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## Columbian Drug Trafficking: Reasons And Solutions

Seven years prior to the year 2000, Pablo Escobar was executed by police in Columbia on the top of a building. Following the passing of its leader, the Medellin Cartel slowly went from being one solid unit to being many smaller groups. Currently, the cartel is made up of multiple criminal groups rapidly expanding their criminal control throughout the world. These groups are involved in different types of illegal activities, including the funneling money earned through illegal means through legitimate businesses and trafficking illegal substances.

The cartel settled a harsh institution. They would kidnap or outright kill anyone who interfered with its goals. The Medellin Cartel has been traced back to multiple murders. They killed politicians, high ranking government personnel, and police.

During the 1980's and 1990's, the Medellin Cartel was at its most powerful point. Escobar controlled most of the shipments of cocaine during the 80's and 90's, by shipping in large quantities of cocaine from Central America. He would then keep the shipment and find ways to bring it into other countries, mainly in the North American Continent. His power grew in the Medellin Cartel during the mid-80's, when he introduced a criminal debt service known as the Oficina de Envigado. He used it to coordinate street gangs in the city. These gangs were used to collect the debts owed to him by both criminals and non-criminals alike.

Diego Murillo Bejarano took control of the Oficina de Envigado after the death of Pablo Escobar. He took the name of Don Berna when he gained control of the organization. Don had given the group huge influence throughout the world. He was arrested and brought to the United States from Columbia in 2008 along with others. He pleaded not guilty initially, but later changed his plea to the trafficking of cocaine in 2008. His plea earned him a little over 31 years in prison along with a fine of four million dollars.

The arrest of Don Berna led to a larger break inside of the Oficina de Envigado. Multiple capos fought amongst themselves for the control of an organization that had become flat. The organization was not seeing any rise or fall, they remained stationary. The Oficina de Envigado is considered a criminal federation in today's time. It is made up of multiple medium-sized criminal organizations working in specific areas of Medellin. These groups control the illegal trade in certain areas.

The Cali Cartel is also known as "Cali's Gentlemen". It was started in the southern part of Columbia near the city of Cali and Valle del Cauca Department. The group started as kidnapers, but soon became involved in the drug trafficking business. They got all of their funds from kidnapping. They started trafficking marijuana, and ultimately trafficked cocaine. They made about seven billion dollars per year.

Norte del Valle Cartel began north of Valle del Cauca Department. They developed into a very powerful cartel in the late 90s, after the decline of the Cali Cartel and the Medellin Cartel. They sold more than 1.2 million pounds of cocaine that was worth around 10 billion dollars. The cartel used extraordinary violence to gain power.

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The North Coast Cartel got their start in Baranquilla. They exported an extreme amount of cocaine to the United States of America and Europe through smuggling routes. The North Coast Cartel held most of the smuggling routes on the north coast of Columbia all throughout the Caribbean.

The shift of control to a franchise was duplicated time and time again within Colombia's underworld. Once Colombia's historic illegal militaries demobilized and broke apart, they became more criminal. They formed more smooth networks of illegal trade within Columbia. This allowed them to become more successful with fewer problems along the way. A new group of "Invisibles", as insightcrime.org states, lead the new networks of illegal trade in Columbia.

Unlike Escobar, Invisibles don't show off all of their wealth. Escobar liked to show his prosperity. He ensured that everyone knew of his success through his lavish home and the lifestyle he lived. This led to trouble and unwanted attention. Invisibles have led the cocaine trade to increase more than it ever has. Columbian cocaine production reached a record of 1,379 metric tons (1,520 tons) in 2017. The Invisibles have learned that showing off a wealthy lifestyle and using immense violence is bad for business. Their protection plan is to use secrecy. With a fewer number of people knowing of the illegal trade that the Invisibles were involved with, they were able to enjoy long periods of success. An example of an Invisible is Jose Bayron Piedrahita Ceballos, also known as El Arabe. Before his arrest in September of 2017, Piedrahita was known for money laundering. By using the disguise of a successful businessman and a rancher, he was able to stay out of the authority's eyes during a career of crime spanning more than 20 years.

Before the passing of Escobar, the cartel controlled most of the Caribbean air route in order to smuggle cocaine into North America. In recent times, the Caribbean air route has been mostly stopped by the authorities. The trafficking route of the Pacific has grown exponentially over the years due to groups establishing more distinct techniques. Police have reported more drug trafficking submarines that mostly leave from the coast of the Pacific Ocean.

The San Juan and Naya rivers are two of Columbia's most travelled routes for drugs. Communities that are around these rivers are enclosed by groups of armed men trying to dominate the area of land. Columbia's main port moves packages full of cocaine from the fields to the coast. New data shows that the amount of land used for coca plants rose by seventeen percent in 2017 in contrast to last year.

The violence surrounding the movement of cocaine has driven people to run away from their home that their ancestors farmed for multiple centuries. The indigenous communities that live along the river, have a hard time identifying who is really responsible for the attacks against them. People don't speak of the crimes they witness for fear of being made an example of from the cartel or militia groups. The authorities started a murder investigation. It was about five dead bodies that were from Carra. They were not able to find anything due to no one testifying. There was suspicion that it was the doing of ELN guerrillas or it was set up to look like them. The ELN has grown in size and strength by holding areas left by Farc.

A solution to the problem of drug trafficking could be to have better narcotics training for the police. Ask for help from the United States, Britain, or Canada with training their narcotics officers. They could help boost their economy by exporting more then they import. That way the people don't have to rely on selling drugs to make a living. If more people are above the

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poverty line, then you would be able to get more out of taxes. Then they can put the tax money into law enforcement and defense.

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