

InSight Crime

Investigation and Analysis of Organized Crime

Gang Affiliation and Structure in the Northern Triangle

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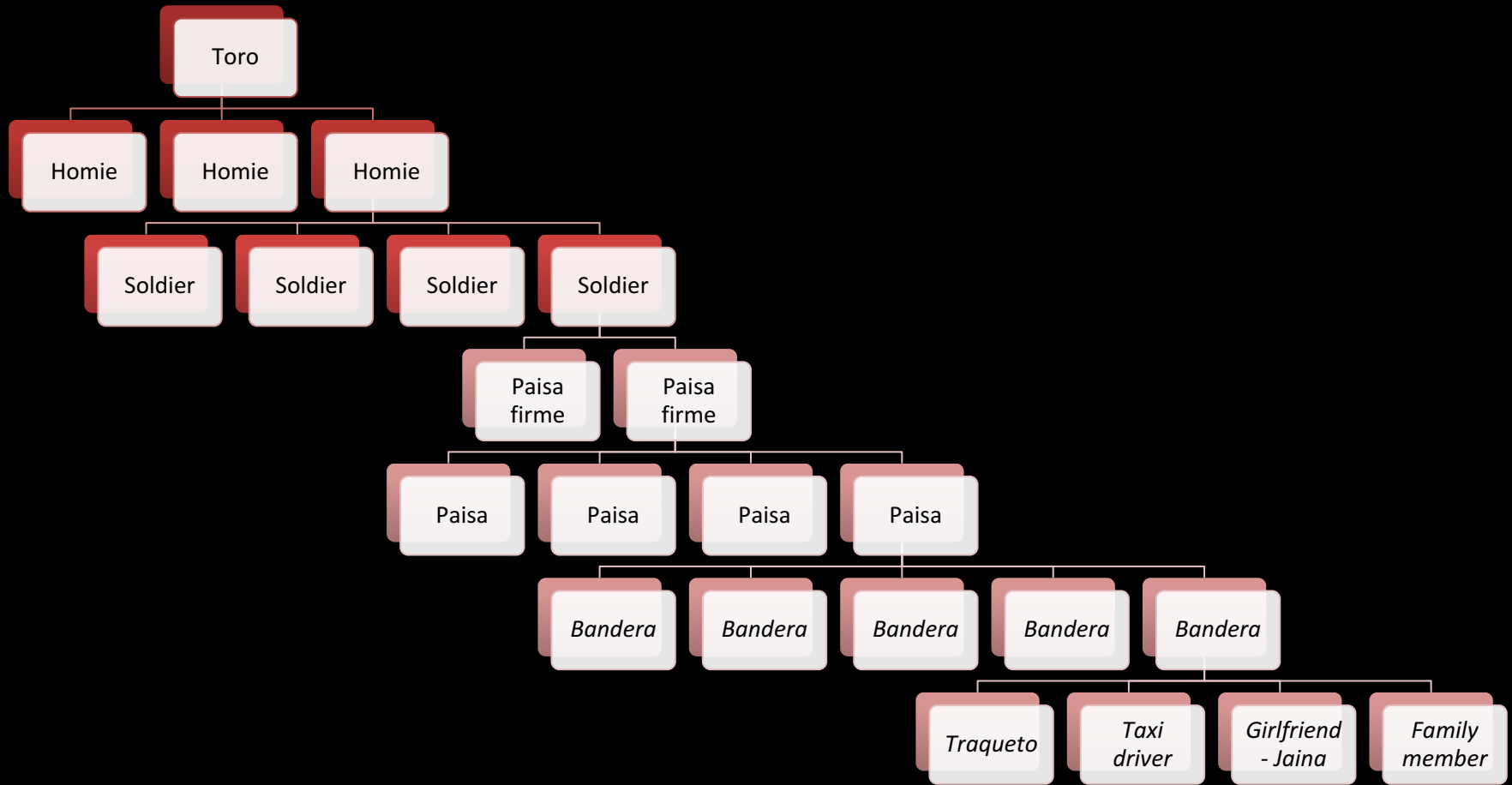
Organized Crime in the Americas

www.insightcrime.org

Problem 1: Gang dichotomy -
They have a hierarchy, but...
it is a disperse and horizontal
organizational style that often affords
an amount of autonomy.

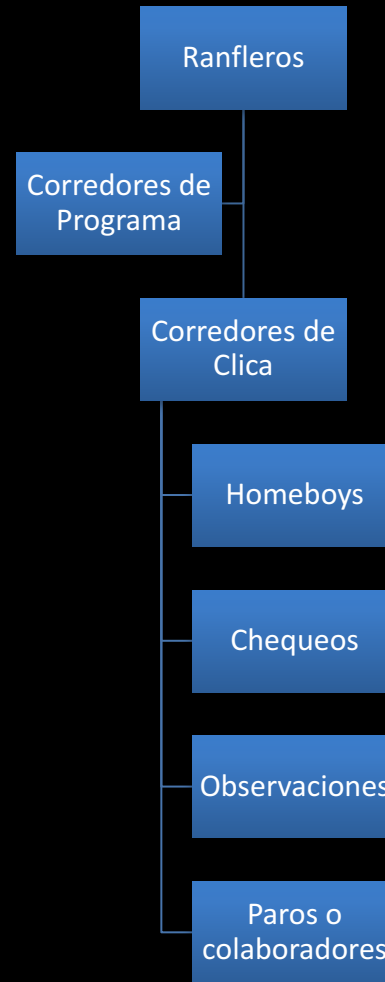
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Problem 2: How many go from that level to the next?
(Who is a gang member?)

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Source	Estimated number of gang members
The National Program for Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Social Reinsertion (Programa Nacional de Prevencion, Rehabilitacion y Reinsercion Social)	4,728 active gang members 447 active gang members in prison
Jovenes Honduras Adelante - Juntos Avancemos (JHA-KA)	5,000 to 6,000 active members of the MS13 and Barrio 18
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	12,000 gang members in the country (7,000 in the Barrio 18 and 5,000 in the MS13)
Honduran police	25,000 active members of the MS13 and Barrio 18
US Agency for International Development (USAID)	36,000 active gang members

Numbers and Perception

- Social organization v. State

Legal Implications

- Imprisonment
- Conviction

Social Implications

- Social Isolation
- Labor
- Education
- International Assistance

InSight Crime defines a gang as a group of people -- usually young and from a low socio-economic background -- that is made up of relatively autonomous cells, each with a clearly identifiable leader. These cells define themselves, in part, around constant, reciprocal violence against other groups of youths; and it is this conflict that makes them a cohesive organization, and that is the means for establishing internal hierarchies and awarding status and power.

Problem 3: Violence

- At the heart of the recruitment
- At the heart of the induction
 - Assassination or multiple assassinations
 - Ritual for entry
- Major part of the career path

Conclusions

- It is very hard to determine who is an actual member, and there are less full-fledged members than are commonly reported.
- A member is often in the eye of the beholder, and this has widespread implications.
- Violence is at the heart of all of these processes, which exposes mass numbers of youth to the violence of the gangs.