olivas, 2018). FICOSEC was modelled on the founding of an earlier trust in the State of Chihuahua. In 1990, the city of Chihuahua, capital of the state, endured historically high levels of flooding after a torrential rainstorm known as *La Tromba* ("The Downpour"), which left 98 people dead, destroyed 275 homes, and rendered thousands of people homeless ("La Tromba en Chihuahua," 2014). The government temporarily relocated the displaced citizens to community gymnasiums and schools, but after months of government inaction to find a permanent solution for these people, the private sector established a trust called the Business Foundation of Chihuahua (Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense, A.C., FECHAC), which applied a payroll tax of 0.1 percent to companies operating in the state. For the people of Chihuahua, the trust helped rebuild homes for thousands of community members and was a resounding success—so much so that the tax remains in place more than 20 years after the completion of the initial projects to finance the construction of community projects, orphanages, and nursing homes.

municipal governments. The Roundtable and FICOSEC succeeded in pressuring government authorities to apply harsher penalties for kidnapping and murder, and the security tax was instrumental in subsidising higher salaries, advanced training, and career benefits for the municipal police force and the district attorney's office (Quiñones, 2016). Some of the most meaningful contributions included courses in crime-scene investigation for state and municipal police officers and the recently reformed State Attorney General's Office (Fiscalía General del Estado de Chihuahua). Perhaps most importantly, FICOSEC founded a public security observatory, which collects community data, analyses local crime trends, and evaluates the effectiveness of anti-crime strategies in the city.

One of the private sector's biggest priorities was the reform of the municipal police force, long seen as an agent of organised crime. The appointment of Julián Leyzaola (2011-2013), a retired army lieutenant colonel, as the Ciudad Juárez police chief signalled a major change in the security sector. Upon assuming command, Leyzaola purged thousands of municipal police officers from the force, purchased new patrol vehicles and weapons, and upgraded the institution's public image by changing the colour of its uniforms from grey to blue (Quiñones, 2016).[236] During his tenure, FICOSEC sponsored audits of the local force and background checks and polygraph tests of police personnel. Leyzaola's successors continued the reform initiative through 2016, improving training, extending life insurance benefits to police officers, and cracking down on drug-traffickers (Author interview with Castro, 2018). The newly minted municipal police assumed an aggressive posture toward organised crime, and from 2011 to 2015, the force arrested record numbers of gang and cartel members (Valencia and Chacon, 2013). As of 2018, several observers acknowledged that the Ciudad Juárez municipal police were exceedingly competent at combatting criminals and

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[236] In 2018, Leyzaola became mired in scandals surrounding human rights abuses committed during his tenure as police commissioner (Díaz, 2018).

driving down crime rates, even though their preventive engagement with the city's

communities had taken a backseat to crime suppression (Author interviews with Castro,

2018; Salazár Gutiérrez, 2018).

Gradually, the citizen security initiatives and local SSR began to bear impressive

results, and crime rates declined starting in 2012. The withdrawal of the army and a

substantial reduction in the presence of the Federal Police—institutions widely regarded in

Ciudad Juárez as abusive and corrupt—appear to have contributed to a decline of some types

of crime. By 2015, homicides in Ciudad Juárez had fallen from highs of over 3,000 per year

to just 256 (Quiñones, 2016; Author interview with Salazár Gutiérrez, 2018). The kidnapping

rate, which peaked at 9 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2009, also dropped to below 1 per 100,000

inhabitants in 2014 (Ramírez Verdugo and Ruiz González, 2016, p. 11). Problems with

rampant extortion remained, but as of 2018, the city no longer registered among the top ten

most violent cities in Mexico (Olson et al., 2018).

Although residents of Ciudad Juárez continue to debate why violence dropped off,

most observers celebrate the efforts of the private sector as having a profound impact (Author

interviews with Brillones, 2018; Chapa Koloffon, 2018; Rendón, 2018).[237] In 2019,

FICOSEC remained the only security tax initiative on the part of a subnational business

community in the whole of Mexico, and the consensus-driven work of FICOSEC and the

Roundtable helped set the security agenda and held the federal, state, and municipal

governments accountable for their relevant investments. Notably, the private sector's

leadership remained committed to crime prevention even after the major crime reduction.

Luján Olivas summarised, "Although FICOSEC is nationally regarded as a success story and

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[237] Some analysts discerned that the drop in violence had more to do with a truce between cartels (Author interview with a representative of an international civil society organization, 2018). Former Chihuahua State Attorney General Jorge González noted, however, that the arrests of the heads of local criminal groups, including the head of the armed wing of the Juárez Cartel, led to a precipitous drop in homicides (Valencia and Chacon, 2013). From October 2010 to January 2013, authorities captured more than 4,000 criminals, including 250 kidnappers and 200 extortionists.

I am proud of the public-private partnership, crime rates are still not at what I would consider an acceptable level" (Author interview with Luján Olivas, 2018). He insists that the positive results on the security front also overshadowed a growing problem with corruption in the municipal government, including among the police (Author interview with Meza, 2018). Although significant challenges remain, Ciudad Juárez, nonetheless, serves as a powerful lesson for Mexican municipalities contending with wanton crime and violence and, more broadly, a convincing point of reference for private sector involvement in SSR.[238]

Conclusion

As the Colombian case validates, an engaged private sector is central to carrying out meaningful SSR. The subnational case of Ciudad Juárez offers additional support for this hypothesis. Ramírez Verdugo and Ruiz González contend, "Full implementation of the measures to revert insecurity is expensive…and imposes such severe stress on local budgets so as to eventually require increases in taxes and reduction in other expenditures for at least the ensuing three to five years" (2016, p. 2). One of the factors that made all the difference at the national level in Colombia and at the state level in Ciudad Juárez was the creation of a formal mechanism, a security tax, to channel private sector contributions to SSR and regulate governmental spending on SSR. Representing a boost for both the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector, security taxes can help encourage continuity of effort, ensure greater transparency, and enable improved security sector governance.

At the national level in Mexico, business elites did not entirely ignore insecurity and delivered contributions to the security forces. However, big business support for SSR arrived late, was insufficient, and lacked a coordination mechanism to hold the federal government

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[238] The application of the "Juárez template" in other Mexican municipalities has not been without complications and mostly failures. In Michoacán, a lack of consensus among business elites and a pervasive distrust of government among the business community stunted preliminary discussions about levying a tax similar to the FICOSEC tax (Author interview with Luján Olivas, 2018).

accountable for its shortcomings. The critical juncture of the failed peace talks with the FARC, which closed off alternative avenues for resolving insecurity, convinced Colombia's economic elites that SSR was the only viable exit from the country's calamity and the only way of keeping themselves and their investments safe. In Mexico, however, elite grievances against organised crime never reached a critical mass to engender broad support for SSR and, thus, the government's mandate to implement it.

Chapter 7: Finding Common Ground: Party Polarisation as an Impediment to SSR

This chapter details the importance of the second independent variable of this study, the extent of inter-party consensus, on divergent SSR outcomes between the Colombian and Mexican cases and represents an intervention in the ongoing debate in the SSR literature about the conditions that impact local ownership of SSR. In one of the few studies that systematically evaluates the domestic factors that affect the adoption of SSR, Berg (2012) insists that the breadth and coherence of the ruling political coalition are especially influential. He hypothesises that the extent to which party leaders can rely on a cohesive base of support to win elections, implement policy, and ensure the loyalty of the security sector actually impedes reforms that strengthen democratic governance. When an executive benefits from such stable support, party leadership has little incentive to incorporate other factions into the ruling coalition and, thus, is likely to reject reforms that might limit their control, like SSR. Conversely, when a ruling coalition is diverse and fragmented, factions tend to exert greater influence on policy formulation. Driven by a desire to shore up support and legitimacy, executive leadership is more likely to turn to international organizations and foreign governments for financing and expertise, thereby creating greater opportunities for external actors to press for SSR. Berg (2014) confirms his hypothesis in a case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which he finds that fragmentation of the ruling coalition created a crucial opening for NATO and the EU to shape the reform of the defence sector.

Despite Berg's focus on the domestic realm, he ascribes a high level of responsibility for the success of SSR to external factors, eclipsing the agency of national actors. Moreover, Berg's claim contravenes the more accepted logic of the public policy literature, which understands fragmentation and divided government as principal causes of policy

stagnation.[239] Based on substantial practical experience with SSR, the UK government, for one, notes that executive leadership is likely to lose political will if "the political instruments (party organisations, alliances with interest groups and other parties) available to the leader are incapable of providing adequate support for a possible action" (Department for International Development, 2004). As this chapter demonstrates, this more conventional argument helps explain the inter-party dynamics that took place in Colombia and Mexico, but one thing that remains certain is the importance of inter-party relations as a determinant of SSR implementation.

Thanks to the pioneering work of Mainwaring and Scully (1995), party system institutionalisation (PSI), or the degree to which parties remain in place and their interactions become stable and predictable, has become a central framework through which to understand modern Latin American democracies. Assessing PSI in a given political system can help researchers identify the nature of relations between parties, illuminating the dynamics at play in driving consensus for policy initiatives like SSR. Where the party system is in flux and major new contenders appear regularly, the party system lacks stability and predictability; the converse is true for institutionalised party systems (Mainwaring, 2018). Although Berg does not directly address the PSI literature, his conclusions support the notion that flexible party relations provide opportunities for SSR. This chapter sets out to evaluate that claim, while elucidating other aspects of inter-party relations that affect consensus on SSR.[240]

Another factor that complements PSI in its explanatory value is polarisation (Jones, 2001).[241] Polarisation reflects the extent of differentiation of policy preferences among parties

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[239] Ames, 2001; Becker and Saalfeld, 2004; Binder et al., 2002; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2002; Edwards et al., 1997; Hiroi and Renno, 2014; Kernell and Cox, 1991; Mette Kjær and Katusiimeh, 2012.
[240] A substantial body of literature on the topic covers the links among PSI, party behaviour, and party longevity (Dalton and Weldon, 2007; Huntington, 1968; M. P. Jones, 2009; Jones, 2010; Levitsky et al., 2016; Lupu, 2015a; Mainwaring, 1999, 2018; Olivares Concha, 2015; Roberts, 2014, 2016; Sartori, 1976; Welfling, 1973).
[241] On party polarisation, see Curini and Hino, 2012; Dalton, 2008; Maoz and Somer-Topcu, 2010; Morgan, 2018; Sartori, 1976.

in a system (Barber and McCarty, 2015; Dalton, 2008, p. 900). According to Sartori (1976, pp. 131–145), polarisation indicates the patterns of cooperation and opposition that lie at the core of party system analysis, and in his seminal treatment of the topic, he refers to a distinction between centripetal and centrifugal systems. In centrifugal systems, parties are more widely distributed along an ideological continuum, which reinforces inflexible policy platforms, whereas centripetal systems see party platforms converge in an opportunistic gambit for non-ideological voters.[242] In Sartori's view, centrifugal systems run the risk of dysfunction due to a phenomenon called polarised pluralism, which occurs when party leadership abandons moderate views in favour of extreme or dogmatic ones.

Centrifugal orientations that are underpinned by a high degree of PSI render the compromise needed for major reforms especially elusive.[243] Although some degree of polarisation among parties may actually be indicative of the quality of party competition, improving the likelihood that parties provide voters with meaningful alternatives, highly polarised systems tend to be less effective at delivering new policies (Dalton, 2008; Lupu, 2015a; Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2013, p. 9). Because there is often an electoral advantage for opposition parties to impede the passage of sweeping reforms initiated by the ruling party, compromise is scarce, and this type of bargaining environment is not conducive to consensus-driven policy outcomes (Jones, 2001; Siaroff, 2000). In less polarised systems, however, the stakes of reform initiatives are typically lower, as any potential fallout would affect the parties that comprise the governing coalition more or less equally. Alexander (2002, pp. 8–10) contends that the narrowing of the political spectrum in centripetal systems even ensures that policy outcomes threatening to major groups are implausible. Such close alignment

[242] For additional perspectives, see Calvo and Hellwig, 2011; Cox, 1990.
[243] In more institutionalised systems, political parties tend to be programmatic—that is, they compete with each other based primarily on policy proposals—and the policy orientations of such parties tend to be more stable because parties are accountable to their partisan voters (M. P. Jones, 2009, p. 16; Levitsky et al., 2016; Mainwaring, 1999).

between parties on major issues actually contributes to a greater commitment among politicians to using democratic channels to push for reform.

The centripetal orientation of the Colombian party system is an example of this latter trend, whereas Mexico in the democratic era has embodied more polarised inter-party relations. As these cases demonstrate, polarisation had far-reaching implications for how each party system processed the formulation of policies to deal with crime and violence. Positive outcomes for SSR were not necessarily dependent on the breadth and fragmentation of the ruling coalition as Berg argues but, rather, on the extent to which polarisation among parties affected security platforms. Although party system deinstitutionalisation played a practical role in opening political space that permitted a bolder SSR strategy in Colombia, it was ultimately the longstanding severity and nature of the security threat that rendered polarisation an unlikely feature of the party system. The country's non-state armed actors threatened to upend the entire political and economic order of Colombia, and in response, the major parties exhibited centripetal convergence on programmatic issues ranging from the country's economic model to resolving the armed conflict.[244] Due to a lack of differentiation on security policies among parties and the historical failure of security policies to reduce criminality, political elites assumed collective responsibility for resolving the country's security crisis in a self-reinforcing feedback process (Mahoney et al., 2009). When the crisis reached its apex during the Pastrana administration, that sense of common ownership facilitated inter-party cooperation on SSR, resulting in enhanced security sector governance.

Conversely, in Mexico, the entrenchment of party platforms, encouraged by the institutionalisation of the party system, made inter-party conflict more consistent, and

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[244] The election of President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), a Conservative Party centrist, signalled an end to the repressive tactics of the Liberal government of President Julio César Turbay (1978-1982) for dealing with guerrilla violence. Betancur called for a democratic opening and offered a truce and amnesty to guerrilla groups (Hanratty and Meditz, 1988). On the consistency of successive administrations' National Development Plans and security policies, see López, 2013.

polarisation impeded a collaborative approach among the country's major parties on security policy. Because the security threat in Mexico was more diffuse and did not necessarily imperil the political system as such, opposition parties rejected Calderón's framing of the security crisis and his militarised response, which undermined executive efforts to establish consensus on the design and implementation of SSR. Party behaviour again abided by path dependence, in this case leading to the reproduction of polarisation on issues that affected security platforms. When the executive switched party hands in 2012, President Peña, who won the election partly by campaigning against his predecessor's vision for SSR, changed course on several major security programmes, disrupting the continuity that is so essential to the success of SSR.[245]

In sum, three main factors reinforced inter-party consensus on SSR in Colombia: the centripetal orientation of the party system, the centripetal convergence on security policy to address an existential security crisis, and a public mandate to pursue aggressive security policies. In Mexico, absent a perceived existential threat to the Mexican state, programmatically polarised parties offered differentiated ideas about security, which, partly because of the controversial militarisation implemented to address the crisis, weakened prospects for consensus and consistency on SSR. This study clarifies Berg's party-system approach by evaluating what effect the nature of the security crisis had on the generation of inter-party consensus. But it adds two other levels of analysis to understand the major factors at play in formulating SSR in Colombia and Mexico: first, the party system's existing tendency toward polarization; and second, the public perception of security policies and subsequent impact on polarisation. Because the centripetal or centrifugal tendencies overlap

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[245] President Peña shifted the government's security approach starting in 2012, but these changes did not reduce political polarisation around the issue of security for two main reasons. First, the PAN and many senior members of Calderón's government continued to insist publicly that the PRI was making a grave error in upending several SSR programmes. Second, Peña's strategy did not reduce crime during his first three years in office, eventually encouraging him to revert to Calderón's militarised strategy.

for each of these levels of analysis, close process tracing is crucial to distinguish the impact of each factor on the level of polarisation and, resultingly, on the policy outcome.

Table 7.1: Factors Affecting Inter-Party Consensus on SSR

	Colombia	Mexico
Party System Orientation	Centripetal	Centrifugal
Party System Treatment of Security Crisis	Centripetal	Centrifugal
Public Reaction to Security Policies	Unified	Divided
Resulting in …	**Consensus**	**Polarisation**

Colombia: A Case of Consensus

Restructuring Party Politics in Colombia

Colombia's two-party system embodied a high level of PSI for much of the country's history, reinforced after 1957 by the National Front pact brokered between the Liberal and Conservative parties.[246] In exchange for routinised political alternation, the traditional parties solidified a closed bipartisan system that persisted formally until 1974 (Dix, 1980, p. 317; Palencia Ramos, 2012, pp. 93–94; Peeler, 1976; Stone, 2016). However, as the ruling parties narrowed their ideological offering in a coordinated effort to forge political stability, brand differentiation became a growing problem, and Colombian citizens decreasingly identified

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[246] On political party development in Colombia, see Dix, 1990; Hartlyn, 2008; Lozano Villegas, 2015.

with one party over the other as the country entered the tumultuous 1980s (Leal Buitrago, 1989, p. 33). Even though some party activists attempted to restore ideological bases for political action, the policy preferences of the two parties remained closely aligned after the conclusion of the power-sharing period (Hoskin, 1979).[247]

Despite the formulation of ambitious reform agendas within the executive branch in the 1980s, legislators from both traditional parties routinely blocked initiatives to enhance the provision of public goods, and Colombia's party establishment quickly became associated with the resulting dysfunction of government (Archer, 1990).[248] As Lupu (2015a) argues, if a party's positions or public image become indistinguishable from those of other parties, the partisan brand becomes diluted, rendering performance in office as the principal basis for evaluation on part of the electorate. Importantly, the "narcotisation" of party clientelism, or capture of party apparatuses by organised crime, discredited the establishment (Restrepo, 2006, pp. 29–30). It was in this context that the erosion of the traditional parties—and consequently, of PSI—took place. Given the inability of the Liberal and Conservative parties to deliver enduring solutions to economic and political problems like land reform and drug violence, new political movements seized the opportunity to challenge the ruling class—both on the battlefield and at the ballot box. Indeed, the 1990s in Colombia witnessed a period of guerrilla expansion and a proliferation of political parties, and the fragmentation of political power initiated a protracted transition from an institutionalised party system to a deinstitutionalised one.

According to Dargent and Muñoz, a period of decentralisation (see Chapter 8) and electoral reform in the 1980s helped reduce the power of clientelistic party bosses in

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[247] Hoskin finds that situational factors reduced the likelihood of ideological conflict in the political system, noting that "the coalescent behaviour of the traditional party elites when confronted with threats from below" sustained the prevailing structure of power (1979, p. 501).

[248] The major parties in Colombia were characterised by high levels of party indiscipline. Liberal and Conservative members of Congress often prevented reform proposals from passing, even reforms that originated in their own parties, when policies conflicted with their clientelistic interests (Roland and Zapata, 2000, p. 2).

Colombia's regions, but these changes had the unintended effect of reducing incentives for local politicians to remain loyal to the established parties (Dargent and Muñoz, 2011, pp. 44–45; Lalander, 2003; Ryan, 2004). In this period, the Liberal and Conservative parties had already lost their programmatic appeal to voters and were largely dependent on local party machinery to maintain their institutionalisation (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2007, p. 258). When reforms that boosted the political and financial autonomy of local politicians took effect, local elites abandoned their party allegiances in increasing numbers. The 1991 Constitution, as well, altered the terms of political bargaining in Colombia. It reduced legal impediments to party formation and established special protections for opposition parties. It also made the system more proportional by adopting a single national district to elect the Senate—a measure that reduced the incentive to build regional strongholds based on party loyalty (Gutiérrez Sanín and Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, 2000, pp. 43–44). The resulting panorama featured high electoral volatility, low levels of partisan attachment, and the emergence of personalism as a defining feature of the political order. By the early 2000s, only 12 percent of respondents in a nationwide survey cited partisan attachment as their reason for voting (García and Hoskin, 2003, p. 11).

The total reconfiguration of the party system was not immediate, however, and fragmentation did not signal the decline of elite rule in Colombia. The Liberal and Conservative parties in the 1990s still benefitted from some partisan sympathy and the electorate's familiarity with them, and even in a hyper-fragmented party system, traditional politicians were electorally competitive (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2003). The 1991 elections caused surprisingly little disruption to their legislative activities; the traditional parties won control

over the legal mechanisms that governed the implementation of the new Constitution (Rampf and Chavarro, 2014, p. 15).[249]

Additionally, the power-sharing compromise that was at the heart of the Constituent Assembly selected to rewrite the constitution was short lived in practical terms. The M-19 Democratic Alliance (Alianza Democrática M-19), which endeavoured to disrupt the party system by courting social groups that had historically been excluded under two-party rule, lacked an understanding of the workings of the state and the technical know-how to legislate successfully (Gutiérrez Sanín and Guataqui, 2009, pp. 42–43). Internal divisions over the party's platform, as well, resulted in the formal fractionalisation of the M-19's party, and despite a promising showing for the M-19 in the 1991 Constituent Assembly elections, the old parties had regained lost ground—at least temporarily—by the 1994 electoral cycle. Although the policy-negotiating process had grown less predictable with the infusion of new actors, the traditional parties, which had adapted to the new rules of the game, jointly endorsed the same broad platforms of the previous decade (Pizarro, 2002). The elections of President Samper of the Liberal Party in 1994 and of President Pastrana of the Conservative Party in 1998 ushered in market-oriented economic policies, suppressive strategies to combat drug cartels, and renewed peace overtures to insurgent groups (Wilkinson, 1994).

Some emerging parties attempted to broaden the ideological spectrum of electoral competition in Colombian politics, especially as demobilised guerrilla groups joined the political fray. Nevertheless, as ordinary Colombians became less ideological and less politically engaged over time, nascent parties, too, eventually adopted opportunistic political discourses. Instead of offering a unique ideological vision of a preferred societal order, they campaigned on electoral issues that mattered to the public, like corruption, bureaucratic

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[249] Several articles of the new Constitution required implementation legislation, and the Liberal and Conservative parties, which controlled the Senate with 85 out of 100 seats, introduced laws that aimed to restrict some participatory mechanisms decided by the Constituent Assembly.

inefficiency, clientelism, and governmental negligence (Andrade Terán, 2011, p. 17; Palencia Ramos, 2012, p. 95).[250] Furthermore, the radical left, which would have ordinarily assumed an oppositionist stance with differentiated ideas about the economy and security provision, failed to gain traction among the broader electorate, especially after the extermination of thousands of members of the Patriotic Union (Unión Patriótica, UP) by paramilitary groups (Gomez-Suarez, 2015).[251] The FARC's leadership, for instance, refused to abandon its stance on land tenure, property ownership, and foreign trade and routinely criticised the democratic political left for having acquiesced to the prevailing order of society (Lee, 2012, pp. 29, 33–34; Petras, 2000). In effect, the absence of ideologically differentiated parties rendered Colombian politics a competition for the middle ground (Palencia Ramos, 2012, p. 109).[252] Notwithstanding the political liberalisation granted by the 1991 Constitution, the proliferation of new parties in Colombia did not translate into highly differentiated policy preferences and, by the close of the decade, merely reinforced the centripetal convergence of the political spectrum inherited from the previous era.

SSR as Crisis Response

By the early 2000s, the corruption of the Samper presidency, the lingering impact of the 1999 recession, and the security crisis sparked a wave of public frustration with the stewardship of the country. In 2002, a staggering 86 percent of a nation-wide sample believed that the country was going in the wrong direction, up 6 percent from those interviewed in

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[250] Since the 1974 presidential election, voter turnout has not exceeded more than 50 percent of the eligible citizens (Giraldo and Muñoz Yi, 2014, p. 384).

[251] Leftist parties in Colombia struggled to consolidate an attractive oppositionist message in the period following the adoption of the 1991 Constitution, and the lack of a clientelistic base, inexperience in democratic competition, and the rigid and exclusive ideological stance of party leadership all conspired to undermine leftist party organisation at the national level (Duque Daza, 2007, p. 73).

[252] According to Moreno's study of party behaviour in Colombia, in the congressional sessions of 1986-1990 and 1994-1998, there was "virtually no difference among traditional parties and 'new' actors across policy areas" (2005, p. 501). Many new party organisations maintained very close ties to the traditional parties, and some merely represented legalised factions of the larger parties.

1998 (García and Hoskin, 2003, p. 10). The legislative elections of that year underscored the unmistakable fracturing of the party system with the groundswell of support for non-traditional parties. Forty-six parties that had never before competed in elections won 32.9 percent of the lower congressional chamber, and as this section explores, the first-ever independent candidate to win the presidency did so in what proved to be a referendum on the traditional parties' management of the country (Albarracín et al., 2018, p. 232).[253] Although most of these new political movements did not offer the public radically different policy proposals, they appealed to voters nonetheless because they lacked the baggage of establishment politics (Bolaños Bolaños, 2013).

The definitive issue in the 2002 presidential race was Colombia's security crisis. Following the collapse of Pastrana's peace talks with the FARC, the Conservative Party had lost credibility to propose new ideas for addressing high crime rates (Albarracín et al., 2018, pp. 228, 247). Similarly, the Liberal Party failed to produce viable alternatives for curbing violence or putting an end to the armed conflict. Party leaders were especially hesitant to pursue an aggressive stance that would translate into intensified confrontation and higher death tolls ("Uribe encabeza las preferencias," 2002). Meanwhile, the FARC, ELN, and AUC were mounting steadily more audacious attacks, leading to high casualties among government troops and civilians. As much as 40 percent of Colombian territory had fallen under some level of guerrilla control, hundreds of local politicians had been displaced from their jurisdictions, hundreds of thousands of citizens were forcibly displaced, and the FARC had used the demilitarised zone granted to them during peace talks to impose a new social, political, and economic order (Hylton, 2003, p. 74). Turning a blind eye to the existential threat posed by the country's illegal armed groups was simply not an option for the

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[253] Following the 2003 political reform that raised the threshold for party formation, 74 parties and political movements formally registered with the government, and between 2002 and 2006, around 40 percent of the members of the lower house of Congress abandoned their previous party affiliation to join new parties (Giraldo and López, 2006; Giraldo and Muñoz Yi, 2014, p. 128). On electoral reforms in Colombia, see Ortiz Ruiz, 2015.

Colombian central government. The paralysis of the Liberal and Conservative parties, however, opened the door to bolder voices, and it was Uribe's hard-line position on security that most appealed to voters, including many in the ranks of the traditional parties. Vowing to expand SSR by doubling the size of the military and police and to take the fight to the country's left-wing insurgencies, Uribe won the presidency with 54 percent of the vote during the first electoral round in 2002—an accomplishment he would outdo four years later when he secured re-election with a convincing 62 percent of the vote (Forero, 2002a; Hoskin et al., 2011).

Embracing the opening of the party system that had taken hold after 1991, Uribe ran as an independent with a highly personalistic campaign called "Colombia First" (Primero Colombia). Despite his background as the hawkish Liberal governor of Antioquia Department from 1995 to 1997, Uribe presented himself as an "anti-establishment" outsider, having opted out of the Liberal Party's primary and instead launching his candidacy by collecting signatures from voters to gain ballot access (Dargent and Muñoz, 2011, p. 58). By 2001, the deinstitutionalisation of the party system had already contributed to rising party indiscipline and tenuous party loyalty from politicians nationwide (Milanese, 2015, p. 80). When Uribe emerged as a strong candidate in the polls thanks to his aggressive anti-guerrilla stance, opportunistic politicians, inspired by the early achievements of Plan Colombia, rode Uribe's wave of popularity and eventually supported his agenda (Dargent and Muñoz, 2011, pp. 62–63; "Uribe y el Partido Conservador," 2006). The growing independence of politicians from their parties and the public mandate enjoyed by Uribe combined to forge an overwhelming consensus among political elites on the implementation of an emboldened security strategy (Rodríguez Raga, 2011).

Had the party system remained intact in Colombia, it is plausible that Uribe and his aggressive security platform would have never succeeded in a Liberal Party primary. That is

not to say that SSR would not have persisted beyond Pastrana's tenure, but SSR may not have been pursued as aggressively under an administration that was still open to making peace with the FARC. SSR was only perceived as necessary and urgent against the backdrop of Colombia's raging armed conflict, and to the extent that the country no longer perceived peace negotiations an option, restoring order via a reformed security sector was the only conceivable solution. Uribe's prestige and appeal as an outsider certainly contributed to the public's faith his candidacy, but it would have also been difficult in practical terms for him to secure the nomination of his party, which was dominated by Horacio Serpa, a Samper loyalist and the Liberal Party's 1998 and 2002 presidential candidate (Dargent and Muñoz, 2011, p. 58; Duque Daza, 2005). Serpa continued to entertain the prospect of a negotiated solution to the conflict, but it was clear that most Colombians and a growing chorus of voices in his own party no longer supported dialogue ("Partido Liberal Colombiano," n.d.). The charismatic Uribe took advantage of growing frustration within the traditional parties to galvanise an electoral and, later, legislative support base. The disorder of the party system was so acute that the Conservative Party, which had lost some of its most committed leaders through five successive party secessions, failed to run a candidate in the 2002 and 2006 presidential contests, and President Uribe co-opted a significant portion of the party's membership (Albarracín et al., 2018, p. 230).

To accomplish his mandate and vision, the new president organised an unprecedented model for coalition formation in Colombia that became the key to his inter-party success. One analysis highlighted that Uribe could count on "the disciplined conservatives…, opinion leaders…, career liberals…, emerging legislative stars…, [and] politicians from the regions with clientelistic tendencies and members of the upper class with a strong presence in the media" ("Matrimonios por conveniencia," 2003). Upon election, Uribe received the declared support of Liberal and Conservative legislators representing a combined 58.4 percent of the

Senate and 64.0 percent of the House of Representatives (Ortiz Ruiz, 2015, p. 27). In an attempt to formalise the "Uribista" movement, some of his top backers formed a new party in 2005 called the Social Party of National Unity (Partido Social de Unidad Nacional), known colloquially as the "Party of the U" in a flattering reference to the president. Even though Uribe never formally declared his membership, this organisational effort represented the union of politicians who believed in Uribe's national project, possessed regional party machinery to attract voters, and maintained a majority in Congress (Albarracín et al., 2018, p. 230).[254]

Uribe's coalition had an impressive legislative approval rate for presidential initiatives of 42.5 percent during his first term, an uncommon feat for Colombian presidents (Ortiz Ruiz, 2015, pp. 27–28). Despite party system fragmentation and weak party loyalties, Uribe's charisma and popularity helped achieve high governability and discipline within his legislative bloc (Milanese, 2015, p. 81). Some of the president's most significant victories included the Justice and Peace Law, which facilitated the demobilisation of the AUC, and the legislation governing presidential re-election, which enabled the continuation of his mandate and SSR programming for another four years. Congress also approved Uribe's National Development Plan, successive iterations of the Democratic Security Tax, changes to military conscription, improved benefits for the security forces, and ambitious reinsertion programmes for demobilised combatants.

The total commitment of the government to SSR led to early and notable improvements. Greater freedom of movement during annual vacation periods thanks to increased highway security gave an immediate boost to the government among the middle and upper classes, and the political class also saw rapid improvements in personal security

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[254] In the 2006 legislative elections, Uribe's supporters won 65 Senate seats and at least 90 out of 163 seats in the lower house ("Gran Resumen," n.d.).

(Leal Buitrago, 2006b, p. 7). In 2002, illegal armed groups committed at least 122 politically motivated kidnappings—a figure that dropped to single digits by 2004 ("Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica," n.d.). Even the Liberal Party, which had become the largest opposition bloc in Congress, was reticent to disapprove of the government's record on security ("La oposición Liberal," 2005). As Pachón notes, challenging a president with a 75 percent approval rating and whose security policy was wildly popular was "risky business that does not lead to many votes" (2009).

In addition to placing SSR high on the legislative agenda, Uribe also masterfully used his popularity to consolidate domestic and international support for SSR. Rhetorically, he had already rebranded the FARC and ELN as criminals, bandits, and terrorists who were fighting against an open and democratic society (Lessing, 2017, p. 253). With the passage of Law 782 of 2002 (Ley 782 de 2002), the administration conclusively revoked recognition of the political nature of Colombia's illegal armed groups—a move that closed the door to peace talks while introducing more antagonistic tactics against armed groups (Bailey, 2011b; Leal Buitrago, 2006b).[255] According to Cepeda and Tascón, Uribe succeeded in implanting a "discourse of fear" throughout Colombia—one that successfully depicted the FARC as public enemy number one. They claim that "[Uribe] rewrote the history of the country, getting rid of the lexicon that referred to an armed conflict, replacing it with terrorism, and increasing the visibility of the war" (2015, p. 27). Following a series of high-profile FARC attacks on civilians in Bogotá in 2002 and 2003, Colombian citizens broadly accepted this characterisation of Colombia's violence (Santader et al., 2012, pp. 30–34).

What's more, taking advantage of the historical moment presented by the US government's declaration of the GWOT, the Uribe government affirmed Colombia's status as

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[255] On the national debate over whether to recognise the political nature of Colombia's armed conflict, see Stone, 2011.

an unconditional ally of the United States by supporting the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and approving judicial immunity for US service members implementing Plan Colombia. These actions, in turn, endeared the Uribe administration to its US counterpart and facilitated an expansion of US support for Colombia's SSR (Rojas, 2015, p. 125; Rosen, 2014, p. 49). In August 2002, the US Congress granted the Bush administration expanded authority for a unified campaign in Colombia that targeted drug traffickers and foreign terrorist groups, and that November, President Bush nullified a previous directive limiting intelligence sharing to counterdrug operations (J. C. Jones, 2009, p. 358; Murillo, 2004, pp. 21–22; Ramírez Lemus et al., 2004, p. 110).[256] SSR retained strong support among the leading Colombian parties— and in the United States—throughout the Uribe administration, reinforced by a broader consensus on security and, thereafter, counterterrorism as the national priorities.

Centripetal Convergence on a Shared Solution

One of the most important reasons why polarisation never affected the implementation of SSR during Plan Colombia was because consensus on security had been a longstanding feature of inter-party relations. Starting in the 1980s, representatives of industry, finance, and banking overwhelmingly opposed any negotiated solution to the armed conflict that would jeopardise the neoliberal economic model—a position shared by the military's leadership and prominent currents of the Liberal and Conservative parties (Avilés, 2001b, p. 37). In 1999, 84 percent of business owners supported the peace process, yet only 24 percent were willing to make economic sacrifices for peace to work (Tate, 1999). The shared interests of such important constituencies—and the position they enjoyed vis à vis the political establishment, as seen in Chapter 6—played an essential role in the perpetuation of a policy

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[256] Although the FARC and ELN had been on the US list of international terrorist organisations since 1997, the openness with which US policymakers identified these groups as a direct threat to the United States increased (Nagle, 2002, p. 33). Pardo García-Peña (2006) explores the confluence of domestic and international factors in the formulation of security strategy in Colombia.

discourse that pursued variations on conciliation, militarisation, and neglect in dealing with illegal armed groups. According to the inter-elite agreement, concessions would only be made to the extent that they did not challenge prevailing economic and political structures.

In addition, Presidents Gaviria, Samper, and Pastrana all oversaw repressive campaigns against drug cartels (Simpson, 2004). Heavy US diplomatic pressure throughout the 1990s made sure that many of the programmatic elements of the Colombian government's security policy in this regard remained the same across administrations (e.g., coca eradication, drug interdiction, and cartel arrests) (Crandall, 2001; Vargas-Alzate et al., 2015). Given the overlapping implementation of security policies—irrespective of party affiliation—political leaders were eager to try something new when their longstanding strategies failed to yield results with the breakdown of Pastrana's peace offer. The deinstitutionalisation of the party system certainly did not hinder the consensus-building instincts of party leadership in Colombia, but even prior to Uribe's presidential victory, parties seldom adopted differentiated security platforms, creating a self-reinforcing tendency to strike consensus on security within the party system.[257] Although the ruling coalition was broad in terms of party representation, it was not especially diverse or tenuous, and the Colombian case did not follow Berg's logic about the party system conditions that lead to greater commitment to SSR.

Simply put, polarising the security debate was not a viable electoral or governing strategy. The fragility of the Colombian state demanded a level of cooperation for repelling the threat posed by insurgents, who sought to conquer the state or secure secession, and a spirit of collective responsibility for resolving insecurity took root as non-state armed actors

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[257] When Pastrana attempted to hold a referendum on congressional corruption and encouraged new legislative elections in 2000, the Liberal Party united in opposition to the proposed measure and, eventually, rescinded its support for Pastrana's two signature projects: the reactivation of the economy and the flagging peace process (Restrepo, 2006, p. 40). The one major element of Pastrana's platform they did not challenge, however, was SSR.

expanded their zones of influence (Lessing, 2017, p. 17). One analyst noted, "The risk became so grave, so the parties aligned their beliefs to save the state. To be the party that politicised security would have been very badly received by the public" (Author interview with a political analyst (academia), 2017). Indeed, it was the nature of the security threat in Colombia that sustained public support for an aggressive security strategy, and partisans of all political stripes were especially committed to comprehensive SSR as the central part of this strategy.258 Though support eventually eroded for Pastrana's lumbering management of the peace talks, Congress still delivered in 2001 essential legislation that outlined the components of the security sector and increased resources to the Ministry of Defence (Ley de Seguridad y Defensa Nacional, 2001; Montaña and Criado, 2001). The law's passage, despite vociferous resistance from national and international civil society groups, reflected a considerable level of cross-party ownership for the fate of the security sector.[259] Ironically, the most controversial aspect of the law—a clause that subordinated civilian authorities to the military in zones of military operations—was supported by 69 percent of the public, reflecting the desperation of the Colombian people and the resounding mandate enjoyed by the government (Pardo, 2002).

Two additional aspects of the Colombian context help further explain the consensus. First, security was a technical realm where the political class had little experience, something

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258 Deas (1997, p. 365) adopts a slightly different perspective. He states, "Most Colombian violence today is neither revolutionary nor political." Although much of Colombia's violence is criminal, it still occurs against a long history of political violence. As Brett notes, the conceptualisation of violence in Colombia as political has a "bearing on the strategic mechanisms employed to transform violence [and] to calibrate interventions aimed to mitigate it" (2018, p. 9).

259 The law was controversial from its initial presentation in Congress because it granted extraordinary judicial power to the armed forces; it even jeopardised Plan Colombia assistance due to US congressional objections ("Aprobada Ley de Defensa y Seguridad," 2001, "E.U. respalda Ley de Seguridad," 2001, "Legislación de guerra complicaría Plan Colombia," 2001). However, in May 2002, the law was nullified in a ruling by the Constitutional Court ("La polémica ley," 2001). Uribe issued Executive Decree 2002, which reiterated most of the elements of the previous law while removing the elements declared unconstitutional. The author of this study attempted to locate Congress' voting record on the law in 2001, but media accounts do not contain that level of specificity, and the Colombian government has restricted public access to selected congressional records prior to 2006.

reflected in the low incidence of military or police service among members of Congress.[260] In the words of one analyst, "[t]here were just too few people who understood security to pose any challenge to whatever the president wanted" (Author interview with a political analyst (academia), 2017). Security issues, as well, tend not to win legislators votes among the electorate because soldiers do not vote in Colombia, even though security issues have historically weighed heavily in presidential contests (Author interview with Colonel, Colombian Army, 2017). Accordingly, few legislators devote much time to becoming security specialists. This lack of experience renders politicians expressly vulnerable to the lobbying efforts of their contacts in the security forces, and one police officer described a national network of departmental police commanders who, armed with a cohesive institutional message, work to persuade their respective legislators to pass laws and budgets favourable to the security forces (Author interview with Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017).[261]

Second, for politicians at the local and national levels, desperation over insecurity became personal, as organised crime and illegal armed groups stepped up armed attacks on political elites. The intertwining of political and drug violence rendered politicians and their families from across the spectrum targets for kidnappings, assassinations, and extortion. From 2000 to 2008, FARC operatives committed at least 32 kidnappings of prominent political figures, not to mention the hundreds of other abductions of local politicians and community leaders perpetrated by the FARC, ELN, and AUC during that same period ("Cronología de los secuestros políticos de las FARC," 2008). Under these constraints, there was broad

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[260] Because political elites had all but renounced civilian oversight in matters relating to citizen security in the National Front era, politicians historically failed to resource the Ministry of Defence adequately, and through the 1990s, the size of the military grew lethargically despite the magnitude of the country's security challenges (Deas, 2017, p. 41).

[261] The Ministry of Defence runs a permanent lobbying office, which is co-located with the offices of the national legislature. This office ensures that the Ministry of Defence can vet legislation that affects the security forces and pre-empt any foreseen opposition to passage (Author interview with Colonel, Colombian Army, 2017).

recognition that the political class would remain vulnerable until the security sector could restore the state's monopoly of force—a factor that made even the most cautious politicians willing to accept a narrative that emphasised strengthening the state's coercive capacity (Author interview with Gomis, 2017).

Ultimately, the lack of polarisation on security reinforced the decision of the immensely popular Uribe to continue Pastrana's nascent SSR effort. In 2005, Rangel asserted, "I believe that the topic of security is going to stay on the national political agenda as it is unthinkable [that we'd see] in the future some proposal to weaken or reverse the process of strengthening the coercive capabilities of the state" (Rangel, 2005, p. 51). By the 2010 presidential election, all of the candidates, including the progressive Antanus Mockus, supported direct confrontation with illegal armed groups and the continued pursuit of SSR in their security platforms (Author interview with Nasi, 2017; "Principales propuestas de Antanas Mockus," 2010). One Colombian police officer agreed, "The only way to ensure that politicians do not derail our security strategy is to depoliticise security. Security in Colombia has not really had an electoral logic for the past few decades" (Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017; Rodríguez Pinzón, 2015).[262] It was the absence of an electoral advantage in politicising security that empowered a reform-minded executive and a cohesive legislature to make good on the promise of SSR.

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[262] The first major partisan fissures on the security front occurred after Plan Colombia. Santos, who secured an endorsement from Uribe for his electoral bid, was expected to usher in a period of reformism due to his coalition's control of more than 90 percent of Congress (Posada-Carbó, 2011; Shifter, 2014). However, when Santos put himself at odds with his predecessor on the issue of peace talks with the FARC, polarisation among political elites surged. By the 2018 presidential election, strong showings for candidates at both extremes of the ideological spectrum reflected a complete realignment of the electorate—and the emergence of highly differentiated platforms among forces on the left, right, and centre (Posada-Carbó, 2018). It is conceivable that such polarisation was at least partially possible because the state no longer confronted an existential security threat.

Mexico: A Case of Polarisation

Unlike the Colombian case, it was this very "electoral logic" and different interpretations of the nature of the security crisis that engendered polarising attitudes among the major parties on the issue of security in Mexico, undercutting executive attempts to deliver SSR. Also unlike Colombia, the Mexican party system grew more institutionalised during the transition to democracy, which strengthened the centrifugal orientation of parties in ways that affected their positions on security.

The Emergence of an Institutionalised Party System

Mexico's modern party system has its roots in the authoritarian period, when the major party actors of the democratic era emerged as alternatives to the PRI.[263] The ruling party permitted limited pluralism and, thus, some interest representation during the hegemonic era, and it was in this context that the PAN—with strong roots in the social teachings of the Catholic Church—organised against some of the key accomplishments of the revolution, including agrarian reform and state-controlled education (Loaeza, 2003, pp. 200–201). The PAN's leadership was fervently committed to electoral politics as the vehicle for national change, but the party's repeated exclusion from power under PRI dominance frustrated meaningful electoral success from the PAN's founding in 1939 until the 1980s (Barraza and Bizberg, 1991). At this point, the PAN's oppositionist message attracted a new class of pro-business adherents, especially following the PRI's controversial nationalisation of private banks in September 1982. The *neopanistas*, as the new party militants were called, brought with them abundant resources for electoral campaigns that helped the party secure

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[263] Before 1989, the PRI had not lost a presidential, gubernatorial, or federal senatorial race since 1929, and opposition parties only occasionally won municipal elections and federal deputy seats. Mexico represented a hegemonic party system for much of the twentieth century—one in which opposition parties existed but posed no real challenge to the PRI (Klesner, 2001, p. 6).

major victories in legislative and gubernatorial races (Loaeza, 2003, p. 223).[264] As Mexico entered the 1990s, the PAN had already earned a reputation as the leading anti-authoritarian political organisation—one that embraced big business, the Church, and pro-democracy constituents in equal measure; the party also represented regional preferences, especially those of the economically dynamic northern states and of the agricultural centre-west (Camp, 2007, p. 99; Klesner, 2005, p. 115). The PAN's popularity with the electorate helped it secure a consistently prominent position in Congress starting in 1988 and the first election of a non-PRI president in 2000.

Similarly, the formation of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD) in 1989 eroded the PRI's hegemony and altered the electoral landscape as the country transitioned to democratic rule. The PRD arose after the presidential succession controversy of 1986, when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and other leading PRI officials rejected the selection of Salinas as the 1988 PRI presidential candidate and separated from the party. Cárdenas ran for the presidency under a coalition banner of left-wing organisations, posing a formidable but ultimately unsuccessful challenge to Salinas (though the election was heavily marred by fraud), and in the following year, he secured the support of smaller parties and social movements to found the centre-left PRD (Garrido, 1993). The PRD embraced social justice and opposed the neoliberalism and austerity programmes of the PRI's post-1982 market-led economic opening, but that is not to say that the PRD presented a completely coherent platform to the electorate, as factionalism has been rife in the party's ranks since its founding (Langston, 2004; Mossige, 2013, p. 9).[265] Partly because of such internal conflict, the PRD struggled to achieve stable victories across electoral cycles, but the party

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[264] On the political opening that permitted greater electoral competition, see Middlebrook, 1985, and on declining cohesion among political elites in the 1980s, see Ronfeldt, 1988.

[265] The PRD's ideological orientation was diverse, given that it drew from social democrats, socialists, Stalinists, ex-guerrilla fighters, and other left-wing elements (Camp, 2007, p. 63). The umbrella-like nature posed a challenge for the party's programmatic coherence and eventually contributed to its formal fragmentation with the 2014 secession of López Obrador.

nevertheless ensured leftist representation in national politics.[266] From 1990 to 2012, the PRD held roughly 12 percent of the total municipal elected offices, governed six states and Mexico City, and was consistently the second- or third-largest party in Congress—signalling its importance to the electorate and, simultaneously, a conspicuous placement in the party system (Bruhn, 2012).

The rise of two main opposition parties during the authoritarian period generated a system in which three parties collectively gained around 90 percent of the vote and, thus, determined policy outcomes at the onset of competitive democracy in 2000 (Loaeza, 2003, p. 238). All three parties boasted long histories and clear programmatic identities among political elites and the electorate, and after the democratic transition, these parties continued to align a majority of politicians and voters at the national level (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer, 2018a, p. 205; Wallis, 2003). In this fashion, during the period under analysis, Mexico was characterised by an institutionalised party system—one that provided voters with "clear and distinct platforms that permit electoral mandates, channel political conflict in system-supporting ways, and facilitate electoral accountability" (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer, 2018a, pp. 201–202).[267] As Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer argue, the electoral rules and party finance regulations negotiated by the three main parties during the transition ensured the survival of the established parties but also helped dissuade potential new competitors. In fact, the three main parties managed to co-opt local political elites into national-level parties to deliver a remarkable level of stability in the party system—one of the principal challenges faced by the established parties in Colombia (Albarracín et al., 2018).

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[266] The PRD's erratic track record on elections is partly attributable to its inability to construct a realistic alternative to neoliberal economic policies and its inability to contain cults of personality that developed around some of its most prominent yet controversial leaders (Bruhn, 2012).

[267] The 2018 Mexican election delivered victories to President López Obrador, founder of the National Regeneration Movement Party (Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional, MORENA), and a majority legislative coalition favourable to the president-elect's policy agenda. The defeat of Mexico's most institutionalised parties—the PRI, PAN, and PRD—suggests a potential reversal of PSI (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer, 2018b).

Although each party exhibited a degree of programmatic flexibility, political parties in Mexico continued to offer differentiated brands to the electorate—a factor that reinforced party cohesion and the institutionalisation of the party system, even if inter-party relations tended to vary from election to election (Knight, 2018; Langston, 2007).

Despite the party system's centrifugal orientation, the intervening decades have borne witness to a circumstantial reconfiguration of party relations across electoral cycles. Interestingly, PSI did not preclude the opportunism and alliance building typically associated with less institutionalised systems (Eisenstadt, 2004, p. 166).[268] Inter-party relations have evolved in response to perceived electoral opportunities, and opposition parties, despite the brand differentiation among them and the antipathy that party leaders may feel toward their counterparts in other parties, have generally pursued coalitions with each other when opposition leaders perceive excessive power accumulation or agenda setting by the governing party. The opposition's use of the legislature as a check on executive power has become one of the defining elements of Mexican democracy, and coalitions of convenience, mostly to block legislation, have become a common measure to undermine the success of the party in power (Langston, 2007; Zamora and Cossío, 2006, p. 415). The parties' strategies and even ideologies have adapted to this form of competition, and each party has also devised some catch-all features to boost their candidates' popularity at the ballot box (Greene, 2015; Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer, 2018a, p. 213; Klesner, 2001, p. 2; Reyes-Heroles, 2005, p. 43). Although parties can tap into their regional and social bases of support, parties in Mexico's institutionalised system, like their counterparts in Colombia's deinstitutionalised system, must compete for swing votes in the centre.

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[268] For much of Mexico's post-revolutionary history, the legislative branch and state governors worked largely "in tune" with presidential and party directives administered by the PRI in Mexico City (Bolaños, 2016, p. 99). When the PRI lost its congressional majority in 1997, though, the executive and Congress faced the constitutional and procedural demands of democratic checks and balances that ultimately produced gridlock.

To persuade undecided voters, the politicisation of specific issues has had a polarising effect on inter-party relations. Government corruption, social issues like abortion and gay marriage, and, more recently, security have been recurrent electoral themes and the principal battlegrounds among parties to vie for the median voter. In much the same way that consensus on security was a self-reinforcing quality of inter-party relations in Colombia, polarisation has become a pattern of interaction among the main Mexican parties. Especially following the 2000 presidential victory of the PAN and the concurrent victory of the PRD in Mexico City, bitter inter-party conflict has been a constant feature of Mexico's party system, and the Mexican electorate registered as the most politically polarised in Latin America in a 2009 poll, with 36 percent of respondents identifying as either extreme left or extreme right (Cárdenas, 2009; Trejo and Ley, 2016, p. 20).

The 2006 campaign featured striking polarisation in what some analysts consider the first truly ideological presidential contest in Mexico (Mossige, 2013, p. 30). Unlike in previous elections in which the PAN and PRD downplayed their differences to challenge the hegemonic PRI, the two leading candidates in the 2006 contest, Felipe Calderón and Andrés Manuel López Obrador, campaigned on their stark programmatic differences rooted in distinct ideologies and candidate-specific vulnerabilities (Bruhn and Greene, 2007). From the perspective of the ruling PAN, what was at stake was the neoliberal economic model and free-market policies embraced by the PAN and PRI; the PRD's platform favoured state-led economic development and the expansion of the social safety net (Moreno, 2007). PAN leaders futilely attempted in 2004 to implicate López Obrador in a major corruption scandal, and in 2005, they sought to block his candidacy altogether by impeaching him as Mayor of Mexico City (Authers, 2005; Ortega Ortiz, 2017, pp. 101–102). These efforts proved fruitless, though, and in short order, PAN operatives turned to time-tested electoral strategies

like personal attack ads that characterised the PRD candidate as a threat to democracy and as a danger to Mexico (Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, p. 685).

The vitriol with which conservative voices attacked López Obrador raised the stakes in what was already proving to be a highly consequential political moment. When Calderón won by less than 0.6 percent of the vote, his opponent accused the PAN of fraud and refused to recognise the victory, casting doubt on the outcome and fuelling polarisation in the post-election period. The PRD's congressional caucus even physically attempted to prevent Calderón from taking office on inauguration day (Klesner, 2007, p. 5). López Obrador, bereft of further institutional recourses to contest the result, thereafter launched a years-long, nationwide grassroots campaign as the "Legitimate President" to mobilise opposition against the Calderón government.[269] The political climate reached a new level of polarisation as the PAN's leader assumed office—a reality that would end up setting the tone for the inter-party conflict that ensued throughout Calderón's term.

Drug Violence as a National Security Crisis, SSR as a Way Out

Surprisingly, security was not a central issue of the 2006 presidential race, and Calderón even dubbed himself the "Employment President" during his campaign (Guerrero, 2013, p. 113). However, in his inaugural speech, Calderón asked his political opponents to overcome partisan differences and cooperate on improving citizen security in Mexico (Bolaños, 2016, p. 102). The "silent disintegration" of the state's security apparatus appeared to climax just as there was a transfer of power between Fox and Calderón, when the Gulf Cartel fractured and contested the Sinaloa Cartel's and the La Familia Michoacana's control of certain smuggling routes (Santa Cruz, 2013, p. 547). The increasing precariousness of

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[269] A 2007 survey of national and local party elites indicated widespread differences between the PAN and PRD on most major issues (Bruhn and Greene, 2007). The survey also indicated that party elites were markedly more polarised than voters were.

public safety, the expansion of domestic drug consumption, and the co-optation of state actors (e.g., mayors, municipal police forces, public prosecutors) by organised crime left Calderón few options but to make SSR a central priority of his government. Bailey notes, "The ominous novelty [of the mid-2000s] was that some [drug-trafficking organisations] were increasingly willing to confront the army, the last wall of protection of the Mexican state" (2014a, p. 2). Upon taking office, the new president swiftly reconceptualised the criminal threat as a national security one, and within days of his inauguration, he declared an all-out war on the drug cartels. Characterising the menace of organised crime, Calderón stated, "They are trying to impose a monopoly by force of arms, and are even trying to impose their own laws. Their business is dominating other people" ("Mexico: Cartels Move Beyond Drugs," 2010). The struggle against organised crime was only one of the many areas on which Calderón placed special emphasis, but it nonetheless became the administration's signature legacy thanks to the considerable resources expended and, tragically, the number of lives it eventually claimed (Santa Cruz, 2013, p. 538).

Calderón's predecessor, Fox, began his presidency with an aspiration of reshaping the country's national security structure (Rodríguez Sumano, 2007, p. 2). However, the PRI-dominated Congress, which in an obstructionist move blocked legislation aimed at addressing Mexico's security deficiencies, and in-fighting among members of Fox's cabinet diverted attention away from the issue (Schaefer et al., 2009b, pp. 13–14; Watt and Zepeda, 2012, pp. 142, 150). Calderón, on the other hand, set the tone for his presidency from his earliest days in office, and in a show of federal force, he launched a major offensive against organised crime, sending more than 25,000 soldiers and federal police officers to border cities and rural regions plagued by cartel and gang violence. The operational strategy entailed the occupation of dangerous municipalities, armed confrontation with non-state armed groups, and the arrest

of drug kingpins. By the end of Calderón's term, dozens of top cartel operatives had been

killed, and more than 35 most-wanted drug criminals had been arrested (Aglionby, 2013).

Beyond crisis response, the Calderón administration understood that it also needed to

lay the groundwork for deeper reforms to eliminate corruption and criminality from the ranks

of government institutions, and SSR was central to this long-term strategy. From 2007 to

2008, the former Director of CISEN, Guillermo Valdés Castellanos, led an initiative known

as the Agreement for Security, Justice, and Legality (Acuerdo Nacional por la Seguridad, la

Justicia y la Legalidad), which advocated for strengthening of security forces, targeting the

perpetrators of financial crimes, and enhancing the capacity of the public prosecutors

(Secretaría de Gobernación, 2008). Valdés initially spent a year seeking support for the

document among opposition legislators and governors, but most demurred not because they

disagreed with it but because they did not yet perceive insecurity to be a critical issue

confronting Mexico (Valdés Castellanos, 2013). However, following the sensationalised

kidnapping of Fernando Martí, the 14-year-old son of one of the country's wealthiest

businessmen, in June 2008, the country's politicians recognised that not signing the

agreement would have a political cost and acquiesced to the reform effort (Author interview

with a senior security official, Calderón administration, 2018).

Buoyed by growing public outrage over insecurity, Calderón pushed a number of

major SSR-related measures through Congress during his first two years in office. A fragile

PAN-PRI legislative coalition helped deliver some significant accomplishments, including a

new federal police law, a revised criminal code, and the reform of the Attorney General's

Office (López-Portillo, 2012, p. 109; "Mexico: Taxes, Pemex and Calderon's Reforms,"

2007).[270] Furthermore, Calderón succeeded in passing legislation governing the National

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[270] The contested elections of 2006 further fractured the opposition, as López Obrador continued to reject
Calderón's legitimacy and created a set of extra-party organisations on the sidelines of the PRD (Mossige, 2013,
p. 4). This internal discord meant that the party did not vote in Congress as a bloc, and the two factions

System of Public Security and introducing harsher penalties for kidnapping and money laundering (Guerrero, 2013, p. 114). Notably, this consensus occurred when the electoral stakes for the PRI were low, with more than two years before mid-term elections, and at a time when Calderón's security policies enjoyed resounding support among the public, with roughly 80 percent of respondents endorsing a confrontational approach for dealing with drug traffickers (Camp, 2010, p. 293; "Mexicans Back Military Campaign," 2012).

Party Differentiation and Polarisation on Security

However, by the middle of Calderón's term, legislative realignments and a perceived political opening for the PRI changed the calculus involved in endorsing Calderón's security policies, including major SSR initiatives. The controversial result of the 2006 presidential race exacerbated the existing polarisation, which had already rendered consensus elusive for policy proposals regarding terrorism and natural disaster management (Rodríguez Sumano, 2007, p. 1). But one event, in particular, invited especially polarising attitudes on security, and in response, opposition parties made both the 2009 mid-term legislative and the 2012 presidential elections referendums on the PAN's security strategy. Early in the 2009 congressional campaign season, the PAN's leadership began pushing a narrative that painted the PRI and PRD as complicit with the country's violent actors. When federal forces intervened in the State of Michoacán to extirpate drug criminals in May of that year, they also detained 10 mayors and 25 other local officials for collusion with organised crime—most of whom were PRI and PRD politicians (Ferreyra, 2015).[271] The government insisted that this was the first step in dismantling political protection of cartels in Mexico. However, the timing of the operation in the weeks before subnational and legislative elections raised suspicions

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expressed different views on issues ranging from electoral reforms to petroleum policy. This worked to the advantage of Calderón, who could count on some PRD legislators to overcome legislative gridlock.
[271] Within two years, all of those arrested were released due to a lack of evidence.

that Calderón was intervening to give local advantages to PAN candidates, whose campaigns were being orchestrated by Calderón's very own sister in her capacity as the head of local PAN operations ("Federal Crackdown on Corruption in Michoacán," 2009).[272] Critics soon questioned the real motivation behind federal intervention in local security matters and, by extension, the PAN's security policies more broadly (Kenny and Serrano, 2012a, pp. 205–206).

The PRI and PRD now had a highly visible instance of what they perceived as political persecution through Calderón's securitised anti-crime narrative, and in a public show of displeasure, opposition members in Congress temporarily withheld SEDENA's budget, a rare move that dragged into the partisan battle one of the few apolitical state institutions. This divisiveness in inter-party relations was further cemented when the mid-term elections delivered a crippling blow to the PAN and, thus, to the remainder of Calderón's legislative agenda. When the PRI more than doubled its seats in the Chamber of Deputies, securing 37.0 percent of the vote in the July elections, it formed a temporary alliance with the Green Party (Partido Verde Ecologista de México) and some PRD members to create a working majority and oppose the Calderón government at every turn. Despite Calderón's high personal popularity, the global economic downturn and rising insecurity posed an electoral and congressional setback to his party (Selee and Putnam, 2009). In 2009, only eight of 624 legislative initiatives had passed by the close of the year, ushering in a new period of legislative gridlock.[273] As Franco notes, reform paralysis—the inability of government to pass major reforms due to partisan differences—emerged as the biggest challenge to the new

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[272] In polarised systems, politicians have a strong incentive to adopt polarising tactics, which reproduces the cycle and exacerbates polarisation. When parties become closer in electoral support such that the conditions are right for a reversal of partisan fortunes, each party is incentivised to engage in strategies of confrontation that highlight partisan differences (Lee, 2009; *Negotiating Agreement in Politics*, 2013, p. 35).

[273] Since 2000, the strengthening of the legislative opposition has limited presidential authority, and the president only retains veto power, unlike in Colombia where the president can also decree new legislation (Camp, 2016, p. 225).

political equilibrium, and party polarisation became so acute that by early 2012 critics labelled the legislature the "Siesta Congress" due to its low policy yield (2013, pp. 40, 46).[274]

On a practical level, legislative resistance did not halt existing SSR initiatives, but it did impede the passage of additional security-related reforms and set the stage for a reversal of Calderón's signature projects when President Peña came to power. Most significantly, Calderón's push for the adoption of a constitutional amendment to unify command among the country's police bodies, a topic explored in Chapter 8 of this study, did not muster the requisite support from PRI governors and legislators (Dettmer, 2012). PRI and PRD legislators defended their opposition, insisting that the police reform violated the constitutional sovereignty of the municipalities. However, as one observer bemoaned, "[t]he PRI, on the eve of a presidential election, did not necessarily want the PAN to win the issue of security" (Author interview with a senior security official, Calderón administration, 2018).

In the run-up to the 2012 presidential contest, the PRI and PRD levied stinging attacks against the PAN for its alleged responsibility for the surge in drug-related murders, which numbered more than 60,000 over Calderón's term (Bailey, 2014a, p. 2). Calderón also identified himself personally with the war on the drug cartels, raising the political costs of backtracking or adjusting the repressive approach (Lessing, 2017, p. 264). Calderón's ownership of the issue enabled his astute opposition, which received the public backing of social movements that organised tens of thousands of protesters to descend on the capital to push for a new anti-crime strategy in 2011. As approval of the PAN's performance on security dropped to below 50 percent, opposition candidates seized upon this growing dissatisfaction as an electoral issue ("Felipe Calderón Reviews," 2010; Miller Llana, 2011;

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[274] From 2003 to 2013, legislation originating in the executive branch plummeted to below 20 percent (Franco, 2013, p. 45). Ironically, in 2010, party cooperation shifted again when the PAN and the PRD formed alliances in some states to thwart the resurgence of the PRI (Vale and Guerrero Vásquez, 2010).

Rozental, 2013, pp. 180–181).[275] One researcher proclaimed, "Security is totally politicised in Mexico. If you want to destroy a party or a candidate, you just 'throw cadavers at them'" (Author interview with Ansolabehere, 2017). "Calderón's Dead" (*los muertos de Calderón*) became a common rallying cry for those who felt that the PAN had either mismanaged or exacerbated Mexico's security crisis and a compelling image for an electorate that desperately sought change ("Los muertos de Calderón," 2010).

New Party, New Policies?

The climate of polarisation fostered by the 2006 presidential election conditioned a large and vocal element of the PRD to reject the PAN's mandate, and after 2009, the emboldened PRI saw its presidential prospects improve in the run-up to the 2012 election.[276] Importantly, Mexican voters grew weary of the humanitarian crisis caused by the drug war violence. Despite some isolated successes in reducing crime at the state level, national homicide rates surged from 8.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000 to 23.5 in 2011 (Heinle et al., 2015, p. 3). Surprisingly, although voters demanded alternatives to Calderón's security strategy, the PAN's 2012 candidate, Josefina Vásquez Mota, defended her party's record on security and advocated for an expansion of the Federal Police and the introduction of "military discipline" to the institution (Méndez, 2012). On the other hand, the PRI and PRD candidates, Peña and López Obrador respectively, emphasised a gradual return of the military to the barracks and economic and social development to tackle the root causes of insecurity (Romero, 2012). Promising to demilitarise the fight against the cartels, target high-impact crimes like kidnapping, and create a national crime prevention programme, Peña handily

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[275] Putnam (2014, p. 2) finds that perceptions of crime were a significant predictor of vote choice in both the 2006 and 2012 elections.

[276] Insecurity and the weak economy hurt the PAN's re-electability. Even though Mexico's GDP grew by 5.3 percent in 2010, a 6.0 percent fall in GDP in 2009 due to global economic downturn devastated Calderón's record (Ortega Ortiz, 2017, p. 158).

defeated his competitors with 38.2 percent of the vote ("México: el plan de Peña Nieto contra el narcotráfico," 2012).[277]

Peña entered office with a vision to break with the past, having won the election on a pro-peace platform, and his early security-related decision-making had little to do with whether the existing strategy was working but, rather, emphasised a rejection or modification of Calderón-era tactics (Felbab-Brown, 2013; Author interviews with Furszyfer, 2017; a security analyst (private sector), 2017b). Ironically, the PRI eventually discovered that the governing conditions in the country had changed after six years of armed confrontation between the state and organised crime, and by the second half of his term, President Peña ended up pursuing similar strategies to those of his predecessor, including militarisation. Nevertheless, the early reorientation of the government's security strategy unquestionably debilitated several SSR initiatives that were only in their incipient stages.

Dramatically, President Peña eliminated the SSP and transferred the faculties of the moribund ministry to the Secretariat of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación, SEGOB) (Zepeda, 2013). This move was symbolic in diminishing the importance of public security and, specifically, of the Federal Police, one of Calderón's signature projects, in the new presidential cabinet.[278] When Peña restructured and renamed the body in 2013, opposition parties in Congress reacted with displeasure by stalling the ratification of the new CNS (Sánchez Lara, 2017, p. 67). Although Peña relied heavily on the Federal Police to reinforce municipal and state police forces after withdrawing the army and navy, over the course of his

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[277] When President Peña entered office in 2012, his first major victory was overcoming the political gridlock to forge the Pact for Mexico, which elicited resounding support from the PAN and PRD. The badly defeated PAN sought to make a comeback by demonstrating its usefulness to the electorate, whereas the PRD proved eager to "dispel its image as a naysayer" (Heredia, 2013). However, Peña's early successes eventually gave way to a string of frustrating defeats in implementing the pact's agenda and public security debacles that undermined citizen confidence in his government (Flores-Macías, 2016b).

[278] According to Fernández de Castro, the Peña government paid a high price for subordinating the SSP to the SEGOB; the president no longer had a cabinet-level official focused 100 percent of the time on the country's security dilemma (Olson et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the move resulted in a 235 percent budget increase for SEGOB from 2012 to 2014, placing substantial resources and discretion in the hands of the president's top cabinet advisor (Sánchez Lara, 2017, p. 86).

presidency he repeatedly cut resources and even reassigned personnel from the Federal Police

to fill the ranks of a completely new civilian internal security force, the National

Gendarmerie (Gendarmería Nacional) (Muedano, 2019). The Gendarmerie, which never met

its recruiting targets and failed to distinguish its role from those already performed by other

federal security forces, represented a concerted effort to assuage critics of Calderón's

militarisation, while producing tangible evidence that Peña's security plan was taking the

country in a new direction (Archibold, 2013).[279]

In addition to shifting his predecessor's security strategy in ways that affected the

institutional focus of SSR, Peña put a freeze on some SSR assistance provided via the Mérida

Initiative. Calderón's call for greater partnership with the United States on security in 2007

raised suspicions among opposition leaders and civil society actors from the very start of the

bilateral collaboration. Senior PRI leaders were especially opposed to Mérida Initiative.

Consistent with Berg's observations, the administration's opponents saw Calderón's

closeness to the United States as a feeble attempt to shore up legitimacy for his contested

mandate. Although the Mérida Initiative never amounted to an international treaty, which

would have required legislative review, the confidentiality of Calderón's negotiations with

the US government resulted in distrust among PRI and PRD leaders (Chanona, 2009, pp. 59–

60; *Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, 1917, sec. 76). Whereas in

Colombia's 1998 National Development Plan President Pastrana spelled out his intentions to

engage in SSR with the support of international partners via Plan Colombia, President

Calderón made no such mention of the Mérida Initiative or of international support for SSR

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[279] The creation of the Gendarmerie distracted resources away from the Federal Police, which received
considerable training and equipment under Calderón; according to one observer, the Peña administration
outright refused to capitalise on a Calderón-era success story (Author interview with a security analyst
(academia), 2017a). Another researcher noted that the Gendarmerie also faced obstacles from within the security
system, as SEDENA officials argued against civilian leadership of a military-trained security force (Presentation
by a security analyst (academia), 2017c). One analyst noted that the Gendarmerie was an attempt to install a
PRI-oriented body in the Federal Police, which President Peña perceived as a vestige of an oppositionist
government (Author interview with Ley, 2018).

when he issued his Public Security Strategy in 2007 (Calderón Hinojosa, 2007; Pastrana, 1998). The PRI's leadership rejected US assistance as a matter of national sovereignty and, furthermore, insisted that US prescriptions for solving Mexico's security problem were misguided (León Hernández, 2011; Wolf and Celorio Morayta, 2011, p. 678).[280]

When Peña assumed the presidency, he was "scandalised and speechless" about how extensive the US relationship had become under Calderón and put an immediate halt to most bilateral security cooperation programmes until his government could properly review them (Author interview with French, 2017). He restricted the access of US advisors to Federal Police installations, cut back on US training of SEDENA units, reduced collaboration between the PGR and US judicial authorities, and eliminated US Embassy-supported background checks for municipal and state police forces. The new government also cut funding for the security sector's budding intelligence fusion capability, Platform Mexico, "pulling the plug" for almost three years (Author interview with Poiré, 2017). In one controversial incident, the incoming administration even requested that US security officials depart a joint intelligence fusion centre in Monterrey, where they had worked for years alongside Mexican military and police in analysing drug war intelligence (Archibold et al., 2013).

One observer noted, "President Peña made the US-Mexico relationship rigid, when it was already benefitting from a growing closeness and fluidity. It became unnecessarily centralised, which hurt coordination and results" (Author interview with Tello Peón, 2018). The resulting lack of certainty even jeopardised US security assistance, as Senator Patrick J. Leahy prevented the release of US$246 million until the Peña government could clarify its intentions and desired relationship with its top international benefactor (Archibold et al.,

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[280] In 2009, Mexican citizens overwhelmingly supported US assistance in the form of money and equipment to confront drug trafficking but were split on whether US agents or soldiers should be operationally deployed in the country (Camp, 2010, p. 317).

2013). The Mérida Initiative was novel because it was multi-annual and evidence-based, which committed the Mexican government to building on the same projects from year to year with fixed budget lines. One analyst remarked, "That consistency is something that you never see in Mexican public policies relating to security"—and ultimately something that was lost in the confusion that ensued following the presidential transition (Author interview with Chapa Koloffon, 2018). Although President Peña resumed most bilateral cooperation with the United States, especially after the 2014 arrest of the Sinaloa Cartel's leader, the mixed signals that his initial policies sent to the security sector impeded the momentum and consistency of some of SSR's most important programming.

The Politicisation of Security

Several factors explain why security became a polarising theme among Mexican political parties. Part of the problem with polarisation and, thus, the inconsistency of security policies across administrations was functional. Mexico's security sector lacks a professional civil service, which means that when a new party assumes power, party leaders staff the bureaucracy with loyalists (Author interview with Ley, 2018). This translates into a lack of institutional memory, which has led the government to make the same bad mistakes from administration to administration (Author interview with a security analyst (private sector), 2017b). Additionally, Shirk argues that the absence of re-election in Mexico's political system ensured a diffusion of responsibility for the country's insecurity. Continuity is important to building on successful police models, and the Mexican political system until 2018 did not hold legislators or local representatives to account for their failings on the security front because they never had to prove their record in a re-election campaign (Olson

et al., 2018).[281] It was party representation in the executive, rather, that bore responsibility for the success or failure of security policy. For the PRI and the PRD, insecurity represented one of the PAN's top vulnerabilities going into 2012, and when the PRI won the election, the party's mandate necessitated some differentiation of its security strategy from what voters perceived to be the PAN's failure to reduce criminal violence.

More broadly, though, Mexico's political class never agreed on the diagnosis of the country's high levels of violence. Whereas in Colombia the threat of political violence helped consolidate political support for SSR, Calderón was unable to build a strong inter-party coalition around his security policy in general because the parties had different views on how to resolve insecurity. According to some analysts, the PAN lacked powerful symbols like "terrorism" and "insurgency" to convince Mexicans of the severity of the security threat (Bailey, 2014b, p. 101; Benítez Manaut, 2013, p. 156). Opposition parties and civil society groups resoundingly rejected a strategy that had "more to do with fighting a war than with law enforcement" (Benítez Manaut, 2013, p. 154; Escalante, 2012, p. 104). Simply put, many political elites did not perceive cartel violence to pose an existential threat to the Mexican political order, especially not one that required military responses, and hence, the political class never overcame the self-reinforcing pattern of polarisation in the party system. A main difference between Colombia and Mexico is the difference between conflict violence and generalised societal violence—and how differing public perceptions of those two manifestations of violence affected support for SSR.

Furthermore, there were legitimate concerns among the public and political class alike that militarisation, in fact, had made the problem of drug violence worse, and a growing chorus of voices rejected Calderón's diagnosis of the problem and proposed solution (Bailey,

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[281] One of President Peña's signature accomplishments was the overhaul of the electoral system, and starting with the 2018 elections, legislators could run for up to four consecutive terms in office for the Chamber of Deputies and up to two terms for the Senate.

2014a, p. 6). According to Corcoran (2008), Calderón broke a main security taboo, allowing opposition leaders to shift blame for the growing security dilemma to the PAN: he controversially and unabashedly deployed the military as the primary agent to combat the drug gangs. Unlike in Colombia, where citizens had long been accustomed to the presence of soldiers in the streets in the context of the armed conflict, Mexican politicians and citizens have historically rejected creeping militarisation, and the PRD and the PRI have been cautious about their public support for the army's deployment in the drug war (Rath, 2016, pp. 19–21).[282] Growing concern about human rights abuses committed by the military afforded the opposition further grounds to oppose Calderón. Additionally, Calderón's security strategy focused on battling drug trafficking as a national security threat but, according to some critics, failed to address broader issues of citizen insecurity that went beyond the drug cartels. Parish Flannery remarks, "A strategy that focused on promoting law and order and reducing street crime would have been better for Mexico's citizens, better for Mexico's image and, in the end, better for the region as a whole" (2013, p. 192).

Lastly, the electoral dynamics of Mexico's federal system incentivised inter-party polarisation on security across levels of government. The federal legislature during Calderón's first years in office voted in support of a constitutional reform to synchronise Mexico's laws with international human rights standards and to transition toward a new national justice system. The real opposition to security reforms, however, came from party leaders in state governments, who wanted to protect their institutional prerogatives and

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[282] The opposition's distaste for the military's use domestically may be more rhetorical than actual. The army's use in maintaining public order was a consistent yet discreet feature of the hegemonic period, reinforcing the PRI's predominance by providing elections security, capturing political intelligence, and containing popular discontent (Ronfeldt, 1975). Even though some PRI officials worried about the military's growing political influence throughout the decades, there was never a serious risk of coup activity, which has consistently reassured the political establishment (Ronfeldt, 1985, p. vii). Despite the PRD's and MORENA's historical rejection of militarised responses, President López Obrador's most recent reform to the security sector, the creation of the National Guard (Guardia Nacional de México), was paradoxically conceived as a dependency of SEDENA, but opposition voices successfully pressured for the new force to be assigned to the SSPC (Ferri, 2019a).

refused to purge or reform their police bodies urgently (Author interview with Poiré, 2017).

In the hyper-partisan environment and against the backdrop of an institutionalised party

system, PRI governors in Chihuahua and Michoacán responded by publicly blaming

President Calderón for the surge in homicides in their states, and in the words of Poiré, the

administration "shot itself in the foot" by returning attacks against the PRI and PRD for their

supposed complicity with organised crime. Two analysts proclaim, "The parties themselves

don't directly cause violence. But the fact that they are so polarized, skirmishing incessantly

for power instead of cooperating for the public good, gives parties an incentive to fail to

clamp down on the violence—so that they can use it to discredit opponents" (Bejar and

Wilson Becerril, 2017). Trejo and Ley further conclude that the PAN found a compelling

electoral calculus in sustaining the war on the cartels. They contend that "national authorities

developed coordinated interventions in subnational regions under control of the president's

conservative party but adopted confrontational strategies [with local government] in states

ruled by leftist subnational authorities" (Trejo and Ley, 2016, pp. 12–13). In their estimation,

these confrontational strategies weakened leftist state and municipal governance and allowed

cartels to capture subnational state power. In sum, despite the Calderón government's

rhetorical commitment to restoring the monopoly of force to the state, partisan polarisation

across levels of government may have prevented the maximisation of that monopoly,

damaging the overall effectiveness and accountability of the security sector (Trejo and Ley,

2016, p. 47).

<u>Conclusion</u>

As the comparison of Colombia and Mexico demonstrates, distinct patterns of inter-

party behaviour, rooted in contrasting experiences with PSI, resulted in disparate levels of

polarisation on the issue of security. Whereas the Colombian political establishment achieved

consensus to pursue SSR as the primary means of containing the country's security crisis, the major parties of Mexico struggled to overcome partisan differences and utilised insecurity for political advantage in ways that stunted SSR. Inter-party relations between Colombia and Mexico were so dissimilar that two former Colombian presidents offered candid advice to the Mexican government regarding its implementation of SSR. Former President Gaviria urged, "The parties ought to learn how to form political alliances with other ideologies and stop thinking that this undermines their identity" (Bailey, 2014b, p. 95). His successor, Samper, insisted, "May the Mexican politicians forgive me, but the very first thing is to construct a state [security] policy. The fight against drugs can't be politicised" (Bailey, 2014b, p. 95). However, in the absence of a common, non-partisan diagnosis of the cause of insecurity, the Mexican parties offered the electorate differentiated proposals for addressing it, in due course detouring many of the SSR effort's signature programmes when the presidency switched party hands. Although greater polarisation logically represents a boost for accountability, as opposition parties hone in on the deficiencies of executive security strategies, the Mexican case suggests that polarisation may simultaneously detract from efforts to enhance security sector effectiveness. The creation of new federal security agencies following consecutive presidential turnovers distracted resources and attention from ongoing SSR programmes. Additionally, the ultimate collapse of consensus on security in the Colombian case, coinciding with the Santos government's peace process with the FARC (2012-2016), supports the argument that the nature of the security threat was a decisive factor underpinning inter-party consensus. As the insurgent threat in Colombia became less critical and as the security sector shifted its focus from an armed conflict to drug violence only, inter-party relations became more polarised and decidedly more comparable to those in Mexico (Duncan, 2014).

These findings are consistent with the bodies of literature on public policy and divided government that find that highly polarised party systems tend to limit consensus and, thus, the prospect of reform. Returning to Berg's thesis, positive outcomes for SSR were not dependent on the breadth and fragmentation of the ruling coalition, as the more successful experience with SSR occurred in Colombia, where parties represented a narrow political spectrum and exhibited remarkable cohesion. Nevertheless, the Mexican case corroborates Berg's contention that executives with weak domestic mandates are more willing to invite external actors to shape SSR outcomes. As the Mexican context also demonstrates, though, external benefactors of SSR are only successful to the extent that their activities and prescriptions remain unaffected by partisan conflict in the nation undergoing reform.

Chapter 8: Building a Monopoly on Violence: The Impact of Security Sector Centralisation on SSR

This final chapter explores the third independent variable of this study, the degree of centralisation in security sector bureaucracy, as a critical factor that helps explain variation on outcomes of security sector governance following the implementation of SSR programmes in Colombia and Mexico. The SSR literature and the broader literature on democratic decentralisation have traditionally emphasised a correlation between a security sector's legitimacy in the eyes of citizens and its institutional proximity to the communities it is charged to protect.[283] Decentralised security sector governance, thus, has multiple perceived advantages. In principle, decentralisation helps alleviate the administrative congestion that usually burdens central government, permitting the centre to act more strategically (Grindle, 2009; Rodríguez, 1997, pp. 3–4; Smith, 1989). Additionally, a security sector that is "close" to the citizenry—that is drawn from and co-located with communities and familiar with local customs and concerns—can make greater claims to representativeness (Litvack et al., 1998). Local security providers are especially well suited to intervene in security dilemmas with more appropriate responses and more rapidly (Acero Velásquez, 2004, p. 177; Piattoni, 2009, p. 174). In this fashion, the devolution of security provision to subnational governments tends to enhance the coverage, quality, and efficiency of security services, while giving citizens a greater say in matters of accountability (Ostrom and Whitaker, 1973; Shah et al., 2001, p. 11; Smoke, 2015, p. 220). This is the majority opinion in the SSR literature, and Keane and Downes explicitly stress that second-generation SSR, above all else, should prioritise "avenues for operationalizing ownership at the local level in order to avoid an overly centralized focus" (2012, pp. 3–4).

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[283] Bangura, 2017; Bevir, 2016; Castro, 1998; Hayek, 1948; Hermansson, 2019; Lawrence, 2012; Moderan, 2015.

Notwithstanding this apparent consensus, Manor notes, "It also makes sense to avoid devolving the control of projects which extend spatially beyond a single local arena onto authorities in such arenas," and security is one such project (1999, p. 81).[284] Chiefly, decentralisation of security provision, which disperses decision-making authority across multiple organisations and across different levels of government, has often been associated with the undesirable prospect of state capture, especially acute in contexts where organised crime competes against the state for economic space and political influence (Gambetta, 1996; Garay Salamanca et al., 2008).[285] Eaton posits, "Decentralization in the pursuit of security can be a particularly dangerous option where the state's most important identifying feature—its monopoly over the use of force—is absent" (2006, p. 534).

Faletti argues that efforts to bring democracy "closer to the people" have tended to strengthen clientelism at the local level (2010, pp. 3–5). As explored below, following processes of political decentralisation, some popularly elected mayors in Colombia and Mexico made use of their newfound powers to strike mutually beneficial bargains with organised crime (Moncada, 2016, pp. 7–8, 34). When hierarchical forms of political domination such as clientelism mix with violent armed actors, the fragmentation of state power tends to intensify armed confrontation (Gay, 2012). Fiscal decentralisation may maximise political economy goals in stable countries, but it tends to undermine governance in places where armed groups can take advantage of subnational officials vulnerable to inducement or coercion (Ch et al., 2019; Oxhorn, 2009). Centralisation, then, makes state protection of crime more reliable or enforcement more efficient—both circumstances that

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[284] Oxhorn (2009, p. 4) describes three ways in which the central state transfers power to regional and/or local authorities: deconcentration (decentralisation of policy administration, while policy is made centrally), delegation (transfer of some decision-making authority, while the centre reserves control over key aspects of policy), and devolution (transfer of maximum authority to subnational government).

[285] Decentralised, or "polycentric," political systems entail multiple centres of decision making, which are formally independent of one another (Ostrom et al., 1961, p. 831). In purely decentralised systems, no single entity can claim the ultimate monopoly of the government's coercive capabilities.

tend to reduce violence—whereas fragmentation is likely to increase conflict between levels

of government, across enforcement agencies in the security sector, and between state security

forces and criminal actors (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 20).[286] Furthermore, Lowatcharin

(2016) finds that, practically speaking, decentralisation of policing is more effective in

preventing property crimes than violent crimes and actually has little impact on levels of

citizen trust in the police.

One of the major distinctions between Colombia and Mexico that tends to weigh

heavily on many political outcomes, including SSR, is institutional design. That is, the

difference is one of unitary structures in Colombia versus federal ones in Mexico.[287]

Colombia, a country divided by treacherous mountain terrain and an extensive Amazonian

river network, historically featured centralised political institutions and a strong national

executive as a way to develop nationwide infrastructure and contain civil unrest among

geographically dispersed populations (Borja, 1989; Graham, 1990).[288] In this type of

constitutional order, "the prerogatives for determining and enforcing the rules are vested in a

single decision structure that has an ultimate monopoly over the legitimate exercise of

coercive capabilities" (Aligica and Boettke, 2009, p. 21). Although Colombia underwent an

important process of devolution of political authority to subnational offices in 1991 and

ultimately became a decentralised unitary state, the coercive power of the state still rested

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[286] Brubaker (1996) and Snyder (2001) highlight the harmful impact of federalism on conflict dynamics in Europe.

[287] A unitary state is one governed as a single power by a supreme central government, which may create subnational political divisions and devolve power to them. Ultimate authority, nevertheless, remains with the central government. A federal state is one in which subnational governments and the central government share powers, and modifications to constitutionally prescribed power arrangements can only be made with the consent of both the centre and subnational government (Lijphart, 1999).

[288] From 1863 to 1886, the Colombian constitutional order was briefly federalist after radical Liberals, who had won a partisan civil war in 1862, introduced a new constitution and renamed the country as the United States of Colombia (Estados Unidos de Colombia) (Paredes, 2014). On executive power and constraints, see Bonvecchi and Scartascini, 2014; Cox and Morgenstern, 2001; Ginsburg et al., 2010; Mainwaring, 1990; Pérez-Liñán et al., 2019; Posner and Vermeule, 2011.

exclusively in the hands of the presidency.[289] Because of a centralised security structure, the Colombian government was able to take decisive action to implement SSR in ways that did not interrupt the executive's political vision. Bureaucratic centralisation of the security sector represented a boost to the implementation of SSR.

The Mexican state, on the other hand, is in constitutional terms a federalist system—a political structure in which "deliberation, bargaining, and compromise-seeking are the main *modi operandi* in governance networks" (Papadopoulos, 2014, pp. 273–274). During the PRI's reign, the state monopolised violence through a centralised military apparatus and a national network of municipal police forces and rural defence forces whose loyalty to the regime was cemented by party-centred political alliances (Camp, 2005; Knight, 2010; Müller, 2012).[290] However, following a period of decentralisation and democratisation in the 1980s and 1990s, the Mexican federal design began to exhibit bona fide horizontal and vertical interdependence between policymakers at the national, state, and municipal levels (Haber et al., 2008, 123-160). In this context, the president, governors, and mayors and their associated executive bureaucracies all have a say in policy formulation, and each possesses formal authority over elements of the security sector.

There is ample evidence to suggest that the dispersion of authority in decentralised security regimes may adversely affect the ability to contain insecurity in consolidating democracies. As this chapter explores, in Mexico the absence of a single chain of command

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[289] In centralised systems, a direct line of accountability between national executives and their ministries and subordinate political offices has the benefit of clarity and permits greater sanctioning authority (Berkley, 1970; Jarvis, 2014, p. 414).

[290] Articles 21 and 115 of the Constitution of 1917 establish the rights of municipal governments in Mexico, including autonomy over the political and administrative organisation deemed necessary for the delivery of public services including local public safety (Cienfuegos Salgado and Jiménez Dorantes, n.d.; López Portillo, 2000). However, following the Revolution, national political leaders made a concerted effort to "patch together a rough and tumble police force comprised of personnel whom they thought they could trust to help keep the local peace" (Davis, 2007, p. 8). The creation of municipal police forces, known as preventive police, was inconsistent across national territory, though, and their jurisdictions and prerogatives were limited to those tasks not assumed by the judicial police, which were agents of the national executive and represented the policing arm of the Public Ministry. The Municipal Reform of 1983 and a subsequent reform in 1999 both further clarified the duties and rights of municipal governments in the administration of local policing.

and the lack of coordination mechanisms between security sector actors contributed to crippling inefficiency and a lack of accountability for security sector agencies. Federal, state, and municipal actors could not agree on a whole-of-government approach over more than a decade of SSR, rendering the reforms both incomplete and easily sidestepped by non-compliant subnational authorities. As such, mutual vetoes led to abundant finger-pointing and suboptimal agreements among political elites in the centre and in the regions. In these circumstances, SSR in Mexico fell victim to what Scharpf refers to as a "joint decision trap," contributing to the government's subsequent failure to implement coordinated security strategies (1988). Mexican authorities found that once security provision was decentralised, it was extremely difficult to recentralise in an effort to improve the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector.

The resulting "chaos" of decentralised environments underscores the value of having a single node of coordination to manage and monopolise security (Groenewegen, 2010, pp. 108–110). This chapter explores the impact of security bureaucracy centralisation as a factor with potentially significant implications for SSR outcomes. It argues that the challenges confronted in Mexico are not the fault of the federal system as such but, rather, are linked to the degree of decentralisation, which provided insufficient coordination mechanisms among the agencies of the security bureaucracy and introduced more opportunities for corruption. Decentralised systems require the active participation of civil society at the local level to shape security interventions and hold actors accountable and constitutional mechanisms that define the competencies of each level of government and are respected by all actors (Oxhorn et al., 2004). In the absence of such vigilance and in contexts plagued by high levels of corruption, power struggles and parochialism take centre stage, the number of "veto-players" increases, and policy stagnation results (Schiavon, 2006; Tsebelis, 2002, pp. 136–137). Corrupt security forces and opportunistic political rivals, for instance, doubled down on their

opposition to SSR, and in the language of HI, the decentralised federal system in Mexico resulted in a self-reinforcing feedback loop that impeded sweeping reform (Lessing, 2017, p. 6).

Conversely, in centralised security sectors, SSR does not necessarily require an articulation of reform strategies at multiple levels of government, which reduces the bureaucratic burden confronted by reform-minded leadership. As this study demonstrates, Colombia's 1991 Constitution, which was signed at a time of intensifying violence, prevented any major devolution of authority in the realm of security. The preservation of national executive control over the security sector and its concentration in a single ministry minimised the interference of subnational spoilers that derailed federal-led SSR in Mexico.[291] This concentration of authority represented a boost for efficiency and, arguably, for accountability, as it made it easier for voters to hold the president and his party responsible for improvements or reversals in security. Indeed, Colombia is a noteworthy example of the decentralisation of security delivery without the structural decentralisation of the security apparatus and a testament to the promise of centralised security provision in vulnerable democratic contexts.

Table 8.1: Evolution of Political Organisation in Colombia and Mexico

	Colombia	Mexico
Historically	Centralised Unitary State	Centralised Federal State
Post-1980s	Decentralised Unitary State	Decentralised Federal State
Security Sector Governance	Centralised	Decentralised

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[291] In systems that feature high levels of corruption at the top of a centralised security bureaucracy, senior actors in the executive branch also have the potential to enfeeble SSR. However, this study's scope is limited to those cases that exhibit presidential commitment to SSR—a feature common to both Colombia and Mexico at the outset of SSR.

Colombia: Centralised Security Provision in a Decentralised Unitary State

Colombia has undergone one of the most radical episodes of political decentralisation in recent Latin American history (Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2010, p. 7). Dating to the Constitution of 1886, Colombia has traditionally featured a unitary constitutional model, characterised by the mediation of regional political power by a centralised political authority (Acosta and Bird, 2003). In 1886, President Rafael Núñez embarked on a major political reform known as "The Regeneration" (La Regeneración), which changed the country's political model from a decentralised federal system to a centralised one rooted in strong presidential power, including the power to appoint governors who in turn had the power to appoint mayors. The 1886 Constitution denied Colombia's states, thereafter known as departments, the authority to set fiscal policy, print money, and maintain militias (Rivera Salazar, 2001, p. 102). From this period until 1991, the only significant representation of departments in political decision-making was via Congress.

However, the indifference of the national government to many outlying regions granted de facto autonomy to regional elites, who historically resented the interference of the central state in local matters.[292] Regional elites also contested the centralised power of the purse, which limited the ability of resource-strapped local governments to administer public services. In 1983, encouraged by multilateral lending agencies like the World Bank, the Colombian Congress approved Law 14 (Ley 14 de 1983) in a bid to strengthen the ability of municipalities to levy taxes and distribute their own fiscal resources. Impelled by domestic political strife over a lack of local representation in national politics, Congress went one step further in 1986 by introducing measures (Law 12, Ley 12 de 1986) to relieve the tax burden on smaller municipalities and to improve fiscal administration in subnational government

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[292] de la Fuente, 2018; Guerrero Rincón, 1996; Mauceri, 2001; Mazzuca and Robinson, 2009; Palacios, 2016; Romero, 2000.

(Eaton, 2006; Schultze-Kraft et al., 2016). Structural adjustment linked to neoliberal economic reforms, a wave of civic activism, and a period of political crisis collectively advanced the devolution of power to departments and municipalities, and starting with the popular election of mayors in 1988 (Ley 11 de 1986), the Colombian political system conclusively shifted to decentralised unitary governance (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2010).

In 1991, the new Constitution expanded the popular election of subnational authorities to governors, and the following year witnessed the first-ever popular elections for all subnational political offices (*Artículo 260*, *Constitución Política de Colombia*, 1991; Fiszbein, 1997). The revamped constitutional order formally established political, administrative, and fiscal decentralisation in Colombia, and by the early 1990s, political power solidly rested in the hands of officeholders at three levels of government. Despite the retention of important rights for the national executive, governors and mayors enjoyed more fiscal resources, managed more social services, and were better organised to represent collective local interests than at any point in the preceding century (Falleti, 2010, p. 9).

However, concerns about the impact of political, administrative, and fiscal decentralisation on security encouraged the national leadership of Colombia's new constitutional regime to redouble efforts to provide for public order. Despite the tendency to devolve vast powers from Bogotá to subnational governments, one major responsibility that remained with the central government was security. The institutional reforms of the 1980s fractured political power, which inadvertently increased opportunities for organised crime to access the system. They also empowered new parties and political movements willing to oppose the growing influence of the cartels. Luis Carlos Galán, for instance, founded a political current of the Liberal Party known as New Liberalism (Nuevo Liberalismo). In his 1990 bid for the presidency, Galán railed against the government's passivity with regard to organised crime, declared himself at odds with the drug cartels, and favoured an extradition

treaty with the United States—a position unpopular among drug traffickers that ultimately led to the candidate's assassination. Fragmentation of political power and the diffusion of state actors ultimately made state protection of organised crime at the various levels of government unpredictable, and non-state armed actors, keen to secure stable arrangements with corrupt officials, aggressively used bribes and violence to infiltrate state institutions from the municipality upward (Duncan, 2015; Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 76).

By the early 1990s, these tactics had plunged Colombian society into a devastating security crisis that featured multi-front cartel wars, renewed fighting between the state and leftist insurgencies, and the rapid growth of right-wing paramilitary groups. The state's monopoly of force was, in no uncertain terms, in serious doubt, and regional political figures, who could now stand for popular election, were compelled to negotiate with illegal armed power brokers as they campaigned for election. Some found themselves at the mercy of insurgents and paramilitaries in areas of the country bereft of the security sector's permanent presence, let alone the presence of more enduring state institutions, while others capitalised on opportunities to make money and consolidate votes by quietly cooperating with organised crime.[293]

Although the architects of the 1991 Constitution conceived of political decentralisation as a solution to the crisis of representation in the political system, Eaton (2006) insists that decentralisation in the midst of armed conflict in Colombia actually contributed to a decline in security in the country and an expansion of guerrilla and paramilitary networks in the 1990s. The logic behind this argument is that it is more difficult for non-state armed actors to control or influence the decision-making of national legislators or bureaucrats than it is to coerce locally situated officials. The risk of proliferation of

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[293] On the Colombian government's efforts to regulate party collusion with illegality, see Perdomo and Uribe Burcher, 2016.

potential spoilers as a government devolves power to local authorities is, thus, a major

argument against decentralised security provision. In the Colombian case, one of the most

challenging aspects from the outset was the rise of some subnational authority figures (e.g.,

mayors, governors, council members, and members of Congress) who misused resources and

political influence to court illegal armed groups, which replaced political parties as extortive

mediators of power in rural and even some urban territories. This scenario resulted in the

perverse dynamic by which the central Ministry of Finance (Ministerio de Hacienda)

transferred revenue to popularly elected local governments that were sometimes controlled by

armed groups engaged in outright war against the Colombian state (Eaton, 2006, p. 537).

What emerged was a new type of corruption at the local level: armed clientelism, or the

private capture of public services, contracts, and resources through armed threats (Reitano

and Hunter, 2016, p. 36). The *parapolítica* scandal, investigations into political collusion

with AUC paramilitaries beginning in 2006, demonstrated just how deeply state capture ran

at the local level in some parts of Colombia (Álvaro, 2007). As of 2016, the Attorney

General's Office had opened 519 disciplinary processes against public servants for ties to the

AUC and BACRIM, implicating at least 109 mayors, 37 governors, and 73 members of

Congress ("Parapolítica no es cosa del pasado," 2016).

Recognising the risk of state capture that the decentralising reforms of the 1980s were

already beginning to pose, in drafting the Constitution the Constituent Assembly stopped

short of turning over command of the security forces, namely the police, to subnational

entities, who were at risk of abusing their authority to consolidate local power (Gutiérrez

Sanín, 2010, pp. 16, 38). Moreover, in Colombia, a historical legacy of the security forces'

institutional autonomy and apolitical identity unquestionably influenced the calculus of

preserving the status quo with respect to the organisation of the police. The prospect of

subordinating the police forces to governors and mayors and, thus, partisan designs was

inconceivable following "La Violencia," when the Liberal and Conservative parties recruited members of the police to create their own praetorian guards with disastrous consequences (Ruiz Vásquez, 2004a, p. 128; Ruiz Vásquez et al., 2006, p. 249). The reassignment of the police as a dependency of the Ministry of Defence in 1953 was a successful measure adopted to depoliticise the police (although it concurrently militarised them) (de Francisco Z., 2006, p. 95).[294]

Consequently, the 1991 Constitution recognised the president's operational control of the "public forces" (*fuerza pública*) to include the four services of the Ministry of Defence (army, navy, air force, and National Police). The Constitution extended shared responsibility for the management of public order to governors and mayors for the first time in Colombia's history by making them agents of the president in matters of security policy, but the president retained agenda-setting and veto authority (Acero Velásquez, 2004, p. 181). This historical moment—one in which the mounting forces of decentralisation were halted—was a critical juncture that reaffirmed the central government's aspirational commitment to monopolising the legitimate use of force and precluded any legal proliferation of competing security sector actors without the explicit consent of the national executive.[295]

A brief but instructive experience with the limited devolution of security provision via a network of self-defence cooperatives confirmed the central government's worst fears and the wisdom of the Constitution's prescriptions for security. In 1994, the Ministry of Defence issued a decree, approved by President Gaviria and later ratified by the Colombian Congress, which authorised the creation of neighbourhood watch groups in communities where guerrilla

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[294] Berkley (1970) argues that centralised police forces, should they as a corporate entity not pose a threat to democratic government, may actually facilitate democratic consolidation because they enhance equal and impartial treatment across geographic space and are subjected to increased control and oversight. Kurtz (1995) also contends that in societies undergoing democratic change and demographic transition, maintaining centralised policing structures makes sense.

[295] In the 1990s and 2000s, there was even a push toward recentralising some elements of decision-making over fiscal affairs and gaining territorial control through centralised security strategies (e.g., PNCT) (Schultze-Kraft et al., 2016).

activity was on the rise and central state presence was weak. Known as the CONVIVIR ("to coexist") and armed by the central government, the self-defence groups, which numbered more than 400, quickly earned a reputation for their brutality against civilians and for their own role as a significant source of violence and insecurity (Bargent, 2015). In the absence of any meaningful governmental oversight, many of the CONVIVIR extorted the communities they "protected" and openly collaborated with paramilitary groups like the AUC, which had come to monopolise some of Colombia's most profitable drug routes (Grajales, 2017). Criticising the government's lack of accountability over the CONVIVIR, the Constitutional Court imposed severe restrictions on them in 1997, reducing the calibre of weaponry they were permitted to use and requiring greater legal supervision by the central government. When dozens of the groups refused to comply with these measures, the national executive completely disbanded the programme and disarmed the CONVIVIR in 1998, at which point the AUC absorbed CONVIVIR units that refused to demobilise.

In the wake of this debacle, the Pastrana administration confirmed the Constitution's structural vision of the security sector in 2001 with the passage of the National Security and Defence Law, which, although ultimately struck down by the Constitutional Court (see Chapter 7), reiterated the pre-eminence of the national executive in the political and administrative management of security (Bell Lemus, 2001; Libreros, 2001, p. 203). Importantly, the new legislation asserted the existence of a centralised security bureaucracy that was above the partisan fray. In Colombia, although the security forces take their orders from the president, the military and police profess loyalty to the state, not their political bosses.[296]

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[296] The Colombian security forces have expressed occasional displeasure with executive political decision-making by resigning *en masse* or stalling policy implementation (Deas, 2001). For instance, Minister of Defence Rodrigo Lloreda and 10 generals resigned in 1999 based on their perception that President Pastrana had granted too many concessions to the FARC in the conduct of peace talks.

Nevertheless, mayors and governors possess the constitutional right to design, implement, and oversee local public security strategies in coordination with the National Police, and they have exercised some autonomy to implement citizen security initiatives in their territories.[297] Although the coercive capacity of the police force remains in the hands of the president, subnational political authorities are responsible for municipal and departmental crime- and violence-prevention initiatives. To the extent that mayors' and governors' security strategies do not contravene those of the president, subnational politicians are lawfully permitted to issue orders to National Police units administratively assigned to their territories. In Colombia's major cities, intrepid and innovative politicians have been especially successful in establishing a precedent of involvement in prevention (Libreros, 2001, p. 208). Citizen Culture (Cultura Ciudadana) in Bogotá and Social Urbanism (Urbanismo Social) in Medellín are two prominent examples of municipal-led security initiatives—both of which entailed reconceptualising urban space in ways that encourage coexistence among city dwellers (Abello Colak and Pearce, 2015; Gutiérrez Sanín et al., 2013). These policies understood urban criminality as a consequence of the disorder and deterioration of poorly maintained public spaces, and they prioritised infrastructural interventions and community conflict resolution mechanisms as keys to reducing violence (Osorio Rendón, 2010, pp. 54–60). By pursuing more preventive security strategies, local politicians avoided impinging on the central government's security prerogatives or appearing insubordinate to presidential authority, all while carving out considerable space to shape outcomes and take credit for advances in citizen security.

Subnational security strategies in Colombia were largely compatible with the Democratic Security Policy of the Uribe administration and SSR (Osorio Rendón, 2010, p.

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[297] Subnational authorities can also participate in security initiatives as part of "territorial development plans" adopted by city councils and departmental assemblies (Artículos 300, 313 y 315, *Constitución Política de Colombia*, 1991). On this division of responsibility, see Osorio Rendón, 2010.

13). Horacio Serpa, the former Governor of Santander Department, describes the delicate

dance expected of subnational authorities in this way:

> I have been a critic of President Uribe's Democratic
> Security, and as governor I am strictly compliant with the
> Democratic Security policies because that is what the
> Constitution says. In a matter so important as security you
> cannot have a president ordering one thing, the governor
> doing whatever he wants, and the mayors going off in
> another direction. There are some things that have to be
> national, and we all have to respect them. (Barberena
> Nisimblat, 2010, p. 74)

The constitutional prohibition on subnational political authorities' developing their own

armed security providers further facilitated the coherence of Colombian security strategies

and reforms. Municipal authorities have attempted to raise local police forces to address

specific instances of public insecurity, but to avoid duplicating mandates of the National

Police, their functions have been limited to the application of municipal transit laws or to

provide logistical support during large public events (Author interview with Captain,

Colombian National Police, 2017; "Polémica por Policía Municipal," 1996). One of the

strengths of the Colombian security model appears to be the development of complementary

preventive and coercive strategies at different levels of government—and the absolute

reliance of mayors and governors on national forces to endorse their subnational security

initiatives (Ospina Restrepo, 2010, p. 145). The Constitution explicitly states that the

National Police will comply with orders issued by mayors—a declaration supported by Law 4

of 1991 (Ley 4 del 1991) and Law 62 of 1993 (Ley 62 del 1993)—but in reality, the

relationship tends to be less hierarchical and more cooperative than the statutes dictate

(Marmolejo et al., 2016).[298] Although the president retains veto power over the decisions of

mayors and governors with the police actively helping politicians design their policies, the

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[298] Law 4 states that mayors can override decisions taken by municipal police chiefs, and Law 62 outlines the
obligations of mayors and governors in commanding the National Police.

day-to-day operations of the National Police in municipal spaces necessitate close collaboration between local authorities and the security forces.

Many mayors and governors, however, have demonstrated indifference and a lack of vision in the fulfilment of their assigned security duties, leaving security policy solidly in the hands of the president (Acero Velásquez, 2004, pp. 181–185). To encourage greater interest in prevention at the subnational level, the central government—via the National Police and Ministry of the Interior and with support from the US Embassy—inaugurated the Safe Departments and Municipalities Programme (Programa Departamentos y Municipios Seguros) as a component of a broader territorial consolidation strategy.[299] The initiative emerged out of a recognition that Colombia's subnational administrations lacked expertise in dealing with insecurity, and starting in March 2004, President Uribe employed the ministries of the central government to host workshops with all subnational authorities about their rights, responsibilities, and tools in the protection of citizen security (Acero Velásquez, 2004, pp. 226–229). The government then paired departmental and municipal police commanders with their political counterparts to devise in a coordinated manner security strategies that accounted for regional security conditions and priorities. This tactic made sure that SSR took on a certain local character and secured the buy-in of subnational political forces—many of whom were eager to collaborate with Uribe, who had a proven track record on security and invited unusually close relations with mayors throughout the national territory ("Uribe realizó su consejo comunal," 2008).

Additionally, Uribe and his cabinet ministers increased the frequency of municipal and departmental security consultations with subnational authorities and community

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[299] This effort "represents a positive break with previous practice," as it has improved coordination between security forces and civilian government and helped addressed some government agency limitations at the local and regional level (Schultze-Kraft et al., 2016). However, some critics maintain that the programme in practice merely strengthened the influence of the police over subnational civilian authorities in matters of security policy (Casas Dupuy, 2005, p. 71).

members, who aired grievances and offered suggestions in ways that directly and publicly

took the central government to task for insecurity. Under this arrangement, the national

government became increasingly responsive to local needs and demands without having to

outsource security provision to local actors.[300] For example, in the conflict-ridden Chocó

Department, the Minister of Defence and leadership of the Navy convened a series of security

consultations with local authorities and community members following the tragic massacre of

more than 100 civilians during FARC-AUC combat in the town of Bojayá in 2002 ("Consejo

de Seguridad en Bojayá," 2004). In light of requests made during such consultations, the

central government organised a series of civic action projects through the Ministries of

Defence and Health, constructed homes for families displaced by violence, and reinforced the

military's presence on waterways vital to the local economy. Even though ultimate

authority—and responsibility—for citizen security remained with the president, who

possessed at his disposal the gamut of agencies represented in the formal security

bureaucracy, the central government tailored its responses to local conditions and

preferences.[301]

In Colombia, the benefits of centralised security provision, informed by subnational

participation, have been many. First, centralisation helped streamline the government's

relationship with its main external enabler of SSR, the US government. From a logistical

standpoint, new equipment acquisitions from the United States, channelled principally to the

Ministry of Defence, reached their ultimate beneficiaries according to a standardised

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[300] The Colombian security forces pride themselves on their ability to respond to local demands and nuances—a characteristic more often associated with decentralised systems. General Salgado remarked, "Colombia is a regionalist country. What works in Antioquia does not necessarily work in Tumaco, and we learned a long time ago that our responses have to be local. Our military is adaptable like this" (Author interview with Salgado Restrepo, 2017). Similarly, one police officer noted, "Our police are capable of thinking nationally, locally, and even internationally" (Author interview with Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017).

[301] Plan Colombia, as well, strengthened the capacity of subnational governance through economic and social development projects, but they did not figure as the central component of SSR policies (Ramírez, 2002). According to Antonio Navarro Wolff, who was a mayor, governor, and congressional representative during the years of Plan Colombia, the bilateral SSR initiative was "militarily a success, but [Plan Colombia] also had a social development component…that failed" (Wynne, 2016).

procedure and timeline. The US Embassy supported SSR programming with all four services

of the Ministry of Defence and the interpersonal links between bureaucrats on both sides of

the bilateral relationship (which took place at the level of the Ministry's professional civil

service rather than individual services) made the Colombian security sector a predictable

partner.[302] One US representative engaged in the implementation of Plan Colombia from the

outset—and later in SSR programmes in Mexico and Central America—noted that having a

single node through which to "plug US resources" was essential to the success of SSR

(Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016). "No matter how much

SOUTHCOM would like to export the mentality elsewhere, we can't build up both the

military and police in Honduras and Mexico as seamlessly as we did in Colombia because

they are separate and divided institutions."

Plan Colombia, in fact, created joint training opportunities that further promoted the

cooperation between security sector agencies, giving a boost to state cohesion and

centralisation (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 84). In Colombia, the US military's goal was not to

work with every unit. Instead, US strategic planners anticipated the diffusion of US-exported

processes and doctrine throughout the Ministry of Defence via personnel and leadership

rotations. Central to this strategy was the invitation of hundreds of Colombian military

officers, from all three services and the National Police, to attend US military schools, which

created a common experience for the Colombian security forces, fomented ties between the

two countries, and standardised administrative and operational practices Ministry-wide

(Author interview with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016). Although this approach was not

necessarily new in the hemisphere, Plan Colombia ensured that Colombians were the top

beneficiaries of training: in 2012, Colombian students represented 53 percent of Latin

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[302] The high level of cooperation and trust between Colombian and US personnel even led to the US government's embedding personnel in Colombian units during the conduct of operations ("JUNGLA Commandos," 2018).

American students in resident courses in the United States and 70 percent of students participating in regional MTTs (*Report to Congress on WHINSEC*, 2012). Similarly, SOUTHCOM helped the Colombian military establish a non-commissioned officer school in a bid to professionalise the enlisted corps (Rhem, 2005). From the vantage of multiple US defence officials, one of the most vital US contributions to the homogenisation of the services was the establishment of the Colombian Army's counternarcotics brigade in 1998, as it gave the US government "a clean slate" to set up a new staff structure and decision-making hierarchy. The new brigade importantly served as a template for later structural reforms in the military and police that reorganised the security forces according to the US/NATO continental staff system (Author interviews with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2017; a senior US defence official, 2017b).[303]

Second, centralisation reduced bureaucratic resistance to the introduction of new reforms, disempowering would-be spoilers of SSR. Centralisation and a single hierarchy established a respected system of accountability, and given the prominent role afforded US advisers in the SSR endeavour, the security sector's leadership, excited by the prospect of sustained engagement with the US government, seldom pushed back against recommendations for organisational modifications.[304] According to one former Colombian adviser to the Mexican SSP, SSR in Colombia was so successful because there was a clear chain of command that everyone respected. Domestic political authorities and international partners concentrated their praise, concerns, and complaints about the military and police in the figure of the Minister of Defence (Author interview with a Colombian defence contractor, 2016). Civilian control of the military permitted the minister and the president to remove officers whose behaviour betrayed the principles of SSR, while rewarding those who

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[303] The continental staff system refers to the division of labour among staff specialities in the military according to functions such as manpower, intelligence, operations, logistics, and plans.
[304] One major exception was human rights vetting, which generated especially heated discussions between diplomats and military officers on both sides of the bilateral relationship (Tate, 2011).

embraced reforms with promotions and desirable commands. In this way, the executive

prevented the erosion of support for SSR from within the agencies undergoing reform—a

most essential feat.[305]

Furthermore, the constitutional declaration that the country's security agencies would

remain national in character prevented them from being drawn into partisan competition for

votes and, especially, corrupt local pacts between subnational officials and organised crime.

One Colombian police officer observed, "There is a lack of trust in subnational governments.

If the state begins to look at what it spends on the National Police, it will find motives to

decentralise the force [to cut costs], but this would expose subnational police to corruption at

departmental and municipal levels—something Congress does not want to risk" (Author

interview with Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017). That is not to say that the security

forces are immune to corruption or clientelistic arrangements, as explored in Chapter 5, but

systematised corruption by drug gangs, which typically seek to influence at as low a level of

government as possible to minimise detection, has proven more difficult thanks to the

security sector's hierarchical structure. Ministry-wide policies that enforce the routine

rotations of soldiers and police officers, at unpredictable intervals, have helped deter unit

infiltration by local criminals, a feature absent in Mexico's geographically bound municipal

forces.

In addition, an organisational and social rift between officers and their subordinate

soldiers or beat cops has meant that this brand of corruption, when it does occur, typically

takes place in clusters (i.e., among peers at the unit level) instead of across the organisation at

large (Ruiz Vásquez, 2013). Although it is impossible to discern how deeply corruption rings

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[305] According to two analysts, Santos had been orchestrating the promotion of more open-minded, apolitical officers for more than a decade. The "false positives" scandal resulted in the firing of many unsavoury and corrupt officers by then-Minister of Defence Santos, who was able to purge a number of senior officers loyal to Uribe. This action permitted Santos to modify the composition of the high command so that it would support his peace overtures to the FARC during his presidency (Author interviews with Barrera, 2017; González González, 2017).

within the National Police run, relatively high public approval of police performance and zero-tolerance policies enacted by successive government to dismiss venal officers suggest that links to organised crime are the exception, not the norm. The Colombian National Police was taken to task for systemic corruption during General Serrano's far-reaching purge and reform in the 1990s, and as recently as 2016, the Ministry of Defence purged hundreds of police officers, including the national director, for unbecoming and illegal behaviour ranging from drug distribution to bribery ("La depuración de la policía," 2016).[306] As de Francisco Z. states, "Corruption within the national police is minor in comparison to other agencies within the Colombian government…. The involvement in fighting drug trafficking also provides experience in fighting corruption and the development of counterintelligence operations [against corrupt personnel]" (2006, p. 110).

A third major benefit of centralised security bureaucracy and, specifically, the concentration of forces in the Ministry of Defence is that it helped contain redundancies and inefficiencies among security sector actors. The clear legal separation of the faculties ascribed to the Colombian Armed Forces and those of the National Police clarified responsibilities in responding to criminality and enabled civilian leadership to determine the strategic direction of each service in an integrated way, including doctrinal reforms, capability enhancements, and equipment acquisitions. For example, all of the national forces have a role in counternarcotics missions, but their mandates are different from service to service. Whereas the Colombian Army's counternarcotics brigades are responsible for neutralising armed groups in areas of the country flush with drug crops to prepare these

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[306] The author is not suggesting that the military and police have handled venality with their ranks perfectly. Illicit enrichment, criminal links, and abuse of authority remain problems, suggesting that incentives to engage in illegal behaviour persist, and over the past two decades, the Ministry of Defence has uncovered major contracting irregularities among all of the services (Nagle, 2002, pp. 16–20). However, when scandal has hit the Ministry of Defence, it has typically resulted in sweeping dismissals of implicated personnel. This has permitted the force to retain the trust of the Colombian public, who recurrently demand the presence of police officers in their neighbourhoods and who generally perceive the police as effective agents of order (Ruiz Vásquez, 2013).

territories for eradication missions, the National Police's JUNGLA Commandos (Compañía Jungla Antinarcóticos) follow up the actions of the army with specialised interdiction missions targeting processing labs, narcotics caches, and precursor chemicals ("JUNGLA Commandos," 2018).[307] The uniformed leadership of each security force have also utilised their positions vis-à-vis the Minister of Defence to help shape SSR goals (Author interview with García, 2017). The incorporation of the services' institutional preferences has facilitated useful innovation. For example, in the early 2000s, the Colombian military's seizure of laptops, thumb drives, and mobile phones during raids on insurgent camps often rendered evidence inadmissible in trials because the military did not have the legal right to secure criminal evidence. In response, the National Police began embedding specialised police officers in operational military units, thereby fusing military operations and judicial investigations in the same task force (Author interviews with Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017; a senior US law enforcement official, 2016).[308] In some operations, the government even deployed civilian prosecutors with military units to expedite judicial procedures for high-profile captures or arrests. This brand of interagency integration and interoperability, which saves resources and makes easier the delivery of justice, would be unlikely were it not for the high degree of bureaucratic centralisation.

The preservation of a centralised security bureaucracy, in spite of the decentralising impulses of the Colombian government in the late twentieth century, has proven to be an important facilitator of SSR. The Colombian security sector managed to maintain a centralised administration and hierarchy, which streamlined the adoption of reforms and

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[307] Despite these efforts, which resulted in a notable reduction of cocaine production over the years of Plan Colombia, Colombia remains the world's principal source of cocaine, suggesting that repressive counterdrug policies alone will not put an end to illicit drug production (Mejía, 2016).

[308] The leadership of the armed forces initially lobbied to secure judicial functions for military units involved in counterinsurgency in Colombia's most remote regions, but when the National Police's leadership demanded that police personnel fulfil this function, the military ceased pressing for an expanded role (Author interview with Captain, Colombian National Police, 2017).

neutralised spoilers, while instituting programmes to bring the security forces closer to local concerns. Although the drug business and its associated corruption continued to pose challenges at the time of writing, SSR entailed the implementation of organisational policies and operational strategies to reduce the risk of institution-wide venality. The Colombian example encourages scholars to reconsider what is meant by decentralising security provision as a component of SSR, and it serves as an important argument in favour of conserving existing centralised security provision, especially in societies plagued by corruption and non-state security provision, instead of outright devolving such authority to municipal actors.

As explored in the following section, the Mexican case features a decentralised and deconcentrated model of security provision that complicated the adoption of SSR and, in fact, undermined security sector governance, contributing to worsening insecurity. One senior Mexican government official concluded, "Mexico is a fragmented system, which works for everything except for security. Decentralising security has been the wrong approach. Two things always need to be controlled centrally: macroeconomic growth and security, which requires the monopoly of the legitimate use of force" (Author interview with a former Mexican Ambassador to the United States, 2017). It would appear that, at least in this latter regard, the Colombian experience powerfully validates this point.

Mexico: Multi-nodal Security Provision in a Decentralised Federal State

From the mid-1930s until the 1990s, Mexican federalism existed only in name, as the political system exhibited solidly centralised tendencies (Schiavon, 2006). Presidential power rooted in PRI predominance was the arbiter of national, state, and municipal politics for decades, and the ruling party often manipulated elections to ensure its continued occupation

of power (Acosta Romero, 1982).[309] During this period, law enforcement, which per Article 115 of the Constitution is a responsibility of municipal government, was not a regime priority because the heterogeneous PRI governing coalition successfully managed most challenges. As a consequence, the state historically failed to allocate sufficient resources to municipal governments, which depended on the federal government for revenue, to professionalise and properly equip the police (López Portillo, 2002, p. 114). According to Gómez Céspedes (1998), police forces were principally instruments of political control, granted sufficient autonomy to repress and extort citizens as long as they expressed loyalty to state-level PRI authorities. Although the administration of public security was decentralised dating as far back as 1917, the use of the police as an extension of national political authority was a persistent practice that aligned police forces with the clientelistic order of the hegemonic regime.

However, as in Colombia, the Mexican government acquiesced, in part, to the prodding of international lending bodies in the 1980s following the regional debt crisis and implemented major decentralising reforms.[310] According to some analysts, the Mexican government's decentralisation efforts were also a coordinated strategy to regain legitimacy and credibility that the PRI began to lose amid simultaneous political and economic troubles (Haber et al., 2008; Rodríguez, 1997; Selee, 2011). President de la Madrid's Municipal Reform of 1983 represented a boost for subnational autonomy and for the first time permitted the allocation of federal funds to municipalities via state governments, which thereby empowered governors to determine the amount of federal monies each municipality received.

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[309] On election rigging and how the PRI used social relief to expand its clientelistic network of electoral support, see Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016; Molinar and Weldon, 1994.

[310] The debt crisis in Latin America, during which the region's foreign debt exceeded countries' repayment capacity, prompted political leadership in the region to reconsider the centralised management of governance. Fiscal stress exposed the vulnerability of large central governments, encouraged greater efficiency, and created incentives for politicians to delegate responsibilities to lower levels of government (Willis et al., 1999, p. 16). Additionally, de la Madrid viewed decentralisation as a means of managing growing opposition to the PRI (Cook et al., 1994; Santín del Río, 2004).

Additionally, the reform clarified the municipal government's responsibility for public safety, assigning a greater share of revenue to subnational authorities for citizen security, traffic enforcement, and fire and emergency medical services. From this point forward, municipalities began lobbying for and expending considerable resources to develop and maintain municipal police services, which were at once both forces of public order and agents of clientelism. Nevertheless, throughout the 1990s, investment in public security remained minimal, estimated at 0.008 percent of GDP (Sabet, 2011, p. 254).

The de la Madrid administration's reforms extended to the electoral realm, as well, and under his watch, the government enforced a greater commitment to electoral integrity, permitting the popular election of non-PRI candidates to subnational offices on a wide scale. When the 1983 elections resulted in opposition victories in five state capitals and more than a dozen smaller cities, however, the PRI recognised its growing unpopularity and its electoral vulnerability, which stalled further political liberalisation—and opposition victories—until the contested and fraudulent electoral cycle of 1988 (Cornelius, 1985, p. 102). After that year, party system reorganisation and popular mobilisation combined to make subnational elections increasingly competitive by the mid-1990s (Camp, 2015). President Zedillo's New Federalism project in the 1990s further decentralised political authority in Mexico, and sweeping reforms included boosting the autonomy of subnational governments, increasing the transparency of administrative functions at all levels of government, and strengthening the administrative and taxation capacity of the municipalities (Rodríguez, 1997, p. 84). Electoral and judicial reforms, too, gave more privileges to state governments. A 1995 fiscal overhaul afforded subnational governments an increasing share of national expenditures devolved from the federal government—a modification that emboldened the political ambitions of mayors and governors, who could extract more resources for their political platforms. In 1999, transfers represented 39.0 percent of the federal budget, up from just 21.2

percent in the period preceding the reform (Camacho-Gutiérrez, 2003, p. 136; Courchene and Díaz-Cayeros, 2000, p. 206). As the PRI's reign began to crack, decentralisation intersected with the process of democratisation, thereby strengthening the clout of subnational actors in defining the extent of governmental reforms (Falleti, 2010, p. 229).[311]

Mexico's process of decentralisation had, in just over a decade, both declared an important role for subnational authorities in the provision of citizen security and at last permitted the free election of subnational officeholders.[312] Not unlike the politicisation of security issues observed at the national level in Chapter 7, this confluence of factors ensured that security would eventually become a top electoral and partisan issue at the subnational level, too, particularly after cartel activity and intimidation of local politicians mushroomed by the late 1990s. Zedillo's reforms to the Attorney General's Office and the creation of new subnational and judicial police forces increased institutional fragmentation in Mexico, inadvertently multiplying corruption channels and reducing the state's ability to regulate the drug market and security threats (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 94). State and municipal police forces had possessed a partisan identity dating to the hegemonic period, but even after democratisation, mayors and governors often continued to appoint their local police commissioners in exchange for campaign contributions and political loyalty (López Portillo, 2002; Sabet, 2012, pp. 62–94). López Portillo states, "The basis of police behavior—and of the regime as a whole—has been political, not legal. The police were excluded from the modernization policies of the state and were consolidated as a privileged resource of repression and corruption" (2002, p. 116). Most state constitutions do not specify the qualifications necessary to the appointment of police leadership, and in practice, one need not

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[311] Decentralisation in Mexico reinforced clientelistic networks because actual authority and the bulk of resources remained at the state level, where governments utilised them to consolidate regional electoral advantages (Oxhorn, 2009, p. 5).

[312] Whereas in Colombia subnational officeholders became popularly elected with the 1991 Constitution, in Mexico they had always been elected, although the PRI severely limited opposition victories.

have experience or qualifications in the realm of public security to become a municipal police chief (Gamboa Montejano, 2005). In addition, changes in subnational political leadership often put a halt to the continuity of police reforms undertaken by previous municipal and state administrations, especially when subnational political power changed party hands (Sabet, 2012).

Additionally, Valadés insists that the design of Mexican federalism bestows inordinate power upon state governors, in turn creating a perverse competition to acquire or influence local political office at all costs (Valadés, 2017).[313] In the democratic era, governors exercise a de facto veto power by refusing to cooperate with federal strategies—a rare occurrence during the PRI's hegemony given the president's ability to remove governors from office. Likewise, state governments tended to use FASP funds to enhance their own coercive capacity, leaving very little to municipal police forces (Sabet, 2011, p. 256). Shared authority often pits levels of government against one another, and for this very reason, the Mexican Army's leadership has been so insistent on the passage of an interior security law that legally expands the military's autonomy in the whole of the national territory regardless of whether subnational authorities cooperate (Presentation by a security analyst (academia), 2017d).[314]

In this context, the ruling party at the federal level could "no longer reach down into the territories," where opposition parties—or unaligned mayors or governors—held the reins of local government and, at times, actively undermined federal strategies for resolving criminality (Author interview with a former Mexican Ambassador to the United States, 2017; Guzmán-Sánchez and Espriu-Guerra, 2014; Rodríguez, 1997). In some regions, municipal

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[313] Mexico's states are often seen as "bastions of the old regime," making it difficult for the federal government to impose top-down initiatives (Vale and Guerrero Vásquez, 2010, pp. 13, 41–70). Gibson (2013) and Giraudy (2015) explore how federal systems can preserve the position of subnational autocrats despite democratisation.
[314] However, the Interior Security Law removed the onus on state governments to be proactive about security because governors know that a "federal bail-out will always be an option" (Author interview with Chapa Koloffon, 2018).

and state police forces, alongside mayors and governors, engaged in underhanded arrangements with organised crime, serving as important points of entry for state capture.[315] These circumstances put them in direct competition with the federal forces of law and order, which also colluded with criminality on occasion. In 2005, in one of the first high-profile instances of blue-on-blue crime, municipal police forces fired on unarmed federal police officers in Nuevo Laredo, resulting in the detention of the 700-member municipal force and subsequent dismissal of half of the force over ties to drug gangs (Althaus and Grillo, 2005). Davis summarises Mexico's security dilemma in this way: "Elected officials in both local and national government are caught in a bind as they seek to secure administrative loyalty from security forces…and purify a corrupt police apparatus at the same time" (2006, p. 83).

The politicisation of subnational police forces—and their use in the clientelistic practices of corrupt mayors and governors or as agents of organised crime—has rendered them particularly effective spoilers of SSR (Bailey, 2011a, p. 332; Powell, 2012; Sabet, 2012, pp. 105–109). A human rights defender noted that in many municipalities organised crime groups hand-pick members of the municipal police forces on behalf of mayors and demand that the police extort the local populace at their behest (Author interview with Vázquez Valencia, 2017). Under these circumstances, civil society runs a risk too fatal to be an effective check on local state power.[316] The decentralisation of Mexico's federal system appears to have facilitated multi-nodal cover for illegality and violence, as non-state armed actors carved out influence among municipal and state authorities. From the 1990s through the early 2000s, fragmentation occurred in the national, subnational, and criminal spheres simultaneously. This trend generated instability and opportunities for corruption for the

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[315] Although seldom have governors and mayors been convicted on collusion charges, there are no shortage of allegations of political collusion with organised crime and widespread tolerance of such corruption (Sabet, 2011, p. 266).
[316] Civil society in Mexico suffers from other challenges, including limited access to information to monitor public security, indifference from political authorities, and a lack of legal oversight authority (Sabet, 2013).

political world and organised crime alike (Chindea, 2014). Corrupt agreements at one level of government sometimes inhibited law enforcement operations conducted by another, as documented in Chapter 6's case study of Ciudad Juárez (Rios Contreras, 2012, p. iii).[317] Pansters explains, "Democratization…was not accompanied by diminishing violence and coercion, but rather by their displacement, or even democratization and decentralization" (Pansters, 2012, p. 6).

Indeed, political liberalisation during the 1990s represented a shift for the security panorama in the Mexican case because the prerogatives of newly empowered subnational authorities over citizen security made it difficult for the federal government to establish a monopoly of force following the decline of the PRI's hegemonic rule (Bailey, 2014a, p. 117). Even when Calderón, frustrated by his inability to nationalise security provision, attempted to entice municipal governments to professionalise their police by providing Municipal Public Security Subsidies (Subsidio de Seguridad Pública Municipal, SUBSEMUN) to those forces that met certain minimum requirements, the programme provided "perverse incentives for municipalities to implement window dressing reform" (Sabet, 2011, p. 261). His top-down, centralising approach largely failed.

In addition to decentralisation, deconcentration of the security bureaucracy at the federal level further complicated the state's ability to monopolise and coordinate armed power. In the 1930s and 1940s, Presidents Cárdenas and Alemán oversaw the reorganisation of the national-level security and defence apparatus to protect the presidency against political interference or coups from within the security sector (Author interview with a former Mexican Ambassador to the United States, 2017). To prevent such meddling, the government divided the security sector's corporate power to act as a single entity and split the Secretariat

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[317] Davis (2006, p. 60) asserted as early as 2006 that an environment of obsessive partisan competition, combined with the fragmentation of the state's coercive apparatus, impeded the government from reforming Mexico's policing model.

of War into two separate cabinet-level ministries, SEDENA and SEMAR. For good measure, PRI governments thereafter founded two additional security forces, the Presidential Chiefs of Staff (Estado Mayor Presidencial) and the Mexico City Police Force.[318] In doing so, the political establishment definitively diffused the federal forces of law and order, but government officials often went one step further by playing to the rivalries among the services and utilising whichever one appeared most convenient to the government's immediate political ends (Rath, 2016, p. 16). In exchange for loyalty, PRI governments implicitly ceded organisational self-governance to the security sector's top commanders, bestowing upon the most loyal forces considerable autonomy that has persisted from the 1940s to the present (Author interview with J.J. Romero, 2017).

Because the federal forces have been a ready and faithful fulcrum for the security initiatives of the central government, it is not surprising that the military and the SSP, at least under Calderón, were the major focus of SSR. In fact, the Mérida Initiative entailed a push for even more centralised security coordination, but rarely did these attempts manage to overcome institutional and subnational resistance to reform. Instead, "hybrid policing models" (those that include multiple actors and stakeholders of different origins participating in the provision of public security) have contributed to the perpetuation of insecurity (Laurency, 2017, pp. 7–8). Alejandro Poiré, the Secretary of Public Security during the Calderón administration, remarked:

> Centralisation is an important factor because it contributes
> to efficiency. You can reproduce reform at every level
> because the standards are the same…but the Mexican
> government possesses an institutional resilience, which
> prevents our institutions from being more adaptable,
> flexible, and innovative—and even honest. (Author
> interview with Poiré, 2017)

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[318] The Mexico City Municipal Police was under the command of the Mexican presidency until 2014, when the force underwent a sweeping reform. Following the creation of the SSP in 2000 and its strengthening during the Calderón government, the Peña administration devolved authority over the capital's police force to the mayor's office.

Platform Mexico, as highlighted in Chapter 5, was a concerted and well-financed effort to consolidate intelligence operations and promote information sharing among security sector agencies at every level of government, but according to one observer, the programme was dead on arrival because there was no accountability at the local level. Where poorly trained municipal police lacked the technical capacity to use the system or helped criminal actors to infiltrate it, security interventions stalled or failed due to incomplete and misleading data (Author interview with Furszyfer, 2017).

Other attempts to centralise coordination among the various security forces faced a similar fate. Efforts to streamline an interagency process in Mexico included the 1995 National Public Security System (Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública), the 2005 National Security Council (Consejo de Seguridad Nacional), and the reorganisation of the SSP during the Peña administration.[319] However, as Sánchez Lara (2017, p. 20) points out, interagency coordination mechanisms in Mexico have failed resoundingly. The major security institutions all retain special exemptions from legal restrictions placed on other government agencies, making intergovernmental strategies difficult to coordinate. Included among these privileges are the protection of classified information, secret budgets, separate judicial systems, and specialised recruitment and entry requirements (Sánchez Lara, 2017, p. 21). The Technical Secretary of the National Security Council (Secretariado Técnico del Consejo de Seguridad Nacional, STCSN), a senior-level executive advisory position created by the National Security Law in 2005 (Ley de Seguridad Nacional), was intended to be a single node through which the executive's various security dependencies could fuse information and collectively

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[319] SEDENA and SEMAR both enjoy equal placement in the cabinet, which provides them with a high degree of independence in their management of relations with the president, their formulation and implementation of security strategy, and their administration of budgets and internal organisation (Sánchez Lara, 2017, p. 53). However, the fusion of SEDENA and SEMAR may not be a panacea to Mexico's serious bureaucratic problems. Arroyo Juárez (2017) notes that the dichotomy between the two military institutions is a democratic division and that the problems are of coordination, not structure. In his view, civilian heads of the military and a stronger Public Ministry would help alleviate some of the perceived corruption problems without collapsing the two institutions into one.

make decisions. Still, the leadership of the STCSN, SEDENA, and CISEN competed for the attention and support of President Calderón, underscoring one of the principal difficulties of security sector coordination in Mexico (Sánchez Lara, 2017, pp. 60–62). The lack of real institutional enforcement power, budget restrictions, and personnel limitations have prevented the STCSN from realising its intended potential as a useful coordinating body (Presentation by a security analyst (academia), 2017d).

As this suggests, one of the most significant problems with Mexico's decentralised and deconcentrated federal security model is layering, or the addition of new practices or institutions without the elimination of old ones (Lessing, 2017, p. 257). At the federal, state, and municipal levels, the leaders of the country's security institutions still lack clarity about their jurisdictions and responsibilities (Laurency, 2017, pp. 10–11; Paul et al., 2014, pp. 38–39). In instances of homicide or kidnapping, it remains unclear if these crimes should be treated as activities associated with organised crime—and under which federal level of authority investigations and judicial procedures should proceed. Additionally, when President Fox sought to engage in SSR, he reorganised federal investigative bodies under the AFI and empowered them to investigate cases of military and police corruption at the federal level.[320] However, the military retained its own investigative arm, and military leaders often refused to cooperate with AFI investigations on national security grounds. As recently as the disappearance of the students at Ayotzinapa in 2014, SEDENA repeatedly denied access to federal investigators who proffered a warrant to inspect an army base thought to have been used in the commission of the crime (Turati, 2014).

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[320] In 2009, Calderón eliminated of the AFI, one of Fox's achievements, due to corruption, and he replaced it in 2012 with the PFM. However, Calderón, constrained by partisan resistance, largely neglected the role of the municipal and state police in the restructuring, which was ultimately counterproductive because local police forces are typically first-responders at crime scenes and the first link in the chain of justice (Schaefer et al., 2009b, pp. 31–44).

The layering of investigative authority has clearly contributed to bureaucratic inefficiency, but it also extends to other operational responsibilities (Chabat, 2012, p. 153; Watt and Zepeda, 2012, p. 188). Drug interdiction operations are the responsibility of the Navy, Army, Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Public Security, and state and local police forces. Similarly, drug investigations fall under the purview of the municipal police, the AFI/PFM, and in some instances the army (Paul et al., 2014, p. 39). President Peña even instituted his signature security effort, the National Gendarmerie, without empowering it with a differentiated mission from other federal forces. The gendarmerie's initial premise was to complement other federal forces in combatting organised crime, but as of 2018, it operated in tourist and agricultural zones and developed a niche mission as the federal agency responsible for protecting the country's cultural heritage from theft and looting (Mcintosh, 2017). According to one analyst, Peña's inordinate focus on quantity over quality in establishing the gendarmerie rendered it no more successful than the countless failed federal reorganisations that preceded it (Author interview with French, 2017). Some critics claim that the gendarmerie "took the wind out of local responses that were gaining steam," such as the performance of background checks and the certification of municipal police forces (Author interview with Ley, 2018).[321] At the very least, its creation provoked tension among the top ranks of SEDENA, who saw the military's budget and prominent role in domestic security threatened by the new federal force.

In addition to reducing prospects for interagency coordination, the proliferation of federal security institutions hurt efforts to tailor security responses in ways that accounted for community preferences and local security threats (Anaya Muñoz, 2012, p. 135). The failure

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[321] López Obrador's opponents have levelled similar criticism against his initiative to establish a civilian-controlled National Guard (Washington Office on Latin America, 2019).

on this front was especially evident in Ciudad Juárez, as noted in Chapter 6. One researcher explained:

> The strategy needs to focus on dealing with infrastructure and social problems, and the municipal presidents need to be at the heart of any solution because they are the only ones who know how to produce order. Calderón sent 42,000 troops into the countryside, but none of them knew how to integrate into local power relations. (Author interview with Escalante, 2017)[322]

Recent federal approaches to insecurity and reform that embraced local knowledge have been the exception and not the norm. Instead, federal forces often dismissed local institutions as corrupt and effectively disbanded municipal police forces in regions to which they deployed. Former Secretary of Public Security García Luna at one point proposed eliminating municipal police forces altogether, but as one researcher highlighted, municipal police officers "serve a social function. They have sustained contact with the communities and are from the communities they represent. Small towns would resent losing their local representatives" (Author interview with Fondevila, 2017). Moreover, such a drastic measure would betray the municipal autonomy at the heart of de la Madrid's 1983 reform.

Regardless, the sentiment behind García Luna's proposal warrants some consideration. Lessing (2017, pp. 256–257) points to the importance of either institutional-political cohesion or centralised political control to overcome institutional fragmentation— both of which were absent in the overall development of SSR in Mexico. The Mexican case exhibits "endemic horizontal and vertical fragmentation" of the country's security institutions, and any successful coordination between security agencies and political actors at

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[322] One civil society representative bemoaned, "The National Development Plan is issued by the federal government and informs policies implemented at the state level. This is unfortunate because the policies do not account for the singularity, the uniqueness of each state. For instance, police bodies are not seen as members of the community or as allies to the citizenry but rather a temporary imposition from the outside" (Author interview with Brillones, 2018).

every level of government typically came down to personal or partisan relationships among officials (Trejo and Ley, 2016).[323]

Strikingly, the issue of security has revealed the true limits of presidential power in democratic Mexico.[324] In 2009, Mexican authorities reported more than 1,661 independent police forces and some 350,000 federal, state, and municipal police officers. However, roughly 90 percent of the police force remained under state or municipal control, reducing those police at the disposal of the executive to only 33,000 officers in a country of nearly 130 million citizens (Schaefer et al., 2009a, p. 18). Moreover, as one security analyst contended, shortcomings on the security front tend to be local in nature, but "everyone puts the onus on the federal government to fix insecurity," and as Chindea notes, federal forces have repeatedly demonstrated an inability to adapt to local cultural and social conditions (Author interview with Chapa Koloffon, 2018; Chindea, 2014). National-level institutions are further prohibited from pursuing crimes that belong to the municipal and state jurisdictions. Federal agents, for instance, can investigate and prosecute homicides associated with organised crime, but confirmed cases numbered between 400 and 800 annually of the tens of thousands of homicides processed by the PGR between 2012 and 2019 (Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, 2019). The real onus to combat illegality, at least constitutionally, rests with subnational authorities, even though violence-reduction and reform strategies are often imposed from the top (Castro, 2018).[325] One representative of the

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[323] Lessing (2017, pp. 256–257) contrasts this scenario with that of Brazil from 2009 to 2014, in which political forces aligned at the national, state, and municipal levels in Rio in a way that overlaid municipal resources and a commitment to violence reduction on top of an existing national strategy.

[324] According to one analyst, local elites tend to hold immense influence over governors, and presidential power has always hinged on the central government's respect for local agreements between municipal governments and social and economic elites, even organised crime (Author interview with Escalante, 2017).

[325] Despite resistance to formal centralisation, since 2006 state governments have increasingly relinquished responsibility over security and have requested federal interventions to resolve insecurity with great frequency. One analyst stated, "The states are weak and have a serious agency problem. Many governors want to sacrifice their privilege of raising their own security forces" (Author interview with J.J. Romero, 2017). There are some instructive exceptions to this trend, though. The deployment of federal troops to Morelia in 2014 actually relieved pressure on local police so that they could engage in a self-driven reform process (Villegas, 2018).

private sector in Mexico contended, "It is hard to make enduring state policies [particularly for security] when there is so little coordination among agencies or levels of government. The law does not require coordination, so functions are duplicated, resources are spread thin, and responsibility is diffused" (Author interview with Pérez Rolón, 2018). The emergence of self-defence forces in places like Michoacán, which has long enjoyed the presence of municipal police forces and sporadically hosted federal forces, underscores the magnitude of the challenge: an illegal armed group supplanted state sovereignty even in the presence of "the state" (Author interview with Vázquez Valencia, 2017).

Decentralisation and deconcentration of the security bureaucracy also complicated the US government's ability to facilitate SSR. In contrast to the ease of working with Colombia's centralised security sector, US authorities, which are themselves represented by a large and unwieldy bureaucracy, found engaging the Mexican security sector to be laborious and slow. One former US Embassy representative described Colombia as "a user-friendly country," but in Mexico, US officials had to write a memorandum of request merely to speak to their counterparts in the security ministries—perhaps as much a consequence of ingrained Mexican nationalism as of bureaucratic inefficiency.[326] A number of officials responsible for implementing the Mérida Initiative also complained that the dispersion of policing authority was debilitating because the Embassy could never tell which federal force—SEDENA, SEMAR, or the SSP—had operational control over the various geographic areas of federal engagement (Author interviews with Colonel (Ret.), US Army, 2016; Lieutenant Colonel, US Army, 2017). Such inefficiencies unquestionably slowed the pace of bilateral coordination and, thus, the rollout of joint SSR programmes. Furthermore, despite the fact that Washington's objective was to focus on the Mexican states most seriously affected by

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[326] Mexican sensitivities were not necessarily unfounded. In 2009, the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives oversaw "Operation Fast and Furious," in which it let people purchase weapons it knew would end up in the hands of criminals in Mexico in order to track them and then build a case against the criminals. At least 69 of these firearms were linked to killings (Dunagan, 2016; "Fast and Furious," 2011).

organised criminal activity, the Mérida Initiative, at the request of the Mexican national executive, remained almost exclusively a federal-to-federal programme that did not specifically address the problems associated with subnational police forces in the most crime-ridden regions (Negroponte, 2013, p. 157).

During the Calderón and Peña administrations, the national debate over whether to standardise police recruitment requirements, responsibilities, and chain of command nationwide via a federal effort known as the Unified Command (Mando Único) exemplified the overall challenges posed by the decentralisation of Mexico's security bureaucracy. The entry and training standards for Mexican police forces at each level of government vary dramatically, and they remain remarkably low in many places because recruitment for such dangerous and thankless work is difficult (Sabet, 2012). Despite some improvements in recruitment, police forces still lack standardised promotion schemes and pay scales, leading to disparate levels of aptitude, trust, and success across the country. The Unified Command model was originally conceived as an initiative to reverse this disorder by enforcing the same qualifications, training, and benefits for all municipal and state police forces, and former Baja California State Governor José Guadalupe Osuna Millán became the first to implement the programme in his state in early 2011. The experiment was at least partially credited with the subsequent reduction in crime in the state's largest city, Tijuana (Diaz, 2011).[327] From 2008 to 2011, homicides in Tijuana halved, and the homicide rate plateaued at a much lower rate than other border cities like Ciudad Juárez (Pachico, 2011b). The empirical success of the Unified Command in Baja California helped build momentum for President Calderón's proposal to extend the plan nationwide, and for the final two years of his mandate, he persistently argued for Congress to adopt a single chain of command and standard for all

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[327] Some analysts suggest, however, that violence only lulled when the Sinaloa Cartel established a criminal monopoly in the city. It rose sharply again in 2018 as cartel clashes renewed.

police in Mexico. Having lost some credibility on security issues and in the face of legislative obstructionism, though, Calderón proved unable to deliver a major subnational policing reform by the end of his term.

In a 2016 poll, only two-fifths of Mexicans believed that local police were best equipped to protect their communities, indicating the need to improve municipal security provision, but the Unified Command model—later endorsed by President Peña, too—failed to pass congressional muster after more than seven years of deliberation (Camp, 2016, p. 229). Critics pointed to the simplicity of unifying command of the police forces in a state like Baja California, with only five municipalities and the concentration of 85 percent of the forces in a single municipality, and the challenge that said unification would pose across more than 2,400 municipalities nationally (Author interview with a former Mexican Ambassador to the United States, 2017). Understandably, some feared that major structural changes would reveal the extent of local corruption, and other politicians opposed the move because it would effectively undo the partisan ties between local political elites and municipal police forces (Laurency, 2017, pp. 24–25). However, some states and congressional districts with highly professional and effective subnational police forces simply resented having to conform to a national standard when local responses appeared to be working just fine. A handful of well-positioned and vocal mayors, including Osuna's successor, rejected the federal imposition on subnational governance as a violation of their constitutional right to municipal autonomy (Lamas, 2015; Padilla, 2016; Ramírez Baena, 2019).

Ultimately, in 2017, national and local political forces decided that the Unified Command would not start with the federal government but, rather, would be determined state

by state.[328] The reform became a matter of cooperation between mayors and governors alone, eclipsing federal power altogether. The plan, therefore, places greater responsibility for citizen security squarely on the shoulders of governors, while ensuring that the security sector accounts for local preferences. As of 2018, 1,757 mayors had relinquished their control of municipal police to state governments, and 28 (of 32) state governments had subscribed to the Unified Command with all of the municipalities in their territories (López, 2018). The benefits of this new system have yet to be seen because the implementation and logistical coordination of the scheme in many states are just underway at the time of writing, but the establishment of new controls and greater accountability via this latest compromise measure represent a positive step in drawn-out and highly contentious process of SSR.

As one researcher so aptly summarised, "[t]he fractured nature of power in Mexico puts the Mexican state at great risk. There are too many interests to be protected" (Author interview with Novoa, 2017). Decentralisation and deconcentration of security provision in Mexico enabled confusion, corruption, and criminality, even as the federal government attempted major reforms to the country's security institutions. In the absence of a single responder or single node of authority, responsibility fell to multiple actors, with competing and overlapping faculties and objectives. The author's interview subjects often placed the blame for local violence on the inability of a single level of government—municipal, state, or federal—to fulfil its obligations to the citizenry. However, vast disparities in perceived culpability among the three levels of government, even among voices in the same city, typify the outright confusion that results from Mexico's decentralised security architecture—and serves as a telling example of just how heavily the degree of centralisation weighs on the citizenry's perceptions of insecurity. Speaking from violence-ridden Acapulco shortly before

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[328] At the national level, this means that municipal and state police qualifications, training, and hierarchies will be determined by state governments.

assuming office in 2018, President López Obrador proclaimed to his audience, "[W]e are going to unify all of the forces: the navy, the army, the Federal Police, the ministerial police, the state and municipal police. We are going to create coordination in all of Guerrero territory and in the whole county, and each coordination will be done jointly and respecting the unified command" ("AMLO propone coordinación y Mando Único," 2018). Although he may be in for an uphill battle in pushing for further reform, the new president has made it abundantly clear that he, too, believes that a degree of centralisation is the way out of Mexico's morass.

Conclusion

The cases of Colombia and Mexico exhibit contrasting frameworks for the organisation of security bureaucracy that contributed to disparate experiences of SSR. Because a security crisis coincided with decentralising reforms in Colombia, national political leaders rejected the possibility of devolving responsibility for security to subnational actors in the 1991 Constitution, a critical juncture that ensured the maintenance of a highly centralised security sector for the duration of SSR. Centralisation made the support infrastructure provided by the US government more effective, minimised the impact of spoilers within the security sector, and reduced inefficiencies that could have delayed the delivery of reforms. Just as importantly, the Colombian security sector, although centralised, tailored its approaches by creating coordination mechanisms between central security providers and local actors, thereby boosting the accountability and legitimacy of state forces at a time when non-state armed actors violently contested state power.

Conversely, in Mexico the longstanding decentralisation of security responsibility and the growing power of subnational authorities rendered some security sector actors agents of local political and often criminal power. This relationship permitted subnational elements of the security sector to undermine federal-led interventions and reforms, complicating

everything from the enforcement of anti-crime interventions to relations with the US government. Despite repeated efforts by federal politicians to centralise security provision or improve coordination across levels of government, for more than three decades the executive proved unable to establish a clear, consolidated chain of command and scheme of interagency coordination throughout the security system. This, in turn, weakened strategies to reduce crime and violence across the national territory. These factors detracted noticeably from the executive's ability to implement SSR and, thereby, curbed efforts to improve the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector.

Notwithstanding these conclusions, complete centralisation should not necessarily be the goal in Mexico or any country, no matter how much it has facilitated SSR in Colombia. Respecting the constitutional prerogatives of subnational governments remains an important source of legitimacy in Mexico's federal context, and a coalition of local actors, including civil society, can successfully coalesce to professionalise and reform local security sector actors and practices, as was accomplished in Ciudad Juárez. In fact, bureaucratic centralisation is not necessarily entirely advantageous: both centralised and federal models of governance—and even of security sector governance—can work well if corruption is not a principal feature of the political order (Author interview with Tello Peón, 2018). Citing a former commander of the Salvadoran FMLN guerrilla group, Joaquín Villalobos, Tello remarked, "You direct from top to bottom. You build from the bottom to the top."[329] It is in striking this balance between monopolising the legitimate use of violence and encouraging local civic participation to develop security institutions where a lasting solution lies.

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[329] Villalobos served as a security consultant to Presidents Uribe and Calderón.

Conclusion

As demonstrated through the paired comparison of Colombia and Mexico, this study underscores the importance of private sector support, inter-party consensus, and the centralisation of security bureaucracy in shaping SSR outcomes. By identifying these factors, the author contributes to the body of literature on the domestic factors that influence the implementation of SSR. Indeed, business elites, party leadership, and the security bureaucracy itself represent the best opportunities or risks for political leadership engaged in SSR.

This analysis has several additional theoretical implications for the literature on SSR. First, as the case of Colombia most clearly exhibits, SSR is possible in societies that feature highly adverse social conditions. Economic crisis, poverty, rampant unemployment, the widespread availability of small arms, and ubiquitous land disputes made Colombia a dubious prospect for SSR success at the beginning of the Pastrana administration. Nevertheless, SSR played a definitive role in reducing insecurity. The Colombian government even showed considerable progress over the same timeframe on several other issues that posed threats to human security, including a reduction in poverty in some of the country's most marginalised communities and the passage of a land reform law—an outcome that would suggest that SSR can even serve as a stimulus for other needed reforms.

Second, this study offers support for the hypothesis that fragmented political systems—or at least ones in which security is hyper-politicised, like Mexico—weaken the impetus to reform (Kocak and Kode, 2014). The ruling party does not necessarily have to possess a wide, diverse political base to govern, as Berg (2012) would have it, but as the case of Colombia demonstrates, inter-party consensus on the issue of security at a minimum ensured sustained inter-party support for SSR throughout its implementation. This study additionally confirms Berg's hypothesis that restricted access to revenue forces ruling parties

to make democratic compromises to secure financing for SSR. Whereas the Mexican Congress had the financial capacity to authorise annual increases in the security budget that gave the impression that the government was doing something about insecurity (even if it was neglecting SSR), the cash-strapped Colombian government was forced to negotiate additional financing with its citizenry and the US government in ways that encouraged greater accountability (i.e., security tax).

Third, authoritarian and clientelistic traditions represent significant challenges for SSR, but it is often in these very contexts where SSR is most needed (Hanlon, 2016). For this reason, deliberate efforts to overcome or perhaps even accommodate these attitudes must form an inherent part of the SSR process if enhanced citizen security is ever to take hold. What stands out as a critical difference between Colombia and Mexico is that the Colombian government found ways to extend responsibility for citizen security to regional politicians in ways that sought to empower them, whereas in Mexico federal-led SSR threatened the constitutionally enshrined rights and clientelistic arrangements of subnational civil authorities in ways that sometimes drove their resistance to reform (Gordon, 2014, p. 128). One remarkable aspect of the Democratic Security Policy in Colombia is that it encouraged communities to join the government's fight against insecurity through programmes such as the Safe Departments and Municipalities Programme and local security consultations. These initiatives linked the citizenry to a centralised state-building project that was anchored in SSR, and the Uribe government incentivised local participation and buy-in, to great effect, by offering access to resources for the most compliant communities.[330]

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[330] In Colombia's coca regions, the government rewarded communities that voluntarily and manually eradicated coca from their territory with AI social development projects (Author interview with Lieutenant Colonel, US Army, 2017). In Mexico, on the other hand, the electoral calculations of the ruling party ensured that resources designated for violence prevention initiatives were disbursed across many beneficiary communities nationwide instead of directly to those most with the most pressing security challenges. On the relationship between civilian loyalty to state security forces and levels of governmental repression, see Moreno León, 2017.

With respect to the literature on democracy promotion, this study lends support to the hypothesis that external actors supporting SSR have the best chance of achieving SSR objectives when they avoid disrupting existing balances of power, even if doing so impedes more robust democratic reform (Wolff, 2015). To facilitate SSR, external actors tend to embrace elite-centric consultations, sometimes in ways that neglect the preferences of popular sectors (Ghimire, 2016, p. 273). This propensity leads to the establishment of hybrid security regimes, or those that combine elements of domestic and external security sector governance prescriptions, in which local reformers accept only those elements of SSR that do not undermine their power relative to other sectors of the population and to donors (Schröder et al., 2014). Such tactics ensured that the US government avoided becoming part of the struggle for power and influence within the countries undergoing reform and facilitated local ownership of SSR, even though they tended to curtail the delivery of more sweeping reforms (Leininger, 2010).

Although these compromises suggest that the promise of SSR will rarely deliver security sector governance that aligns with a perfect liberal democratic ideal, hybrid security regimes can be a desirable result in their own right (Schröder et al., 2014). For one, hybrid regimes can reinvigorate the legitimacy of the security sector, both internationally and domestically. Abroad, even marginally improved security sector governance can alleviate diplomatic censure, thereby generating new opportunities for international actors to engage reforming security sectors and shape outcomes. For instance, the removal of the military *fuero* in Mexico enabled the US government to release funds previously withheld at the request of the US Congress and civil society over the armed forces' continued impunity for human rights abuses. Similarly, in Colombia, drops in most indicators of insecurity and a perceived improvement of human rights protections meant that the Colombian government was no longer a global pariah, and by 2012, these advances were enough to convince US

legislators to reward the Colombian government with a long-delayed bilateral free-trade

agreement. Changes in the relationship between the US and Colombian governments were

incremental, but they culminated in a diversification of bilateral objectives that extended well

beyond the drug war. Improved security and economic liberalisation eventually resulted in

high levels of foreign investment by other advanced democracies, which facilitated

cooperative agreements between the Colombian government and the European Union and

NATO that provided additional "carrots" to sustain SSR.

On the home front, merely placing SSR on the national agenda created new spaces for

engagement between the Colombian and Mexican governments and civil society. In both

countries, SSR inspired long-needed national conversations about resolving insecurity and

consolidating weak democratic institutions, and despite the continued vulnerability of the

press and civil society in Colombia and Mexico, SSR exposed the security sector to public

scrutiny like never before. Although not formally included as a variable in this thesis, civil

society activism, as highlighted in Chapter 5, was critical to improving accountability and

security sector governance in Colombia and Mexico.[331] Just as decisively, the security sectors

of both countries became attuned to popular opinion and have incorporated into their doctrine

the importance of public trust to accomplishing their operational objectives. In this way, the

security policies implemented became more human-centric (e.g., humanitarian and civil

affairs activities implemented in vulnerable communities by AI during the later years of the

Uribe administration), even though the overall objective of SSR remained the state-centric

monopoly of the legitimate use of force. Neither Colombia nor Mexico accomplished a full

monopoly on security provision during the periods under analysis, but improvements in the

security sector's effectiveness and accountability in Colombia engendered a newfound

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[331] The MSSD entails the isolation of independent variables based on contrasting values. Despite the importance of civil society involvement in SSR and its relevance to outcomes on security sector governance, the author was unable to identify discernible differences between activist strategies in Colombia and Mexico, rendering the variable unsuitable for formal inclusion as an independent variable in this study.

legitimacy for state actors and an expansion of the rule of law across much of the national territory. SSR even set a precedent for reformism in a security sector culture in which reform was historically contentious. Indeed, from 2012 to 2017, the Colombian military underwent the fourth major institutional reform in its history, a process that originated not in the civilian ruling class but rather from among the ranks of the military leadership itself (Author interview with Lieutenant, Colombian Navy, 2017).

The development of hybrid security regimes in Colombia and Mexico also refocuses attention on the generation of stakeholder support to implement SSR. Although the literature consistently stresses the importance of this factor, researchers have devoted only cursory consideration to the topic. This study isolates three important factors that appear to have considerable bearing on the ability of the executive to deliver SSR. It also explores the specific ways in which the executive coaxed each relevant group into behaving in ways that permitted the robust implementation of SSR. Big business, for instance, embraced SSR in Colombia and in Ciudad Juárez when political elites ceded oversight of SSR spending to financial elites. In the case of political parties, consensus on the repeated renewal of the Democratic Security Tax to finance SSR in Colombia emerged from a remarkable legislative alliance between the progressive movement, which favoured increasing taxes on the wealthy as a matter of ideology, and the conservative ruling party, which ensured that the wealth tax offered economic elites major returns on their investment in the security sector. Mexico, on the other hand, featured opposition to SSR that was rooted in the politicisation of security as a partisan electoral issue. Finally, because of the centralisation of the security bureaucracy in Colombia, the executive—across three presidential administrations—guaranteed that only security sector officials who favoured reform and, more broadly, the political objectives associated with SSR were promoted. Conversely, in Mexico, the proliferation of security sector institutions and the lack of deference to national-level political authority among

otherwise autonomous security sector leaders undermined the ambition of the Calderón and Peña governments to make the security sector more effective and accountable.

It is beyond the scope of this study to link these independent variables to the specific indicators of security sector governance outlined in Chapter 5. Isolating many of those relationships (e.g., the impact of private sector support for SSR on declining homicide rates) would depend on unavailable data, including shifts in the character of violence over time or even murky details about the protection of organised crime by state actors, which would unquestionably affect indicator values. Nonetheless, it is possible to conclude that the three independent variables examined in this study, taken individually, had differentiated effects on the broader components of security sector governance, effectiveness and accountability. Private sector support for SSR in Colombia resulted in improvements for both elements of the dependent variable thanks to the application of a security tax, which enabled professionalisation and improved the transparency of government spending on the security sector. However, an argument can be made that inter-party consensus in Colombia, although a boost for efficiency and consequently effectiveness, did little in the way of introducing more robust accountability mechanisms. The reluctance of the Colombian Congress to exert a bona fide oversight role of SSR over the years of SSR is one example. Finally, whereas the centralisation of the security sector reduced bureaucratic inefficiency and resistance to reform, it also risked a reduction of accountability at the local level. Indeed, the introduction of programmes specifically designed to ensure that security strategies were compatible with the preferences and needs of subnational political authorities and citizens was an essential component of enhancing security sector governance among the agencies of a highly centralised security sector. The Mexican case also shows that accountability is not necessarily improved in decentralised contexts, as decentralised security provision merely enabled state capture in some regions of the country.

In accounting for outcomes on the dependent variable, the explanatory value of each independent variable differs. The degree of party polarisation appears to have the greatest impact on security sector governance, as low polarisation tends to facilitate the long-time horizons prescribed to deliver on institutional reform. Similarly, as demonstrated in the case of Mexico, the politicisation of security as an electoral issue was the principal impediment to the implementation of SSR. In this vein, inter-party consensus is likely a necessary condition for improved security sector governance. However, such consensus is not likely a sufficient condition, and interaction effects among independent variables were clearly present in both of the cases in this study. The politicisation of security took place in a hyper-partisan environment in Mexico and against a backdrop of decentralised security provision, which multiplied the influence of spoilers across three levels of government. In Colombia, on the other hand, low polarisation in combination with a highly centralised security bureaucracy helped minimise obstacles to SSR implementation, especially corruption. Likewise, parties in Colombia may have been less susceptible to polarisation in the context of noteworthy support from the private sector, a constituency with outsized influence in Colombian politics. Whereas the Colombian private sector made resources available to the national budget in such a way that prioritised SSR, the Mexican private sector did not signal the prioritisation of SSR as a legislative or presidential agenda item via contributions to the federal effort. Private sector support and centralisation are certainly not sufficient conditions for improvements on security sector governance, but resource-strapped governments facing high levels of corruption, particularly at subnational levels, would find them necessary conditions for any meaningful enactment of SSR.

From this perspective, the cases examined in this study importantly elucidate the agency of governments undertaking SSR—an oft-ignored facet of the SSR literature. By shifting the discussion away from the influence of enablers like the US government (while

not ignoring their relevance to the outcome of SSR), the author's research centres on national

actors, deliberations, and characteristics and underscores the prominence of domestic

conditions in facilitating or impeding reforms.[332] Although it would be presumptuous to assert

that other countries pursuing SSR should replicate the Colombian model, which remains an

incomplete or "hybrid" instance of SSR, this study's results identify essential areas of inquiry

for researchers attempting to reformulate theory on SSR. Accordingly, second-generation

SSR should necessarily contemplate a larger role for the private sector; detect ways to

enshrine SSR as a policy of the state rather than a policy of a particular administration; and

resolve the tension between centralised and local security provision that may undermine the

state's monopoly on violence. Second-generation SSR should also accept compromise as an

inevitability in the negotiation of SSR; it should re-evaluate the ambition of SSR to

accommodate hybrid security regimes that reflect certain aspects of the liberal democratic

model without achieving it absolutely. Acknowledging that democratic consolidation is likely

never to occur unless the state can get a handle on insecurity—even in ways that may betray

the rigid prescriptions of traditional SSR—should be at the heart of SSR interventions, given

that such considerations have proven central to the legitimacy of a state in the eyes of its

citizens one way or another.

Final Reflections on SSR and Citizen Security

The analysis of the Colombian and Mexican cases also highlights a number of broader

trends that have implications for citizen security. First, conducting SSR while engaging in

confrontation with violent non-state actors tends to exacerbate the burden for the security

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[332] SSR enablers, as well, continue to refine their model of support and intervention. Inspired by some of the inefficiencies in aid administration in Colombia and Mexico, the US government adopted a new paradigm for supporting SSR with the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017. The measure centralises security cooperation efforts by integrating programmes, placing a greater administrative and oversight burden on the US Congress, and enforcing more robust requirements for human rights training and institutional capacity building (Author interview with a US defence contractor, 2017).

sector and may lead to reversals, at least initially. Both cases reveal that upticks in violence and insecurity occurred shortly after the outset of SSR, and insecurity in Colombia worsened before indicators of crime and violence steadied at much-reduced levels. Changes in criminal modality appear to have some link to these peaks and troughs (e.g., fewer kidnappings, more extortion), as the Colombia case features a drop in violent crimes despite consistent figures for victimisation over the period of analysis. Interestingly, public trust in the security sector reached its peak during the most conflictive years, when violence was also most visible. Visibility, which refers to instances in which criminals publicly expose violence or claim responsibility for attacks, tends to peak prior to a transition toward participation in less visible criminal activity (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 2). The invisibility of crime—which Colombians opaquely ascribe to "the dark hand" (*la mano negra*)—does not make it less menacing, and a wholly effective security sector is one that demonstrates a certain adaptability to counter even less visible manifestations of violence, an unresolved challenge for both Colombia and Mexico.[333]

Second, the security sector—itself often a major source of citizen insecurity—runs the risk of reproducing the violence it seeks to uproot unless reform initiatives include robust democratic accountability mechanisms (Pearce, 2010). The security forces in both countries only began to take human rights accountability seriously in the face of major scandals unearthed by the media and human rights community. It was primarily the resulting loss of public confidence, specifically for institutions that previously enjoyed broad public support, which seems to have encouraged security sector leaders to address and curtail abusive conduct. The "false positives" tragedy in Colombia and the mystery surrounding the Ayotzinapa massacre in Mexico generated sufficient public outrage and international

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[333] The absence of violence does not necessarily signal the absence of criminality (Durán-Martínez, 2017, p. 71). Although violence dropped off dramatically in Colombia and the security sector's effectiveness improved, a perception of citizen insecurity remained high despite SSR.

attention to provoke a newfound sensitivity to human rights among security sector leaders. Although US pressure in the form of the Leahy amendments is an important gauge of performance on this front, national checks on the security sector—both among government entities and from civil society—contributed to the adoption of lasting reforms and new attitudes, practices, and doctrine concerning human rights. Furthermore, SSR must entail a programme of robust protections for vulnerable journalists and human rights defenders, whose vigilance, in the absence of governmental accountability, bestows upon the security sector its legitimacy to act on behalf of the citizenry.

Third, improved security for the majority does not mean improved security for all, and public opinion polls do not necessarily reflect the lived experience of insecurity. Most residents of Colombian cities reported an improved perception of security during the middle years of the Uribe administration, but the armed conflict raged in more remote regions of Colombia, claiming more civilian victims than at the outset of SSR. There were strong reductions for organised crime activity, but homicide rates appear to have been largely unaffected for several years following the beginning of Plan Colombia (Pérez V., 2014). Similarly, in Mexico, a reduction in cartel violence in the country's border cities after 2012 coincided with an explosion of violence in smaller cities and rural zones. Security is fluid, and strategies to address citizen insecurity are likely not to be sustainable unless they target the systemic roots of crime and violence across national territory.

Fourth, as security forces improve their operational effectiveness, the state must simultaneously accommodate an expansion of judicial capacity. The Colombian and Mexican governments both engaged in comprehensive penal reform only after enhancing the security sector's capacity to pursue organised crime. What resulted was a profound confusion about how to process and punish record numbers of criminal suspects under a new system that was poorly understood by judicial professionals, let alone the public. For this reason, judges and

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prosecutors continued to rely on unhelpful habits from the old judicial regime, and politicians and the citizenry placed unfair blame on the justice sector, which released pre-trial suspects under the new accusatorial system, for surges in criminal activity. In addition, penitentiary capacity lagged behind even the state's ability to deliver justice in the courts, and a lack of attention and resources to prisons in the conduct of SSR rendered them ineffective at stemming corruption and crime. These consequences point to the importance of sequencing the implementation of reforms. In Colombia and Mexico, government efforts to satisfy public demands for results in the form of captures and kills occluded a bona fide, long-term commitment to the legal system in the early years of SSR. Comprehensive justice reform came too long after the emphasis on crime suppression, and such short time horizons at the outset ultimately help explain the persistence of insecurity well beyond the "heavy-lifting" phase of SSR.

Lastly, it would be disingenuous to attribute exclusively to SSR the evolution of indicators utilised in this study. Shifts in criminal dynamics have certainly played an important role in some of the changes mentioned above. Lessing (2017, p. 9) argues that policy approaches to organised crime that do not necessarily require the repressive apparatus of the state may be sufficient to curb violent behaviour of criminal groups and thereby reduce the overall incidence of insecurity. Specifically, he finds that unconditional crackdowns against cartels lead to an increase in anti-state violence, whereas approaches that exert a "conditional repression" against organised crime—that is, only resorting to repressive strategies when a criminal group commits violence—may have the overall effect of reducing public violence.

It is difficult given the available data to determine whether dramatic reductions in violent crime were the result of SSR, a change in the state-criminal dynamic, or a combination of factors, but Lessing's argument warrants consideration. Criminal dynamics

are a vague and largely unexplored field of inquiry that undoubtedly has ramifications for the success of any given state response to violence. Moreover, the small number of cases and large number of variables in this study result in a degrees-of-freedom problem that no amount of rigorous process tracing can eliminate. This analysis, then, should be seen as an invitation for other researchers to test the findings of this study in different contexts and with different methodologies. In both Colombia and Mexico, the opacity of the state-criminal dynamic—and the corruption that this dynamic engenders—renders the determination of causality a Sisyphean task, but acknowledging this limitation underscores the messy and at times unsavoury reality of conducting SSR in a vulnerable democratic context. Durán-Martínez concludes, "As violence increases, efforts to combat crime can strengthen the state's enforcement ability over time. In other words, while confronting criminals, states do not have to choose only between corruption and violence; they have to reconstruct a cohesive state that is autonomous, accountable, and democratic" (2017, p. 110).

Although local context will always have a final say as to whether SSR bears its desired fruits, the conclusions outlined in this study can ultimately help theorists to refine knowledge for applying SSR and practitioners to structure SSR interventions on the ground in ways that seriously contemplate how to attract local ownership. If the hurried expansion of security cooperation across the globe following the 9/11 attacks is any indication, SSR as a tool of democratic consolidation and citizen security is here to stay, but the "one-size-fits-all" model has failed. More nuanced, tailored designs that permit the accommodation of local preferences and power structures represent a sustainable direction for international sponsors of SSR and, in the end, a more palatable and natural model for local security sector actors.

Scholarship on the topic must evolve to reflect these insights, for the operating environment has come to demand it. Citizen security is one of the defining political issues of this century, in Latin America and beyond, and in the absence of responsible, consequential

remedies to reduce criminality and violence while bolstering democratic governance, national responses are apt to draw from historically entrenched yet categorically illiberal strategies. Mexican Nobel laureate Carlos Fuentes proclaimed, "History is the violence that, like Macbeth, murders dreams" (2011). Nevertheless, Latin America and the other young democracies of this world need not be condemned to this nightmarish fate. Indeed, SSR has proven itself not solely a way out of Shakespearean dystopia but also a way forward.

Appendix: List of Interviewees

Chapter 2 features a discussion of interview methods and techniques. Unless otherwise indicated, all interviews were conducted in person.

Acuña, F. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 24 October 2017.

Aguayo Quezada, S. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 13 September 2017.

Ansolabehere, K. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 04 September 2017.

Araíz, D. (2018). Monterrey, Mexico, 07 February 2018.

Barrera, V. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 27 October 2017.

Bohórquez, E. (2018) [Phone interview]. 06 April 2018.

Brewer, S.E. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 14 September 2017.

Brillones, A. (2018). Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 15 January 2018.

Cabrera Ortíz, F. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 01 November 2017.

Captain, Colombian Army (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 27 October 2017.

Captain, Colombian National Police (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 24 November 2017.

Castro, A. (2018). Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 16 January 2018.

Chapa Koloffon, L. (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 09 February 2018.

Colombian Defence Contractor (2016). Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 13 September 2016.

Colonel, Colombian Army (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 20 November 2017.

Colonel (Ret.), Colombian Army (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 15 November 2017.

Colonel (Ret.), US Army (2016). Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 20 May 2016.

Colonel (Ret.), US Army (2017). Washington, DC, 12 October 2017.

Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, A. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 15 November 2017.

Demobilised FARC Company Commander (2017). Antioquia, Colombia, 02 November 2017.

Demobilised FARC Front Commander (2017a). Antioquia, Colombia, 03 November 2017.

Demobilised FARC Front Commander (2017b). Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia, 04 November 2017.

Demobilised FARC Front Logistics Head (2017). Antioquia, Colombia, 02 November 2017.

Demobilised FARC Front Second Commander (2017). Córdoba, Colombia, 07 December 2017.

Demobilised FARC Member (2017). Córdoba, Colombia, 08 December 2017.

Demobilised FARC Military Strategist and Head of Recruitment (2017). Antioquia, Colombia, 02 November 2017.

Durango, C. (2017). Montería, Córdoba, Colombia, 07 December 2017.

Escalante, F. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 13 September 2017.

Fernández Aguilar, A.L. (2018). Monterrey, Mexico, 06 February 2018.

Fernández González, W. (2018). Monterrey, Mexico, 07 February 2018.

Fernández Martínez, A.A. (2018). Monterrey, Mexico, 07 February 2018.

Fondevila, G. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 06 September 2017.

Former Mexican Ambassador to the United States (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 25 August 2017.

French, J. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 24 August 2017.

Furszyfer, J. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 05 September 2017.

García, R. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 24 October 2017.

General (Ret.), Colombian Army (2017). Bogotá, D.F., 30 October 2017.

Gomis, M. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 30 October 2017.

González González, F. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 27 October 2017.

Guzmán, S. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 24 October 2017.

Hernández, D. (2017). Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia, 07 November 2017.

International Development Worker (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 05 December 2017.

Isacson, A. (2017). Washington, DC, 12 October 2017.

Ley, S. (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 09 January 2018.

Lieutenant, Colombian Navy (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 31 October 2017.

Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 19 September 2017.

Luján Olivas, A. (2018). Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 15 January 2018.

Mendoza Bautista, A. (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 18 January 2018.

Meza, S. (2018). Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 17 January 2018.

Nasi, C. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 30 October 2017.

Novoa, M. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 13 September 2017.

Official, Unit for Attention and Integral Reparation to Victims of Conflict (2017a). Bogotá, Colombia, 26 October 2017.

Official, Unit for Attention and Integral Reparation to Victims of Conflict (2017b). Bogotá, Colombia, 26 October 2017.

Pérez Rolón, J. (2018). Monterrey, Mexico, 07 February 2018.

Poiré, A. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 14 September 2017.

Political Analyst (Academia) (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 08 November 2017.

Political Analyst (Government) (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 08 September 2017.

Political Analyst (Government) (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 29 January 2018.

Rendón, E. (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 03 January 2018.

Representative, Citizens' Observatory for Prevention, Security, and Justice (2018). Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 15 January 2018.

Representative, Colombian Business Community (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 14 December 2017.

Representative, International Civil Society Organization (2018). Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 15 January 2018.

Representative, José Alvear Restrepo Law Association (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 15 December 2017.

Representative, Regional Civil Society Organization (2018). Monterrey, Mexico, 07 February 2018.

Researcher, Folke Bernadotte Academy (2017) [Phone interview]. 09 November 2017.

Researcher, Ideas for Peace Foundation (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 25 October 2017.

Researcher, Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy (2018) . Mexico City, Mexico, 18 January 2018.

Romero, J.J. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 21 December 2017.

Romero, M. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 14 December 2017.

Salazár Gutiérrez, S. (2018). Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, 16 January 2018.

Salgado, J. (2017) [Phone interview]. 26 October 2017.

Salgado Restrepo, J.A. (2017). Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia, 07 November 2017.

Sánchez Bocanegra, M.C. (2018). Monterrey, Mexico, 07 February 2018.

Sánchez, D.Y. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 31 October 2017.

Security Analyst (Academia) (2017a). Mexico City, Mexico, 11 September 2017.

Security Analyst (Academia) (2017b). Bogotá, Colombia, 20 November 2017.

Security Analyst (Government) (2017a). Mexico City, Mexico, 08 September 2017.

Security Analyst (Government) (2017b) [Phone interview]. 25 October 2017.

Security Analyst (Government) (2017c). Bogotá, Colombia, 26 October 2017.

Security Analyst (Private Sector) (2017a). Mexico City, Mexico, 08 September 2017.

Security Analyst (Private Sector) (2017b). Mexico City, Mexico, 12 September 2017.

Senior PRI Official, Peña Administration (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 18 September 2017.

Senior Security Official, Calderón Administration (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 26 January 2018.

Senior US Defence Official (2017a). Mexico City, Mexico, 08 September 2017.

Senior US Defence Official (2017b). Washington, DC, 12 October 2017.

Senior US Development Official (2016). Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 25 August 2016.

Senior US Law Enforcement Official (2016). Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 23 August 2016.

Tello Peón, J. (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 13 February 2018.

Tique, V.M. (2017). Bogotá, Colombia, 15 December 2017.

Toro, M.C. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 07 September 2017.

US Defence Contractor (2017) [Phone interview]. 24 October 2017.

US Department of State Official (2016). Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 27 May 2016.

Vázquez Valencia, L.D. (2017). Mexico City, Mexico, 05 September 2017.

Wertman Zaslav, L. (2018). Mexico City, Mexico, 13 February 2018.

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