This work draws on fieldwork conducted in several Latin American countries and sites in the past ten years. In addition to several field trips to our four selected cases, authors have conducted interviews to inquire about drug trafficking relates issues in other critical case studies, including Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico. Part of this material is also included. We thank Juan Albarracín, Ana Arjona, Gustavo Leal, Benjamin Lessing, Dipali Mukhopadhyay, Rachel Beatty Riedl, Fernando Rosenblatt, Carolina Sampó Ben Ross Schneider for their generous and insightful feedback on several iterations of this work and their encouragement and support. We acknowledge critical research assistance by Antonia Brown, Renata Boada, Jorge Mantilla, Gonzalo Parra, and Mariene Rodríguez and members of the *Instituto Mileno para el Estudio de la Democracia y Violencia,* who participated in a special workshop in Santiago de Chile November 2022. We also relied on a list of interviews for the Chilean case made available by Pilar Larroulet.

**List of Interview Subjects**

**B.1 Chile (*fieldwork by Feldmann and Luna, several dates in 2018-2022)***

*Policymakers and Enforcers*

Mahmud Aleuy, Vice minister of Interior (2014-2018)

Diego Sazo, Ministry of the Interior (2014-2018)

*Anonymous Sources*

Public Prosecutor, Santiago South (Fiscal Zona sur)

Public Prosecutor, Narcotics Unit (Fiscal zona norte)

Narcotics Unit, Policia de Investigaciones de Chile

Senior Officer 1, Unidad Análisis Financiero, Ministerio de Hacienda (Money laundering agency)

Senior Officer 2, Unidad Análisis Financiero Ministerio de Hacienda (Money laundering agency)

Drug dealer akaDenisse

Drug dealer aka Andrea

Drug dealer aka Rubi

Drug dealer aka Rosa

Drug dealer aka Talía

Drug dealer aka Teresa

Drug dealer aka Maria

Drug dealer aka Lucas

Drug dealer aka Pedro

Drug dealer aka José

Drug dealer aka Caín

Drug dealer aka Tomás

*Academics and Journalists*

Mónica González, Director Ciper Chile.

Alejandra Luneke, Instituto de Estudios Urbanos, Universidad Católica de Chile

Gabriela Pizarro, Ciper Chile

*Civil Society*

Interviews with key informants from civil society organizations in: La Pintana (Región Metropolitana), El Bosque (Región Metropolitana), Pedro Aguirre Cerda (Región Metropolitana), La Florida (Región Metropolitana), Puente Alto (Región Metropolitana), Quintero-Puchuncaví (Región of Valparaiso), Antofagasta (Región of Antofagasta), Valparaíso (Región of Valparaíso).

**B.2. Paraguay *(fieldwork by Feldmann and Luna, Fall 2019)***

*Policy Makers and Enforcers*

Hugo Volpe, Viceministro de Política Criminal.

*Anonymous Sources*

Political activist and journalist, Julián, Ciudad del Este

Representative Lower Chamber (Diputado)

Public Prosecutor, Ciudad del Este

Special Antidrug public prosecutor, Asunción

Special Antidrug public prosecutor, Asunción

SENAD, informer, Asunción

SENAD, Executive directorate and task force, Asunción

Sixteen congress-members and party activists from Partido Colorado (ANR), Partido Liberal Auténtico (PLRA), and Frente Guazú.

*Academics and Journalists*

Carlos Peris Castiglioni, Universidad Nacional de Asunción

Dante Ariel Leguizamón

Sarah Cerna, Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí

Jorge Rolón Luna, Universidad Católica de Asunción

Diego Abente Brun, George Washington University

**B.3 Perú (*fieldwork by Feldmann and Luna, Fall 2014)***

*Policy makers and Enforcers*

Carlos Basombrio, Deputy Minister of the Interior (2001-4)

Fernando Rospigliosi, Minister of the Interior (2003-4)

Eduardo Vargas, Prosecutor, Special Antidrug Unit (Fiscalía)

Gisella Rosa, Prosecutor, Special Antidrug Unit (Fiscalía)

Leonardo Caparros, Director, Instituto Nacional Penitenciario (INPE)

Ricardo Soberón, Centro de Investigación Drogas y Derechos Humanos.

*Anonymous Sources*

Prosecutor, Special Antidrug Unit (Fiscalía)

Prosecutor, Special Antidrug Unit (Fiscalía)

Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas (Executive directorate and drug-enforcement task force)

*Academics and Journalists*

Gustavo Gorriti, Investigative Journalist

Julio Cotler, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos

Eduardo Dargent, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

Patricia Zárate, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos

Paula Muñoz, Universidad del Pacífico

Alberto Vergara, Universidad del Pacífico

Maritza Paredes, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

B.4 **Uruguay (*fieldwork by Luna, several dates in 2018-2022)***

*Policymakers and Enforcers*

Inspector Pablo Lotito, Policía Nacional de Uruguay (2000-2019)

Juan Carlos Alves, Anti-money laundering government initiative (2015-2020)

Ricardo Gil Iribarne, Anti-corruption and transparency agency (2010-2020)

Gustavo Leal, Ministry of Interior Officer (2010-2020)

*Anonymous Sources*

Public Prosecutor, Montevideo

Narcotics Unit, Policía de Montevideo

Senior Officer 1, Anti-corruption and transparency agency

Customs Officer 1, Montevideo

Customs Officer 2, Union of Customs Employees

Counterfeiting Lawyer

Drug dealer aka Richie

Drug dealer aka Fabián

Drug dealer aka Jennifer

Drug dealer aka Wilson

Drug dealer aka Gladys

*Academics and Journalists*

Antonio Ladra, Latitud 3035

Gabriel Pereira, VTV

Pedro Cribari, Comisión Uruguaya de Lucha Contra la Corrupción

*Civil Society*

Interviews with key informants from civil society organizations in: Casavalle (Montevideo), Rivera (Rivera), San Carlos (Maldonado), and Minas (Lavalleja).

***Other sources:***

*Mexico (fieldwork by Feldmann and Luna: August 2013 May 2017)*

Jerjes Aguirre, Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo

Sergio Aguayo, Colegio de México

Alejandro Anaya-Muñoz, CIDE

Laura Rubio Díaz-Leal, ITAM

Otto Granados, former Governor State of Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Gustavo Mohar, Director for International Affairs, Center for Investigation and National Security (2006-2012)

Alejandro Poiré, Secretary of Interior (2006-2012)

*Anonymous sources*

Mayor municipality, Michoacán

Mayor municipality, Michoacán

Mayor municipality, Michoacán

Journalist La Jornada.

*Colombia (Fieldwork by Feldmann, Spring 2016 and Spring 2017)*

Fernando Cubides, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Pedro Díaz, Special Magistrate Special Tribunal for Peace Colombia

Gustavo Duncan, Professor Universidad EAFIT

Gustavo Gallón, Comisión Colombiana de Juristas

Román D. Ortiz, Defense and Security Observatory of Latin America, Colombia

Angelika Rettberg, Universidad de los Andes

*Argentina (Fieldwork by Luna, Spring 2016)*

Carolina Sampó, Universidad Nacional de La Plata

Marcelo Saín, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (interviewed remotely *Fall 2021)*

Matías Dewey, University of Saint Gallen

*Online Appendix 1: Our Cases in Comparative Perspective*

We created a dataset comprising all news collected regarding drug trafficking-related activities published by the site *Insight Crime*from its inception in 2012 to January 2022. *Insight Crime*specializes in investigative reporting on organized crime activities and is arguably the most comprehensive repository of news across Latin American countries. As observed in Graph 1, Chile and Uruguay are among the countries with fewer mentions. Although Peru and Paraguay feature more prominently in this ranking, they are still far behind other countries (e.g., Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Venezuela). Graph 2 displays overtime trends in coverage of this topic for our cases for 2012–2021. Whereas Paraguay and Peru declined from a peak of reported stories in 2014 and fluctuated over the period, Uruguay and Chile remain marginal throughout while displaying slight fluctuations over time.

Graph 1. Number of reports on drug trafficking activity in *Insight Crime* Reporting 2012–2021

Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated

*Source: Own construction on the basis database of Insight Crime’s articles.*

Graph 2. Number of reports on drug trafficking activity in selected countries *Insight Crime* Reporting 2012–2021

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

Source: Own construction on the basis database of *Insight Crime’s articles.*

Graph 3 presents the network configuration derived from counting co-occurrences of the country’s’ co-occurrences in news coverage of drug-related Activity or the 2012–2022 period. Countries that appear closer together and with a greater density of bilateral relations are more central to news reports of criminal activities in Latin America. As can be observed, Chile, Uruguay, and even Paraguay present significantly less coverage than other countries in the region. They are also more densely connected to other sites in the Southern Cone and Andean region than to more influential countries in terms of organized crime (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Venezuela, and especially Colombia and Mexico). Peru is also a relatively marginal country in the network. However, it is more connected to mainstream trafficking networks and displays active connections with our other countries of criminal interest.

Graph 3. Countries Co-Occurrences in News Coverage of Drug-Related Activity

Diagram

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

*Source: Own construction on the basis database of Insight Crime’s articles*

To conclude this comparative description of the coverage of criminal activity, we present a synopsis of relevant indicators regarding the likely incidence of corruption and violence in each of our cases. Graph 4 (panel a) displays the relative incidence of reported corruption victimization by police officers in the Latin American Public Opinion Project (2019). We also include two V-DEM indicators reflecting the incidence of public sector corruption in our selected cases against the Central American and South American average (panel b). Finally, we also feature a control, the corruption index for the 2002–2020 period for the same cases, as well as regional averages (panel c). The information across indicators is consistent. Whereas Chile and Uruguay display the lowest corruption levels in the region, Paraguay and Peru are among those showing greater police victimization in the region. These countries also feature public sector corruption above the regional average, though the rates are below the corruption control index average.[[1]](#footnote-1)

*Graph 4. Incidence of Corruption in Latin America*

*Panel A*

Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated

*Panel B*

Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated

*Panel C*

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

*Source: Own construction based on AmericasBarometer 2019 and V-DEM (2022)*

Concerning violence, Graph 5 displays the incidence of homicide rates in the region and their overtime evolution in each case. As can be seen, our four cases have been typically among the least violent in the region. However, Peru, Chile, and especially Uruguay have witnessed a steady upward trend in observed homicide rates. Paraguay, on the other hand, displays only a very minor increase*Graph 5. Homicide Rates 1995–2020 in Latin America.*

*Panel A*

*Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated*

*Panel B*

*Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated*

Source: Own construction based on *Yashar 2018, Assman and Jones 2021, and Assman and O’Reilly 2020.*

*Online Appendix 2: Comparative Narco-trafficking Business Structures*

**Monopolistic and Oligopolistic Narco-trafficking Business Structures**

Figures 1 and 2 depict multi-level arrangements consistent with one monopolistic cartel (Figure 1) and two competing DTOs (Figure 2). In Figure 2, DTOs can compete for territory or split their jurisdictional scope, which often alternates over time and space. Vertically integrated cartels can control narco-trafficking activities in both types of structure, integrating production, macro-trafficking, micro-trafficking, and money laundering.

           Although highly stylized, the configuration in Figure 1 approximates an ideal type in which a DTO develops monopolistic multi-level arrangements. While at the national level, this has not happened, at the regional level, one finds such deals, for example, in the state of Sinaloa, where the Sinaloa DTO has for decades been the proper authority in the shadows and dominated many facets of the economic and political life of the state. A similar pattern occurred in Colombia during the zenith of the powerful Medellin and Cali cartels. While competing at the national level and in their transnational operations, their power over the Antioquia and the Cauca Region was almost total. Finally, in Brazil, something similar occurs with the PCC and CV.

           In figure 2, oligopoly matches existing conditions where DTOs compete for power and territory, either reaching a compromise that divides up routes and territories or violently vying for them. Mexico, under the PRI, the “golden era” of drug trafficking due to the existence of the peaceful “plaza system,” might approach a cooperative arrangement with a similar structure to that depicted in Figure 2. The contemporary structure of Brazil’s prison gangs might also resemble that scenario, excepting sites where territorial disputes between DTOs arise. In turn, Mexico during and after the “war on drugs” declared by President Calderon in 2006 might approximate a conflict scenario with a similar structure (but a greater number of conflicting criminal groups) than that of Figure 2.

**Figure 1**

**Monopolistic Business Structure**



**Figure 2**

**Oligopolistic Business Structure**

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The configuration of narco-trafficking activities in more peripheral markets for production and consumption tends to differ from those observed in counties where dominant DTOs operate. In our cases, different activities in the narco-trafficking chain function with greater degrees of autonomy. In a nutshell, transnational DTOs dominate macro-trafficking in and out of the country. At the same time, micro-trafficking usually emerges around distributor and retailer chains that operate with relative independence and across different locations. This system does lead to territorial disputes among familial clans and gangs engaging in micro-trafficking at the local level, for instance. Still, these disputes tend not to escalate to higher levels in the narco-trafficking chain.

In some cases, international DTOs are more directly present in the country and might seek to establish a franchise that vertically integrates business operations. In other cases, they operate with more significant fragmentation and intermittency. Figure 3 depicts the first type of scenario, akin to the situation we observe in contemporary Paraguay. Figure 4, in turn, shows the second type of configuration and is closer to the existing arrangements we observed in Chile, Peru, and Uruguay. Since those four cases are the focus of our empirical exploration, we will return to the implications of these less vertically integrated narco-trafficking chain arrangements below.

Figure 3. Retailer/Franchise Business Structure



Figure 4. Fragmented Business Structure



*Online Appendix 3: Elective Affinities Among Narco-trafficking Activities and Specific Places*

During our extensive fieldwork, we were able to detect/establish elective affinities between certain types of criminal politics and specific narco-trafficking activities. These activities vary in their elective affinity with specific types of places,they become more salient to politicians. For example, specific drug-trafficking-related activities are more coercion than capital-intensive, and vice versa. We summarize those elective affinities in the table below. Whereas the first column describes the characteristics of each activity and the types of places, and the relevant political and institutional actors for each one, the last two columns speculate on the salience and typical crime structure associated with each activity and on the most likely criminal politics to emerge from the interaction among criminals, politicians, and state agents. In the last column, we tentatively rank different types of criminal politics accordingly to their likely prevalence associated with various drug-trafficking activities.*Table 1. Elective affinities between drug-trafficking related activities and fuzzy-interface types*



*Online Appendix 4: Stylized Comparison of Prevalent Narco-trafficking Activities in Our Four Cases*

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1. The relative positioning of our four cases in the region is also consistent with annual estimations by Transparency International (Transparency International 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)