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development research centre



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RESEARCH IN LATIN AMERICA

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Crisis States Programme

Research in Latin America

Introduction

Our programme of work in Colombia will contribute directly to the overall objective of the Crisis States Programme to develop a “new understanding of the causes of crisis and breakdown in the developing world”. The work will centre on Colombia, but several of the projects look outward to situate Colombia in a comparative perspective within the Andean region and Latin America. We employ a wide variety of methodological approaches drawn from historical and comparative political economy, economics, politics, anthropology and sociology to addresses questions raised at all three of the levels of the overall Centre programme – the global to the national, national to local, and local to the national and global.

The collaborative arrangement between DESTIN and Colombian partners at the Universidad de los Andes, the Universidad del Rosario and at IEPRI at the Universidad Nacional, got underway somewhat later than the other collaborative efforts. However we have all worked double time to put together an evolving programme of work. After a series of meetings in Colombia and consideration of almost 50 project proposals, we have decided on the following programme of work to begin in year one. We have allocated funding for the first year and a half only in order to allow the collaboration to develop and new proposals to be formulated during the course of this year. We have established an Advisory Committee in Colombia to vet both the choice of projects and their funding, as well as to monitor the progress of the work. CSP Director, James Putzel will liase with the Advisory Committee, while Jean-Paul Faguet and Dennis Rodgers will work closely with partners on the research.

Background

Historically, Latin America has often been considered an extremely violent area of the world, marked by multiple instances of “political disappearances, repressive dictatorship, torture, death squads, and revolutions”.¹ This image has significantly changed over the last decade and a half, however. The twin processes of “demilitarisation” and “democratisation” which have characterised much of the region in recent years are viewed as signs that a definitive break has been made with the past, and that a new era of peace and stability has begun.² Against such an interpretation of the Latin American experience, the violent conflicts that continue to characterise the contemporary socio-political landscape of Colombia might appear to be wholly unique. However, in line with Eduardo Galeano,³ we would argue that the view of Latin America as having entered a “new era of peace and stability” is overdrawn. There is much to be learned by studying the processes that have sustained violent conflict in Colombia and elsewhere, as well as the efforts at institutional reform to achieve peace, that is

¹ T. Rosenberg, *Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America*, New York, NY: Penguin, 1991, pp.7-8.

² S. Halebsky & R. L. Harris, ‘Introduction: Capital, Power, and Inequality in Latin America’, in S. Halebsky & R.L. Harris (eds), *Capital, Power, and Inequality in Latin America*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995, pp.8-9; as well as J. G. Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left after the Cold War*, New York, NY: Vintage, 1993, p.3; and J. Nef, ‘Demilitarization and Democratic Transition in Latin America’, in Halebsky & Harris (1995), p.104.

³ E. Galeano, *Patatas Arriba: La Escuela del Mundo al Revés*, 4th edition, Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1998.

relevant to the wider Latin American experience, and to an understanding of crisis and breakdown in the developing world more generally.

Contemporary Latin America can be said to be ripe with paradoxes that present challenges for prevailing notions in the “good governance” paradigm that democratic participation and human capability will generate socially desirable outcomes. This is all the more the case when one considers that on the one hand, the region is, after East Asia, the largest per capita recipient of foreign direct investment and has undertaken some of the most extensive reforms in the areas of privatisation, trade liberalisation, financial deregulation and decentralisation of any region in the developing world. Moreover, Latin America consistently ranks highest among developing regions in indicators of civil and political liberties, democratisation and political participation and press freedom.⁴ The Human Development Index for Latin America is surpassed only by developed countries and is quite similar to that of the more developed regions of East Asia and Eastern Europe.⁵ On the other hand, economic growth and investment rates in the 1990’s have failed to revive in most countries, and are in fact, significantly lower than in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, the region is experiencing alarming increases in the absolute and relative levels of informal employment in the context of the most unequal distribution of income of any region in the developing world.

Of most concern is the dramatic increase in crime and violence that has occurred in the 1990s. While in the 1970s, the median intentional homicide rate in Latin America averaged approximately 8 per 100,000 inhabitants; in the 1990s this approached 13 per 100,000 inhabitants, an increase of over 40 percent.⁶ Apart from Sub-Saharan Africa – where the median intentional homicide rate rose from 6 to 9 per 100,000 over the same period – no other region in the developing world experienced such a dramatic increase in crime.⁷ Generally, the median Latin American intentional homicide rate in the 1990s stood at nearly four times the rate in other developing regions.⁸ Over three-quarters of reported homicides are of criminal origin, and the levels of crime victimisation in the region in the 1990s were the highest in the world according to the UN Crime Victimization Survey – consistently above a staggering 30 percent of the total population.⁹ A recent World Bank report declared criminal violence “the single major obstacle to the realization of the region’s long-standing aspirations for sustainable economic and social development”.¹⁰

⁴ IADB, *Economic and Social Progress Report: Development Beyond Economics*, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000.

⁵ IADB (2000), p.6.

⁶ IADB (2000), p.13.

⁷ P. Fajnzylber, D. Lederman & N. Loayza, *Determinants of Crime Rates in Latin America and the World: An Empirical Assessment*, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Viewpoint Studies Series, Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1998, p.13. It should be noted, though, that Chile and Costa Rica are partial exceptions to this trend.

⁸ IADB (2000), p.13.

⁹ UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute), *Criminal Victimization in the Developing World*, UNICRI publication no. 55, Rome: United Nations Publications, 1995; and J. L. Londoño, A. Gaviria & R. Guerrero (eds), *Asalto al Desarrollo: Violencia en América Latina*, Washington, DC: BID (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo - Inter-American Development Bank), 2000, pp.23-24.

¹⁰ R. L. Ayres, *Crime and Violence as Development Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Viewpoint Studies Series, Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1998, p.23. See also PNUD (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo - United Nations Development Programme), *Violencia en una Sociedad en Transición*, San Salvador: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 1998, for a similar view specifically on Central America.

In many ways, it can be said that since the beginnings of the revolutions for independence in the early nineteenth century, much of Latin America has in fact experienced cycles of political instability and violent conflicts. The Andean region in particular is a case in point, and the recent histories of Peru and Colombia indicate that the region continues to produce “societies of fear”. As in many developing regions, the processes of violence there have been closely related to the political contestation over control of the national state apparatus, valuable mining resources and fertile land. Given the abundance of natural resources in the region, such conflict and violence has had substantial economic benefits for those groups appropriating power. More generally, the intersection of politics and economics has frequently constituted flashpoints for the flaring of conflict.

But at the same time, Colombia and the Latin American region as a whole have experienced a significant transformation in recent decades. Political and economic reforms linked to processes of globalisation have had a profound impact. This programme of work will seek to assess the extent to which these institutional changes have favoured the emergence of stable and peaceful liberal democracies, or conversely, as political scientist, Oswaldo de Rivero has argued, the proliferation of “ungovernable and chaotic entities”.¹¹ Certainly, in recent years, nation-states such as Colombia, Peru, and El Salvador have come alarmingly close to the brink of disintegration, while others, such as Nicaragua and Haiti, for example, have imploded under the strains of extreme and endemic poverty and economic stagnation, as frequently already weak state institutions no longer provide any consistent structure of “order” through which to contain and regulate conflicts and violence. Civil society in these countries has shattered, and society has fragmented due to the lack of cohesive collective reference points and effective mechanisms of social structuration.¹²

Understanding these trends and the reasons for them constitute critical issues for development which this programme hopes to inform.

Research Objectives

General

The Crisis States Programme in Latin America is centrally concerned with problems of institutional change and reform and governance in the face of persistent violent conflict, the political economy of coca production and its linkages with violent conflict, and the examination of the changing nature and forms of violence in society. The comparative work proposed in the Andean region (by the IEPRI Comparative Politics Research Group and by Jean-Paul Faguet and Jonathan DiJohn), as well as the inter-regional comparative work within Colombia itself (especially in projects by Fabio Sanchez, and the collaborative work on decentralisation by Jean-Paul Faguet and researchers at Los Andes and Rosario) will make direct contributions to answering one of the Crisis States Programme’s central questions, “why some political systems and communities... have broken down even to the point of

¹¹ O. de Rivero, *El Mito del Desarrollo: Los Países Inviabiles en el Siglo XXI*, Lima: Mosca Azul, 1998. See also X. Gorostiaga, ‘América Latina: La visión de los cientistas sociales’, *Nueva Sociedad*, (139), September-October, pp 106-109, 1995; and I. Ramonet, *Géopolitique du Chaos*, Paris: Galilée, 1997, for similar perspectives.

¹² See C. Cariola, (ed), *Sobrevivir en la Pobreza: El Fin de una Illusion*, Caracas: Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo (CENDES)/ Editorial Nueva Sociedad, 1992; *Nueva Sociedad*, 137 (May-June 1995), special issue on ‘El Futuro del Desarrollo’ (1995); J. Petras & M. Morley, *Latin America in the Time of Cholera*, New York, NY: Routledge, 1992; and D. Rodgers, *Living in the Shadow of Death: Violence, Pandillas, and Social Disintegration in Contemporary Urban Nicaragua*, Ph.D dissertation, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge, 1999.

violent conflict while others have not”. These projects will also contribute to an assessment of “how constellations of power at local, national and global levels drive processes of institutional change, collapse and reconstruction”.

Specific Aims

1. From the Global to the National level

The overall CSP states the need “to gain a better understanding of the extent to which interventions of various kinds by the international community and the policy prescriptions they have promoted contribute either to exacerbating breakdown or to creating the conditions to overcome crises and breakdown.”

Specifically, the CSP asks: “What effect have internationally promoted prescriptions for political and administrative reform had on institutional reforms at the national and local levels and what impact have they had on patterns of conflict, as well as on the composition, support and strategies of opposition movements?” In Colombia, we will address this question first in terms of an analysis of the Colombian experience with foreign aid, and in particular the historic impact of US foreign assistance, first through the “Alliance for Progress” in the 1960s and now with the on-going “Plan Colombia”. A particular issue of concern in our research will be to examine what has motivated US aid in the past and the present and what will determine if it will be sustained over time.

The CSP programme also asks: “Who has benefited and who lost from the imposition of sanctions and under what circumstances have they achieved their objectives or alternatively served to consolidate the position and power of those whom they were designed to undermine?” In Colombia we will look at the role that US-led drug prohibition has had both directly and indirectly – as a result of eradication programmes in neighbouring countries – on the proliferation of violent conflict. Research will also attempt to estimate what might be the impact of legalisation on patterns of crime, violence and economic welfare.

2. From the National to the Local level

A great deal of work proposed in Colombia and Latin America will look at problems of crisis and breakdown from the national to the local level. First, the overall CSP asks how forms of political organisation are related to the capacity “to regulate and contain conflict.”

“What has been the relationship of different frameworks of political representation to the capacity or incapacity of political systems to contain and regulate conflict generated by economic and social change?” In Colombia we ask how the institutional changes introduced in the 1991 Constitution have affected resource distribution and whether they have strengthened democratic representation and participation as intended or whether they have instead brought about the “marketisation” of patron-client relations.

The overall CSP asks: ‘How have changes in economic organisation changed patterns of class power and class coalitions, as well as the basis of group organisation and the manner in which social groups participate in politics?’ and “Is there a connection between the rise of populism and appeals to identity as a basis of organisation, with the informalisation of employment?” In the Andean region, two projects will ask what accounts for the decline in the role of political parties and varied “paths of evolution” of markedly imperfect democracies, including the rise of “presidentialism”? To what extent and why have these changes enjoyed significant popular support?

The CSP aims to assess the “impact of political reforms proposed within the ‘governance agenda’ of the international development organisations, including those related to democratisation [and] decentralisation” and asks: “To what extent have decentralisation measures precipitated breakdown, offered the means to respond constructively to crisis, or made no meaningful impact and what are the conditions that lead to these alternative outcomes?” We propose to examine the impact of decentralisation in Colombia and in the wider Andean region through a major study based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis in work that will begin at the local level and stretch to the national and inter-regional. We hope to incorporate within this work one project that proposes to examine through economic analysis the relationship between growth and stability in various regions within Colombia.

The overall CSP aims to explore “the extent to which violent conflict can be seen as rational” and to interrogate “the relationship between predictable and unpredictable violence and between ‘greed and grievance’”. Further it asks: “What are the factors that have led to political fragmentation and the criminalisation of politics?” and “How important has the decline of ideologically inspired oppositional organisations been to the proliferation of the ‘criminalisation of politics’ and the proliferation of disordered violence”? These questions are of central importance to our work in Colombia and comparative work in the region. In projects that stretch from the national level to the local level, we will ask why, despite having entered a ‘post-authoritarian era’, many countries in Latin America continue to be plagued by violence.

Work in several cities in Nicaragua and Colombia will investigate the proliferation of urban youth gangs as a manifestation of new and increasingly dominant forms of violence in the region in an effort to answer the questions above, as well as questions about the extent to which the gang membership forms “youth identity” and the relationship between the gang phenomenon and poverty.

At a later stage in the Programme we hope to take up questions raised about the impact of liberalisation, privatisation and fiscal austerity on patterns of crisis and breakdown in Colombia and the region. There is some important work going on around these issues in Colombia and we hope to identify particular projects of work in the future.

3. From the Local to the national and global

The overall CSP proposes to “examine the workings of local institutions and political party systems and the action of local political authorities...to determine what are the systematic political, institutional and economic differences between violent and non-violent regions”.

First, the CSP asks “to what extent does local government represent local civic society and its demands and needs, and then respond effectively to the same”.

What are the linkages between the inclusiveness of local politics, the effectiveness of local government, and civil violence and social breakdown? We will undertake work beginning in Colombia at the local level and then graduating to a comparative study within the region (in Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela) to undertake empirical investigation of these questions. A sample of municipalities will be studied including both those where violence has set root and others where it has not, to discover if there are systematic differences between violent and non-violent regions.

Second, the overall CSP asks: “What happens when formal market institutions (related to local, national and cross border commodity and labour markets) are eroded or break down in the absence of effective state regulation and what practices, relationships and informal institutions do people engage in to achieve or maintain a secure economic position?” In Colombia work will be carried out to determine the relationship between the expansion of coca cultivation activities and the presence of illegal armed groups by establishing an historical database of key variables and conducting qualitative research:

What was the nature and extent of the state’s presence in the region before it became a coca growing area? What were peasant living conditions like? What were the characteristics of both land and soils? What historical presence do illegal armed groups have in the region?

We will analyse how violence spills over and increases in particular regions. How do illegal armed groups take over a region? Does violence increase as soon as these actors arrive? How do different illegal armed actors interact (in particular through killings, intimidation, or threats, for example) and what impact does this have on local communities and local authorities?

We will analyse the patterns of proliferation of violence. What determines the pace at which violence spreads? What is the response of the state’s agencies to the violence shocks. Do they expand police forces or increase public investment, for example?

Third, “we want to understand what happens to associational life, local politics and public action in situations of violent conflict and post-conflict reconstruction”. The Colombia programme will investigate the much neglected question of the role of local businesses in situations of crisis, violent conflict and social breakdown.

What has motivated local businesses to participate in, or even initiate, peace initiatives? Echoing questions at the national level, we will ask who has an interest in maintaining conflict and who in ending it?

Research Activities

1. The Effects of Drug Prohibition on Socio-Economic Conflict in Colombia

Roberto Steiner, economist, CEDE, Universidad de los Andes

Carlos Medina, economist, CEDE, Universidad de los Andes

This project examines the institutional framework in which Colombia has become a coca grower and asks what would happen with an institutional change involving legalisation. It proposes to evaluate the concrete economic consequences of prohibition, seeking in particular to attempt to quantify the potential earnings which could be derived from the drug-growing activities under an eventual regime of drug legalisation. It also asks the question from a historical perspective, to understand what the present consequences are for Colombia of having become a major drug grower and drug processing centre. In addition, the project seeks to look at how drug illegality is related to socio-economic conflict, from two angles. Firstly, in terms of what the relationship might be between drug prohibition and violence, considering in particular whether legalisation could conceivably lead to a decline in violence. Secondly, in terms of the economic costs associated with violence induced by drug prohibition, and how this impacts at both the national and local level. Of particular investigative interest will be the

relationship between illegal drug production and guerrilla violence, and what kind of impact legalisation would have on the peace process. Finally, the project will attempt to consider what the effects of drug legalisation would be on consumption in Colombia.

2. Violence, Armed Conflict and Illegal Crops (Coca and Poppy) in Colombia

Fabio Sanchez, economist, CEDE & Facultad de Economía, Universidad de los Andes.

This project analyses the relationship between the expansion of coca cultivation activity and the presence of illegal groups before and after the expansion. Guerrilla activity in Colombia grew exponentially during the 1990s. At the beginning of the decade guerrilla groups had presence in no more than 200 municipalities (out of 1000) while at the end of the decade they were active in around 600. The increase in guerrilla activity has been linked in particular to the weakness of the Colombian state, and has also been associated to the spread of drug cultivation and processing (as has the rise of paramilitarism). The conjunction of the illegal armed actors, drug trafficking, weak state presence and rent based economic activities such as coca cultivation and processing provokes the exacerbation of violence in certain areas or regions, it is argued, and increases the likelihood of violence and illicit crops propagating to neighbouring areas. However, in order to properly determine this proposition, it is necessary to subject this issue to rigorous empirical testing. This project consequently proposes to carry out econometric evaluations of a number of critical topics surrounding the problem of the relationship between violence, armed groups, and illegal drugs. The relationship between the expansion of coca cultivation activities and the presence of illegal armed groups would need to be considered in light of the nature of the state's presence in a region before it became a coca growing area, socio-economic conditions, patterns of land tenure, and the history of illegal armed groups in the region. Analysing how violence spreads to and increases in a particular region needs to be considered in light of the precise ways in which illegal armed groups take over a region, how they interact with already existing political actors, as well as other violent actors, and what their impact on the local economy might be (do illegal crops increase labour opportunities, for example?). Finally, in order to establish patterns of violence diffusion, it is necessary to focus on the response of the state to the spread and increase in violence, and to consider whether these achieve their desired effect.

3. La Representación Política en Colombia: Redes Clientelistas en el Congreso de los años Noventa (Political Representation in Colombia: Clientelist Networks in the Congress of the 1990s)

Andrés Dávila, political scientist, Departamento de Ciencia Política, Universidad de los Andes.

Francisco Gutiérrez, anthropologist/political scientist, IEPRI, Universidad Nacional.

This project proposes to explore the transformation of the Colombian political system in the 1990s. The new constitution adopted in 1991 is widely seen to have represented a critical and much needed instance of institutional change, modernising the Colombian political system by providing new democratic mechanisms for increased participation and representation. It has been portrayed as the means through which to reform Colombia's traditionally clientelist political system. What has arguably happened instead, however, is not so much the disappearance of clientelism as the "marketisation" of the clientelist system. Partly as a result of the constitutional changes, but also the intensification of the conflict with the guerrillas, the links between different levels of clientelist pyramids have been weakened, and political leaders at all levels of the clientelist chain have become more autonomous. As a result,

congressmen are no longer guaranteed to be able to mobilise pyramidal chains of influence which run from the local up to the national, and so have to depend on their personal links with specific individuals imbued with political capital, who offer their political “goods” to the highest bidder. This has transformed the logic of political competition in Colombia and has redefined the function of representation and intermediation of members of Congress in ways which are not adequately conceptualised through “traditional/modern” or “democratic/anti-democratic” dichotomies. This process has also arguably caused a crisis of representation within the national polity because it has undermined the processes of resource redistribution which clientelist pyramids inherently promote. This project seeks to investigate the ways in which individuals and political parties have adapted to the situations of institutional change and crisis. In order to do so, it is important to understand the informal processes of negotiation and channelling of political interests from the local to the national level, for it is here that there will be clues for explaining the resilience of non-democratic political structures, which rather than being reformed by institutional change have instead adapted and developed new incentive and organisational forms. In particular, it will be necessary to consider the way in which different social groups participate and see themselves represented in political institutions, the types of political loyalties which predominate, and whom representatives and intermediaries call on to get to or stay in power.

4. From the Alliance for Progress to the Plan Colombia: A Retrospective Look at US aid and the Colombian Conflict

Luis Fajardo, historian/economist, Facultad de Economía, Universidad del Rosario.

This project seeks to present an historical perspective on US financial assistance to the government of Colombia. The premise of the study is that previous attempts at stabilising beleaguered Colombian state institutions through large foreign aid packages left largely unsatisfactory results. One of the reasons behind this failure was the changing internal political environment in the US, and the impact this had on US commitment to large-scale aid flows to Colombia. Specifically, this study will focus on the Alliance for Progress initiative of the 1960s, a case study that reveals many of the shortfalls of a counter-insurgency strategy based primarily on the promise of large-scale US aid. In particular, it will try to explore the political reasons that determined US commitment (or lack of commitment) to maintaining economic aid to Colombia in the 1960s. It will identify the political processes that eventually led US policymakers to abandon the initiative in the late 1960s with many of its goals unattained. The project will also attempt a preliminary comparative study in order to evaluate differences and similarities between the Alliance for Progress and the present-day “Plan Colombia”, which is seeing renewed US involvement with Colombia. This should yield elements that will contribute to assess the feasibility of Plan Colombia as a strategy for institutional strengthening.

5. Building Peace Locally: Business-Led Peace Initiatives in Colombia

Angelika Rettberg, political scientist, Centro de Estudios Políticos e Internacionales (CEPI), Facultad de Ciencia Política y Gobierno, Universidad del Rosario.

This project focuses on the role played by the Colombian business sector in the context of the present peace process. Business involvement in the current peace process has been mixed, ranging from support to open opposition. Between these two extremes, business initiatives at the local level have taken steps conducive to building peace, however, and the project proposes to study these business-led peace initiatives at the local level. Given a set of options

for business involvement – including support for hard-line solutions of the Colombian conflict, inaction, and support for peaceful solutions – the project will ask what has motivated business to participate in such peace initiatives, and what shapes local business preferences for particular peaceful solutions over others. This will include considering why some local business leaders or firms choose to carry out such initiatives and others don't, whether context-specific conditions are important to both participating in and promoting local-level peace initiatives and the specific type of initiative. Also important – particularly when one considers that Colombia is a society marked historically by oligarchic and clientelist tendencies – will be exploring what sorts of institutional barriers and incentives exist, both from the perspective of promoting and not promoting peace initiatives, and whether, within the Colombian situation of crisis, there are groups and actors with interests in maintaining conflict, and how they interact with others who seek to end it.

6. Democratic Sustainability in the Andean Region

The IEPRI Comparative Politics Research Group (Francisco Gutiérrez, anthropologist/political scientist; Alvaro Tirado, historian; María Emma Wills, political scientist; Andrés Dávila, political scientist; Mónica Pachón, political scientist; Luisa Ramírez, psychologist; Miguel García, political scientist; Juan Carlos Rodríguez, political scientist; Diana Hoyos, political scientist; and María Teresa Pinto, political scientist).

This project is a comparative analysis of the various paths and trajectories taken by democratic regimes in the Andean Region, with the purpose of establishing which factors explain their evolutions during the last three decades. Uncertainty about democratic sustainability in the Andean Region has become a central issue in Latin American comparative political analysis, especially when we observe how during the 1990s these countries have undergone major transformations, sometimes including clear breakdowns of the democratic institutional framework. These disruptions have generally not involved the establishment of authoritarian dictatorships, however, but have led to the emergence of new forms of “semi-democratic” government, oriented less by “formal” principles or practices than by the search for specific goals. These clearly pose a critical challenge to theories of political change, as well as to the very notion of democratic sustainability in Latin America. With this in mind, this project will firstly evaluate the trajectory of Andean democracies during the past three decades through a systematic comparison of a variety of quantitative indicators representative of four broad dimensions of the political system: representation, competition, participation and efficacy. Secondly, the project will then evaluate the effects that actors and institutions have and have had on the democratic sustainability of Andean regimes.

7. Identidad, Pandillas y Conflicto: Violencia Juvenil en Bogotá, Barranquilla y Nieva (Identity, Gangs, and Conflict: Youth Violence in Bogota, Barranquilla and Nieva)

Carlos Mario Perea Restrepo, historian/anthropologist, IEPRI, Universidad Nacional.

This project proposes a comparative study of the dynamics of youth gangsterism. Youth gangs are increasingly important actors within the Colombian violence landscape, with over one third of criminal violence attributable to them. The dynamics of gang violence are very different across different locations in Colombia, however, and this project aims to investigate this empirically through ethnographic studies of gangs in the cities of Bogotá, Baranquilla, and Nieva, with a secondary source-derived study of Medellin. These are different types of urban centres, in very different areas of Colombia. Bogotá is the largest city in the country,

while Nieva is a substantially smaller provincial town. Contrarily to Bogotá, however, Nieva is on the frontline of the conflict with the FARC. Baranquilla is on the Caribbean coast, where the general dynamics of violence are very different from the rest of the country. Medellín is widely considered to be the most violent city in Colombia, where the gang phenomenon has particular dynamics, and is linked in particular to the drugs trade. The study builds on the insights of a previous study of gangs in Bogotá,¹³ and proposes to focus on five critical aspects of the gang phenomenon: their relationship to the social fabric (both locally and nationally, and both in material and symbolic terms); gang practices (in particular violent gang practices, but also, more broadly, understanding what the gang as an institution means, and how it is sustained and reproduced in time); the gang as a means of constituting youth identity (including understanding the meanings that violence in and of itself can take on); the relationship between gangs and other violent actors (e.g. guerrilla, paramilitaries, drug cartels, the state, etc.); and finally, to explore the relationship and processual linkages between gangsterism and wider structural phenomena such as poverty and social exclusion.

8. Violence, Crime, and Society in Latin America: Youth Gangsterism in Nicaragua and Colombia Compared

Dennis Rodgers, anthropologist, DESTIN, LSE.

This project proposes to conduct theoretical and investigative research on the manifestation of violence in contemporary Latin America. Despite having entered a "post-authoritarian" era, Latin America remains plagued by violence, to the extent that in many countries it is still the dominating feature of society. At the same time, however, the dynamics of violence have changed fundamentally in the region; the dictatorships characteristic of the past have given way to what can be termed more "disordered" regimes of violence. In particular, crime now constitutes the most visible form of violence in Latin America today, and it is on this type of violence that this proposed research will focus. This new criminal regime of violence in Latin America throws into question many of the dominant frameworks and assumptions that conventionally underpin inquiries into violence, however, and consequently, new theoretical avenues and directions are needed to fully grasp the manifestation and consequences of such forms of violence. An exploration of this issue will constitute the first phase of the proposed project. The second phase proposes to look at the ramifications of criminal violence through a comparative investigation of the youth gang phenomenon in Latin America, which in many ways is paradigmatic of the new forms of violence now dominating the region. This work will take as starting point previous research carried out on youth gangsterism in Managua,¹⁴ and will firstly update it, and then secondly, expand it to other Nicaraguan urban centres, namely Bluefields, León, and Granada. The project will be conducted in synergy with the comparative research proposed by the IEPRI researcher Carlos Mario Perea Restrepo on youth gangs in Bogotá, Baranquilla, Medellín, and Nieva in Colombia, with the aim of being able to systematically compare the respective Nicaraguan and Colombian studies, something which would be unprecedented within the context of research on Latin American gang violence.

¹³ C. M. Perea Restrepo, 'Un ruedo significa respeto y poder: Pandillas y violencias en Bogotá', in *Violencias colectivas en los Andes*, Lima: IFEA, forthcoming.

¹⁴ Rodgers (1999).

9. Local Institutions, Decentralisation and Conflict

Jean-Paul Faguet, economist/political scientist, DESTIN & CEP, LSE.

This project will study a sample of municipalities/regions including some where violence has put down roots amongst the local people, and others where peace predominates. We will examine the workings of local institutions and political party systems to discern the extent to which local government represents local civic society and its demands and needs, and then responds effectively to the same. We will try to understand the linkages between the inclusiveness of local politics, the effectiveness of local government, and civil violence and social breakdown. This research will be placed in the context of the local economy and economic actors, natural resource endowments, and the local distribution of income and wealth. The goal will be to determine what are the systematic political, institutional and economic differences between violent and non-violent regions in Colombia.

10. Politics, Institutions and Civil Violence in the Andean Countries

Jonathan DiJohn, economist, DESTIN, LSE.

Jean-Paul Faguet, economist/political scientist, DESTIN & CEP, LSE.

This is a comparative study of state capacities in the Andean countries to contain and control violent conflicts. One of the more startling phenomena which has occurred in Andean countries in recent years is the collapse of traditional political parties, and in fact the entire party system, in countries as diverse as Peru, Venezuela and Ecuador, alongside their persistence in Colombia and Bolivia. The premise of this study is that state capacity to resolve conflict peacefully cannot adequately be understood separately from the stage of development, political organisation and strategies, and economic performance. Moreover, the study seeks to disaggregate the state into its component levels to investigate the extent to which national and local political institutions and policies have any systematic influence on the incidence of political violence and crime. One of the striking features of the Andean countries in the past decade is the decline in the legitimacy and effectiveness of clientelist political parties as mediators of conflict between the state and interests in civil society. The central hypothesis of this project is that one of the main causes of increasing political disintegration and fragmentation in the region has been a decline in resources available for patronage as a result of economic stagnation and decline. In turn, we suggest that this has caused a noticeable increase in the informalisation and improvisation of conflict resolution in the region and a resurgence of populist politics. The implications of these trends on the capacity of the state to provide public goods, infrastructure and improve taxation and resource mobilisation will therefore also be explored.

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The aim of the Crisis States Programme (CSP) at DESTIN's Development Research Centre is to provide new understanding of the causes of crisis and breakdown in the developing world and the processes of avoiding or overcoming them. We want to know why some political systems and communities, in what can be called the "fragile states" found in many of the poor and middle income countries, have broken down even to the point of violent conflict while others have not. Our work asks whether processes of globalisation have precipitated or helped to avoid crisis and social breakdown.

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Research Objectives

- We will assess how constellations of power at local, national and global levels drive processes of institutional change, collapse and reconstruction and in doing so will challenge simplistic paradigms about the beneficial effects of economic and political liberalisation.
- We will examine the effects of international interventions promoting democratic reform, human rights and market competition on the 'conflict management capacity' and production and distributional systems of existing polities.
- We will analyse how communities have responded to crisis, and the incentives and moral frameworks that have led either toward violent or non-violent outcomes.
- We will examine what kinds of formal and informal institutional arrangements poor communities have constructed to deal with economic survival and local order.



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