Ending Prohibition in order to Strengthen Institutions: Law Enforcement, Democratic (governments & NGOs), Economic

Kathleen (Kathy) Staudt, PhD
Professor of Political Science
kstaudt@utep.edu
A Bi-national Perspective
The Paso del Norte Region
1. Law Enforcement Institutions

• 1990s/early 2000s: missed opportunities
  – To CLEANSE state and municipal police
  – To reform procedures
• Femicide: preview of the subsequent chaos
• Militarized approach, both sides: murder rates skyrocketed (x10)
  – 2007: < 300 in Cd. Juárez, ‘world’s murder capital’
  – 2008: 1,600 “
  – 2009: 2,600
  – 2010 through July 21: 1,609 ~6,000 in 3 years!
Current LE/militarized approach ineffective

- GOM Claims that 90-95% associated with drug trade, but few investigations/prosecutions (how do they know???)
- The dead, nation-wide (25,000+): comparable to the 1970s guerra sucia in Argentina
- Mérida I initiative provides ‘more of the same’
- U.S. drug consumption, which FUELS profitable drug trafficking, as high as ever
  - Marijuana: the “cash cow” (WSJ) of cartels (50-60% profits)
2. Democratic Institutions

• Size of government
  – U.S.: swollen surveillance/security/control bureaucracies. 40-year War on Drugs: $1 trillion
  – Mexico: shrinking since 1980s, reduced social infrastructure
  – Do politicians and political appointees have the nerve to discuss alternatives to militarization and ‘wars’ on drugs? (would admit failure of Mérida?)

• Non-government Organizations (NGOs): Civil society OVERSIGHT = essence of democracy
  – Within border AND across-the-border collaboration
  – Economic/business/developers: PdNG, chambers, etc.
  – What about the other NGOs?

Facilitators:
Ideological/issue orientations: global citizenship; religious; regional vision; research & database
NGO global/regional connections to local NGOs
Transitional policy institutions
Potential profit/fund niches
Common language(s)
Mexican heritage

Blockages:
Fear
Nationalism
Bad experience
Monolingualism
Huge inequalities
Bridge traffic/time
Local parochialism
National sovereignty
Perceived competition
Stereotypes of “el otro lado”
Communication differences
Limited resources: $ and staff
Immigration and labor controls
Official militarized tone and actions

Chart 3.1 Cross-border collaboration: facilitators and blocks
3. Economic Institutions, including wage base for the majority

• Missed opportunities to move beyond the $25-40 per week take-home pay for maquila workers (US workers earn more in a day)

• Is this ‘competitive’ over the long term?

• Youth and young adults: ni estudian, ni trabajan: ni ni’s: 1/3rd of those aged 20-24 years old

• Under these conditions:
  – is south ➔ north migration a surprise?
  – How can people earn a decent living without living wages?
Cd. Juárez: a paradigm for the future?

- Global manufacturing in the Paso del Norte region
- Relative ‘security’ on one side of the border, but ‘insecurity’ on the other side of the border
- Use opportunities to
  - Pay decent wages in decent jobs to the majority
  - Invest in functional law enforcement
  - Reduce demand for marijuana: legalize & control to reduce profitable cash-cow underground economy
  - Facilitate civil society voices: NGOs
  - Invest in social & educational infrastructure
Cities and Citizenship at the U.S.-Mexico Border
The Paso del Norte Metropolitan Region
Edited by Kathleen Staudt, César M. Fuentes, and Julia E. Monárrrez Fragoso

At the center of the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border, a sprawling transnational urban space has mushroomed into a metropolitan region with over two million people whose livelihoods depend on global manufacturing, cross-border trade, and border control jobs. This volume advances knowledge on urban space, gender, education, security, and work, focusing on Ciudad Juárez, the export-processing (maquiladora) manufacturing capital of the Americas and the infamous site of feminine and outlier murder rates connected with arms and drug trafficking. Given global economic trends, this transnational urban region is a likely paradigmatic future for other world regions.

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Kathleen Staudt is Professor of Political Science/Investigadora Visitante at University of Texas at El Paso/El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, (COLEF)/Ciudad Juárez. César M. Fuentes is Research Professor at the COLEF/Ciudad Juárez. Julia E. Monárrrez Fragoso is Research Professor of Sociology at the COLEF/Ciudad Juárez.


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