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UNDERSTANDING CARSI: THE IMPACT OF U.S. FOREIGN AID ON CRIME TRENDS IN
CENTRAL AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a proliferation of crime and violence in Central America. The region has become a transshipment point for over ninety percent of the illicit drugs that enter the United States and the escalation of crime in the region has made it one of the United States' most tangible national security threats. In response, in 2008, the United States constructed the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), a financial aid package developed with the dual-purpose of mitigating crime in the region's seven countries and reducing drug flow into the U.S. This study evaluates CARSI's impact on the level of crime in Central America through both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Through the use of multivariate regressions, it finds that, contrary to policy goals, the policy has had a limited impact on the level of crime and is, in fact, related to increased homicide and crime victimization levels in the region. It substantiates the claim that iron-fist policies that prioritize the use of military force to reduce crime are ineffective and counter-productive. Drawing from both statistical and case-study analysis, it supports policy recommendations that prioritize community efforts and youth programs in the effort to mitigate crime in the region.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Central America has become a focal point for crime in the recent years. The U.S. government estimates that approximately ninety percent of illicit drugs entering its borders pass through Central America and Mexico. Central America's status as a transshipment point (coupled with the expansion of gangs, drug trafficking organizations, and other criminal groups) has led to the proliferation of crime in the region (Meyer and Seelke 2014). In fact, Central American crime rates are the highest rates of social violence and crime in the world outside of Sub-Saharan Africa (Casas-zamora 2011). Excessive violence and crime threatens to overwhelm governments in the region. Furthermore, fear of crime has resulted in a lack of social cohesion and confidence in the government. These fears, as well as the presence of transnational criminal organizations in the region, pose a threat both to the fledgling democracies in Central America, as well as to U.S. strategic interests (Wyler 2012, i).

Central America's instability – attributed to the declining support for democracy due to corruption, the proliferation and protection of drug trafficking organizations due to weak national police forces, and the recent surge in emigration due to increased violence levels – and the region's proximity to the United States has affected the United States in tangible ways. The violence and crime in the region is now considered one of the US's most tangible national security threats (Wyler 2012) .

Historical Background

In the mid-1900s, drugs primarily passed through the Caribbean. While the majority of narcotics passed through the Gulf, drug trafficking organizations have had an extended presence in the region (Meyer and Sullivan 2012). During this time period, Nicaragua was a central transit point for the

Medellín cartel and Panama was used as a safe-haven and launch pad for drug shipments (Dudley 2010, 9). Successful efforts on the part of several international actors, as well as the collapse of two major drug cartels (the Cali and the Medellín cartels), have resulted in an increase in drug flow through the isthmus. Analysts have described this increase as a manifestation of the “balloon effect” – a phenomenon in which reductions in illegal narcotics activity in one country or region leads to increases in another (Olson n.d., 4). The increase in cocaine seizures in Central America suggests that there has also been an increase in infrastructure and logistics to support the increased flow of narcotics (Dudley 2010, 9).

The large coastlines and ungoverned spaces of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras (which together, form the Northern Triangle) and the countries’ proximity to Mexico, have made problems related to drug trafficking particularly severe. In addition to geography, factors such as a history of armed conflict have exacerbated the situation in the region (Dudley 2010, 3). The armed conflicts in these states established infrastructure and routes to facilitate weapons trafficking, money laundering, and trade of other contraband goods. For example, in El Salvador, Cold War clandestine networks formed to transport weapons and people during the civil war have evolved into criminal organizations post-conflict and leaders of current criminal groups were former civil war combatants (Olson n.d. , 5). Furthermore, nearly all institutions in Central America (civilian military, or police) have demonstrated connections to organized crime.

The role that Central American organizations play in drug trafficking – to transport drugs between South America and Mexico – has led to their being labelled *transportistas* (Dudley 2010, 7). In addition to an increased presence of drug trafficking organizations, there has also been an influx in the number of gangs in the region. Gangs fall into two main categories: *pandillas*, smaller gangs that band together in poor neighborhoods to commit petty crime; and *maras*, larger transnational gangs that are largely responsible for extortion and trafficking of small firearms and that frequently have ties to the United States (Phillips 2014, 9). The two most notable of these gangs are M-18 and *Mara Salvatrucha*, or MS-13 (Seelke 2014, 2). Certain states in the region, the Northern Triangle countries in particular, have

been more severely impacted by the influx of criminal organizations. Homicide rates have increased exponentially and, to the same extent, citizens' perceptions of security have plummeted.

In addition to the geographical problems, and the history of military violence, there have been a slew of other problems that have contributed to the high level of citizen insecurity. These factors include social conditions such as poverty, inequality and unemployment (Meyer and Seelke 2014, 3). Such social conditions have led to high rates of emigration from the region to the United States. The severity of this situation has been reflected in the recent influx of immigrants and unaccompanied minors in the past year. Between October 1st 2013, and July 31, 2014, US Customs and Border Protection has estimated approximately sixty-three thousand unaccompanied minors have crossed the border into the United States, nearly double the number from the year before (Renwick n.d.).

Another consequence of high levels of poverty and unemployment in the region, analysts argue, is that local residents in border communities view trafficking as a means of increasing the general economic welfare of their communities, making them reluctant to turn over organized crime group leaders (Espach and Haering n.d., 6). Residents launder money and partake in transportation activities, disguising these activities as part of their legal business ventures. This effort to mask illegal efforts has proved to be a major setback for policing efforts (Espach and Haering n.d., 7).

History of United States Funding in Central America

The United States has had a long-standing presence and history of financial aid in Central America. During the 1980s, the United States provided the region with an average of \$1.3 billion dollars annually with the purpose of propping up regimes to combat the "Pink Tide," a series of leftist movements that swept the region. However, in the 1990s, as the civil wars in the region drew to an end, the United States discontinued support, electing to channel resources to narcotics-producing countries in the Andean region. It was only after that the U.S. successfully eradicated the majority of the production in

the region that it – through the Mérida Initiative – set its focus on Mexico and, to a smaller extent, Central America for narcotics interdiction and institutional capacity building in 2008. It was only in 2010, however, that the Obama administration acknowledged the impact that the U.S.-backed efforts in Colombia and Mexico had on Central America- that the transnational organized crime groups had shifted production, transportation, and packaging to Central America, where political institutions were weaker and interdiction efforts were significantly lower (Seelke et al. 2011).

In response to the increased violence, as well as the increased flow of narcotics from Central America to the United States, the Obama administration, through the efforts of the State Department, established CARSI – the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The initiative provided the seven Central American countries with equipment, training, and technical assistance. From 2008 to the present day, the United States has allocated over 800 million dollars to Central America – these funds have been supplemented by additional aid from other US government agencies and international organizations.

This thesis aims to examine the effect of the ample funding that the Central American region has received, in addition to several foreign policies aimed at bolstering citizen security, on the level of crime in Central America. The thesis will first review the literature surrounding this topic, providing background on the components of CARSI, information on the progression of the security situation in the region. Next, it will provide a qualitative analysis that compares the CARSI Initiative with its predecessors (Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative) and discusses the primary transnational and national crime actors in the region. Next by completing a multivariate regression, focused on mapping the correlation between the foreign policy and crime levels in the region, this thesis will comment on the effectiveness of existing policy in achieving its purported goals. Finally, I will conclude with three case studies, focusing on countries with high and low levels of crime prior to the implementation of the CARSI initiative. I will discuss crime groups in the countries, pre-existing conditions that make the country more (or less) susceptible to crime, and target country efforts to mitigate crime.

Primary Crime Actors in the Region

In many other areas of the world where illicit trade takes place, current participants and groups are not the core of the problem. Central America is viewed as an exception in this regard (United Nations 2012, p. 21). The two main types of crime groups in the region are territory-bound organized crime groups and transnational trafficking groups, although the distinction between these groups is somewhat unclear. Territorial groups are frequently referred to as *pandillas*, or localized groups that have had an extended presence in the region (Seelke 2014, p. 2). These actors focus on controlling a specific territory and taxing the residents of the region. Their criminal activity can range from graffiti and petty theft to serious criminal activities such as drug trafficking, and extortion (Seelke 2014, p.2). These groups also frequently act as an alternative to state rule, imposing order in communities where the state has frequently failed (United Nations 2012, p. 22). Many residents in violence-stricken countries turn to neighborhood-run patrols to protect their young ones and, frequently. These neighborhood patrols accrue so much power that they end up dominating the community that they once protected, collecting “taxes” and sending messages to assert their authority (United Nations 2012, p. 24).

Territorial groups have limited involvement in transnational trafficking – they dominate distribution in their territory. However, if territorial groups are located on an international border, these groups become more willing to participate in transnational trafficking – differences in the national policies of the countries in which these border groups are based allow for significant economic gains. These strategic positions, known as “plazas,” are also considered a base for trafficking groups and much larger transnational organized groups. Trafficking groups – networks of suppliers and receivers – are frequently referred to as “transportistas” (United Nations 2012, p. 21) or as *maras*, groups that, more recently have a certain level of transnational routes (Seelke 2014, p. 2). Central American organizations’ primary purpose is to transport drugs between South America and Mexico. However, these organizations have recently begun local distribution and supply of marijuana poppy, and heroin. Indicative of this latest trend, Guatemala eradicated close to 1300 hectares of poppy, more than double the amount of poppy

seized in Colombia that year (Dudley 2010, p. 7). These *transportistas* were, prior to working with drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), experts in contraband. They have recently expanded to other operations such as human smuggling. There are three traditional families involved in the transport business in Guatemala (Dudley 2010, p.8).

The first of these is the Mendoza family, believed to operate in the northeast of the country, in a Caribbean port-city that is on the direct path from the Honduran coast onward to Mexico. The family has international agribusiness roots, and is involved in a mix of illicit and legitimate businesses, which includes running drugs and being involved in anti-union violence against local farmhands (United Nations 2012, p. 23). The Mendoza family has a non-aggression pact with a second major territorial group in the region, the Lorenzanas, a group backed by the Zetas, that makes the majority of their profit through transporting goods and smuggling cocaine (United Nations 2012, p. 24). The Lorenzanas also have an alliance with the Zeta Cartel, who, following their separation with the Gulf Cartel, was looking to expand their alliances to other parts of South and Central America.

The Mendozas and Lorenzanas formed a non-aggression pact in opposition to a third group, known as *Los Leones*, a group that was initially based along the Salvadoran border. The group also elected to form an alliance with a larger Mexican organization, the Gulf Cartel. This alliance was forged prior to the Gulf Cartel's decline from power and, as a result, the *Leones* resorted robbing other groups' cocaine shipments (United Nations 2012, p. 24). The fourth and final territorial Guatemalan group is *Los Chamales*, a group that worked along the Mexican border. The *Chamales* group has suffered several high-level arrests, but is still considered one of the most powerful groups in the region (United Nations 2012, p. 24). *Transportista* practices are common in Honduras and other Central American countries, as well, but the families that run these practices are not as well-known as the families based in Guatemala (Dudley 2010, p. 8). Similar to Guatemala, they are also generally part of a family trade.

Several organized crime groups have also begun setting up operational sites in the region. The two most active of these Mexican crime groups are the Cartel del Pacifico (an alliance between the

Sinaloa and Gulf Cartels) and the Zetas (United Nations 2012, p. 24). Both the Sinaloa Cartels and *Los Zetas* remain the largest DTOs in Mexico (Beittel 2013). An increase in drug seizures and a climb in homicide rates are two indicators of a stronger DTO presence.

The Sinaloa cartel emerged as one of the most effective leaders in moving drugs from South America to the United States and is estimated to control close to 45% of drug trafficking in Mexico (Beittel 2013). The two main leaders of the cartel are Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán and Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada García. El Chapo was arrested in February 2014 (Beittel 2013, p. 20). Sinaloa cartel members reportedly bought land and houses and co-opted local officials in areas that are utilized for storage and trafficking of products (Dudley 2010, p. 11).

“Los Zetas” are reputed as the most violent cartel in the hemisphere and are believed to have achieved the highest level of diversification into other criminal activities – this includes theft of petroleum, product piracy, human smuggling, and extortion. The Zetas were initially the enforcing arm of what is now one of the smaller cartels in Mexico, the Gulf Cartel; they split to form a separate DTO in the early 2000s (Beittel 2013, p. 9). The group expanded operations to Central America in collaboration with their Guatemalan equivalent, *Los Kaibiles*, and have been attempting to control shipments across the Guatemalan border into Mexico (Beittel 2013, p. 10)

Recent studies indicate that the relationship between these organized crime groups and territorial groups has strengthened in more recent years, most evidently in El Salvador (Seelke 2014, p. 5). Of the two cartels, the Sinaloan cartel has been more willing to negotiate with local traffickers and integrate itself into the community. Cooperation between the cartels and smaller gangs, or *maras*, is limited, particularly because these DTOs find the street gang members bothersome and there is evidence that they conduct “social cleansing” operations to reduce *mara* involvement (United Nations 2012, p. 29). The *Zetas* appear to favor this more forceful, vertical approach, bringing in their own people, rather than employing smaller local enterprises (Dudley 2010, p. 12). The exception to this vertical approach is the *Zetas* aforementioned alliance with the *Kaibiles* (Dudley 2010, p.12).

There are two major gangs operating in Central America with ties to the United States, the 18th Street gang (known as M-18) and their counterpart, *Mara Salvatrucha*, or MS-13 (Seelke 2014, p. 2). Because their emphasis is not on financial gain, both M-18 and MS-13 are not categorized as organized crime groups (United Nations 2012, p.27). Both were initially started in Los Angeles, but expanded their base of operations to Central America when the United States began deporting illegal immigrants with criminal convictions back to the region (Seelke 2014, p. 2). M-18 and MS-13 are heavily concentrated in the Northern Countries of Costa Rica, Panama, and Belize. *Mara Salvatrucha* also has a small presence in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Belize, although these countries have mostly loosely structured local gangs (Seelke 2014, p.4) .

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The bulk of the literature relevant to this thesis tends to fall into one of two categories – the discussion of existing policy, or country-specific information that discusses both the levels and types of crime in the region. A large portion of the literature associated with existing policy comes from official sources such as the Department of State website and the Congressional Research Service.

The collection of fact sheets published on the Department of State’s website, as well on as the websites of Embassies based in countries receiving CARSI funding proved particularly useful in the completion of this thesis. These documents provided a detailed description of the five goals of CARSI:

- “1. Creating safe streets for the citizens of the region;
2. Disrupting the movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and between the nations of Central America;
3. Supporting the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments
4. Re-establishing effective state presence, services, and security in communities at risk; and
5. Fostering enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation between the nations of the region, other international partners, and donors to combat regional security threats (State 2014).”

Meyer’s paper discussed the criminal threats in Central America – as well as the danger these groups pose to the governments of the region (Meyer and Seelke 2014, 1). He reviewed the underlying societal conditions and structural weaknesses in Central American countries’ governments to provide context for the next portion of his paper, which discussed Central American policy. Here, he specifically emphasized examples of military and law enforcement, prevention, counterdrug efforts, and regional cooperation. In regards to figures and statistics, Meyer included crime victimization rates, a map of

Central American drug trafficking routes, and the funding for CARSI from 2008 to 2014. Meyer discussed specific CARSI sub-initiatives, which include narcotics interdiction and law enforcement support, institutional capacity building, prevention programs and the coordination of other US organizations such as the DEA and FBI with Central American government authorities (Meyer and Seelke 2014).

Meyer's report was largely speculative, describing the existing conditions in Central America. This directly contrasted with a report released by Vanderbilt, in collaboration with USAID, LAPOP (the Latin American Public Opinion Project), and AmericaBarometer. The report was the culmination of a four-year multi-site "cluster randomized experiment" that measured the effectiveness of CARSI aid in Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Berk-Seligson et al. 2014). It focused primarily on the results of implementing a community-based crime prevention program and, utilizing public opinion data, concluded that there were significant reductions in the expected level of crime victimization and increases in the expected level of citizen security.

The report purported that community-based crime and violence prevention should be the primary tool for improving citizen security, rather than the *mano dura* approach – an approach that emphasized the violent removal of cartel leaders and, particularly in Mexico, resulted in higher levels of violence (Berk-Seligson et al. 2014). Based on the results of the study, the most effective community crime prevention methods included improving community organization, increasing family support, improving school systems, and utilizing the structure offered in schools to educate youth about crime, and improving police patterns (Berk-Seligson et al. 2014).

While it didn't focus specifically on CARSI, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)'s threat assessment on transnational organized crime in Central America and the Caribbean was useful in creating an overview of crime in the region as a whole. UNODC reviewed the main types of crime in the region, including cocaine, the smuggling of migrants into the United States, and firearm trafficking within Central America. In addition to discussing the crime trends, the report discussed the

impact of the crime in the four areas where it's impact is particularly noticeable – specifically violence, drug use, economic development, and governance (United Nations 2012, p. 65). The report concluded with implications for policy based on these areas – suggestions that the report believed would “establish order in the short-term and reduce violence in the long-term” (United Nations 2012, p. 75). These suggestions included improving local law enforcement capacity, instituting national prevention strategies, reducing drug flow, and creating peace-building strategies (United Nations 2012, p. 76).

The Wilson Center's series of reports on CARSI also proved particularly useful in the completion of this thesis. Phillips's piece reviewed CARSI from a Guatemalan perspective, describing its successes and challenges (Phillips 2014). In addition to providing a security overview (and touching on the use of homicide rates as a measure of CARSI's success), Phillips described recent developments in Guatemala's counter-narcotics effort, in particular, the role of the Attorney General in attacking narco-traffickers. Phillips examined gang activity in the country as well as the prevalence of other crimes (including extortion, robbery, and femicide) (Phillips 2014, p. 14). He evaluated existing government institutions, including CICIG –the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala –, an organization created to reduce corruption and organized crime (Phillips 2014, p. 15). Phillips also discussed CARSI strategy in Guatemala and the discrepancies between the two managers of CARSI funding – USAID and INL (the narcotics branch of the state department) – suggesting that these discrepancies contributed to the limited success of the initiative (Phillips 2014 p. 24). After describing the differences in the two agencies' approaches to distributing funding, he reviewed specific programs that they have funded. These programs include violence prevention programs, poppy eradication, and security and justice reforms (Phillips 2014, p. 35).

While the majority of the aforementioned articles focused heavily on the role of individual countries or crime actors in the war on drugs, Marcy's article was unique in that it utilized recently declassified documents, as well as secondary sources to focus specifically on the impact of civil war on narcotrafficking (Marcy 2014). He indicated that it was a Honduran trafficker that arranged contact

between the Mexican DTOs and the Colombian cartels (Marcy 2014, p. 3) Marcy demonstrated that Guatemala was the first of the Central American countries to align with Mexican DTOs, as the guerilla groups used Mexico as a location for weapons and training (Marcy 2014, p. 8). In exchange, Mexican traffickers utilized the unmonitored landing strips. Similar civil war effects in the rest of Central America allowed narcotraffickers to proliferate; Marcy elaborated on civil war effects in every Central American state (Marcy 2014, p. 9) . Marcy touched on the role of civil wars in creating a gang problem and reviewed the subsequent relationship between Central American gangs and Mexican cartels (Marcy 2014, p. 20). He also examined post-civil war policy, and argued that early policy suffered because of lack of resources and Central American governments' indifference in regards to stopping Colombian and Mexican traffickers (Marcy 2014, p. 15). He concluded his piece by speculating that it is possible that CARSI, and other US programs were “too little, too late” (Marcy 2014, p. 28)

The Mesoamerican Working Group's article on the drug war in Central America and Mexico was more willing to draw parallels between the Central American and the Mexican examples. The piece incorporated both analysis of the current situation, as well as recommendations for legislators (Mesoamerican Working Group 2013, 1). The paper drew largely from the Guatemalan and Honduran examples, and examined the effects of militarized counter-narcotic efforts on militarization, drug policy, violence against women, and forced migration (Mesoamerican Working Group 2013, 1). The report suggested that the US's policy has increased the transfer of arms and military/police training to the region and, at the same time, has resulted in exponential increases in general violence as well (Mesoamerican Working Group 2013, 4).

Stephen Morris's piece on drug trafficking and violence in Mexico provided valuable background information on the Mérida Initiative, the financial aid package that preceded CARSI. Morris introduced the concept of bilateral cooperation – the notion that Mérida (and CARSI) was a two-part effort that required action both from the United States and Mexico. Morris focused on the influence of corruption in the struggle against organized crime, discussing both its role in keeping violence down in the state, and its

importance in the organizations that provide contraband goods (Morris 2013, p. 215). He argued that not all forms of corruption are the same and that different forms of corruption carry distinct consequences. Morris asserted that efforts to reign in cartels through enforcement and to curb corruption, have been unsuccessful and have actually fueled higher levels of violence and corruption (Morris 2013, p. 218). Morris's discussion of the influence of corruption labelled it as a potential variable that needs to be considered when evaluating the impact of US foreign aid packages.

Bailey offered another analysis of the Mérida Initiative, arguing that the main goal of the strategy was to employ the armed forces (namely the Army) to disrupt the activities of criminal organizations in specific locals – a means of “buying time” to implement institutional reforms (Bailey 2010, p. 328). He described the US's policy, in both Mexico and Central America, as two pronged – focusing on (1) providing training and equipment and (2) improving communication and coordination (Bailey 2010, p. 329). In his analysis, Bailey concluded that the strategy was working in the short term and in that it has limited the quality and price of drugs but that, in the long-run, success was dependent upon the effectiveness of the programs and institutions established in the initiative. Bailey's emphasis on programs and institutions that have been developed as a component of CARSII influenced my decision to identify organizational capacity as a control variable in this study.

Astorga and Shirk (2009) and Lee's (2015) analyses were also instrumental in providing background on the Mérida Initiative, specifically in regards to describing the conditions in the country prior to the implementation of the foreign aid policy. Astorga and Shirk's piece discussed the rise of the drug trafficking market in Mexico, as well as its ties to increased levels of corruption and violence in the country. They reviewed the development of a multi-party democracy in the country and the subsequent fracturing of the country's main cartels into smaller, more-volatile groups (Astorga and Shirk 2009). They concluded by discussing four scenarios for managing drug use and reviewing the merits and limits of each scenario (Astorga and Shirk 2009).

Lee's article achieved a similar goal, but emphasized the Mexican cartels' initial role as transporters for Colombian producers, rather than focusing on their existing role as wholesalers and distributors (Lee 2015). She highlighted on the role of *Plan Colombia* (the interdiction effort in Colombia) as well as other counter-narcotics efforts in rerouting the flow of drugs from water route through the Gulf to an overland route through the Central American isthmus (Lee 2015). Furthermore, she attributed the increased importance of Mexican cartels to the disbanding of the two primary Colombian cartels, the Medellín and Cali cartels (Lee 2015). Both Lee and Astorga and Shirk described this process of displacing and redirecting drug flows as a "balloon effect," a response to changing markets and counter-narcotics (Astorga and Shirk 2009). The "balloon effect" also has an impact on trafficking trends in Central America, as reflected by the region's increased role as a transporter of narcotics into the United States and the phenomenon was further referenced in several additional pieces of literature.

While the previous documents focused more heavily on Mexico as a reference point for Central American policy, Ana Arana's piece, another qualitative analysis of the drug trafficking situation in the region, drew more heavily on *Plan Colombia* – a similar counter-narcotics aid package provided by the US government to Colombia – as a point of reference (Arana 2014, 88). Arana conducted a case study of the instability in Guatemala due to increased DTO presence to highlight the problems that DTOs are presenting for weaker Central American democracies (Arana 2014, 91). While acknowledging that weak local governments are a large reason behind the TOC problem in Central America, Arana argued that the United Nations' mismanagement of aid and US policy – which tend to have too narrow of a scope – have also contributed to TOC prevalence (Arana 2014, 99).

Another source that was particularly useful in my discussion of *Plan Colombia* was a Congressional Research Services report by June Beittel. The piece first discussed recent developments in Colombia, specifically the 2010 elections and foreign trade developments. Beittel then delved into internal conflicts that have plagued the country, first touching on previous threats (such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and other paramilitaries), and then on current problems such as

human rights violations and demobilization (Beittel 2012, i). After addressing these issues, Beittel reviewed U.S. policy and concerns, touching on Plan Colombia, as well as more recent foreign aid packages such as the US.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement and the U.S. - Colombia Free Trade Agreement. Beittel commented on critical views of Plan Colombia, specifically that interdiction and the reduction of illicit drug demand has more of an impact and is less costly to peasant producers (Beittel 2012, p. 46). However, supporters claimed that, because of U.S. policy, Colombia is now a regional partner in the counter-narcotics effort. Beittel concluded that, following these major improvements in security conditions in Colombia, it is important to shift the focus of foreign aid packages to also include human rights issues that have emerged following the implementation of *Plan Colombia* (Beittel 2012, p. 46).

Rosen's report provided additional background on Plan Colombia, further providing context for the procedure through which CARSI was implemented. Rosen's article drew from International Relations Theory and Comparative Politics to examine the motives behind the US's decision to finance Plan Colombia, especially as it had previously decertified the country for three years prior – preventing foreign aid from entering the country (Rosen 2012) . He focused on the role of International Relations in pursuing a bilateral agreement, specifically the goal of improving relations and trade in the region. Rosen argued that military aid alone is not effective in curbing drug trafficking and that other methods of reducing production need to be implemented (Rosen 2012, p. 196). He also referenced the “balloon effect” arguing that reduction in production in Colombia, even as recently as 2011 has resulted in increased cultivation in Peru and Bolivia (Rosen 2012, p. 199). Rosen, in his evaluation of Plan Colombia, suggested that future counter-narcotics and security package expand from supply-side policies to focus on the demand aspect as well (Rosen 2012, p. 201). He advised that politicians need to exercise caution when attempting to export Plan Colombia to other parts of the world (such as Mexico and Central America) because other countries have different histories, geographies, and political systems (Rosen 2012). He cautioned against viewing Plan Colombia as a completed success, due to numerous reports of

human rights violations, limited community level efforts, and little to no change in the robustness of democracy (Rosen 2012, p. 209).

Veillette's report also provided a discussion of Plan Colombia. It focused primarily on the objectives of Plan Colombia as perceived by the US and Colombian governments respectively (Veillette 2006). It assessed the key objectives and issues of the plan by reviewing statistics on cultivation, violence, and seizures. Veillette also touched on human rights concerns, ending her report by recapitulating these concerns and government efforts to resolve them (Veillette 2005, p. 12). She concluded by discussing prospects of US disengagement. Veillette's piece, completed in 2005, was useful in understanding the initial implementation of Plan Colombia, but needed to be supplemented by Rosen and Beittel's reports, which included updated statistics and revisions in policy.

Gibson's thesis, which examined the influence of U.S. security partnerships on Latin American nations was unique in that it reviewed both of CARSI's predecessors (Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative) as well as CARSI and the related Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) in a single document (Gibson 2014). Gibson first discussed Plan Colombia and reviewed drug-related crime rates to examine the policy's role in creating the balloon effect. Second, he reviewed the Mérida Initiative, and concluded that (1) the policy was largely reactive and (2) that, while it did reduce crime, its sustainability would be limited after funding stopped (Gibson 2014). The final section of his thesis examined both CARSI and CBSI. The CBSI is CARSI's sister security initiative that focuses more heavily on crime prevention in the Caribbean countries and on strengthening institutions in the region. It aims to prevent the displacement of crime into the Gulf region following crackdowns in the Central American isthmus (Gibson 2014). Gibson concluded that the policies had a negative impact on GDP per capita and unemployment rates. He also established that CARSI (and CBSI) was more sustainable than its predecessors because of its emphasis on community level preventative efforts (Gibson 2014).

In addition to reviewing similar financial aid packages to understand the impact of CARSI on crime trends in Central America, it is vital to understand the crime actors existing in the region. Dudley's

article was one of the most useful sources in achieving this end (Dudley 2010). Dudley provided a history of drug trafficking organizations' (DTOs) activity in the region, a description of their composition, and their *modus operandi*. He focused heavily on the Northern Triangle countries, where the problems from drug trafficking appears to be the most acute (Dudley 2010, p.4). Dudley discussed several security challenges that DTOs pose to the weak Central American government, as well as efforts that countries have undertaken to eradicate their dominance (Dudley 2010, p. 4).

Also particularly useful in understanding the nature of organized crime actors in Central America was a collection of reports released by the Wilson Center that also focused specifically on organized crime in the context of the Northern Triangle (Olson n.d.). Bosworth, the author of one of the reports, discussed the role of political crisis and instability in perpetuating the level of crime in Honduras. He described Honduras as the “command and control” for cartels (Olson n.d.. p. 86). Bosworth included a discussion of the various drug cartels present in the region, the routes through which drugs pass through Central America (both by sea and by land), and a synopsis of other illegal services that take place in the country. In this synopsis, Bosworth focused primarily on money laundering and human trafficking. After reviewing the types of crime in the region, he analyzed the impact that the transnational groups had on the political situation in the country (Olson n.d., p. 97).

Farah followed Bosworth's model in his discussion of El Salvador, focusing heavily on the transnational aspect of crime in the country. He argued that El Salvador's incredibly developed banking systems, the use of the US dollar as the primary currency, and the increased flow of drugs through the country have made it extremely vulnerable to money laundering (Olson n.d.. p. 106). He discussed the roles of geography and of former combatants in the criminal world (and their ability to control territory and smuggling routes) in the proliferation of crime and violence in the country (Olson n.d., p. 109). Farah also described the rise of gangs in the country and the hierarchy put together by USAID that ranks gangs in a five-tier hierarchy – the lowest tier is vulnerable youth at risk, and it progresses up to organized crime and international narco-activity bosses (Olson n.d., p.113). Farah concluded with a brief description

of the routes by which illicit goods traverse Central America, a summary of CARSI, as well as hurdles that CARSI must overcome to be effective (Olson n.d., p, 130).

In its discussion of crime and violence in Central America, and how US policy responses are either helping or need to be improved, the Wilson Center included an invaluable section that discussed policy options for future security assistance (Olson 2014). The author, Olson, reiterated the external and internal threats created by firearms stockpiles from the 1980s civil conflicts, the steady demand for illegal goods, and the presence of criminal organizations (Olson 2014, p. 2). He argued that the United States had invested a substantial amount of money in the region and, before investing more, it needs to create a clear strategy, with mandatory impact evaluations. Furthermore, he purported that the proposed strategies should avoid focusing solely on drug trafficking and expand focus to local criminal markets to prevent children and families from fleeing from the dire situations. Olson reflected the views of several other authors in the canon, that the United States' policy was a good foundation but the various programs needed to be refocused and prioritized before it can have its desired impact (Olson 2014, p. 7). The Heritage foundation proposed ways in which US policy responses can be improved. An issue brief by Ana Quintana proposed four targeted policies to improve assistance in the Northern Triangle countries specifically (Quintana 2014). These included (1) removing requirements on foreign assistance to Honduras, (2) allowing Honduras to repair its fleet of jet fighters, (3) relieve restrictions on funding to Guatemala, and (4) increase maritime interdiction capabilities (Quintana 2014).

Bartilow and Eom's article further discussed the impact of drug war policies on countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bartilow and Eom 2009). The authors suggested that these policies have caused higher levels of property crime, violent crime, and corruption (Bartilow 2014). Furthermore, they argued that the current policies, which focus on reducing the supply of drugs, rather than the demand has led to increased violence because cartels and other drug trafficking groups have been forced to develop new strategies to increase, or simply maintain, their profit (Bartilow and Eom 2009). They referenced an earlier study in the Caribbean in which homicide rates were positively related to enforcement of drug

prohibition (Bartilow and Eom 2009). Additionally, the article discussed the increased involvement of the national military in drug trafficking eradication due to concerns about corruption among police forces – it concluded that differences in training and goals has resulted in increased human rights violations (Bartilow and Eom 2009). The authors suggested a revision in policy, arguing that a policy that prioritized demand management and legalization of narcotics would be more effective and would cost less – they estimated that an expenditure of \$34 million on treatment would reduce the consumption of cocaine by the same amount as \$366 million spent on supply-side interdiction (Bartilow and Eom 2009). Bartilow continued this discussion in a follow-up article, where he argued that organized crime and “narco-terrorism” has caused citizens to lose faith in the government and has further undermined the legitimacy of these already weak regimes (Bartilow 2014).

The final set of resources that were instrumental in the completion of this thesis was the pair of Government Accountability Office (GAO) documents that assessed U.S. agencies’ funding and activities meant to support CARSI goals (United States Government Accountability Office 2013a). In addition to discussing how accurately funding to the region met the partner countries’ needs, these reports was unique in that they were only sources that provided a breakdown of CARSI and non-CARSI funding by country, account, and year. The first report, released at the beginning of 2013, was primarily a discussion of the scope and methodology of the data collection that the office completed, as well as a breakdown of funding by account (United States Government Accountability Office 2013b, p. 17).

In the second report, released six months later, the GAO concluded that the Department of State and USAID had successfully identified the needs of respective countries and had considered various factors in funding security activities (United States Government Accountability Office 2013a). However, they argued that a stringent set of interagency objectives – between USAID, State, and other organizations providing financial aid – needed to be drafted to assess the progress of such aid packages (United States Government Accountability Office 2013a).

Chapter 3

CARSI's Predecessors

Since the mid-1970s, the United States government has invested billions of dollars in anti-drug assistance programs, the majority of which emphasize supply reduction. The programs include which include the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and its sister program the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) (Seelke et al. 2011). These programs were preceded by two main counter-drug initiatives – Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative. In this chapter I will provide a detailed description of the two policies, how and why they were drafted and passed, and how they have been implemented. I will conclude by briefly comparing the two policies with CARSI

Plan Colombia

Colombia is one of the United States' strongest allies in the region and has made a significant amount of progress in reducing narcotics trafficking in the region – particularly of cocaine and heroin. The success of the financial aid package that the United States provided to the country – aptly named *Plan Colombia* – has resulted in bilateral goals expanding to other issues such as trade, human rights, and development. Colombia's crime-fighting capacity has developed to the extent that it has begun providing training in security and counter-narcotics for other countries in the hemisphere (Beittel 2012).

Conditions in Colombia Prior to *Plan Colombia*

When understanding the rise of the narcotics trade in the country, it is important to examine the history of organized crime and violence in the country. While the country has a long-standing history of

democratic rule, conflict between the conservative and liberal parties led to extended, extremely bloody civil wars, the two most noticeable being the War of a Thousand Days, which spanned 4 years, ending in 1903, and The Violence (an eleven year war that ended in 1957) (Beittel 2012, 13).

Despite an official agreement to end The Violence in 1957, little was done to address the root causes of the violence, resulting in the formation of leftist guerilla groups in the 1960s and right-wing paramilitaries in the 1980s. The most notable paramilitary group that has had an extended presence in the region is the FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). The two groups competed for political and military control of different parts of the country and the production of cocaine production generated a source of revenue for both sides to fund their military expeditions (Beittel 2012, p. 14). For example, the FARC is fully engaged in the drug trade at all stages, including cultivation and distribution (Beittel 2012, p. 14).

Cocaine cultivation and trafficking in Colombia emerged as a result of counter-narcotics efforts in Peru and Bolivia. Beginning in the 1990s, the United States spent close to one billion dollars in an unsuccessful effort to reduce crop cultivation (Rosen 2012). Despite significant investment, production of coca leaves increased by 140 percent and by 1999, eighty percent of the total cocaine imports smuggled into the United States were produced in Colombia (Rosen 2012).

Tension over narco-trafficking in Colombia came to a head in 1989 when Luis Carlos Galán, a Liberal Party presidential candidate was assassinated. Galán was the third presidential candidate to be assassinated by a drug cartel before the 1990 elections (the other two candidates were Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa and Carlos Pizarro Leongómez who were assassinated on March 22, 1990 and April 26, 1990, respectively) (Rosen 2012) . Galán's assassination resulted in an increase in US financial aid in an effort to curb violence within cartels.

With US support, the Colombian government adopted a "king-pin" strategy, which focused on eliminating the heads of the various cartels, the logic being that cartels couldn't function without their major leaders. In 1993, the Colombians successfully eliminated Pablo Escobar, the head of the Medellin

cartel, severely weakening it. The government adopted similar tactics to destroy the Cali cartel (Rosen 2012). While this tactic temporarily reduced the effects of corruption and prevented Colombia from becoming a narco-state, it resulted in the fragmentation of the cartels into smaller organizations. Three hundred smaller cartels emerged and other organizations, such as the guerillas, took over coca leaf cultivation (Rosen 2012).

By the start of the 2000s, drug trafficking and violence continued in Colombia and it was argued to be one of the most dangerous states around the globe and it became a major concern for the United States from a security perspective (Rosen 2012, p. 20). In addition to the presence of paramilitary and guerilla groups and narco-trafficking groups, the level of violence was exacerbated by Colombia's weak institutions, which were prone to corruption and, therefore, helped foster crime (Rosen 2012, p. 32). The United States actively criticized Colombia's state institutions and the country's efforts to curb violence within the country, going so far as to decertify Colombia –withholding aid to the country – for three years, from 1995 to 1997 (Rosen 2012) .

Formulation and Implementation of Plan Colombia

In 1998, Plan Colombia was proposed by Colombian President Pastrana in an effort to (1) improve relations with the United States, (2) end the armed conflict with insurgents in the country, (3) eliminate drug trafficking, and (4) promote economic and social development (Veillette 2005, p. 2). Pastrana hoped to first achieve peace, then developmental assistance and, eventually, drug trafficking (Rosen 2012). His plan initially focused heavily on forms of economic and social aid, rather than the use of the military in creating peace. United States' primary objectives in funding the project focused more heavily on the counter-narcotics aspect (Veillette 2006, p. i). Because of its role as the primary benefactor of Plan Colombia, the US was able to modify the plan's agenda, shifting its focus dramatically. Eighty

percent of the funds were allocated to hard components, rather than the softer issues of human rights and alternative development (Rosen 2012),

US fiscal support for the plan began in FY2000. The plan was initially a \$7.5 billion six-year plan, with the Colombian government providing approximately \$4 billion of the funding. Officially, the United States didn't sanction Plan Colombia. Instead, the United States provided funding as part of the Andean Counterdrug Program (ACP), which served to aid Colombia, in addition to counter-narcotics programs in Panama and several South American countries including Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and, for a span of seven years, Venezuela (Beittel 2012, p. 31). Colombia received further funding through a second account, entitled the Air Bridge Denial Program, which provided aid to both Colombia and Peru to force down planes believed to be drug flights (Beittel 2012 p. 32).

US funding as a component of Plan Colombia started to be reduced in 2008, when the United States started to both operational and financial responsibility for the programs to Colombia as a nationalization effort. Regardless of a move to reduce aid, in 2014 itself, \$320 million dollars was allocated for Plan Colombia – of this, \$140 million attributed to counter-narcotics, close to \$30 million for the army, and an additional \$140 million for institutional fortification (Horswell 2014) .

In addition to attempting to disrupt trafficking routes, the Plan Colombia also implemented several other practices to reduce the prominence of drug trafficking in the country. This included aerial eradication and alternative development programs – which aimed to assist farmers in switching from the production of illicit to legal crops, as well as to establish stable markets for these new legal crops (Beittel 2012). The success of these practices, particularly the alternative development programs, has been questioned, particularly because the projects were (1) not located in areas where the majority of cocaine is grown and (2) the success of these projects hasn't been measured by any fixed standards (Beittel 2012, p. 33).

Both the United States and the United Nations have different statistics for the cultivation of the coca plant from which cocaine is derived, but, despite these discrepancies, it is clear the plan was

successful in reducing cocaine. The UN World Drug Report from respective years shows that in 1999, there was approximately 680 metric tons of cocaine produced. This amount was reduced by almost two thirds to 232 metric tons in 2012 (United Nations Office of Drug and Crime 2014). In addition to a reduction in production, the prices for both cocaine and heroin have increased and the purity and availability have decreased significantly (Veillette 2006). Figure 1 demonstrates the change in cocaine cultivation, with the dashed line demarcating where funding for Plan Colombia began. Subsequently, Figure 2 reflects the decline in homicide rate in the country following the implementation of Plan Colombia in 2000.

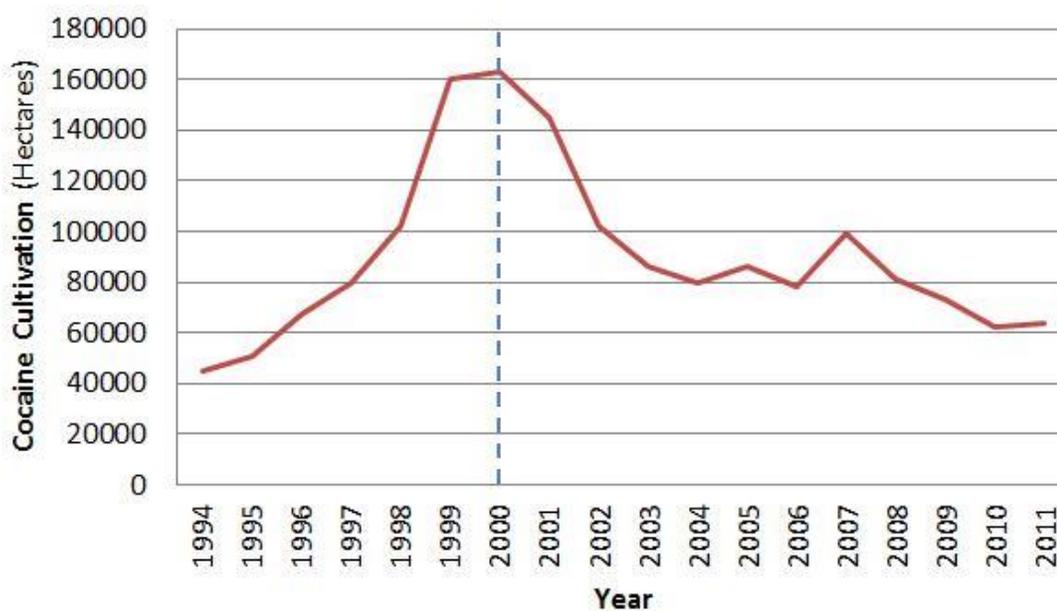


Figure 1 Change in Cocaine Cultivation in Colombia

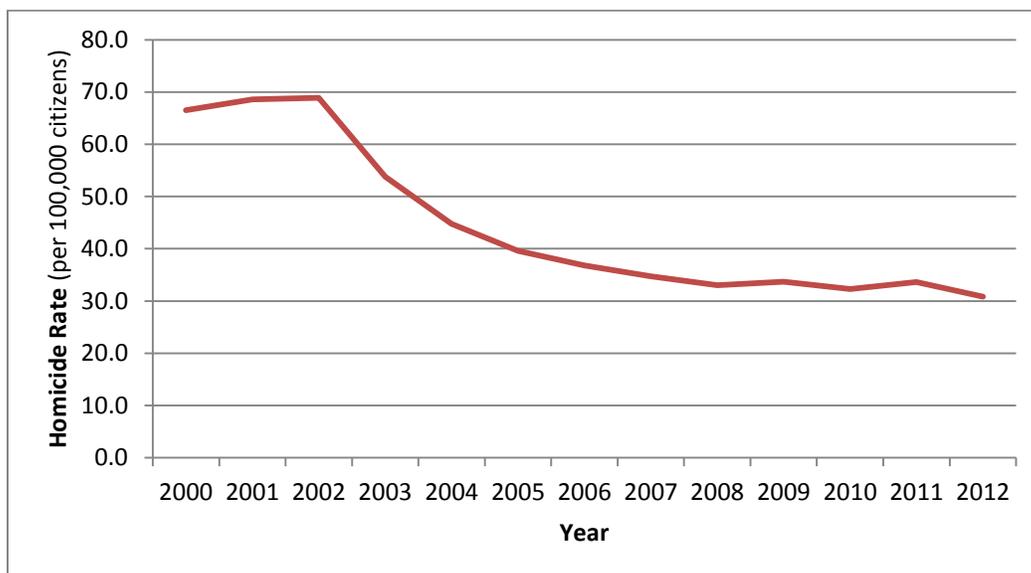


Figure 2 Change in Homicide Rate following the Implementation of Plan Colombia

There have been mixed reviews as to the success of Plan Colombia. In 2013, Colombia's unemployment rate reached a record low of 9.6% and 4.1% economic growth (Runde n.d.). Furthermore, Plan Colombia also succeeded in reducing the number of insurgent fighters by 75% from 2003 (Runde n.d.). According to well-recognized corruption indicators, the country also experienced drastic decreases in corruption – these improvements were brought about in part by financial assistance, as well as through the establishment of new rules and procedures that decreased the amount of time to solve a criminal case (Rosen 2012, p. 112). Plan Colombia succeeded in reducing poverty levels, although there is a rise in the gap between urban and rural data. Indicative of this is the fact that Colombia still has the 12th highest GINI coefficient of the 101 countries measured by the United Nations (Tickner 2014).

Despite successes in drug eradication, however, human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, have criticized the “Plan” because of reports of torture, massacres, and killings of non-combatants, as well as collusion between armed forces and paramilitary groups (Amnesty International USA n.d.). Furthermore, while the number of paramilitary and guerilla troops have declined, the leftist guerilla groups seem no closer to a cease-fire and there is still a large amount of controversy regarding the demobilization of the rightist paramilitary forces (Veillette 2006). The UN Human Rights report praises

the laws that Colombia has passed, but, similar to Amnesty International, emphasizes their inability to implement these laws. In addition to commenting on major human rights violations that took place in the implementation of Plan Colombia, analysts argue that Plan Colombia didn't allocate sufficient resources to the strengthening of democracy, promoting the rule of law, and strengthening existing institutions (Rosen 2012). Further analysis of Plan Colombia and current funding suggests that, while Colombia has made major strides in regards to security and counter-narcotics, it needs to further strengthen its democratic institutions if it wants to more effectively combat organized crime and corruption (Rosen 2012, p. 125)

The challenges that Central America currently faces – specifically the problems tied to recent mass migration – are somewhat similar to the challenges that Colombia faced prior to the implementation of Plan Colombia (Runde n.d.). For this reason, politician and proponents of foreign aid have looked upon Plan Colombia as a model for CARSI and other Central American aid packages. It is important to note, however, that Colombia's investments in the program were equal to, if not more than, U.S. financial aid. Central American countries have significantly smaller national budgets and weaker democratic systems and, therefore, do not have the resources to co-finance similar security initiatives (Runde n.d.). This simple difference between the two regions is indicative of the fact that the strategies that were successful in Colombia need to be reviewed and revised thoroughly before making an effort to export them to other parts of the world.

Mérida Initiative

Mexico is the United States' third largest trading partner after Canada and China and the U.S.-Mexico border is one of the busiest, most financially significant borders in the world, with nearly a billion dollars' worth of goods crossing the border each day (United States Department of State 2010). The importance of the border to both countries' economies and Mexico's position as the United States' geographic neighbor contributed to the development of the Mérida Initiative (Seelke and Finklea 2014).

Conditions in Mexico Prior to the Mérida Initiative

Mexican drug trafficking organizations have roots that date back to the early twentieth century, when laws in the United States began to prohibit the production, distribution, and consumption of alcohol and psychotropic substances (Astorga and Shirk 2009). Drug trafficking organizations in the country flourished as a result of the "balloon effect," in which changes in the market and counter-narcotics efforts displaced and redirected drug flows. In the 1970s and 1980s, cocaine shipments from Colombia peaked, namely through the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. However, when the United States' counter-narcotics efforts in the Gulf took hold, the importance of Mexican smuggling networks increased dramatically (Astorga and Shirk 2009). The Mexican cartels' roles grew even more when Colombia's drug cartels were dismantled – instead of simply being couriers of cocaine and other illegal substances, Mexican cartels became the wholesalers (Lee 2015). In addition to taking over cocaine routes into the United States, cartels also produce heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana (Reid 2012).

The rise of the Mexican drug market coincided with the Mexican government's efforts to achieve economic integration with the United States, opening up new channels of commerce for the cartels. Furthermore, Mexico's government was a highly centralized structure that not only permitted, but also protected, organized criminal activities. While the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which held political power in the country for seventy-one years, didn't tolerate criminal activity in general, cartels

were more likely to be protected or tolerated by party-members if they were promised a substantial payoff (Astorga and Shirk 2009). Frequently corruption took place at extremely high levels, resulting in high levels of impunity and allowing cartels to become extremely powerful, unchallenged by the state.

However, major institutional changes took place in the 1980s, including the rise of multiple political parties and the decentralization of power, tipping the balance that cartels and the government maintained. This has resulted in high levels of violence as criminal groups fight to protect their zones of control and maintain their share of the cocaine market (Astorga and Shirk 2009). The fragmentation among drug trafficking organizations increased dramatically in 2000, when Vicente Fox, a candidate from the National Action Party rose to power. Fox rose to power around the same time that the PRI was defeated in the federal legislature.

The United States began providing Mexico with equipment and training to combat both marijuana production and opium production in the late 1960s. The two countries also worked together to strengthen border patrol and reduce the flow of narcotics and weapons from the Mexico and the United States respectively. The two most notable of these operations were “Operation Cooperation” in 1969 and “Operation Condor” in 1975 (Astorga and Shirk 2009).

Cooperation between the two countries, as well as the flow of aid from the United States was stalled in 1985 when a DEA agent was assassinated, generating the United States’ subsequent mistrust of Mexican counterdrug officials led to a stall in aid. U.S.-Mexican cooperation was revitalized with the decline of the PRI and the election of a non-PRI president, Vicente Fox. In 1998, the United States and Mexico passed a Binational Drug Control Strategy in 1998. Following the initial push, US assistance totaled close to \$400 million from FY2000 and FY2006 (Seelke and Finklea 2014).

Implementation of the Mérida Initiative

U.S. - Mexican cooperation was strengthened, when the Mexican President Calderon requested assistance from the US government – namely in the form of financial aid and military training – to combat drug trafficking and organized crime. The Mérida Initiative, while largely an aid package from the US, emphasized “shared responsibility” – the Mexican government was responsible for reducing corruption and crime, and the US government aimed to reduce the demand for narcotics, as well as the illicit flow of both bulk currency and arms (Seelke and Finklea 2014, p. 6). The implementation of Mérida involved an unprecedented level of transparency, a multi-level working group structure, and annual cabinet-level meetings (Seelke and Finklea 2014).

The Initiative was officially initiated in December of 2008, and has four broad pillars:

1. “Disrupt Capacity of Organized Crime to Operate
2. Institutionalize Capacity to Sustain Rule of Law
3. Create a 21st Century Border Structure
4. Build Strong and Resilient Communities” (US Department of State 2014b).

These long-term goals were established with deadlines of improvement to encourage full cooperation of Mexico’s state and federal governments. While the United States was responsible for organizing and funding the Initiative, Mexico was held responsible for enforcing these policies, reducing organized crime, and minimizing corruption within its institutions (Gibson 2014 , p. 26). Unlike Plan Colombia, both the US and Mexican governments attempted to focus on long-term benefits, achieved through proper training and a strengthened judicial system (Gibson 2014, p. 27). The United States has also attempted to address several other issues tied to narco-trafficking – namely focusing on the demand-related aspects of drug trade, reducing the trafficking of weapons, and decreasing the flow bulk currency to Mexico.

The scope of the Merida Initiative has morphed with the rise of President Enrique Peña Nieto, and the newly elected Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Peña Nieto’s newly proposed strategy

builds on Calderón's previous administrative goals, but particular Mérida goals, specifically police training and judicial reform (Beittel 2013). US funding has focused increasingly on strengthening various institutions through training and technical assistance – this includes creating training centers for customs personnel, canine teams, and police at the federal, state, and local levels (Seelke and Finklea 2014). As of May 2013, nearly 20 thousand law enforcement officers, and additional 30 thousand justice sector personnel have received funding (Seelke and Finklea 2014). However, officers still have limited education and low salaries and, accordingly, there are high levels of turnover, even at higher levels in the government (Reid 2012). Analysts are concerned that, if corruption isn't eradicated, leaders being trained today have the potential to become future drug traffickers and equipment might fall into cartels' hands (Reid 2012).

Because one of the complaints regarding Plan Colombia was the human rights abuses and impunity that resulted from U.S. funding, Congress placed more strict conditions on their financial aid through Mérida – close to fifteen percent of the assistance to military and police forces was required to meet human rights conditions (Seelke and Finklea 2014). Furthermore, the current president, Peña Nieto has explicitly prioritized human rights, citizen participation, and crime prevention. Nieto also passed a Victim's Law, enacted in January 2013, which assists in transferring victims of military abuse to civilian court and finding missing persons while preventing future disappearances (Seelke and Finklea 2014).

Mérida funding, to date, is approximately \$2.35 billion, and has been distributed among three different accounts – the economic support fund (ESF), foreign military financing (FMF), and the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account (Seelke and Finklea 2014).

In addition to focusing more on police training and judicial reform, Peña Nieto's has pushed to launch a national crime prevention plan with a single code of criminal procedures. Keeping with the second pillar of the Mérida Initiative (protecting human rights through institutional reform), Peña Nieto's strategy emphasizes human rights, citizen participation, and crime prevention (Seelke and Finklea 2014). This effort has had mixed results. The number of organized crime-related homicides has continued to

decline but, more recently, the number of extortions and kidnappings have risen (Seelke and Finklea 2014). Interestingly, the general homicide rate in the country has also increased since the implementation of the program, as reflected in Figure 3.

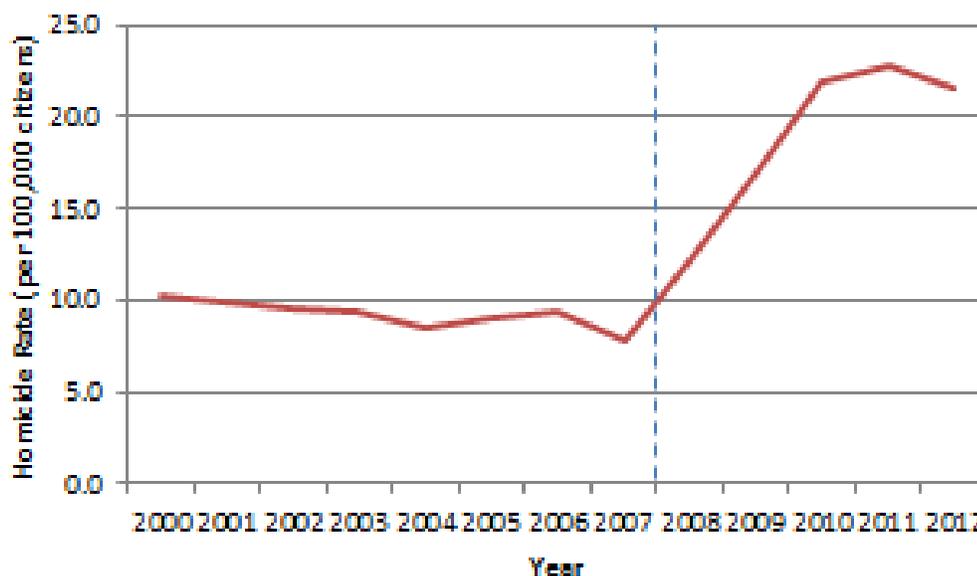


Figure 3 Homicide Rate in Mexico from 2000-2012

Furthermore, under the Calderon Administration, the US and Mexico have been focused on the security aspect of strengthening the border. Peña Nieto, in recent years, has somewhat altered the focus of this particular pillar to emphasize cooperation in border trade, instead of just limiting it to security concerns (Seelke and Finklea 2014).

Several analysts were initially extremely concerned that the rise of the PRI would result in a decrease in cooperation between the United States and Mexico. While it is true that the new government's strategy maintains a lower profile and there are slightly higher restrictions placed on U.S. security agencies in the country, there is substantive evidence that bilateral cooperation is as strong as ever. U.S. intelligence helped Mexican marines (SEMAR) arrest Z-40, the leader of the Zetas, in July 2013 and embedded DEA agents and US Marshals helped SEMAR capture El Chapo, the head of the Sinaloa Cartel and the world's most wanted drug-lord (Seelke and Finklea 2014, p. 11). As of 2011, the United States and Mexico released an updated initiative that extended the initial three-year agreement between the two

countries (Lee 2015). The expansion of the strategy includes additional strategic priorities including improving border surveillance and addressing socio-economic factors. This includes border patrols that examine vehicles going south (not just north) and technical and financial support to local police initiatives (Lee 2015).

Under the Mérida Initiative, the Mexican government has limited involvement in crop eradication efforts and alternative development plans. Initially the Mexican government involved the military in eradication efforts, but, more recently, under Peña Nieto's plan, the majority of the resources directed towards this initiative have been rerouted to reduce crime and violence in more urban environments. The government has also designated minimal resources to alternative development. Studies of Plan Colombia revealed that a combination of eradication, alternative development, and interdiction is more effective than a single strategy. However, analysts believe the Mexican government is reluctant to even consider alternative development because it requires significant investment and takes years to demonstrate results (Seelke and Finklea 2014, p. 28).

Similar to Plan Colombia, there is limited information on the impact of the Mérida Initiative and analysts disagree on how the efforts should be evaluated. One reason behind this disagreement is, while both governments have the same long-term goal of reducing drug trafficking, they have different goals for the short-term. Mexico appears to be more focused on reducing crime and violence, whereas the US is focused more on capturing leaders and seizing drugs (Seelke and Finklea 2014). Measures to assess the effectiveness of Mérida include the number of DTO leaders arrested, as well as the number, price, and purity of drugs seized (Seelke and Finklea 2014).

A secondary challenge in assessing the success of Mérida, however, is separating the results of Mérida efforts from other cooperation initiatives – something that is unattainable with the current data available. It is important to note that the two most frequently used measures of policy success for security initiatives (cocaine seizures and homicide rates) for the Mérida Initiative show different results. As demonstrated in Figure 4, cocaine seizures have been in decline, especially starting in 2008 (when the

Mérida Initiative was implemented). However, as portrayed in Figure 3 (above), homicide rates in the region have increased. These mixed results indicate the need for reviewing the strategies being implemented in México, as well as the need for more definitive measures of progress and interagency objectives.

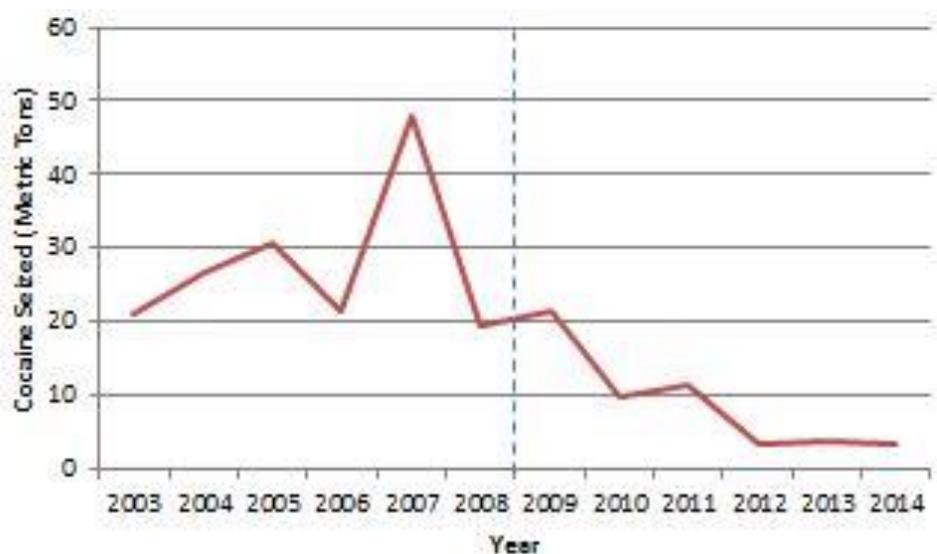


Figure 4 Cocaine Seizures in Mexico from 2003-2014

Conclusion

There are several important distinctions between the strategies employed in Mexico and Colombia and those in Central America. Firstly, the Mérida Initiative and CARSI were developed with a regional approach in mind. Funding to Central America began as a component of the Mérida Initiative in 2008 as both the US and the Mexican government acknowledged that a crackdown in Mexico would exacerbate the issues of firearms smuggling and cartel violence in the region (Carpenter 2013). The United States developed the separate CARSI package in response to higher levels of violence and an increased flow of drugs through the region in 2010 (Seelke et al. 2011)

Mexico and Colombia were middle-income states and, accordingly, the packages to those countries revolved around the strengthening of the military and trade institutions (Carpenter 2013). In Mexico's case, the Mérida Initiative employed heavily militaristic strategies, particularly because the violence across the border was perceived as one of the greatest direct threats to US national security (Carpenter 2013). Furthermore, Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative were considered a reflection of the new cooperative dynamic between Colombia and the US and Mexico and the US respectively. Law enforcement and social collaboration between the US and the Central American region predate CARSI and the new package attempted to build upon already existing programs (Carpenter 2013).

Central American countries have significantly poorer social and economic conditions and, accordingly, US funding to the region was determined through a more developmental lens (Carpenter 2013). CARSI's emphasis on anti-corruption and community youth programs, in addition to its focus on counter-narcotics is reflective of a more holistic plan (Meyer and Seelke 2014).

Despite the fact that CARSI's scope is significantly wider than that of the Mérida Initiative (it attempts to support seven different countries as well as regional programs), as of 2012, the program has received about a quarter of the funding that México has received. Figure 5 demonstrates the discrepancies between funding levels for Plan Colombia, the Mérida Initiative, and CARSI between 2007 and 2013. It is important to note that Plan Colombia has been enforced since 2000, and therefore, the amount of funding that the Plan has received is significantly more than the other two plans. Critics of the policy argue that the US may be sending too little too late and question the effectiveness of current aid because of Central America's high levels of corruption (Meyer and Seelke 2014).

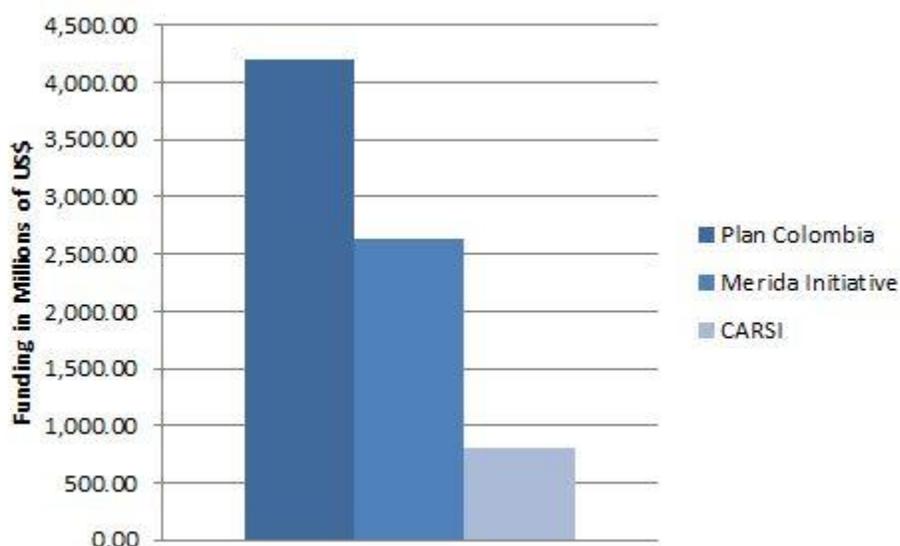


Figure 5 Difference in Funding Levels for Security Initiatives

The willingness of Central American leaders to implement and enforce changes in policy has also been called into question. For example, the reforms proposed at peace talks following the violent uprisings in Central America in the 1980s have yet to be implemented (Meyer and Seelke 2014). While it is evident that CARS has developed beyond a plan with a limited military scope (like Plan Colombia), its lack of a coherent strategy and lack of plans for evaluation suggest that there is lots of room for improvement (United States Government Accountability Office 2013a).

Chapter 4

Theory and Methodology

Theory

This piece analyzes the origins of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and its evolution over time. In terms of social science research, the project focuses on foreign policy analysis and involves the use of security studies. The existing literature presents a debate on whether or not CARSI has been effective in curbing crime in Central America. The research canon was largely qualitative and speculative. The majority of the literature focusing on the disbursement of funds, changes in trafficking routes, and the aims and goals of the policy. A large part of the literature focused on crime at the national level, portraying violence and crime primarily as intra-border issues. The limited number of reports and articles written at a cross-national level focused on criminal actors and specific types of crime (such as narco-trafficking or human trafficking). In the few instances that they referenced foreign aid, these pieces made largely speculative claims, offering little to no statistical analysis on the packages' effectiveness.

The contribution of this paper is twofold. First, the paper adds a quantitative element to the debate on the merits of CARSI funding. Second, I supplement this quantitative study with qualitative case studies, with the aim of strengthening the argument that there is a correlation between crime levels and CARSI funding. In addition to strengthening this argument, I examine national factors that may influence the effectiveness of the aid package.

My approach has two primary goals. First, I quantify the links between CARSI funding and crime levels, controlling for other social, political, and economic factors. In addition to examining the relationship between the entire CARSI account and crime levels, I examine the correlation between the INCLE and ESF accounts (component accounts of CARSI) and crime trends in the region. Second, by utilizing case studies, I offer reasons as to why there is a variation in the level of crime in states in the

same region, despite similar historical backgrounds. In addition to understanding the variation in the level of crime, I explain why certain states' institutions have been able to more effectively utilize the funding they receive. When construing my hypotheses and conducting the quantitative analysis, I take three different measures of crime into account – homicide rates, cocaine seizure rates, and crime victimization rates. I hypothesize that CARSI funding has distinctive and significant relationships with each measure of crime.

Literature suggests that “mano dura” policies (i.e. those that utilize military force) result in cartel and organized crime group fragmentation. As groups fragment, there is competition both (1) among middle-tier individuals to claim leadership of groups and (2) among cartels to maintain control of both territories and profits. Accordingly, I argue that, contrary to policy goals, increased overall CARSI spending will result in increased violence in the region and, therefore higher homicide and crime victimization rates.

H1: Contrary to stated policy goals, increased spending will result in an increase in violence and crime in Central American countries as measured by homicide and crime victimization rates.

One of CARSI's main pillars is focused on reducing the movement of criminals and contraband between Central American countries. Because of this pillar, as well as the United States' previous success in curbing the flow of narcotics in Mexico and Colombia, I hypothesize that increased CARSI spending (specifically INCLE spending) will result in a decrease in narcotics trafficking and crime in the region. I predict that increases in spending will correspond with decreased cocaine seizures.

H2: An increase in CARSI spending targeted toward combatting drug trafficking will result in a decrease in narcotic-related crime in Central American countries as measured by cocaine seizure quantities.

Several of CARSI's pillars refer to the development of “strong, capable, and accountable” Central American governments and institutions (Meyer and Seelke 2014). As reflected in the literature review, a large amount of funding has been designated towards the strengthening of police forces as well as judicial systems (Meyer and Sullivan 2012). Municipal level studies indicate that a strong, trustworthy police

force results in lower levels of crime (Berk-Seligson et al. 2014). However, studies also indicate that police organizations have the potential to utilize funds inefficiently. Because the majority of the funding is distributed to the national police force, I hypothesize that there is an interaction between CARSF spending and police capability. Furthermore, I hypothesize that an increase in police capability results in an increase in the effect of CARSF funding and therefore, a decrease in homicide rates, crime victimization rates, and cocaine seizures.

H3: There is an interaction between CARSF funding and police capability.

H4: An increase in police capability will result in an increase in the effectiveness of CARSF funds and, therefore a decrease in homicide, crime victimization, and cocaine seizure rates

Similarly, the literature review suggests that high levels of corruption can result in foreign aid being pocketed by officials, preventing foreign aid from being utilized effectively to serve its designated purpose. Therefore, I hypothesize that there is an interaction between CARSF funding and corruption. Subsequently, I predict that an increase in corruption will result in a decrease in the effectiveness of CARSF and, therefore, will be correlated with higher homicide and crime victimization rates, as well as higher cocaine seizure rates.

H5: There is an interaction between CARSF funding and corruption.

H6: An increase in corruption will result in a decrease in the effectiveness of CARSF funds and, therefore an increase homicide, crime victimization, and cocaine seizure rates

Methodology

I will run several multivariate regressions to test the impact that CARSF funding has on levels of crime in Central America. I use several models that utilize three different measures of crime (homicides, cocaine seizures, and crime victimization rates) as the dependent variable. I will also test the interaction effect of increased police capacity on the level of crime in the region.

I examine this question by estimating variants of the following regression equation:

$$\text{Crim.lvl} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{CARSI}) + \beta_2(\text{pov}) + \beta_3(\text{dem.inst}) + \beta_4(\text{corr}) + \beta_5(\text{natpol}) + \beta_6(\text{inc}) + e$$

As reflected in the equation above, I predict that there is a correlation between crime levels and CARSI funding, controlling for poverty, strength of democratic institutions, corruption levels, confidence in the national police, and income levels.

I will first conduct a bivariate analysis of CARSI funding and crime levels. Next, I will run a multivariate regression, controlling only for political variation (confidence in the national police, strength of democratic institutions, and corruption). Third, I will run the full model, with all the aforementioned controls (the political controls, as well as controls for poverty and income). Fourth, I will run the entire model, but with confidence in the national police as an interaction variable with CARSI funding. Fifth, and finally, I will run the entire model, replacing the police confidence interaction variable with an interaction variable between corruption and CARSI funding.

I plan to run these five models three times, utilizing each measure of crime as a dependent variable. I then plan to run this set of models again using INCLE funding and ESF funding as the independent variables.

To check for robustness and ensure that the results are consistent, I will run the entire model using different measures for poverty and strength of democratic institutions. The measures I used for poverty were primary education completion rates and infant mortality rates. The indices that I used to measure the strength of democratic institutions were VanHanan's Democratic Index and the Freedomhouse Index. I chose to cycle these measures in, rather than include them all in a single model to avoid problems of collinearity. The operationalization of these variables is discussed in the section below.

Data

My dependent variable is the level of crime in Central America. I will be using three different measures to represent the level of crime in the region. The first of these measures is the intentional homicide rate per year per 100,000 inhabitants in each country, from FY2008 to the present day. Data on this variable are collected and maintained by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The second measure is the amount of cocaine seized in each country by metric ton. The data for this variable are also collected by the UNODC as part of their annual World Drug Report. Because the residuals for this variable weren't normally distributed, I elected to use the logarithm of the variable to improve the fit and make the variable more normally distributed.

Until the early to mid-1990s, the cocaine was shipped through the Caribbean until greater law enforcement interdiction in the Caribbean and the rise of Mexican drug cartels drove narco-traffickers to the Central America- Mexico route. This trend in increased overland transportation is reflected in the slow, but somewhat steady increase in cocaine seizures beginning in 2000 (depicted in Figure 7). The black dashed lines on the graphs above represent the point at which the Mérida Initiative was implemented and the red dashed lines indicate the year in which CARSÍ was introduced. As depicted in the Figure 7, there is a gradual decline in cocaine seizures from pre-Mérida and CARSÍ. However, there is no noticeable decrease in homicide rates (Figure 6). Unfortunately, as reflected above, statistics for homicide rates and cocaine seizures ended in 2012 and 2013 respectively and, therefore, data analysis stops at those years.

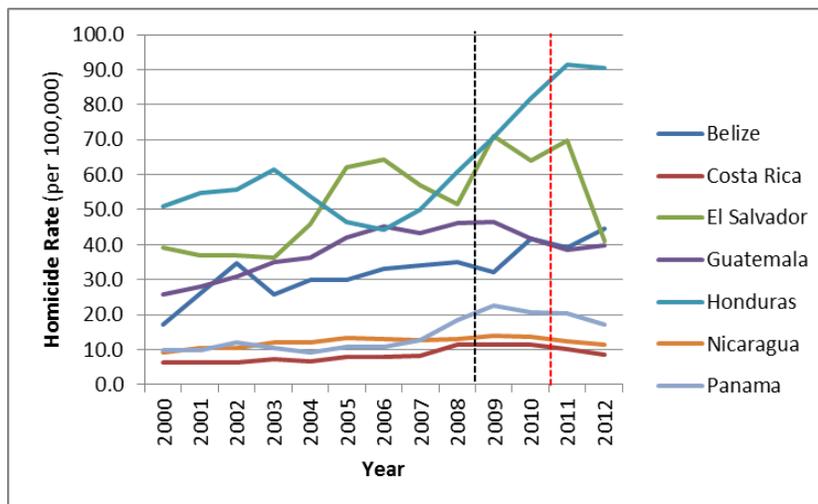


Figure 6 Homicide Rate per 100,000 population since 2000

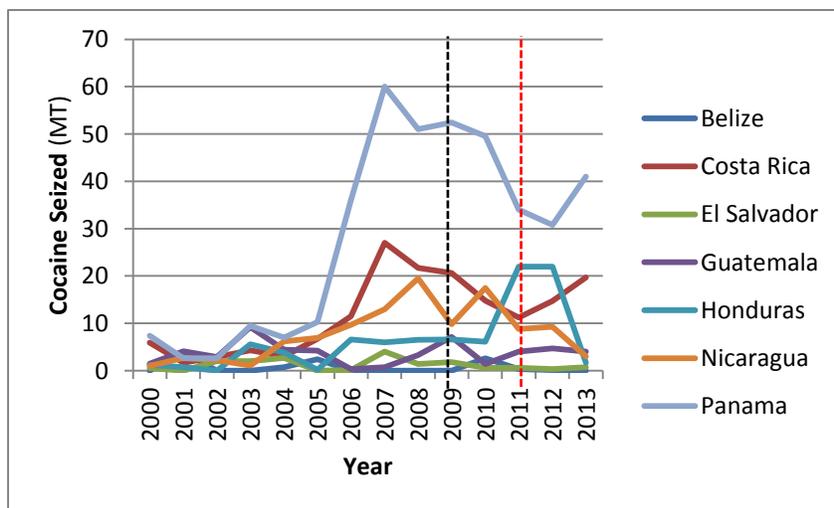


Figure 7 Cocaine Seized in Metric Tons since 2000

Frequently, official statistics on homicides and drug seizures are overstated. Hence, I also measure crime levels through the use of poll data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project – a set of public opinion surveys conducted by Vanderbilt University. I specifically analyze responses to the question “Speaking of the neighborhood where you live, and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe? (Vanderbilt University, LAPOP, 2010).” The change in responses to this question is reflected in Figure 8.

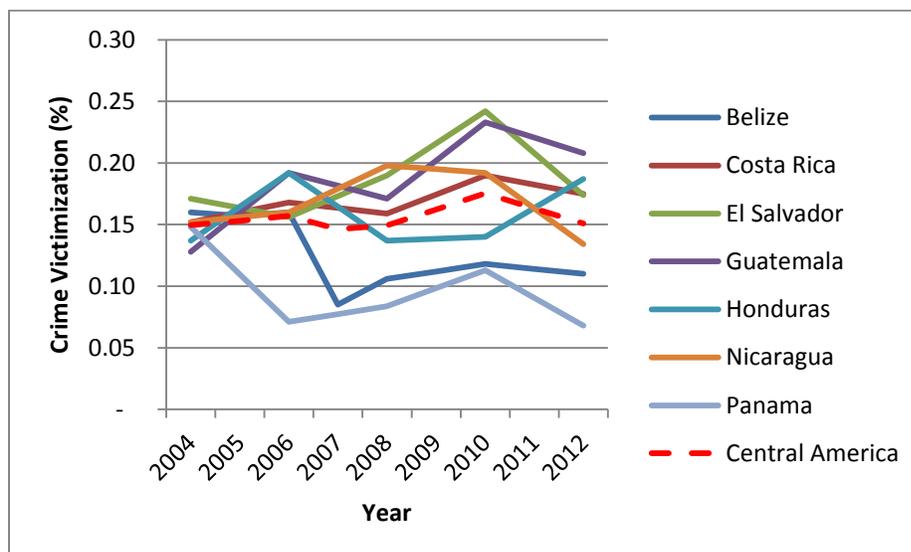


Figure 8 Crime Victimization Rate (as a Percent of the Entire Population) since 2004

My primary independent variable is the level of United States foreign aid Central American countries receive through CARSI per year. All aid figures are in constant U.S. dollars. When conducting my analysis, I chose to run several different models, varying the values used to represent CARSI funding. I first ran regressions using total CARSI funding per country per year. In subsequent tests, I elected to run regressions for the two largest component accounts of CARSI – the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account and the Economic Support Fund (ESF) (Meyer and Seelke 2014, p. 22).

When examining the effect of US foreign aid on Central American crime levels, there were several variables that I needed to control for. One such variable was the capability of the national police (labelled as natpol). I operationalized this variable by using the AmericasBarometer – a survey produced by LAPOP, and the only survey of public opinion and behavior that covers all of the Americas. The survey measures such behavior using national probability samples of voting-age results. The capability of the national police is measured by the level of confidence that citizens have in the force. It is measured on a scale of 0-4, with 4 being the highest level of confidence.

Another control variable that I include in my analysis is income. I used the gross national income (GNI) per capita from the World Bank. GNI per capita has been identified as the broadest measure of national income that measures total value of added domestic and foreign resources claimed by residence. It is calculated by dividing the GNI by the mid-year population. The data for this variable comes from the World Bank Economic Indicators dataset. I initially considered utilizing the GINI coefficient, which controls for equality within income distribution. However, because of the incomplete nature of the indicator, I refrained from it as a measure of income. I encountered similar problems with other measures of income, such as income share percentages.

I also chose to control for poverty levels in my analysis. I chose to use three measures when calculating poverty levels, focusing on life expectancy, infant mortality rate per 1000 births, and primary education completion rates respectively. Data for these variables came from the World Bank's database. Other indices such as the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) were considered, but to avoid overlapping variables in my regression analysis, I chose an index that didn't include income in its calculations.

I also chose to control for the strength of democratic institutions and corruption. Specifically, I examined the level of democracy. I utilized both Freedomhouse and VanHanen scores to check for robustness. When examining corruption levels, I included data from the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), which compiled a minimum of 3 other corruption indices to measure the level of corruption in a country.

There were holes in the data for certain variables in certain years. The specific variables were police confidence, crime victimization rates, and primary education completion rates. To create a more complete dataset, I conducted multiple imputations using STATA. Using the multiple imputation function, I created 5 full and imputed datasets, and utilized the fifth one to conduct the analyses (Yuan 2010).

Chapter 5 Results

Each of the following tables includes five models, examining the influence of the independent variable (CARSI, INCLE, or ESF funding on a specific measure of crime. The first model in each table is a bivariate regression of funding on the respective crime measure. The second model in the set of tables includes controls for military and political factors, specifically the strength of the democratic institution, a measure of corruption, and confidence in the national police. The third model in the table controls for the political factors, as well as socio-economic influences on the effectiveness of funding (primary education completion rate and gross national income per capita). The fourth and fifth models include interaction variables between CARSI and police confidence and between CARSI and corruption respectively.

Table 1, 2, and 3 (on the subsequent pages are summaries of the findings found in the first fifteen regressions. Homicide rates, crime victimization rates, and cocaine seizure rates respectively were utilized as dependent variables and total CARSI funding acted as the main independent variable. As demonstrated in Table 1 and Table 2, CARSI funding had a significant impact on homicide rates and crime victimization rates respectively – as CARSI funding increased, homicide and crime victimization rates both increased. However, as demonstrated in Table 3, there was no significant relationship between CARSI funding and cocaine seizures. The last finding was particularly surprising because a large portion of the funding was designated toward counternarcotic efforts.

The exception to this statement is demonstrated in Model 15, when an interaction variable between CARSI and corruption rates was included. This model, interestingly, was also the only model in which the CARSI-corruption interaction variable registered significant. The regression suggested that as the interaction coefficient increases, cocaine seizures would decrease – this finding clashed with my hypothesis that corruption would limit the effectiveness of CARSI funding in reducing crime levels (and, therefore result in higher cocaine seizure rates).

Certain variables (specifically GNI per capita and confidence in the national police) were only statistically significant in relation to certain measures of crime. As demonstrated in Table 2 and 3, GNI per capita had no measurable impact on crime victimization rates or cocaine seizure rates (when CARSI was the main independent variable). However, in Table 1 (examining the influence of CARSI funding on homicide rates), GNI per capita registered significant – suggesting that there is an inverse relationship between crime levels and income. .

While confidence in the national police was statistically significant in Table 1 and 3 (which examine the relationship between CARSI and homicide rates and CARSI and cocaine seizure rates respectively), it was not significant when looking at the relationship between CARSI and crime victimization rates (Table 2). Confidence in the national police and cocaine seizure rates had the expected relationship – an increase in police confidence was correlated with a decrease in cocaine seizure rates. However, the relationship between confidence in the national police and homicide rates was somewhat unexpected. Contrary to my hypothesis, and the literature, an increase in the confidence in police was correlated with an increase in homicide rates.

Primary education completion rates, the poverty indicator utilized in the study was significant in every CARSI model, at either the 0.01 or 0.05 significance level. The significance of this coefficient supports arguments made in the literature review that programs focused on reducing poverty (especially through promoting education) is an effective means of reducing violence and crime in the region. To check the robustness of these results, I ran models 3, 8, and 13 (which included all political and socio-economic control variables). The results of these regressions were consistent with the findings in my main models (See Appendix A).

Table 1 Influence of CARSI Funding on Homicide Rates

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
CARSI Funding	0.00121 (0.000)	0.0012*** (0.001)	0.0011*** (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.427)	0.0012* (0.057)
Controls					
year	-----	-0.7526 (0.245)	0.5403 (0.330)	0.0695 (0.480)	0.6201 (0.317)
primary_comp	-----	-----	0.6102*** (0.003)	0.6363*** (0.003)	0.5931*** (0.008)
VanHanan Democracy	-----	-2.1805 (0.000)	-1.9000 (0.000)	-1.816 (0.000)	-1.9003 (0.000)
WGI_Corruption	-----	-0.2753 (0.025)	-0.0809 (0.330)	-0.1005 (0.295)	-0.0528 (0.411)
police_conf	-----	4.1689 (0.237)	8.1594** (0.033)	3.6211 (0.314)	8.5207** (0.07)
gnipc	-----	-----	-0.0048*** (0.001)	-0.0050*** (0.001)	-0.0048*** (0.001)
CARSI/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	0.0004 (0.190)	-----
CARSI/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	-3.62e-06 (0.421)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.2123	0.5529	0.6947	0.6994	0.6950

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 2 Influence of CARSI funding on Crime Victimization Rates

Independent Variable	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
CARSI Funding	0.0012 (0.000)	1.67e-06** (0.034)	1.77e-06*** (0.009)	6.32e-06** (0.025)	4.71e-07 (0.382)
Controls					
year	-----	-0.0031 (0.121)	0.0042* (0.055)	0.0058** (0.022)	0.0034 (0.107)
primary_comp	-----	-----	-0.0015*** (0.001)	-0.0016*** (0.001)	-0.0014*** (0.004)
VanHanen Democracy	-----	-0.0002 (0.416)	-0.0003 (0.366)	-0.0006 (0.255)	-0.0003 (0.367)
WGI_Corruption	-----	-0.0001 (0.345)	0.0019 (0.000)	0.0020 (0.000)	0.0016*** (0.001)
police_conf	-----	-0.0177 (0.102)	0.0037 (0.371)	0.01881 (0.113)	0.0002 (0.494)
gnipc	-----	-----	-0.00002 (0.000)	-0.00002 (0.000)	-0.00002 (0.000)
CARSI/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	-1.34e-06* (0.081)	-----
CARSI/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	3.55e-08 (0.175)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.1166	0.1807	0.5729	0.5895	0.5804

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 3 Influence of CARSI funding on Cocaine Seizure Rates

Independent Variable	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15
CARSI Funding	0.0001 (0.261)	0.00001 (0.364)	0.00002 (0.239)	-0.00005 (0.364)	0.0002** (0.004)
Controls					
year	-----	-0.0031 (0.438)	-0.1370 (0.109)	-0.1619 (0.093)	-0.0461 (0.337)
Primary Completion Rate (primary_comp)	-----	-----	-0.0462** (0.011)	-0.0448** (0.019)	-0.0657*** (0.001)
VanHanan Democracy	-----	0.1490 *** (0.001)	0.1311 *** (0.0005)	0.1355*** (0.001)	0.1307 (0.000)
WGI Corruption Index (WGI_Corrupt)	-----	-0.0152 (0.122)	-0.0621 (0.000)	-0.0631 (0.000)	-0.0301 (0.000)
Confidence in National Police (police_conf)	-----	-0.4740 (0.194)	-1.1589*** (0.009)	-1.3990** (0.020)	-0.7477* (0.061)
Gross National Income per Capita (gnipc)	-----	-----	0.0006 (0.000)	0.0007 (0.000)	0.0006 (0.000)
CARSI/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	0.00002 (0.303)	-----
CARSI/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	-4.12e-06*** (0.005)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.0068	0.1895	0.5184	0.5210)	0.5808

One-tailed Test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Models 16 through 30 (Tables 4-6) examine the influence of the INCLE fund (one of CARSI's sub-accounts) on homicide, crime victimization, and cocaine seizure rates respectively. The findings in these models are particularly similar to those that examine the impact of the overall CARSI package. In each of the fifteen models, the primary completion rate is significant. Similar to Tables 1-3, GNI per capita is significant only in relation to homicide rates. Similar to Model 9, the interaction variable between confidence in the police and funding is statistically significant (in its influence on crime victimization rates). Furthermore, similar to Model 15, the interaction variable between INCLE funding and corruption has a statistically significant impact on cocaine seizures.

There are, however, some notable differences. Firstly, when examining the bivariate analyses (which have no control variables) in Models 16, 21, and 26, INCLE funding is statistically significant. This directly contrasts with the findings in Tables 1-3, where, in the bivariate analyses, CARSI funding wasn't significant. When examining the relationship between INCLR funding and cocaine seizure rates, corruption was statistically significant in three of the four multivariate regressions (Models 28, 29, and 30) – directly contrasting with CARSI funding

Additionally, INCLE funds were significant in relation to cocaine seizure rates in three of the five models (directly contrasting with CARSI, where funding was only significant in one model). This finding suggests that INCLE funds have a more significant impact on crime trends in Central America. Interestingly, this finding the positive relationship between INCLE funding and cocaine seizures) goes against my hypothesis (hypothesis 2) that increased funding will reduce cocaine seizures.

Table 4 Influence of INCLE Funding on Homicide Rates

Independent Variable	Model 16	Model 17	Model 18	Model 19	Model 20
INCLE Funding	0.011*** (0.008)	0.0006 (0.146)	0.0007** (0.073)	0.0010 (0.345)	0.0019** (0.084)
Controls					
year	-----	0.8283 (0.234)	1.8291* (0.075)	1.8599* (0.081)	2.186* (0.052)
primary_comp	-----	-----	0.6212*** (0.006)	0.6181*** (0.007)	0.5294** (0.022)
VanHanen Democracy	-----	-2.2577 (0.000)	-1.9752 (0.000)	-1.9860 (0.000)	-1.9852 (0.000)
WGI_Corrupt	-----	-0.3343** (0.019)	-0.0722 (0.360)	-0.074 (0.359)	0.0564 (0.409)
police_conf	-----	-2.737 (0.321)	4.8740 (0.193)	5.4077 (0.251)	6.898 (0.128)
gnipc	-----	-----	-0.0054*** (0.001)	-0.0054*** (0.002)	-0.0053*** (0.001)
INCLE/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	-0.00003 (0.463)	-----
INCLE/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	-0.00003 (0.179)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.0914	0.1325	0.6521	0.6522	0.6580

One-tailed Test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 5 Influence of INCLE Funding on Crime Victimization

Independent Variable	Model 21	Model 22	Model 23	Model 24	Model 25
INCLE Funding	1.28e-06* (0.067)	3.63e-07 (0.382)	1.79e-06** (0.042)	0.00001*** (0.006)	2.05e-07 (0.471)
Controls					
year	-----	-0.0004 (0.440)	0.0055** (0.017)	0.0070*** (0.004)	0.0050** (0.032)
primary_comp	-----	-----	-0.0015*** (0.002)	-0.0016*** (0.001)	-0.0013*** (0.006)
VanHanen Democracy	-----	-0.0004 (0.373)	-0.0003 (0.354)	-0.0008 (0.169)	-0.0003 (0.361)
WGI_Corruption	-----	-0.0002 (0.258)	0.0020 (0.000)	0.0019 (0.000)	0.0018*** (0.001)
police_conf	-----	-0.0285** (0.018)	-0.0001 (0.496)	0.0251* (0.054)	-0.0028 (0.409)
gnipc	-----	-----	-0.00002 (0.000)	-0.00002 (0.000)	-0.00001 (0.000)
INCLE/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	-2.90e-06** (0.013)	-----
INCLE/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	4.07e-08 (0.546)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.0365	0.1325	0.5505	0.5941	0.5537

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 6 Influence of INCLE Funds on Cocaine Rates

Independent Variable	Model 26	Model 27	Model 28	Model 29	Model 30
INCLE Funding	0.0005** (0.05)	0.00007* (0.073)	0.00002 (0.343)	-0.0001 (0.292)	0.0003*** (0.005)
Controls					
year	-----	-0.0693 (0.239)	-0.1127 (0.146)	-0.131 (0.120)	-0.0306 (0.386)
primary_comp	-----	-----	-0.0457** (0.012)	-0.0440** (0.017)	-0.0670*** (0.001)
VanHanen Democracy	-----	-0.0147 (0.124)	0.1298*** (0.001)	0.1361*** (0.001)	0.1275*** (0.001)
WGI_Corruption	-----	0.1522 (0.001)	-0.0618*** (0.001)	-0.0608*** (0.001)	-0.0322** (0.051)
police_conf	-----	-0.0147 (0.124)	-1.2221*** (0.006)	-1.5335** (0.014)	-0.7560* (0.059)
gnipc	-----	-0.3172 (0.265)	0.0006 (0.000)	0.0006 (0.000)	0.0068 (0.000)
INCLE/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	0.00004 (0.259)	-----
INCLE/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	-7.07e-06*** (0.005)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.0435	0.2176	0.5151	0.5192	0.5764

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Models 31 through 45 (Tables 7-9) examine the influence of the ESF fund (a second CARSI sub-account) on homicide, crime victimization, and cocaine seizure rates respectively. The findings in these models are particularly similar to those that examine the impact of the overall CARSI package, as well as the INCLE sub-account. Similar to the CARSI and INCLE regressions, GNI per capita is significant only in relation to homicide rates. Furthermore, similar to the CARSI and INCLE models, the interaction variable between ESF funding and corruption has a statistically significant impact on cocaine seizures.

The differences between the ESF model and the previous models are expansive. Unlike the previous sets of models, poverty (as measured by the primary completion rate) has no statistical significance in any of the models focused on crime victimization rates. Amongst the bivariate analyses between funding and crime measures, ESF funding only has a statistically significant relationship with the crime victimization rate. This contrasts with the findings in Tables 1-3, where, in the bivariate analyses, CARSI funding wasn't significant and the findings in Tables 4-6 where INCLE funding was significant in every bivariate analysis. ESF funding is somewhat similar to the initial CARSI model in relation to cocaine seizure rates (funding was only significant in the Model 45, which included an interaction variable between corruption and funding).

Table 7 Influence of ESF Funding on Homicide Rates

Independent Variable	Model 31	Model 32	Model 33	Model 34	Model 35
ESF Funding	0.0035 (0.000)	0.0031*** (0.001)	0.0026*** (0.001)	0.0013 (0.355)	0.0018 (0.1333)
Controls					
year		-0.3754 (0.350)	1.1163 (0.157)	0.9628 (0.211)	0.9299 (0.213)
primary_comp	-----	-----	0.5272*** (0.009)	0.5366*** (0.009)	0.5606*** (0.0009)
VanHanan Democracy	-----	-2.2675 (0.000)	-2.002 (0.000)	-1.9874 (0.000)	-2.0126 (0.000)
WGI_Corruption	-----	-0.1722 (0.115)	-0.0183 (0.461)	-0.0302 (0.437)	-0.0704 (0.369)
police_conf	-----	3.4400 (0.267)	7.1665* (0.086)	5.7946 (0.189)	6.3132 (0.126)
gnipc	-----	-----	-0.0044*** (0.001)	-0.0044*** (0.002)	-0.0043*** (0.002)
ESF/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	0.0004 (0.362)	-----
ESF/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	0.00002 (0.295)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.2660	0.5690	0.7000	0.7008	0.7018

One-tailed Test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 8 Influence of ESF Funding on Crime Victimization Rates

Independent Variable	Model 36	Model 37	Model 38	Model 39	Model 40
ESF Funding	3.83e-06 (0.005)**	3.11e-06 (0.075)	2.89e-06 (0.050)	9.63e-06 (0.111)	1.07e-07 (0.473)
Controls					
year		-0.0018 (0.222)	0.0061*** (0.007)	0.0069*** (0.005)	0.0054** (0.018)
primary_comp	-----	-----	-0.0016 (0.001)	-0.0017 (0.001)	-0.0015 (0.002)
VanHanan Democracy	-----	-0.0004 (0.371)	-0.0005 (0.279)	-0.0006 (0.250)	-0.0005 (0.265)
WGI_Corruption	-----	-0.00005 (0.438)	0.00119 (0.000)	0.0020 (0.000)	0.0017 (0.000)
police_conf	-----	-0.0217* (0.057)	-0.0003 (0.491)	0.0071 (0.307)	-0.0034 (0.388)
gnipc	-----	-----	-0.00001 (0.000)	-0.000002 (0.000)	-0.0001 (0.000)
ESF/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	-1.99e-06 (0.190)	-----
ESF/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	8.63e-08 (0.184)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.1004	0.1626	0.5478	0.5548	0.5552

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 9 Influence of ESF Funding on Cocaine Levels

Independent Variable	Model 41	Model 42	Model 43	Model 44	Model 45
ESF Funding	0.0002 (0.390)	-0.00002 (0.399)	0.00004 (0.273)	0.0002 (0.234)	0.0004** (0.001)
Controls					
primary_comp	-----	0.0338 (0.359)	-0.0477*** (0.001)	-0.0462 (0.008)	-0.0648*** (0.001)
VanHanan Democracy	-----	-----	0.1286*** (0.001)	0.1263*** (0.001)	-0.0648*** (0.001)
WGI_Corruption	-----	0.1476*** (0.001)	-0.0061*** (0.001)	-0.0594*** (0.001)	-0.0346*** (0.024)
police_conf	-----	-0.0017 (0.107)	-1.1965*** (0.007)	-0.9827*** (0.005)	-0.7596** (0.047)
gnipc	-----	-----	0.0007 (0.000)	0.0007 (0.000)	0.0006 (0.000)
ESF/police_conf interaction	-----	-----	-----	-0.00006 (0.272)	-----
ESF/corruption interaction	-----	-----	-----	-----	-0.00001*** (0.001)
N	63	63	59	59	59
R-Squared	0.0013	0.1887	0.5171	0.5207	0.7018

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Summary

When reviewing the models collectively, twenty of the forty-five models above demonstrated that funding was significant. Examining the financial aid package in its entirety (ie. CARSI funding as the primary independent variable), half of the models were statistically significant, demonstrating that there is a correlation between funding and crime trends. The relationships between funding and specific crime trends, however, indicate that an increase in funding to the region is positively correlated with increases in homicide, crime victimization rates, and cocaine seizure in the region. These findings support my first hypothesis that increased funding will result in an increase in violence and crime in Central American countries as measured by homicide and crime victimization rates.

These results, however, also contradict my second hypothesis that an increase in CARSI spending targeted towards combatting narcotics trafficking would result in a decrease in cocaine seizure quantities. It is important to note, however, that these findings may be inaccurate. There were several discrepancies between databases as to the quantity of cocaine seized by each country, and this study only utilized the United Nations cocaine seizure rates.

As a whole, the interaction variable between CARSI funding and police capability (as well as the influence of this interaction variable on the overall effectiveness of CARSI funding) was largely insignificant. Of the nine multivariate regressions that it was included in, the interaction variable (and its effects), were statistically significant in only two of them. These findings negate both my third and fourth hypotheses.

Conversely, the analysis above largely supports my fifth and sixth hypothesis – that there is an interaction between CARSI funding and corruption and that an increase in corruption will result in a decrease in the effectiveness of CARSI funds and, therefore an increase in homicide, crime victimization, and cocaine seizure rates. These hypotheses are supported, to some extent by five of the nine models that it is tested in.

Chapter 6

Crime at the National Level

When examining the impact of CARSI funding on crime in Central America, it is also important to examine the domestic reasons for crime, as well as national methods of policing and law-enforcement. As demonstrated in the case studies of Nicaragua and El Salvador below, Central American countries have extremely similar historical backgrounds – marked by independence from Spanish colonial authorities, clashes between liberal and conservative forces, periods of oppression by ruthless dictators, and, finally, the establishment of somewhat unstable democracies. Nonetheless, the countries in this region have significantly different levels of poverty, crime, and violence. The aim of these case studies is to account for the differences in the level of crime in countries from the same region. The following chapter examines Nicaragua and El Salvador, two countries that have low and high levels of crime respectively. I seek to achieve this goal by focusing on the crime-mitigation strategies of each country, as well as socio-political differences between the two countries.

Nicaragua

The Republic of Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America, just less than 50,000 square miles. It is located just below the Northern Triangle region (comprised of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala), a region identified as the second most violent sub-region in the world (Parkinson 2014). Honduras, Nicaragua's neighbor to the north, has the highest homicide rate in the world, with 90.4 per 100,000 citizens (United Nations Office of Drug and Crime 2013).



Figure 9 Map of Nicaragua from CIA's World Factbook

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America after Haiti (“Nicaragua: Country Profile” 2012). Figure 10 reflects the differences in gross national income between the country and Central America as an entire region. The country’s police size is also significantly lower than the median for Central America. As of 2012, there were 180 policemen for every 100,000 citizens, a stark contrast to the region’s median (284 policemen for every 100,000 citizens) (Johnson, Kareff, and Asvapromtada 2012).

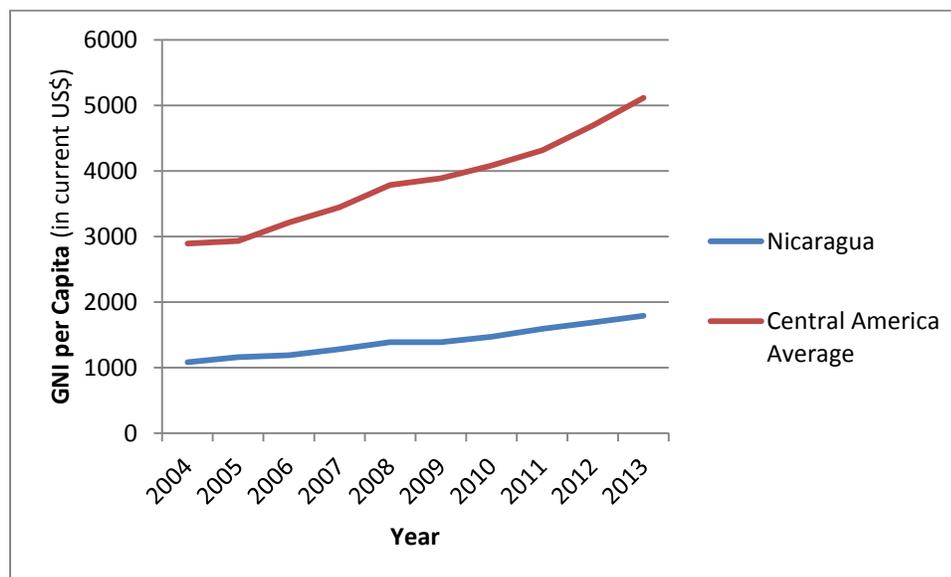


Figure 10 GNI per Capita in Nicaragua from 2004

In addition to these socio-economic indicators, Nicaragua has had a tumultuous history. The country gained independence from Spain the same year that it's the rest of its Central American neighbors did in 1823 and became part of the United Provinces of Central America, consisting of Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica (Staten 2010). In their movement towards independence from Spain, however, it is important to note that Central America didn't force the Spanish out with a war of independence – they chose to transition slowly from Spanish authority, beginning with independent action at the municipal level (White 2009). The newly independent union of states almost immediately was plagued by instability due to differing political ideologies. The first elected president, Manuel José Arce, and his cabinet were conservative and looked to Spain for political and economic models. On the other side of the debate, the liberals favored the political and economic systems in the United States and Western Europe (Staten 2010).

Less than fifteen years later, in 1838, because of irreconcilable differences between the liberal and conservative leaders of UPCA, the group of states disbanded and Nicaragua declared its independence. However, even upon declaring its independence, differences between liberal and conservative factions threatened the stability of the newly formed Nicaraguan government. The stability

of the country was further endangered by the involvement of the United States and British governments who were seeking to improve their economic standing by creating a cross-isthmus trade route through Nicaragua (Staten 2010). The United States' involvement manifested itself in two ways. First, the United States and Britain negotiated a treaty without consulting the Nicaraguans to cross through Nicaragua and, eventually to build a canal through the Nicaragua's Lake Nicaragua (Staten 2010). The second example of US influence in Nicaragua includes the Nicaraguan liberals requesting the involvement of American William Walker to quash the conservative faction in the country (Staten 2010). Walker seized power for himself in 1855 and became president in June of 1856. Interestingly, Walker's brutal presidency served as a uniting force. The liberals and conservatives came together, along with allied forces from the other Central American countries to expel Walker (Staten 2010).

The Nicaraguan government, between 1856 and 1933 was marked by intermittent struggles between liberal and conservative factions, as well as the periodic involvement of the United States in attempting to mediate these disputes (Staten 2010). An anti-US sentiment developed as a result of the northern giant's frequent involvement in Nicaraguan politics. This sentiment culminated under the leadership of Augusto César Sandino who, in response to a US intervention in 1909, formed an army to free Nicaragua from the US and those that cooperated with it (Staten 2010). Sandino became the symbol for *Nica* nationalism and independence and his strong anti-US sentiment, not surprisingly, resulted in a strong reaction by the United States government (Staten 2010). Sandino fought the occupying US Marines for six years until they left in 1933. However, before they left, the Marines succeeded in putting the dictator, Anastasio Somoza Garcia, as the head of the National Guard – the main collective military force in the country. Somoza subsequently transformed the National Guard into his personal killing force and succeeded in murdering Sandino quelling the Sandinista uprising (Staten 2010). The country was governed for slightly over forty years by Somoza and his descendants (“Nicaragua: Profile” 2012). Somoza maintained power by in two ways. First, he focused on pleasing his most allies, namely the National Guard, the agro-exporting economic elites, and the United States. Second, he utilized Guard to

suppress any form of opposition. Somoza ensured that the Guard was the only military and created incentives (such as higher pay and personal favors) for officers to support him fully (Staten 2010).

Economic difficulties in the country, the income inequality between the economic elites and the common folk, democratic revolutions in Guatemala, the populist Cuban revolution, and frustration with Somoza's oppressive tactics led to immense popular frustration (Staten 2010). The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) combined the political ideology created by Sandino in adopted the guerilla-military-political organization utilized in the Cuban revolution. The Somoza dynasty was finally ousted by the left-wing guerrilla group in 1979 ("Nicaragua: Country Profile" 2012).

The FSLN victory against Somoza was brief. While the forces that eliminated the Somoza dynasty reflected the entire population, the years after saw yet another set of social division and led to a ten year civil war between the FSLN and anti-Sandinista groups ("Nicaragua: Profile" 2012). The Sandinista rise to power coincided with a certain number of economic elites fleeing to the United States. Some of these elites were trained by the US to return as contras and to fight the FSLN troops. The contra war was extremely violent and by mid-1985, it was estimated that 12,000 Nicaraguan's had been killed.

The level of violence, the perpetual prodding of the United States, and concern by Nicaragua's neighbors, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, and Colombia, led to the latter group formulating a regional peace settlement (Staten 2010). The conflict was settled when the two sides agreed to negotiations and held elections beginning in 1990, leading to the establishment of a somewhat unstable democracy under the presidency of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (Staten 2010). It is important to note that, while some elites fled to the United States during the FSLN's initial rise to power, some chose to stay negotiate with the Sandinistas. It is these negotiations that led to the peaceful transition of power in the 1990s as well as the cooperation between the Sandinistas and the non-Sandinista president Chamorro (Staten 2010). The most recent elections in the country contained several irregularities and the judicial system is characterized by corruption (OSAC 2014b).

Nicaragua is not immune to crime. Its Atlantic Coast has high rates of cocaine seizures, indicative of high levels of drug trafficking (Wilson 2009). 39% of Nicaraguan business firms still rank crime as a serious obstacle (Wilson 2009). Despite these socio-economic indicators and its geographic location, Nicaragua has the second lowest homicide rate in the region (United Nations Office of Drug and Crime 2013). Its homicide rate is lower than Panama and only marginally greater than Costa Rica, the two most developed countries in the region. In recent years, its crime victimization rate is lower than the regional average. Furthermore, only about one percent of Nicaraguans said that crime was the most important issue plaguing the country, directly contrasting with the 44%, 35% and 25% of citizens from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras respectively who said that crime was the most important issue (United Nations 2012). Why, despite the long war Nicaragua suffered and high levels of poverty, is the country less violent and crime-ridden than its neighbors in the north?

There are several dominant theories as to why the region has had less incidences of crime than its Central American counterparts. The first of these is the way in which the civil war in the country was ended. Following the toppling of the Somoza dynasty, the FSLN, with the support of the majority of Nicaraguan citizens removed all security forces tied to the regime, creating their own army and police force (Cruz 2011). In doing so, they dominated all forms of legal military authority and eliminated any remnant of the oppressive regime.

When the Sandinistas were defeated in the 1990 elections, the new government (under Violeta Chamorro) maintained the system, but required the head of the police to resign from the FSLN (Cruz 2011). While Nicaragua's years as a burgeoning democracy were initially unstable, the ending of the FSLN-Contra conflict and the demobilization of was internationally monitored (Wilson 2009). The United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) was established to oversee the process. ONUCA, assisted in the seizure and destruction of firearms in the country, limiting the number of arms available for illicit dealings in the future (Wilson 2009). The United States also contributed to the institutionalization of the state. After discovering that Sandinista-intelligence services were allowing

organized crime groups in the Managua (the country's capital), the United States cut \$100 US in aid (Cruz 2011). By withholding aid and setting strict limitations on loans, the US and the World Bank forced economically-desperate Nicaraguan institutions to combat crime and curb party-affiliated corruption (Cruz 2011).

Furthermore, when the FSLN lost in the 1990 elections, they strengthened the security institutions to legitimize their role and to prevent old-regime opposition from both “developing parallel structures and launching extralegal violence” (Cruz 2011). The Sandinistas made an effort to separate the police and military from the party as they believed it would be the only way they could survive after their electoral defeat (Cruz 2011). The FSLN, wishing to avoid recreating an oppressive Somoza-like regime and to maintain public support, adopted less repressive methods of policing (van de Velde 2011). These less oppressive methods include limiting the use of violence and employing community-focused policies (van de Velde 2011). When the force was still being formulated, the founders aimed to create a police unit that was explicitly “an antithesis to the *Guardia*,” the police force of the Somoza dictatorship (van de Velde 2011).

In summary, the way in which Nicaragua's civil conflict ended resulted in the limited availability of weapons for illicit practices, reduced party-related corruption, and created a police force responsive to citizen demands, all of which contributed to the lower crime and violence levels in the country today.

Another socio-political factor that contributes to lower levels of crime in the country includes migration patterns in the region. The two most notorious gangs in the Central American region – the Mara Salvatrucha 13 and Barrio 18 –, which were introduced in Chapter One, have minimal presence in Nicaragua, as well as its neighbors in the south specifically because of these migration patterns (Stone 2011). Many citizens of Northern Triangle countries migrated to Los Angeles, California and formed gangs as a means of self-protection. These gangs eventually morphed into large-scale criminal organizations and, when the gang members were convicted and deported to their respective countries, they brought their violent practices back with them (Stone 2011). Conversely, in Nicaragua, emigrants

opted to move to their wealthy neighbor, Costa Rica, or to Miami (which doesn't have a gang culture to the same extent as Florida) (Stone 2011).

The country's approach to drug trafficking is similar to that of other countries in the region – it focuses heavily on seizures and patrols (“Nicaragua: Country Profile” 2012). However, lower levels of violence and crime have also been attributed to the more pacifist, community-focused police policy that the Nicaraguan National police abide by. Nicaragua's neighbors, specifically El Salvador and Honduras follow *mano dura* (“iron fist”) policies – emphasizing zero tolerance for drugs, possession of arms, and general violence. Following *mano dura* practices, these countries have rounded up and arrested thousands of adolescents simply based on their appearance, associations and addresses (Cajina 2013).

There are several major differences between the police force in Nicaragua and those of other countries in the Central American region. Nicaragua has chosen to adopt a more “preventative, proactive, and community-oriented approach” (Cajina 2013). This is exemplified in the fact that all officers (regardless of their gender) do not wear a gun, even when they enter the more dangerous parts of Managua, the country's capital (van de Velde 2011).

Police officers are also more integrated within the local community. The majority of officers in the neighboring Northern Triangle countries have a more militaristic mentality in which they are considered independent from the community – a mentality that is reinforced by the police residing in an independent barracks (Cajina 2013). Nicaraguan police officers, by contrast, are more neatly integrated into the community. In addition to working in shifts, policemen return at home at night and on weekends, creating a more personal dimension to the police forces (Cajina 2013). Upon its foundation, the police force derived authority from the society and it is the moral agreement between the force and the community that essential for the NNP to function smoothly (van de Velde 2011).

Another indicator of the good relations between the police and the community is also reflected in the fact that the police officers, prior to the contra conflict were willing to work without a salary for three months and received food and drinks from the community for that period of time (van de Velde 2011) .

While the institution underwent major transformations following the contra conflict (in which the force underwent a leadership change, became more professional, and distanced itself from the Sandinista party), the restructured organization preserved its identity as a community-based institution (van de Velde 2011).

In addition to being more integrated into the community, the Nicaraguan National police adopted innovative policies in regards to youth and familial violence. The Nicaraguan force is the only in Central America that addresses violence against women and children – it has sixty-one precincts specifically for women and children (Cajina 2013). These family violence units assist women and children in receiving professional help when reporting attacks, and also do psychosocial work (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency 2014). The force also has a unique, preventative policy to combat youth violence – focused on two different types of youth (high social risk youth and youth gangs) (Cajina 2013).

The first of type of program focuses on preventing at risk youth from joining gangs and the second aims to demobilize existing gangs. The crime prevention strategy recruits police officers in preventative efforts that focus on interventions in at the family, school, and local community levels (Seelke 2014). The country has received funding from the International Development Bank (IDB) for a five-year program headed by the national police to target at risk youth (Seelke 2014). The Youth Center of the NNP enrolled over two hundred young people in vocational programs to help drug addicts reintegrate into the society (US Department of State 2014a). Youth training centers such as the one located outside the country's capital provide an alternative to prison for juveniles, in which they receive training and skill sets conducive to a gang-free lifestyle (Peralta 2014).

In October of this past year, the European Union also partnered with the NNP to create youth centers in two cities on the Atlantic Coast that is more heavily plagued by drug trafficking problems (US Department of State 2014a). The NNP also has a Juvenile Affairs Division, which has run several home

intervention programs and drug prevention social activities, counselling at-risk youth and their parents.

The program has reached approximately 83,000 youths in the past year (US Department of State 2014a).

Crime patterns in Nicaragua are consistent with findings in the literature review, specifically findings in the impact evaluation conducted by USAID and Vanderbilt University (Berk-Seligson et al. 2014) . An examination of the country's police institution as well as its youth-centered programs provides support for the argument that policies focused on community organization and development are more effective in curbing crime than other hardline military approaches (Berk-Seligson et al. 2014). After examining the country's history and crime mitigation strategies, it becomes evident that the low levels of crime in the country are attributed primarily to the country's seemingly innovative, community-driven policing strategy – a strategy that directly contrasts with that of El Salvador (which places emphasis on the use of abrasive military force to control crime).

El Salvador

El Salvador is one of three countries in the Northern Triangle (the other two being its neighbors Guatemala and Honduras), a region distinguished by its high levels of violence and crime. The country's homicide rate is the second highest in the region, despite being less than two hundred miles from Nicaragua, the country with the second lowest homicide rate in the Central America. Because of their similar social, political, and economic conditions, it is possible to understand the security dilemma in Guatemala and Honduras by drawing parallels with El Salvador's history and the reasons for its high crime levels.



Figure 11 Map of El Salvador - Credit: OCHA

There are several different types of crime in the region, ranging from credit card theft to homicide (OSAC 2014a). The country is described as one of the most violent countries in the world and crime is further propagated by the members of shanty communities in the midst of high-income residential and commercial areas. While homicide rates have appeared to decline in recent years, incidences of kidnapping, extortion and rape have increased dramatically. Between 2012 and 2013, the number of people reported missing increased by 93% (from 545 cases of kidnapping in 2012 to 1070 people in 2013) (OSAC 2014a). Armed robberies and rape are also a major concern. 461 rapes were reported between

2010 and 2012, but this number is believed to be seriously understated – authorities estimate that this statistic may report a little less than twenty percent of rape cases in that time-period (OSAC 2014a).

There are several reasons for the security crisis in El Salvador. They include demographics, endemic poverty, weak civil institutions, the deportation of gangs from the United States, and the inability of the government to end the history of impunity in the country (Farah 2011). Furthermore, El Salvador's developed banking systems, the use of the US dollar as the primary currency, and the increased flow of drugs through the country have made it extremely vulnerable to money laundering (Olson n.d., p. 106).

El Salvador's location on the Pacific coast, its proximity to Mexico, and borders with Honduras and Guatemala generate opportunities for smuggling both overland and through sea routes (Farah 2011). The country's abrasive geography – which includes over twenty volcanoes in the southern mountain range, an extremely hot, tropical environment, and limited arable land – has restricted agricultural practices in the region (White 2009)

As with Nicaragua, before delving into these more current reasons, it is important to examine the historical roots of the violence. An important component of Salvadoran history is the presence of indigenous groups, primarily the Pipil group, which migrated from Mexico to El Salvador as early as 1350 (White 2009). The Pipils specialized in indigo production as well as in several other crafts that were highly sought after by both locals and Spanish – this includes the production of stone tools and feather work. The Pipil were first attacked by Spanish *conquistador* forces in 1502 following Columbus's arrival in Hispaniola in 1492. The territory of El Salvador, as well as the people that occupied the land, were put securely under Spanish rule in 1528.

From the time of the *conquistadores*, El Salvador's population has been divided between the peasants (comprised of indigenous peoples and those of mixed blood), and the wealthy minority of landowners (Center for Justice and Accountability 2014). The indigenous peoples have been regularly marginalized by both colonization and the dominance of non-Indian group for close to five centuries (White 2009). The presence of indigenous people, as well as their marginalization by both colonists and

non-indigenous people is a common occurrence in the region and, the conflict between this peoples group and the more “Western” society makes it possible to draw parallels between the country and its Central American neighbors (White 2009). The Salvadoran economy experienced its first boom due to indigo trade and the initially high quantity and quality of indigo resulted in in El Salvador becoming the most densely populated province in Central America (White 2009). Unfortunately, it was a decline in the exports of this same crop (the Salvadoran markets couldn’t compete with the exports from Venezuela and India), that led to a decline in the purchasing power of consumers in El Salvador. The decline in purchasing power, as well as the spread of Enlightenment ideals in the region resulted in internal conflict and rebellion.

El Salvador joined Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala in the newly formed United Provinces of Central America. While it was largely the conflict between liberals and conservatives that led to Nicaragua declaring independence from the Federation, a main factor that led to El Salvador breaking away was conflict with its neighbor, Guatemala. The rivalry between the two countries was centuries old and included an invasion by Guatemala into the smaller country prior to the formulation of the federation of Central American states. Within the first few years of the federation, civil war broke out. The War lasted between 1826 and 1842 and negatively impacted every aspect of Salvadoran society. It resulted in the death of 2546 people in El Salvador and 2291 in Guatemala (White 2009). In the aftermath of this war and in the face of further economic decline, El Salvador officially declared its independence from the union of states in 1839.

The formation of El Salvador as an independent state marked the beginning of two important trends. First was the development of militarism within Salvadoran political culture. The history of inter-state conflicts between Guatemala, and Honduras, as well as the thirteen military coups in the state between 1841 and 1890, resulted in a focus on developing a strong military and on refining police powers. This is reflected in the revision of security legislation in 1825, 1843, 1848, 1855, 1868, 1889, and

1911 (White 2009). This focus on the military provides important historical context for the heavily militarized approach to drug trafficking and crime that will be discussed later in this case study.

The second important trend, also discussed in regards to Nicaragua, was the beginning of the conflict between liberal and conservative factions (White 2009). The inability to resolve political differences between these two parties became evident in the numerous military uprisings that took place in the country's history as well as the fifty-eight presidents between 1941 and 1898 (White 2009). The early history of the country included liberal efforts to build the economic infrastructure and increase trade, as well as shifts in land tenure policies towards privatization, escalating conflict with the peasant and Indian population (White 2009).

Similar to Nicaragua, El Salvador's history bears witness to frequent US involvement and military assistance to political regimes in the country. Support continued even when the Salvadoran government regimes carried out brutal repression against their populations. Also similar to Nicaragua, this demonstrates the deep and long-lasting roots of US connection to the Salvadoran elites (White 2009).

It is during the first century of El Salvador's independence that El Salvador's culture of violence was cultivated. The military enforced the rules of the elites, frequently utilizing violence against the peasants who protested low wages and cruel treatment. In addition to the violence between classes, it was also common to have elites hire their workers to fight each other on the landowners' behalf (White 2009).

The country's violence and internal conflict intensified 1932 when a peasant revolt was lead against the ruling dictatorship. The peasant revolt was brutally suppressed by the military (an event known as *La Matanza* or "The Killing"), once again reinforcing the precedence for extensive military force and dominance over the Salvadoran government (Center for Justice and Accountability 2014). The massacre resulted in the death of between 10,000 and 30,000 people and cultivated a fear of the government forces that lasted until 1992 (White 2009).

While the rebellion was quelled, the conflict between left and right wing groups persisted. Somewhat similar to Nicaragua, there were frequent confrontations between left-wing guerillas and right-

wing paramilitary groups (Center for Justice and Accountability 2014). One such group, the umbrella guerilla group in the country, was the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), named after the leader of the peasant rebellion. Also similar to Nicaragua, the United States allied with the elites, and praised the dictator, Martinez, for his ability to quell the rebellion so efficiently. His regime was recognized in 1934 and the regime lasted until 1944 when he was overthrown by a mass movement led by students and elite/middle class opponents (White 2009). Following Martinez's dictatorship, there was a period of authoritarian governments, who hid under the pretense of democracy. Elections were held but the results were controlled by the military and resulted in the presidency of several Generals (White 2009). This changed in 1979, when the country moved towards a civil war. The fall of Somoza's regime in Nicaragua in 1979 strengthened the counter-revolutionary resolve of the Salvadoran elites. In the midst of this chaos, a group of moderates interested in reform established a Revolutionary Government (known as the JRG). However, the moderate government was ousted relatively quickly and the country entered a brutal full-scale civil war (Center for Justice and Accountability 2014). The civil conflict spanned over a decade and by the time a peace agreement was signed in 1992; more than 75,000 people were killed and 500,000 had fled to the United States. The war was brought to an end by the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace accords, signed in January 1992. Conditions included in this agreement include the FMLN stipulation that the group would lay down their arms but needed to be allowed to enter the National Civilian Police (White 2009).

The peace accords were initially dubbed successful and a police force incorporating members of the rebel group (the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front or FMLN) was established that same year (InSight Crime 2014). The peace, similar to that in Nicaragua, involved the action of the United Nations as a peace force in the region for a second time (the first being the UN's involvement in Nicaragua) (Wrobel and Gaspar de Oliverra 1997). However, violence in the country returned just as quickly as it was uprooted. This newer type of violence was propagated in several different ways. Disarmament through the UN peace-keeping force was developed based on trust and therefore, the UN depended on the guerilla and

contra parties to create inventories of weapons (Wrobel and Gaspar de Oliverra 1997). Both sides were reluctant to surrender their arms because of a level of distrust – the FMLN in particular, was hesitant to surrender its arms, noting that the government had kept its military structure intact (Wrobel and Gaspar de Oliverra 1997). The UN organization left, satisfied with a cease-fire and without having supervised the disarmament of the Salvadoran society. As a result, many former guerillas in El Salvador never surrendered their weapons or gave up their violent practices (InSight Crime 2014). These former guerillas adapted wartime activities to criminal activities – the most definitive example of this includes the repurposing of supply routes (initially used for smuggling supplies and weapons) into pathways for cocaine and human trafficking (Farah 2011).

Another way in which violence was propagated in the region was the development of private security forces. Paratroopers, previously the paid, armed groups of wealthy businessmen have both (1) joined guerillas in organized crime groups and (2) formed private security groups (Seelke 2013). The prevalence of these private security groups is reflected in the fact that there are nearly 5000 more private security force members than national police members (25000 security force members as compared to 20500) (Seelke 2013). The formation of organized crime groups from military organizations and the ready availability of weapons are indicative of the endemic nature of violence and crime in El Salvador. Another similar indicator includes the crime rate in the 1960s and 1970s which averaged approximately thirty per 100,000 citizens, nearly ten times over what is considered “extremely violent” (Hume 2007).

The presence of street gangs (or maras) has also contributed to the high level of crime in El Salvador, and the region as a whole. The two main maras in the country, are also the most violent in the region, the Mara Salvatrucha 13 and Barrio 18 (better known as MS-13 and the 18th street gang in the United States) (InSight Crime 2014). There are several reasons for the growth of these gangs – many of which also contribute to high levels of drug trafficking, violence, and other types of crime. They include, poverty, dysfunctional families, and the lack of access to basic education (InSight Crime 2014). The

problems of poverty and dysfunctional families are reflected in the large number of youth who migrated illegally, both in El Salvador and its neighboring countries.

The most significant of these includes the repatriation of gang members after they are deported from the United States (Farah 2011). In addition to these repatriated criminals, MS-13 and Barrio 18 succeed in recruiting young people in search of an identity (Hume 2007). Frequently, these youths experienced higher levels of violence in their home and the community and gangs offer a forum to channel this frustration and develop an identity (Hume 2007). The presence of weapons in the country as well as the involvement of hardened guerillas has resulted in the maras being more heavily armed and deadly than their respective counterparts in the United States (Hume 2007). The former defense minister of the country estimated that there are approximately fifty thousand gang members in the country and that about ninety percent of homicides in the country are related to organized crime groups (Seelke 2013).

The country's location as a transit point for narcotics from South America into Mexico and the United States has resulted in the presence of other organized crime groups, adding to the violence created by street gangs in El Salvador (Seelke 2013). The most notorious of these groups are *Los Perrones Orientales* and *Los Perrones Occidentales*. *Los Perrones Orientales* transport cocaine from Colombia and Ecuador toward Guatemala and Honduras (Farah 2011). Their partner group, *Los Perrones Occidentales*, are responsible for taking the product through the rest of the country, toward Guatemala and Honduras (Farah 2011). These two groups are considered particularly distinct because of their strong ties to Mexican organized crime groups (the Sinaloa cartel in particular) (Farah 2011). In addition to having these strong ties, the *Perrones* have also adopted the cartels' drug "culture," indulging in expensive racehorses and racecars and tracks to race them on (Farah 2011).

The *Perrones* also explored and branched out to partake in other crimes, including the smuggling of stolen cars and human trafficking (Farah 2011). The groups' financial assets and military strength afforded the group societal power. This power is supplemented by the organization's influence over the political system, even at the highest levels. The *Perrones* level of influence was exposed when the police,

in 2008, arrested senior members of the police force and as well as several powerful local authorities (Farah 2011). The organization is believed to have spent close to \$13.2 million dollars in bribes. Reports indicate that *transportista* groups, like the *Perrones* utilize *maras* as muscle to enforce the groups' arrangements. The higher authorities in the *Perrones* are notorious for their ruthlessness and this reputation has led to recent efforts by the violent Mexican cartel, the *Zetas*, to forge stronger connections between the two groups (Farah 2011).

In response to the vicious nature of gangs, Salvadoran officials have chosen to resort to equally violent measures to repress organized crime groups. Authorities, instead of focusing on crime prevention, have elected to focus on repression (Hume 2007). It is hypothesized that, because they don't have the capacity or finances to contain crime levels or violence, these groups are required to turn to repression to maintain order (Hume 2007). The country's lack of resources is reflected in the rejection of *Mano Amiga* policies, alternatives to repression that are under-sourced and considered ineffective. Furthermore, limited resources have resulted in the majority of funding being allocated to salaries and benefits, rather than on training and equipment for more effective policing (Seelke 2013). The policies that focus on combating crime through repression are widely referred to as *mano dura* or "iron fist" policies (Farah 2011). Examples of these policies include the deployment of the military to help the police (Farah 2011). Salvadoran policemen currently practice discretionary policing, where youth are arrested based on affiliation or subjective evidence (Holland 2013). In addition to being arrested on questionable grounds, these detainees frequently suffer severe human rights violations (Hume 2007).

Analysts purport that "mano dura" strategies, particularly in El Salvador, aren't utilized solely because of high crime rates (Holland 2013). Other countries such as Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela have high levels of crime but don't have such policies. These policies, in the case of El Salvador, are also chosen for political reasons, specifically to curry political support and to divert attention from other political problems (Hume 2007). There are several instances of ARENA (the Nationalist Republican Alliance), using "mano dura" policies as a party platform and of the opposition party (the FMLN) using

counter-“mano dura” policy in the most recent elections (Holland 2013). The state has propagated the fear of crime through “mano dura” policy, as well as actual crime levels and political support for the party (Holland 2013). Perceptions of crime as the principal problem spiked following the implementation of “mano dura” policy in 1996 and 2003 respectively.

As recently as 2004, the Salvadoran Congress passed anti-gang reforms consistent with *mano dura*. These policies explicitly “outlawed gang membership, enhanced police power to search and arrest suspected gang members, and stiffened penalties for convicted gang members” (Seelke 2013). These same policies also allowed for the increased use of the military against gangs. While these policies demonstrate the political will of the state to curb crime, it has generated other problems – these problems include overcrowded prisons and ill-informed arrests (Seelke 2013).

There have been several attempts by Salvadoran officials to negotiate with the leaders of the MS-13 and M-18 gangs (Seelke 2013). In 2012, the defense agreed to transfer high-ranking gang leaders to less secure prisons to facilitate negotiations (Seelke 2013). These prisons offered better amenities and more benefits (Pachico 2015). In exchange, the gang leaders pledged to avoid recruiting children, to refrain from using violence against women, and to surrender small quantities of weapons (Seelke 2013). Third party groups such as the Organization of American States (OAS) began monitoring the progress of these efforts. The truce raised questions regarding the level of corruption in the country as well as the motives of the gangs in requesting the transfer of prisoners. The truce temporarily reduced homicide rate, other crimes such as extortion are still rampant (Seelke 2013). In January of 2015, the gangs had committed to a new truce and would be interested in a serious peace process although incidences of violence increased following that statement. In February 2015, there were several shootouts between the police and gang members. These shootouts have triggered a return to more violent *mano dura* strategies. The current Police Director, Mauricio Landaverde, confirmed this in a public statement in which he encouraging officers to use weapons against criminals with “complete confidence” (Gagne 2015). In addition to authorizing the increased use of violence against gang members, the police returned gang

leaders to top security prisons. In doing so, they demonstrate a lack of willingness to entertain prospects of a new truce (Pachico 2015).

After reviewing El Salvador's history and crime mitigation strategies, it becomes evident that the "mano dura" policies in place, the military-driven policing strategy, and the presence of gangs and private security forces in the country have contributed to the high levels of violence and crime that the country is currently facing. It is clear that El Salvador's policing methods, as well as those of its Northern Triangle counterparts, need to be reviewed and revised to become more efficient.

Comparison and Recommendations

In discussing the history and social, political, and economic conditions of Nicaragua and El Salvador, there are several explanations for differences in the level of crime that I would like to highlight. The most significant of these (and the most relevant to the revision and implementation of CARS policy) are the policing strategies adopted in the respective countries. El Salvador's "mano dura" policies – developed from a culture that prioritizes the role of the military – emphasize the use of brutal force to control crime. In addition to using these heavy-handed techniques, Salvadoran policing methods include arresting youth based on circumstantial evidence and affiliations and increasing the number of adolescents in prison (in the process, keeping them from attaining an education and developing the skills necessary to become a contributing member of society).

This directly contrasts with Nicaragua's community-based policing and the role that police-organized educational programs and youth activities play in keeping adolescents off the streets and out of organized crime groups. A comparison of the two countries makes it apparent that policing strategies need to be revised to include similar community policing methods. These findings complement both the findings in the quantitative portion of this study as well as the literature canon.

Another significant difference between the two countries is the presence of “maras”, or gangs, in El Salvador, a factor that is limited in Nicaragua. While there is little that can be done regarding the deportation of criminals from the United States, it becomes clear that El Salvador, as well as the other Northern Triangle countries, plagued by the return of convicts, must develop effective programs to reincorporate these individuals into society and, in doing so, prevent them from joining organized crime groups in these states. Similarly, the abundance of firearms and private security forces in El Salvador (a phenomenon that, once again, is somewhat nonexistent in Nicaragua) calls for the development of policy to both reduce the availability of firearms and consolidate the use of force.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

As discussed briefly at the end of the Results section, this paper demonstrates that there is limited support for the claim that CARSI funding is having an impact on the level of crime in the region. Slightly less than half of the models generated in this study demonstrate that funding – either as an entire package or respective sub-accounts – was significant. Interestingly, the statistically significant relationships between funding and crime indicate that, contrary to the stated policy goals of CARSI, an increase in funding correlates with increases in homicide and crime victimization rates. These findings support my first hypothesis. They also substantiate claims made in the literature that the amount of funding may be too little too late. The findings also suggest that CARSI funding is positively correlated with increased cocaine seizure rates in the country – this directly contradicts my second hypothesis that increased funding would result in lower cocaine seizure rates.

As demonstrated in the discussion of CARSI's predecessors, the amount of funding that CARSI provides to the low-income Central American States is significantly lower than funding to *Plan Colombia* and the *Mérida Initiative* (which supported the middle-income Colombia and Mexican states). The literature review indicated that, because funding levels (when distributed to individual countries) are particularly low, states are forced to treat manifestations of violence, rather than specific roots (such as poverty). Based on the findings of this study, an increase in funding to Central America – on the same scale as funding to Colombia and Mexico – may help to achieve stated policy goals.

While increases in funding have the potential to reduce the level of crime in the region, the study suggests that a dramatic revision of policy guidelines and strategies will significantly improve the influence of this foreign aid on crime in the region. As demonstrated in the literature review and background sections, crime prevention strategies supported by the CARSI initiative appear to be the same

for the entire region, without taking country-level variance into consideration. Revising CARSI policy to include country-specific metrics will increase the effectiveness of CARSI funding in mitigating crime. The statistical significance of primary completion rates and income also speak to the importance of policy revision. The significance of education and income in a large number of the statistical models in this analysis is consistent with findings in the case studies and the literature review. The study highlights the importance of revising police strategies to incorporate community building and youth educational programs.

This study supports the theory that there is an interaction between CARSI funding and corruption, and that increased corruption will result in a decrease in the effectiveness of CARSI funding. These hypotheses are supported by five of the nine models that it is tested in and support arguments for the increased monitoring of corruption in the region to ensure that funds are utilized for counter-crime measures instead of being pocketed by corrupt officials.

In completing this study, I encountered several limitations – primarily technical ones. Data for Central American countries, Belize in particular, were limited and somewhat inconsistent. Several prominent indicators for corruption and poverty (specifically the Corruption Perception Index and the GINI co-efficient) didn't have values for Belize or were unavailable for several years in a row. The unavailability of data for several subsequent years made statistical methods of filling in holes in the data (such as multiple imputations) either impossible. There were significant discrepancies between databases in regards to information and statistics for certain variables (most notably cocaine seizures).

Furthermore, variables such as crime victimization and police confidence were measured through the use of public opinion polling data. In doing so, I was able to avoid inflation by official government sources, but the data from these sources also had the potential to be skewed by personal bias, specific social events prior to the polling period, or either the exaggeration or understatement of actual circumstances. Finally, there was limited data available on the breakdown of CARSI funding. The only source available was a set of Government Accountability Office Reports. There was little to no

transparency from states receiving funding, which made it difficult to understand how the funds were being utilized. In summary, this study could be strengthened greatly through the increased availability of data – both in regards to social, political, and economic control variables and in regards to the actual expenditures associated with CARSI funding.

Based upon these findings, current funding alone is not the answer to citizen security in Central America. A set of well-defined measures and standards for funding, a revision of police implementation, and increased funding to Central America have the potential to reduce the level of crime in the region.

Appendix A
Robustness Checks

Table 10 Democracy Robustness Check - Influence of CARSI funding on Cocaine Seizure Rates

Independent Variable	
CARSI Funding	0.00004 (0.112)
Controls	
year	0.2920 (0.403)
primary_comp	-0.1033 (0.000)
Freedomhouse Democracies	-1.3344*** (0.009)
WGI_Corruption	-0.0822 (0.0000)
police_conf	-0.8911** (0.039)
gnipc	0.0004*** (0.007)
N	59
R-Squared	0.4568

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 11 Democracy Robustness Check - Influence of CARSI funding on Crime Victimization Rates

Independent Variable	
CARSI Funding	1.53e-06** (0.030)
Controls	
year	0.0035* (0.093)
primary_comp	-0.0012** (0.026)
Freedomhouse Democracies	0.0093 (0.222)
WGI_Corruption	0.0021 (0.000)
police_conf	0.0043 (0.346)
gnipc	-0.00001 (0.000)
N	59
R-Squared	0.5769

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 12 Democracy Robustness Check - Influence of CARSI funding on Homicide Rates

Independent Variable	
CARSI Funding	0.0008** (0.029)
Controls	
year	-1.6415 (0.120)
primary_comp	1.322 (0.000)
Freedomhouse Democracies	15.8447*** (0.009)
WGI_Corruption	0.1270 (0.311)
police_conf	3.6116 (0.272)
gnipc	-0.0022 (0.144)
N	59
R-Squared	0.6065

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 13 Poverty Robustness Check - Influence of CARSF funding on Cocaine Seizure Rates

Independent Variable	
CARSF Funding	-7.00e-07 (0.491)
Controls	
year	-0.1779** (0.038)
infant mortality	-0.0751* (0.062)
VH_Dem	0.1219*** (0.001)
WGI_Corruption	-0.0946 (0.000)
police_conf	-1.2337*** (0.009)
gnipc	0.0006 (0.000)
N	63
R-Squared	0.4322

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 14 Poverty Robustness Check - Influence of CARSI funding on Crime Victimization Rates

Independent Variable	
CARSI Funding	2.06e-06*** (0.003)
Controls	
year	0.0009 (0.352)
infant mortality	0.0006 (0.288)
VH_Dem	0.0004 (0.324)
WGI_Corruption	0.0017*** (0.001)
police_conf	-0.0008 (0.474)
gnipc	-0.00002 (0.000)
N	63
R-Squared	0.4932

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

Table 15 Poverty Robustness Check - Influence of CARSI funding on Homicide Rates

Independent Variable	
CARSI Funding	0.0013 (0.000)
Controls	
year	-1.1100 (0.168)
infant mortality	-1.2710** (0.013)
VH_Dem	-2.2185 (0.000)
WGI_Corruption	-0.3568* (0.088)
police_conf	2.3594 (0.346)
gnipc	-0.0033** (0.013)
N	63
R-Squared	0.6249

One-tailed test

(*p≤0.1, **p≤0.05, ***p≤0.01) Probability is in parenthesis

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ACADEMIC VITA

JEANNE ALMEIDA

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University | The College of the Liberal Arts | Schreyer Honors College; Class of 2015

Majors: International Politics and History; Minors: Spanish and Latin American Studies -

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

U.S. Department of State; Embassy of the United States

Managua, Nicaragua

Intern

June-August 2014

- Worked in the Regional Security Office on a project to increase awareness of crime trends in Nicaragua and to develop more effective crime mitigation techniques to be included in the 2014 Crime and Safety Report
- Collected and recorded crime data in database and geospatial formats

Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies; Ft. McNair

Washington DC

Intern

June-August 2013

- Worked on Transnational Organized Crime research, with focus on the drug trade in Mexico and Central America
- Assisted with preparation for an annual transnational organized crime conference hosted by the center
- Collaborated on a series of smaller projects on topics such as the UN Treaty of the Seas and constructivism

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Scholar Advancement Team

University Park, PA

Student Representative/Head Scholar Liaison

December 2012-Present

- Represented > 1200 Schreyer Scholars in an initiative designed to further the name and vision of The Honors College amongst prospective students, alumni visitors, and current and potential donors; provided tours and a student perspective at various events

Adventures in Missions

Nicaragua

Missionary and Volunteer

June-July 2012

- Worked alongside a group of eighteen other volunteers to contribute in an initiative to increase the economic standing and self-sufficiency of a children's home in Ometepe, Nicaragua
- Provided service to local jails and drug rehabilitation centers in Masatepe, Nicaragua, distributing meals, and leading discussions

Abington Lansdale Memorial Hospital

Lansdale, PA

Outpatient Procedure Volunteer

January-June 2011

- Facilitated the completion and organization of paperwork for outpatient procedures and patient-hospital relations

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Pennsylvania State University

University Park, PA

Independent Research Project

January 2014- Present

- Worked toward the completion of an undergraduate honors thesis examining the effectiveness of US foreign aid policy on the crime trends in Central America

University of Southern California;

Research Assistant

June-July 2011

- Collaborated with Dr. Gerard Tellis, to produce a chapter on product champions for his book, and assisted in producing graduate-level lesson plans on successful advertising strategies

RECOGNITION/QUALIFICATIONS

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- Phi Alpha Theta Brother History Honor Society
 - Pi Sigma Alpha Brother Political Science Honor Society
 - Paterno Liberal Arts Fellow
 - Dean's List (6/8 Semesters)
 - SHC Career Development Program Mentor
 - Highly Proficient in Spanish; Proficient in Microsoft Office applications (PPT, Publisher, Word); Google Earth,