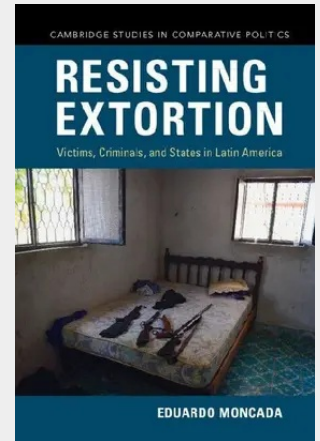


Resisting Extortion

Criminal extortion is an understudied, but widespread and severe problem in Latin America. In states that cannot or choose not to uphold the rule of law, victims are often seen as helpless in the face of powerful criminals. However, even under such difficult circumstances, victims resist criminal extortion in surprisingly different ways. Drawing on extensive fieldwork in violent localities in Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico, Moncada weaves together interviews, focus groups, and participatory drawing exercises to explain why victims pursue distinct strategies to resist criminal extortion. The analysis traces and compares processes that lead to individual acts of everyday resistance; sporadic killings by ad hoc groups of victims and police; institutionalized and sustained collective vigilantism; and coordination between victims and states to co-produce order in ways that both strengthen and undermine the rule of law. This book offers valuable new insights into the broader politics of crime and the state.

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