

Abstract

This dissertation aims to provide a strategic qualitative economic analysis of the illicit drug trafficking industry as it evolved in its modern form across the Americas in the latter part of the 20th century, with principal focus on Colombia and Mexico, and to assess its impact on the security environment in the Americas with the ultimate ambition to provide tangible recommendations for complex disruptive countermeasures. The key premise upon which all the conclusions are later formulated is that trafficking in illicit substances is primarily an entrepreneurial activity aimed to generate profit and economic approach to the issue therefore yields the most promising prospects for tangible results. Narcoterrorism in its own merit, and drug-related violence in general, is contemplated, analyzed and explained as one of the key tactics inherent to the trafficking business model. Finally, a critical assessment of existing counter-narcotics strategies is performed in order to outline deficiencies of these policies with the aim to provide alternative and more effective countermeasures against illicit trafficking.