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**EDI COVID-19 ESSAY SERIES**

August 2020

**Crime in the time of covid-19<sup>1</sup>**

**How Colombian gangs responded to the pandemic**

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Innovations for Poverty Action -  
Universidad de Chicago - Universidad EAFIT



**About the covid-19 essay series**

In response to the covid-19 global pandemic, the EDI programme commissioned a series of essays written by EDI researchers. Essays highlight the relevance of EDI research to the covid-19 crisis, in many cases referring to ongoing EDI research. They illustrate how an understanding of the relationship between institutions and economic development might help to gauge the impact of the crisis and to formulate a response. For more information, please visit: [www.edi.org.uk](http://www.edi.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> For research assistance, we thank Angie Manning, Maria A. Rodriguez Uribe, and Sofia Jimenez from Innovations for Poverty Action; Peter DeRoch and Zachary Tuzovitch from The University of Chicago; and Nelson Nolas Colorado from the newspaper El Colombiano. For support on implementing the project and providing access to information we thank the Secretaría de Seguridad y Convivencia de la Alcaldía Mayor's Office, the Instituto Nacional de Protección y Convivencia (INPEC) and the Ministerio de Justicia of the Colombian Government. Funding for this project was provided by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, awarded through the Crime and Violence Initiative at JPAI, and the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), the Economic Development and Institutions Programme (EDI), funded with UK aid from the UK Government and working in partnership with Oxford Policy Management Limited, University of Nnamdi, Paris School of Economics and Afdk de Gestion Economique, and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

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# Crime in the Time of COVID-19: How Colombian Gangs Responded to the Pandemic

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, scholars and journalists have spread anecdotes of gangs and criminal organizations coming to the aid of citizens, governing in place of the state. Researchers studied if gangs respond to COVID-19 in Medellín. Despite the headlines, gang involvement in pandemic response is exceptional and mostly idiosyncratic. Surveying every low- and middle-income neighborhood in Medellín, they find that most of the support for civilians comes from state authorities and not from gangs.

To read more about this project, click here to read the publication (in Spanish), [\*Covid-19: consecuencias y desafíos en la economía colombiana: Una mirada desde las universidades\*](#) (please refer to the chapter that starts on page 243).

March 16, 2021