POWER WITH INPUNITY: MICHOACAN, MEXICO

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Abstract

This research presents an overview of history on law enforcement in Mexico, early police leadership, and law enforcement connection to politics. The research describes changes in the Mexican police through political transition and explains the current police practices. The research focuses on the state of Michoacán de Ocampo, Mexico as it presents the current structure of the Police in that state and describes some of the problems such as police corruption, social instability, and citizenry dissatisfaction with police. Additionally, this research provides information on drug trafficking organizations operating in the state of Michoacán, their association with politics and police, and the continued trend of organized crime incidents that occur in the state of Michoacán providing the perception that the government is unable to control organized crime. Furthermore, the research provides information on the state of Michoacán, to include its major problems, and perspectives from citizens regarding Michoacán's criminal justice system. This research provides information to systematically understand the civil unrest in Michoacán and to help shape policy making procedures that will help reduce corruption at all levels of law enforcement including municipal, state, federal police, and the military.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to provide information that will help understand the recent problems that have occurred in the state of Michoacán regarding law enforcement and their inability to maintain order and stability for the citizens. The research reviews literature associated with police structure in the state of Michoacán as of 2005, law enforcement in Mexico, political transition in 2000 and changes in the police, as well as information obtained from a series of interviews and experiences. The information obtained from this research is intended to help society understand the current problems taking place in Michoacán and will contribute policy makers with information necessary to effective decision making process. Michoacán is a land of mountains and lakes and is dominated by the mountains of the Sierra Madre Occidental and extends from the Pacific Ocean northeastward into the central plateau. The climate and soil make Michoacán a diverse agricultural state that produces both temperate and tropical cereals, fruits, and vegetables (Schmal, 2004). The climate is also excellent for Marijuana and Cocaine and this provides a base for the illegal drug production and trade.

The Police Structure in Michoacán as of 2005

As of 2005, in the state of Michoacán, there were two principal types of police officers who worked for the executive branch of the government. The *Polícia Estatal Preventiva* (State Preventative Police) were directly supervised by the *Secretario de Seguridad Pública del Estado* (Secretary of Public Safety for the state), Ramon Martin Huerta. The other was directly under the *Procurador General de Justicia del Estado* (the state attorney general), Miguel Ángel Arellano Pulido, and were known as the *Polícia Ministerial* (ministerial police). This was the investigatory police that assisted the *Ministerios Públicos* (Public Ministry) in their investigations of crimes and complaints.Those municipalities or communities that were incorporated also had their own police departments who worked for the mayor but received their instructions from the *Directores de Seguridad Pública Municipal* (local chief of police). These police agencies were supported by the *Policía Estatal Preventiva* (State preventative police) when it was required or when state security was a concern.

Aside from the governmental police there also existed a private police called *La Policía Auxiliar* (Auxiliary police). *La Policía Auxiliar* functioned as a private security body and therefore charged organizations such as banks, businesses, commercial center, state offices, etc. for their services. *La Policía Auxiliar* was the only Law Enforcement agency where civilians were authorized to carry firearms. Mexican police forces often lacked the most basic systems of accountability. Record keeping was so bad that when officers were fired, the police department had to reinstate them, because their misconduct was not documented. Wilkinson and Malagon (1995) estimated that close to 800 federal officers who had been fired had received their jobs back as a result of a lack of documentation regarding the alleged misconduct (p. 18).

For many people in México, joining the police force provided an opportunity to make money. Wilkinson and Malagon (1995) noted that *Polícia Rural Estatal* officers were largely undereducated, from rural areas where education was not widely available, and many were farm workers with the appropriate political connections (p. 19). At the local level, police personnel were paid very poorly. In 2005, a police officer in the state of Michoacán earned as little as $650 *pesos* ($65 U.S.) a week while a master brick layer earned $1700 *pesos* ($170 U.S.). The argument is often made that the low pay resulted in police taking bribes and extorting money to augment their incomes.

A prior criminal conviction had not been a barrier to being employed as a law enforcement officer. In the last decade, police officers had been arrested for smuggling drugs, kidnapping, and extorting Mexican citizens. México's drug cartels had been a particularly powerful corrupting force (Wilkinson, & Montaro, 1991, p. 9).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research provides an overview of the history of law enforcement in Mexico, and current law enforcement practices in the state of Michoacán, as well as problems associated with police corruption, drug trafficking organizations, and politics. The research describes (a) early police leadership and connection to politics; (b) current police practices; (c) political transition in 2000 and changes in the police; (d) drug trafficking organizations that have affected police practices and politics in the state of Michoacán; and (e) Information witnessed and obtained from interviews and personal observations during our visit to Mexico.

Early Police Leadership and Connection to Politics

Policing and police administrators, specifically the Office of Inspector General, were extensions of General Porfirio Díaz political machine. Control over the police came directly from the president and those appointed to head administrative positions were military figures that had a record of proven loyalty to Díaz. Rohlfes (1983) reported that policing experiences, energy or willingness to police, and even an honest character appeared to be secondary to political loyalty to the president (p. 31). In 1897, there was a major scandal involving the inspector general. He was party to the killing of a political opponent of Díaz while in police custody (p. 30). The inspector general committed suicide and nine of his aides were convicted and sentenced to death. Their sentences were commuted and eventually they were released. Both the police and the secret police were used to support the Díaz regime. Political opponents were arrested and incarcerated on false charges. Members of the press were routinely harassed and arrested on false charges (p. 32).

General Porfirio Díaz used armed force to overthrow the elected Mexican government in 1876. At the time, bandits terrorized the countryside and even cities with utter impunity. Díaz wanted order and felt that the Mexican people were not ready for democracy. He developed a tough law and order policy and by 1911 Mexican lawlessness had all but disappeared. In the Mexican capitol paid police officers enforced political and social discipline. The improvements of the police force in México City, known as the *Gendarmeria Municipal*, were seen as a symbol of Mexican progress and received foreign recognition. However, despite a reduction in crime, the new system of law enforcement was wrought with problems (Rohlfes, 1983, p. 11-14).

Under the Díaz administration, the paid police were required to be able to read, write, and perform elementary math. They had to be in good health and not have a criminal record. They had to be recommended for the office by citizens of high reputation (Rohlfes, 1983, p. 22). They were warned not to take bribes, abuse suspects, or drink alcoholic beverages while on duty. They were fined for failing to follow regulations and were mandated to carry a copy of the regulations on their persons (p. 25). While the regulations were firm and the standards high, the pay was poor and less than wages earned by factory workers. As such, the police profession attracted rural farm workers who left the occupation soon after locating factory work.

Turn over was as high as 46 percent (Rohlfes, 1983, p. 59). There was no chance to instill professional pride among the transient police force. There was no formal training or a police academy. The first police academy was not organized until 1896, 20 years after Díaz took power (p. 85).There also were corruption, discipline, and morale problems as a result and the newspapers reported police abuses daily. The poor hated the police, both for their actions and the fact that they conscripted them into the military as part of their duties. People in the upper class considered themselves above police rule and treated the police with disdain. Additionally, the upper class would bribe the police. Díaz responded by increasing wages and the numbers of police. However, the working conditions of the police remained poor. Police officers worked 20-hour-days and there were no holidays (Rohlfes, 1983, p. 37).

Current Police Practices

There is little in the literature on Mexican police from 1911 to 2004. Lutz, (1990) and other commentators have suggested there is a lack of information for a reason (p. 77). The unethical practices and the corrupt nature of the police and the PRI were obstructed from view and those who were critical of the Mexican government or police were assassinated, disappeared, or were incarcerated on trumped up drug charges (p. 78).Reports in the 1990s suggested that police practices on the federal level remained largely as they were under President Díaz, characterized by corruption, harassment of the news media, and closely linked with the ruling political party or dictatorship (Human Rights Watch, 1990 p. 36). The difference between the Díaz administration and the 1990s was the presence of significantly more money from the sale and exportation of narcotics (Olivero & Murataya, 1998, p. 1).

Wilkinson (1990, p. 97) provided a unique analysis of local Mexican law enforcement practices and structure. Wilkinson (1990) coined the phrase "*mordida*," a slang term in México referring to "the bite" or money paid to local level police officers to fix problems or to overlook the breaking of the law (p. 2). Wilkinson suggested that the *mordida* played an important role in the Mexican criminal justice system. He also noted that inmates within prisons commonly complained about beating at the hands of the police as a matter of course. Wilkinson and Malagon (1995) compared written descriptions of police education and training in Tampico, Tamaulipas, México, and Brownsville, Texas (p. 6). In the Mexican sample, he found that commanders (person in charge of a unit) are often college graduates who have also trained at the police academy and held lower positions. Municipal police officers do not need to meet standardized educational requirements beyond basic education. Although higher education was an increasing trend among Mexican police in higher ranks, the rank and file officers in Tampico are not highly educated. Wilkinson and Malagon concluded that the issue of increased professionalism in policing was a major concern in México (p.18). However, assassinations of major political figures, and media reports of alleged police brutality do not convey the image of a country on the verge of making tremendous economic, social, or political advances (p. 21).

Quiñónez (1994) reported that corruption among police officers in México was entrenched. There were efforts by a valiant few to do something about it, but according to Quiñónez, the possibility of reform remained a "long-shot" (p. 63). Corruption consists primarily of bribery and payoffs the police extorted from citizens and tourists. Each line officer is then expected to pay command officers. The root cause of the corruption was the "trivial" salaries of officers. Their gross pay every 2 weeks was between 600 and 700 pesos, $175- $200 US. In comparison, bus drivers were making higher wages. To make matters worse, out of their own pockets officers were paying to maintain their patrol cars and other equipment. Officers who did comply with their commander's dictates were harassed and given unattractive assignments. Quiñónez also found that academy training consisted primarily of firearms training. Without adequate training, officers were more likely to resolve conflict with violence, since they were not taught communication and human relations skills. Moreover, the public image of the police was so negative that officers who quit the force in disgust had trouble finding jobs because they were former police officers. Like Wilkinson, Quiñónez in 1994, foresaw the prospects for police reform as being poor, since the PRI, which had been in power for 65 years, remained in control. According to Quiñónez, old-line political bosses, many of them police administrators, had no motivation to introduce reforms (p. 64).

Political Transition in 2000 and Changes in the Police

On July 2, 2000, voters ended the political dominance of PRI with the election of President Vicente Fox Quesada. He vowed to clean up political corruption starting with a reorganization of the federal police. According to Shelly (2001) the primacy of these issues is an indication of the severity of the problem and the public recognition that México's democracy and economy cannot advance unless society tackles these problems.

She stated that addressing the dual problems of crime and corruption posed a formidable challenge because these problems were deeply entrenched in México (p. 214). Shelly concluded that the consequences of one-party rule, the failure to accord the rule of law dominance in society, and the institutionalized corruption of the police and other parts of the justice system limited the country's capacity to act against crime and corruption. Shelly indicated that the press's task had been constrained through intimidation and a strong civil society had not developed to counteract these forces (p. 219).

At the same time Shelly (2001) indicated that México had important strengths. Its investment in education since the change in leadership had resulted in an urban population committed to solving the problems the country faces. Many of those who worked for Fox's election were young Mexicans, often educated abroad, who returned to their country to work for changes. Fox's party included many members of the business community, who wanted an alternative future for México and a more open, competitive economy to promote growth. Fox's emphasis on greater transparency and better governmental administration is aimed at addressing deep-seated corruption (pp. 221-222).

Subsequent to Fox's election, Nelson Arteaga Botello and Adrián López Rivera from the University of the State of México enrolled in a police academy and after graduation joined a municipal police force (Arteaga & Lopez, 2000, p. 61). Their experiences revealed the pervasive problems with law enforcement in México. They found that the reasons people became police officers usually had nothing to do with a genuine interest in law enforcement. Many had criminal histories including violence, drug use, and low educational achievement. Some even saw police work as a means to expand drug distribution networks (p. 63).

Arteaga and López (2000) found that the police academy taught prospective police officers how to extort money from citizens (p. 65). Once on the street, they are expected to put this information and techniques into practice. After graduating from the academy, police officers were assigned to work with experienced officers for training and became integrated into the life of the district in which they were assigned. One commander described the zone worked by a covert researcher as being a "gold mine." Lower level police officers were instructed to give part of their "ill gotten gains" to the shift commander. The orders of superiors were to be obeyed without hesitation. Veteran police officers taught the new recruits the art of extortion and new recruits were warned to take money little by little (p. 66).

After graduating from the police academy, officers' first shifts and assignments were based on the possession of a driver's license and the ability to memorize and interpret radio codes. Those who could not drive were made escorts to veterans who knew how to drive. Veteran officers informed the recruits that they were there to make money and to do otherwise would run counter to fitting into the group. New recruits were informed to watch out for anything suspicious because if something was going on, it meant money. While taking extortion, recruits were shown ways to hide their identity. The recruits were instructed to focus on juveniles and were trained on how to steal things. Further, the new recruits were made responsible for the collection of protection rent from small businesses and stores. Recruits were told that in a short amount of time they would have enough money to start their own businesses. After being trained, choice posts were granted on the basis of payoffs to superior officers (Arteaga & López, 2000, p. 67).

Previous research done by Dr. Rodrigo Murataya and Dr. J. Michael Olivero lends support to the above findings. They analyzed citizen satisfaction with police services in Guadalajara, Jalisco. Among subjects who had contact with the police, 21.3% were "not satisfied" with police services, and 4.3% of the subjects indicated being "very satisfied." An issue developed as they discussed police services with the subjects. It should be noted that part of the decision to indicate satisfaction with police services might stem from the ability to pay "*mordida*," instead of paying a fine, or paying off the police, etc. That is to say police corruption can benefit police-community satisfaction when the ability to pay a bribe outweighs the costs of paying fines, etc. As such, it could be that citizens support some forms of police corruption (Olivero & Murataya, 1998 p. 307).

Only 2.2% of the police officer-citizen contact was initiated to report a crime or to request a service. This finding supports the conclusion that police-community involvement was typically something citizens wished to avoid or they felt that police involvement was futile. Several subjects further elaborated that if they contacted the police concerning a problem, the individual with the most money would carry the day. Typically, problems were solved between disputants or fighting ensued (Olivero & Murataya, 1998, p. 309).

Drug Trafficking Organizations that have Affected Police Practices and Politics in the State of Michoacán.

Grayson (2010) described that *La Familia Michoacana* or as it is also known, *La Familia,* has emerged as one of Mexico's strangest and most grotesque drug cartels that have imported precursor drugs from Asia, and Europe through the Michoacán Pacific Coast port of Lazaro Cardenas (p. iii). Grayson (2010) mentioned that this drug trafficking organization has constructed sophisticated laboratories to convert chemicals into methamphetamines for sale and in an expanding U.S. market (p. iii). For example, Grayson (2010) explained that *La Familia Michoacana* has imported precursor chemicals from Germany, Bulgaria, India, Thailand, China, Holland, Pakistan and other countries through the port of Lazaro Cardenas on the Michoacán coast and that after receiving for such materials they processed them into methamphetamines for sale to American consumers (p. 17). Grayson (2010) noted that on March 9, 2010 the Mexican Army found a laboratory pertaining to *La Familia* that contained 10 chemical production units or reactors, three times larger than any other facility previously discovered (p. 48). In this same location, the military confiscated one ton of amphetamines and 300 kilograms of methamphetamines worth approximately 10 million dollars. This megalab was located in Pichataro, an ecotourism region in the north central Michoacán (Grayson, 2010 p. 48).

Grayson (2010) mentioned that *La familia* engages in bloody warfare for the control of imports, growing areas, processing plants for synthetic drugs, controlling drug distribution areas, and transit routes to the United States (p. 2). Other common operations of this drug trafficking organization include extortion, kidnapping, human smuggling, contraband, loan sharking and sales of cocaine and marijuana (Grayson, 2010, p.2).

La Familia Michoacána burst into the limelight on September 6, 2006, when members of this organization crashed into the seedy Sol y Sombra nighclub in Uruapan, Michoacán and fired shots into the air while at the same time they screamed at the people to lie down, ripped open a plastic bag, and lobbed five human heads onto the dance floor (Grayson, 2010 p.1). *La Familia's* traditional competitors in Michoacán and elsewhere include *Los Zetas* which were founded by deserters of the Army's Special Airborne Forces Group (GAFES) who have similar interests as *La Familia* such as control for key locations for the purpose of distributing drugs and practicing extortion, kidnappings, human smuggling, and other forms of organized crime (Grayson, 2010 p. 2). Beittel (2009) described that *La Familia Michoacana* is active in the control of drugs arriving from Colombia in the seaports of Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas (p. 6). Additionally, Beittel (2009) explained that the emergence of violence is accredited to the conflict among drug organizations that seek control over lucrative drug smuggling routes or "*plazas"* in Michoacán and neighboring states to include Colima and Jalisco (p. 6). Greyson (2010) provided examples of lucrative drug smuggling routes or *"plazas"* such as the port of Lazaro Cardenas, Michoacán who in the year 2009 was able to handle 11.5 million tons of commercial cargo, second only to the port of Manzanillo, Colima who in that same year handled 18.5 million of commercial cargo (p. 17). Grayson (2010) explained that dozens of inlets surround the ports to which fast launches and semi-submerged vessels ferry illegal items from ships anchored offshore to the mainland, often under the radar of the Mexican Navy (p. 18). Grayson (2010) reported that *La Familia* dominates narcotic sales in 113 municipalities in the state of Michoacán (p. 25).

When describing the leadership and organization of *La Familia*, (Grayson) 2010 mentioned that the founders of such drug trafficking organization included Nazario *"El Chayo"* Moreno Gonzalez, and Jesus Mendez Vargas alias *"El Chango."* Also included on this list were Enrique Plancarte Solis and Servando "*La Tuta"* Gomez Martinez (p. 24). According to Mexico's ministry of public safety (SSP), one of *La Tuta's* confidant and closed friend is Julio Cesar Godoy Toscano, who was a successful congressional candidate in the July 5, 2009, election, and a key mover in regions of Lazaro Cardenas, Arteaga, and Nueva Italia and who turned his congressional seat over to an alternate and is currently at large (Grayson, 2010, p. 27).

Greyson (2010) added that Julio Cesar Godoy Toscano is related as (half-brother) to the current Governor of Michoacán, Leonel Godoy Rangel (p. 27). Grayson (2010) described that at the beginning of his administration, President Felipe Calderon visited the 43rd Military Zone in Apatzingan, Michoacán with the purpose to fight *La Familia* and other cartels in Michoacán (p. 64). President Calderon presented a new strategy which included a focus on politicians who were enabling *La Familia* and other cartels to act with impunity (Grayson, 2010 p. 65). The outcome of this strategy resulted in the arrest of 12 mayors, 32 public officials, various municipal security directors, state public servants, and other advisers to the state attorney general.

Included in this list of arrested public officials was Citlali Hernandez Gonzalez, a former state legislator who was Michoacán's secretary of public safety and who then served as an adviser to the Governor Leonel G. Toscano (Grayson, 2010 p. 66).

Grayson (2010) reported that *La Familia* is a drug trafficking organization that has an executive council composed of businessmen, and government officials, along with narco-traffickers from regional and municipal cells (p. 30). Additionally, Grayson (2010) explained that *La Familia* reinforces morale by heaping retribution on authorities who pursue their leaders and members (p. 33). On July 11, 2009, after the arrest of one of its popular members, *La Familia* precipitated four days of mayhem in Michoacán as they ambushed units of the armed forces and Federal Police in eight cities, beginning with Michoacán's capital, Morelia. On July 12, 2009, a major confrontation also erupted in Lazaro Cardenas, where *La Familia* used high powered rifles and fragmentation grenades. On July 13, 2009 *La Familia* captured, stripped, and executed 12 Federal Police, leaving their corpses in a heap along side the Morelia- Lazaro Cardenas Highway with a message reading: "come for another of our leaders, we are waiting for you."Additionally, on July 14 2010 *La Familia* ambushed a tourist bus carrying 30 Federal Police on the same highway and later that day, it set fire to the Federal Police headquarters in Zitacuaro, Michoacán (Grayson, 2010 p. 34).

Information Witnessed and Obtained from Interviews and Personal Observations during our visit to Mexico.

A day before we arrived to Guadalajara, Jalisco, one of Michoacán's main leaders, Nazario Moreno Gonzalez "*El Chayo"* was killed in Apatzingan, Michoacán. This happened after a two-day shootout between El Chayo's men and the federal police. El Chayo was one of the leaders of the drug trafficking organization *"La Familia Michoacána."* EL Chayo's loss was felt by the people that he helped and who looked up to him. However, his death also represented a victory for the Mexican Government and a revindication for the people his organization terrorized. In the aftermath of el Chayo's death, however, the command of the cartel shifted to Enrique Placartes Solis, also know as (aka)*"La Chiva,"* and Jose de Jesus Mendez Vargas aka *"El Chango Mendez."*

Arriving to the Guadalajara Airport on December 9, 2010 in Jalisco, Mexico, we could see the presence of the Mexican military guarding the hallways and scattered across the airport with their assault rifles. After renting a car, we headed off to interview a few relatives and acquaintances in Guadalajara to start our study on how "*La Familia Michoacána,"* the *"Los Zetas"* cartel, among other organized crime cartels are affecting the people. Dr. Murataya's brother mentioned that police officers would oftentimes act as spectators when a crime is committed. The reason for the police officers' inability to act is because they are afraid of being killed. An additional reason is that they are being paid off to give information and to keep quite.

The next day on December 10, 2010 we arrived to Colima, Mexico, a state where *La Familia Michoacána* and their rivals *Los Zetas* constantly fight for control. *Los Zetas* are the most notorious cartel in Colima because they have constant confrontations with the municipal, state, and federal police forces, as well as the military. After talking to various people discreetly, they stated that the police are also partaking in Drug trafficking, bribery, people smuggling, political corruption, money laundering, counterfeiting, extortion, murder, kidnapping and arms trafficking. This is something that is also visible on television because law enforcement officers are also being extorted by the cartels. The death of family member is among the most brutal forms of extortion done against law enforcement officers in order to ensure their cooperation. When we asked my relatives how the cartel situation was without giving them a hint they were being interviewed, they said that often times the bodies of police officers will be found mutilated or hanged to advertise and deter people from fighting the cartel and submit to their authority. They also mentioned that *los Zetas* would kill people and hang or leave them for not keeping quite or betraying them. The dead were often left with signs and messages stating, "This person died for snitching." In other cases, they leave dead bodies with messages that the cartel is recruiting and that they pay is great if people join the cartels.

According to the people we interviewed in Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán, police are afraid of engaging in firefights and often act as spectators when a crime is being committed. Oftentimes, the police equipment is inadequate to protect themselves and the body armor they use is often useless, defective, or no enough to protect them from the high-caliber guns that the cartels have. The weapons the cartels have are more than enough to scare the police and military because they carry grenades, grenade launchers, body armor, armored vehicles, and armor-piercing weapons.

As we shifted from violence to the political system, many citizens through Mexico were also disappointed because Mexico's own governors, senators, representatives, and mayors have been accused and incarcerated or evaded the law due to corruption charges. During the visit in Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán, we saw and heard people talking about the corruption and how Michoacán governor Leonel Godoy was protecting his half brother Julio Cesar Godoy Toscano, an elected deputy for the opposition Revolutionary Democratic Party from accusations of working directly for *La Familia.* He hid from authorities since 2009 and swore in 2010, giving him parliamentary immunity so that he could not be prosecuted. He was later stripped away from his immunity and remains evading authorities to the present day.

La Familia Michoacána has been the most notorious cartel in the past few years with their organized crime tactics. Even though the cartel is growing, problems within the cartel arise as members of the kill and fight with each other due to distrust and betrayal. Their alliance, though a troubled one, remains standing so that they can defend against rival cartels.

While in Michoacán, we also heard testimonies of how the military will go into private property to look for individuals. Unlike U.S. law, the necessity of getting a search warrant is unnecessary, and the civil rights of Mexican citizens are often violated.

The death of *El Chayo* in December of 2010 and the arrest of *El Chango* on June of 2011 has been a hard hit for *La Familia Michoacána*, and the territories controlled by them have been drastically reduced. As their charismatic leaders begin to die or get arrested, people begin to lose faith, as a strong leadership is needed keep a union within a cartel. As of today, the military seems to have more control over the state in Michoacán, but the flow of drugs into the US is still a major problem. One of the main reasons for this is that guns and ammunition keep flowing illegally from the U.S. and into the hands of the cartels.

CONCLUSION

The literature review in this research suggests that corruption is still a major problem in Mexico that affects the efficiency of law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies. The continued presence and operations of drug trafficking organizations have created a high number of organized crime incidents and other atrocities which has shocked and terrorized communities. The research reveals that in the state of Michoacán, the government struggles to maintain order and control as they confront with *La Familia* and other drug trafficking organizations.

The literature review presented in this research also suggests that *La Familia* is a drug trafficking organization that can create major implications for the United States and Mexican security. The administration of President Felipe Calderon should put more pressure to combat all drug trafficking organizations operating in Mexico and label such organizations as a serious threat because they represent a serious threat to both national and international relations. The need for more strategies focusing on dismantling politicians, government officials, and key public policy-makers who are associated with organized crime and drug trafficking organizations is necessary to reduce corruption. Such strategies should be a continued practice for all states experiencing the effects of organized crime. The reduction of corruption in law enforcement may be possible once politicians and other government officials do not engage in corruption and are not involved with drug trafficking organizations.

Additional strategies by the government are necessary to maintain full control of all ports on the pacific coast, providing more security and increasing the inspections of every container, cargo, and ships entering such ports. Such strategies should also be practiced for those lucrative drug smuggling routes. The strategies can be successful only if those enforcing them and those in charge do not fall into the trends of corruption. After analyzing the information collected in the literature review and comparing such information to the information gathered in the interviews and observations it is possible to conclude *La Familia* is a serious threat not only to its people but to national and international security.

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