

The fate of migrants is determined by the business model of the criminal organization that controls the region they are traveling. There were 289 criminal organizations in Mexico in November 2019, according to Lantia Consultores. If migrants travel on routes or cities within Cartel of Sinaloa sphere they would be more respected than people inside the Zetas sphere, because those kind of organizations practice a “systemic brutality” against migrants as a business model.

Migrants face too many risks during their journey. From reports of the Mexican State,ⁱ of civil society,ⁱⁱ and the academic community,ⁱⁱⁱ we know that migrants lack protection during their journey and they are constant victims of harassment, threats and aggressions along the way. We also know that they use the ways less attended by the authorities, aiming to not to be apprehended or extorted due to their illegal status. In this way, they normally use paved roads without fees or unpaved roads, to link up with the scarce Mexican rail system whenever they can.

As San Fernando and Cadereyta showed us, amongst other cases, we know that organized crime is present in both type of roads: they have information to choose by which one to circulate and manages to assault, kidnap, extort, disappear and kill in both types of roads. However, two considerations have to be made. The first is that unpaved roads do not have a big reach, rather they are subsidiaries of the road system. The second is that there is much more money involved on the paved roads, because there circulate large goods and more people.^{iv} Finally, we can differentiate between two types of violence on the road: on the one hand, that which occurs right there, such as vehicle theft or an execution; on the other hand, control violence, dominate the area in which the road is inserted through, for instance, control points. That is, the road is an element in the environment in which it is inserted.

Mexican roads are very susceptible to natural weather events. In that sense, Mexican geography plays a very important role, since earthquakes, heavy rains, hurricanes and others occur in its territory. But its effects are enhanced by deficiencies in construction and lack of infrastructure, leading to landslides, ruptures or situations of extreme danger along the roads. An extreme case was Hurricane Stan in 2005, which hit Central America and

southeastern Mexico, causing dozens of deaths. It had a devastating effect on migration, because many people had to emigrate, and the routes changed in a lasting way.

What is the Mexican new government doing with the combination of poorly constructed roads with criminal presence along them? It is taking focalized measures. For example, the Safe Roads Plan has just been launched, seeking to help the sections with the highest criminal incidence. In summary, it will serve with more security elements in these sections, will seek coordination with local police and will make available to the citizens a telephone number and apps for travellers. Hopefully it turns out, although the criminals have shown us their ability to adapt systematically, especially when they have other similar routes.

Mexican society has taken measures to protect itself. There are groups in social media to share travel, within closed groups. They also use Whatsapp or Facebook, to share information and create alerts when something serious happens, such as efforts to find missing people. However, the scope of this information is reduced, due to the closed nature of these groups. On the other hand, business Chambers, such as the National Freight Transport Chamber (CANACAR, acronym in Spanish), try to communicate their experiences through the media.^v We believe that it could be more organized and complemented with that of the authorities, so that it flows better towards citizens. We will speak about that in the next pages

ⁱ Informe cndh https://www.cndh.org.mx/sites/all/doc/Informes/Especiales/2011_secmigrantes.pdf

ⁱⁱ https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/document/micic_mexico_1.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ casillas

^{iv} <https://www.jornada.com.mx/ultimas/economia/2019/05/21/crimen-organizado-se-reparte-carreteras-para-robar-transporte-informe-1730.html>

^v <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/autopistas/las-carreteras-de-mexico-donde-mas-asaltan>