

Working



KELLOGG INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

exploring DEMOCRACY *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**PROTESTING AGAINST CRIME AND INSECURITY: HIGH-RISK
ACTIVISM IN MEXICO'S DRUG WAR**

Sandra J. Ley Gutiérrez

451

Sept

2022

paper



exploring DEMOCRACY *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Kellogg Institute for International Studies
University of Notre Dame
130 Hesburgh Center for International Studies
Notre Dame, IN 46556-5677
Phone: 574/631-6580
Web: kellogg.nd.edu

The Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame has built an international reputation by bringing the best of interdisciplinary scholarly inquiry to bear on democratization, human development, and other research themes relevant to contemporary societies around the world. Together, more than 100 faculty and visiting fellows as well as both graduate and undergraduate students make up the Kellogg community of scholars. Founded in 1982, the Institute promotes research, provides students with exceptional educational opportunities, and builds linkages across campus and around the world.

The Kellogg Working Paper Series:

- Shares work-in-progress in a timely way before final publication in scholarly books and journals
- Includes peer-reviewed papers by visiting and faculty fellows of the Institute
- Includes a Web database of texts and abstracts in English and Spanish or Portuguese
- Is indexed chronologically, by region and by research theme, and by author
- Most full manuscripts downloadable from kellogg.nd.edu

Contacts: Elizabeth Rankin, Editorial Manager
erankin3@nd.edu

PROTESTING AGAINST CRIME AND INSECURITY: HIGH-RISK ACTIVISM IN MEXICO'S DRUG WAR*

Sandra J. Ley Gutiérrez

Kellogg Institute for International Studies
Working Paper #451 – September 2022

Sandra J. Ley Gutiérrez is associate professor in the Political Studies Division at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE) in Mexico City. Prior to her arrival at CIDE, she was a visiting fellow at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Her research addresses the political and behavioral consequences of criminal violence and has appeared in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, and *Latin American Politics and Society*, among other academic journals. Together with Guillermo Trejo, she coauthored *Votes, Drugs, and Violence: The Political Logic of Criminal Wars in Mexico* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). Ley received her PhD in Political Science from Duke University in 2014.

* Preliminary versions of this article were presented at the 2018 Women Studying Violence Workshop, 2016 LASA Annual Conference, the Kellogg Institute's Work in Progress Series, the 2013 Midwest Political Science Association Conference, and the Latin American Politics Workshop at the University of Houston. I am grateful to Guillermo Trejo, Melina Altamirano, Lauren Young, Hannah Baron, Erica Simmons, Francisco Cantú, Anne Mische, Patrick Regan, Kraig Beyerlein, Diane Davis, Kees Koonings, and seminar participants for their valuable feedback and insightful suggestions. Special thanks to Elizabeth Orozco, Patricia Cárdenas, Valeria Ramírez, and Adriana Santamaría, for superb research assistantship, as well as to the Parametría and the Buendía and Laredo teams for their invaluable support. Some parts of this paper were drawn from S. Ley (2022), "High-risk participation: Demanding peace and justice amid criminal violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221085441>. This manuscript greatly benefited from the sharp observations of two anonymous reviewers, as well as the editorial and proofreading work by Elizabeth Rankin. The data collection for this study was funded by the Department of Political Science and the Graduate School at Duke University, as well as the Inter-American Foundation Grassroots Development Fellowship.

ABSTRACT

When do protests against crime and insecurity take place, regardless of the risks that such mobilization may entail? This paper argues that while violence provides an initial motivation for participating in protests, social networks play a fundamental role in incentivizing citizen mobilization against insecurity. Socialization within networks helps generate solidarity and empathy among participants, while at the same time transforming emotions associated with living in a violent context into potential for action. Also, through networks, individuals share information about opportunities for collective action and change their perceptions about the effectiveness and risks of such activism. These distinct mechanisms are valuable for the activation of protest against crime across levels of violence. Supporting evidence is derived from an original dataset on protest events in reaction to violence in Mexico between 2006 and 2012. Additionally, I rely on qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation to illustrate the role of networks in protest against crime across several Mexican states. This paper contributes to the growing literature on criminal violence and political participation.

RESUMEN

¿Cuándo se realizan protestas contra el crimen y la inseguridad, independientemente de los riesgos que dicha movilización pueda implicar? Este trabajo argumenta que, aunque la violencia proporciona una motivación inicial para participar en protestas, las redes sociales desempeñan un papel fundamental para incentivar la movilización ciudadana contra la inseguridad. La socialización en redes ayuda a generar solidaridad y empatía entre los participantes, al mismo tiempo que transforma las emociones asociadas a la vida en contextos violentos en potencial para la acción. Además, a través de las redes, las personas comparten información sobre oportunidades para la acción colectiva y cambian sus percepciones sobre la eficacia y los riesgos de dicho activismo. Estos distintos mecanismos son valiosos para la activación de la protesta contra el crimen, en distintos niveles de violencia. La evidencia en apoyo a este argumento se deriva de una base de datos original sobre eventos de protesta en reacción a la violencia en México entre 2006 y 2012. Además, se realizaron entrevistas a profundidad y observación participante para ilustrar el papel de las redes en la protesta contra el crimen, en varios estados mexicanos. Este artículo contribuye a la creciente literatura sobre violencia criminal y participación política.

Over the past decade, citizens in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela have poured into the streets demanding an end to criminal violence. In countries where homicide rates are comparable to those in regions facing civil wars,¹ citizens have engaged in marches, blockades, and hunger strikes, among other forms of protest, to denounce cases of civilian victimization, expose violence, and demand peace and justice. However, such actions are not without risk. Protests against crime voice strong calls for justice and often push for a stronger security policy. As a result, criminals often feel threatened and use violence against protesters. At the same time, given that criminal activity depends on collusion between organized criminal groups and state agents (Snyder and Durán-Martínez, 2009; Trejo and Ley, 2020), authorities do not necessarily have incentives to always resolve cases and administer justice effectively. Therefore, in addition to the minimal chances that protests have to affect security policies and achieve justice, citizen mobilization faces a double threat: retaliation from criminal groups and reprisals from corrupted or coopted state authorities.

Given the high risks and low effectiveness of protests against insecurity amid criminal violence, this paper seeks to understand the puzzling occurrence of citizen mobilization efforts to demand peace and control crime. Previous works analyzing violence and participation at the aggregate level have mainly focused on electoral participation. However, as argued by Machado, Scartascini and Tommasi (2011), when institutions are weak—such as in a security and human rights crisis—street protests become more attractive. At the same time, studies examining the relationship between violence and non-electoral participation have centered on individual-level of analysis. This paper, therefore, represents a bridge between these two sets of literature. Moreover, the literature on contentious politics has mainly focused on how violence produced by the state in the form of repression shapes protest and rebellion. Much less is known about how violence produced by criminal organizations affects protest. By focusing on the mechanisms that enable non-electoral forms of participation in reaction to criminal violence, this paper also connects studies on social movements and crime in a novel fashion.

I argue that while criminal activity may provide an initial motivation for the organization of protests against insecurity, social networks—understood as relationships, links, or social ties through memberships in organizations (Passy and Giugni, 2001)—play a fundamental role in

¹ According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), over the past decade homicide rates in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela have largely exceeded 20 per 100,000 inhabitants.

citizen participation in reaction to crime. Networks are crucial for both instrumental and non-instrumental reasons. They help transform the paralyzing emotions often associated with living amid violence and generate solidarity among potential participants. At the same time, through networks, individuals are able to exchange views on the issue of crime and to discuss options to confront it. Most importantly, networks also help redefine perceptions of the effectiveness and risk that such collective efforts imply. I further argue that the different functions that networks play are relevant and useful across distinct levels of contextual violence.

To test this argument, I rely on the Mexican case. I examine protest activity related to issues of violence and insecurity in Mexico during the 2006–2012 period, when the federal government began an open confrontation with criminal organizations. Based on evidence from an original dataset on protest events in reaction to violent crime from 2006 to 2012 across Mexican states, this paper helps develop an understanding of the logic, at the macro level, of non-electoral participation in the midst of violence.

This paper is organized in seven sections. First, I discuss the literature on high-risk activism. Second, I explore the logic of collective action against criminal violence. Third, I discuss the role of social networks and their relevance for such citizen efforts. In the fourth section, I provide an overview of citizen mobilization in reaction to violence in Mexico, as well as of the challenges with which participants have been confronted. The fifth section presents aggregate-level evidence that shows that social networks, particularly those related to civil organization and education, stimulate citizen mobilization. Sixth, to understand the role of networks in protests against crime, I show evidence from qualitative interviews with protest participants. Finally, I discuss the implications of my findings.

VIOLENCE AND NON-ELECTORAL FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

Recent works on the legacies of violence have found a positive relationship between the victimization experience and various non-electoral forms of participation, ranging from conversations about politics to town meetings and general protests (Bellows and Miguel, 2009; Blattman, 2009; Bateson, 2012). To these authors, the image of disengaged and alienated victims has little support. On the contrary, victims are conceptualized as social and political activists, able to confront any potential risks that collective action may entail. While these studies focus on

individual-level analysis, an implication of this set of findings is that regions with higher levels of victimization rates will also exhibit higher participation rates.

Two main explanations have been provided to explain the positive relationship between violent victimization and participation. First, according to the post-traumatic growth theory, individuals who go through a traumatic experience tend to have a greater sense of personal strength (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004), and this pushes victims to participate in politics (Blattman, 2009). A second explanation suggests that emotions play influential roles in political behavior, especially in political participation (Marcus and MacKuen, 1993; Jasper, 1998; Jennings, 1999; Marcus, Neuman and MacKuen 2000). Thus, increased participation is a way for victims to express their feelings of anger and frustration, as well as to alleviate the emotional consequences of victimization (Bateson, 2012).

These explanations, however, dismiss the mechanism through which emotional reactions to violence are transformed into action. Anger and frustration do not translate directly into mobilization (Shorter and Tilly, 1974). Moreover, anger is not the only possible reaction to crime. While some victims may experience anger (Ditton et al., 1999), others may experience fear (Guerra, Huesmann and Spindler, 2003; Fowler et al., 2009). Fear is a response to an external threat over which the individual has little control. Unlike anger, fear has been associated with heightened vigilance, increased sensitivity to threat, and behavior avoidance (Huddy, Feldman and Cassese, 2007). According to psychologists, when violent victimization undermines perceptions of individual agency, victims often see themselves as weak and out of control (Janoff-Bulman and Frieze, 1983; McCann, Sakheim and Abrahamson, 1988; Macmillan, 2001). This translates into a decreased sense of efficacy, which is a fundamental variable to participation in politics. How fear is overcome and how anger translates into action are issues that the prevailing literature has failed to address.

Criminal violence can generate higher mobilization efforts against insecurity, but it can also result in increased fear and therefore reduce protest activity. In fact, there is wide variation in protest occurrence across different levels of criminal activity. I argue that an analysis centered on crime rates does not take us far enough to fully understand collective action amid violence. Furthermore, I contend that there is an omitted variable among existing explanations of the relationship between violence and protest activity. Social networks are a crucial explanatory variable, not taken into account thus far, to explain protest against crime and insecurity.

It is also important to note that by focusing on the effect of violence on broad forms of participation, the current literature has disregarded the challenges that collective efforts in reaction to crime face. As I show here, protest amid criminal violence represents a high-risk type of activism. How such dangers are overcome is also a pending question in the prevailing literature.

To understand the logic of participation in the midst of violence, I focus on protest events in reaction to crime. Not only are these expressive acts, but they are directly related to issues of security and thus acts that those affected by violence may be more inclined to participate in. I argue that given the risks associated with protests against crime, it is important to develop a vibrant civil society and strong social embeddedness. Overall, social networks help potential participants build a common identity and modify their perceptions of the associated costs and benefits of protest.

COLLECTIVE ACTION AMID CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

Organized crime groups are informal business enterprises that regulate and control the production and distribution of illicit services or products (Varese, 2010). Given the illegal nature of organized crime activities, corruption is crucial for its existence and survival. Criminal groups depend on informal local networks of government protection through which public officials refrain from enforcing the law or, alternatively, enforce it selectively against the rivals of a given criminal group, in exchange for a share of the profits generated by criminal organizations, the provision of information about rivals, or the containment of violence, if necessary (Snyder and Durán-Martínez, 2009). Thus, authorities do not always have the incentives to control criminal violence, resolve cases of victimization, or administer justice effectively. Criminal activity, often linked to the collusion between criminals and government authorities, has important implications for citizen participation.

Violence exhibits the government's inability to fulfill one of its basic functions: the protection of its citizens. The persistence of violence and the poor administration of justice reveal that the state lacks either the resources or the incentives to provide security. As other studies have shown, when governments appear in the causal chain, either as actors or as very visible missing links, citizens are more likely to become politically active because there is a clear target against which to mobilize (Jennings, 1999; Arceneaux, 2003; Javeline, 2003). Under such

circumstances, institutional means to reverse the situation are seen as useless or insufficient. Since voting is a limited accountability mechanism (Peruzzotti and Smulovitz, 2000), particularly in a context where a criminal-political nexus is present, social mobilization emerges as a plausible strategy, not only to expose the violent situation, but also, potentially, to push for justice. Therefore, as others have proposed, we would expect that criminal violence stimulates the organization of citizen efforts to denounce and control violence.

What the current literature has not acknowledged, however, is that these actions often face many risks. As noted by McAdam (1986), risk refers to the anticipated dangers (legal, physical, social or financial) of engaging in a particular type of activity, not necessarily due to the nature of the action but to the context in which it occurs, triggering the reactions of other actors, which are also difficult to predict (Loveman, 1998). In this case, although the act of protesting is not risky per se, when such protests involve calls for security and justice *and* occur in a violent environment—with active criminal actors operating in collusion with state authorities—physical dangers are likely to emerge.

Participants in protests against crime and insecurity may be threatened or co-opted by criminals and their allies into not pressing for reforms (Arias, 2006). Criminal groups may feel threatened by actions that involve a call for stronger state reactions to crime or demand reforms to the judicial or political system. This has been the case for civil society organizations working in some of the most violent areas of Colombia and Guatemala, where they have been forced to operate semi-clandestinely (Pearce, 2007).

Given that such acts of protest are likely to expose the corruption and impunity within the justice system, state actors also become a threat to popular mobilizations aiming to oppose and control violence. In a context permeated by criminal violence, the state itself puts civil society at an even higher risk. If the state remains indifferent or inactive—either due to lack of resources or lack of incentives—it further strengthens protection networks, and consequently, organized crime groups can also exert a tighter grip on civil society (Arias, 2017). If, as part of such collusive arrangements, the state represses citizen mobilization, civil society then faces additional pressure from both the state and criminal groups. Coercive and non-coercive state repression (Earl, 2003) can expand criminal repression of civil society. Hence, protest against crime and insecurity faces a double threat from both the state and non-state armed groups. Following McAdam (1986) and Wood (2003), such forms of collective action imply a high-risk

type of activism. This complex situation also negatively affects the probability of these actions succeeding in the control of violence. I argue that social networks play a fundamental role in overcoming these challenges.

THE POWER OF NETWORKS

Social movement scholars have examined the role of networks in collective action. Foundational work by McAdam (1986) revealed the importance of networks for recruitment to high-risk action. Subsequent studies reiterated the relevance of networks, beyond recruitment, to transform individual perceptions related to mobilization (Passy and Giugni, 2001). In addition, the reshaping function of networks has been shown to be particularly relevant for high-risk action. In authoritarian and repressive contexts, networks intensify the commitment to participate, ultimately affecting perceptions of the effectiveness of collective action (Loveman, 1998; Wood, 2003). In a civil war, networks can be equally important in framing perceptions of the threat posed by the conflict and as a result affect mobilization decisions (Shesterinina, 2016).

This work contributes to the study of the role of networks in high-risk action. First, following Loveman (1998) and Wood (2003), I argue that networks have the power to transform emotions of people associated with a crime-ridden environment and subsequently shape collective identities. Second, I contend that networks transform perceptions of the effectiveness and risks associated with collective action against crime amid criminal violence. Therefore, unlike previous works that have examined the role of networks on perceptions of threat (Shesterinina, 2016), I do not focus on how networks shape the understanding of violence to subsequently define mobilization strategies, but on how they shape the understanding of risks associated with mobilization. In this section, I examine the transformational power of networks.

From economic to educational and health outcomes, criminal activity transforms daily life completely. Developmental psychology studies have found that exposure to violence and its multiple social consequences generates different psychological reactions, from aggressive behavior to distress and post-traumatic stress syndrome (Guerra, Huesmann and Spindler, 2003; Fowler et al., 2009). In the face of these complex circumstances and emotional processes, sharing becomes particularly important. Sociologists have noted that victims' coping mechanisms often include sharing their experience with others to "relive and relieve" the anxiety the crime has created (LeJeune and Alex, 1973). It is through their social networks that victims

share their personal experiences, both with other victims and non-victims. Such interaction may occur through either formal or informal relations, links, and social ties. Formal networks refer to membership in organizations, while the informal networks include interpersonal ties such as those of kinship, friendship, and acquaintance (Passy and Giugni, 2001). Overall, socializing the victimization experience within either type of network contributes in both instrumental and non-instrumental ways to taking action. In this case, however, formal networks—such as civic or human rights associations—can be particularly relevant for the dissemination of information on violence, the development of skills essential for citizen mobilization, and opportunities for continuous interaction (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, 1995). These characteristics are relevant for different and related reasons, as I explain next.

From a non-instrumental point of view, embeddedness in networks generates a sense of solidarity and helps transform emotions into potential for action. First, when victims and non-victims interact through networks, they become more aware of crime and its consequences. This process helps victims discover shared concerns and build a common identity around their experiences of violence. At the same time, such a sharing process exposes and sensitizes non-victims to the violent realities that victims of crime have endured (Bell-Martin, 2019), which is something non-victims often ignore or misinterpret (Schedler, 2015). As a result, network participants find commonalities and build trust among themselves.

Through networks, victims and non-victims also socialize the feelings of fear and anger that often result from living in the midst of violence. They are able to share how and why they feel in one way or the other about their past or future experiences with violence. They become aware of how their feelings are also widely shared and understood by many others. Moreover, as individuals become more engaged with one another, their feelings are transformed from being exclusively self-oriented to being other-oriented. It is no longer about personal anger, but about indignation for one's own situation and that of others (Loveman, 1998; Wood, 2003). It is no longer about fear, but about the need to empower oneself because of a moral commitment to one another. Therefore, networks help transform emotional reactions to violence into potential for action.

While common identity, moral indignation, and empowerment are strong incentives for collective action, they cannot automatically trigger participation and corresponding organizational efforts. At this point, networks have only helped to increase the potential number of participants, by putting them in contact and forging empathy and solidarity among them (Fireman and Gamson, 1979). Disposition to participate has increased, but it remains latent and is not automatically translated into action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Passy, 2002). The next step is to be provided with an opportunity to take action in response to the violent experiences. Here is where networks perform a more instrumental role. Socialization within networks allows participants to discuss and identify opportunities to achieve justice, as well as share information about such opportunities. As many studies have found, a person who knows someone who is already involved in a particular cause will be more inclined to participate in it (DellaPorta, 1995; Gould, 1993, 1995; Klandermans, 1997; McAdam, 1986, 1988; Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olson, 1980). The challenge, however, is to overcome the potential risks of mobilizing against crime. In this regard, networks are also useful. As I will argue next, they can help reshape the understanding of the dangers associated with such activism, as well as of its potential effectiveness.

Coming together as a group has the additional side effect of raising the costs to violent actors who seek to silence individual groups (Arias, 2004). Dense interpersonal networks tend to insulate activists (Berg & Carranza 2018). This protection contributes to their intensified commitment and willingness to act despite possible risks. How does this occur? First, as noted, network involvement can help coordinate and redirect efforts in response to crime, in order to create a common front. Second, organized communities are better able to link with outside actors who can assist in reducing violence or protecting human rights through information reporting and shaming (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Third, since dense social ties enable trust and strong social norms, such ties help reduce the potential of armed actors from outside making inroads into the community (de Sousa Santos and García Villegas, 2004; Van Cott, 2006, Berg & Carranza 2018). Ultimately, more intense interactions and dense networks make participants aware of their potential to mobilize effectively and safely, through these intertwined mechanisms. Their perceptions of the effectiveness of mobilization and the risks they face transform. Protest can be then considered a viable and desirable channel to mobilize amid criminal violence.

It is important to note that the different functions of networks are relevant and useful across different levels of violence. As noted, in violent contexts characterized by higher victimization rates, networks can be particularly useful for victims in coping with their emotional reactions to violence and, most importantly, reshaping their perceptions of the risks associated with protesting against crime. In less violent contexts exhibiting lower levels of victimization, non-victims need to become sensitized to victims' experiences and better understand the consequences of violence. Network interaction can provide opportunities both to become informed about violence and its consequences and to develop a growing commitment to the cause.

To summarize, this discussion indicates that social networks play a fundamental role in the genesis of protests against insecurity. Networks can generate solidarity and a common understanding of the issue of crime, which subsequently transforms emotions into potential for action. Through this interaction, participants exchange views on the prevailing violence and on available options to confront it. Ultimately, these interactive processes shape and redefine the perceptions of the effectiveness and risks that such collective action implies, regardless of the local context of violence. Therefore, I propose that *regions with high density of civil society organizations are more likely to experience greater levels of protest against insecurity*. I test this proposition using quantitative data from Mexico's recent wave of violence. To understand the process through which networks generate empathy and solidarity, and most importantly, reshape perceptions of the risks associated with activism in the midst of violence, I show evidence from qualitative interviews with protest participants.

VIOLENCE, VICTIMS, AND PROTEST AGAINST INSECURITY IN MEXICO

The evolution of criminal violence in Mexico, as well as increasing citizen efforts to confront the mounting violence, make the Mexican case very well suited for testing the proposed hypothesis.

Since the mid-1990s, major violence has been taking place in northern Mexico (Trejo and Ley, 2020). However, beginning in 2006, when President Felipe Calderón began to openly confront organized crime, violence expanded to other regions. As a result of criminal activity and the militarized strategy the federal government following in cracking down on criminal organizations, the country experienced unprecedented levels of insecurity. The battle between

drug cartels, their private armies, and government security forces resulted in over 70,000 deaths in the 2006–2012 period (Shirk and Wallman, 2015), over 30,000 disappearances,² and approximately 200,000 internal displacements (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2011). Additionally, militarization resulted in increased human rights violations (Flores-Macías and Zarkin, 2019).

In the face of rising violence, Mexican citizens have attempted to keep government authorities accountable around insecurity through diverse non-electoral mechanisms, among which protest has been a recurring tool.³ To study this phenomenon, I constructed the Mexican Protest against Crime (MPC) Dataset. This data collection includes 1,014 protest events organized by citizens against insecurity in 31 Mexican states between 2006 and 2012,⁴ Figure 1 illustrates the evolution of protest in reaction to violence, showing the monthly frequency of protest events against insecurity from 2006 to 2012. National mobilization efforts in 2008 and 2011 greatly increased the number of protests. In fact, 57 percent of the protest events were part of broader national protests demanding peace and security, while the remaining 42 percent were local protests organized in response to more focused demands, from the disappearance or death of specific individuals to violence against a given sector, such as of journalists, teachers, or doctors.

In order to understand the general logic of protest against crime in Mexico, as well as the challenges such protest has faced, the following sections provide an overview of citizen mobilization in reaction to violence over the last decade.

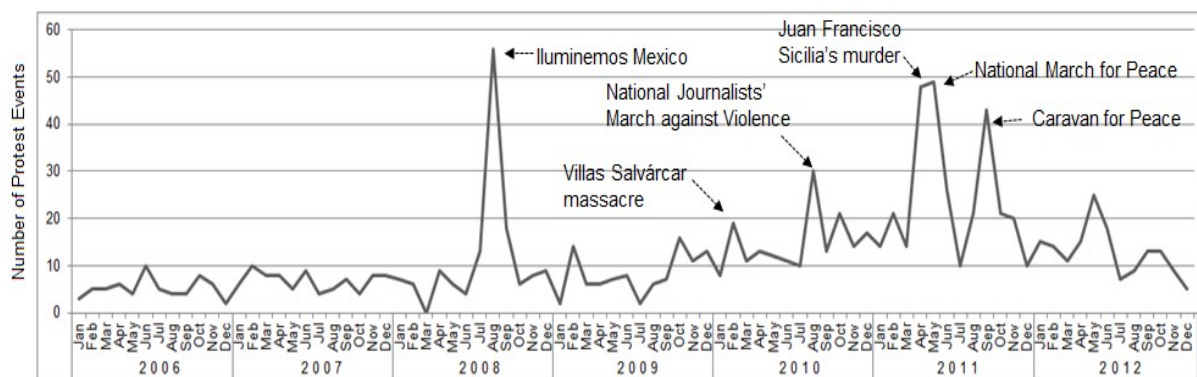
² See <http://personasdesaparecidas.mx/db/db>.

³ Vigilantism, however, was also a prominent reaction to crime. In particular, vigilante organizations emerged in 13 of Mexico's 32 states in 2013 (Phillips, 2017). Examining the choice between armed and non-armed civilian responses is beyond the scope of this paper.

⁴ The information is derived from a systematic review of 50 local newspapers and one national newspaper. I focus exclusively on mobilization events organized by citizens as a means to freely express their opposition to a particular violent event or general insecurity, as well as a way to demand specific changes to security policies. See Appendix A for more information on the MPC Dataset.

FIGURE 1

NUMBER OF PROTEST EVENTS AGAINST CRIME, 2006-2012



History

Chihuahua: The origins of mobilization against violence

The first efforts of citizen to mobilize against criminal violence occurred in the northern state of Chihuahua, where drug-trafficking organizations' attempts to gain access to smuggling routes and the American market expanded. This phenomenon was combined with cultural, economic, and political changes in the region and resulted in increased violence, particularly that directed against women. Femicides have mobilized hundreds of mothers who untiringly demand justice for the unsolved murders of their daughters and search for the many more who have been abducted (Bejarano, 2002). In fact, some mothers have founded nongovernmental organizations to provide psychological and legal help to other mothers and relatives of femicide victims. Such is the case of the founders of *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* (Bring Our Daughters Back Home) in Juárez, Chihuahua, and *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas* (Justice for Our Daughters) in Chihuahua, Chihuahua. Not only have they organized marches, sit-ins, and demonstrations, but they have also taken an active role in the investigation of their daughters' disappearances and murders, ultimately pushing authorities to conduct thorough investigations to resolve their cases.

After President Calderón began to openly confront organized crime, the state of Chihuahua, particularly the municipality of Juárez, was wracked by violence. With over 2,000 murders in 2009 and more than 3,000 in 2010, it became one of the world's most violent cities. From extortion to massacres, violence reached deeply into the civilian population. Most notably, when 15 people (including 11 youths) were killed on January 31, 2010, in the neighborhood of

Villas Salvacar, citizens poured into the streets to protest. As shown in Figure 1, this event initiated a new wave of protest.

From entrepreneur to activist

In June 2008, Fernando Martí, the 14-year-old son of entrepreneur Alejandro Martí, was kidnapped in Mexico City; on August 1, his body was found in the trunk of an abandoned car. The publicity surrounding the case right when the federal government was trying to convince public opinion of the effectiveness of its strategy against organized crime, despite rising levels of violence, outraged citizens across the country—particularly middle-class citizens who were often the targets of kidnappings. On August 30, 2008, hundreds of thousands of citizens in 88 cities participated in the national march “Iluminemos Mexico”⁵ (“Let’s Illuminate Mexico”) that the Martí family and civil society groups organized. Participants demanded an end to violence, insecurity, and impunity.

In the following years, Alejandro Martí founded his own nongovernmental organization, Mexico SOS, and became one of the main activists on the issue of insecurity. However, this has not translated into effective results for the resolution of his son’s case. It took two years for the authorities to track down the alleged perpetrators. Five years after his son’s murder, only one of the 24 people believed to have been involved had been convicted (El Universal, 2014).

From poet to activist

Three years after the Martí national mobilization, the son of renowned poet Javier Sicilia, Juan Francisco Sicilia, was slain together with six friends in Temixco, Morelos, by members of the Pacífico Sur Cartel. Sicilia made a call for a massive mobilization against crime. Quickly, marches for peace multiplied throughout the country, marking the beginning of a national victims’ movement, the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD). The movement’s Caravans for Peace drew media attention at the national and international level and exposed cases of civilian victimization—ranging from extortion to massacres—that the government had managed to keep quiet or had suggested might have involved collusion with criminal groups. The first caravan took place in June 2011, traveling across nine states that included highly violent cities in northern Mexico such as Torreón, Monterrey, Chihuahua, and Ciudad Juárez. A second caravan traveled south in September 2011 and visited 18 cities, including Xalapa and

⁵ Translates to: “Let’s Illuminate Mexico.”

Acapulco, two of the most violent cities at the time.

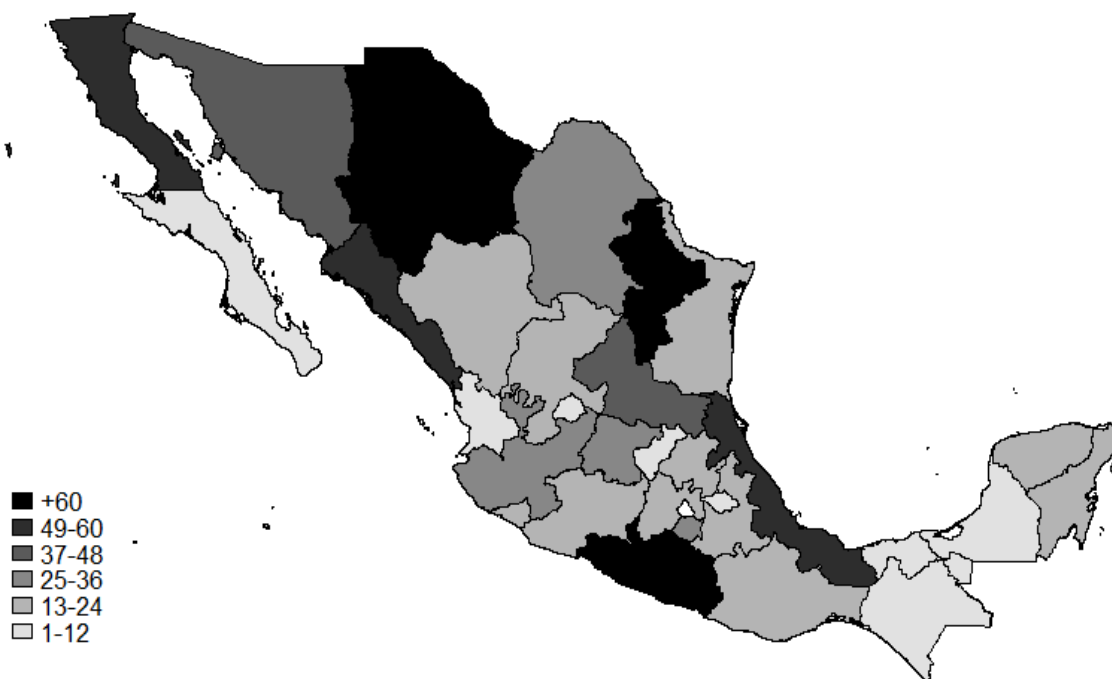
Hundreds of cases were documented during these marches and new citizen-led groups emerged to help victims and to advocate against violence, corruption, and impunity. At each event, victims and their relatives, who had not even dared to report the crimes they had been subjected to in the past few years, were finally able to speak out about their experiences with violence and the judicial system.

The Geography of Protest

Figure 2 confirms the intensity of protest in the state of Chihuahua, which exhibits the highest number of events: 224 protests or 22 percent of the total in Mexico were organized there between 2006 and 2012. Citizens in Guerrero organized 9.6 percent (97 events) of the protests occurring during that period. Sixty-six demonstrations took place in Nuevo León (6.5 percent). These three states exhibited the highest levels of violence during the Calderón administration. However, other states with similar crime rates, such as Baja California, Sinaloa, and Veracruz, registered moderate levels of protest, with a little over 50 events in each. The remaining states exhibited much lower levels of protest. This paper seeks to explain such variation.

FIGURE 2

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PROTEST EVENTS AGAINST CRIME, 2006–2012



Risk and Challenges

As noted above, faced with high levels of violence, citizens in the state of Chihuahua were quite active. However, such activism has taken its toll. In December 2011, Norma Andrade, founder of the organization Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa and mother of Lilia Alejandra, who had been murdered in 2001, was attacked by gunmen. The threats continued and Andrade was forced to leave Juárez (Martínez, 2012). Other activists were not able to leave in time and became victims of violence themselves. That was the case for Marisela Escobedo. After denouncing the corruption of the Chihuahua judicial system during a month of intense protest against the release of the main suspect in her daughter's killing, Escobedo was shot dead in front of the governor's office building (Ellingwood, 2010).

Outside of Chihuahua, such unfortunate situations multiplied. In 2011, nine political activists against insecurity were killed in Mexico. One was Nepomuceno Moreno, who publicly accused local police officers in Obregón, Sonora, of colluding with an organized crime group in the abduction of his teenage son, Jorge (Quintero and Castillo, 2011). In October 2011, Moreno participated in the Dialogue for Peace organized by the MPJD and pleaded his case directly to President Calderón. He told the president that he feared for his own safety and that of his family. A month later, Nepomuceno Moreno was shot to death right outside of his house. Jorge is still missing.

Protesters were also confronted with state repression. A student participating in one march, José Darío Álvarez Orrantia, was shot and injured by federal police (Bricker, 2010). The police argued that since a few of the demonstrators had their faces covered, the authorities were forced to shoot warning shots into the air. However, Darío was severely wounded.

In order to better understand the risks of protest amid violence, I took part in 15 marches for peace occurring across Mexico between 2011 and 2012. A persistent discussion among participants in all marches was what to do in case of a shooting—and whether or not one was likely. These questions show the heightened awareness that march participants had regarding the possible risks they faced. These concerns became a reality on several occasions. For example, both Caravans for Peace encountered direct and indirect threats. The night before the caravan to northern Mexico arrived to Torreón, Coahuila, 13 men were killed two blocks away from the caravan's meeting point. Then, on the way to Juárez, one of the human rights organizations involved in the coordination of the caravan, Centro de Derechos Humanos Paso del Norte (Paso

del Norte Human Rights Center), was attacked by the federal police, which took away documents and destroyed property. Also, when the caravan to southern Mexico approached the state of Veracruz, the leadership of the MPJD was alerted of the presence of an unidentified armed group. The buses were halted, and security protocols were activated. That same night, the Catholic priest and human rights activist Tomás González was illegally arrested by the army and local police forces, right after his participation in the Caravan for Peace.

In addition to my participant observation in the peace marches, I conducted in-depth interviews with 31 participants in protests against crime during 2012, in four cities with relatively high homicide rates: Acapulco (Guerrero), Chihuahua (Chihuahua), Juárez (Chihuahua), and Monterrey (Nuevo León). Interviews with participants in such events further show how violence is factored into the individual participation experience.⁶ First of all, interviews reveal individual awareness of the risk associated with actions against crime. One of the organizers of a march for peace in Acapulco acknowledged that they were concerned about the infiltration of state agents or crime groups in the march and the possibility of a violent attack. A teacher participating in subsequent marches in Acapulco said, “we were afraid that, in the middle of the march, the ‘bad guys’ [*los malos*] would attack us, or that they would see who was there and then look for us at home.” The father of two young men who were kidnapped by an armed group in Chihuahua thought that threats could also come from the state authorities: “I am afraid of what reporting of crime and mobilizing can imply. I am afraid of reprisal, either from the government or organized crime.”

For others, threats derived from protest were not only a possibility, but a fact. Three of my interviewees had actually received threatening phone calls as a result of their activism. For one, the threat was clearly coming from an organized crime group, and in the other two cases the source was unclear. Others had experienced threats while taking part in protests. For example, a mother whose daughter disappeared in Chihuahua, Chihuahua, said that during a protest in front of the governor’s office, state police surrounded participants and threatened to arrest them. For local activists in Ciudad Juárez, the fact that, a few hours after their mobilization, bodies

⁶ Interviews began with questions about experiences with crime and perceptions of insecurity. Next, respondents were asked about their participation in protest events, their views on those types of actions, their reasons for participating or not, as well as their involvement with different community groups. For security reasons, the respondents’ names and stories have been omitted or modified, unless their cases were previously made public by the media.

appeared in the same spot where they had protested was seen as a warning sign.

In summary, this overview of citizen-led protest against crime and insecurity shows the risks and challenges that its participants face. Citizens who take part in these efforts are further exposed to violence and retaliation by criminals and government officials. Therefore, the question that remains is what enables protest against crime and insecurity in the face of such risks. To address this puzzle, I rely on quantitative evidence at the aggregate level. I find empirical support for the role of social networks in protests amid criminal violence.

AGGREGATE-LEVEL DATA AND METHODS

Dependent Variable

When analyzing protest against insecurity, I focus exclusively on mobilization events organized by citizens as a means to freely express their opposition to a particular violent event or to general insecurity and as a means to demand specific changes to security policies. With such a focus, protest events organized by criminal organizations against a particular branch of government, a security policy, the police, or the army are not considered in this analysis. For example, protests organized by the criminal group La Familia in 2010 against the military's presence in the state of Michoacán (Insight Crime, 2010) were not included in this analysis. Likewise, public forms of protests by police forces demanding greater security in their working conditions (Reyes, 2011) are not included either.

The statistical analysis of citizen protest against violence is based on the Mexican Protest against Crime (MPC) Dataset previously described. I analyze the annual number of protest events organized by Mexican citizens throughout thirty-one states, during the most violent period in recent Mexican history.⁷ Due to data limitations, explained in Appendix A, I am unable to use the municipality as my unit of analysis. However, as Figure 2 demonstrates, state-level data provides significant variation in the occurrence of citizen mobilization. I seek to explain such variance.

⁷ N= 31 states x 7 years = 217 observations.

Independent Variables

Social networks

I measure the presence of social networks through various indicators. Following Passy (2002), I assess the role of formal networks that help socialize potential participants in the movement against crime and insecurity. Among the closest networks are human rights organizations. Unfortunately, available data for such groups is limited. Instead, I use the number of *Civil society associations per 100,000* as a proxy for the density of such formal group activism. This measure is derived from the Interior Ministry's register of civil society associations.

In addition, I measure socialization within networks that have been most affected by criminal violence, which social mobilization literature has also considered as relevant for participation in social movements. First, based on data from the Public Education Ministry, I account for the number of *Colleges per 100,000*. As noted by Zhao (1998), colleges' ecological conditions—density, place-based relations, and routine spatial activities—structure and strengthen social interactions. As such, a college provides a unique setting in which to socialize. I expect this environment to be particularly relevant given that youth have been a main target of criminal violence in Mexico.⁸

Next, relying on economic censuses, I estimate the number of *Labor unions and professional associations*, as well as the number of *Religious associations per 100,000*.⁹ Criminal violence has vast economic consequences, particularly regarding employment and income (Robles, Magaloni and Calderón, 2013), both of which greatly affect members of labor unions. Moreover, people who work and socialize together form strong bonds that often produce shared visions about problems and solutions (Jarley, 2005). Finally, social movement literature has shown that informal socialization in churches is a powerful and effective stimulus of political involvement (Morris, 1996; Smith, 1996; Osa, 1997; McAdam, 2010). This may be particularly relevant in a country where violence against religious authorities has increased significantly over the past decade (Centro Católico Multimedia, 2014)

⁸ According to census data on homicides, two-fifths of victims of violent homicides in Mexico between 2006 and 2012 were young people, ages 20 to 24.

⁹ Only the 2004 and 2009 economic data were available by the time this analysis was conducted. Therefore, I interpolate using the data for these two years to estimate the annual levels of each of the variables using the formula $V_t = V_{t-1} (1+r)$, where $r = [V_f/V_i]-1$; f (i.e., 2009) is the value of the final census year and i stands for the value of the initial census year (i.e., 2004).

The nature of this quantitative analysis and the limited availability of the data does not allow me to fully disaggregate local networks. However, this evidence can show how violence and different types of networks may be relevant for understanding protests in reaction to crime and insecurity.

Violence

As noted before, the relationship between protests and violence has been widely established. Therefore, in order to test my proposed hypothesis, I test the effect of violence on protest against crime, both in the absence and in the presence of social networks. I rely on the information on intentional homicides from the Mexican National Public Security System (Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Publica, SNSP), which updates crime statistics on a monthly basis at the state level. Based on this data, I calculate the state's *Homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants*.¹⁰

Controls

Given that lack of financial resources may limit the organization of protest events, regression models control for the state's economic development as measured by the *Poverty index* generated by the National Population Council (CONAPO). In addition, as a way to control for the possibility that human rights violations by the armed forces may have contributed to protest activity, I include the number of *Human rights abuses by the army* according to the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH).¹¹ Relying on census data, I also include the number of *Prosecutor offices per 100,000*, as a proxy for state capacity. Finally, to control for bandwagon effects, I include *Lagged protest events* per state in the model.

Analytical Strategy

I test for random effects (RE) negative binomial (NB) regression models. NB models are the most appropriate estimation technique for studying protest against crime because, like other protest cycles, this phenomenon exhibits overdispersion (variance greater than the mean) and the events are not independent. Given that some of the independent variables change slowly over time and that the period under study is relatively short, the use of fixed effects is less appropriate

¹⁰ Given the rising number of disappearances in Mexico, I would ideally use the number of missing people to estimate the disappearance rate. However, available data is limited and problematic. Official information from the National Registry of Missing and Lost People (Registro Nacional de Personas Extraviadas o Desaparecidas, RNPED) relies exclusively on voluntary reports and combines cases of forced disappearances and crime-related disappearances along with cases of voluntary absences. Still, the homicide rate is a good proxy for the phenomenon of disappearances and overall criminal violence.

¹¹ Systematized data is available through Justice in Mexico. See <https://justiceinmexico.org/>.

(Allison and Waterman, 2002). For this reason, as well as the short time period, I emphasize cross-sectional variation over temporal change and rely on random effects (RE) models. To control for more populated states being at higher risk of experiencing more protest activity, I use population as the exposure variable in the model.

RESULTS

Before showing the regression results, I provide preliminary evidence on the role of networks in protests against crime. Based on the MPC Dataset, Table 1 shows who was behind such mobilization efforts.

TABLE 1

ORGANIZERS OF PROTESTS AGAINST INSECURITY, 2006–2012

Organizer	Frequency	Percent
Human rights organizations	373	36.79
Victims and relatives	112	11.05
Schools/colleges	104	10.26
Neighborhood associations	102	10.06
Churches	118	11.64
Journalists	49	4.83
Physicians	30	2.96
Taxi and bus drivers	30	2.96
Merchants/vendors	24	2.37
Teachers	18	1.78
Entrepreneurs	17	1.68
Political parties	16	1.58
Local government authorities	16	1.58
Peasants	5	0.49
Total	1014	100

During the Calderón administration, more than a third of protests against insecurity in Mexico were organized by human rights organizations while victims and their relatives organized 11 percent of these events. Adding up the protests organized by community groups in schools, neighborhoods, and churches, these groups jointly promoted a third of the protests. Close to 17 percent of demonstrations were organized by professionals and workers from various sectors: media, health services, transportation, and education, among others. This initial

examination of the data suggests not only that networks play an important role in the successful organization of protests against crime and insecurity, but that there are certain types of networks that are particularly helpful in the promotion of such events.

To objectively test the role of networks, Table 2 shows negative binomial panel models using protest events at the state level as the dependent variable. Model 1 shows the simple model that prevailing literature has focused on, examining only the relationship between violence and participation.¹² All else being equal, for each one unit increase in the homicide rate, protest increased 2.7 percent (IRR=1.027). To illustrate the effect of violence, consider the year 2011, when massive mobilizations took place, and compare the situation in a relatively peaceful state, such as Yucatán—with a homicide rate equal to 2.29—with that in a highly violent one, such as Nuevo León—with a homicide rate equal to 41.75. A shift from 2.3 to 41.8 in the homicide rate would imply a 107 percent increase in the intensity of protest. In fact, in 2011, while Yucatán had six protest events, Nuevo León had 19 in that same year. These results confirm that criminal activity was an important motivating force behind citizen mobilization.

However, Model 2 shows that social networks, measured by the presence of civil associations and colleges, were also strong promoters of protests against violence. All else being equal, for every additional civic association per 100,000 inhabitants in a given state, protests increased by 4 percent (IRR=1.040), and education networks, measured by the number of colleges per 100,000 population, also stimulate protest.¹³ For every additional college, the model predicts a 23.7 percent rise in the intensity of protest (IRR=1.237). Figures 3a and 3b graphically show the positive effect of civic associations and colleges on the predicted number of protest events.¹⁴

¹² Models not shown here reveal that the results hold when using alternative sources, such as census data, that also estimate homicides in Mexico.

¹³ The results also hold when using the proportion of college students among the student population in the state.

¹⁴ Descriptive statistics are available in Appendix B.

TABLE 2

PROTEST, VIOLENCE, AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN MEXICO, 2006–2012 (NEGATIVE BINOMIAL MODELS WITH RANDOM EFFECTS, USING POPULATION SIZE AS EXPOSURE VARIABLE)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coefficient	IRR	Coefficient	IRR	Coefficient	IRR	Coefficient	IRR
Homicide rate [^]	0.027*** [0.003]	1.027	0.026*** [0.003]	1.027	0.038*** [0.009]	1.039	0.019* [0.011]	1.019
Civil associations [^]			0.044** [0.020]	1.040	0.067** [0.027]	1.067	0.039** [0.019]	1.040
Civil associations*Homicide					-0.001 [0.001]	0.999		
Colleges [^]			0.228*** [0.086]	1.237	0.203*** [0.078]	1.214	0.185* [0.095]	1.203
Colleges*Homicide							0.002 [0.003]	1.002
Labor unions [^]			0.039 [0.060]	1.032				
Religious associations [^]			-0.004 [0.005]	0.996				
HR recommendations	-0.007 [0.026]	0.966	0.023 [0.026]	0.983	0.006 [0.028]	0.987	0.025 [0.027]	1.025
Prosecutor offices [^]	0.003 [0.045]	0.994	-0.021 [0.044]	0.992	-0.004 [0.042]	0.997	-0.017 [0.043]	0.984
Poverty	-0.007 [0.005]	0.995	-0.005 [0.005]	0.995	-0.007* [0.004]	0.993	-0.006 [0.004]	0.994
Lagged protest	0.004 [0.005]	1.005	0.004 [0.006]	1.002	0.005 [0.006]	1.005	0.003 [0.006]	1.003
Constant	-14.293*** [0.327]		-15.377*** [0.443]		-15.592*** [0.448]		-15.272*** [0.474]	
Observations	186		186		186		186	
Number of states	31		31		31		31	
Log	-441.512		-433.253		-432.821		-433.449	
BIC	924.831		929.216		923.126		924.380	

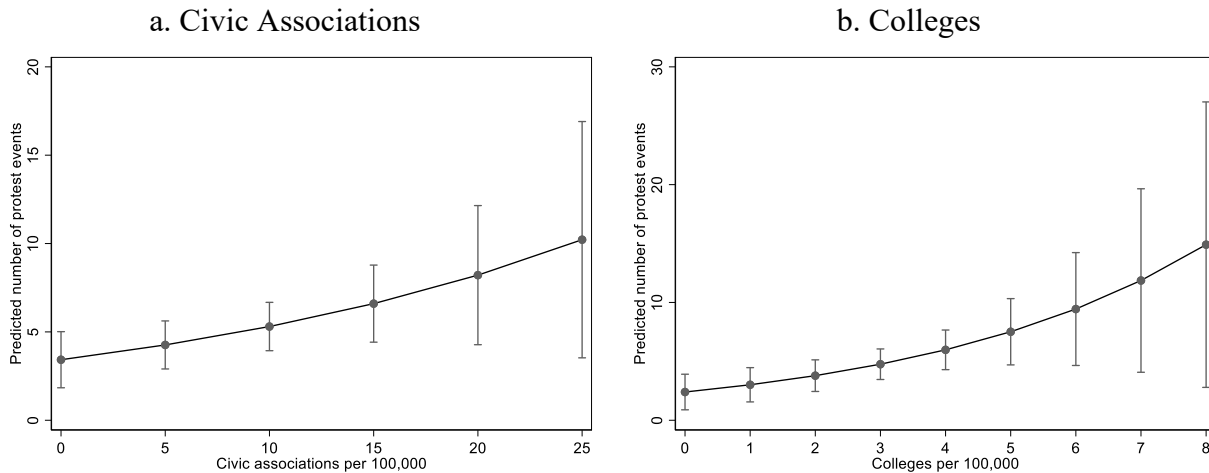
[^] per 100,000

IRR = Incidence Rate Ratios

Standard errors in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

FIGURE 3

PREDICTED NUMBER OF PROTEST EVENTS BY TYPE OF SOCIAL NETWORK



Religious and professional networks, however, do not exhibit a statistically significant effect, likely the result of the lack of disaggregated data across time and space. First, since yearly data is not available, these measures are derived from interpolated data, and they may fail to capture the real density of these types of networks across the period under study. Second, I am limited by my unit of analysis. Religious networks tend to operate at the community level (Trejo, 2009).¹⁵ However, as noted earlier, I am only able to use data at the state level. Finally, unlike other organizations, religious groups have not focused on protests, but instead tend to emphasize religious services in response to crime, such as masses, prayers, and rosaries, all of which are not part of my event data.

Focusing on the role of civil associations and colleges, Models 3 and 4 test the interactive effect between violence and social networks. Interaction terms are not statistically significant. This finding suggests that, as proposed before, networks are equally important in violent and non-violent contexts, but for different reasons. In a violent environment, networks are fundamental to overcoming the risks associated with collective action. In contrast, in relatively

¹⁵ Following Trejo (2009), I generated a measure of religious competition. However, this variable did not have a statistically significant effect either. As noted, this is likely to be the result of the level of aggregation. Religious competition takes place at a more disaggregated level. The municipality or the diocese would be a more appropriate unit of analysis in this regard.

less violent regions, networks are particularly helpful for socialization purposes and the construction of a common understanding and identity around the issue of crime. It is most likely that in relatively low violence settings, such socialization processes raise awareness of the importance and viability of citizen mobilization, before a security crisis occurs, particularly given the broader context of criminal violence across the country. However, to better understand the role of networks in the generation of solidarity and empathy, as well as in the transformation of perceptions on the effectiveness and risks associated with protest, we must turn to qualitative evidence.

HOW AND WHY NETWORKS MATTER

Qualitative interviews with participants in protests against crime help show how networks can bring individuals together to socialize, share their experiences and feelings, exchange views on prevailing violence in order to generate solidarity, and find available options to confront violence. In this process, networks also reshape perceptions about the effectiveness and risks that such collective action involves.¹⁶

Non-instrumental Network Functions

Victimization experiences often push individuals to find ways to express their feelings and concerns (LeJeune and Alex, 1973). Interviews with victims certainly reflected this. A participant in the Caravan for Peace in San Luis Potosí, whose son had disappeared, conveyed her need to speak out: “I cannot stay silent; I cannot silence my pain. It hurts too much; it's a feeling that never ends.” Many other victims and their relatives often expressed the same feelings of deep pain and sadness, but what was most important to them was to share their feelings with others. As a mother of a disappeared police officer in Monterrey put it: “You cannot deal with pain on your own. For a mother, living without one's child is to live as if she was dying day after

¹⁶ Appendix C includes additional information on the methodology followed for these interviews. Overall, the timing and logic of my fieldwork research allows me to address potential concerns on the role of networks prior to protest participation. I participated in the first national protests against crime that took place in Mexico during the spring of 2011—the National March for Peace (May) and first the Caravan for Peace (June)—as violence expanded and multiplied across the country. For most participants, these protests were their first social mobilization experiences. This allowed me to capture the logic of protest participation in its early stages. These first contacts opened opportunities for me to follow up with participants who had been part of these first massive protest events and understand the process they went through before deciding to take to the streets.

day. When I share my experience, I get strength to keep on going.”

Sharing can be interpreted as a coping mechanism, but sharing is more powerful than that. Collective expressive exercises transform feelings of anger and fear into collective indignation and empowerment. Take the case of a mother whose four sons were abducted by organized crime. She admits that, after such shocking events, she “just wanted to die.” She spent three months in bed, barely eating or taking her medicine. However, something changed. She joined the Movement for Peace (MPJD), and she is now the head of an organization that provides legal orientation to victims of crime. According to her, sharing was crucial for moving forward: “I used to feel helpless. I thought there was nothing I could do for my children. Here [in the Movement for Peace], I have found strength, my lost faith. I didn’t know what to say, how to talk, how to share my pain, but ever since I spoke out about my experience with others, I realized that together, with a friendly hand next to us, we can get to where we want to be.”

Many other cases also support the socialization process described by network scholars in which participants collectively develop indignation, empowerment, and solidarity and build a common identity. A father whose son was kidnapped by the police in Monterrey says, “there have been moments where we have lost hope, but we then realize that we have a new beautiful family that continues to give us energy, strength, and a space to fight until the very end, until we find our son again.” Even those who did not directly experience violence but who interacted with victims described a similar process of personal empowerment and other-regarding feelings. For example, a participant in marches for peace in Acapulco, who had not been a victim of crime, explained that her interaction with people who had been deeply affected by violence in Acapulco made her change her perception of victims: “I realized they [victims] are courageous citizens. Their courage made me want to get out of my house and help them do something about the violent situation in the city.” Another non-victim went a step further, saying: “sometimes my family tells me it is best not to take chances by going to marches, but I cannot avoid my responsibility to victims, especially because, in the end, we are all victims of violence.”

Socializing within networks also provides opportunities for action. For instance, on the birthday of a victim or the anniversary of a victim’s killing or disappearance, relatives often organize acts of protest. This is a way for them to honor their loved ones, as well as a way to call the attention of both the government and the media. While these events may be dedicated to a particular person or group of people, many others join. Relatives share information about these

events and invite others. As a mother in Juárez, whose daughter was found dead, put it, “Support among us is very important. If others still have the hope of finding their children, we have to stay together and show the government that we will not accept their death until they find their bodies and evidence to support their claim.” This shared feeling among victims and non-victims can trigger powerful waves of citizen mobilization, such as the ones shown previously in Figure 1.

Instrumental Network Functions

Interviews with marches for peace participants also reveal that socialization processes help transform perceptions of the risks and benefits associated with their collective efforts. Initially, many victims’ relatives expected protest to have an impact on the resolution of their cases. There was a general expectation that by protesting and bringing the media’s attention to bear, government officials would be forced to take action. However, achieving actual justice is a long road. All interviewees recognized that marches could not solve the problem of insecurity, but overtime they convinced themselves that protests did help set the agenda and make the government pay attention to issues they would otherwise ignore. A participant in Chihuahua eloquently summarizes this point: “Marches, protests, and sit-ins help inform and express discontent. Maybe they cannot do all they should do or all we expect of them, but they at least shake up authorities who only want to show the ‘pretty things’ they do. When we show what is really going on, they have to do something because society and the media are watching.”

Interviews in Monterrey, Nuevo León, were conducted a few days after a group of victims attended a meeting with local government officials. Participants stated that although authorities had not made much progress in their investigations, as victims they knew that they had to be thankful because they had “overcome fear” and the government could “no longer fool us.” In fact, most of the interviewed participants in protests in the four cities emphasized that even if the violence had not changed, protests had definitely influenced the political agenda and made it harder for politicians to deny rising insecurity.

As noted before, despite changing perceptions of the effectiveness of protest, latent risks remain. However, continuous interactions transform the participants’ perceptions about such dangers. All protest participants believed that acting as a group, as opposed to protesting on their own, protected them in some way. There was a generalized perception that being part of a larger body made it harder for the government to either act against them or not protect them: “If there

are many of us and the media is there, it's best for the government that nothing happens to us." An interviewee in Chihuahua further noted that the chances of risk diminished when a group is strong and united, because then "the government or whomever wants to do wrong knows that if they do something to one of us, we will all come out to fight for each other."

An activist in Juárez further emphasized that, while she was aware of the risks she was exposed to, "the key is to know when to stop [taking part in protests], ask for help, and have a network of friends that takes you in, takes care of you, and worries about you." Furthermore, she was convinced that her networks have protected her from threats she has received. Overall, this qualitative evidence reveals the role that networks play for protest in the midst of violence. Victims rely on networks as a coping mechanism, but in the process, they are strengthened, develop a sense of solidarity, and find ways to take action and help each other. Although at a less intense level, non-victims also take part in the socializing process and become sensitized to the experience of victimization. Interactions further help participants reshape their perceptions of effectiveness and risks. While the dangers associated with protest remain, networks help participants cope with such risks and change their views about them. Protesters also reassess the expected impact of their protest, which allows them to continue mobilizing despite the lack of major results in achieving peace and justice.

CONCLUSION

The literature on the legacies of violence has established a positive relationship between violence and non-electoral forms of political participation. However, this is only part of the story of mobilization in the midst of violence. By focusing on violence and looking only into broad forms of participation, current explanations have failed to address this puzzle and fully understand the logic of collective action amid criminal violence. Extant literature has also assumed emotions are automatically transformed into action, largely ignoring how such processes actually take place. In this paper I have argued that social networks are a crucial variable for solving these pending issues.

Relying on a unique protest event dataset, I showed that citizens mobilized intensely as violence was rising in Mexico. Regions most affected by criminal activity exhibited a higher number of protests against crime. However, the analysis also revealed that local associations greatly contributed to the activation of victims and non-victims across different violent contexts.

Quantitative analysis showed that civic, student, victim, and neighborhood associations are particularly important for both initiating and organizing protests against crime. Criminal violence only partially explains citizen decisions to take action.

Qualitative evidence derived from participant observation and in-depth interviews provided detailed information on the role that social networks play in citizen mobilization against criminal violence. This evidence showed that it is through social networks that citizens are able to generate solidarity among victims and non-victims. This process enables them to overcome fear associated with increased violence and empower themselves, as well as transform anger into collective moral indignation. Simultaneously, network participants share information about possible collective strategies. Ultimately, interaction within networks helps reshape their perceptions about the effectiveness and risks of protest against crime. As a result, individuals are able to further security and justice.

This paper contributes to incipient research on the social and political consequences of criminal violence. It makes a strong case for social networks, a variable that has been missing in the literature, as an explanatory mechanism of citizen mobilization amid violence. While it is widely accepted among students of social movements that social networks matter for collective action, their role had been ignored among scholars of organized crime. This article brings both sets of literature together to provide a theoretical rationale and empirical evidence on the mechanisms through which networks enable high-risk collective action against criminal violence.

Collective action amid criminal violence still involves many risks. Its goals are also hard to attain. As a result, participation on behalf of victims continues to be low (Schedler, 2015). This research suggests that the key to making societal accountability work effectively, despite ongoing violence, is to develop a strong and vibrant civil society that connects citizens, helps them build a common identity, and potentially raises the cost of the use of violence for both organized crime and state forces. Exchanges within such networks can, in the short run, build trust and facilitate communication among individuals, both of which are fundamental for activating alerts should any of the network members face risks. Therefore, this work also opens up exciting new avenues for investigation into the conditions under which social networks are built and activated in the midst of violence. It also pushes for further research on the extent to which citizen mobilization can effectively generate changes in security policies and the resolution of cases.

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, Icek & Martin Fishbein (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Allison, Paul D & Richard P Waterman (2002). Fixed-effects negative binomial regression models. *Sociological Methodology* 32(1): 247–265.
- Arceneaux, K (2003). The conditional impact of blame attribution on the relationship between economic adversity and turnout. *Political Research Quarterly* 56(1), 67-75.
- Arias, Enrique D (2004). Faith in our neighbors: Networks and social order in three Brazilian favelas. *Latin American Politics and Society* 46(1): 1–38.
- Arias, Enrique D (2006). *Drugs and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro: Trafficking, Social Networks, and Public Security*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Arias, Enrique D (2017). *Criminal Enterprises and Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bateson, Regina (2012). Crime victimization and political participation. *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 570–587.
- Bejarano, Cynthia L (2002). Las super madres de Latino America: Transforming motherhood by challenging violence in Mexico, Argentina, and El Salvador. *Frontier: A Journal of Women Studies* 23(1): 126–150.
- Bell-Martin, R (2019). “It could have been me”: Empathy, civic engagement, and violence in Mexico. PhD thesis. Brown University. <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:918794/PDF/?embed=true>
- Bellows, John & Edward Miguel (2009). War and local collective action in Sierra Leone. *Journal of Public Economics* 93(11–12): 1144–1157.
- Berg, Louis-Alexandre & Marlon Carranza (2018). Organized criminal violence and territorial control: Evidence from northern Honduras. *Journal of Peace Research* 55(5): 566–581.
- Blattman, Christopher (2009). From violence to voting: War and political participation in Uganda. *American Political Science Review* 103(2): 231–247.
- Brady, Henry E.; Sidney Verba & Kay Lehman Schlozman (1995). Beyond SES: A resource model of political participation. *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 271–294
- Bricker, Kristin (2010) Mexico: Federal police shoot student in Ciudad Juarez during forum against militarization and violence. *Huffington Post*, 2 November (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristin-bricker/federal-police-reportedly_b_778032.html).

- Centro Católico Multimedia (2014). “El riesgo de ser sacerdote en México.” *Centro Católico Multimedial*, 30 December (<http://ccm.org.mx/2014/12/reporte-anual-2014-riesgo-sacerdote-mexico/>)
- De Sousa Santos, Boaventura & Mauricio García Villegas (2004). *Emancipación Social y Violencia en Colombia*. Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma.
- Della Porta, Donatella (1995). *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ditton, Jason; Stephen Farrall, Jon Bannister, Elizabeth Gilchrist & Ken Pease (1999). Reactions to victimisation: Why has anger been ignored? *Crime Prevention and Community Safety* 1(3): 37–54.
- Earl, Jennifer (2003). Tanks, tear gas, and taxes: Toward a theory of movement repression. *Sociological Theory* 21(1): 44-68.
- El Universal (2014). “Martí recibe con alegría sentencia a secuestrador.” *El Universal*, 1 April (<http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion-mexico/2014/estoy-muy-contento-con-la-sentencia-alejandro-marti-1000040.html>).
- Ellingwood, Ken (2010). Mother shot dead at anti-crime vigil in Chihuahua. *Los Angeles Times*, 18 December (<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/18/world/la-fg-mexico-mom-20101218>).
- Fireman, Bruce & William A Gamson (1979). *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, Social Control, and Tactics*. Cambridge, Mass: Winthrop Publishers.
- Flores-Macías, Gustavo & Jessica Zarkin (2021). The militarization of law enforcement: Evidence from Latin America. *Perspectives on Politics*, 19(2): 519–538.
- Fowler, Patrick J; Carolyn J Tompsett, Jordan M Braciszewski, Angela J Jacques-Tiura & Borid B Baltes (2009). Community violence: A meta-analysis on the effect of exposure and mental health outcomes of children and adolescents. *Development and Psychopathology* 21(1): 227–259.
- Gould, Roger V (1993). Collective action and network structure. *American Sociological Review* 58: 182–196.
- Gould, Roger V (1995). *Insurgent Identities*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Guerra, Nancy G; L Rowell Huesmann & Anja Spindler (2003). Community violence exposure, social cognition, and aggression among urban elementary school children. *Child Development* 74(5): 1561–1576.

- Huddy, Leonie; Stanley Feldman & Erin Cassese (2007). On the distinct political effects of anxiety and anger. In: W Russell Neuman; George E Marcus, Ann N Crigler & Michael MacKuen (eds.) *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 202–230.
- Insight Crime (2010). Peace rallies in Michoacán demand police withdrawal. *InSight Crime*, 13 December (<http://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/peace-rallies-in-michoacan-demand-police-withdrawal>).
- Janoff-Bulman, Ronnie & Irene Hanson Frieze (1983). A theoretical perspective for understanding reactions to victimization. *Journal of Social Issues* 39(2): 1–17.
- Jarley, Paul (2005). Unions as social capital: renewal through a return to the logic of mutual aid? *Labor Studies Journal* 29(4): 1–26.
- Jasper, James M (1998). The emotions of protest: Affective and reactive emotions in and around social movements. *Sociological Forum* 13(3): 397–424.
- Javeline, Debra (2003). *Protest and the Politics of Blame: The Russian Response to Unpaid Wages*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Jennings, M. Kent (1999). Political responses to pain and loss: Presidential address, American Political Science Association, 1998. *American Political Science Review* 93(1): 1–13.
- Keck, Margaret & Kathryn Sikkink (1998). *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Klandermans, Bert (1997). *The Social Psychology of Protest*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- LeJeune, Robert & Nicholas Alex (1973). On being mugged: The event and its aftermath. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 2(3): 259.
- Ley, Sandra, J; Eduardo Ibarra-Olivo & Covadonga Meseguer (2019). Family remittances and vigilantism in Mexico. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 47(6), 1375–1394.
- Loveman, Mara (1998). High-risk collective action: Defending human rights in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina. *American Journal of Sociology* 104(2): 477–525.
- Machado, Fabiana; Carlos Scartascini & Mariano Tommasi (2011). Political institutions and street protests in Latin America. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55(3): 340–365.
- Macmillan, Ross (2001). Violence and the life course: The consequences of victimization for personal and social development. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 1–22.

- Marcus, G. E., & MacKuen, M. B. (1993). Anxiety, enthusiasm, and the vote: The emotional underpinnings of learning and involvement during presidential campaigns. *American Political Science Review*, 87(3), 672-685.
- Marcus, George E; W Russell Neuman & Michael MacKuen (2000). *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Martínez, Paris (2012). Norma Andrade fue dada de alta por amenazas contra médicos. *Animal Politico*, 4 January(<http://www.animalpolitico.com/2012/01/norma-andrade-fue-dada-de-alta-por-amenazas-contra-medicos/>).
- McAdam, Doug (1986). Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of freedom summer. *American Journal of Sociology* 92(1): 64–90.
- McAdam, Doug (1988). *Freedom Summer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McAdam, Doug (2010). *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- McCann, Lisa, David K Sakheim & Daniel J Abrahamson (1988). Trauma and victimization: A model of psychological adaptation. *The Counseling Psychologist* 16(4): 531–594.
- Morris, Aldon (1996). *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*. New York: Routledge.
- Osa, Maryjane (1997). Creating solidarity: The religious foundations of the Polish Social Movement. *East European Politics & Societies* 11(2): 339–365.
- Passy, Florence (2002). Social networks matter. But how? In: Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (eds.) *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 21–48.
- Passy, Florence & Marco Giugni (2001). Social networks and individual perceptions: Explaining differential participation in social movements. *Sociological Forum* 16(1): 123–153.
- Pearce, Jenny (2007). Violence, power and participation: Building citizenship in contexts of chronic violence. Institute of Development Studies. Working Paper 274. (<https://gsdrc.org/document-library/violence-power-and-participation-building-citizenship-in-contexts-of-chronic-violence/>)
- Peruzzotti, Enrique and Catalina Smulovitz (2000). Societal accountability in Latin America. *Journal of Democracy* 11(4): 147–158.

- Phillips, Brian J (2017). Inequality and the emergence of vigilante organizations: The case of Mexican *autodefensas*. *Comparative Political Studies* 50(10): 1358–1389.
- Quintero, J & E. Castillo (2011). Nepomuceno Moreno, Mexico anti-violence activist, killed in northern state. *Huffington Post*, 29 November (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/29/nepomuceno-moreno-killed_n_1118707.html).
- Reyes, Laura (2011). La muerte de un policía en Acapulco desata las protestas de sus compañeros. *CNN*, 25 February (<https://expansion.mx/nacional/2011/02/25/la-muerte-de-un-policia-en-acapulco-desata-las-protestas-de-sus-companeros>).
- Robles, Gustavo, Beatriz Magaloni & Gabriela Calderón (2013). The economic consequences of drug trafficking violence in Mexico. Poverty and Governance Series Working Paper, Stanford University (<https://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/crimelab/publication/economic-consequences-drug-trafficking-violence-mexico>)
- Schedler, Andreas (2015). *En la niebla de la guerra: Los ciudadanos ante la violencia criminal organizada*. Mexico City: CIDE.
- Shesterinina, Anastasia (2016). Collective threat framing and mobilization in civil war. *American Political Science Review* 110(3): 411–427.
- Shirk, David & Joel Wallman (2015). Understanding Mexico's drug violence. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(8): 1348–1376.
- Shorter, Edward & Charles Tilly (1974). *Strikes in France 1830–1968*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Christian (1996). *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*. New York: Routledge.
- Snow, David A; Louis A Zurcher & Sheldon Eklund-Olson (1980). Social networks and social movements: A microstructural approach to differential recruitment. *American Sociological Review* 45(5): 787–801.
- Snyder, Richard & Angélica Durán-Martínez (2009). Does illegality breed violence? Drug trafficking and state-sponsored protection rackets. *Crime, Law and Social Change* 52(3): 253–273.
- Tedeschi, Richard and Lawrence G Calhoun (2004). Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence. *Psychological Inquiry* 15(1):1–18.

- Trejo, Guillermo (2009). Religious competition and ethnic mobilization in Latin America: Why the Catholic Church promotes indigenous movements in Mexico. *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 323–342.
- Trejo, Guillermo & Sandra Ley (2020). *Votes, Drugs, and Violence: The Political Logic of Criminal Wars in Mexico*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Cott, Donna L (2006). Dispensing justice at the margins of formality: The informal rule of law in Latin America. In: Gretchen Helmke & Steven Levitsky (eds.) *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 249–273.
- Varese, Federico (2010). What is organized crime? In: Federico Varese (ed.) *Organized Crime: Critical Concepts in Criminology*. London: Routledge.
- Wood, Elisabeth J (2003). *Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zhao, Dingxin (1998). Ecologies of social movements: Student mobilization during the 1989 prodemocracy movement in Beijing. *American Journal of Sociology* 103(6): 1493–1529.

APPENDIX A

MEXICAN PROTEST AGAINST CRIME (MPC) DATASET

General Description

The Mexican Protest Against Crime (MPC) Database provides detailed information on 1,014 protest events against crime and insecurity that occurred during the 2006–2012 period in the 31 Mexican states. MPC collects data on the organizers of the protests, their claims, actors involved, and types of mobilization efforts. Acts of protest include the following: marches, demonstrations, road blockages, community meetings with authorities, labor strikes, sit-ins, hunger strikes, and occupation of government buildings.

I focus exclusively on mobilization events organized by citizens as a means of freely expressing their opposition to a particular violent event or general insecurity, as well as a way to demand specific changes to security policies. Therefore, protest events organized by criminal organizations against a particular branch of government, a security policy, the police, or the army are not considered in this analysis, as in the case of demonstrations organized in 2010 and 2011 in Michoacán to show support for La Familia. Likewise, public forms of protests by police forces demanding greater security in their working conditions are not included either.

This appendix describes the sources I used to build the MPC database, the selection criteria for the news sources, and limitations of the data.

Source

As shown in Table A.I, MPC uses multiple sources for data collection: 50 local newspapers and one national newspaper.

The national daily *Reforma*—founded as a branch of *El Norte*, a noted Monterrey-based daily—has developed an extensive coverage of northern Mexico, one of the regions most affected by violence. Most importantly, it has covered news on marches for peace since as early as 1999. Ever since, it has continued to report on this type of event, particularly after the national mobilizations and caravans organized by the Movement for Peace (MPJD) in 2011. Therefore, the first newspaper I personally collected data from was *Reforma* (2006–2012). The initial daily review of this news source provided a preliminary count of protest events, as well as a list of keywords that I used to complete information from local dailies.

In order to select newspapers at the subnational level, I first consulted local academics and activists to get information on what they perceived to be the newspapers with the highest circulation and the best news coverage of protest events. When the suggested newspapers were not available for public access, either entirely or for a portion of the period of interest, I complemented the data collection with additional local news sources.

TABLE A.1

NEWS SOURCES USED IN THE MEXICAN PROTEST AGAINST CRIME DATABASE

State	Source	Years
Aguascalientes	El Sol de Aguascalientes	2008-2012
Baja California	Frontera	2006-2008
	Crónica	2009
	El Vigía	2010-2012
Baja California Sur	El Sudcaliforniano	2006-2012
Coahuila	El Siglo de Torreón	2006-2012
	El Zócalo de Saltillo	2006-2012
Colima	Diario de Colima	2006-2012
Chihuahua	The Chihuahua News Database, Información Procesada(INPRO)	2006-2012
Durango	El Siglo de Durango	2006-2012
	El Sol de Durango	2008-2012
Guanajuato	Periódico AM	2006-2012
	Milenio León	2006-2012
Guerrero	El Sur	2006-2012
	El Sol de Acapulco	2008-2012
Hidalgo	El Sol de Hidalgo	2006-2012
	Milenio Pachuca	2006-2012
Jalisco	El Mural	2006-2012
	El Informador	2006-2012
México	Milenio Estado de México	2006-2012
Michoacán	El Sol de Morelia	2008-2012
	Cambio	2009-2012
Morelos	El Sol de Cuernavaca	2008-2012
	La Unión	2007-2012
Nuevo León	El Norte	2006-2012
	El Porvenir	2006-2012
Puebla	El Sol de Puebla	2006-2012
	Milenio Puebla	2006-2012
Querétaro	Diario de Querétaro	2006-2012
San Luis Potosí	El Sol de San Luis	2006-2012
	La Jornada de San Luis	2006-2012
Sinaloa	El Sol de Sinaloa	2008-2012
	Noroeste	2008-2012
Sonora	El Imparcial	2006-2012
Tabasco	Milenio Villahermosa	2006-2012
Tamaulipas	El Sol de Tamaulipas	2008-2012
	El Mañana	2009-2012
	Milenio Tampico	2006-2012
Tlaxcala	El Sol de Tlaxcala	2008-2012
Veracruz	El Sol de Orizaba	2008-2012
	El Sol de Córdoba	2008-2012
	Milenio Xalapa	2006-2012
	Liberal	2008-2012
	La Jornada Veracruz	2011-2012
Yucatán	Diario de Yucatán	2006-2012
Zacatecas	El Sol de Zacatecas	2008-2012
	Imagen	2006-2007
	NTR	2008-2012
National newspaper	Reforma	2006-2012

Milenio, a newspaper owned by Grupo Multimedios, has regional publications in ten cities: Monterrey, Nuevo León; Guadalajara, Jalisco; León, Guanajuato; Pachuca, Hidalgo; Puebla, Puebla; Villahermosa, Tabasco; Tampico, Tamaulipas; Torreón, Coahuila; Toluca, México state; and Xalapa, Veracruz. These publications, in addition to reporting news for the locality, include news from neighboring states.

The use of multiple newspapers allowed me to complement and verify information about protest events. When the newspaper information was insufficient, I used activity reports from human rights NGOs.

Data Collection

All newspapers used for the data collection were available via the Internet, either directly through their webpages or through newspaper search engines, such as Latin American Newsstand or ISI Emerging Markets. The daily print editions of almost all of the sources listed in Table A.1. could be read online. Together with a team of three research assistants, I read thousands of daily papers, searching for news on protests against crime. When daily editions were not available, we conducted online searches based on the list of keywords I had previously developed from the initial review of *Reforma*.

After collecting the series of news reports that resulted from the daily review or the keyword search, we carefully read each of the articles in order to gather information on the following characteristics of the event: a) type of protest, b) organizers, c) number of participants, d) claims made by protesters, and e) state and municipality of occurrence.

Events occurring in the Federal District¹⁷ were only included in the dataset when: a) protests were organized by actors outside of Mexico City, and b) participants were making a claim on the issues of crime and insecurity in regard to the situation of violence in one of the 31 Mexican states. The event was then assigned to the participants' place of residence.

Sources of Bias and Limitations

While the MPC cannot provide an official count of protests against crime occurring in Mexico during the Calderón administration, it is possible to say that the dataset's reporting of events is not systematically biased in favor of or against any state. The use of multiple sources significantly reduces sources of geographical or temporal bias. There are other limitations, however.

The data collection process included the specific location of each protest event. Nevertheless, I am unable to provide a count of protests at the municipal level. Reporting on this kind of events has an inherent urban bias. When protests against crime in rural areas are covered by media, it is often the result of a massacre that caught public attention or of a sustained series of mobilizations. I tried to reduce this spatial bias through the use of multiple local sources described in the previous section. Still, for more than 90 percent of the reports, journalists failed

¹⁷ *Reforma* gave wide coverage to protests against crime occurring in Mexico City.

to provide information about the place of residence of participants. This characteristic of the news reports meant that a municipal count of protests could not be developed.

Another problem in building a protest dataset based on newspapers is that news reports are not consistent, and each emphasizes different characteristics of the protest event. For instance, in 60 percent of the news reports we collected, journalists did not provide any information about the number of participants. Therefore, I am also unable to provide an analysis of the levels of participation or weigh protests according to their levels of turnout.

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Protest	217	4.673	8.057	0	78
Homicide rate [^]	217	15.673	16.878	0	110.710
Civil associations [^]	217	9.308	4.559	1.990	27.006
Colleges [^]	217	3.621	1.254	1.496	8.337
Labor unions [^]	217	4.435	1.990	1.175	11.663
Religious associations [^]	217	62.972	25.055	22.127	135.585
HR recommendations	217	0.535	1.601	0	14
Prosecutor offices [^]	217	3.957	2.270	0	10.973
Poverty	217	34.340	19.568	4.400	100

[^] per 100,000

APPENDIX C

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

As described in the main manuscript, the context in which I conducted my interviews was characterized by a profound sense of suspicion, with various participants in protests facing threats. Therefore, the process towards a formal interview required multiple prior interactions and conversations in order to build trust with participants and obtain the necessary information. A key element in this process was my involvement and participation in protests across Mexico; I was particularly active in the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity and took part in its Documentation Commission, helping to systematize data on victimization cases. This experience allowed me to identify a wide and diverse set of cases, both in terms of experiences of violence and levels of involvement. I was also able, in different cities, to establish local contacts, with whom I then followed up to request interviews in their original hometowns of Monterrey, Nuevo León (February 2012); Chihuahua, Chihuahua (March 2012); Acapulco, Guerrero (April 2012); and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua (June 2012).

My interviews revolved around the following main issues: (1) experiences with violence and perceptions of insecurity; (2) the process through which participants became involved (or not) in protests against crime and other forms of political participation; (3) participants' insertion into

any type of networks; (4) the process through which participants established contact with such networks; and (5) their interaction with other participants in such networks.

Participation in in-depth qualitative interviews was, of course, voluntary. The place and time of the interview was set by the participant. Protecting the confidentiality of the participants' identities and responses in the in-depth interviews was fundamental. Therefore, I never used the participants' real names in my notes or in my research in general. As noted in my text, I purposefully decided to anonymize their statements and experiences. I did not record my interviews and only took detailed notes by hand. On average, interviews lasted 45 minutes.

Overall, my sample of interviews was almost evenly distributed between victims and non-victims. As I explain in the paper, since my focus was on explaining the role of networks among participants of protests against crime, I concentrated in collecting the experiences of such participants. However, by reaching out to the local contacts of this main cluster of interviewees, I was able to collect the experiences of individuals who had not participated in protests but had been victims of crime. Additionally, the opportunity I had to personally meet several of my interviewees prior to our formal interview—after having marched together or spent many hours in the Caravan for Peace bus—allowed me to trace their experiences and the evolution of their protest participation. As noted in the main text, I am therefore able to identify the role of networks prior to actual protest participation.