Impact of Poverty and Violence on Children in Mexico

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By

Javen Owens

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Abstract

This paper will discuss the violence in Mexico seen since the declaration of war on drugs issued by President Calderon and the ensuing violence that spread. This paper will also discuss the relevance of this topic in the treatment of immigrant populations that have spilled over into the United States as a result. This paper reviews literature on violence and poverty and the correlation, if any between the two. These factors are also explained in differing contexts and contrasted with other populations who have experienced the same. The orphaned population in Mexico has risen dramatically since the war began. The effects of that on the children who are witness to this violence are explored as well. Long term and short term mental health implications of violence are considered in this paper. Part of the mental health discussion is the criteria for recognizing early signs of violent tendencies. This paper also covers the criteria for violence that teachers in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico look for in their students to screen for escalating behavior later on.
Contents

Abstract 2

Acknowledgement 4

Dedication 5

Impact of Poverty and Violence on Children in Mexico 6

Individual Psychology Applications of Poverty and Violence and the Effects it has on the Children in Mexico 7

Adler 9

History of the war on drugs in Mexico 11

Factors and Their Effect on Children 15

Poverty 15

Violence 17

Social injustice 20

Correlations between poverty and violence 21

Children in war zones 24

Children in poverty 30

Social Interest 35

Adlerian Applications in Childhood Trauma 36

Conclusion 41
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my brother-in-law Erik Alejandro Badillo who was murdered in Juarez, Mexico in 2013. We will miss his contagious smiles and generosity that touched everybody he met. Although he died young he left the world a better place for having had him for the time it did.
Impact of Poverty and Violence on Children in Mexico

This paper will explore the population of Mexico’s youth and the effects of their exposure to violence post the declaration of war on drugs (Guerrero, 2011; Banco Mundial, 2012). The effect of violence caused by wars and natural disasters has had much research and development over the years, especially in the last three decades. This research has helped countries that have been devastated by war recover rather quickly. Now physical and economic recovery takes as little as twenty to twenty five years. What has not been researched to the extent it needs is the effect this has on children in all developmental stages. Children have become the voiceless population whose rights and needs are often subordinate to those of the soldiers, and the necessities of war (Machel, 2001). Mexico is in the process of a full blown war on drugs, on a scale that has not been seen before. The effects this will have on those who experience this violence is a major concern. Many of the border populations have migrated over to the United States in an attempt to look for safety and for the wellbeing of their family’s future. Instituto Nacional de Migracion (2012) statistics show that 9,160 women and girls were detained in Mexican immigration stations during 2011, with the number of female detainees rising to 11,958 the following year which is more than 2,000 more (INM, 2012). There is a growing need to increase awareness of child exposure to atrocities that are carried out during these operations by both sides of the conflict.

Research is important in the aftercare of these populations; this will ensure that these children receive the attention and assistance they need to cope with what they have experienced. This in turn will support future healing and further development (Machel, 1996). This is only possible through the understanding of the effects these traumas have on mental health and childhood development.
Individual Psychology Applications of Poverty and Violence and the Effects it has on the Children in Mexico

Alfred Adler was an early advocate for the equal rights of all people. He was the first to focus on children and open clinics to help educate children and their families about social interest and leading a healthy lifestyle. In our contemporary society, children are demanding more and more this democratic view of their rights and their place in society. Mexico and the United States advocate equality regardless of age, race, or religion but have little practice on what they preach.

Adler showed parents and teachers that children are born with the knowledge that older people are better able to satisfy their needs and urges and this is where the learning comes in (Adler, 1964). From birth, one of the jobs children face is integrating themselves into their environment. This is and on itself not an easy process and is even more difficult when the environment is dangerous and not compatible with a healthy lifestyle.

The above quote also mirrors the qualities shown by Mexico’s current turmoil; with the war on drug violence being widespread and an everyday occurrence. As a field, Individual Psychology needs to be able to handle this new (or newly “packaged” old) problem so we can assure the future of these children as they come to take a place in our society and foster social interest. Social interest is the ultimate consideration as it determines the very future of our society, only when the majority of the society’s members can show social interest can there be an assurance into the survival of humankind. A generation without a care other than self can never move forward and instead will wreak irrevocable damage to the moral and developmental underlying of our society.
A consideration for Adlerians everywhere is whether social interest can be fostered in a warlike environment where the adults look the other way and allow war crimes to occur. While children adopt their belief systems from their authority figures they also challenge this later on when they go to school and are introduced to another group of figures who may show differing views from those of their parents. This causes the child to ponder and draw their own conclusions to what they believe in and what their lifestyle will be. The problem in Mexico is that many children only go to school for primary education due to this being the only mandatory education level in the country and the fact that most employment prospects for these youth, namely factories, only require this level of education as well (Arjen, 2012).

Mexico’s case is a prime example of an environment for a child’s development to become stunted and to move towards the useless side of life. An important aspect of Individual Psychology is the principle that the only movement that is worthwhile is that which is useful to society, which shows the useful side of movement. Adler (1964) was very adamant in that to understand who a person is requires that you recognize his movement and where it is taking him. This is definitely a consideration for the mental health professions as these children will need their help to work through these issues when they come into mental health care. The useless side of life tends to lead towards disorders as compensations or avoidance techniques replace healthy striving towards social interest. Social interest is vital to the mental health of any individual and is therapeutic in its own sense as people tend to feel better about themselves as they help others.

Social interest is fostered at an early age and those children who feel alienated by nature will find themselves hard pressed to foster these feeling towards their society. Children who are raised in an environment which is not appropriate for them will see that environment as hostile. This can cause children to have views like:
I am....small, weak, unprotected, in danger

People are....not to be trusted, dangerous, out to get me

The world is...... not just, unfair, everybody for himself

If such mistaken belief cannot challenged it will lead to the assumption that they are in enemy territory. When looking at the motive of this behavior and whether or not it is a healthy assumption the environment must be considered. If the environment is a warzone than this may be considered as a healthy adaption because they are in a hostile environment which is not appropriate for them so they must take measures to ensure their safety. These feelings of inferiority and smallness may give the child reason to adapt justifications for criminal behavior as is found as an essential piece in the personality of criminals (Highland, Kern, & Curlette, 2010)

Instead of being preoccupied with others, they are focused on the safety of themselves which can help in their chances for survival. It is after they have left this environment that care is needed to show them that safety is assured and that this belief is no longer valid. Many of these children are migrating to the United States, which is a relatively safer environment. Along with the usual cultural transplanting issues that arise they must also be afforded the chance to switch out of survival mode as well. This, combined with the trauma, makes a unique challenge to this field in the United States.

Adler

Childhood is a crucial time in the development of children and any kind of trauma that is experienced can have rippling effects throughout development (Machel, 2001). The war on drugs has created such an environment where children are becoming more and more exposed to acts of violence in their schools, community and homes. The media itself does its part to contribute to
this trauma by posting graphic pictures of dead bodies and the gang violence that is running rampant in the area.

Adler (1956) proposed that there are three factors that contribute to developing mistaken beliefs and maladaptive lifestyles later on in life. These are; neglect, pampering and organ inferiority. Neglect is thought of as not being very common because the child would not survive such circumstances, but many do and the streets of Mexico are full of them. The orphanages are overflowing with children who lost their parents to the violence. Neglect also comes from the fact that Mexico has underdeveloped social programs to care for its poor and neglected.

The average salary of a family in Mexico is $7300 dollars a year (Banco Mundial, 2012). This is a quarter of what an average American family makes. This does not take into account the rising gap between the upper and lower classes. Although the lower class makes up almost half the population, the differences in salary are so dramatic that they are greatly underrepresented in an economy that promotes social inequality.

The United States has experienced an ever increasing influx of immigrants from Mexico, both illegal and legal, as the violence and living conditions become unbearable in their home country. These new residents bring with them a new need in the mental health field. Not only are they experiencing culture shock and the usual emotions tied with transplanting into a different culture, many are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental illnesses as a result of the trauma sustained in the war on drugs in Mexico. This problem is confounded by the fact that a common border is shared and the perception that they can just go back may be prominent.

This influx is in spite of the United States not granting Mexico asylum, like they have with other countries that have experienced violence of this magnitude. Factor in the rising cost of
naturalization and it makes it seem impossible for an average Mexican to become a legal immigrant. The cost of being naturalized in 2007 was $330 (City University of New York, 2012), which may seem reasonable but is not so to a family who has barely enough to send their children to school and feed them. The cost has doubled since then and is $780 now. This, combined with the time it takes to be naturalized, makes it nearly impossible for a family whose very lives are in danger every day.

This has caused many families to divide themselves as the husband tries to cross the desert or use “coyotes,” also known as human traffickers, to get across. The purpose of this dangerous crossing is for the husband to get a job and raise enough money for the rest of the family to cross as well. Many do not survive the crossing and those who do find themselves at the mercy of the new economic turmoil that this country currently finds itself in.

The other method that families find to bring their children over is for pregnant mothers to cross with a passport one month before their due date with the intent to stay until their baby is born. They often have to stay away from their loved ones and with a distant family member until the baby is born a US citizen and their future secured. When the baby reaches eighteen years old they can put paperwork in for the rest of their family.

**History of the War on Drugs in Mexico**

Just on the other side of the United States southern border lays one of the most dangerous cities in the world. While many think Afghanistan or Iraq, Ciudad Juarez is also at the top due to the war on drugs, female factory worker killings, and drug cartel territory expansion. Danger may seem like a foreign concept for many people living in different part of our country, but to those who live on the border it is real and seen every day. News agencies thrive on reporting the
latest killings, beheadings, or drug seizures that plague this area as a result of the drug war that has been declared by the Mexican government on the cartels that run the drug trade.

When former President Calderon came into office it was on rocky ground and after a three month stabilization period he declared a full out war on the drug cartels (Grillo, 2012). This was more than he had intended but the fact was he thought it was needed. The former President came into the process thinking like a doctor in a surgery, that he must only remove the affected appendix and that everything would be better. When he opened the abdomen he discovered that the whole cavity was infected and that he must do everything in his power to save this “patient” - the country he had sworn to serve.

While the “war on drugs” has become metaphorical in the United States, and most other countries, in Mexico it is very real and a government policy. It is responsible for killing people daily in Mexico. While the war on drugs is a good concept, the reality of the situation is that it may be impossible to win. Mexico has long been a transit point in the drug trade but recently it has also become a using ground, as more and more of its youth begin to use instead of becoming involved in the logistics aspect of it alone.

While the government claimed that this drug use was on the rise, they have very little data to back it up. This is due to the fact that Mexico has only just in the last few decades escaped corruption enough to begin to document the workings of the country’s interior. It has only recently established an actual congress that allows for the freedoms they are now “enjoying” in their neoliberal globalization. In the past war on drugs that Mexico has carried out it has been done through the old system which was rife with corruption and scandals. This made these wars obsolete and no numbers were recorded for the amount of drugs seized or the drug cartel members captured.
The new war has been well documented and while there has been an increase in seizures of drugs, and arrests of cartel members, this in itself has caused a cockroach effect in which the cartels have simply moved their operations to other towns when they feel pressure or a crackdown coming. Within days of declaring the war on drugs more than 30,000 troops were deployed to many states and an anticorruption task force for the police was also initiated (Malone, 2009). This was thought to be a sure fire way to land a devastating blow to the cartels.

While it did hit them hard they simply migrated to other areas that weren’t prepared to handle the new influx of crime and took over. This is what happened to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. It is a pivotal point in the drug trade as it is one of the major trafficking points drugs take as they enter into the United States. This area has not seen organized crime to this extent since the Juarez Cartel under “Mil Caras” dominated this area decades ago. Mil Caras, whose name is translated as “thousand faces” is the former Juarez Cartel leader who was known for getting extensive plastic surgeries to hide his identity. He was killed and the area has been without a major cartel until the new war on drugs forced cartels to move into the area.

Another problem with this deployment of military is the military itself. While Mexico has a military, it is more of a response team to natural disasters and not in any other essence an actual fighting force. This is due to the fact that the government has for decades kept the army a small untrained force to prevent any rise in military power that could lead to a coup (Grillo, 2012). Mexico has a long history of revolutions and many Mexicans believe the actual revolution never ended because the government is still in the hands of the corrupt. This untrained force was no match for the cartels and their superior numbers and arsenals.

Another flaw in this plan is the police force. While they must participate in the actual fighting against cartels it is with an identity crisis (Grillo, 2012). The majority of the police force
in Mexico is not trusted, as the citizens believe they are involved in the cartels themselves. The common word heard around Ciudad Juarez is that the police are responsible for the thousands of female factory workers that have been raped and killed over the past few decades. The reasoning behind this is that there have never been any suspects or arrests of the people responsible.

Now they are asked to fight against the cartels that are paying them much more than the government. This has led to the many instances of police officers turning their backs on mass killings and the infiltration of cartel members into prisons to conduct executions of people who are witnesses of their crimes or rats. These have been caught on tape and the public was outraged by the atrocities committed on both sides (Grillo, 2012).

This is the environment children are exposed to violence on a daily basis. This is the environment where more and more children are finding themselves orphans as their parents are killed or arrested as a result of this war. Children in the poorer parts of Mexico are the most affected because, unlike their wealthier counterparts in Mexico, they don’t have the money or connections to move across the border to safety. This is their reality and the effects these factors have on their mental health is the topic of this paper.

While the rich children are affected in different ways, extortion for example, they have the choice to move on to better grounds. The poorer children have to live where the cartels and government carry out their operations and are often victimized by these daily traumas. This has caused a hostile environment where children are not safe to develop fully as they should. Instead the risks they are exposed to accumulate to such an extent that their entire outlook on life can be skewed to such a point as to cause maladaptive patterns of behavior and cognitive processes, loss of sense of freedom, and loss of trust in the adult population. This implication cannot be ignored
in the mental health field as more and more of these children are coming into contact with repeated trauma.

**Factors and Their Effect on Children**

**Poverty**

Merriam-Webster defines poverty as “the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions”. Poverty is everywhere in differing forms and definitions. What would be considered poverty in the United States might not hold true for other countries. While this differing in the extent of poverty holds true, the fact that poverty is economic inequality holds true in all locations. This inequality is the essence of poverty and its relation to crime and violence. While there are areas in the world where poverty is abundant and crime is not this is not the norm, merely a deviation in the norm. Some cities in India have very low crime rates and very high poverty rates. This ratio is a deviation from the average as many people can see that areas of high poverty tend to have more crime.

Poverty in Mexico can be categorized into three differing levels; extreme poverty, moderate poverty and overall poverty. Extreme poverty, the first, refers to the monetary means required to afford food for the entire family or everybody in the household. Moderate poverty combined with extreme poverty measures the minimum required to afford basic health care and education as well. Overall poverty adds to the first two; minimum required to afford a dwelling, transportation and overall basic expense in the household.

Extreme poverty is the state of destitution so great that basic needs are not being met. This is seen in Mexico as more and more children are forced into orphanages that do not have the capacity to hold them. These orphanages are not state run and instead many of them are managed by local citizens or church groups. Although they are supplying much for the needs of these
children many more are left without these resources. These orphanages are filling up more and more every day and the conditions are getting worse and worse as a result (Grillo, 2012).

Extreme poverty affects around ten percent of the Mexican population according to the Consejo Nacional de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL, 2008). Thirty three percent were affected by moderate poverty which brings the total to around forty four percent or over forty nine million people who live under the poverty line.

The town of Ciudad Juarez is a prime example of poverty. The government did a survey in 2011 and had to lower the poverty level as a result. Many families live in makeshift buildings made of carton and wooden pallets. More than 450,000 people are considered below the poverty level with the new guidelines which is a little less than half the population (CONEVAL, 2008). In areas where the population is indigenous and speak languages other than Spanish the rates can rise upwards to 98 percent of the population experiencing poverty. These guidelines were lowered so that it would be harder to qualify for assistance due to the more than thirty percent increase in request for government assistance over the past year.

The new guidelines for extreme poverty fall into two categories; first the family must lack three or more of the basic eight necessities, second they must make less than 56 pesos a day which amounts to about $3.46. The basic necessities are: food, housing, affordable health care, utilities, schooling, transportation, and having no means to feed children. A widow mother of four earns $43 a week working at a factory which is barely enough to cover her basic needs like housing, school, transportation, and groceries. Due to the fact that she works she is only given a scholarship for her daughter to go to school. Her husband was killed by a stray bullet while going to the convenience store a year ago.
An estimated five percent of the population has no access to food, ten percent barely cover their needs and three percent have no clothes or roof over their heads according to the Department of Social Development in Juarez (CONEVAL). This lack of resources worries parents on the increased chances their children may join the cartels to supply for their families.

These are not the only shortages the country is facing. Due to the recent expenditures in fighting the war on drugs many government assistant programs have had dramatic cuts. A program that was meant to supply electronics to families in need has recently been cut as they have had to send more special police forces to Juarez. This program allowed people to trade in their old, nonworking appliances, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, for brand new ones. This is a big deal in Ciudad Juarez because temperatures get very hot in the summer and this has caused deaths in the past from heat related injuries.

Violence

Violence is seen as the “intentional use of physical force or power against a person or community that results in or has a high chance of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (World Health Organization, 2002). Violence has been a problem in Latin America, as a whole, during the last two decades. Studies have been conducted on violence and the use of two major categories will be used in this paper; domestic violence and social violence (Buvinic, Morrison, & Shifter, 1999; Arteaga, 2004).

Domestic violence signifies violence perpetrated by someone known to the victim, and mainly takes place inside the home. Domestic violence is very prevalent in Mexico with rates as high as 42% in a study conducted in 1993 (Buvinic, Morrison, & Shifter, 1999). Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, or psychological and the abuse suffered by children tends to be physical violence. This physical abuse can take the form of slapping, shoving, choking, kicking,
hitting, burning etc. While domestic violence may not be directly related to the war on drugs, violence at home generally leads to violence in the streets (CONEVAL, 2008). The APA (1993) reported that as levels of violence in the family of origin increases the likelihood that a child will grow to engage in abusive or violent behavior also increases. Although they do not necessarily grow up to repeat the same type of violence, studies document a significant connection between victimization in childhood and later development of some form of interpersonal violence (Dahlberg, 1998).

Social violence on the other hand is directly related to the war on drugs and the effect it has on the children’s development in Mexico. Children who are abused or experience other types of violence have a greater chance of behaving violently themselves, both inside and outside the home. Social violence can be further divided into two sub categories; emotional violence and instrumental violence (Buvinic, Morrison, & Shifter, 1999). Instrumental violence is the use of premeditated violence for the obtainment on another goal. Common examples of these are political and drug related violence which is very common in Mexico currently and throughout its history. In emotional violence the actual violence is the reasoning behind the response.

Domestic violence can be instrumental or emotional but the results for children are often the same. Children exposed to this violence are not only more likely to carry on the violent tendencies later on in life, but are also more likely to pass it on to future generations. This continual cycle of violence goes on until the generational chains are broken by confrontation through psychotherapy or family counseling. What does not help the issue is that domestic violence was, until recently, not a taboo behavior in most of Latin America, which encouraged the choice most made to look the other way when it did happen. Now the issue is receiving
attention and laws are actually being enforced that stop these abuses as opposed to the old habit of looking the other way.

Even though the homicide rate has dropped over the last year it is still a problem in Juarez. In comparison New York City, with a population estimated at 8,336,697 had a homicide count of 414 in 2012, Ciudad Juarez, which has a population of 1,500,000, had a homicide count of 750 - a dramatic drop from the 2,086 in 2011 (CONEVAL, 2008). This demonstrates the level of social justice currently being acted upon in Mexico.

While these two cities are very different, an idea of the magnitude of the violence that plagues Mexico can be drawn from these simple statistics. The violence that happens in Mexico falls under all of these explanations, meaning that it does not just entail physical violence but also extortion and the threat of physical harm as a way of controlling the local populations. In Ciudad Juarez many local small business owners have shut down their shops due to being threatened by the local cartels or extorted to the point where they could not afford the cost.

A local store owner in a poorer part of Ciudad Juarez, called Zaragoza, used to be very involved in her community. She would host celebrations throughout the year for the children in the neighborhood and allow their parents to get groceries on credit when times were rough. The neighborhood loved her and she had a very fulfilling life. This all changed one day when she crossed the border to buy supplies for her store. She got a phone call from her husband telling her that some “sicarias” or killers had been by and demanded that they pay them protection money or they would die.

The sicarias described the vehicle his wife has used and how many children he had to let him know they were serious. They informed him of their daily schedule to also let him know they had been watching for awhile and that this was not just a false alarm. One never knows if
they are connected with the cartels or not, but who wants to risk their lives to find out. The husband called the police who asked if they would allow themselves to be used as bait. This is common in Mexico where the police do not want to take risks and instead place the victims in even more danger in the hopes they can ambush the cartel members with a few civilian casualties as well.

The question here is if there is any correlation between the poverty and violence. Most people would answer, “yes” to that, as it is something that borders on common sense in the United States. Although this correlation is taken for granted, very little research has been done to prove or disapprove the direct relationship. The reason behind the lack of motivation to research this area is that these assumptions are the basis for many grants and non profits that are combating these epidemics. Poverty has been increasing its grip on the world more and more as the gap between the poor and rich grows farther and farther apart.

**Social Injustice**

Where there is rampant violence and poverty one can find social injustice. Social injustice is the unequal distribution of rewards and burdens. This is not an uncommon theme with Mexico as it has been documented since Spanish colonization (Grillo, 2012). The reins of power have always moved from one dictator to another whether the hat the leader wears says such or not. During the colonial times the natives were worked to death and given very little reward, while the colonists themselves began to intermarry and merge with their culture. This caused many to be sympathetic and in turn want to reject the law governing them from across the ocean. The same can be said of the United States in its infancy as well.

The new revolutionary Mexican forces promised the Indians better treatment and such but in the end it was the same injustices committed under different leadership. That the
revolution was carried out under the guidance of a Catholic priest, who was known for murder and adultery, was a sign for what was to come. This lasted for a while as the lower class became poorer and the rich -richer. Finally, enough was enough and another revolution took place which was led by the poor and represented the hope of the lower class to redistribute the wealth that had been hoarded by the last usurpers of the reins of power.

In the end, the poor won and lost at the same time. The ones who held the ideals of the people were killed and the corrupt took over again. This has held true to present day, where the poor are still underrepresented and not likely to get out of their situation and move on to a better life because the government’s corruption and social systems fight each other every step towards recovery. The wealthy are still getting richer and now a new class has developed due to the drug trade of poor people who are tired of the social injustice and take their future into their own hands. They become drug dealers, hit men, or transporters for the cartel in hopes of providing something better for their family in the future.

This mixture of power, wealth, and violence is not a new problem and has only been aggravated by the war on drugs. It has brought it to the surface and now the citizens have to look into the face of their government’s inability or unwillingness to change every time they see a new murder or atrocity being committed on their streets.

**Correlations between Poverty and Violence**

Barenbaum, Ruchkin, & Schwab-Stone (2004) stated that although the class system seems to remain the same through wars the poorest of the communities are usually hit the hardest. Many researchers agree on the fact that the actual research taken from these situations almost always comes from the developed countries they have sought refuge in and not the actual warzones themselves. Several reasons are issued for this the main one being that conducting
research on a pure scientific basis can be seen as crass since the area is in need of assistance and these needs tend to outweigh the research being conducted. This can cause a lot of mistrust from the locals whom the researchers are trying to reach.

These results for the majority are taken after the fact and when a host of other factors are influencing them as well. Having oneself transported into another culture can, in and of itself, cause psychological disturbances, not to mention the effect it can have on the perceptions of what one experienced before. These factors have to be taken into account when results of studies are based in refugee populations that have been granted asylum and have already moved into another society.

That wars and the violence they cause are, for the most part, found outside the first world is an important observation made by Garbarino (2001) in the Journal of Community Psychology. Recent warfare has provided opportunities for actual research to be conducted inside these areas where the trauma took place. War experiences in the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia (Kinzie et al., 1986), Mozambique (Boothby, 1996) have been prime sources for research but are outside of the western framework of those conducting the research. Other areas like Israeli and Palestinian children and youth have been the focus in the late twentieth century because these highly sophisticated societies have been exposed to war-like situations and are accessible to the western-style approach (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996).

Garbarino and colleagues (1996) agree with Barenbaum et al. (2004) in that social classes tend to remain the same, but also demonstrate how in urban war zones in the United States social class is critical correlate of exposure. The norm for these children exposed to violence are poor social class, father-absent families, contend with parental incapacity due to depression or substance abuse, and are raised by parents with little education or employment
prospects, which also puts them at risk for domestic violence. As described in the violence section of this paper domestic violence has direct correlation with future manifestations of social violence such as the drug violence experienced in Mexico.

Lower socioeconomic classes’ exposure to trauma seems to correlate with what is found in Ciudad Juarez. The poorer parts of town have been run over by the cartels and the violence is concentrated in these regions. Children are not able to get the help they need due to new standards in social reform the government has implemented to fund the war on drugs. These children are forced, on a daily basis, to walk through these “hot spots” on the way to school and back every week day which makes the chances of exposure even greater.

Another study conducted by Krueger and Malečková (2003) went over correlations between poverty and the participation in terrorism. Their original theory had been that there would most likely be a direct correlation between economic need and the willingness to participate in suicide bombings. This was due to the increase in suicide bombings after Iraq increased the amount given to the families of suicide bombers - from $20,000 to $25,000. What they found from talking with terrorist recruiters was the opposite, in that there was no shortage of volunteers and the most of these volunteers were well educated and came from middle social class and above.

This trend flies in the face of other research and could be a deviation from the norm. It is also correlated with felt social injustice and the retaliation that can ensue. The reasoning behind the recruitment of more educated suicide bombers is that the terrorist recruiters say there is a higher chance they will go through with the operation. They use the ideals they have learned in school to manipulate them into a higher purpose. Only through challenging these assumed facts can we reach this type of educated recruitment.
Social injustice is also seen as reasoning behind violence in Mexico as more and more of the lower class is cut off from the help they need. While this by itself does not seem a correlation, the link between being cut off from the resources and the resulting poverty can provide some insight into the correlation found between poverty and the resulting violence in terms of joining cartels and carrying out violent acts for monetary gains. The money they can get from working with the cartels will allow them to take care of their families and live beyond the means they would have been able to if they had stayed in their current class. This has created a new class in Mexico of lower class moving up into higher class rather quickly. The norm for this class is lavish spending and short lived fame as they become targets for other cartels.

Many become hired guns who kill people for around $500 a week (Grillo, 2012). While this may not seem like much the average factory worker brings around $40 a week, which is substantially less. The result is youth being involved in events that can possibly stunt their development as is reported by the work of Perry and his colleagues (1995). They documented the impact of early trauma on brain development. What they found was that trauma can produce deficient development of the brains cortex, which is home to the higher functioning such as abstract reasoning, moral development and impulse control. These are direct and indirect, direct in that a stress related hormone, cortisol, impedes brain growth, indirect in the disruption of normal care they would have received which resulted instead in neglect and abuse.

**Children in War Zones**

The eventual breakdown of a community supports that happens when there is a war involved has a very large impact on the mental health of children. In the book *Minefields in Their Hearts* (Apfel & Simmon, 1996) the authors captured the simple truth that war presents serious developmental challenges to children. If these needs are unmet it can lead to disaster. In
the twentieth century, children account for a large proportion of the civilian killings, which have
gone up since the 1900s according to estimates by UNICEF. This shows the very nature of war is
changing as technology increases and target areas are more widespread as the increase in
destruction capability increases as well.

These developmental challenges can turn into developmental harm. The reasoning is that
as the risks increase, so the ability of the children to cope with the trauma decreases as they reach
their breaking point. If positive influences are introduced after the trauma, the probability of
recovery and enhanced development increases as well. A study on developmental models offered
the hypothesis that most children are able to cope with low levels of risk but that if it exceeds
these levels there must be a major concentration of opportunity factors to prevent harm
(Sameroff et al., 1987).

Using a pool of eight risk factors the study found that when children were faced with one
or two risk factors little change was noted. The addition of a third or fourth risk was damaging
developmentally, as evidenced by the drop in IQ scores. This predicts that children and youth
who live in accumulated risk like the socially marginal, fractured families, substance abuse etc,
are the most at risk for being affected by community violence. On the flip side, those who have
positive factors, like intact families, can better accept challenges and deal with them on a more
positive side.

Child development has a very important feature that allows them to form social maps or
representations of the world that reflect their cognitive competence. These also represent the
moral and affective inclination of a child, not only where they have been but also where they
view the future. These are similar to Adler’s fictions and mistaken assumptions. If considerable
risk is accumulated it could skew their views of the world negatively. This can be buffered by the
POVERTY AND VIOLENCE IN MEXICO

reactions of adults around them as is evident by studies done in London during the height of German bombing in World War II (Papanek, 1972).

Children are affected by these risks even more because of the beliefs they have. Most adults are realistic in the threats around them but children can increase the threat in their mind by their vulnerability and increased imagination. Examples are monsters under the bed, invisible creatures in the shadows etc. Children are more likely to believe in things that don’t exist which can serve supportive or negative roles e.g. Angels vs. Monsters. Whereas most times an active imagination is beneficial to children during these war times it can be detrimental to their sense of safety.

A normal part of development for a child incorporates the sense of security they feel. When children are young they depend on their parents or other adults they recognize for this sense. They will not move around a strange room and explore unless they know people around them and feel that safety net. Later on they begin to trust in their own security enough to go to school, in the neighborhoods by themselves or over at their friend’s house. When they are exposed to community violence they do not develop this sense of security and can become overly attached to adults that are in charge of them. In an example a six year old girl was interviewed in an urban war zone where she told the interviewer that her job was to find her two year old sister when shooting started and get her to the bathtub in their apartment. “The bathroom is the safest place”, she told him (Garbarino, 1995).

Community violence as another consequence in that is can make children more susceptible to social groups outside the family that can offer a sense of security or affiliation. This is evident in Ciudad Juarez in a survey done by a local newspaper. Children were asked what they want to do when they grow up and the majority answered that they would either join a
cartel or become a soldier. Any profession with camaraderie and weapons was their main choice as this offers them a sense of security that their family cannot. Since there is a gun ban in Mexico it is only those who uphold the law or those that break it that own firearms. This leaves the rest of the population at their mercy and as children are like little anthropologists they discover this early on.

Gangs are a big part of these war zones and can offer youth a sense of belonging and solidarity added with the extra security in numbers. Many youth that don’t have many other social prospects, like the orphans in Mexico, are drawn to this choice as they aren’t afforded much else. The decline of social supports in the country, as well as the recent economy crash in employment has stripped them of most of their options. The gangs allow them to have a constant cash flow and to be a part of something bigger than them. If children feel adults cannot provide them with security they are at a high risk of joining gangs.

A risk factor comes from the parents as well. Often in these situations there is one parent trying to handle all the stressors and daily functioning of the family. This can be due to one of the parents having died in the violence, or, as is common in Ciudad Juarez, this can be because more women work than men. This is because factories trust women more as they are more reliable, which leads to the man leaving eventually due to his perceived loss of power. The mother then has a higher tendency to go into depression and this can cause neglect in her care for the children (Osofsky, 1995). This also leads to attachment issues, which in turn, leads to a higher chance of abuse or accidental injuries which the child cannot attach meaning to. This leads to these experiences being outside of the normal realm of experience and can turn into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms if not treated.
Experiencing situations outside the realm of normal can lead children into patterns of behavior, thought, and feelings that are also abnormal in an attempt to understand the trauma. This is especially true for children who are exposed to trauma before the age of ten as they are three times more likely to develop PTSD than those who experienced it after twelve years of age (Davidson & Smith, 1990). These traumas can take months to process and if a child is continually exposed to trauma they have no chance to process it normally and this turns into complex PTSD. Exposure to the media and other outlets of that show violent images and video can increase this sense of trauma. Some of the symptoms these children suffer from are: Extreme startle response, sleep disturbances, day dreaming, recreating trauma in play, emotional numbing, and diminished expectations for the future and even biochemical changes in their brains that can impair social and academic behavior (Osofsky, 1995).

These traumas interfere with learning and social behavior in school which increase the chances for the children affected to drop out of school earlier than normal, which is sixth grade in Ciudad Juarez. Sixth grade is all the factories require for an educational level prior to applying for employment at their facilities. Other students can complete High School but, depending on their economic status, will have little chance of attending post secondary education. These traumas can cause “psychic scars” which cause excessive sensitivity to stimuli associated with the trauma and again the diminished future expectations (Terr, 1990).

Chronic danger is another story as it forces the child to make developmental adjustments, as the child is unable to assimilate these experiences into existing conceptual framework (Piaget, 1952). Piaget (1952) stated that these experiences force a child to alter existing schemas to accommodate the new experiences. These accommodations are likely to involve alterations in personalities or life styles, major changes in patterns of behavior that provide a framework for
making sense of the ongoing danger. This process rewrites the child’s life style and redirects behavior. This is especially common when communities are altered substantially like in the case of Ciudad Juarez where overnight it became a battle ground, or with the death of an important member of the immediate family, as is also common in this city.

In Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge’s regime in Cambodia, fifty percent of children exposed to chronic horrors exhibited persistent symptoms of PTSD eight years after exposure (Kinzie et al., 1986). These wounds challenge the very meaning of life for children and those exposed to this type of trauma for the majority will struggle with this meaning for the rest of their lives unless treated. This shows that there are critical developmental times in the search for meaning in a child’s life and when those are interrupted the enormity of it can overcome this development until it is fully processed.

This also coincides with the fact that children’s world view is more fluid at this age due to their creativity and naïveté’s. When they experience these traumas they are more likely to attach an unrealistic significance to it than adults. In a study that interviewed children whose parents had died 57% reported speaking with their dead parents and 43 percent felt they received a response. This is in contrast with the 12 percent of adults who reported such contact (Kalish & Reynolds, 1973). A child who experiences chronic danger can have these beliefs in higher powers challenged by the experience. Trauma creates a profound cut which severs the child from the place within where he or she believed in a higher power.

Psychoanalyst Erich Lindermann (Coles, 1990) stated the following “These are young people who suddenly have become quite a bit older; they are facing possible death, or serious limitation of their lives; It would be a mistake ... to emphasize unduly a psychiatric point of view..If those children want to cry with you, and be disappointed with you, and wonder with you
where their God is, then you can be there for them” (Coles, 1990 pg 187). Children often see God as a kind of parent figure, which in their mind includes protection, when this is taken away they can seek out a negative universe where anything is better than nothing. This leads into extreme negative behavior that can lead to antisocial behavior as found in the cartel members and their apparent lack of respect for life.

While the actual war itself has a great impact on the psyche of a child it is the adult that would experience the greater effect. This can be a positive effect as the adults maintain calm, take charge of the children and themselves, and serve as a support, the children will have reduced risk of trauma. In the event that the adult deteriorates or panics, this hurts the child in short term, as they do not find the authority figure they are looking for. They turn to God and find that in an environment like this they may never find him or her. The adults themselves are handling a lot of trauma as they are experiencing the added responsibility of the care for others and not just themselves.

In the end the process of accommodation of this trauma places adults in the teacher’s seat. In a case of a onetime trauma the child may need assurance that things are back to normal but in the chronic danger situation they need more, they need to be taught how to redefine the world and their concept of it. This has to be done to avoid the terminal thinking of the imminent violent death just around the corner. This leads to depression, antisocial behavior and fatalistic thinking (Garbarino, 1995). They need to move beyond the terminal thinking or revenge morality.

**Children in Poverty**

United States Census data collected from 2009 to 2010 reports that the total number of children under the age eighteen who are living in poverty increased from 15.5 million to 16.4
million. The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that 17.2 million children living in the United States have a foreign born parent, and that 4.2 immigrant children are poor. This is due to factors like low wage work and the barriers they have to receiving social support like the rest of the population.

The factor of fractured families is relevant here as well. Population Reference Bureau (2011) reports that twenty-four percent of the population of children under eighteen live in single-parent (mostly with mothers) homes, of this population forty-two percent were within the poverty rate, which is well above the rate for any racial class alone. The total poverty level in the entire country is 15.1 percent. Add the additional factor of a single, Hispanic mother household and that rate jumps up to 50.9 percent, higher than any other minority; black 48.8 percent, 31.6 percent Asian and 32 percent white, non-Hispanic.

That Hispanic mothers have a higher population of single mother homes skews the results slightly, but a trend can be seen here. The effects this has on the children and their development are multi-faceted. Academics is an easily measured factor that has special interest to the government and the data is easily obtainable as they monitor the progress schools are making to determine funding.

Lower levels of socioeconomic status have been linked to several negative outcomes as listed below. For ease of reference the negatives will be subdivided into categories; Poverty and academic achievement, Poverty and psychosocial outcomes, and Poverty and physical health.

Poverty and Academic Achievement
- Socioeconomic status appears to create achievement gaps for Black and Hispanic children, when compared to the achievement levels of White children (Duncan and Magnuson, 2005).
• Children from low-SES families often begin kindergarten with significantly less linguistic knowledge (Purcell-Gates, McIntyre, & Freppon, 1995).

• Children from less-advantaged homes score at least 10% lower than the national average on national achievement scores in mathematics and reading (Hochschild, 2003).

• Children in impoverished settings are much more likely to be absent from school throughout their educational experiences (Zhang, 2003), further increasing the learning gap between them and their wealthier peers.

• While national high school dropout rates have steadily declined (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), dropout rates for children living in poverty have steadily increased. Between 60 and 70% of students in low-income school districts fail to graduate from high school (Harris, 2005).

Poverty and Psychosocial Outcomes

• Higher rates of attempted suicide, cigarette smoking, and engaging in episodic heavy drinking (Newacheck, Hung, Park, Brindis, & Irwin, 2003)

• Higher levels of emotional and behavioral difficulties, including anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, and conduct disorders (Weissman et al., 1984; Spencer et al., 2002)

• Higher levels of aggression (Molnar et al., 2008), hostility, perceived threat, and perceived discrimination for youth (Chen and Paterson, 2006)

• Higher physiological markers of chronic stressful experiences for adolescents (Chen and Paterson, 2006).
• Poverty is a reliable predictor of child abuse and neglect. Among low-income families, those with family exposure to substance use exhibit the highest rates of child abuse and neglect (Ondersma, 2002).

• Lower SES has been linked to domestic crowding, a condition which has negative consequences for adults and children, including higher psychological stress and poor health outcomes (Chen and Paterson, 2006).

• All family members living in poverty are more likely to be victims of violence. Racial and ethnic minorities who are also of lower SES are at an increased risk of victimization.

Poverty and Physical Health

• Higher incidence of Alzheimer’s disease later in life (Chen and Paterson, 2006)

• Low birth weight, followed by low nutrition as represented by inadequate food, which can lead to food insecurity or hunger.

• Lack of access to healthy foods and areas to play sports which can lead to childhood obesity or being overweight.

• Chronic conditions like asthma, anemia and pneumonia

• Risky behaviors such as smoking or early exposure and to sexual activity

• Exposure to violence which can lead to injury, disability and mortality.

• Higher rates of cardiovascular disease for adults (Chen and Paterson, 2006)

These conditions continue the cycle of poverty as they make achievement and getting ahead in life very difficult for those who grow up in these conditions. Inadequate education especially contributes to this cycle of poverty because it makes it more difficult for low income children to get the education they need for higher paying jobs. This is only aggravated by the under resourced schools that are found in poorer communities as they struggle to meet the needs
of these students with much less resources. In 2008, the National Center for Education Statistics reported the dropout rate for students living in low income families was about four and a half times greater than those who came from higher income brackets (APA, 2012).

The psychosocial aspect is also very detrimental to the safety of these children. Unsafe neighborhoods which for the majority are found in the lower income areas may expose children to violence. Exposure to violence can also predict future violent behavior as the child learns from their peers and adopt the behavior they deem makes them strong. This place those at a higher risk of injury and mortality and time spent in the juvenile justice system (APA, 2012).

The situation in Mexico is much direr, while they have been making great strides in economic growth and financial integration, inequity has become their Achilles heel reported UNICEF (2012), in a study they completed on childhood poverty. The study found that 53% of children in Mexico live in poverty; which adds up to more than twenty million; of this, around five million live in extreme poverty. “The economy has grown well over the past years”, said UNICEF Representative Isabel Crowley, “But this does not always mean that the poor are better off. The human development indexes in some parts of Mexico are close to those of some of the world’s least developed countries”.

“These poverty levels reveal persistent and grave inequities in the fulfillment of child rights”. As the President said just three weeks ago, “efforts and resources must be dedicated to children, because in them – he said – lies the future of the Mexico we want to have”, said Erika Strand, UNICEF’s Chief of Social Policy in Mexico, “This situation requires an urgent public policy response, to ensure equity and inclusion for all children in Mexico.”
Social Interest

Social interest may seem like something that cannot be fostered during wartime, but it was especially this during World War I that Adler himself came up with this ideology (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Some thought it was a religious move for Adler and left his group, but more and more people listened to Adler because the world was looking for more from humanity after the atrocities of war. It is during time when everything but the essence of people is stripped down.

In Ciudad Juarez, the people who are tired of the violence and poverty are forming their own groups to show the community that it is up to them to change the town. One group, called female warriors or “guerreras”, in Spanish, has been doing just this. They are known for riding around on pink motorcycles and handing out food to the poor. They are made up of teachers, policewomen and businesswomen and are entirely self-funded. They ride around to the worst parts of town, where violence is widespread, and hand out care packages to the poor. Many families depend on these acts of kindness for their survival. This group was formed after one of the founders was witness to the murder of seven people on a soccer field where she was volunteering several years ago. She was tired of sitting on the sidelines and wanted to help take back Ciudad Juarez. The pink bikes are used to present a feminine, nurturing image. This is in contrast to the bikes used by hit men to ride up and shoot at vehicles and carry out drive-by shootings in these same neighborhoods. The group also carries medicine to these families and hope. They have a vision for what their town should be and won’t stop until it is realized.

Another group is called, “Angels of Juarez”, and is made up of the youth who led less than angelic lives in the past but now have repented and want to give others the same chance. This group is led by a small church group called, Psalm 100. They dress up like angels and hit
crime scenes and busy corners to spread messages like, “Corrupt policemen repent, God loves you”, “Hit men repent God loves you”, etc. In their past, these youths lived the lives of drug dealers, hit men and robbers. They said they want the change they experienced to be shared by everybody until the killings stop. No one benefits from the death of somebody in a neighborhood, is their reasoning.

Another group that is tired of the way their town is spiraling out of control is a group of young artists and musicians. They report they used to enjoy going to the parks and performing to the public. When the killings started the whole town shut down and public places like parks were avoided. Now the town is taking back these public places as they make it a point to go to the parks and other places they frequented every night before the war to show the public and cartels that they are not afraid.

This movement has taken the city by storm and now almost all the old popular attractions can be seen filled up with people at night time. The cartels have not retaliated against the public and the police have done nothing as well. The public knows they cannot depend on the government for change and must demonstrate their vision for others to share. The night life in this town has taken on a new life and many in the city are given new hope by this movement and some of the hope they have lost for the future of their youth has been restored due to the courage and resilience of these young heroes.

**Adlerian Applications in Childhood Trauma**

With the recent trend of school shootings and other youth violence in the United States research has been done to try and discovered a common theme. Dahlberg (1998) found that shootings in inner city areas tend to be drug and gang related. They found this was not the case for suburbia though, as these killing and crime sprees tend to stem from a general lack of a sense
of belonging on the part of the aggressor. These children were often made fun of and did not fit in socially in their communities and schools. This causes a sense of inferiority and alienation that leads to isolation.

Adler stated that one of the basic needs a child can base their lifestyles off of is a need to belong (Adler, 1964). When a child is integrated into a different culture and has undergone extensive trauma like the children coming from war zones, this can create a very hostile environment for belonging. These children can feel that there is no one who can understand them from a cultural perspective as well as from the trauma they have experienced. If the need for belonging is not met than no other needs are satisfied (Maslow, 1962).

Schaps and Lewis (1999) found that a sense of belonging is “causally linked to students’ later development of intrinsic academic motivation, concern for others, democratic values, skill and inclination to resolve conflicts equitably, altruistic behavior, intrinsic prosocial motivation, enjoyment of helping others learn, inclusive attitudes toward outgroups, and positive interpersonal behavior in class” (p. 216).

The risk the United States runs in not understanding this problem will come in the integration of these populations into the main stream society. Feelings of alienation can cause many problems in schools as is evident by the increase in violence in American schools already. How the schools react to this trend can directly correlate with the success of controlling this rise. When a child feels alienated they often feel powerless and hopeless as well, if a school responds authoritatively they make things worse (Coles, 1990).

The risk here is that by further alienating these youth creates a reaction for them to find others who feel alienated as well. This trend can lead to the formation of gangs and violence. Children who have experienced great trauma due to violence in their past can have a greater
propensity to commit it later on in life as they have included that violence in their schema of the way things are. If they do not receive the aftercare they need to process through this trauma is will be unchanged and unresolved. This can be compounded with the cultural implant and subsequent feelings of alienation that result.

For this reason it is important for counselors in school and outside of schools to intensify their efforts to identify children who are being alienated and not getting along with their peers as they should. The inability to establish these relationships should be a warning sign that more measures are required to integrate these children into their new environment. This can help facilitate the integration process much more smoothly and help lessen further trauma as a result. Early identification is the key to stop this problem before it turns into a news story on television and it is too late for the youth in distress.

From an Adlerian perspective there are other factors that should be considered when crimes are involved. Adler believed that everybody has some degree of Social Interest inherited and that in order to commit a crime one must first overcome the social interest that they possess. They do this through developing excuses to justifying their actions by rationalizing their circumstances. In a war environment, this can seem easier to justify, as violence is coming from both sides every day. As an innocent civilian, who is the easiest target, it might be easier to justify taking up arms and joining one side or the other for the mere fact of safety in numbers.

Daughtery, Murphy and Paugh (2001) found that a lack of Social Interest is an important factor in unemployment, new felony arrests, and recidivism. This lends credibility to Adler’s view that children who lacked in social interest could develop passive or active lifestyle attributes that can result in delinquency. Adler discussed four lifestyle types: the socially interested type; the getting type; the ruling type; and the avoiding type (Adler, 1938). Those who
have lower activity levels, the getting type, might feel they should be able to get what they want with little effort. The children with higher activity levels might just take what is not theirs (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). In a society where things are taken by force and violence or the threat of violence can lend itself to the adoption of the same type of mentality from the children who are raised in this environment.

Olweus (1978) provided some tentative support with findings that showed that aggressive tendencies beginning in early childhood have a high degree of stability and continue into adulthood. When a child is overprotected from this violence as a result the parent may be limiting the children in gaining experiences that instill socially interested feelings towards others through trial and error. This can cause a child to find very little use in cooperating with others.

Eva Dreikurs-Ferguson (2010) stated that a sense of belonging instills a greater movement towards contributing to the community. When encouragement is used instead of authoritative punishment at risk behavior is more likely to dissipate. Mental health professionals need to understand the whole spectrum of a youth at risk instead of treating symptoms. Treating symptoms is like trying to decide where the water in a river will run after a large boulder falls into it. Instead of removing the boulder, or source of the problem the therapist is instead trying to predict future manifestations and treat the aftermath of the issue. Adler was a major proponent of education and understanding the underlying movement of the problem to resolve issues that come up in life.

Alfred Adler (1964) wrote that if a person is to help a client he must understand their style of life. This can be done using the variety of techniques used in Individual Psychology such as; birth order, early recollections, and also using the miracle question. These methods can enable a client to empower himself by teaching him social interest through the mutual striving.
the therapist and client take to understand the client and their movement. Early recollections are very important as more than likely they will bring up the images and events they experienced in war zones and allow them to start processing them. The therapist has a strong tool in the fact that they can reconstruct recollections to help the client get a sense of control over a situation that was out of their control (Mosak & DiPietro, 2006).

The miracle question is very important to encourage change as well. A client is asked what life would be like if their problem they are going to therapy for was “taken away by a miracle on night”, what would their life be like? When a client starts to think in terms of these changes that would take place in their life he can see things that are getting in the way of his success.

Birth order is important in determining one’s life style but biological birth order does not necessarily denote actual birth order. There are many instances and factors that can interfere with one’s birth order. When a child is born seven years or more after a first child they can be considered a firstborn also, as the age gap is significant. The birth position can be changed when, for example, an only child is dethroned by the birth of another child. So while this is a great tool it needs to be from in the larger picture.

Adler’s main concern in clients was helping them improve functioning within their life tasks; work, intimacy and friendship. All of these factors contribute to social interest which is the highest level of mental health. Davidson & Smith (1990) stated that as discouragement grows the goals in these life tasks can seem overwhelming. When they have a good support group which includes therapy they can work through these false assumptions and on to the productive side of life.
Conclusion

The war on drugs will not be over any time soon in Mexico. The results and trauma experienced by the population in the war zone will be felt even longer unless the mental health field, as a whole, takes on the role of educators and rehabilitators. Literature and research has been aimed mainly at the effects war has on its participants and only recently, in the past two decades, has research been conducted on its effect on children and civilians as well. Whether this is due to the changing nature of war as more and more child soldiers are seen in the frontlines, has not been clarified, but what has is the deep need humanity has to protect these children from the atrocities that are carried out during war.

Children who are exposed to this trauma can live the effects of it throughout their lives unless proper treatment is received. As discussed earlier when a child is exposed to chronic trauma they have to shift their schemas to incorporate these horrible acts and events they live through otherwise they would break from the sheer contradiction it represents from the normalcy of life before. These lifestyles that are adapted and/or adopted during these trying times can serve a purpose to mitigate the danger of the actual warzone, but become on the useless side of life later on when the danger is over and they are faced with adapting to a new reality.

While the creativity a child has can be a help in times of danger and war, it can also serve to amplify the dangers they might face by allowing unrealistic or even mythical creatures to be seen as a danger as well. Prior research that has focused on adults has never had to take this into account, but with the growing civilian population affected by the ever changing technology that has affected war it is increasing every year. With the increase in technology the danger to the civilians increases dramatically. Weapons are capable of more widespread destruction now more than ever and this is a growing concern.
More research needs to be done for the aftercare that these children are receiving to be effective. More research is needed into the psychological challenges this population deals with as they try grow and to survive. Only through thorough research and careful clinical practice, can we help ever emerging civilian victims that are emerging from wars. Much like in Adlerian theory there needs to be an emphasis on how the individual group being studied functions as a whole and not to be broken down into irrelevant parts (Adler, 1964).

The problem this field has, as a whole, in the United States, is the lack of collaboration and representation from other countries. Arnett (2008) found that this problem is very real and present in six of the major psychology publications in the United States; *Developmental Psychology* (DP), *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (JPSP), *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (JAP), *Journal of Family Psychology* (JFP), *Health Psychology* (HP) and finally *Journal of Educational Psychology* (JEP). While research seems to be conducted everywhere, each country has its own methods for publishing and reporting their findings which makes it inconsistent and hard for other researchers from different countries to share, compare and contrast results. This creates the most development when two different perspectives can be combined to create something that can be used by a wider group of clients.

Arnett (2008) reports in his article, which is comprised of American publications, which are also the majority of the articles published, are not from international authors or samples. He finds that the majority of articles published are from universities in the United States. 73 percent of the articles were published by authors from these universities while another 14 percent were from four English speaking countries not including the US. This is purely on the topic of research done into the first authors listed on articles.
When it comes to samples an average of 70 percent of the research conducted was on populations within the United States, while major populations such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America were represented by one percent or less. This brought up the question to whether the research done was on the different cultures within the United States since it is so culturally diverse. The answer was a resounding “no”; of the research carried out in the United States around 80 percent was of European American descent. In JPSP the majority of the articles did not even specify an ethnicity of the sample and that sixty seven percent of the studies conducted by this journal were on undergraduate psychology students (Arnett, 2008).

What this means is that a new perspective on mental health in the United States needs to take place. While the efforts of incorporating multiculturalism into the education programs for mental health staff is a good start, it needs to involve the collaboration of mental health staff from other countries as well. Exchange programs are a good way for therapists to learn differing perspectives on the treatment of populations from the viewpoint of their own culture. One can never truly learn a culture until one has lived inside that culture.

The data on the representation of minorities in research conducted by therapists, psychologist and other mental health workers in the United States clearly shows a gap in the representation of all races and ethnic groups. This has caused problems in the treatment of these minorities because the treatments do not come from a sense of understanding the individual in the greater context but instead as just another set of symptoms that need remediation. Individual Psychologists have the advantage in this as they view the problem from the perspective of the individual who is having problems. This allows them to treat any kind of problem with any kind of population as they do not make assumptions and categorize issues that arise, but see each client as a new page that needs to be filled in with the clients answers not the therapists.
Epilogue

The journey through this master’s project has been an emotional one. When I began this I had already experienced the effects of the violence on my two little brothers in laws who had to come and stay with us in 2012 because they were almost kidnapped. I had recently separated from the military and had my U-Haul packed and ready to go to Omaha, NE. When we got the phone call my wife and I decided to move to Las Cruces, NM instead to take care of these two children and keep them away from Mexico. Since then their parents have moved over to the States and they are doing quite well. I had begun to be drawn in by the optimism that was running in Mexico as the violence began to decrease and things started to look up. I imagined new programs that could be implemented to help these children who were now freer to go about the daily tasks of live.

On May 16, 2013 we received a phone call from my wife’s mother telling her that her oldest brother had been found murdered in the back of his vehicle. This hit both of us pretty hard. It made it hard to be subjective and unbiased when writing and editing this paper. I have learned that we bring ourselves when we enter the room to see a client and this is the case with this paper as well. While I still feel there is a lot of hope for Mexico, I hope it comes sooner than later for the sake of the people who are affected by it the most.
References


