

Citizenship, Security & Human Rights in Mexico and Central America

January 15-16, 2015 | UC San Diego

Organized by the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) and UC San Diego's Eleanor Roosevelt College Human Rights Program. Co-sponsored by the UC San Diego International House, Center on Global Justice, Blum Cross-Border Initiative and Scholars Strategy Network.

Mexico and Central America are facing an unprecedented wave of violence, making everyday life increasingly more precarious and insecure. This is the result of numerous trends: the rise of illegal economies on a massive scale, including drug and human trafficking; increasing authoritarian governance, marked by militarization and corruption; and near total impunity for violators of human and citizen rights. In order to assert their “right” to security, citizens are increasingly willing to approve the state’s use of repressive, punitive and extra-judicial measures against so-called criminals. Some citizens have decided to take matters into their own hands - be it through the organization of self-defense forces, community patrols or even lynchings. Others flee to the United States, confronting new forms of violence from migration officials, gangs, and eventually, if apprehended, the carceral US state.

In this conference, we examine the consequences of insecurity and citizens’ and policymakers’ reactions to violence. To explore that theme, we ask a series of questions. What are the impacts on human rights, democracy, and the exercise of citizenship in the region? What conception of citizenship and citizens’ rights emerges in contexts characterized by high levels of insecurity and crime? In which ways does insecurity serve to authorize and legitimize the use of violence against so-called criminals? How does insecurity and criminal violence impact levels of interpersonal trust, adherence to human rights and civic participation in the public sphere, all considered important values for a democratic exercise of citizenship? What types of representations and discourses about crime, violence, and justice inform current responses to crime in the region? Under what conditions do citizens rely on human rights? Can security be understood as a “right”? And, if so, what tensions arise between citizenship rights and human rights? What do these tensions tell us about democratic processes?

Agenda

Thursday, January 15, 2015 | 11 am – 6 pm

Venue: The Great Hall, UC San Diego *

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| 11 – 11:30 am | Blum Cross-Border Initiative Student Fieldwork Presentation
Introduction by Fonna Forman, UC San Diego |
| 11:30 – 12:00 pm | Student Poster Presentations on Issues of Citizenship, Social Justice and Human Rights
Introduction by Maureen Feely, UC San Diego

Participants include Health Frontiers in Tijuana Initiative and students from Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF), and Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) |
| 12:00 – 1:00 pm | Lunch |

** Please note the change in venue after lunch (see next page)*



Venue: Malamud Conference Room at the Weaver Center, UC San Diego

1:30 – 2 pm

Security at the Intersection of Citizenship and Human Rights in Mexico

Opening remarks by Pablo Piccato, Columbia University, Shannon Speed, UT Austin, and Nancy Postero, UC San Diego

2:00 – 3:45 pm

Book Panel: The Politics and Publics of Violence and Crime in Latin America

This panel brings together a multidisciplinary group of scholars working on an edited collection. Their chapters examine how different actors and audiences have attempted to normalize, conceal, denounce, and expose the manifold manifestations of violence and crime in Latin America. Examining both politics (the discourses, conflicts, and policies that violence and crime generate amongst different social and political groups) and publics (the multiple audiences that take part in the debates, representations, and meanings of these practices), they argue that the tenacity of certain forms of violence by both state and non-state actors in Latin America needs to be understood with regards to the processes that have led to their de facto legitimation, normalization and endurance.

Introduction by Gema Santamaría, The New School for Social Research

I. Extralegal Violence and its Justifications

“Ley fuga as Justice: The Consensus Around Extrajudicial Violence in Twentieth-Century Mexico” | Pablo Piccato, Columbia University

“The Politics and Publics of Lynching Violence in 1930s Puebla” | Gema Santamaría, The New School for Social Research

II. Crafting Criminals to Legitimize Violence

“Femicide in Mexico and Guatemala: A Comparative Study of Violence, Gender, and Society” | David Carey, Jr., Loyola University

“Anti-Communism and the Criminalization of the Enemy in Mexico and Colombia during the Cold War” | Luis Herran, The New School for Social Research

Q&A moderated by Jeffrey Rubin, Boston University

3:45 – 4 pm

Coffee Break

4 – 5:30 pm

Roundtable on Politics, Policing, Violence and Human Rights in Mexico

(Panel will be in Spanish)

In September, 43 student protesters went missing in the Mexican city of Iguala in the state of Guerrero. It appears that the students were detained by a group of municipal police officers on the orders of the now former mayor of the city, and then turned over to the criminal organization, Guerreros Unidos. The cartel then allegedly massacred the students. Investigations by the federal government into the students’ disappearance have put the spotlight on a region where drug-trafficking organizations seem to operate freely and, even worse, in coordination



with local government and police. This particular incident is not an isolated event and is emblematic of the dynamic behind thousands of unsolved disappearances and deaths across Mexico in recent years. President Peña Nieto has promoted a national agenda focused on the adoption of a long list of major structural reforms, but the disappearance of these students demonstrates that violence cannot be swept under the rug and insecurity will not improve unless clear steps are taken to tackle this challenge at its institutional root: corruption.

Confirmed Speakers:

- Marcela Turati, Journalist
- Maria Teresa Sierra, CIESAS
- Abel Barrera Hernandez, Tlachinollan Human Rights Center of the Montaña
- Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, Stanford University

Q&A Moderated by Carlos Vilalta, CIDE

5:30 – 6 pm

Reception

Friday, January 16, 2015 | 10 am – 3 pm

Venue: Malamud Conference Room at the Weaver Center, UC San Diego

10 am – 12 pm

Human Rights and Transnational Violence

This panel focuses on those who have borne the brunt of the violence, sacrificed by the multiple forms of criminality at play in the region. Examining the multiple dimensions of violence – interpersonal, socially organized, and state-led – this panel will also attend to the gendered, generational, and racialized nature of violence. Responding to the alarming trends in femicides and domestic violence, the discoveries of mass graves of Central American migrants, and the continued detention and deportation of vulnerable youths, these papers focus on the ways illegalities create new subjects, new practices of governance and control, and increasing levels of state and socially organized violence. If these subjects are outside state protection, as forms of “bare life”, do human rights regimes offer them any protections?

Introduction by David FitzGerald, UC San Diego

“Militarization and Transborder Gender Violence: Lessons from Mexican Indigenous Female Asylum Seekers” | Lynn Stephen, University of Oregon

“Indigenous Women Migrants, Human Rights, and Neoliberal Multicriminalism” | Shannon Speed, UT Austin

“A Genealogy of the Gang War Refugee” | Elana Zilberg, UC San Diego

Q&A moderated by David FitzGerald, UC San Diego

12 – 1:30 pm

Lunch with Reading by Cristina Rivera Garza, UC San Diego

1:30 – 3 pm

Roundtable on Transnational Policy Responses



Finally, what policy responses are emerging? How can states, international organizations, and NGOs provide information and policies to move the region forward? This roundtable discussion brings together policy experts, local activists, and scholars to think through possible interventions and trajectories. What kinds of transnational coalitions can advance thinking and practices, while avoiding the sorts of geopolitical power relations inherent in the War on Drugs or the War on Terror? What lessons emerge from local efforts to combat cross-border trafficking? How is the ongoing debate on immigration in the US contributing to the violence in the region? Recognizing that only collaborative efforts across national borders are likely to provide any insights, we end with a cross-disciplinary and transnational dialogue.

Confirmed Speakers:

- Rafael Fernandez de Castro, ITAM
- Maureen Meyer, Washington Office on Latin America

Q&A moderated by Ev Meade, University of San Diego