Security, disaster management or schooling? Consequences of the Mexican *War on Drugs*[*]

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Abstract

This article examines the effects of the Mexican *War on Drugs* on human capital accumulation given an additional dimension that is inherent to the region: natural disasters. Initiated by conservative President Felipe Calderón in 2006, this drug enforcement policy has been heavily criticized for causing more violence than stability, and for failing in its inherent objective of cracking down the major cartels. We investigate whether on top of this, municipalities that elected mayors from the conservative party and were shown by previous literature to have implemented the *War on Drugs* most thoroughly, were less efficient in minimizing the exogenous effects of natural disasters on local populations. Although we find no effect of natural disasters, nor of the *War on Drugs*, on education when each phenomenon is analysed solitarily; difference-in-difference-in difference estimates show that municipalities affected by both 'treatments' simultaneously do see a significant reduction in enrolment rates and years of schooling. Labour estimates show that this finding can partly be explained by the reduced number of adults working in the education sector in 'affected' areas. On the other hand, more workers seem to be affiliated to the defence sector although the reduced number of weekly hours worked in this sector hints to a possible reduction in terms of efficiency. This study thus provides some evidence that security efforts on drug law enforcement seem to crowd out public investment in disaster preparedness, thereby worsening consequences on human capital.

Keywords: Local Governance, Drug Law Enforcement, Education, Natural Disasters

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