

# The Private Sector and Public Security: The Cases of Ciudad Juárez and Monterrey

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## INTRODUCTION

Between 2008 and 2012, murder, extortion, and drug and human trafficking rose to unprecedented levels in the important northern manufacturing and industrial cities of Ciudad Juárez and Monterrey. Private sector leaders and organizations confronted their grim reality and staged protests, made concrete demands of

organizations with civic organizations that included medical associations, human rights defenders, academics, and other activists. Umbrella organizations like these that cut across sectors are highly unusual in Mexico. The two cities are “isolated cases” in that business and civil society groups were able to work together, especially in a country where the government is “not an impartial arbiter,” says Miguel Fernández, CEO of the expanding Transtelco fiber optics cable firm and president of the Plan Estratégico de Juárez, a participatory citizen initiative to improve the quality of life in the city. Insecurity was so pervasive “it was at the point of destroying the city, and that placed it in the interest of everyone” to take action, says Fernández.

The hybrid civic organizations created in Juárez and Monterrey to respond to the security emergency blur the lines of the conventional understanding of “private sector.” Their leadership and composition went outside of commerce and industry to tap talents in universities and nongovernmental organizations and also included, in the early stages, representative groups such as neighborhood associations and market vendors. In this paper, “private sector” may refer to the narrow definition of commerce and industry and, more broadly, may also denote the combined forces of the business sector and civil society organizations working together.

The paper focuses on the nature and results of the civic engagement and activist postures adopted by the private sector in Juárez and Monterrey since 2008. The private sector has successfully established dialogues with authorities, has been met with varying degrees of receptivity and response and has created its own mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on government actions to combat crime. Private sector activism in both cities is based on creating trust among citizens that encourages citizen reporting of crimes, and centers on pressing specific demands with local and state officials, starting crime report hotlines and web platforms, and creating channels of communication that relay citizen intelligence about delinquency to the authorities. The results of this activism are most evident in drops in crimes such as extortion, kidnapping, auto theft, and other robberies. Another significant result of the organizations and initiatives of the private sector in Ciudad Juárez and Monterrey is the demonstration effect for other cities and authorities across Mexico of how civic participation can be catalyzed and function as a constructive force for improving citizen security. Indeed, the private sector leaders of both cities are consulted often by business associations and civic groups in other states of Mexico for their know-how on participation and combating crime.

The achievements of business groups and civil society are important in the context of the horrific spate of violence and crime unleashed in Juárez and Monterrey and other regions of Mexico in recent years. The results that can be expected from the private sector are limited, however. The structural problems that either fuel or

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1 Miguel Fernández, telephone interview with author, February 27, 2013.

2 Ibid.

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facilitate the expanding wave of crime require intervention by the state. A classic

across the river from El Paso, Texas. That changed drastically seven years ago. As drug cartels fought for control of the vital Juárez transit point, a con agra tion of violence overtook the city.

Drug tra ckers of the Juárez and Sinaloa cartels and criminal bands waged war over the next three years, and Juárez became the most violent city in the world. The murder rate soared to between 178 and 224 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2009 and 2010. Violence also increased across Mexico between 2008 and 2010, and homicide became the leading cause of reduced life expectancy among males ages 20–44. Nowhere was the toll worse than in the state of Chihuahua. The killing in Ciudad Juárez and throughout the state lowered the life expectancy of males by 5.2 years.

The terror of kidnapping also reached a peak in 2010. “There were 10 kidnappings a day, that’s when we began to organize,” says Jorge Contreras, a manufacturer who became a leader in several of the Juárez civic orgarñizations. Businessmen hired bodyguards. The city began to empty out as families moved across the border or to central Mexican states. Several thousand businesses closed, shops and restaurants shut their doors and nobody dared go out at night.

Beginning in 2005, Juárez had fallen prey to the violent rivalry between the Juárez Cartel and its violent arm, La Línea, and the Sinaloa Cartel, the powerful organization headed by legendary tra cker Joaquín “El Chapo” ~~Guzm~~ Murders tripled between 2007 and 2008, when more than 1,600 people were killed. The government sent 2,000 army troops to Juárez in March, 2008, as part of a Chihuahua joint operation. But violence grew worse.

Telephone extortion calls began to sweep through neighborhoods, and became commonplace. As 2008 wore on, doctors and lawyers were kidnapped. Businessmen, too, were carried away by criminal bands seizing people for ransom. Organized crime then began demanding protection money from businesses in central Juárez and the tourist district. “Kidnapping and extortion had been unknown in Juarez,” recalls Contreras, who presided over a non-pro t economic development agency when the crime wave began.

As killings increased in 2010, the army was withdrawn and 4,500 federal police were sent in to try to bring order in the city. It was not until the July 2011 capture of José Antonio Acosta Hernández, aka “El Diego,” leader of La Línea, the armed wing of the Juárez Cartel, that the murder rate began to come down. In custody, Acosta reportedly confessed to having ordered 1,500 murders. Months later, a large

5 Guillermo Julián González-Pérez, María Guadalupe Vega-López, and Carlos Enrique Cabrera-Pivaral, “Impacto de la violencia homicida en la esperanza de vida masculina en México,” *Estadística y Demografía* 32, no. 5 (2012):335–42, <http://www.scielo.org/pdf/rpsp/v32n5/v32n5a03.pdf>.

6 Jorge Contreras, interview with author, September 27, 2012.

7 Borderland Beat, “Murders in Ciudad Juarez Top 2009 Total,” Nov. 20, 2010, <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2010/11/murders-in-ciudad-juarez-top-2009-total.html>.

8 Wikipedia, “Operation Chihuahua,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Chihuahua).

9 Jorge Contreras.

contingent of federal police was withdrawn, and state and municipal forces began to take responsibility for security in the metropolitan area. Acosta's arrest is widely considered among Juárez activists to mark a turning point in the crime surge. After the arrest, Juárez began to see the beginning of a gradual decline in high-impact crime, a decline that is attributed to many different factors.

### The Strategic Plan of Juárez

When the security crisis struck, Juárez could draw on the background of experience, relationships, and strategic thinking developed by a citizen-led Strategic Plan, a nongovernmental organization operating since 2001. The Strategic Plan of Juárez (Plan Estratégico de Juárez) is the effort of a plural, multiparty group



auto theft with and without violence, extortion, and robberies of business with violence. JPP provided information to authorities about where the crime problems were concentrated. This worked as a means of ensuring that police do their job, of monitoring the work of government to see results, and of developing ideas for strengthening institutions. Anonymous citizen reports of kidnapping and extortion and intelligence-sharing between authorities and civic groups are the main instruments for working to reduce these high-impact crimes. To encourage citizens to report crime, JPP introduced Crime Stoppers to Juárez and administered this hotline, which functioned well during 2009 and 2010 when the service had cooperation from the then-mayor. “No other organization in Juárez had worked on security,” says Fernández of the Plan Estratégico de Juárez. Experience and leadership would prove invaluable later when the federal government invited civil society to collaborate in a broad anti-crime campaign.

### Solution for Juárez

By 2009, extortion had reached epidemic proportions and spread into middle class neighborhoods, terrorizing residents. Members of JPP met with the state attorney general, Patricia González, to demand action. Her response was to recommend paying protection money and letting the authorities trace the money. To members of the JPP, this seemed like a recommendation to acquiesce to the demands of organized crime, with little or no chance of recovering the funds handed over to the extortionists. Whether this was a sign of indifference or even corruption on the part of the attorney general, it solidified the existing disaffection of civil society with the state government.

As frustration mounted, the CMC called for a protest demonstration. The organizers—doctors, human rights leaders, and academics—decided it was essential that the protest place specific demands before authorities. In December 2009, the “Solution for Juárez” march gathered 2,000 people outside the city hall. This was a significant show of civic activism at a time when the city was living a reign of terror.

The six demands called for federal, state, and municipal authorities to join in a pact between government and society that would install a permanent assembly to develop a rescue plan and a sweeping social policy to attack the causes of violence and provide aid for victims of crime, to complete restructuring of security forces

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13 Miguel Fernández.

14 González's term ended with a cloud of controversy. In late 2010, days after González left office, she was accused of having ties to the Juárez Cartel. In a widely circulated internet video, González's brother Mario made a videotaped confession at gunpoint, in which he claimed that he was the contact between his sister and the Juárez Cartel. William Booth and Nick Miro, “Mexican Drug Cartel Forces Lawyer's Video Confessions,” [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).

with an emphasis on intelligence, and overhaul the justice system to combat impunity and resolve crime. “The violence is not exclusively a public security problem, but rather an authentic crisis of governance and cannot be resolved exclusively with traditional strategies in the hands of police and the army,” the protesters said. The marchers demanded that President Felipe Calderón visit Juárez to set in motion the crime-fighting pact. After the march, federal authorities met with leaders of the Observatory and promised a visit by Calderón, although no date was set.

Less than eight weeks later, tragedy struck. On Jan. 31, 2010, 20 gunmen burst into a party of students and killed 15 people. Calderón mistakenly claimed the slayings were the product of a dispute between drug gangs, implying the youths were criminals. The president was soon forced to admit his error. The massacre at Villas de Salvárcar, perpetrated by a criminal gang seeking to murder rivals, was a grievous case of mistaken identity. The tragedy galvanized the government into action, and on Feb. 17, the president and his entire Cabinet came to Juárez, heard the stinging criticisms of mothers of the slain students, and heard the desperation and demands of civil society leaders. This meeting broke down the conventional barriers between government and society, say Juárez participants.

### We Are All Juárez and the Mesa de Seguridad

Calderón then launched the “We are All Juárez” (Todos Somos Juárez) program aimed at implementing an anti-crime strategy that coordinated all levels of government, brought in civic groups, and included social actions to foster crime prevention. Todos Somos Juárez called for representatives of the federal, state, and municipal governments to develop and implement programs with local civil society participants grouped together in six task forces focused on security, labor, health, economy, education, and social development. The president sent his top security adviser, Tello Peón, to Juárez, where he met with citizens as the security task force—the Mesa de Seguridad—was being organized. An intelligence expert, Tello Peón had the authority to make demands of the army and police and came with a mandate from the president to listen to citizen demands. Ultimately, the task forces designed a total of 160 measures to attack crime and its social roots and to improve living conditions in the city.

The security task force, the Mesa de Seguridad, is widely considered the most successful of the Todos Somos Juárez initiatives. It included officials from all



university. It was not a natural combination. “The looks were like at a poker game,” recalls Valenzuela of the Citizens’ Medical Committee and a prominent civil society participant in the Mesa. Still, a breakthrough in collaboration was achieved between these disparate personages. “We took a leap of faith, we were in a situation so extreme that many people let down their defenses and were willing to enter into this dialogue,” says Vargas, director of the Plan Estratégico.

Both sides of the table were committed to working together. The visit of Calderón and the persistence of Juarenses por la Paz in working with authorities had established the dynamic of dialogue that assured the composition of the Mesa de Seguridad was decided correctly. Calderón assigned Facundo Rosas, at the time the federal police commissioner, to visit Juárez monthly with the pledge that civil

## Turning the Tide of Crime and Violence

By the end of 2010, murder had reached a record level of 2,000 in the year. In March 2011, the city government took action to improve policing. Retired Lt. Col. Julián Leyzaola was hired to take charge of the Juárez police. A controversial figure, he came from a stint in Tijuana where he led the police and presided over a decline in crime. Leyzaola built the Juárez municipal police force to 2,000 agents and saw to it that at least half the force was active on the street. He also began cleaning up the force. In April, crime began to subside.

The monthly crime indicators report is a prominent feature of the Mesa's work. Developed by an engineer and assembly plant manager, the indicators document the rates of violent and high-impact crimes since peak levels in 8(y p)2.4(lvs1)-5(6(129.



classes, and other activities for youth and families. Coordination between the levels of government was also important. “When a house is burning, you can’t fight over who takes the bucket,” he said. Murguía was controversial because soon after his first term ended in 2007, his former police director was arrested by U.S. agents for bribing an undercover cop to allow him to transport drugs. Murguía was later elected to a second, non-consecutive term in office.

Murguía did an apparent about-face in February 2013, when he called for “institutionalization” of the Mesa de Seguridad. The mayor invited the Mesa to regular meetings with the city council, attorney general and police chief, and the Mesa agreed. “We see the permanence of Todos Somos Juárez, the Mesa de Seguridad is institutionalized, we don’t have legal status, the relationship between society and government becomes formalized,” says Valenzuela of the Mesa. The scope and terms of Mesa participation in municipal security remain to be seen.

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of violence, and support a center for citizen reports on crime and on abuse by

TABLE 1: SECURITY PERFORMANCE IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ, JANUARY–DECEMBER 2013

Crime						

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administration, the different military and security agencies failed to coordinate their actions, but the Mesa succeeded in bringing them together. “We always convene the army, navy, intelligence office, and federal and state police,” says a businessman involved in the Mesa. The people responsible for dealing with car theft in the federal, state, and municipal police forces and the army did not know each other until civil society brought them together to combat carjackings in a year when 17,000 cars were stolen in Juárez.

When the Mesa staked out clear positions and followed them up, it got a response from authorities that led to improvements in security. The demand for beefing up the investigative police unit led to a doubling of its agents and put muscle into the nearly nonexistent investigations up to that time. The Mesa



new high; over 100 people were killed in the metropolitan area, including more than two dozen police officers, and 88 people were reported as kidnapped and disappeared.<sup>25</sup> Also that year, armed robberies of stores, bank robberies, and carjacking increased and extortion by phone calls became common.

In 2008, members of the Beltrán Leyva trafficking group started settling in Monterrey and setting up business. They soon forged ties with local political leaders and businessmen. About this time, the Beltrán Leyva group had developed a partnership with the Zetas, based on the Gulf Coast, and the Zetas had already begun to move into Monterrey.<sup>26</sup> Organized crime sought to reap maximum benefit from Monterrey's longstanding assets, its wealthy market, and the city's proximity and transportation links to the U.S. border. Murders in the city doubled during 2008, to more than 5,300, fueled by rivalries stemming from the splitting off of the Beltrán Leyva group from the Sinaloa Cartel in early 2008, the state attorney general reported.<sup>27</sup>

During 2007 and 2008, the number of youths joining gangs in Monterrey doubled to over 26,000, the state Ministry of Public Security reported, although specialists considered this a low estimate. In the same period, the number of gangs in metropolitan Monterrey rose to nearly 2,000, and in Escobedo municipality alone tripled to 492 in 2008, according to a study by the Autonomous University of Nuevo León.<sup>28</sup>

After the killing of Zeta lieutenant Sergio Peña Mendoza in January 2010, the Zetas broke off from the Gulf Cartel, and Monterrey was a leading battleground between the rivals. Brutal killings, roadblocks, and kidnappings became common. In 2010, the number of homicides in Monterrey and the state of Nuevo León tripled to 828. The Zetas had penetrated police forces, and during 2010, Monterrey reduced more than 400 officers—nearly half the force—and two other municipalities in the metropolitan area reduced some 200 officers each.

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25 U.S. State Department, "Mexico 2008 Crime and Safety Report: Monterrey," Jan. 30, 2008, <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportPDF.aspx?cid=6242>; Borderland Beat, "'Narco' Offensive Strikes Monterrey"; "In Two Years the Number of Gang Members Doubles in Monterrey, Mexico," translation of story by Diego E. Osorno,

The slaying continued in 2011 as the rivalry between the Gulf Cartel and the Zetas raged on. The security chief of a Monterrey prison and the top intelligence official of the state were murdered in February, and during the first half of the year, 78 security officials were killed. The afternoon of August 25, 2011, eight gunmen carrying automatic weapons and gasoline burst into the Casino Royale in Monterrey, poured gasoline, and set the gaming machines a fire. Fifty-two people died in the brutal attack. Among the five suspects initially rounded up by authorities, one was a state policeman who confessed to being a Zeta.

In 2012, gruesome and widespread violence continued to plague Monterrey. The mutilated bodies of 49 people were dumped in the state, a prison riot in the municipality of Apodaca provided cover for the escape of 30 prisoners, and murders on the streets continued. The State Department reported experts' estimates of one or two kidnappings a day in the city of Monterrey and noted that the

of corruption and fraud in a Monterrey municipality had been exposed by civic groups, but authorities took no action. “There comes a moment when the only thing you can do is to act with a civic conscience,” says a businessman<sup>32</sup> activist.

### The Crime Stoplight and the Consejo Cívico

One month after the march, the Crime Stoplight (Semáforo Delictivo) was launched. It is a civic intervention to monitor the trends in murder, carjacking, thefts in homes and businesses, and family violence in each municipality of greater Monterrey, including Monterrey itself, which is the state capital. Designed in consultation with security experts, the Crime Stoplight draws its information from the attorney general’s office. The Crime Stoplight is a tool for holding government accountable because it identifies progress and setbacks in combating crime in each metropolitan township.

As the presence of organized crime groups expanded in Monterrey during 2009, violence and crimes continued to mount. In early 2010, the private sector decided to back the revitalization of a civic group that had languished over the years. The Consejo Cívico (formerly known as the Civic Council of Institutions of Nuevo León, called CCINLAC) was reconstituted and began working to demand effective public policies to restore security. At the outset of this new phase, the Consejo Cívico began operating as a repository of the business chambers of bankers, employers, and manufacturers. Among those groups, the employers’ association (Coparmex) had been assigned responsibility for coordinating with the state attorney general’s office.

The Consejo Cívico is a hybrid organization, a non-partisan association that brings together business chambers, professional associations, civic and charity organizations, neighborhood organizations, human rights groups, and sports clubs. It has become the standard-bearer of a security agenda shared by the private sector and civil society, and has grown to count 100 organizations as members. As a representative group, the Consejo Cívico has become a legitimate spokesperson for the needs and concerns of civil society. The group serves as a bridge for building dialogues between the private sector and civil society organizations and the government and business.

The major lines of Consejo’s actions are to act as a watchdog and demand accountability in the security and the penal and justice systems, serve as an interlocutor with state and municipal security agencies, promote civility and a culture of peace and legality, combat corruption through collaborating with local academic institutions to advocate reforms, and set up a state anticorruption agency.

The Consejo also manages the public release of the crime-monitoring Stoplight.

jointly by two of the city's leading business chambers, Coparmex and CAINTRA, and the Consejo. The study causes some friction with state authorities and "has

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government to develop the recruiting and screening protocols and devise the career path and incentives to draw in applicants. “We established a consortium with businesses to carry out the vetting and recruiting of clean entry-level police,” says a Nuevo León security official.<sup>7</sup>

Five universities offered their talent to prepare training programs for the police. The goal was to recruit and train 1,900 police during 2011. Despite the offer of a high salary of more than U.S. \$1,000 per month—nearly double the entry level elsewhere in Mexico—plus a benefit package including housing, insurance, and a pension, few people applied for the dangerous job of patrolling Monterrey which, at the time, was experiencing its most violent year ever. The first recruits completed a compressed 3-month training, and Fuerza Civil was launched in June 2011 when 422 graduates were deployed in the city. By year’s end, Fuerza Civil had 900 agents, most of them from out of state. The goal was to recruit and train another 2,000 police by the end of 2012, and recruitment is taking place nationwide. Currently.

Seven convenience stores made space available for the recruitment posters. The transportation company, Senda, offers discounts for home visits made by the police now in the Monterrey force. Corporations donated equipment including patrol cars. “The key to success is called willingness to do things and to break paradigms,” says state security spokesman Jorge Domínguez. In December 2012, a Consejo Cívico initiative was approved and a new state law called for creating a council on police development that is to include one citizen representative, the first time such a body has been opened to civil society.

An outgrowth of this dialogue was that the private sector overcame its distrust of government to such a degree that businesses also committed to investments in urban programs aimed at rebuilding the social fabric such as building parks, supporting training for youth, and cultural activities, backing addiction prevention programs and strengthening a culture of law and order. Some government officials say the private sector should be investing more to support interventions in poor, crime-ridden communities, but they recognize the efforts so far are moving in the right direction. Civil society leaders involved in the meetings with government on security report that the relationship is one of ups and downs.

### Measuring Progress

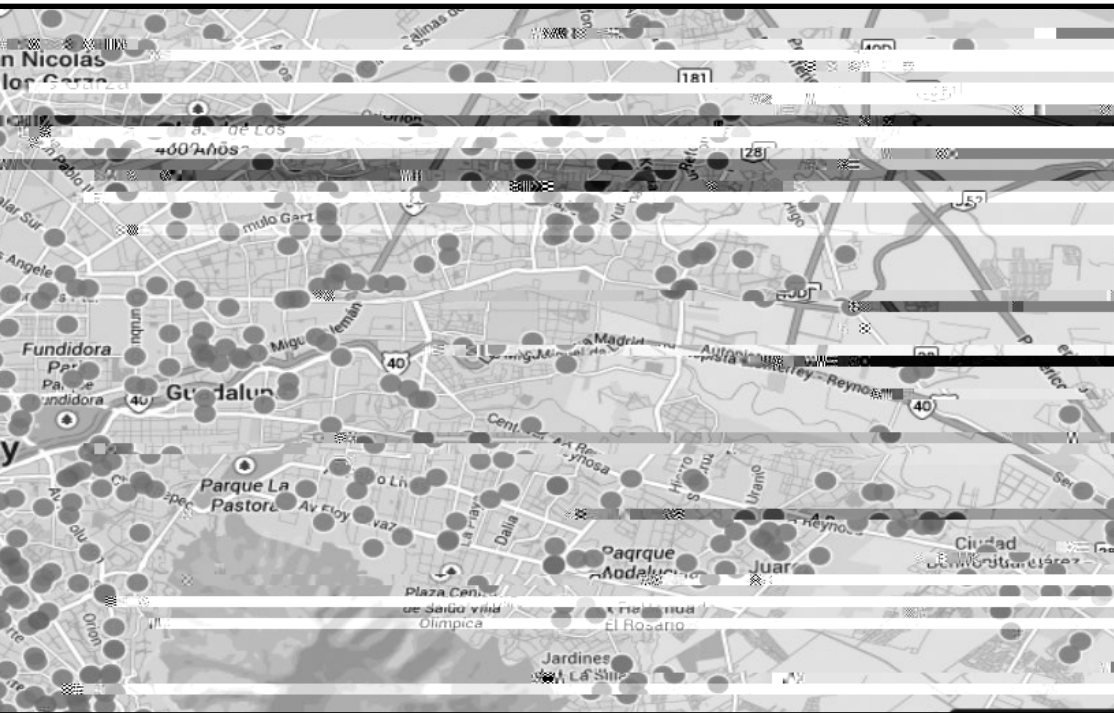
An important tactic of the Consejo Cívico has been to create instruments that measure progress in combating crime. The Consejo Cívico is a prime mover in the Crime Stoplight, or Semáforo del Delito, which relies on figures from the State Attorney General to monitor monthly the crime rate. In 2011, as the number of auto thefts in Monterrey equaled that of greater Mexico City, which has nearly five times more inhabitants, the Consejo Cívico asked the government to set a goal for reducing carjacking. The number of thefts dropped over the next year from more than 2,000 to 800 as all nine municipalities and the state focused on the



their confidence in municipal institutions and police forces. Sponsored by the CAINTRA and COPARMEX business chambers with and the Consejo Cívico and Centro de Integración Cívica (CIC), eight surveys were published between August 2011 and May 2013. Perceptions of insecurity are a highly reliable indicator of real conditions of insecurity, say experts in monitoring and evaluation. (Other analysts blame the high perception of insecurity in Mexico to media sensationalism.) The survey gathered public opinion from each of the municipalities, and reported in July 2012, that 39 percent of metropolitan residents thought security had worsened in the previous quarter. In January 2013, the survey showed a slight increase in the number of residents who thought their municipality is “not very safe” (45.5 percent) and strong improvements in those who ranked their city “unsafe” (31.5 percent, a seven-percent drop from July 2012) and “safe” (23 percent, an increase of nearly five percent).

Early in 2010, the platform was piloted with small networks of trusted citizens who led reports in real time from cell phones and e-mail accounts. A year later, the platform was upgraded to integrate reports from Twitter accounts and to aggregate citizen reports and display crimes and hazards on maps that can be accessed online or from a smart phone. The platform was subsequently adapted to receive reports from e-mails, SMS, and Facebook, and apps for smart phones and computer tablets have been released. All reports are confidential unless the sender releases his or her name. Today, CIC is building new services and tools it may share

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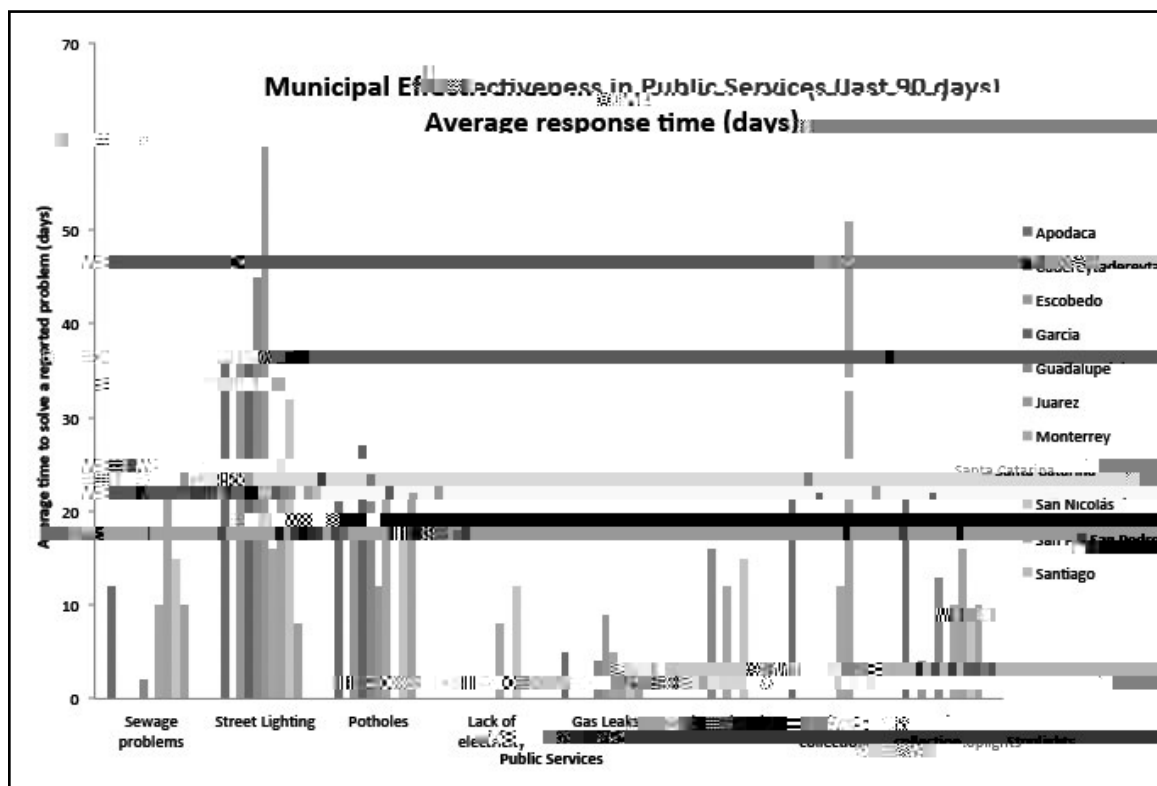


relationships with the local municipalities of Monterrey, San Pedro, Guadalupe, and San Nicolás, and the Nuevo León state government. The San Pedro mayor's office went a step further and signed a collaboration agreement with CIC, signaling that the platform is now an official trusted source of aggregate citizen reports. CIC works hand in hand with San Pedro to follow up on all citizen reports and complaints about the municipality.

Talks are under way with other municipal officials to set up similar arrangements. "Our value proposition is simple, we are a cost-free medium where government can both learn of citizens' most-pressing needs and engage with citizens to work to resolve their needs," says Patrick Kane, executive director of CIC.<sup>43</sup> Observing the CIC connection with active citizens, the public electricity commission (CFE) studied CIC's approach and decided to create its own Twitter account as the vehicle for delivering on-demand customer service.

<sup>43</sup> Patrick Kane, telephone interview with author, February 26, 2013.

FIGURE 2: RANKING OF MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SERVICES IN GREATER MONTERREY



Source: Centro de Integración Ciudadana (CIC) <http://cic.mx/tehuan-beta> (accessed March 13, 2014.)

CIC also provides legal counsel for citizens who wish to file a formal complaint to authorities and offers psychological counseling for victims of violence. The legal services function to help inform and convince victims of kidnapping, extortion, and theft to overcome their distrust of the justice system and to file crime reports with the police. During 2012, half of all kidnappings addressed by CIC were formally filed and processed with authorities. By late 2012, the percentage of kidnapping cases handled by CIC and filed with police rose significantly, suggesting CIC is trusted by citizens who also now feel more confident about approaching authorities, says Kane. It is expected that the proportion of kidnappings that are reported could continue to rise, he adds. Last year, CIC provided legal counsel in almost 500 cases of crime and over 1,500 sessions of psychological counseling to victims of violence and their families.

Monterrey is an especially apt proving ground for CIC. The city boasts cellphone penetration of 100 percent, and a high percentage of the mobiles are smart phones. The surge of crime and violence fuels the impulse to let complaints be heard, and CIC is trusted because it is a citizen-run effort. The posted testimony of an extortion victim who was helped by CIC psychological counseling drew an endorsement from a citizen: “An incredible initiative!” writes Jess Baez in a post to the site. “We all complained and felt that there was nothing we could do, now we have a way to pressure the authorities—good CIC! Thanks for sharing, and may people begin to trust that there is a place where we can get help and above all prevent this (type of) crime.”

CIC is designed to act as a model for promoting citizen participation, and creates an environment of confidence because it is an all-citizen organization. The advisory board is made up of a wide range of civil society leaders, and although seed capital was provided by Cemex, the financial backing now comes from a growing number of private companies and individual donations.

The intention of CIC is to scale up. The core technology is designed to be replicable beyond Monterrey. “The bottleneck to scale beyond Monterrey is not technical but strategic and operational—what is required is finding committed organizations that will use technology wisely to promote citizen participation,”

Consejo Cívico will track changes in police sta ng to be sure they are registered on Mexico's national anti-crime data base, Plataforma México. This initiative is funded with donations from local backers.

When the rst comparative rankings were released in February 2013, "there was a lot of competition among them, they all wanted to be the best, they take it seriously," says Molinard of Consejo Cívico.<sup>46</sup> The rankings include the Consejo's kudos for good performance and reproaches for laggardly progress and create incentives for mayors to fulfill their promises to their communities and outdo one another.

### Results: Monterrey

Monterrey is by no means in a position to lower its guard on combatting violence. Crime continued to rise through 2011, which was the most violent year on record for the state. Killings in Nuevo León increased by 192 percent in 2011. The rate of vehicle theft rose steadily from 606 per 100,000 residents in 2007 to 803 in 2011, a rate that is twice the national average.

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to believe the understanding between the federal government and Monterrey captains of industry could improve, says a corporate security adviser. "Security is beginning to be built to a great extent due to pressure of the businessmen," says Alejandro Hope, formerly an official in Mexico's intelligence agency, CISEN, and now security director of IMCO, an applied research institute.



acting as a watchdog, and generating citizen crime watch intelligence are clear. Other Mexican cities including Acapulco, Aguascalientes, León, Mazatlán, Monterrey, and Torreón have consulted the Mesa for advising about how it confronted crime in Juárez. National victims' groups also look to the Mesa for lessons that can be replicated elsewhere.

Juárez stands out in Mexico not only for the terrible violence it suffered but also because the city offered a rich experience in participatory planning and civic engagement by the private sector. The Plan Estratégico mobilized reflection and initiatives by citizens about how to lift up the city in every aspect and improve quality of life for all residents. Businessmen created and supported non-profit groups that taught values and ethics in schools, for example. In addition, many of the residents who became active in the Mesa de Seguridad already knew one another and many had worked together in the past. This unusual depth of experience in private sector involvement in civic affairs undoubtedly contributed to making the Mesa work well. Even so, civil society in Mexico still lacks a familiarity with civic action, and citizens need to learn how to be citizens, says Vargas of the Plan Estratégico. In this sense, "The problem of Juárez is not of Juárez, it is a Mexican problem," she adds.

Meanwhile, the power and reach of Monterrey business leaders have been important factors in catalyzing action on security issues and in bringing about some of the principal improvements achieved there in fighting crime. Business leaders may be focused on a local issue, but their influence is national. They make specific requests of the federal government, such as legal reforms and a cleanup of the police force. During the current security crisis, the Monterrey corporations and the federal, state, and municipal government have cooperated on several fronts. "The view of the businessmen is that it's not useful to do battle with government," says a source familiar with one of the biggest Monterrey multinational corporations. The top corporate leaders of Monterrey have been important participants in a variety of actions aimed at improving

and industry. These groups in turn expose the governor and local authorities by publicly denouncing corruption and questionable public debt, and the associations make demands for business-friendly policies. “It’s a pincer movement they (big business) make on the government,” says a corporate security expert. This pressure tactic is not always well received. “The worst way to communicate between government and the private sector is in the pages of newspapers; mechanisms of communication are needed,” says federal deputy Treviño.

In the context of the security crisis in Monterrey, corporate interests have built up another type of representative organization, the hybrid civil-society group; Consejo Cívico brings together business interests with civil society groups, universities, conventional charities, and a host of non-profit social programs. The business chambers communicate among themselves, and each chamber decides what will be its central issue for policy and action. In this constellation, although it is not a business chamber, the Consejo Cívico has become the representative organization and leading civic mechanism for private sector security concerns. The Consejo works in close coordination with representative business chambers, especially the employers’ association and manufacturing chamber, Coparmex and CAINTRA, respectively. These associations provide visibility and valuable financial and technical support to the Consejo’s efforts. For example, the Coparmex membership includes all the private security experts and firms in Monterrey. The business associations support the Consejo Cívico with technical information which is then used to develop proposals in dialogue with the governor and mayors of the metropolitan area.

## CONCLUSION

The northern cities of Ciudad Juárez and Monterrey have been overtaken by two of the worst waves of violence in Mexico's contemporary history of savagery. The darkest days of the two cities elicited bravery and commitment among their hometown residents, professionals, and business people. The citizens who rose to the challenge to confront crime and impunity created vibrant civic organizations composed of business persons and civil society organizations working together. These hybrid groups, new on the Mexican scene, have placed specific demands before authorities, generated their own information to monitor government actions and, ultimately, worked in coordination with government to stem the threats to security from organized crime and from weak and often

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In both cities, citizen-led groups set up mechanisms to build trust in government

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