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BUILDING HUMAN SECURITY IN MEXICALI, BAJA CALIFORNIA (2010-2020)

ABSTRACT   This article aims to analyze social inequality and public security in Mexicali Metropolitan Area from a Human Security approach. The research methodology, carried out in the summer of 2021, is mix methods, with qualitative, quantitative, and cartographic technics. It is based on official data, international organizations reports, media outlets while Google Earth and Mapinfo are mapping tools. The document is divided into the following sections: introduction, conceptual framework, methodology, and qualitative and quantitative description of social inequality and insecurity in the Mexicali Metropolitan Area (MMA). Subsequently, the main argument is addressed, supported by statistics and thematic maps. Finally, the closing considerations are presented.

Keywords: Mexicali, crime, inequality, human security, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a positive international instrument, which recognizes essentially the inherent dignity and rights of human beings, regardless of nationality, sex, color, sexual orientation, or religion. In this historical act, established a few years after World War II, the participating states, including Mexico, agreed to safeguard the integrity, freedom and rights of individuals.[1]

Derived from the Declaration, within simultaneous legal protection and democratic culture building, the United Nations General Assembly conceived resolution 66/290, which recognizes that *human security requires people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all individuals and communities* [translation mine].[2]

Despite the international regulatory framework, social inequality coupled with the lack of urban infrastructure, the precarious security and justice in Mexico, and the multiple effects derived nowadays from the COVID-19 pandemic call into question any possibility of achieving human security in the medium term.[3] Particularly in the northwest of the country, which, due to its strategic geographic location bordering California (United States), the territory and social space register chronical abandonment and violence, caused by state and non-state actors.[4]

In Mexicali between 2010 and 2020, violence indicators increased compared to previous years. Furthermore, between January and May 2021, intentional homicides increased 52% compared to 2020.[5] In contrast to the 'golden zone' in the Mexicali Metropolitan Area (MMA, where only moderate marginalization was recorded (Figure 1), the east and southwest of the city show high and very high marginalization.[6]

In 2018, the Gini coefficient (an instrument used to measure inequality by income in the population) was .402, with a downward trend for Baja California.[7] Indeed, it would seem that the state is among the least unequal in the country, given that, according

[1]   United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 217 A (III). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Paris, 10 December 1948.

[2]   United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 66/290. Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome*, New York, 10 September 2012.

[3]   S. Zavaleta Hernández, C. Rico Becerra, "La pandemia del SARS-CoV-2 como riesgo global: desigualdad e inseguridad humana," *URVIO. Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de Seguridad*, no. 31 (2021), pp. 62-76.

[4]   Z. Orozco, *Economía criminal en Tijuana, Baja California, México. Alcances y límites en la conformación del espacio social (2000-2010)*, PhD tesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México 2018.

[5]   Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación, *Incidencia delictiva*, 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php 2021 – 7 X 2022.

[6]   N. Bringas Rábago, D. Toudert, *Atlas. Ordenamiento territorial para el estado de Baja California*, Tijuana 2011, p. 156.

[7]   Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, *Informe de pobreza y evaluación 2020. Baja California*, México 2020, at https://www.coneval.org.mx/coordinacion/entidades/Documents/Informes_de_pobreza_y_evaluacion_2020_Documentos/Informe_BC_2020.pdf – 7 X 2022.

to the index, an ideal scenario with full equality occurs when the value is zero, while the maximum inequality is indicated by the value of 1.

Figure 1. Mexicali Metropolitan Area: Golden Zone and Marginalized Areas
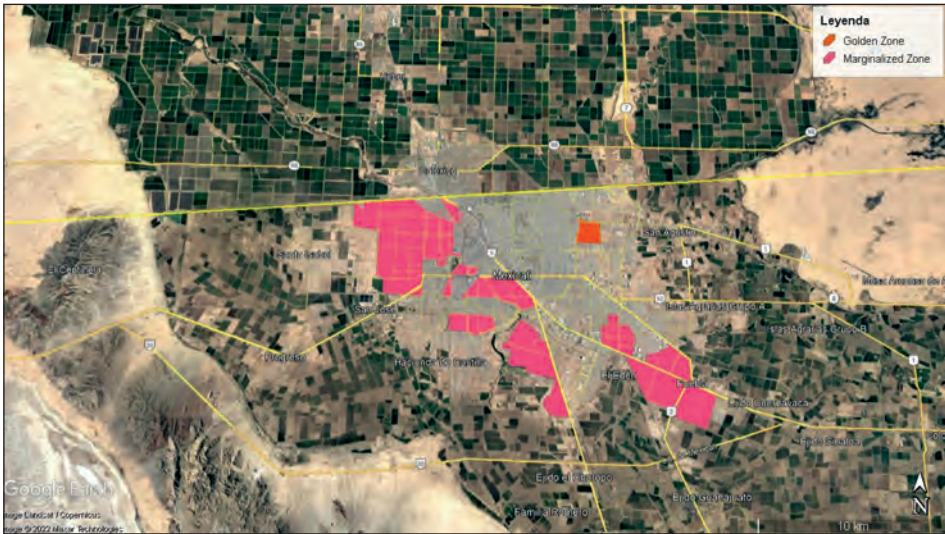
Source: own elaboration with Google Earth. The golden zone marked in orange is delimited by Calle Novena, Calzada Independencia, Periférico Oriente, and Calzada Cetys. The pink polygons show the marginalization areas.

However, the premise is refuted given that in 2015 the MMA registered 988,417 inhabitants of which 278,238 were in poverty and extreme poverty.[8] Indeed, one out of every three inhabitants was in a situation of high vulnerability, even though the municipal Human Development Index (HDI) was .821.[9]

As mentioned, this article aims to analyze social inequality and access to public safety in Mexicali from the theoretical perspective of human security. The research methodology, conducted in the summer of 2021, is documentary, qualitative, quantitative and cartographic, for which we will rely on various official reports, international organizations, media, as well as Google Earth and MapInfo in respect to cartography. Likewise, exploratory visits were made to several MMA neighborhoods with high marginalization.

The following section presents the conceptual, theoretical framework of human security.

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[8]   Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, *Población. Número de habitantes*, 2020, at http://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/monografias/informacion/bc/poblacion/default.aspx?tema=me&e=02 – 7 X 2022; Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, *Informe de pobreza...*, pp. 70-72.

[9]   Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Informe de Desarrollo Humano Municipal 2010--2015. Transformando México desde lo local*, México 2019, pp. 84, 87, at https://www.mx.undp.org/content/mexico/es/home/library/poverty/informe-de-desarrollo-humano-municipal-2010-2015--transformando-.html – 7 X 2022.

HUMAN SECURITY NOTES

The modern state originates from the protection of individuals from an attack by others.[10] Before the 20th century, security was not relevant in international thinking; conceptually, the words 'security' and 'insecurity' had not been defined as such. The closest approach to the concept of security was propagandistic rather than scientific.[11] The change arose during the inter-war period in the countries with the most significant political influence, England and France, which used collective security. This blurred the distinction between national and local.[12]

It was argued that the national approach was deficient, and a shift to collective security was inevitable. However, according to Waever, the objective was to look for one word among many to be used together with fear, danger, and security, although the politically operative concepts were peace, order, and interests. Thus the concept that emerged on the US political scene was that of Homeland Security.

The *raison d'état*, the idea that radical challenges justify extreme measures, was less and less suggestive. Thus, the rationale that the state 'must do what it has to do' was reduced to a special case of 'exception' or 'state of emergency.' For Waever, the concept helped manage geopolitical rivalry with the Soviet Union as national security expressed an effort with military and non-military components, which justified a policy with more force than before.[13]

Against this background, the US perspective of national security is currently focused on international security, mainly in the face of terrorism. It became clear: […] *the use of economic, political, diplomatic and military power to maintain the integrity of the State; the referent object is the State; and the instrument is, at the extreme, force, mainly military force.*[14]

In the post-war period and with the rise of globalization and new actors – transnational corporations, civil organizations, and criminal groups, among others – acting parallel to states, a change occurred in how security was studied. As a result, the relevance of maintaining the traditional emphasis on military threats to state security or broadening the focus was questioned. Instead, it was suggested to include non-military threats to states and, perhaps, other actors, or to go further and include a range of threats, both military and non-military, in the scope of the security competencies of all actors in the relationship.[15]

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[10]   O. Waever, *Paz y seguridad: dos conceptos en evolución y su relación cambiante. Reconceptualizar la seguridad en el siglo XXI*, México 2009, p. 78.

[11]   W. Bruce, T. McCormick, "Concepts of Security and Insecurity," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 59, no. 6 (1954), p. 556.

[12]   O. Waever, *Paz y seguridad…*, p. 78.

[13]   Ibid., p. 79.

[14]   T. Payan, "La seguridad en la frontera México-Estados Unidos: paradigmas, conceptos discursos e intereses," in A. Hristoulas (eds), *La seguridad de América del Norte reconsiderada*, México 2011, pp. 77-80.

[15]   P. Hough, *Understanding Global Security*, London 2004, p. 2.

The search for a new approach gained ground in the 1990s at the end of the Persian Gulf War: on March 6, 1991. Peace movements appeared, arguing that security was part of the problem and not part of the solution. This movement sought to redefine the concept of security with meanings such as common security and security alliances.[16] However, the changes did not undermine the realist logic of security studies. The state system and the relations between states governed by power remained central to the analyses.[17]

Buzan argued that the peace and power movements were too limited in their basic view of international relations to generate a comprehensive understanding. In contrast, security embraced the dynamics of conflict and harmony, and precisely this size of coverage made it so helpful when applied to the international system. The security offered a synthesis that preserved and reconciled the valuable insights of both power studies and peace movements and addressed the critical areas that those concepts had denied.[18] The broadening of the term 'security' came with the theory of securitization, which defined security as: *Threats and vulnerabilities may arise in different areas, military and non-military, but to count as security problems, they have to meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal march of the merely political. They have to be organized as existential threats to an object of reference by a securitizing actor, and this generates the backing of emergency measures.*[19]

What this new concept sought was for security to encompass all areas of human life, for example, political, economic, social, and ecological. With this expansion, all goods, resources, services, property, capital, space, information, identity, documents, and technology, among others, are referents of not only public security but also national security.[20] From this approach, the securitizing actor (the state) can signal that someone or something (an object of reference) is existentially threatened and, therefore, extraordinary actions such as secrecy, violence, recruitment, and other security measures (usually exercised by the securitizing agent) are justified. Through this movement, security becomes political and achieves a status of urgency and precedence.[21]

By 1994, the Human Development Report suggested that the logic with which security was studied should be broadened beyond territorial defense, national interests and the efforts to contain nuclear weapons. This paradigm shift involved looking at the challenges posed by poverty and underdevelopment. Thus, human security emerged as a concept that focused on human life, dignity, how people live, how they exercise their freedoms, access to the market and social opportunities and, above all, whether they live in conflict or peace.[22] The acceptance of the concept was based on

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[16]   O. Waever, *Paz y seguridad…*, pp. 88-89.

[17]   P. Hough, *Understanding Global Security…*, p. 8.

[18]   B. Buzan, "Peace, Power, and Security: Contending Concepts in the Study of International Relations," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1984), pp. 109-111.

[19]   Buzan, Waever, and Wide cited in P. Hough, *Understanding Global Security…*, p. 8.

[20]   T. Payan, "La seguridad en la frontera…," pp. 82-83.

[21]   O. Waever, *Paz y seguridad…*, p. 80.

[22]   United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994*, Oxford 1994, pp. 22-23.

the search for aspects of global life but always taking as a reference the importance that states give to security.[23]

According to Tadjbakhsh[24] and Booth,[25] human security is concerned with identifying and avoiding threats when possible and mitigating their effects when they occur. In addition, it means helping victims cope with the consequences of widespread insecurity resulting from armed conflict, human rights violations and massive underdevelopment. This expanded use of the word 'security' encompasses the concept that people's livelihoods must be guaranteed through 'social security.'

The discourse on human security does not seek to elevate all possible issues to the highest political priority; it only seeks to establish thresholds below which people's lives are in danger and their dignity is threatened. This is related to Resolution 66/290 of the United Nations General Assembly, in which the concept of human security encompasses certain aspects, which are delimited as follows for this research:

- The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All people, particularly the vulnerable, have the right to live free from fear and want, to have an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and to develop their full human potential.
- Requires people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and communities.
- It recognizes the interrelationship between peace, development and human rights and considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.
- Human security does not involve the threat, use of force, or coercive measures. Human security is not a substitute for state security.
- Human security is based on national ownership. Since the political, economic, social and cultural conditions for human security vary considerably between and within countries and at different times, human security reinforces national solutions compatible with local realities.
- Governments continue to have the primary role and responsibility for ensuring their citizens' survival, livelihoods and dignity. The international community's role is to complement the work of governments and provide the necessary support, when requested, to strengthen their capacity to respond to current and emerging threats. Human security requires greater collaboration and partnership between governments, international and regional organizations and civil society.[26]

The above helps dimension the implications of human security since there has been a radical broadening of the types of threats and sectors to which security applies.

[23]   O. Waever, *Paz y seguridad…*, p. 95.

[24]   S. Tadjbakhsh, "Human Security: Concepts and Implications with an Application to Post-Intervention Challenges in Afghanistan," *Les Etudes du CERI*, no. 117-118 (2005), pp. 5-8.

[25]   K. Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies*, vol. 17, no. 4 (1991), pp. 313-326.

[26]   United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 66/290…*, pp. 1-2.

Specifically, human security involves seven categories: 1) economic security; 2) food security; 3) health security; 4) environmental security; 5) personal security; 6) community security; and 7) political security.[27] In this sense, the article focuses on the security of individuals.

In the following section, we will address the research methodology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This basic research was conducted during the summer and fall of 2021 in the capital city of Mexicali. We used a mixed-methods methodology because we resorted to quantitative, qualitative and cartographic techniques. Through statistical data, fieldwork, and the elaboration of thematic maps, the authors analyze social inequality and access to public safety in Mexicali from the theoretical perspective of human security.

From the quantitative methodology, official reports were used, especially those related to poverty and social backwardness in Mexicali, Baja California. It should be noted that an additional effort was made to locate information at the colony level; however, the closest we could get, due to lack of data, was to the locality.

Another essential factor that strengthened the research was that, throughout 2020, different official censuses of national relevance were published, such as the Population and Housing Census or CONEVAL's own Social Gap Index. Having recent data for our research was significant because it provided an updated analysis of the situation that, at any other time, would have had several years of difference that would not reflect the context in situ.

We also resorted to various reports published by the United Nations system, particularly by the UNDP, the institution that determines the HDI in the world and within Mexico. Furthermore, regarding crime incidence, we used the reports provided by the State Security and Investigation Guard (GESI) of Baja California. Thus, statistical reports elaborated by UNDP, CONEVAL, INEGI and GESI are quantitative pillars that support this research.

The qualitative methodology consisted of desk research through the review of various authors specializing in the subject and the geographical area, ethnographic work and non-participant observation in the areas with the highest marginalization and crime incidence in 2020. In addition, multiple visits and tours were made to get to know the field, some of the local actors, and dynamics according to the days and times of the field visits.

The fieldwork was particularly relevant for the authors to understand the relationship between social gap, crime, and the indicators that make up the surveys that feed the official reports. As a security protocol, during the fieldwork, the geo-referenced position

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[27] Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo y Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, *El enfoque de la seguridad humana desde tres estudios de caso*, Costa Rica 2011, at https://www.iidh. ed.cr/multic/UserFiles/Biblioteca/IIDHSeguridad/11_2011/d31ae043-1976-4d83-86e9-35323eef 3393.pdf – 10 X 2022.

of the researchers was reported at all times to more than one colleague to assist if necessary. Among the neighborhoods regularly visited were El Robledo and Angeles de Puebla.

Finally, we believe it is essential to incorporate cartography because it illustrates the incidence of crime in a city with a high HDI. Through the maps, we can visualize the neighborhoods that are not guaranteed the right to security in the capital city. The thematic maps were focused on social deprivation, intentional homicides, commercial robbery, and home robbery, and for this purpose, we used two programs: Google Earth and MapInfo.

The former used a more straightforward and different methodology than those elaborated in MapInfo. The thematic maps produced in Google Earth plot the neighborhoods without measuring the density of cases per neighborhood, as opposed to those produced in MapInfo, which, in effect, contain the crime density depending on the incident recorded.

The maps produced with MapInfo were based on the systematization of statistics reflected in an Excel software database. Both technological tools are helpful for analysis and simultaneously demonstrate independence and congruence with each other.

In the following section, we will analyze the case of Mexicali, Baja California.

SOME INDICATORS OF MEXICALI, BAJA CALIFORNIA

Mexicali is the second most populated municipality in Baja California. By 2020, it had 1.05 million inhabitants (50.4% men), whose median age was 31. In the last 20 years, the population increased its median age and registered a clear downward trend in birth and fertility rates.[28]

Indeed, births registered in Mexicali between 2000 and 2010 form an inverted J-curve: in 2000, 16,851 Mexicalenses were born, while in 2019, 14,084 births were registered. Regarding the ageing of the population, in 2000, the median age was 24 years, while in 2010, it was 27, and as mentioned above, in 2020, it was 31 years. In addition, mortality has also increased in the last decade. For example, already in a clear upward trend, in 2010, there were 4,776 deaths (approx. 60% men), while in 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), there were 6,092 (approx. 61% men).

However, from 1970 to date, Mexicali has registered a population growth rate of between 2% and 2.5%.[29] This is a significant growth considering the previously mentioned population trends. Immigration to the capital city corresponded to 4.5% of the total population in 2020.

According to Ley (2012), the MMA has developed in four stages in respect to housing policies that influenced the urban expansion of the municipality: 1900-1940, 1940--1970, 1970-1990, and 1990-2010 (Figures 2 and 3). In addition, the Bracero Program (1942-1964) profoundly influenced the demographic and urban explosion of Mexicali

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[28]   Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, *Población. Número de...*

[29]   Ibid.; N. Bringas Rábago, D. Toudert, *Atlas. Ordenamiento territorial...*

since over the years, the migratory flow of national and international farmers remained in the border capital city.[30]

However, this was not the only factor that facilitated the city's urban growth over the years. Undoubtedly, the industrialization of the border through the maquiladoras, coupled with the economic crises suffered mainly in the center of the country, and the consolidation of housing policies in Mexico were factors that motivated a migration rate of between 2% and 2.5% to Mexicali.[31]

Figure 2. Urban sprawl of Mexicali, Baja California (1900-2010)

Figure 3. Urban growth of Mexicali, Baja California (1910-2005)
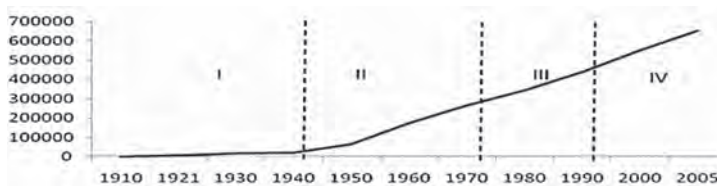
Source: J. Ley, *Procesos urbanos en Baja California: Análisis, planeación y sustentabilidad*, México 2012, p. 124.

Thus, by 2020, Mexicali had registered 330,356 inhabited private homes, of which 68.8% had internet access and 78% had a motor vehicle. Also, 97% and 98% of the homes had essential services, such as electricity, potable water, and drainage. In some cases, homes even had solar panels (3%), a cistern (7%), and a solar water heater (8%). On average, dwellings were inhabited by 3.2 people, and in 2015, 70% of the houses had homeownership titles.[32]

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[30]   J. Ley, *Procesos urbanos en Baja California: Análisis, planeación y sustentabilidad*, México 2012; J. Durand, "El programa bracero (1942-1964). Un balance crítico," *Migración y Desarrollo*, no. 9 (2007), pp. 27-43.

[31]   J. Ley, *Procesos urbanos...*, pp. 123-127; N. Bringas Rábago, D. Toudert, *Atlas. Ordenamiento territorial...*

[32]   Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, *Banco de indicadores*, Mexicali, Baja California 2021, at https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/indicadores/?t=56&ag=02002 – 7 X 2022.

As mentioned, the municipal HDI was .821. However, the index is misleading if we consider that 45% of its population has primary schooling and 27.4% has high school education. In other words, 7 out of 10 *cachanillas* have essential tools for life in a border state capital immersed in a context of neoliberal globalization. In addition, 2.5% of the population aged 15 years and older had no schooling. Although the authorities have made an effort, the challenge remains: it took twenty years (1995 and 2015) to increase the population's schooling from 8.5 to 10 years.[33]

Likewise, according to CONEVAL, the Social Gap Index in the state capital was -1.2, a shallow degree, according to the measurement instrument.[34] Mexicali ranked 2,397 out of 2,469 (0 being the highest). The urban neighborhoods with a high degree of social gap in Mexicali were: Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Venustiano Carranza, Granjas, El Bordo, and La Ladrillera.[35] In terms of municipal crime indicators, robberies mainly affected small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (Figures 4 and 5). According to Denegri de Dios, between 2004 and 2017, merchant's victims concentrated in the following borrough: González Ortega, Pueblo Nuevo, Independencia, Primera Sección, Centro Cívico, Jardines del Lago, Carbajal, Valle del Pedregal, Prohogar, Villa del Rey, Nuevo Mexicali, Venustiano Carranza, Hacienda de los Portales, and Ángeles de Puebla.[36]

Figure 4. Violent robberies in Mexicali, Baja California (2011-2020)
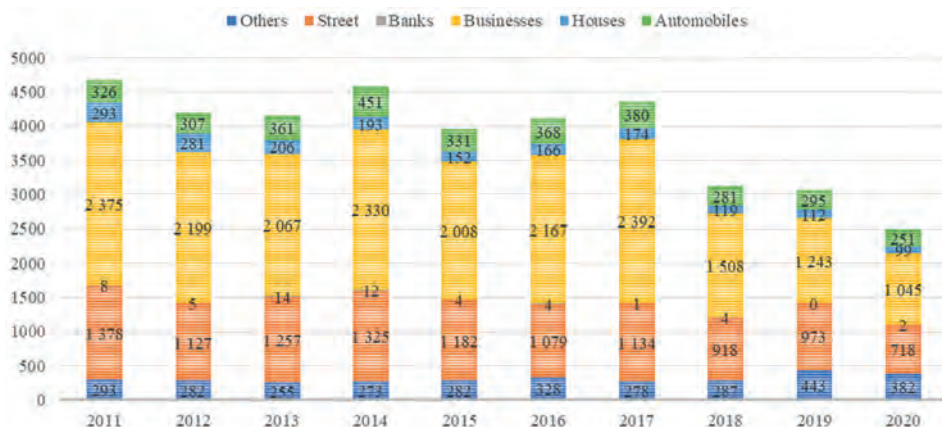
Source: own elaboration with data from Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación, *Incidencia delictiva*, 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php.

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[33]   Ibid.

[34]   Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, *Índice de Rezago Social 2020*, México 2020, at https://www.coneval.org.mx/Medicion/IRS/Paginas/Indice_de_Rezago_Social_2020_anexos.aspx – 7 X 2022.

[35]   Ibid.

[36]   F. Denegri de Dios, "Resiliencia empresarial frente a la delincuencia: robos a micro comercios en Mexicali," in J. Ley García, F. Denegri de Dios (eds), *Ciudad y sustentabilidad. Riesgos Urbanos*, México 2019, pp. 115-141.

Figure 5. Merchants' victims of crime, Mexicali (2004-2017)

Crime	Affirmative	Negative	Total
one or more offences	73%	27%	100%
robbery with a knife/firearm	30%	70%	100%
merchandise theft	10%	90%	100%
vehicle theft	7%	93%	100%
extortion	7%	93%	100%
abduction	3%	97%	100%

Source: F. Denegri de Dios, "Resiliencia empresarial frente a la delincuencia: robos a micro comercios en Mexicali," in J. Ley García, F. Denegri de Dios (eds), *Ciudad y sustentabilidad. Riesgos Urbanos*, México 2019, p. 126.

In her research, Denegri de Dios demonstrates that there is no correlation between commercial density and concentration of violence (the greater the number of businesses in an area, the greater the number of crimes). On the contrary, the highest absolute number of merchants victims of crime are located in the urban periphery, which has a lower number of businesses.[37]

On the other hand, although the intentional homicides rate in Mexicali (18 victims per 100,000 inhabitants) is not relevant in contrast to Tijuana`s rate (96 per100,000 inhabitants). Moreover, except 2014 and 2015, intentional homicides have increased in the capital city (Figure 6 and 7) since 2016.[38]

Finally, as for residential burglaries, there is a downtrend registered since 2011 (Figure 8). However, it is questionable given the high value of human development in the midsize capital city, were 419 families (per 100,000 households) were violently dispossessed in their personal sphere. Indeed, even though the downtrend reaching 2020, in a Covid-19 lockdown context, about 419 per 100,000 households had their privacy and property invaded.
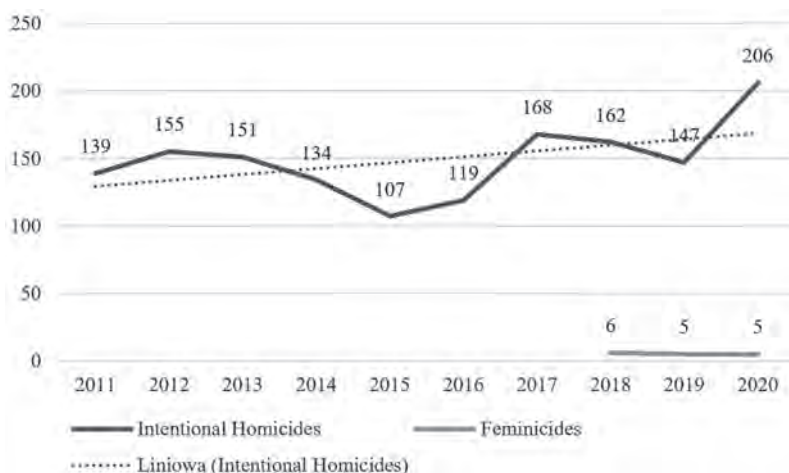
Figure 6. Intentional Homicides in Mexicali (2011-2020)

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[37] Ibid., pp. 124-125.
[38] Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación, *Incidencia delictiva...*

Figure 7. Intentional homicides and femicides in Mexicali (2011-2020)

Source: own elaboration with data from Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación, *Incidencia delictiva*, 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php.

Figure 8. Residential burglaries and percentage decrease compared to the previous year, Mexicali (2011-2020)

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
8,392	7, 970	6,257	5,098	4,606	3,985	3,625	2,739	2,154	1,386
	-6%	-22%	-19%	-10%	-14%	-10%	-25%	-22%	-36%

Source: own elaboration with information from Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación, *Incidencia delictiva*, 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php.

In summary, some advances certainly advance the quality of life in the capital city in recent years (e.g., a decrease in assaults, an increase in years of schooling, and a high percentage of homes with essential services). On the other hand, crime makes it difficult for citizens to live in peace and without fear, even considering the low Gini coefficient and the high HDI recorded in the capital city. Next, we will show the cartography that traces some of the crimes in the MMA during 2020, the lockdown year due to Covid-19 pandemic.

CARTOGRAPHY OF INSECURITY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN MEXICALI

In this section, we will analyze the incidence of crime and social inequality in the state capital city through mapping. Depending on the results, we consider that both factors can hinder efforts to achieve human security in Mexicali. This is because the social lag variable analyzes the population's access to education, health, housing, services and the use of technology in daily life. At the same time, in terms of insecurity, we consider that

the crimes that mainly affect society are intentional homicides, home and commercial establishment robberies.[39] In addition, kidnapping is also a crime of high social impact; however, in 2020, only two cases were recorded in the MMA.

In this sense, the information that feeds the thematic maps dates from 2020. During that year, the Social Gap Index was also published by CONEVAL; and the INEGI Population and Housing Census was carried out, making possible a detailed picture of the MMA context. Finally, we also used the municipality's crime statistics for that year.

According to CONEVAL, the social gap characterized by being very high is mainly located in the Mexicali Valley; that is, it has a rural dimension.[40] Likewise, high social gap or inequality is registered mainly in some neighborhoods of the urban periphery. According to the instrument, *ejidos* (common land) appear more frequently than *colonias* (borroughs). Likewise, the polygons of social inequality with rural characteristics are relatively close, while the urban polygons are distanced (Figure 9). Distance will not be a relevant factor in crime incidence, as shown below, according to the mapping of insecurity in Mexicali, Baja California, during 2020.

Figure 9. Neighborhoods and social inequality in the MMA

Source: own elaboration with information from Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, *Índice de Rezago Social 2020*, México 2020, at https://www.coneval.org.mx/Medicion/ IRS/Paginas/Indice_de_Rezago_Social_2020_anexos.aspx. The red polygons are the neighborhoods with very high and high social inequality.

According to the State Security and Insecurity Guard (GESI), the neighborhoods most affected by homicidal violence were: Angeles de Puebla, Gonzalez Ortega,

[39]   L. Cheshire, P. Walters, C. ten Have, "'Strangers in My Home': Disaster and the Durability of the Private Realm," *The Sociological Review*, vol. 66, no. 6 (2018), pp. 1226-1241.

[40]   Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social, *Índice de Rezago Social...*

Ladrilleros Campestre, Parajes de Oriente, and Pueblo Nuevo.[41] It is important to note that the victims of intentional homicide did not necessarily live in the neighborhoods mentioned above; the bodies were recovered there. Figure 10 below shows the distribution of intentional homicides during 2020.

Figure 10. Intentional homicides in the MMA, 2020

Source: own elaboration with information from Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php. The polygons in blue are the neighborhoods affected by intentional homicides.

Indeed, as can be seen in the images, homicidal violence is not correlated with social gap. The first reflection is that social inequality is not a conditioning factor for homicides; on the contrary, most such acts were carried out in the periphery of the MMA, classifying them mainly as an urban crime in populated neighborhoods.

Regarding commercial robberies, the most affected neighborhoods in 2020 were: Bellavista, Benito Juárez, Carbajal, Centro Cívico, Colonia Nueva, Conjunto Urbano Universitario, Cuauhtémoc Norte, El Robledo, Ex Ejido Coahuila, Ex Ejido Zacatecas, Ángeles de Puebla, Esperanza, Guajardo, Jardines del Lago, Nuevo Mexicali, Residencias, Valle de Puebla, Villa Fontana, Villa Residencial Casa Magna, Villa Verde, Villanova, González Ortega, Hacienda de los Portales, Hidalgo, Independencia, Industrial, Las Fuentes, Libertad, Nacozari, Nueva Esperanza, Porvenir, Progreso, Pueblo Nuevo, Santa Mónica, Valle del Pedregal, Xochimilco, and Ejido Puebla.

Compared to other felonies, assaults on commercial establishments registered a significant diffusion throughout the MMA (Figure 11). Commercial robberies draw

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[41]   Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación, *Incidencia delictiva...*

geographically an inverted J trend along the city, which follows the main communication routes (Blvd. López Mateos-Mexicali-San Felipe Highway). In other words, this crime is carried out transversely in the city and extensively to the sides, affecting approximately 50% of MMA.

Figure 11. Businesses robbery in the MMA, 2020
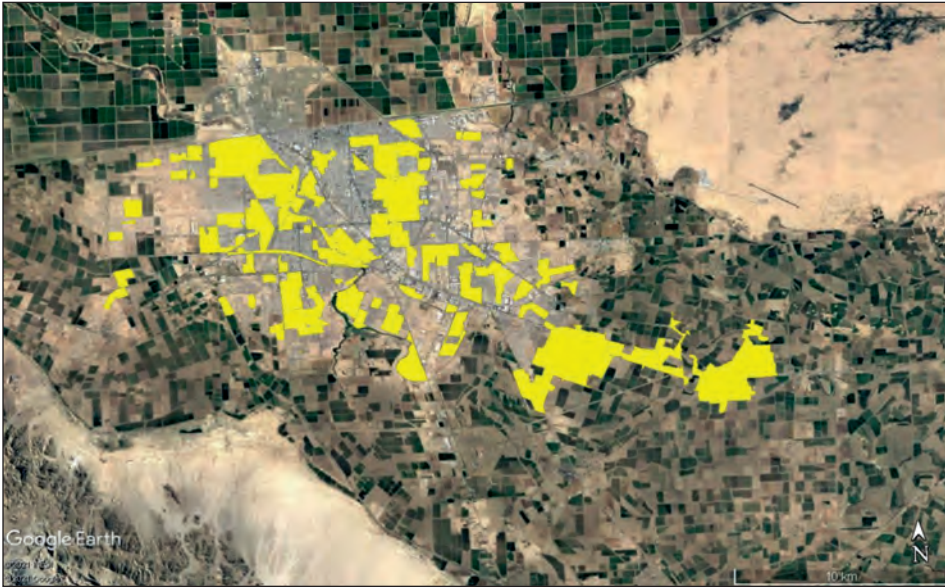
Source: own elaboration with information from Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php. The yellow polygons are the neighborhoods where establishments have been robbed.

Finally, home burglary was a particularly recurrent crime in the capital city. Neighborhoods with high and very high HDI also registered the felony and, in some cases, business as well (Figures 12 and 13). However, not all boroughs registered multiple home assaults during covid-19 voluntary lockdown. According to the official data, the most afflicted and distressed boroughs during this period due to multiple violent robberies are the following:

Considering the human security framework, peace and individual safety were not a constant in Mexicali during 2020. The crime victim rate for that year was approximately 2,814 per 100,000 inhabitants. Indeed, 3% of the population suffered theft, loss, injury, or other. However, let us remember that reporting to the Public Prosecutor's Office is particularly low, as 9 out of 10 crimes are not reported to the corresponding authorities. According to INEGI, the lack of crime informing in Baja California reached 91% during 2020, a figure that is on the rise.[42]

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[42]   Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, *Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad Pública (2020). Principales resultados Baja California*, 2020, at https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/programas/envipe/2020/doc/envipe2020_bc.pdf – 7 X 2022.

Figure 12. Neighborhoods that registered multiple home robberies at MMA

Alameda, Solidaridad Social, Anáhuac, Aurora, Baja California, Benito Juárez, Burócrata, Morelos, Colonias del Sol, Colonia Nueva, Conjunto Urbano Esperanza, Conjunto Urbano Orizaba, Conjunto Urbano Universo, Cucapah, Benito Juárez, Plan de Ayala, Plan Nacional Agrario, El Coloso, El Cóndor, El Robledo, Estación Delta, Finca de los Jazmines, Ángeles de Puebla, Condesa, Esperanza, Gran Hacienda, Hacienda de Castilla, Hacienda de los Portales, Hacienda del Real, Jardines del Lago, Misión del Ángel, Popular Nacionalista, Quinta del Rey, Residencias, San Marcos, Valle de las Misiones, Valle de Puebla, Valle del Colorado, Valle Dorado, Villa Florida, Villa Fontana, Villa Casa Magna, Villa Verde, Villas del Prado, Vista Hermosa, González Ortega, Hacienda de los Portales, Hacienda del Bosque, Hidalgo, Independencia, Industrial, Insurgentes, Las Fuentes, Libertad, Loma Linda, Los Arcos, Los Encinos, Mayos, Nacozari, Nueva Esperanza, Orizaba, Parajes de Puebla, ProHogar, Pueblo Nuevo, Barcelona, Gran Venecia, Las Lomas, Santa Clara, Santa Mónica, Solidaridad Social, Santa Teresa, Valle del Pedregal, Venustiano Carranza, Villa del Rey, Villas Lomas Altas, Zaragoza

Figure 13. Residential burglary in MMA, 2020

Source: 0wn elaboration with information from Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php. The gray polygons are the neighborhoods where homes were looted with the use of violence.

This is relevant because when the population does not have access to personal and property security, then the dimension of individual security, which is part of the human security approach, is not fulfilled. In any rule of law (Roman or Common Law tradition), one would expect the security and justice apparatus to be preventive and, in the worst case, agile, effective and efficient.[43] Even more, personal security is as relevant as food or economic security.

As shown in Figure 14, crime extends throughout the MMA. According to the number of incidents, the most affected are merchants and households. Finally, according to the results, the correlation between marginalized areas and crime incidence concurs in the southwest part of the city.

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[43] World Justice Project, *Mexico Overall Score, 2021. WJP Rule of Law Index*, 2021, at https://world justiceproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2021/Mexico/ – 7 X 2022.

Figure 14. Urban crime in MMA, 2020

Source: own elaboration with information from Guardia Estatal de Seguridad e Investigación, *Incidencia delictiva*, 2021, at https://www.seguridadbc.gob.mx/contenidos/estadisticas2.php. The black-grey scale polygons refer to those neighborhoods troubled by crime.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Evidence shows discrepancies between official reports and data. While Mexicali's human development values are reported high and positive from an official standpoint, the crime rate is distributed throughout the city. Even though Mexicali is not the most violent city in Baja California and has a few underprivileged neighborhoods, the question that naturally arises is: Why is crime scattered all over the city? Is it just due to an opportunity criterion, or is there something more to it? In order to achieve human security, citizens need to have security and justice.

It is essential to see that in 2020, voluntary confinement and the closure of US land ports of entry because of the Covid-19 pandemic altered criminal dynamics statewide. According to the research, robbery and kidnappings increased by up to 40% that year. Of course, homicides also increased throughout the state, but this trend was related to organized crime.[44] Despite the economic crisis after the readjustment of (il)legal markets due to the pandemic, Mexicali maintained its downward trend in practically all crimes except homicide, which increased significantly because of struggles between the opposing cells inside the Sinaloa Cartel.

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[44] Z. Orozco, *Seguridad pública en Baja California, México. Los nuevos retos derivados por el Covid-19*, Working paper 2022.

Also, even considering the downward trend in robberies (from 8,392 victims in 2011 to 1,386 in 2020), the rates are consider high for a city that, not only decreased its population in a decade, but remained lockdown for more than a year due to the deadly virus. Indeed, the Covid-19 lockdown, meant that most population stayed deliberately in their homes, providing economically for their families, whereas in this context 419 households per 100,000 were victims of crime in their properties.

Putting the *cachanilla* milieu in its fair dimension, unlike many other Mexican cities (starting with Tijuana), this one 'thrives' in peace and stability. Professional alarm systems and dogs are common. However, there is a possibility that robbery occurs in a consequence of opportunity.

Human security is a United Nations approach that guides state institutions towards stability and development opportunities. Although it is entirely a Western approximation, it directs societies and authorities towards, among others, consolidating democracy, (gender) equality, sustainability, human rights. In the Latin America case, where some countries are authoritarian and almost all are with weak or unconsolidated democracies, such as Mexico, the human security agenda becomes the ultimate guide for political action, helping avoid falling into despotism and human rights violations.

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