Political Corruption and Narcotrafficking in Mexico

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1 Introduction

In recent years, Mexico has been the center of drug violence, killing thousands of people and exposing the Mexican society to extortion, kidnapping, torture and impunity. In December 2006 the Mexican President Felipe Calderon, a few days after being in power, launched a new strategy to tackle the increase of narcotrafficking called "war on drugs". More than 50,000 troops were deployed in the country. Since then more than 28,000 people have died in drug-related violence (BBC, 2010a).

Mexico faces one of the worst violent chapters in its history. In this context many questions arise: Has the Mexican President's strategy fuelled the violence in the country? Is violence one of the consequences of the merger between political corruption and the drug cartels? To what extent has the flow of weapons from the US to Mexico contributed to drug violence?

This article studies the development of political corruption and drug trafficking in Mexico, and it is divided in four parts. The first one aims to analyse the main functions of corruption during the post-revolutionary Political system headed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The second part, it studies the arrival of new political elites called "the technocrats" represented by the presidents Miguel de la Madrid, Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo, which will mark a new stage in the relations between the State and drug gangs. The third part shows briefly the political transition with the arrival of Vicente Fox Quesada from the National Action Party in July 2000 and its consequences for Mexican democracy. Finally, it examines the flourishing of narcoindustry in Mexico and the deployment of troops to take on the drug gangs and its social effects for the population.

According to the Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International in 2011, Mexico is ranked 100 from a list of 182 countries, with a score of 3, using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is highly corrupt and 10 highly clean (TI, 2011:4)

The indicators of control of corruption presented by the World Bank points out that Mexico gets -0.26 points, where -2.5 is the lower level of governance and 2.5 is the highest level of governance, that's means that Mexico obtained a low level of good governance, in terms of control of corruption (Kaufman, 2009)

Following the scores from the Transparency International and the World Bank, Mexico is far a way from good governance[1], high transparency accountability and good control of corruption.

The high levels of corruption[2] in Mexico have a long history that would provide materials for several books. However, this text will present the antecedents of corruption since the post-revolutionary Mexican political system, which will facilitate the development of contemporary corruption and drug trafficking.

[1]The term governance is understood in terms of the World Bank: "We define governance as a set of traditions and institutions which the power is exerted in a country with the goal to look for the sake of everybody. It involves the methods used by the person in charge of the exercise of power as well as the methods how those representatives are chose, controlled and replaced. Equally, it comprises the capacity of the government to manage efficiently their resources at apply the solid policies, encouraging the respect of the citizens, and the respect of state towards the institutions, and the financial and social interactions" (Kaufmann, 2009).

[2]The term corruption is taken as the abuse of public power for private purposes. This definition assumes the distinction between public and private roles. In many societies is not very clear the frontier between both spheres, and it seems to be natural to give some gifts in exchange of assigning contracts and jobs. The distinction between public and private spheres seems to be strange and not clearly defined. However, in developed societies the difference between the two spaces is more pronounced. (Rose-Ackerman, 1999: 91)

2 Corruption in the post-revolutionary era

It is important to remember that the traditional Mexican political system[3], born after the revolutionary movement of 1910, is based theoretically on the Constitution of 1917 which established a federal government divided into three powers: the executive, who is represented by the President of the country; the legislative that is formed by the chambers of deputies and senators; and the judiciary based on the Supreme Court of Justice, and national courts (Constitución de México, 2010).

Under the terms of the Constitution, "States are sovereign and free" and have a governor and an assembly of representatives elected by universal suffrage. But in reality, these constitutional prerogatives have not been applied rigorously, because the force of this political system was based on other pillars such as the existence of an executive with constitutional and extra constitutional powers to control the other powers and the dominance of a political party on the remaining opposition parties, (Carpizo, 1978: 191), without forgetting another important component of this system: corruption, which became an essential element, not only in building this system but also in its preservation.

The institutionalisation of the political life in Mexico, through the foundation of the PRI in 1929 sets up not only the rules of the political game, but also institutionalises the corruption as a tool of negotiation among dissidents, reducing the levels of violence triggered by the revolution (1910-1929) as Aguilar Zínser indicates: "the Mexican political regime managed to use the force selectively and exemplary; it achieved to suppress relatively little, and with the indiscriminate abuse of the national treasury, it achieved to corrupt a lot, to keep the power, break up their opponents, dilute disagreement and contain social demands" (Aguilar, 1996: 86)

The well-known phrase of General Obregón (1880-1928) at the time of the institutionalisation of the political life in Mexico: "There is not a General that can resist a cannonshot of 500 pesos" (Villoro, 1974)

According to Alan Riding, the stability and social peace that was achieved through the traditional political system was based on corruption. This element was essential to make the regime work: "the corruption is the oil that moves the Mexican political system" (Riding 1985: 140).

Following Riding (1985), the corruption in Mexico embodied a "modus operandi" in political exercise: the privileges, the political influences, and the favours, as well as the loyalties, disciplines and silences were the base of the system.

The PRI, as a hegemonic party, and the corporatism structure functioned as important tools to handle corruption and political control. In this way, Morris Stephen indicates that the structure of the PRI through the National Peasant Confederation (Confederación Nacional Campesina-CNC), the Confederation of Mexican Workers (Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos-CTM) and the National Confederation of the Popular Organisations (Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares-CNOP) used the support of corruption as a strategy of coaptation in order to control leaders of labour unions, peasants and neighbourhood associations. This strategy meant that the regime obtained support and legitimacy from dissidents in exchange of listening to their concerns and making concessions with them (Morris, 1992:51)

For Rivelois, the corruption is part of the Mexican Political System for two reasons: on one hand, it works as an element for social regulation, corporatist agreements and mutual favours; On the another hand, it allows distributing in an informal and selective way the public wealth (Rivelois, 1999: 285).

Furthermore, Rivelois indicates that corruption was the element that unified the Mexican political elites[4] during many decades, not only because members of the elites received benefits directly from the fruits of corruption, but also because they could distribute resources provided from this source.

[3]The traditional Mexican political system refers to one whose main feature was the exercise of an exacerbated presidentialism, and the predominance of the PRI in power for 71 years (1929-2000) (Rivelois, 1999)

[4]Firstly, the concept of elite is defined as a group of people that have a privileged position inside of the political, military, economic and cultural structure. The decisions of this group of people have important consequences for the rest of the society (Mills 1956, 11-12). On the other hand, the term of Mexican political elite is characterized following the criterion of Jean Rivelois, who affirms that the Mexican political elite is divided in three levels: the first one is a small council, comprising the President and his favourite members of the executive's board; the second one is formed by representatives linked with political active groups, bankers, entrepreneurs and members of the agriculture sector, as well as several ministers, government departments, armed forces and labour union leaders, the third one is composed of leaders placed the highest level of PRI, PAN and PRD (Rivelois, 1999: 272).

> The actors of political power are linked not only by the reproduction of a system which gives them material benefits, but also by the blackmail that it may have against each another, the complicity restrains application of the law. Therefore, if a political actor gets resources without distributing, he risks facing the judicial system and allegations against him. This is what happened to the brother of President Salinas de Gortari, who only distributed the fruits of corruption among a tiny group. Raúl Salinas paid for an error of egoism, because he accumulated without sharing among elites (Rivelois, 1999: 285).

Following Rivelois (1999), the traditional Mexican political System could survive for many decades due to the manipulation of the traditional power's structures such as Caciquism[5], Nepotism[6], Parenthood [7], Clientelism [8], and of course, by the use of the corruption as a mechanism to receive and distribute resources among the elite and among the citizens. For example, many citizens benefited from the corruption through their local political elites. It is well known that some citizens with a "close relation" to a PRI's representative could get electricity by a clandestine connexion without paying the service, and avoiding paying a fine or being legally prosecuted.

In this scheme, the corruption in the traditional Mexican Political System fulfilled several functions among them: sets up political agreements, reduces violence and conflicts among other political groups, shares political positions, makes the regime more flexible, buys dissidents, creates complicities, strengthens loyalties, disciplines and political commitments. The corruption also encouraged the peaceful way that allowed the mobility of the elites without violence and with a high dose of consensus. However, this pattern of corruption was altered by the arrival of new elites.

3 The new political elite: The technocrats

At the end of the 1970's, the import substitution industrialization model, which was highly influenced by Keynes' theories that advocated for a good dose of state intervention as condition for stability and steady growth, found its limitations, and it started a structural crisis.

The neoliberal economic policies, that promote free market, privatizations of state enterprises and trade liberalization, were well received by Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s. These policies, promoted by Milton Friedman and the Chicago School boys, were instructed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. All together, they spread a set of practical prescriptions that in theory were applicable to all economies (Rousseau, 2000).

Soon these theories found an echo among the Mexican political elite, who was named "the technocrats". This new elite was characterised by their skills in economy and finances and its little experience in political positions. (Rousseau, 2000: 124) The Mexican presidents known as technocrats in recent years were Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) and Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León (1994-2000). However, the main president of applying the neoliberalism was Salinas de Gortari. He accelerates the process of privatisation, sets up the basis to disarticulate the power of the corporatism and labour unions, and opens the door for the North American Free Trade Agreement, through diplomatic negotiations in 1986 (Rousseau, 2000).

[5]Caciquism is a form of power exercised by people who are entitled of two powers: one territorial and another moral. The exercise of this power is characterised for schemes authoritarians and clientelists (Guerra, 1992: 181).

[6]Nepotism is the preference to give public post to close friends or relatives without taking into account professional skills and education. The allocation of post is given on the grounds of loyalty or for a personal favour (Mény, 1992).

[7]Parenthood surged as a catholic requirement set out in the canonical right in which gives to a child during a ceremony a spiritual director who will survey as a father in his Christian formation. Through this ceremony is created a sort of relationship among parents towards to godfathers, this relation is named co-parenthood. Brief, this relationship is a religious engagement and is associated to a ritual parenthood. This relation can be used to reinforce social and political links inside of the Latin American political class (Lewis, 1951)

[8]Clientelism is a political practice that consist in creating bonds of mutual and unequal dependency (...) the boss does a favour in exchange of services provided by the client (sometimes in exchange of votes but there are many kind of services that the client can provide to the boss) The services can be done through discretionary decisions in profit to the clients (Mény, 1997: 2).

Simultaneously, with the arrival of the technocrats to the presidency and the most important positions in the country, the political power experiences an important modification, breaking with the rules and principles that regulated the traditional practices and political process in Mexico (Wayne, 1996:47). The corporate and social agreements were replaced by unilateral measures based in statistical analysis. The political experience was substituted for finances and statistical degrees, and the social peace was finished, giving place to the turbulent political movements, rebellions, criminal confrontations and the rise of the violence in different parts of the country.

In accordance with Morris, the change of the traditional political elites to the technocrats not only modified the career and education of the Mexican leaders, but also changed the nature of the corruption. The new pattern of the corruption is more unstable than that one from the traditional Mexican political system. The equilibrium between State and society through the corruption was fundamentally modified (Morris 2000: 229) The killing of the Cardinal Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo in May 1993 and the Candidate for the Mexican Presidency, Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta, in March 1994, and the General Secretary of the PRI, Francisco Ruiz Massieu, in September of the same year, as well as the murder of the judge of Mexico City, Pablo Uscanga, in 1995, and the disappearance of the ex-general attorney from Jalisco, Leonardo Larios Guzman in May 1995, showed a new logic in the pattern of the corruption in this country (Astorga, 1999).

The new corruption, as Morris states, is guided more by crime organised interests than for bureaucratic or political party stakes. In this scheme, the priority is not loyalty for the president and for the political system, rather creating money at any means (Morris, 2000: 229-234). Besides, Rivelois indicates that this type of corruption is more complex due to its fusion with the drug trafficking and other global phenomena (Rivelois, 1999).

In this light, the type of corruption from the traditional Mexican system has been modified profoundly. It is necessary to stress that this text does not advocate for any form of corruption under any political regime, however by analytical purposes it is essential to distinguish the difference of patterns in the political corruption in Mexico.

4 Political Transition and Mexican democracy

The defeat of the PRI, the backbone of the Mexican political system, after seventy- one years of holding the political power continuously, and the arrival of Vicente Fox, candidate of the National Action Party (PAN) to the presidency in July 2000, the loss of the majority of PRI's members in the Chamber of Deputies, the challenges given by the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) and by his party member, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano, without forgetting the role of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the growing of demands for accountability, respect of human rights, clean elections and combat to corruption had important consequences on the political, economic and social sphere. At the same time, these changes also had effects on the corruption structure and organized crime, particularly for drug trafficking.

For some scholars, the political changes in 2000 represented a democratic transition[9] which would open a door to plurality and equality on electoral competition, Nevertheless, the political changes transformed not only the Mexican Political system, but also the modus operandi of corruption and drug trafficking, as well as the expectations of Mexicans to the political system (Morris, 2009).

On the other hand, Labrousse considers that after the opening of trade in Mexico through NAFTA (North American Free Trade), drug trafficking became a key issue for international finances and for national economy:

> At the end of this decade, when Carlos Salinas de Gortari and George Bush come to power simultaneously, drug trafficking become a matter of international finances and a mainstay of the Mexican economy through the introduction of "dirty money" in productive activities, legally

[9] According to O'Donnell and Schmitter, the term "democratic transition" called the dismissal of an authoritarian regime and the creation or establishment of a new democratic regime: "We understand the transition as an interval between one political regime and another (...) The transitions are defined, on one hand, by the beginning of a process of dissolution of the authoritarian regime, on another hand, by the establishment of a democratic shape, the return to authoritarianism or the appearance of a revolutionary alternative" (O'Donell and Schmitter, 1986: 6)

> recognized such as state finances. Thus, the passage of the import substitution industrialisation model to neoliberalism and the privatization of national companies encouraged the participation of narcotrafficking in the national economy (Labrousse, 2003: 445).

In the same vain, Jean-François Boyer argues that the Mexican economy was nourished by drug trafficking, given that the political representatives "invited" to drug traffickers to invest their financial resources in the country:

> The country's financial authorities asked to the drug traffickers to invest their income in an economy undercapitalized, and in return, the police and army turned a blind eye on drug trafficking, and both parties were an agreement not use violence, and to negotiate any arrests in cases where it would be necessary in order to make concessions vis-à-vis the U.S and anti-drug authorities. The Mexican government was committed to not allow the DEA and U.S. anti-drug agencies to participate in a crackdown on its territory (Boyer, 2001:148).

According to Astorga's report, PGR officials estimated in 1994 that Mexican traffickers profits to be 30 billion U.S. dollars in 1994 (four times the oil revenues the same year, 7.1% of the GNP, and almost five times the international reserves). The American authorities figures were from 8 to 30 billion U.S dollars a year circulating in Mexican banks in 1996 (2.38-8.96% of the GNP) (Astorga, 1999: 28-29).

The gross earnings generated by narcotrafficking makes it easier to attract members of the police and army into this business, for example, in 1996 the participation of the ex-General Jesús Gutierrez Rebollo, who was appointed the country's top-ranking drug interdiction officer by head of the National Institute for Fighting Drugs (INCD). The narcotrafficking showed an example of the penetration of this phenomenon in the Mexican intelligence and political sphere (Astorga 1999).

The Mexican financial crisis in 1994-1995 and the plan of safeguarding from the International Monetary Found and the U.S. government (50 billion U.S. dollars) broke the myth of "good management" of the government of Carlos Salinas and of the "New Mexican economic miracle" based on Neoliberalism. This economic crisis was described by economists as the "tequila effect", referring to the

false prosperity of Mexico, which preceded the 1995 crisis (Fabre, 1999: 127-128). At the same time, Guilhem Fabre considers that the "tequila effect" was linked to the "cocaine effect". That is to say that the economic prosperity experienced by Mexico was based primarily on the resources provided by the money-laundering and drug trafficking (Fabre, 1999: 127-128).

It is difficult to measure the impact of the drug trafficking trade. Nevertheless, on the eve of the 1995 crisis, financial funds were laundered in Mexico increased from 3 to 8 billion dollars: they were comparable to oil exports (6.7 billion U.S. dollars). They represented from 4 to 10% of total imports Mexican (80 billion U.S. dollars in 1994) (Fabre, 1999: 127-128).

In accordance with Fabre, NAFTA allowed Mexico and the United States to take advantage of recycling drug dollars. For Mexico, the narcoprofits reached significant proportions at the macro financial level, mobilizing small business, real estate, and at a larger scale, the International financial intermediation. Not to mention that these narcoprofits have to export the image of Mexico as a country with strong economic growth, this allowed Mexico to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). For the U.S. narcoprofits facilitated side purchases of consumer goods such as automobiles and electronic equipment manufactured in Mexico. Besides, this situation benefited the U.S. economy to create a paradise for laundering dirty money not so far from their territory (Fabre, 1999: 127-128)

Thus, drug trafficking became not only the most important financial source for Mexico in the 1990's, but also the largest foreign exchange earner for the country, replacing oil and tourism, especially after the beginning of the NAFTA, to the point that some scholars called the "drug trafficking, the engine of the Mexican economy" and others nicknamed the NAFTA as the "North American Drug Trade Agreement (NADTA). (Soppelsa, 2002:124).

In this scenario, one third of the U.S. drugs' market is controlled by Mexican cartels, whose profits in 2000 were estimated at 50 billion dollars. (Aguayo, 2000, p. 99). Moreover, according to Larry Holifield, director of the U.S. (Drug Enforcement Administration), the Mexican cartels are the most powerful in the

world and their influence continues increasingly. In 2003, Mexican traffickers were responsible for 77 percent of the cocaine arriving in the United States and 88 percent of marijuana. (La Razón, 2005)

Following the report called "National Drug threat assessment 2010" prepared by the U.S State Department of justice, it estimates that 90% of cocaine entering the United States transits through Mexico from Colombia, being cocaine producer. The same report indicates that drug cartels in Mexico control approximately 70% of foreign narcotics that flow into the United States. The text also calculates the illicit drug sale earnings range from $13.6 billion to 48.4 billion annually (NDIC, 2010)

On the other hand, the United Nations through the Drug and Crime Office indicates that drug trafficking generates annual revenues of 320 billion dollars worldwide, and just in Mexico reaches 30 billion dollars per year. The report also estimates that between 150 and 250 million adults use illicit drugs each year (The UNODC, 2011)

In this context, it can be observed that the development of the narcotrafficking in Mexico could not have been possible without the endorsement from the political elites. For Marques Pereira, the Mexican political corruption got married with narcotrafficking, and the persistence of this marriage can be explained to a large extent by social tolerance. In agreement with Marques Pereira, drug traffickers bought political elites and police in order to expand their business; in turn, politicians protected criminals in order to get money, exploiting their political positions (Marques-Pereira, 1996: 771).

Marques- Pereira argues that the merger between politicians and drug traffickers was achieved through social and religious ties such as marriage, parenthood and family links, which allowed to drug traffickers to get a sort of "social laundering" that had the same function of the "money laundering". In other words, it makes legal and socially acceptable something that had origins of "dirty" (Marques-Pereira, 1996:771).

Another factor that contributed to the strengthening of the development of drug trafficking in Mexico was the dissemination of the image of drug dealers as "heroes" through the *corridos*[10]. This new "social hero" based his legitimacy on his ability to redistribute wealth generously among the poor (Marques-Pereira, 1996). For example, in the State of Morelos, some farmers protect drug traffickers, according to the population, they built roads to transport agricultural products; they also built schools, clinics and churches. More still, they facilitated the purchases of cars and trucks for farmers and they provided work for young people. Thus, in some regions of the country, drug traffickers are seen "social heroes", a sort of Mexican Robin Hood "who are able to redistribute wealth among the poor" (Rivelois, 1999).

The social acceptation of the narcotrafficking and political corruption, the disarticulation of the old political structures that in the traditional political system was maintaining the social peace, the opening of the economy, the negotiation of regional powers and regional caciques, the corruption inside of the police's body and the army and the constant admiration for traffickers as "heroes" contributed with the growth of the narcoindustry in Mexico.

5 The boom of the Narcotrafficking and wave of violence

Conforming to Astorga, drug traffickers in Mexico have become so powerful that they have "penetrated" the protective shield of official institutions, whose purpose is to fight against them. Historical research in the Mexican case does not support the assumption of two separate fields: drug trafficking and its agents, on one side, and the State, on the other. Moreover, since the beginning of prohibition, the illegal trade appeared related to powerful political agents in the production and trafficking regions. Cultivators and wholesale smugglers were not autonomous players; their success depended on political protection. They did not buy politicians; rather, politicians obliged them to pay a sort of "tax". If they did not pay, their business was over. However, the narcotrafficking reached a sort of autonomy, confronting directly the political power (Astorga, 1999: 33).

[10]The *corridos* are narrative poems transformed in popular music, which have the same function than epics narratives in Greece in Homer's time, that is to say, encourage the popular imagination based on reel events that are considered worthy of being retained in the collective memory. In the past decades, the *corridos* were devoted to Generals from the Mexican Revolution, however in recent years, they have been devoted to stories of drug traffickers. In 1997, "Los Tucanes de Tijuana", a musical group that sings *corridos*, sold over 5.5 million records in Mexico and the USA. (Aguayo, 2000 : 167)

In the past, politicians decided who, when, where and how drug trafficking could operate (Astorga, 1999: 35). Nowadays, drug leaders of traffickers decide where and how they operate. The drug gangs control the territory, divided by regions. The confrontation among gangs causes the increase in violence. For example, Mexico's northern border towns are experiencing the worst of the violence. Ciudad Juarez (just across from El Paso in Texas) is the city suffering the most. There are also high levels of violence in Michoacán and Guerrero states (BBC, 2010b).

Mass graves have been turning up increasingly frequently, some containing dozens of bodies. Beheadings and bodies hung from bridges point to a rise in gruesome attacks, massive rapes, disappearances, extortion, torture, mutilated bodies, decapitations and public killings are the most common acts committed by narcotrafficking (BBC, 2010a). According to the National Intelligence chief, Guillermo Valdes, more than 28,000 people had died in drug-related violence since 2006 and its fast increase has been unstoppable (BBC, 2010a). If the killings continue to increase at the current rate that total will rise to about 75,000 by the time the government's term in office ends (BBC,2010c). On the other hand, the Mexican Presidency Office reported in January 2011 a total of 34.612 people killed by drug-related violence, from which 30.913 were by execution-style killings, 3,153 by confrontation or shootouts, and 546 by aggression and clashes, representing 18.4 murders per 100, 000 inhabitants. 44% of the total (34.612 deaths) corresponding to 2010 (Milenio, 2011). Following a report from BBC in September 2010, there is a selective type of violence led by rival organisations and police and military authorities, driven by the chronic instability of criminal networks, and their ability to retain and win routes and territories for drug trafficking (BBC, 2010c). Some 162 municipalities out of the 2,456 that exist across Mexico account for 80% of the total number of killings, and within that figure the violence is concentrated yet further. For example, Ciudad Juarez has seen 20% of the murders, while three other cities, Culiacan, Tijuana and Chihuahua, account for 16% (BBC, 2010c). As reported by BBC, in Mexico there were two periods of dramatic and sudden increase in drug-related killings between January 2007 and August 2010: the first from April 2008 to November 2008, when killings rose from 200 to over 700 per month. In this case, the origin of violence was the arrest of Alfredo Beltran Leyva, aka El Mochomo, in January 2008. The arrest culminated in the separation of the organisation of the Beltran Leyva brothers from the Sinaloa Cartel in March 2008 (BBC, 2010c). The second wave of violence happened between November 2009 and May 2010, when the number of killings went up from 500 to about 1,000 per month. This was driven by the death of Arturo Beltran Leyva, aka el Barbas, who was seized by the army (BBC, 2010c) Following BBC's report, both of these big waves of violence were triggered by either an arrest or elimination of a cartel boss (BBC, 2010c). In general terms, it can be observed that the increase of violence in many regions of the Mexican territory is directly associated with gang confrontations, as the national cartels use local gangs to get control of a region. For instance, in Ciudad Juarez, in Chihuahua State, the largest and most violent gangs (such as Barrio Azteca or Mexicles, with about 3,000 members each) are used by drug cartels to smuggle, import weapons, murder, extort and kidnap (BBC, 2010c). Mexico, as a major transit country to the USA, represents a strategic point for the narcoindustry. Drug cartels of different size fight for regional control, among the most important can be represented by the following table:

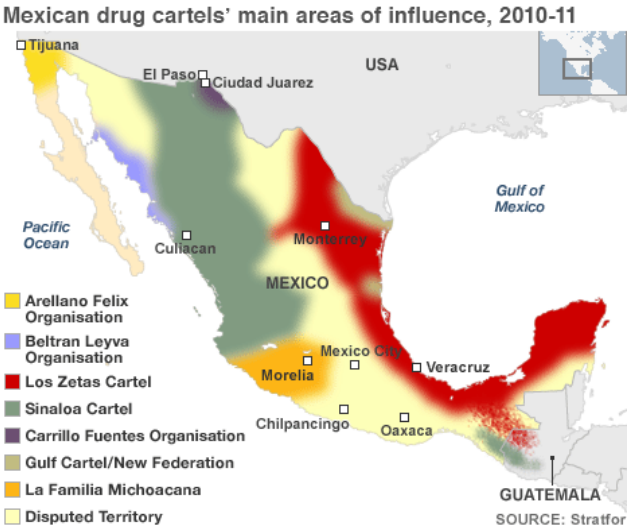
Cartel's name	Leaders	Founders	Region of control
Beltrán Leyva Cartel	Hector Beltrán Leyva	*Arturo Beltrán Leyva, Alfredo Beltrán Leyva, Carlos Beltrán Leyva, Edgar Vadez Villareal, Sergio Villareal Barragán*, Héctor Beltrán Leyva	Sonora, Sinaloa, Morelos, Guerrero

Cartel's name	Leaders	Founders	Region of control
La Familia Michoacana	*Nazario Moreno González*, José de Jesús Méndez Vargas, Enrique Plancarta Solís, Servando Gómez Martínez	*Nazario Moreno González, Carlos Rosales Mendoza, Arnoldo Rueda Medina, Dionicio Loya Plancarte, Rafael Cedeño Hernández, Alberto Espinoza Barrón*, Enrique Plancarte Solís, José Méndez Vargas, Servando Gómez Martínez	Michoacán, State of Mexico, Guererro, Jalisco
Gulf Cartel / New Federation	*Osiel Cárdenas Guillén, Antonio Cárdenas Guillén*, Jorge Eduardo Costilla	*Juan Nepomuceno Guerra, Juan García Abrego*	Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Nuevo León
Juárez Cartel	Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, José Luis Fratello	*Rafael Aguilar Guajardo, Pablo Acosta Villareal, Amado Carrillo Fuentes*	Chihuahua
Sinaloa Cartel	Joaquín Guzmán Loera, Ismael Zambada García, Juan José Esparragoza Moreno, *Ignacio Coronel Villareal*	*Héctor Luis Palma Salazar, Adrián Gomez González*, Joaquín Guzmán Loera, Ismael Zambada García, Manuel Garibay	Sinaloa, Sonora, Nayarit, Chihuahua, Durango, Jalisco, Colima, Chiapas, Guerrero, Zacatecas, Baja California, Baja California Sur, La Sierra de Juárez (Mexicali), Coahuila, Oaxaca, Guanajuato, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Tlaxcala, Puebla, Michoacán, México, Morelos, Mexico City
Tijuana Cartel	Enedina Arellano Félix (La Jefa), Luis Fernando Sánchez Arellano (El Ingeniero/El Alineador), Edgardo Leyva Escandon	*Ramón Arellano Félix, Benjamín Arellano Félix*, Francisco Rafael Arellano Félix, Carlos Arellano Félix, *Eduardo Arellano Félix, Francisco Javier Arellano Félix, Teodoro García Simental (El Teo)*, Gilberto Fimbres Fimbres, Luis Alonso Sedano Morales, Mario Alberto Apodaca, Sergio Tejada Martínez, *José Manuel García Simental, Gustavo Rivera Martínez (El P1)*, Héctor Guajardo Hernández (El Güicho), Armando Villareal (El Gordo Villarreal), Enrique Forquera Guerrero, Jorge Briceño López (El Cholo).	Tijuana, Mexicali, Tecate, Ensenada, Jalisco

Cartel's name	Leaders	Founders	Region of control
Los Zetas	Heriberto Lazcano, Jesús Enrique Rejón Aguilar, Miguel Treviño Morales	*Arturo Guzmán Decena, Jaime González Durán*, Jesús Enrique Rejón Aguilar, Heriberto Lazcano	Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Coahuila, Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatán, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Chiapas, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Hidalgo, Querétaro, Zacatecas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, México City, Baja California, Michoacán, Morelos
Other Cartels	Leaders of cartels		Region of control
Guadalajara Cartel, Sonora Cartel, Colima Cartel, Oaxaca Cartel, Milenio Cartel, Carrillo Fuentes Organisation, Arellano Felix Organisation	*Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo, Héctor Luis Palma Salazar, Jesús Amezcua Contreras Pedro Avilés Pérez, Juan Nepomuceno Guerra, Juan García Abrego, Rafael Caro Quintero, Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo*		Guadalajara, Sonora, Colima, Oaxaca, Michoacán, Jalisco, Mexico City, Nuevo León, Baja California, Ciudad Juárez-Chihuahua and Tamaulipas

Information provided by BBC (2010c), (Fineman, 1996), (UNODC, 2010), (Nájar, 2005), Ravelo (2010) Names in italics represent dead or arrested individuals.

The country is divided by the power of different drug cartels as can be observed on the provided map. However, many drug cartels work simultaneously in different regions.



Source: Q&A: Mexico's drug-related violence. BBC. News Latin America & Caribbean.[11]

[11] available online: `http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-10681249` [January 25, 2012]

The penetration of the narcotrafficking in Mexico is present in the whole territory in different scales. Nevertheless, its presence is notorious not only in terms of the violence that in recent years has increased, but also in terms of the presence of the troops.

The escalating of violence can be traced back to a political decision. President Calderon when he assumed office four years ago, promised to eliminate the drugs cartels once and for all. Then more than 50,000 troops and federal police have been actively involved in Mexico's so-called war on drugs (BBC, 2010a).

Since then, senior cartel leaders have been jailed, killed or prosecuted. One of the most direct consequences of this militarization has been the explosion of violence between drug cartels, gangs and the army.

The militarization in the Mexican Territory has been carried out after the police failed to fight against drug cartels. It is known that the Cartels have massive financial resources to infiltrate and corrupt policemen and high decision makers. In this context, the deployment of the army responds to the need to rebuild the entire structure of the Mexican Police body (Booth, 2010).

The Mexican President has blamed in many occasion the USA: "The origin of our violence problem begins with the fact that Mexico is located next to the country that has the highest levels of drug consumption in the world (...) It is as if our neighbour were the biggest drug addict in the world" (Booth, 2010).

It is certain that the Mexican geography does not help so much to reduce the amount of drug traffic and human traffic. From the south of Mexico, all drugs coming from Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Venezuela try to penetrate the U.S market through Mexico. From the north of Mexico, the cartels try to place the drug inside of the US market. Thus this territory becomes strategic for the narcoindustry.

> "The cartels have grown rich and bold – fed with billions of dollars from the United States. Even more, experts estimate that $10 billion to $25 billion in drug profits flow to Mexico each year from the north. About 90 percent of the cocaine consumed in the United States passes through Mexico, which also smuggles at least half of the marijuana and methamphetamine sold in U.S. cities. Meanwhile, many of the weapons the cartels use, including grenades and military-style assault rifles, are smuggled into Mexico from the United Status" (Booth, 2010).

Nowadays, the profits from the narcoindustry are so huge that it represents an enormous challenge to stop the power of narcotraffickers. Besides, it is a painful process for the population, who suffer on daily basis, violence, impunity and vulnerability.

"Cleaning the house", dismissal of corruptive members of the police and army is not a unilateral measure to fight narcotrafficking. Fighting the Mexican narcoindustry is not an easy task for anyone, and this process will take years or decades to rebuild public faith in the State, authorities and police officials, as well as creating a new image that condemns traffickers instead of giving them "a status of heroes".

6 Conclusion

This paper draws a set up of conclusions, which show that narcotrafficking in Mexico is a phenomenon that prospered under the U.S.A interests and under the umbrella of the Mexican political corruption. On one side, drug trafficking began as a response to U.S.A opium demand, during 'The Second World War' (1939-1945), in order to produce heroine for American soldiers. In Mexico, as in many other countries, drugs such as opiates, cocaine and marijuana were commonly used for medical reasons. On the other side, the exacerbated power of the Mexican presidency, the monopoly of politics by one political party (PRI), the subordination of the legislative and judicial spheres to the executive, and the lack of organized political opposition, created the conditions for developing drug trafficking from within the political power structure (Astorga, 1999: 32).

According to Astorga, before the Second World War, not a single suspected governor was ever formally accused or investigated. However, in the aftermath of the war when disputes arose between elite political groups, the drug issue was used to damage a governor's image. Nothing was proved because there were no formal accusations, nor any investigation, just political negotiations. Suspicions remained in the public opinion, but without any political or judicial accountability.

In this context, drug trafficking continued to function for many years under the protection and tolerance of the political power. The infiltration and links of drug traffickers inside of the official institutions has also a long history.

The combat against narcotrafficking has followed during many years the same pattern as anti-corruption campaigns. They were used as a mark of respect from the previous executive board, to obtain international financial resources, to show good governance policies, to attract foreign investment, to gain international legitimacy and to create an image of change and accountability among citizens but without a real will of stopping this phenomenon.

During many decades, the narcotraffickers were under the subordination to political power and politicians granted to groups of narcotrafficking, spaces to operate (Rivelois, 1999). The cracking down of the traditional political system has provoked a cascade effect on the different levels of the power structure pyramid. Lethal disputes among the state party political families have disrupted the mechanisms of political control over institutional mediations between traffickers and political power. Institutional mediators (police and military) and traffickers can now be more autonomous than ever and capable of playing for their own interests (Astorga, 1999: 35).

The democratic transition in Mexico and the development of globalisation have contributed to increase the power of organised crime, and making it more difficult to fight against the narcotrafficking.

Social historical problems: high levels of unemployment, illiteracy, indigenous exclusion, alcoholism, drug addiction, family breakdowns, low levels of social mobility, high scales of social inequality, decrease of ethical and moral principals, disappointment in political changes and democratic values, impunity and corruption, and negative perception of the police and judiciary body are some of the main causes that have contributed to increase the levels of the narcotrafficking in Mexico.

This country is confronted to one of the most difficult challenges: To stop the levels of violence. According to many experts, "more people are murdered in Mexico than in Iraq" and "Mexico's Ciudad Juarez is one of the world's most dangerous cities" (BBC, 16 November 2009). Social peace, security, justice, transparency and accountability are more than ever priorities as conditions to consolidate democracy in a country, where democracy has been translated basically on electoral competition, rather than reducing social inequalities, corruption, impunity and respect for the political and judicial powers. Nowadays, the bill is shared for the whole population from those elite' members to the average citizen than work honestly to earn their living, and are the most vulnerable to the impunity. Corruption and narcotrafficking need to be addressed seriously with the same intensity in order to restore the judicial and political institutions, as well as the confidence and respect of the citizens towards their institutions.

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