Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Order and Crime: Criminal Groups´ Political Legitimacy in Michoacán and Sicily

Pena Gonzalez, R.

Citation
Pena Gonzalez, R. (2020, February 20). *Order and Crime: Criminal Groups´ Political Legitimacy in Michoacán and Sicily*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/85513

Version:	Publisher's Version
License:	Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/85513

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/85513 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Peña González R.
Title: Order and Crime: Criminal Groups´ Political Legitimacy in Michoacán and Sicily
Issue Date: 2020-02-20

Order and Crime:

Criminal Groups´ Political Legitimacy in Michoacán and Sicily

Rodrigo Peña González

Order and Crime:
Criminal Groups´ Political Legitimacy in Michoacán and Sicily

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op donderdag 20 februari 2020
klokke 11:15 uur

door

Rodrigo Peña González
geboren te Tlalnepantla (Mexico)
in 1987

Promotor:	Mw. Prof.dr. I.G.B.M. Duijvesteijn
Copromotor:	Dr. J.C.G. Aguiar
Promotiecommissie:	Prof.dr. P. Silva
	Prof.dr. C.G. Koonings (University of Amsterdam)
	Mw. Prof.dr. J. Demmers (Utrecht University)
	Dr. G.J.C. van de Borgh (Utrecht University)
	Mw. Dr. S. Valdivia Rivera

Curriculum Vitae

Rodrigo Peña González was born in Tlalnepantla, Mexico. He studied International Relations at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where he received his bachelor's degree in 2011. In 2014 he obtained a master's degree in Political and Social Studies also at UNAM. Since 2015, he is a member of CASEDE, a Mexican Think Tank focused on security and violence phenomena. In 2016 he was awarded a scholarship from the Mexican National Council for Science and Technology (CONACyT) to conduct a four-year doctoral research at Leiden University. For this purpose, he joined the research group From Disorder to Order: Conflict and the Resources of Legitimacy.

Acknowledgments

At some point during my Ph.D. studies at Leiden University, a fragment of the poem “The Road Not Taken," by Robert Frost, was installed outside one of the University´s buildings. The fragment goes as follows: “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— / I took the one less traveled by, / And that has made all the difference.” Indeed, choosing Leiden for carrying my doctoral studies made all the difference. Traveling to such a remote place and converting it into my home was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made and, yet, it was also one of the best. Nevertheless, it was the people I found on this "less traveled" path who made this a great experience. First of all, thanks to the members of the reading commission. Their commitment to critically reading this work served to enrich its content. Thanks to Leiden University. The support I received throughout the research project, “From Disorder to Order: Conflict and the Resources of Legitimacy” was essential to achieve success in this work. Thanks to the National Council for Science and Technology of Mexico (CONACyT). The scholarship which I was awarded to carry out my doctoral studies let me take every step in this academic journey.

Special thanks to my supervisor and co-supervisor. You have been both wise mentors, smart advisors, and helpful guides. Isabelle, thank you for always expecting the best effort from me. You are an inspiration on how to combine excellence and discipline while carrying out research. José Carlos, thank you for welcoming me in Leiden for the first time years ago. You gave me the chance to open my world, my view, and my mind. Thank you for always having an interesting and exciting idea or reference to improve my research. Dear both: thank you, as always. Thank you to the people of the Department of Latin American Studies. You placed the first bricks that transformed Leiden from an unknown place into a warm home. Thank you, Patricio, for supporting me during my arrival in Leiden, a particularly difficult moment during my Ph.D., and making me feel part of such a great group.

Thank you, Cristóbal and Jenny. Those first months in the Netherlands, you guys became my older brother and sister. Mariana and Mariano, thank you for being such great friends. Håvar and Sole, thank you for your friendship and hospitality. You became, indeed, my family. Nanne, thank you for always having good academic advice accompanied by a smile. Dear Pablo, thank you for all those deep conversations during either launch, borrel, or while having coffee. Thank you, Vicky, for always having a warm smile despite how cold the weather was. Also, thank you, Randal, for your friendship.

Thank you, Karla and Dago for your help during my arrival in the Netherlands. Thank you to those beloved friends that I found while walking this journey, I will always treasure every second spent with you: Ylva, Kate, Marloes, Monika, Carlein, Hannelien, Annemijn,

Dianeth, Karin(o)a, Noel, Susy, Marta, Lina, Joaquín, Azucena, Meri, Merel, Julienne, Sterre, Evi, Paola, Lisa, Chema, Ita, Monse, Erik, Lydia, and all the lovely mappies. A special thanks to my beloved Cascos Azules: Francisco a.k.a. Cherito, Santiago, and Sebastián. You guys became my brothers time and again. You guys became my brothers time and again. I would gladly do it all over. Thank you for never leaving me and for making a brotherhood out of our friendship. Also, thank you, Jesse; you became a close and dear friend in very little time. It is, and will always be, my pleasure to share time and talk with you. Thank you, Daniel. Your friendship was a breath of fresh air in my life.

Special thanks to George Mason University, where I attended as guest researcher, and specifically to Dr. Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera. My time there was immensely helpful to improve my research. Also, a big thanks to Elisa and Pepe for your friendship and hospitality in Washington, D.C. Outside the Netherlands, many people helped me during this process. Thank you Saúl, Sergio, Eugenia, Abraham, Pau, Maura, Luz, Armando, Andrea, and Jovani. Gracias, mamá y abuela. Por ser y estar. Las amo. Son mi inspiración y mi motor. Arlen, mi Calita, thank you for your patience and for always being here and there. You love has accompanied me every step of the way. ¡Lo logramos! Y espero que sigamos lográndolo, siempre juntos. Last but not least, I want to thank my informants. Their testimonies, every word, are backgrounded by tons of experiences, usually related to pain and violence that directly or indirectly involves them. This work would not have succeeded without your time and knowledge.

A mi madre.

Todo lo que te enorgullezca de mí, lo haré un tributo a ti.

Summary

This study explores contexts of disorder and crisis, in which criminal actors gain legitimacy. By affirming that criminal groups are already social agents, this research argues that they gain political legitimacy to the extent that criminal groups engage in an authority-building process. Thus, it focuses on two instances in which criminal groups launched campaigns— or at least engaged in planned activities— in order to gain political and social legitimacy. La Familia Michoacana (LFM) and Los Caballeros Templarios (LCT) de Michoacán in Mexico, on the one hand, and Cosa Nostra (CN) in Italy, on the other, offer rich and instructive cases to examine. Precisely, the research asks for how these groups seek to forge legitimacy, as well as for what are their strategies for that purpose. The research opens two avenues of conceptual discussion.

Firstly, it recovers and organizes what has been written about political legitimacy in order to propose a working definition. Thus, to tackle this issue, we need an operative idea of how legitimacy could be, rather than how it should be. The second conceptual discussion uses the two cases to explore how the ideas of legitimacy and authority relate to each other. The contexts of the respective cases offer fruitful opportunities to re-think accepted notions, including the disciplinary perspectives from which they come. The story of Michoacán, the primary case in this research, emerged over the last several decades, and thus is less investigated than the centennial Sicilian story, the secondary research case. Comparing them brings into focus both similarities and differences, which sheds new light on them, and offers new perspectives for the conceptual debate.

This study is structured into six chapters designed to tackle the stated puzzle. The first chapter is entitled "Illegal but Legitimate? Review on Legitimacy Concept towards a Social (Dis)Order Debate." It collects, systematizes and dialogues with the key research concepts. Political legitimacy comes first, focusing on what has been studied and argued about this theme across disciplines. This exercise helps distinguish a strictly literature review approach from a more engaged theoretical perspective which can grapple with how the hypothetical legitimate *should* be compared to the debate on how this same subject *could* be. Also, key concepts in political legitimacy and authority are explored, such as social order, the state, and sovereignty. With this established, the second chapter's agenda is twofold.

First, to deepen discussion of the concepts as they relate to the specific cases of criminal groups interested and performing political legitimacy actions. Second, to describe and explain this study's methodology, including data collection, techniques, strategies, and so on, not only as they pertain to this study, but how they might apply to similar investigations addressing other cases worldwide. Chapter 2, "The Ghost of Robin Hood," lays out the epistemology behind the data collection carried out in fieldwork as well as the usage of

secondary sources. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Michoacán, the central case of this research, based on primary data and fieldwork. Chapter 3, "Tracking Local Robin Hoods," contextualizes contemporary Michoacán, including the role of other agents involved in the war on drugs strategy carried out by the Mexican federal government.

Chapter 4, The Art of Dying Twice, focuses on the analysis of LFM and LCT legitimacy efforts and performances, using what is called the sources and resources of legitimacy, which inspired the data collection in the field, and guided the presentation of the information. This chapter ends by elaborating cases in which these sources and resources somehow play together when the criminal groups performed their legitimacy campaigns. After that, chapter 5 carries out in an abbreviated form the same kind of analysis, but this time for CN. The first part provides a critical overview of what the mafia is and CN´s role in local political legitimacy efforts across this criminal group's long history. The second and most important part addresses the sources and resources of legitimacy following the same model. Finally, and again paralleling the Michoacán analysis, it examines an emblematic case in which all the sources and resources of legitimacy overlap.

With both the Michoacán and Sicilian cases presented and discussed, chapter 6 conducts a comparative analysis. Initially, the data from both cases in the previous chapters inform the conceptual debates identified at the outset of this dissertation. Each source of legitimacy guides an analytical comparison in which similar and dissimilar practices are evaluated. Curiously, what at first seem like significant similarities actually conceal vast differences; combined, they deepen and clarify our understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of each case, while highlighting their unique characteristics. Finally, inspired by these ideas, the dissertation closes with some reflective concluding remarks.

Samenvatting

Deze dissertatie bestudeert hoe criminele actoren zich legitimeren in een context van crisis en wanorde. Er wordt beargumenteerd dat deze criminele actoren, zijnde sociale agenten, hun politieke activiteiten legitimeren door te participeren in processen van autoriteitsverwerving. Het onderzoek richt zich op twee casussen van criminele groeperingen die publieke campagnes hebben gestart, of hebben deelgenomen aan bepaalde activiteiten met het doel om die als doel hebben het verwerven van politieke en sociale legitimiteit te verwerven, namelijk La Familia Michoacana (LFM) en Los Caballeros Templarios (LCT) in Michoacán, Mexico, en Cosa Nostra (CN) in Sicilië, Italië. De dissertatie bestudeert hoe deze groeperingen legitimiteit verwerven en welke strategieën ze daarvoor gebruiken. Voor dit onderzoek worden twee conceptuele discussies geopend.

De eerste conceptuele discussie behandelt eerder geschreven werk over politieke legitimiteit om vervolgens een werkdefinitie van dit concept op te stellen. Om dit onderzoek uit te voeren, is er een definitie nodig die ingaat op wat legitimiteit *kan* zijn, in plaats van wat het zou *moeten* zijn. De tweede conceptuele discussie gebruikt de twee casussen om te onderzoeken hoe de ideeën van legitimiteit en autoriteit met elkaar verband houden. Deze casussen blijken geschikt om eerder geaccepteerde noties van legitimiteit en autoriteit te herzien, alsmede de disciplinaire perspectieven waaruit deze voortkomen. De casus van Michoacán is recenter en daarom minder onderzocht dan de casus van Sicilië. Door deze twee casussen te combineren worden de overeenkomsten en verschillen tussen beiden in kaart gebracht, komen de casussen in een nieuw licht te staan, en worden er nieuwe perspectieven op het conceptuele debat geboden.

De studie is onderverdeeld in zes hoofdstukken. Het eerste hoofdstuk “Illegal but Legitimate? Review on Legitimacy Concept towards a Social (Dis)Order Debate” verzamelt, systematiseert en bediscussieert de centrale onderzoekconcepten. Allereerst wordt in kaart gebracht wat er in verschillende disciplines is geschreven over het concept van politieke legitimiteit. Er wordt een onderscheid gemaakt tussen een strikte literatuurrecensie en een meer geëngageerd theoretisch onderdeel dat ingaat op het debat over hoe legitimiteit zou kunnen functioneren in tegenstelling tot het debat over hoe legitimiteit zou moeten functioneren. Ook worden centrale concepten binnen deze debatten, zoals sociale orde, de staat, en soevereiniteit onderzocht. Het doel van het daaropvolgende hoofdstuk is tweevoudig.

Ten eerste wordt de discussie van de centrale concepten verdiept aan de hand van de casussen van de criminele groeperingen. Ten tweede wordt de methodologie van het onderzoek – dataverzameling, onderzoekstechnieken- en strategieën – uiteengezet. Hierbij wordt niet alleen de relevantie van deze methodologie voor het onderzoek benadrukt, maar wordt er ook

gekeken naar hoe deze toegepast zou kunnen worden in studies van andere casussen wereldwijd. Hoofdstuk 2, “The Ghost of Robin Hood” gaat in op de epistemologie achter de dataverzameling tijdens het veldwerk en het gebruik van secundaire bronnen. Hoofdstuk 3 en 4 analyseren de centrale casus van dit onderzoek, Michoacán, aan de hand van primaire data en veldwerk. Hoofdstuk 3, “Tracking Local Robin Hoods”, brengt het hedendaags Michoacán in context, en gaat in op de rol van andere actoren die betrokken zijn bij de drugsoorlog die de Mexicaanse federale overheid uitvoert.

Hoofdstuk 4, “The Art of Dying Twice”, analyseert de legitimeringspogingen van LFM en LCT. Hierbij wordt gebruik gemaakt van zogenaamde legitimeringsbronnen en -middelen die van invloed zijn geweest op zowel de manier van dataverameling alsmede op hoe deze data gepresenteerd worden. Hoofdstuk 4 eindigt met een bespreking van een specifieke casus, waarindeze bronnen en middelen samenvallen met de legitimiteitscampagnes van de criminele groeperingen. Hoofdstuk 5 voert een verkorte versie van een soortgelijke analyse uit voor de casus van CN. Het eerste deel biedt een kritisch overzicht van wat de maffia is en van de legitimiteitspogingen van CN gedurende diens langdurige bestaan. Het tweede en belangrijkste deel bespreekt de legitimiteitsbronnen en -middelen aan de hand van hetzelfde model dat is gepresenteerd in hoofdstuk 4. Tot slot en wederom parallel aan de analyse van Michoacán, wordt er een emblematische casus bestudeerd waarbinnen alle bronnen en middelen samenvallen.

Na de presentatie en bespreking van de individuele casussen toont hoofdstuk 6 een comparatieve analyse. In de eerste plaats tonen de data van de casussen de conceptuele debatten die al eerder aan het begin van de dissertatie zijn benoemd. Elke legitimeringsbron leidt een analytische vergelijking in, waarbinnen zowel gelijksoortige als ongelijksoortige praktijken worden geëvalueerd. Opvallend genoeg, de op het eerste gezicht veelzeggende overeenkomsten tussen de casussen lijken bij nader inzien grote verschillen te verschuilen. Gezamenlijk verdiepen ze ons begrip van de conceptuele onderbouwing van elke casus en benadrukken ze hun unieke eigenschappen. Tot slot en gebaseerd op de voorafgaande ideeën, sluit de dissertatie af met een aantal conclusies.

Table of Contents

Introduction **16**

Chapter 1. Illegal but Legitimate? The Concept of Legitimacy and the Debate on Social (Dis)Order **22**

1.1. What is Political Legitimacy? Understanding a Social and Political Concept 23

1.1.1. Normative Perspective of Legitimacy 25

1.1.2. Descriptive Perspective of Legitimacy 27

1.1.3. Max Weber´s Legitimacy: Review of a Fundamental Scholar 30

1.1.4. Towards an Operative Concept of Legitimacy 33

1.2. The Right to Rule: Social (Dis)order, the State and the Grounds for Legitimacy 35

1.2.1. What Social Order Is and What It Is For 36

1.2.2. Legitimate Power and Decisions: State and Sovereignty 39

1.2.3. The Audience for Legitimacy: Social Order, Legitimacy, and the Social Contract 42

1.3. Alternative People´s Legitimacy: Non-state Actors 44

1.3.1. What Is a Non-state Actor? 46

1.3.2. Why and When? Non-state Actors In Search of Legitimacy 48

1.3.3. Violence as Catalyst: Towards a Taxonomy of Non-State Actors 50

1.3.4. Criminal Groups: Characteristics of a Violent Non-state Actor Regarding Legitimacy 52

1.4. Closing Remarks and Summary of Chapter 1 55

Chapter 2. The Ghost of Robin Hood: Tracking Legitimate Crime **57**

2.1. Crime and Illegality as Social Phenomena 58

2.1.1. Illegal Is Illegitimate: Limits of the Normative Perspective 58

2.1.2. Illegal But Legitimate: Towards Descriptive Grounds 60

2.1.3. From Illegal to Legal: Changes in Social Order 61

2.2. The Fiction of Counter-Society Actors 62

2.2.1. Blurred Boundaries: Crime and Illegality 63

2.2.2. The Myth of the Counter-Society: Circuits of Illegality 64

2.3. Criminal Agendas and the Performance of Legitimacy 65

2.3.1. Lessons from Diverse Scenarios 66

2.3.2. Legitimate Justification: Does Crime Always Need to Be Justified? 67
2.3.3. On the Importance of Criminal Agendas 69
2.4. Sources and Resources of Legitimacy 71
2.4.1. Anthropology of the State and Legitimacy for Research on Crime 72
2.4.2. The Audiences of Legitimacy: Four Types 75
2.4.3. Sources and Resources of Legitimacy: Where to Watch 77
2.4.4. The Michoacán-Sicily Connection: Towards Two Criminal Legitimation Processes 81
2.5. Closing Remarks: Chapter II Summary 82
Chapter 3. Tracking Local Robin Hoods: Criminal Groups and Legitimacy Attempts in Michoacán, Mexico 84
3.1. The Big Picture: The Mexican War on Drugs 86
3.1.1. War as Metaphor: From the Symbolic Dimension to Real Consequences 86
3.1.2. Michoacán: The First Battlefield 89
3.1.3. The Real Battles: The Size of Violence in Michoacán 94
3.1.4. An International Overview: Michoacán Between the Caribbean Basin and Asia Pacific 100
3.2. How to Understand Michoacán: Many Actors, Complex State 102
3.2.1. Michoacán: Geography Matters 103
3.2.2. Cartography of a Pre-supposed Sovereign: State-effect, Statehood, and Sovereign Practices 108
3.3. Closing Remarks: Chapter III Summary 116
Chapter 4. The Art of Dying Twice: Legitimacy Sources and Resources of La Familia and Los Caballeros Templarios 118
4.1. *La Familia* and *Los Templarios:* Sources and Resources of Legitimacy 119
4.1.1. Symbolic Sources 123
4.1.1.1. Proposed Social Contract 123
4.1.1.2. Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification 124
4.1.1.3. Dissemination of Symbols 126
4.1.2. Performance-Centered Sources 129
4.1.2.1. Provision of Governing Institutions 130
4.1.2.2. Philanthropy and Coercion: Carrots and Sticks 133
4.1.3. Portrayals of Enemy Sources 136

4.1.3.1. Expressions Against Formal Authorities 137
4.1.3.2. Expressions Against Other (Informal) Authorities 137
4.1.3.3. Stances Towards the Current Law 138
4.2. Across Legitimacy Sources and Resources: The Forbidden Books of Michoacán 139
4.2.1. "El más loco": Nazario´s Memoirs 140
4.2.2. "Usted juzgue": The Third Person Perspective 143
4.2.3. El código: Criminal Commandments 145
4.2.4. Palabra de Caballero: The (Independent?) Journalist's Angle 146
4.2.5. "Pensamientos": The Doctrine 147
4.3. Closing Remarks: Chapter IV Summary 150
Chapter 5. Cosa Nostra: Tracking Sicilian Mafia's Political Legitimacy 152
5.1. The Big Picture: The Sicilian Mafia in Sicilian History 154
5.1.1. Mafia and the Italian State: Parallel Histories? 154
5.1.2. The Mafia and the Social Order in Sicily 157
5.1.3. Sicily and the Concept of the Mafia 157
5.2. The Sicilian Mafia: Sources and Resources of Legitimacy 159
5.2.1. Symbolic Sources 160
5.2.1.1. Proposed Social Contract 161
5.2.1.2. Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification 162
5.2.1.3. Dissemination of Symbols 164
5.2.2. Performance-Centered Sources 166
5.2.2.1. Provision of Governing Institutions 166
5.2.2.2. Philanthropy and Coercion: Carrots and Sticks 170
5.2.3. Portrayals of the Enemy 175
5.2.3.1. Expressions Against Formal Authorities 175
5.2.3.2. Expressions Against Other (Informal) Authorities 180
5.2.3.3. Stances Towards Current Law 182
5.3. Across Legitimacy Sources and Resources: *La Festa di Sant´Agata* 185
5.3.1. The Sicilian Mafia and Catholic Processions 186
5.3.2. Saint Agatha´s Procession: 2019 Edition 187
5.4. Closing Remarks: Chapter V Summary 189

Chapter 6. Reshaping Crime and (Dis)order: Towards a Comparison 191
6.1. Criminal Groups and Legitimacy: Pushing Conceptualization 192
6.1.1. Political Legitimacy, Criminal Groups, and the State 194
6.1.2. Political Legitimacy, Criminal Groups, and Sovereignty 195
6.1.3. Political Legitimacy, Criminal groups, and Social (Dis)Order 197
6.2. Michoacán-Sicily Connection: Comparing Sources of Legitimacy 198
6.2.1. Comparing Symbolic Sources 200
6.2.1.1. Proposed Social Contract 201
6.2.1.2. Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification 204
6.2.1.3. Dissemination of Symbols 205
6.2.2. Comparing Performance-centered Sources 209
6.2.2.1. Provision of Governing Institutions 210
6.2.2.2. Philanthropy and Coercion: Carrots and Sticks 212
6.2.3. Comparing Portrayals of Enemy Sources 214
6.2.3.1. Expressions Against Formal Authorities 215
6.2.3.2. Expressions Against Other (Informal) Authorities 217
6.2.3.3. Stances Towards Current Law 219
6.3. Closing Remarks: Chapter VI Summary 222
Conclusions 224
Appendix 233
Sources 240
Interviews Appendix 262
Other Inputs Related to Fieldwork 263

Introduction

According to Eric Hobsbawm, the social bandit career is "[…] the best way to enter the complicated subject of 'social banditry'" (2000, 1). His argument is that a bandits' story is not exclusively about an individuals' life, but sheds light on the social interactions in which illegality and its social acceptance, or rejection, take place. Highlighting the key elements of that relationship requires an understanding of political legitimacy. A case in point is Sicilian-born Tommaso Buscetta, a former mafia figure who died of cancer in April of 2000 in New York. He had been living in the United States under the witness protection program after becoming the first *pentito* (repentant) and confessing multiple mafia secrets. His confession revealed relevant information about Cosa Nostra´s functioning and served to launch the biggest trial against the mafia in Italy. Buscetta revealed a number of secrets that shocked the public because of the extent of the mafia's influence, exposing in detail the inner workings of a political economy linking criminal elements to ostensibly independent government institutions, and democratically elected leaders. Not long before he died, he explained to journalists: "It is not the Cosa Nostra that contacts the politician; instead a member of the Cosa Nostra says: that president is mine (*è cosa mia*), and if you need a favor, you must go through me. In other words, the Cosa Nostra figure maintains a sort of monopoly on that politician […] one goes to that candidate and says, '*Onorevole*, I can do this and that for you now, and we hope that when you are elected you will remember us'. The candidate wins and he has to pay something back" (Buscetta quoted in della Porta and Vannucci, 1999, 21).

A decade after Buscetta´s death, the appearance of a "new Saint" in the southwestern state of Michoacán, in Mexico, surprised the local press. The installation of shrines with *San Nazario* statuettes honored the memory of Nazario Moreno González, former leader of the local criminal group, La Familia Michoacana, who was declared killed by Mexican federal police in December of 2010. Nazario's cult was developed after that date, even when almost four years later, in March of 2014, the government confirmed that (this time for sure) Nazario had been killed by federal forces. However, now it was not only shrines, but "bibles" as well, as a Mexican newspaper called them (Staff Reforma, 2012), that spread across the region. A memoire-like narrative of Nazario's entitled "*Me dicen: 'el más loco'*" (They Call Me: 'the Maddest One') was freely distributed containing the experiences of the local group leader together with a collection of justifications and explanations on the decisions he made as an individual and as a group leader. "Some will think that I do this book to justify my actions and present myself as a little angel," he said in the opening. But his real motivation, he said, was the "Need to explain to the Mexican people the truth about my behavior, since this has been altered maliciously by the government."

Southwestern México may seem a long way from the corridors of power, and Michoacán is, in fact, a great distance from New York and Italy. But cases like Buscetta and Nazario, point

to a political legitimacy discussion, and reveal similar things about both contexts' political economies, and the bare mechanics of power. Both cases share the overlap of legal and illegal actors and institutions, and expose the intricacies of how money, power, and cultural iconography have been used to establish legitimacy. In expressing their 'truths' in their own voices, Buscetta and Nazario's first-person narratives reveal the values and logics informing the quest for political legitimacy of two criminal groups. Hobsbawm's introduction to *Bandits* opens with a local student´s narration of Weldegabriel, a sort of Eritrean Robin Hood who led rebellious activities in banditry to give the Eritrean people advantages against the Italian colonists. According to Hobsbawm, Weldegabriel's reputation as a heroic figure and local savior led people across Eritrean society to attend his funeral and sing songs in his honor. Often in society, crime is viewed negatively, and those who engage in crime tend to eschew their activity and maintain a low public profile. But sometimes, certain kinds of crimes, combined with the persuasiveness or eloquence of certain figures, can expose ruptures in the social fabric, and lead people to question the legitimacy of institutions, and to find valiance in criminals looking for making crime legitimate.

Research Context

This research falls within the research group and project "From Disorder to Order: Conflict and the Resources of Legitimacy," financed by the Political Legitimacy profile area of Leiden University.[1] Led and supervised by Prof. Dr. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Dr. José Carlos G. Aguiar, the project researches contexts of disorder or crisis, in which counter-state actors gain legitimacy. The project conceptualizes "rebels," such as extremist groups, terrorists, militias, and guerrillas in terms of their popular legitimacy, seeking to understand how and when these types of groups, figures, and institutions come to be seen as valuable and are accepted. In this case, the core-researched actor is a criminal group. So are these criminal groups "rebels," and if so, in what sense? This research affirms that criminal groups are already social agents, and they gain political legitimacy to the extent that they engage in an authority-building process. Thus, this research focuses on two instances in which criminal groups launched campaigns—or at least engaged in planned activities— in order to gain political and social legitimacy. La Familia Michoacana and Los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán, on the one hand, and Cosa Nostra, on the other, offer rich and instructive cases to examine. Precisely how do these groups seek to forge legitimacy? What are their strategies? When and to what extent do they find it necessary to seek such legitimacy (and ultimately, who bestows this legitimacy — the state, popular consent, some combination of the two?) Ostensibly, criminal groups´ primary motivation is exclusively or primarily economic profit, and to preserve or expand their access to such profit. But strictly economic

[1] In addition, the author received and acknowledge a grant to conduct this research from the National Council for Science and Technology of Mexico (CONACyT).

concerns do not explain all of their activities, certainly not, in the case of Michoacán, for example, the sudden proliferation of saints.

This research opens two avenues of conceptual discussion. First, as part of a general literature review it recovers and organizes what has been written about political legitimacy in order to propose an operative idea of political legitimacy. Given that crime is by definition illegal, if legality is the source of legitimacy, then the quick answer would be that no criminal group could ever be legitimate. However, the reality is more complicated. Thus, to tackle this issue, we need an operative idea of how legitimacy could be, rather than how it should be. The second conceptual discussion uses the two cases to explore how the ideas of legitimacy and authority relate to each other. The contexts of the respective cases offer fruitful opportunities to re-think accepted notions, including the disciplinary perspectives from which they come. The story of Michoacán, the primary case in this research, emerged over the last several decades, and thus is less investigated than the centennial Sicilian story, the secondary research case. Comparing them brings into focus both similarities and differences, which sheds new light on them, and offers new perspectives for the conceptual debate. This is explored in depth in the thesis, but here what follows is a brief explanation regarding the cases' selection.

The Cases

The first and primary case is actually composed of two atypical criminal groups located at the Southwestern state of Michoacán, Mexico: La Familia Michoacana (The Family of Michoacán; identified henceforth with the acronym LFM), and Los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán (The Knights Templars of Michoacán; identified henceforth with the acronym LCT). Together they form a sort of single criminal *continuum,* and this research shows their shared concern for forging and preserving legitimacy, although there were some crucial distinctions between the criminal families regarding social group transformation. Both criminal groups are treated as one case due to their shared context and similar practices in their campaigns for political legitimacy. The first registers of LFM date from 2005; LCT declared their 'birth date' in a document published in 2011 (this code is carefully analyzed in the fourth chapter).

Javier Sicilia, a Mexican poet and the leader of the most prominent victims of violence movement in Mexico, referred to LFM and LCT as the New Age criminal groups. This astute observation is based on how these criminal groups mixed self-help teaching rituals, religious systems and principles, counterinsurgency, paramilitary, guerrilla spirit, and fanaticism (Sicilia, 2015, 13). Not so far from this view, the British journalist Ioan Grillo, called these criminal groups "the puzzling postmodern" mafia network (2017, 11). Together with other organizations like the Red Commando in Brazil, the Shower Posse in Jamaica, and the Mara Salvatrucha gangs in Central America, Grillo describes LCT as a complex mix of gangs,

mafias, death squads, religious cults, and urban guerrillas. The story of how they gained legitimacy cannot be separated from their capitalist success in becoming an economic empire in both legal and illegal markets in Mexico, China, the United States, and Europe. But categorizing such atypical criminal groups in anything but the broadest brushstrokes is difficult, due to the complexity and variety of political intentions, streams of profit, practices, and symbols that go into shaping their interest in, perception of, and quest for legitimacy.

After feigning his death in December of 2011, in which the Mexican government claimed to have killed him, LFM head Nazario Moreno, in fact, continued to lead LCT until March of 2014, when he was finally, actually killed. But already in 2011, LFM had launched discourses that reflected a complex political legitimacy strategy. And when LCT appeared, the criminal group began to set up religious symbols and rituals, reflecting a different, perhaps even more culturally deft turn. However, between the two groups, continuance could be trace by interest in achieving legitimacy Differences such as these notwithstanding, both groups continued similar strategies to achieve legitimacy such as publishing and distributing books, explaining their actions in terms that would appeal to ordinary people, increasing their public visibility, and assuming a nominally governmental role (of ruler and ruled) with local populations. At the same time as these groups were growing in legitimacy and gaining authority in soft power-style campaigns in local communities, waves of violence continued to exact a bloody toll on local populations. Journalistic reports attribute a high degree of violence and drug trafficking to LFM and LCT "members". But how could this be; how could both ‘faces’ of these groups coexist? To methodologically solve this puzzle, this research focuses on analyzing the period of 2005 (first register of LFM apparition), to 2014, when the Mexican government assured the public that police had finally killed Nazario, the villainous LCT leader.

The Sicilian Cosa Nostra (identified henceforth with the acronym CN) offers an auxiliary research case. It made methodological sense to compare Michoacán with Sicily for three reasons: as criminals and bandits (in Hobsbawm’s sense) both launched successful campaigns for political legitimacy; both have been highly visible as well as deeply impactful in their respective societies; and they provide revealing differences because of Michoacán’s relative youth and the CN’s relative age. The CN, also known as the Sicilian mafia or simply "the mafia", is the notorious criminal group based in Sicily (and which has inspired countless books, Hollywood films, and television series). Together with the Camorra in Naples, and the ´Ndrangheta in the Southern-continental region of Calabria, CN shapes the Italian criminal organizations' landscape, deeply impacting the social, economic, political, and cultural milieu in Italy. Furthermore, in the case of the CN, as a social phenomenon, this centennial criminal organization has for many decades been a fixture in Italian society, particularly in Sicily. Beyond the obvious connections with other criminal organizations in Mexico and elsewhere, another methodological relevance here pertains to the CN’s place within the other criminal organizations in southern Italy. But given that the CN is nearly as

old as the modern Italian state, it can also provide a usefully contrasting political case to examine, considering the relative "youth" of LFM and LCT. In the long history that interweaves the CN with Sicilian society, different stages and phases can be distinguished. Those distinctions are of particular relevance for this research because, in terms of analyzing political legitimacy, CN has had different historical periods. Its performance and place in society during the late nineteenth century differed greatly from the post-war era, for instance. This research takes into account its long trajectory, using both primary and secondary sources, but focuses on the political legitimacy discussion and recovers specific empirical references where relevant.

Research Structure

This study is structured into six chapters designed to tackle the stated puzzle. Initially, the discussion focuses on conceptual and theoretical issues, and goes on to address methodological concerns related to the data collection. Then the discussion moves to consider empirical aspects of the cases which, after being presented and analyzed, get compared. This comparison is what brings the analysis back to the initial conceptual level, but now with lessons and new questions connected to theoretical debates.

The first chapter is called “Illegal but Legitimate? Review on Legitimacy Concept towards a Social (Dis)Order Debate.” It collects, systematizes and, more importantly, dialogues with the key research concepts. Political legitimacy comes first, focusing on what has been studied and argued about this theme across disciplines. This exercise helps distinguish a strictly literature review approach from a more engaged theoretical perspective which can grapple with how the hypothetical legitimate *should* be compared to the debate on how this same subject *could* be. This discussion seems essential given the actors involved. Also, key concepts in political legitimacy and authority are explored, such as social order, the state, and sovereignty. Other terms and concepts are also considered, namely the social agent, and the idea of non-state actors in general, followed by violent non-state actors in particular, and finally addressing the criminal groups as particular kinds of non-state actors within these categories.

With this established, the second chapter’s agenda is twofold. First, to deepen discussion of the concepts as they relate to the specific cases of criminal groups interested and performing political legitimacy actions. Second, to describe and explain this study’s methodology, including data collection, techniques, strategies, and so on, not only as they pertain to this study, but how they might apply to similar investigations addressing other cases worldwide. Chapter 2, “The Ghost of Robin Hood,” lays out the epistemology behind the data collection carried out in fieldwork as well as the usage of secondary sources.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Michoacán, the central case of this research, based on primary data and fieldwork. Chapter 3, "Tracking Local Robin Hoods," contextualizes contemporary Michoacán, including the role of other agents involved in the war on drugs strategy carried out by the Mexican federal government. As it will be seen, the context shapes and is also shaped by the many social agents pursuing and assuming legitimacy there. Chapter 4, The Art of Dying Twice, focuses specifically on the analysis of LFM and LCT legitimacy efforts and performances, using what is called the sources and resources of legitimacy, which inspired the data collection in the field, and guided the presentation of the information. Indeed, as one method for organizing the data, the chapter ends by elaborating cases in which these sources and resources somehow play together when the criminal groups performed their legitimacy campaigns.

After that, chapter 5 carries out in an abbreviated form the same kind of analysis done for Michoacán in the previous chapters, but this time for Sicily. The first part provides a critical overview of what the mafia is and CN´s role in local political legitimacy efforts across this criminal group's long history. The second and most important part of the chapter addresses the sources and resources of legitimacy following the same model. Finally, and again paralleling the Michoacán analysis, the chapter examines an emblematic case in which all the sources and resources of legitimacy overlap.

With both the Michoacán and Sicilian cases presented and discussed, chapter 6 conducts a comparative analysis. Initially, the data from both cases in the previous chapters inform the conceptual debates identified at the outset of this dissertation. Each source of legitimacy guides an analytical comparison in which similar and dissimilar practices are evaluated. Curiously, what at first seem like significant similarities actually conceal vast differences; combined, they deepen and clarify our understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of each case, while highlighting their unique characteristics. Finally, inspired by these ideas, the dissertation closes with some reflective concluding remarks.

Chapter 1.
Illegal but Legitimate? The Concept of Legitimacy and the Debate on Social (Dis)Order

Authority is not synonym for legitimacy, and history helps to prove it. Correspondingly, each study of legitimacy follows social and political crises linked to lack of power, questioned political authority, and people's mistrust in governance processes. In 2000, almost a decade after the massive violence of Slobodan Milosevic´s administration in the former Yugoslavia, the Kosovo Report was presented to the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Commission's Report concluded, among other points, that the NATO military intervention designed to contain violence in the Balkans "(…) was illegal but legitimate. It was illegal because it did not receive prior approval from the United Nations Security Council. However, the Commission considers that *the intervention was justified because all diplomatic avenues had been exhausted and because the intervention had the effect of liberating the majority population of Kosovo from a long period of oppression under Serbian rule*" (2000, 4, emphasis added).

Two years later, in 2002, the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, proved Milosevic's administration crimes against humanity. The former head of state (acting as his own lawyer) defended himself by denying the court's legitimacy (Rotella, 2002). Despite the particularities of the case, many questions regarding legitimacy arise. Is an "illegal but legitimate" scenario really possible? If so, how and under what circumstances? Is there legitimacy beyond or without legality? What is the source of legitimacy in such situations? Who decides? Why did Milosevic use the questioning of the court's legitimacy as a legal weapon? This case is helpful to draw a landscape of how relevant legitimacy becomes in certain political situations. Contexts like these and legitimacy's crises are undoubtedly proper instances for carrying out research on a fundamental social science concept, namely, legitimacy. This research makes use of one of these crises to study legitimacy in contexts of violent crime to examine why and when criminal groups, illegal agents *per se*, dispute legitimacy. Can these groups become illegal but legitimate?

The first and mandatory step consists of reviewing the central concepts, starting with the political legitimacy idea itself.[2] It has been a matter of interest for many disciplines, such as political science, sociology, philosophy, social psychology, but also in criminology and legal studies (Johnson, Maguire, and Kuhns, 2014; Schlichte and Schneckener, 2015). Each of

[2] In this research, legitimacy is recognized as a phenomenon that potentially involves numerous social dimensions. However, here it is centered on political legitimacy, broadly speaking, addressing the definition of who rules over whom. Of course, political legitimacy involves more than questions of power, but it's highly relevant in understanding how and why criminal groups would be interested in it.

these approaches has its ideas, concepts, and methodologies through which disciplines shape their involvement in the debates around social and political legitimacy – some of them will be summarized in the first section of this chapter. Meanwhile, this research starts focusing on an in-depth exploration of, first of all, the concept of political legitimacy. This is done through a disciplinary review but also through specific scholarly reviews (especially of Max Weber). In that review, it will become essential to observe that legitimacy is not only a matter of interest for many disciplines but also an interdisciplinary problem itself. This discussion will become more evident when getting deep into specific social contexts, where many actors look for and possibly achieve legitimacy for themselves and their activities within their context.

This chapter begins with the literature on legitimacy which leads, later in the chapter, to a formulation of an operational concept of legitimacy that applies to this research. This operational concept is based on the literature review along with data collection and empirical references, and serves to highlight certain theoretical aspects that inform this investigation. My interdisciplinary approach to this topic offers some new perspectives on political legitimacy in criminal and violent contexts. In particular, this chapter explores how legitimacy relates to the idea of social order. Does legitimacy somehow exist outside of or without social order, or is it rather a source of (alternative) order? What kind of relationship does legitimacy have to social order? To flesh out this issue and explore answers, this chapter discusses the role of the state, and how the concepts of the social contract and sovereignty help to establish the state's authority. This is important because it allows us to understand how and why the state becomes the key reference point when talking about who, how, why and with whom, specific political actors become legitimate — or illegitimate.

The chapter's third section defines and analyzes non-state actors, particularly violent ones, and discusses legitimacy among state and non-state actors alike. Reflecting on criminal groups' experiences with legitimacy (they represent a specific kind of non-state actor in the contemporary world) sets the stage for a more in-depth discussion in chapter 2.

1.1. What is Political Legitimacy? Understanding a Social and Political Concept

Even though legitimacy involves several dimensions, this research focuses explicitly on political legitimacy. This idea involves problems related to power, government, and how different kinds of authority are established. According to *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Political legitimacy is a virtue of political institutions and of the decisions […] made within them" (Peter, 2016), a sentiment which works as a starting point to discuss such legitimacy from two angles: fist, from the perspective of that supposed virtue, and second, from the perspective of where that legitimacy comes from and how it is established. These issues involve both institutions and decisions. As a restrictive definition that constrains its meaning to the power of decision making, it is helpful to question the idea. For instance, what

happens when the decider is not legitimate? Or legal? Alternatively, how and why is the power of decision making challenged? Because of situations like these, political legitimacy involves intense and complex dialogues between those who pursue the "right to do and decide" and those who concede it. Moreover, what happens when more than one political actor is pursuing that right to decide? To answer those questions, this first section reviews what the existing literature has said about this concept.

When studying legitimacy, a significant problem is detecting if it involves a normative or a descriptive conception (Peter, 2016). In other words, is legitimacy a fixed idea, in which political actors should reach specific characteristics or virtues to become legitimate? Or is it a flexible or even volatile notion with characteristics that vary from case to case? The problem between both general, theoretical insights and particular perspectives crops up again and again when discussing "political" legitimacy, which raises the issue of whether we are debating a problem of political philosophy, or engaged in a more extensive social science discussion (Fossen, 2013, 426). To address this conceptual and epistemological problem, we follow a binary categorization originally proposed by Duyvesteyn (2017). His work helps to summarize, organize, and understand how legitimacy has been studied across disciplines. Duyvestyn's division consists, firstly, of literature in which legitimacy is defined by how it should be, or is supposed to be, what we'll call the *normative* perspective. The second category relates to how political legitimacy really is or could be in the field, that is, the actual practices of legitimization (Duyvesteyn, 2017, 671), which is the *descriptive* perspective.[3] The former is common to legal and philosophical approaches, while social sciences mostly use the latter.

However, philosophy, political philosophy, social psychology, legal approaches and many political theorists also rely on the normative perspective. But maybe what's most interesting about these works resides in what they say about what legitimacy *is not,* by naming characteristics that legitimacy should have and how its building process should be. The fields of sociology and anthropology, on the other hand, tend to use the descriptive perspective of legitimacy study. Their concepts, methodological instruments, and approaches let these disciplines distinguish differences and particularities from specific cases. As a result, they seem open to recognizing variations in definitions of legitimacy, including the social contingency influence. Nevertheless, it is true that other disciplines and their conceptual elements (such as the law, power, and shared beliefs) are also present in this kind of analysis. Finally, political science has scholars on both sides. Thus, it is not surprising to find scholars interested in both kinds of legitimacy, as will be shown for all disciplines in detail below.

[3] This division is close and actually compatible with the one proposed by Fossen between *de jure* legitimacy, in which "[…] an authority´s being legitimate with respect to valid norms", and *de facto* legitimacy, means "an authority´s being taken to be legitimate". Fossen suggests that this division between *de jure* and *de facto* legitimacy, is a sort of disciplinary "division of labor between philosophy and social sciences" (2011, 20).

1.1.1. Normative Perspective of Legitimacy

The normative perspective works with ideal-type conceptions of legitimacy. It is profoundly attached to a normative analysis interested in general aspects of legitimacy, more than the factual aspects of its formation (Thornhill, 2006, 165). Hence, it is less sensitive to contingency and new perspectives on the idea. For instance, the legal approach of legitimacy mainly focuses on established norms, rules, and law in general,[4] emphasizing the accordance between practices and current legal frameworks existing in each case. That depends on the law, and sometimes on its interpretations. However, this may become a very restrictive perspective. From this point of view, people´s attitudes do not make the law (Soper, 1984). Therefore, if a population merely stops respecting normative commitment, this will not change the existing legitimacy setting, but only represent a non-observance of the law, which tends to be approached as though it were an inherently legitimate independent variable. For instance, the legal positivist school founded by the British legal philosopher, John Austin, tends to eschew moral evaluation of the law, and generally doesn't see the law's legitimacy as conditional or provisional.

Even when this approach recognizes historical changes and transformations of the law, it offers a limited frame for understanding legitimacy from a holistic social phenomena perspective because it does not take into account what happens outside the legal framework. Therefore, any possible struggle for legitimacy like, for instance, the emergence of a legitimate actor who does not achieve it through legal ways, or social behaviors attempting to disrupt and change the prevailing legitimacy´s configuration, become automatically illegal and, therefore, illegitimate (Hurd, 1999; Soper, 1984). However, considerations for this approach matters because of the socio-political influence of law. Its discourse and usage play a significant role when defining what, who, and when an institution is or is not legitimate. Enforced or not, the law can also work as an incentive for legitimation and then becomes source and resource to modify power relations (i.e., discourses, the use of public institutions and resources, etc.), as shown in chapter 2.

The philosophical approach to legitimacy comes from a moral perspective of governance, and studies the way power is justified (Buchanan, 2002). This approach seeks to understand 1) what kind of claim for authority occurs in general situations and 2) what is the ethical basis from which it is developed. Therefore, an important attention of this viewpoint is situated in the authority´s accomplishment of normative requirements with which an authority becomes legitimate, such as the reasons that people have to follow its directives and build together obedience (Raz, 1985, 8). The philosophical perspective is usually complemented by a political theory view, in particular within the modern political frame through Jean Jacques

[4] As a matter of fact, from a philological angle *legitimus* meant specifically "lawful, according to law" in Classical Latin (Merquior, 2006, 2).

Rousseau. Although he did not focus much on legitimacy per se, he did develop some other concepts concerning it. The main one is the social contract.

The social contract is not a minor pact but a valuable repertory of principles for the sovereign. These principles provide legitimacy to govern: the social contract is "[…] a specific mandate given by those governed to those in government" (Ruggiero, 2006, 13). Hence, for the first time in political theory, power resided in people, who were able to transfer it to a superior entity through their own will, their own consent, and by doing so, people decide the legitimate authority. This represents the political materialization of the social contract. Bernard Manin´s ideas on Rousseau help to clarify this; he stated that legitimacy requires the highest level of public debate between everyone concerned or affected by each decision. Moreover, he argued that this should occur through public deliberations, justified on the ontological idea of the Rousseaunian social contract. By popular will, each political decision is a matter of public interest and thus everyone should deliberate on it before putting it into practice (Manin, 1987, 352).

Manin considered this deliberation process essential to achieve legitimacy; thus, everyone should take part in it: "[…] the source of legitimacy is not the predetermined will of individuals, but rather the process of its formation, that is, deliberation itself". And he even goes further than Rousseau and others: "We must, therefore, challenge the fundamental conclusion of Rousseau, Sieyes, and Rawls: a legitimate decision does not represent the will of all, but is one that results from the deliberation of all" (1987, 351-352). That requires an adequate political sphere through which deliberation is available and possible, but also to increase the levels of public interest as problems arise (Habermas, 2000, 77). The core question from this perspective is not what happens with legitimacy in specific contexts, but how it should be built, maintained, and possibly increased. All of that is based on irrevocable principles like civic participation, legal validity, and representation. Thus, political actors should march through the one valid path in order to be recognized as truly legitimate.

Social psychology is the other discipline in which a normative perspective on legitimacy arises. This angle focuses on people's beliefs, values, and social attitudes, exploring why people trust an authority. Social psychology understands trust not as something simply in an "on" or "off" position, but as a dynamic that is built between the ruler (or ruling institution) and the ruled. Social psychology is particularly interested in the cognitive elements behind how an authority is legitimized, how legitimacy is forged. These actions and strategies to construct legitimacy operate in a wide range that goes from trust to fear. These actions might influence decision procedures, political arrangements, and legal tools: general mechanisms through which the belief in the rightness of the decision and the process of policymaking are constructed (Tyler, 1997; Dahl, 1956). An absence of that belief also interests social psychologists, who examine as well how and when trust in authority is lost.

Therefore, relationships of trust between people and governments (and other institutions of authority) is a priority issue. Personal attitudes towards the ruler like confidence, expectations of the use of power, and general beliefs in the correctness of the authority are core elements, as well. As Tyler stated, "[...] legitimacy is a psychological property of an authority or social arrangement that leads to that which is appropriate, proper, and just" (2006, 375). However, this perspective does not usually consider cultural or sociological aspects of how legitimacy is generated, which is a limitation of this approach. In addition, power relations are not at the core of social psychology analysis since they are seen as resulting from of the legitimation processes. This discipline puts more attention on the acceptance or rejection of the rule, rather than on the source from where it emerges. In this case (as in the whole normative perspective of legitimacy), a requirement is acting as guidance to make legitimacy happen in society. Furthermore, only one kind of legitimacy is possible to aspire to, rather than variations of it or contesting/sharing scenarios – even more, sources and resources of legitimacy seem pure and static, regardless of whether the focus is on people's mindset, government, law, or codes. That contrasts with the ideas and disciplines of the descriptive perspective, as explained below.

1.1.2. Descriptive Perspective of Legitimacy

The descriptive perspective of political legitimacy involves the understanding of how legitimacy, as a collective accreditation of the political authority, is built in every case. To be more precise, this is an exploration of legitimacy as a process of building, rather than a fixed conceptual unit. This approach recognizes that a concept can be formulated and understood in linear relation to local conditions. That implies that political legitimacy will always be attached to the socio-political settings of each place (locality), reasonably linked to the historical circumstances analyzed (historicity), and not necessarily connected to standardized formulations. It is a perspective less of how legitimacy should be, and more of how it actually operates. This perspective fits and has been developed in anthropology, sociology[5], and some elements of political science with minor disciplinary variations. A detailed analysis is presented below.

Anthropology is quite helpful to understand the conceptual elements of how legitimacy works within societies – particularly those that generate the consent for the rulers to decide or govern. Among other features, this discipline recognizes the existence and relevance of both material and non-material resources of authority. Moreover, it also pays attention to practices and symbols that enable legitimate mandates independent of their legal condition. Those elements work together with a strong recognition of how locality influences the

[5] Max Weber, of course, heads sociological approaches to legitimacy. Given his importance to the topic, the next section will specifically analyze his ideas and a general sociological perspective. Other scholars such as Tilly and Beetham whose work is of great importance on the topic are also explored in that section.

understanding of specific social scenarios. Approaching legitimacy from this point of view is accompanied by a profound knowledge of the empirical context and a sensibility of how locality has been configured through historical, cultural, political, and social terms.[6] However, an interdisciplinary dialogue is needed to share insights and build a comprehensive basis in which a legitimacy discussion becomes fruitful. In this regard, the anthropological work helps in the detection of how empirical realities are powerful enough to reconfigure conceptualizations. As a result, even when shared beliefs, valid moral conducts, and appropriate behaviors may act as strong elements to configure the law, other sources could exist on the ground to build legitimacy. Anthropological work examines those other sources on the ground.

Legitimacy in anthropology (and actually in the whole descriptive perspective with more or less emphasis) has an extra feature: it enables the legitimacy understanding as a process. In this regard, according to the Dutch anthropologist Henri Claessen, there is a qualitative difference between legitimacy as the condition or quality of being legitimate, and legitimation as the process itself or the act of making legitimate (1988, 25). That is especially important for understanding changes in legitimacy features through time and space. For instance, in postcolonial contexts, where the nation-state building process took place at different rates, the state had to make efforts to achieve legitimacy, sometimes competing against other (local and foreign) political actors (Claessen, 1988). Some of them succeeded, some of them did not, and some of them seem to share legitimacy (these are, of course, essential matters for this research and will be recovered further in the following chapters). Anyway, it is essential to underline the academic benefits of this approach to measure and understand legitimacy. The main reason, as Claessen pointed out, is that this perspective allows us to distinguish between different degrees and dimensions of both possibilities: being legitimate and legitimation (1988, 24).

Political science participates in this descriptive perspective debate by including a core concept for the discipline, which is the right to rule. Its importance addresses the understanding of political relations and the power configurations associated with legitimacy. Whether it is understood from a rational choice perspective or a normative one, power relations and the elements of interactions on which they occur are sources of analysis. Thus, distinguishing this approach from the others is fundamental. As a result, the role of the ruled (and not only of the ruler) becomes the priority. For political science, the understanding of why and when specific governance is accepted or denied and what are the consequences for society is core. As Beetham explained, understand legitimacy helps to solve "[…] why people

[6] However, both sociologists and anthropologists have started to recognize that their analyses increasingly require a *meso* and *macro* level scope to get a comprehensive view of the locality (Beck, 2004; Robertson, 2005; Bouchard, 2011). This because global and national dynamics are more and more relevant in the local social configuration given the increasing and intense global connections in economic and commercial terms as well as sociopolitical consequences.

have the expectations they do about a power relations, why institutions of power systematically differ from one type of society to another, why power is exercised more coercively in some contexts than in others" (1991, 6). Moreover, understanding power relations becomes the first step in a holistic awareness of a commonly shared belief in this discipline, i.e., that the formal authority can govern over the governed.

Authority is the concept that enables the latter statement possible, a sort of grease to lubricate mandates. Political scientist Robert Dahl defined authority as "[...] a special kind of [...] legitimate influence" (1991, 54). That influence is relevant in political systems because leaders try to convert it into authority, explained Dahl. Since there are many ways to use and perform power, and some of them involving coercion and even violence, legitimacy acts as a sort of shock absorber by transforming obedience by coercive power into legitimate authority (Wrong, 1979). Thus, legitimacy fits in this approach as an instrument or as a governing path. Regarding the first case, a mandate seeks legitimacy in order to avoid the non-desirable scenario of the use of force to achieve obedience and consolidate authority. Addressing the second case, legitimacy seems to be understood as one way among many to practice authority, and it is a goal itself, rather than a tool to achieve another political goal. Nevertheless, the political science debate does not ignore legitimacy; moreover, its discussion goes beyond the social consequences in society's power relations.

Political science also tends to study legitimacy from its operative virtues. That involves a refreshing exercise by in understanding legitimacy holders´ benefits. Ruling a society as the legitimate authority differs considerably from lacking that authority. This operative function (Rothstein, 2009) involves (at least) two parts: the ruler, who seeks legitimacy, and the ruled, who legitimate the ruler. It is a socio-political relation involving two levels: 1) who enjoys the benefits and advantages of being legitimate and 2) who gives or refuses, removes or maintains, that political legitimacy – and also by which conditions and under what circumstances this happens. These two levels successively refer to sovereignty (first level) and social contract (second level). Both are core political science concepts and will be analyzed in detail later. Meanwhile, another perspective of political science is revisited, namely, the measurable approach.

With certain proximity to sociological analyses, the measuring legitimacy angle also uses this perspective. However, this work involves an epistemological dilemma. If measuring legitimacy is possible, then it has universal measurable standards, which only differs in the potential variation from case to case. Thus, this phenomenon becomes a gradation problem rather than a political process. Hence, legitimacy should be understood in the same manner everywhere and anytime in order to be able to measure it. It becomes a universal concept. Bruce Gilley is the author of one of these works. In "The Meaning and Measure of State Legitimacy", he measured and compared degrees of state legitimacy among 72 countries around the world (2006). This work faced two problems: in the first place, the state works as

the only possible analytical and, thus, measurable unit. That fact avoids the possibility of studying legitimacy among non-state actors. Secondly, his research encountered the problem of variations in legitimacy´s dimensions; to be more precise, it measured the degree of legitimacy by identifying an increase or decrease of specific variables, but ignored other possible additions, such as adaptations to particular contexts as a consequence of local processes of legitimacy-building. Thus, to offer a broader analysis, these studies require a continual redefinition of their criteria. Only then, will they be able to include other political actors within the exercise, and from a broader range as well.

Summarizing the descriptive perspective, rather than striving for a general or universal definition of political legitimacy, it focuses on social possibilities and conditions. The debate between both angles, the normative and the descriptive, could be summarized through the struggle between what legitimacy should be on the one hand, and how it could be on the other. However, even when both normative and descriptive perspectives work to summarize as well as organize the debate, in the literature they are not always clearly separated. This is the case with Max Weber´s ideas, a central scholar when it comes to this discussion. To some extent, Weber's sociological work sets the terms of the debate both in the past and the present. Weber´s relevance can be seen across disciplines, as well, and no definition of political legitimacy, either in the normative or descriptive arenas, can avoid referencing his thoughts. He is such a fundamental part of the social science landscape, that sometimes his immense contributions are taken for granted. Given that, the following section reviews his work.

1.1.3. Max Weber´s Legitimacy: Review of a Fundamental Scholar

German sociologist Max Weber was one of the first (if not the first) scholars who explicitly worked on political legitimacy´s conceptualization. Even more, his work helped create the social sciences, the main arena to develop the study and conceptualization of legitimacy in general, and its political aspects in particular (in the sense of authority, domination, and control). His work is a mandatory reference on the topic. His ideas work as the starting point and the archetypical conception of legitimacy. This section explains some of Weber's thoughts on it, as well as other scholars' ideas addressing him. Before continuing, a brief methodological warning is needed. Weber's work on this subject is hard to categorize in the binary scheme proposed here (normative and descriptive perspectives) for logical reasons. First, the most crucial Weberian thought regarding legitimacy is possibly a normative categorization, which could be understood as a normative feature. However, Weber himself considered that his legitimacy categories were no more (but also no less) than ideal-types. Thus, they work as operative simplifications of complex realities – this Weberian recognition on the limits of ideal-types is quite usual in the rest of his work; hence it is not exclusive to the conceptual considerations of political legitimacy. Therefore, this is a recognition of social contingency which also indicates a feature of the descriptive perspective.

Regardless, Weber's thought is present in most of the disciplinary approaches to this idea. This justifies a particular review of the author. According to him, legitimacy depends on what motivates social action. For instance, and following his social action conceptualization, in the action-motivated by self-interest it is not always enough to expect people's support for authority because individuals may not consider it convenient to follow authority to achieve or obtain personal gains. Therefore, the possibilities for legitimacy are lower, and the authority could expect an adverse scenario for putting in practice its mandate, which possibly increases the chances for relying on coercion. That latter scenario contrasts with the action guided-by-belief, in which people often have or perceive a sense of duty to act according to what authority requires of them and, consequently, a ruler is more likely to expect obedience from people (Weber, 1964, 124). Thus, it is mandatory for the ruler to generate an "[…] internal sense of moral obligation" (Johnson et al., 2014; Weber, 1964) to expect action guided-by-belief as a platform to build legitimacy. That sense could operate on the grounds of what social psychology explains, but it also has a deep relation with current or past moral values, beliefs, and the social construction of law and power.

According to Weber, the types of legitimacy (or as he called them, “types of legitimate domination”) are threefold: the traditional, the charismatic, and the legal-rational (1964). All of them are stated in teleological terms and recognize the necessity of the ruler to generate conditions for obedience among the ruled. However, even more important, they all ground the possibilities of legitimation in people's belief in the authority, and not vice versa. The first type is the legal-rational. Weber explained that this one rests “[…] on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the rights of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue command” (1964, 215). In this case, the established rules are the only possible path through which legitimacy can be created. That is because it is the sole way to become the authority and rule. Its rational characteristic assumes that the source of obedience from the ruled comes from the law because the power of the ruler was acquired through legal procedures. Therefore, the law is strong enough to give and to remove power from the government. That is why people assume the government's power to be legitimate.

In the second type of Weberian legitimate domination, the traditional, legitimacy comes from traditions and heritage, but also from the idea of ancient regimes and established ways of governing with its long-established patterns. In this regard, legitimacy rests “[…] on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them” (Weber, 1964, 215). Therefore, it could be found in any place where authority claims obedience by traditional habits, customs, conventions, behaviors, etc. (Bendix, 1966, 306). Some examples of this type are monarchical and religious regimes. The third type is charismatic domination, where the legitimate mandate is attached to a charismatic head of state. However, the person itself is not the only one who produces this type of legitimacy; his or her extraordinary qualities can also do it. Therefore, this type of legitimate domination appears only with the presence of that person, and it does

not need the rest of conditions (for instance, historical or ancestral, as in traditional rule, or the established rule and legal basis as in the rational type). Following Weber, charismatic legitimacy rests "[...] on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber, 1964, 215).

As stated earlier, Weber´s categories are archetypical. However, they have been contested. For instance, according to British scholar David Beetham, Weber´s categorization has the problem of hugely focusing in people´s beliefs and not in how authority reacts or interacts with those beliefs. As a way to explain his diagnosis, it is possible to say that Beetham observed an excess of normative perspective in the original categorization, this is, too many normative characteristics that allow for reconsiderations, and thus signifying an absence of descriptive perspective because categories do not always explain specific empirical cases. That is why Beetham himself proposed his trinity of legitimacy by invoking its multidisciplinary character. Beetham´s categorization includes three levels of legitimacy: a) conformity to established rules, b) justifiability of the rules because of, or based on, shared beliefs, and c) legitimation to the ruler through expressed consent of the ruled (Beetham, 1991). Even when this scholar received critiques about the limitations of his proposal (Wrong, 1993; O´Kane, 2013; Fossen, 2011), he developed one of the first epistemological efforts pointing the symbolic dimension of legitimacy. In addition, he recognized a co-constitutive relationship between the ruler and the ruled. That suggested that both parts are continuously shaping each other, especially in terms of legitimacy. In other words:

> Beetham understood legitimacy not in terms of the different sources from which authority arises, but in terms of three dimensions upon which all legitimacy relies [...] This allows for a level of symbiosis; that people's perceptions of legitimacy are influenced by the justifications provided by an authority and that an authority's justification for its legitimacy, in turn, is influenced by the shifting beliefs of the people. Furthermore, the acts of consent displayed by the subordinate contribute to the construction of justification for an authority (McCullough, 2015, 4).

David Beetham is not the only one who has tried to increase or unfold the original Weberian classification. Matheson proposed an expanded five-category classification "[…] according to the particular explanation or reason why command and obedience are said to be legitimate" (1987, 200). He took Weber´s three types of domination to develop five legitimacy basics: 1) command-obedience on the basis of convention, grounded in norms; 2) contracts that specify that power-holder and power-subject assume mutual rights and obligations; 3) conformity with universal principles which are discoverable by all human beings; 4) sacredness of authority or of the norms which prescribe command and obedience and 5) expertise, where command and obedience are considered legitimate because the power-holder possesses some types of expertise which make him the right or even the best person to hold mandate at that moment (1987, 200-203). Despite the existence of other discussions, it is clear that Weber´s influence is located not only in the strength of his ideas to understand

legitimacy but also in proposing platforms through which legitimacy discussion emerged. While keeping those ideas in mind, the next section is centered explicitly on an operative concept of legitimacy that becomes useful for this research, as well as other investigations with similar empirical or methodological interests.

1.1.4. Towards an Operative Concept of Legitimacy

Conceptual frameworks are tasked with explaining what is observed in reality. However, empirical references are always required in order to dialogue with those concepts. After reviewing the discussion on political legitimacy, in order to design and propose an operative concept, this section aims to sort out five interrelated considerations designed to addressing the empirical cases reviewed in this research in the following chapters. Before presenting them, they require certain qualifications. First, the proposal is more a guideline of what is essential to observe regarding the interest of this research, which is how and why criminal groups look for legitimacy. Therefore, this analysis does not try to fix the weaknesses in the definitions already explored, and that could limit further analysis. Instead, it concentrates and structures thoughts from what is useful (and what is not) from conceptions to enable the operative concept of political legitimacy.

Any conceptualization of legitimacy must address the ruler as well as the ruled. Here we are not only talking about how power or authority shapes them, but people come to accept, validate, or even become resigned to it. Moreover, this is not a given or static relation but a dynamic and contingent one. However, there could be a third perspective in understanding how legitimacy works when there is more than one figure or institution seeking to become a power-holder. That involves the problem of multiples legitimacies on the one hand, and the problem of the nature of the legitimate actor on the other (Stinchcombe referenced by Tilly, 1985). How to build a definition that also recognizes the attempts of legitimate parallel authorities?[7] Any attempt should consider this scenario.

The second is the necessity of recognizing contingency in how legitimacy is built. That involves three analytical elements: locality, temporality, and rationality (Duyvesteyn, 2017, 677-678). Since the experiences of authority could differ at the local level (either because central power is not so present, because it coexists with another reference to the authority, or just because of the history of the place), then it is essential to recognize that political legitimacy is not fixed and, thus, changes. If so, then authority needs to reaffirm itself and its mandate. There will not be perpetual legitimate authority without any effort to preserve it. These efforts are necessary to identify and analyze. Sources and resources of legitimacy also

[7] It remains as a matter of interest for the further discussion if two or more legitimate power-holders can coexist as authorities in the same time and space. Furthermore, what happens when those two or more authorities not only share legitimacy, but also become a source of legitimacy among them by validating each other´s power? This, of course, is a separate consideration from what happens with the ruled.

make sense in local dimensions – even when there could be universal values, this test should be made in the field to demonstrate it.

The third relevant consideration from the literature review directly concerns the hypothesis of coexistence of two or more parallel legitimate authorities. Charles Tilly stated; “Legitimacy is the probability that other authorities will act to confirm the decisions of a given authority” (1985, 171), that is, legitimacy as a relational concept (Duyvesteyn, 2017, 674). His idea remembers how the nation-state, as a political project, was not only successful by itself but as a whole system (the Westphalian). Mutual recognition between the members undoubtedly was one of its main sources of validation. That explains why some postcolonial countries, particularly in Latin America, spent so much time and effort in achieving recognition from the other nation-states during the first years of independence (Held, 1989). Following this notion, if today an actor pursues legitimacy, to what extent may other current authorities influence that pursuit? Is that always a conflict? Is it a negotiation? Alternatively, is it that there is no clear distinction between both potential "legitimates"? Nevertheless, this should be investigated in every case to comprehend empirical cases.

The fourth consideration arises from the presumption of contingency: political legitimacy understanding requires studying not only the current moment of the legitimate authority but also, how it became legitimate and how it was lost from another. In other words, this means giving history the relevance it deserves and locating how legitimacy has evolved in a specific place. One option to do so is by historicizing the completely political legitimacy process. For instance, that can be rationalized through a timeline method around the act of decision from a legitimate authority. In this regard, the first step (before the decision) concerns how the transfer of power occurred from the ruled to those who decide on politics, and also what gives them the right to make decisions on behalf of all in the first place. It is also important to understand how the decision is granted, and what are the characteristics of that legitimate authority (Mazepus, 2016). The second step (current moment of decision) is about the act of deciding, including the moral, legal, ethical and power bases on which that decision is possible and its consequences.

Finally, the fifth (after the decision) regards the perpetual need of the legitimate political actor or institution to reconfirm its legitimacy. This implies a recognition of the current setting of legitimacy in an ongoing social process. To do so, it is not enough for the authority to keep deciding but also to keep performing to maintain its decision-making power. This last point lets the research recognize the appearance of new political actors defying (or possibly sharing) previous political actor legitimacy and even more significant, the peculiarities of the social process in which legitimacy is disputed, rebuilt, regenerated, and recreated. Again, political legitimacy shows itself to be contingent on a number of factors. This issue will be revisited in following sections and chapters, and particularly within the cases analysis. However, and before leaving the theoretical discussion, the following section

explains legitimacy concerning another concept, social order. Indeed, it is a needed revision of this idea to establish its relation with some other related concepts.

1.2. The Right to Rule: Social (Dis)order, the State and the Grounds for Legitimacy

Ties connecting the social order, the state, and political legitimacy are close but not instantaneous. On the one hand, each society may be exposed to the resulting struggles of confronted views and expectations around how the social order should be. On the other, the same society will have its own formal and informal configuration of methods, structures, and institutions through which a legitimate mandate becomes valid, respected, and updated. In the modern world, the state is supposed to mitigate those social processes – depending on a number of factors. Legitimation processes play a primary role when shaping the social order by enabling condescending but productive relations between the ruler and the ruled. Moreover, legitimacy is an effective measure of the state´s strength: "[…] legitimacy includes the acceptance of the state´s symbolic configuration within which the rewards and sanctions are packaged. It indicates people´s approval of the state´s desired social order through their acceptance of the state´s myths" (Migdal, 1988, 33). A legitimate mandate enables government capabilities by defining the rules of the game (social order) and expecting approval and recognition for that social order as trustworthy and correct.

However, empirically, those statements highlight an important subject: does political legitimacy depend on the existence of a given social order? Moreover, should it be a specific model? If so, then it is impossible to be legitimate outside the established social order and outside the state as well. This might be close to a normative perspective of legitimacy, where the hypothesis of sharing or challenging legitimacy between two or more of those groups turns into a potential destabilizing factor triggered by misuse of normative legitimating tools. In other words, this premise will not take into consideration any legitimacy attempt made by illegal means; its goals and ends will never be more than outcomes of illegality. Nevertheless, political legitimacy can be possible in social disorder if sanctioned by certain social groups within the society. Furthermore, social disorder may eventually become a source and resource for building new social orders, but we will return to this topic later in this research. Here the focus is on how the social order, the state, and legitimacy become linked.

Apart from political legitimacy, three concepts inform this research: the social order, the state, and the sovereignty. In order to develop these ideas, the following section explores and analyzes the literature on: 1) sovereignty (specifically regarding the use of violence and the definition of the decision-maker), and 2) the social contract (in particular, the deliberation process and the acceptance of the ruler´s mandate). This discussion will serve as a guide to discuss, later, if political legitimacy is possible beyond the state and within a supposed social disorder. In other words, to what extent can legitimacy create social order and vice versa? As with the conceptual review, the focus is not on definitive or final answers, but theoretical and

epistemological insights, thoughts, and suggestions that later help analyze the cases that are the subjects of this research. Nevertheless, the discussion now delves into what social order is and its political and sociological relevance. That is intended to show that legitimacy is closely related to the development of social order and the state.

1.2.1. What Social Order Is and What It Is For

Social order is a trans-disciplinary problem for almost all social sciences. It starts from the presumption that individuals live in society. Therefore, this happens in a certain way in which coexistence needs to be possible, and it unfolds in terms of social order. Societies organize their social life through specific conditions, in which legitimacy becomes relevant for political reasons. However, there are also practical issues related to how those societies generate a particular order and predictability, which are essential for carrying out their chances for developing. In other words, to make society reasonably predictable, and develop expectations about other's behaviors, a proper social order is desirable (Banfield, 2003, 29). Some origins of social behavior predictability and conditioning can be found in the law, the respect for formal authority, or even the idea of a common good and shared destiny, just to pose some examples. However, what if illegality or informal authorities participate in the definition of social order? Moreover, what if social behavior conditioners go against the presupposed idea of a common good? Is that a social disorder scenario or just another sort of order? This research keeps those questions in mind to study two notional features of social order: 1) the role of legitimacy in the maintenance or changes in the social order (discussed here), and 2) the scenarios in which a supposed social disorder could become a source of order (discussed in cases´ chapters).

Belonging, cohesiveness, and people's trust in the establishment are all closely related, but they also connect social order with legitimacy (Gellner, 2003). Each case needs to define if those features are a result of obtaining legitimacy, or on the contrary, are means through which legitimacy is attained. What is known is that, when an authority is legitimate, a sense of belonging is more likely and, hence, the claim of authority is simplified. Additionally, how competent authority is at integrating popular social values and reproducing itself through social relations tracks closely to its sustainability and, of course, its legitimacy. With this background in mind, two questions become relevant: 1) is the social disorder always anomalous? To be more precise, what happens when atypical behavior, not aligned to the supposed dominant social structure, is more the rule than the exception? and, 2) is the social order capable enough to create society? In other words, is there a society where the disorder is dominant? Any possible answer to these questions involves recognizing the existing co-constitutive relationship between social order and social disorder.

Scholarly work examining the basis of social order comes from a variety of places. Balandier, for instance, argued that myths have the sociological function of explaining and shaping the

historical sense of social order (1970). However, the debate seems to have a consensus among traditional, modern, and contemporary scholars alike when recognizing, in the state, the central social order provider and manager *par excellence*. Thomas Hobbes considered the social order as a foundational part in which the Leviathan is possible and available, not as a consensus but as a needed coercion. The *homo homini lupus* owes its origins to this. According to this principle of political organization, and inspired by the idea of a superior general interest and a shared destiny, individuals resign their power to kill each other by conceding that power to a superior entity, that is, the state (Hobbes, 1998, 111-122). A more in-depth discussion on this will come later but here it's valuable to quote Ian Hurd on Hobbes's suggestions regarding social order preservation and maintenance:

> Although Hobbes' citizens join society by consent and retain a residual right to self-defense, the system is best seen as an example of a society based on coercion rather than consent, or even religious conviction, since (1) the motivation for joining is the fear of certain depredation in the state of nature, (2) the motivation for obeying the sovereign is the threatened sanction, and (3) the obligation to obey exists only while the sovereign maintains almost absolute power. The argument is sometimes made that Hobbes also relied on legitimacy or religion to help explain the maintenance of social order; however, the Leviathan is necessary precisely because these other mechanisms cannot be counted on to do the job. For Hobbes, it is the sword that ultimately maintains compliance, since neither self-interest nor legitimacy is sufficiently compelling (Hurd, 1999, 384).

Modern State societies around the world have made efforts to codify their social order. Laws, norms, constitutions, and punishment codifications are part of that effort. However, when a non-permitted action goes unpunished, the supposed predictability of social order seems to collapse, and social disorder can arise. Nevertheless, here it is argued that the absence of social order is not equal to chaos. Hence, the social disorder does not necessarily entail an absence of order but indicates a different kind of social setting. Of course, rebellion, violence, dissent, crime, deviance, and conflict in general do not necessarily means that there is no order, nor any society. And a different social order may rise from the ashes of the old order. Hence, disturbing behaviors with legitimacy pretensions may become a source of social order. For instance, crime (anti-social activities from a rigid legal perspective) and its perpetrators (likewise anti-social players from a rigid legal perspective) may become a source of social order by getting into legitimacy dilemmas — creating or renewing institutions, codes, values, and so on in their attempts to achieve, or maintain, political legitimacy.

Social order is needed to make antisocial behavior recognizable and punishable. This idea addresses how social structure is defined and how it operates in specific contexts, i.e. to recognize the mechanisms through which social order is achieved (Hetcher, 2003, 4). Those mechanisms condense social behavior based on norms, beliefs, ethics, values and how they become crystallized in institutions, laws, hierarchies and power relations. That is why the social order also works as a platform or channel through which social behaviors like consensus, negotiation, and conflict happen. Therefore, it functions as a sort of guide, to

outline the standards of social behavior. According to Michael Hechter, the maintenance of a particular social order depends on "[…] the existence of a set of overarching rules of the game, rules that are to some degree internalized, or considered to be legitimate, by most actors. Not only do these rules set goals, or preferences, for each member of society, but they also specify the appropriate means by which these goals can be pursued" (1987, 3 quoted by Hurd, 1999). That is why criminality, — a compendium of activities and values that go against the rules of the game — is such a valuable source for legitimacy for the sovereign.

> The gangster, the underworld, or the informal sovereign who has become "a law onto himself" are, in other words, central to the endeavors of governments and police forces to produce legitimacy, and to perform the sovereignty of the State. Likewise, both the underworld and the imputed amorality or corruption of State functionaries are central to the production of its opposite, "the community", as a sovereign repository of moral values and authentic sociality. Criminality as a "zone of darkness" is, in brief, the perennial outside, an unruly and originary source of sovereign life, and thus a necessary condition for any claim to establish and defend a social order (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005, 32).

We still have not addressed if, and how, this "perennial outside" can be successful in its attempt to become "a law onto itself", or even become the law itself. Social order is persistent but never static. It is dynamic and contingent, which means it must affirm and reaffirm itself through time and space (Frank, 1944). Contingency is similarly anchored to social dynamics. As a result, academic work has made efforts to explore and explain social order from big picture concepts to very local and specific scopes. Each big social theory has its own view on how social order is conceived, how it works, and even how it could be modified. Marxism, for instance, recognized dynamism in any social order by looking at the logic of dialectical materialism (Seidman, 2016, 24-30), while American sociologist Talcott Parsons took a clear static position by arguing that only institutions and how they regulate social action are relevant when determining social structures, in particular but not exclusively within democracy (Burger, 1977).

Given the long shadow cast by Parsons and the dominant assumptions of that point of view, it is important to stress that social disorder does not mean pure chaos or absence of authority, particularly when illegality and crime are the main causes of social disorder. In fact, social disorder contexts are powerful social inputs and/or frameworks for the creation of renewed complex social realities. From the ashes of a destroyed social order, a new one can be built. Hence, rather than long-stable social environments, social disorder should be studied for its relevant transition stages. The alleged social disorder scenarios facilitate 1) the establishment of a new social order and, 2) the enabling of zero-sum dilemma scenarios. Crime and criminals are usually associated with destabilizing governance because of their association with insecurity, violence, and corruption. Hence, hypothetically crime can overthrow a government´s legitimacy. If formal authorities do not recover that hypothetically "lost legitimacy", are empty spaces (scenarios without politically legitimate actors) possible? In

other words, does this open the door for politics without legitimacy? Here exactly the opposite is argued.

But before we get there, we review the state's role in the construction, permanence, and sustainability of a specific social order by honing in on two central features of the state: sovereignty and the social contract. Both are unavoidable topics when talking about legitimacy because the first addresses the foundations of the right to govern (and decide), and the second addresses the basics of people for whom an authority becomes legitimate. Moreover, they are essential concepts regarding social order because they support the idea that the state is the legitimate apparatus through which power and authority is supposed to be channeled.

1.2.2. Legitimate Power and Decisions: State and Sovereignty

Among monarchical governments in Europe, royal houses´ legitimacy was mainly based on the notion of the divine right of kings, the right to rule by divine mandate. Several centuries later, the foundations of governmental legitimacy had shifted to a broader social contract. Established ruling procedures also become more complex and included the idea of citizens (through elections or the use of formal or legal mechanisms and institutions to achieve power). Sovereign power moved away from royal houses and started residing in complex social configurations involving deciders, laws, codes, and even the people themselves (Wallerstein, 2006; Schmitt, 2001; 2004; Krasner, 2001; Crossman, 1986). That change is the focus of this section. What is the basis of that renewed social agreement and what are the implications for legitimacy? The answer addresses the understanding of a couple of core concepts within the social sciences: namely, the state, and the source of its right to rule and decide, i.e., sovereignty.

Logical statements on this topic suggest that only the state is sovereign enough to decide (where sovereign power resides varies depending on who explains it), and the legitimate mandate could only be reached through state channels. Within a modern framework, political legitimacy forms a central part (or even a complete definition) of the "who", "how", and "when" of sovereignty. Only the state can govern in a specific territory under certain principles while coexisting with other's sovereignties. They became the solitary holders of the renewed divine mandate (Held, 1989). Therefore, the state is supposed to win and preserve legitimacy as a positive but natural consequence of good government. If not, society will hypothetically have mechanisms to change political conditions, whether this only means to change the government or the whole basis of the social order. That change will reestablish legitimacy when it has been lost or is in crisis. However, in any scenario, the state is supposed to be the sole channel through which this can occur.

However, what happens if both state and sovereignty are empirically far away from ideal-types? What are the consequences of how the legitimate mandate is set? American anthropologist Clifford Geertz posed an interesting problem in *Current Anthropology* "What Is a State If It Is Not Sovereign?" (2004). This issue concerns him, particularly "[…] after the decolonization revolutions of the 1950s and 1960s have resulted in a renewed concern with the problems of government in multiethnic, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic countries" (2004, 577). Is the lack of sovereignty the end of the state? And if so, what is the role of legitimacy in that social and political equation? In the case of democratic regimes, as a theoretical principle, elections are the main source of fixing the lack of representation, bad government, and more. But what triggers that change is precisely the lack of legitimacy of the current government. All those are helpful suppositions to come back to Geertz's question. What happens when the state exists with its government but does not benefit from those qualities and advantages that legitimacy brings? If a state without sovereignty is possible (Geertz called these "complicated places"), is a state without legitimacy possible?[8]

Let me inject a word here on how this research understands the state. As a central concept in social sciences, of course, there is a vast literature on the subject. In this case, the "State in society" approach developed by Joel Migdal serves as a guide (together with conceptual tools from the anthropology of the state). Migdal´s work has considered how both the state and society interact with each other, particularly if one is embedded inside the other, or if it is a mutual constitution. He recognized that real states vary considerably in how much they resemble ideal-types, and he observed many institutions participating in the state-building process. He resolved the apparent conundrum by answering not only "what" and "who" the state is but also "how" it works (1988, 19). That serves as a platform to deal with the sovereignty dilemma in this section, and helps to maintain the discussion of legitimacy in a broad perspective.

Migdal offered the following definition: "The state is a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by 1) *the image of coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory*, and 2) *the actual practices of its multiple parts*" (2011, 15-16; emphasis in the original). The former point refers to what is named as "the state" within the socio-political imaginary and gets close to the government members and public officials (but not exclusively). The second point recognizes the social and political participation of other institutions and individuals. This definition will be both useful and stimulating for this research. First, it helps us distinguish between different state realities by their empirical singularities. Second, it works to understand how state and non-state actors coexist and relate by recognizing multiple

[8] These questions bring the analysis to another coming topic in this chapter, specifically in section 1.4.c; where does the lost legitimacy go? Can other political actors without sovereignty or non-state actors claim it? Is the same legitimacy lost by the state the one that the non-state actors claim? Or is it another type of political legitimacy? And finally, is it possible to share it?

institutions´ images and practices. This *mélange* has its own specific social and political features,[9] but allows for scenarios in which all those parts are politically competing and potentially looking for legitimacy mandates, and where the state is possible with, without, or with a variety of legitimacies coexisting. It remains to be determined if the "multiple parts" take part in the legitimacy process, to what extent, and how. The answers, again, will depend on each case. It is fundamentally an empirical issue.

> In every society there are different groups competing between each other to impose order. This is, to impose each one its own version of order. It means that the state is never the only actor capable of generating norms. On the contrary, it is always one among others, many actors, more or less institutionalized, more or less formal, with a more or less wide radium: churches, families, patronages, webs, corporates, communities…and the state is not obviously, naturally and immediately superior to the rest of actors even when it wants to be. Sometimes, State's lawfulness can impose above the others, in some spaces law can be reinforced with perfect regularity, but it is not possible to assure that it will be always like that. When that happens, when the state is successful in undermining the other powers, it is a consequence of a long struggle, and it is never a definitive victory (Escalante, 2011, 11).[10]

What does sovereignty mean for legitimacy? Anthropologists Veena Das and Deborah Poole suggest that the place to look is what they call the "margins of the state". They were specifically thinking of places that have been labeled as weak, failed, or partial states by political comparative studies (or "complicated places", as Geertz put it). They argue that this study of the offers "[…] a unique perspective to the understanding of the state, not because it captures exotic practices, but because it suggests that such margins are a necessary entailment of the state, much as the exception is the component of the rule". That perspective presents an opportunity to detach social order from the language of the state as a ghostly, rational, homogenous, lonely, and persistent authority (2004, 4-5). Her work is fully helpful in mapping the state from the locality and, with this, recognizing the margins of where authorities exist and are conceived. Their ideas opened the door for the study and recognition of non-rational, non-uniform, non-static sovereignties. In brief, "Whether labelled State or not, it seems that a wide variety of institutions constitute themselves as de facto public authorities, with greater or lesser success" (Lund, 2006, 676). Implications feed hypotheses of challenging, multiple, and successful legitimate authorities, and point the way toward conceptions of sovereignty and the state within descriptive perspective grounds.

Departing from that understanding, sovereignty 1) is no longer the state´s exclusive prerogative, but 2) it does not disappear just for that reason. Thus, some social groups may

---

[9] The "*Mélange* society" idea suggests hyper-concentrations of authorities in the same space and time: "[…] groups exercising social control in a society may be heterogeneous both in their form […] and in the rules they apply […] [but] the distribution of social control in society may be among numerous, fairly autonomous groups rather than concentrated largely in the State. In other words, the over-all sum of authority may be high in the society, but the exercising of all that authority may be fragmented. In this mélange, the State has been one organization among many" (Migdal, 1988, 28-29).

[10] This and all the translations from non-English texts and documents are from my own.

be especially interested in taking advantage of these possibilities and operate in a sovereign mood, either by claiming authority, using violence, performing statehood practices, or pretending to become legitimate (and maybe simply becoming legitimate). Concerned with these problems, Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat proposed the "de facto sovereign power" concept (2005). Ultimately, the monopoly of violence breakdown and sovereignty becomes a practice, which could be exercised by the state –or more precisely, by those who are supposed to be the sovereign through legal, political, or any other manner. Non-state actors, especially violent ones, may fit into the scenario of a fragmented sovereignty and exercise it. In this case, legitimacy will also be at stake. Sovereignty and legitimacy will always be related concepts. Following the scheme analyzed here, they would permanently need to involve at least two sides: the one interested in becoming sovereign/legitimate (which could be more than one), and the audience(s) with which sovereignty is exercised and legitimacy is sought, and possibly attained. The next section delves into the latter.

1.2.3. The Audience for Legitimacy: Social Order, Legitimacy, and the Social Contract

This chapter has questioned if political legitimacy is possible beyond traditional notions of the state and social order. However, there is another element to address, namely, with whom political actors attempt to become legitimate. In other words, who has the faculty (or power?) to grant (or deny) the condition of legitimacy? The answer points to the audience(s) of legitimacy. Matheson states that "Power-holders have an interest in securing obedience motivated by a belief in legitimacy, for legitimate authority is a less 'costly' form of authority than either coercive or reward-based authority" (1987, 200). Political legitimacy, as it has been explored earlier, is part of a relation between ruler and ruled. With that in mind, this section explores and debates the origins of the idea of the ruled legitimating the ruler. It is revisited to trace the logic behind this social process. In order to do so, the concept of the social contract guides the discussion.

State and sovereignty have deep linkages with the social contract idea. During the European Enlightenment Jean Jacques Rousseau proposed that sovereign power is no more than the expression of the general will, which can never be alienated. Therefore, the sovereign is nothing but a collective being and the power holder (1999, 51). Furthermore, while power can be transferred (for instance, as part of a government or regime change), general will cannot. Thus, the social contract is precisely the arrangement through which (either people, citizens, population, inhabitants, etcetera) power is transferred and, by doing so, sovereign gets legitimized. Moreover, this process can be developed in the opposite direction. The general will should be able to delegitimize and withdraw power to the sovereign and transfer it to a new one. That is why democracy is seen as the imperative legitimating mechanism, even despite the widely diverging interpretations of the concept (Duyvesteyn, 2017, 670). Any political actor or institution with legitimacy pretensions needs to regularly reaffirm itself

towards the population, and even towards other authorities. Otherwise, it will always run the risk of being delegitimized and, consequently, disempowered.

Empirically, the social contract plays a dual role. First, as an ideal-type it defines parts of the imaginary constitution of how authority should be in its legitimate condition. On the other hand, it helps to shape the audience of legitimacy. In other words, it helps to shape and justify the existence of a more or less inchoate audience onto which legitimacy efforts are intended to have resonance. Therefore, the social contract acts as a sort of glue between the transfer of power from people to authority as an act towards legitimating its right to rule. Naturally, this is far from being mere fiction. Real people (individuals or collectivities) live in society perceiving or suffering political actors' attempts to achieve legitimacy. However, this takes us to a new problem, i.e., how it happens. In the field, the state may share or compete legitimacy versus other actors. Thus, audiences of legitimacy, both in social order and disorder contexts, often distribute their credits to several authorities simultaneously (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005, 4). That may happen, for instance by respecting several coexisting rules, by trusting or fearing in one, another, or both mandates, or a complex mix of these.

On social order and legitimacy grounds, the social contract is more than merely the state´s business. No government can create a social contract by itself. It requires at least an effort from the authority to (at least symbolically) sign and attend that social contract celebration. Moreover, it seeks social relations of a desirable predictability (i.e., celebrating and respecting contracts, recognizing and respecting the law, such as the formal authority) (Duyvesteyn, 2017, 679). Any political order's claim, to be acknowledged as legitimate and fair, deserves recognition: "Legitimacy means a political order's worthiness to be recognized" (Habermas, 1976, 6). That is why is quite usual to find political claims in the name of the general will. That happens either through discursive, practical, or symbolic means. Thus, authority's agendas and visions of reality may compose those claims. On the other side of the coin, audiences of legitimacy receive and (ideally) evaluate them and participate in the process by giving, withdrawing, or transforming legitimacy. That scenario is an undoubtedly deliberative approach. However, when violence and fear join or mark those messages and claims, this process may vary in its stages. It is helpful to look at why political actors may be interested in these issues and observe the line connecting three concepts: legitimacy, the social contract, and the general will.

In Western Europe, where the social contract idea was initially developed, the credibility of the political project offered by the one who plans to rule played a primary role. Legitimacy came later as a consequence (Duyvesteyn, 2017, 679). Encouraging security had been the entry point for those pretending to establish the basis of a new social contract. Once warranted (or at least once the rules to do so are sanctioned), then it is possible to follow steps towards a legitimation process in which social order becomes firmly established. Following this idea shows the extent to which both legitimacy and social order become the

channels through which the social contract is supported. Audiences of legitimacy may vary. (Chapter 2 proposes how to categorize and recognize them – mainly when speaking about criminal groups' efforts at legitimacy. That process enables also involves a discussion of the methodology through which fieldwork and data from these actors becomes accessible.) Here the important point is to understand "who" is included in this legitimating process from the spectators' perspective.

Theoretically speaking, the social contract is a singular noun: it implies that there is only one within the same time and space. Its hypothetical expiration, malfunction, or decline is reason enough to renew it. However, again, empirical cases show contexts in which it is possible to talk about this in the plural. For instance, rebels may be able to propose their vision of social order, maybe establish it, and therefore set the basis for a parallel social contract. That might challenge the current status quo, but scenarios of cooperation, mutual understanding, or some other symbiotic relationship are of course possible. And as this analysis has repeatedly emphasized, this is a contingent process, and definitive victories are not guaranteed. That "never definitive victory" of political actors in their legitimating process (including the state), needs to continually reinforce and recreate their legitimacy. This opens possibilities for all those other institutions that, following Migdal, also constitute the state. Some of them, specifically the violent non-state actors, might also offer a social contract for their audience. Hence, they will need to "[…] explain and justify their agendas and actions; they need material and moral support from communities both inside and outside the conflict region. Without minimal legitimacy, an armed group is bound to fail in its attempts to stay in power" (Schlichte and Schnekener, 2016, 410). These collectivities will find themselves in a dilemma between coercion and legality to achieve or enforce legitimacy, and to reaffirm their claim to authority. The question of who these social groups are and how to study them is explored in detail in the next section.

1.3. Alternative People´s Legitimacy: Non-state Actors

Nowadays, cases around the world proliferate in which other actors seek and potentially achieve legitimacy. These "other actors" have been called "non-state actors" within the academic literature as a pragmatic manner to refer them. However, that pragmatism is a conceptual problem itself and highlights fundamental questions for this research: what and who are those non-state actors? What is their claim to legitimacy? And if indeed they are legitimate, how and why? Even when this happens in places around the world, the process and the specificities are neither uniform nor homogeneous. Each case is unique precisely because this search for legitimacy depends on material and immaterial elements, symbolic features, practices, power configurations, and local and historical conditions (i.e. the descriptive perspective of the political legitimacy), which are also particular and therefore need specific considerations. (These considerations will be explored in detail in the last section of this chapter.) In other words, to be understood, each non-state actor looking for

legitimacy has its socio-historical context that needs to be incorporated into the analysis, together with a consideration of what non-state actors are and to what extent they are equal or different.

Any group with minimum cohesiveness and whose members are not in government are supposed to be called non-state actors. However, social borders are not rigid. Thus, within a given social context, an individual can be the authority, criminal, citizen or more all at the same time and without even renouncing any of these roles. Also, as happens with the state, non-state actors are not monoliths, and therefore are not fixed entities or agents (or, at least, not always). These groups are part and parcel of complex socio-political processes, which often happen in the frame of conflict and dissension with authority. It is helpful now to identify some of the foundational thoughts about non-state actors to understand the limits and possibilities of the concept. When the social research and debate on globalization went beyond economic and financial issues and started addressing governmental and political processes, some scholars raised the question of a possible state-reduction or state-decrease. Consequently, non-state actors´ capacities appeared to be escalating, both politically and economically (Strange, 2002; Ianni, 1995; Hardt and Negri, 2001).

The hypothesis was that the international state scheme (the so-called Westphalian system) was becoming weak and useless in the face of new contestations, both local and global. With some distance, it seems fair to recognize that this premise was not complete or entirely accurate. In one hand, the state keeps having great analytical importance and, even more, not all the states face the same problems or in the same dimension. Thus, examining all the states, or the Westphalian system, in the same way is not useful. Furthermore, those new actors exist and grow as social groups with singularities and on-going activities. Thus, they have shown to be even more complicated and diverse (Josselin and Wallace, 2001). Some of them might be interested in dealing with legitimacy issues, either by claiming, questing, questioning, or giving it. This is why is it valuable to understand the concept of the "non-state actor".

Moreover, to analyze non-state actors involves questioning their problematic configurations. That includes studying their interior-group features but also how they are related with other political actors, including the formal or official authorities. For instance, are non-state actors comparable? If not, how to differentiate them? Is a taxonomy possible or desirable? Can a hybridity among them occur? Are they always entirely or unconditionally "non-state"? These questions demonstrate the challenges of the concept but must be addressed. Otherwise, complexity and ambiguity generated in societies by non-state actors may go unnoticed or misunderstood, including their political contribution, particularly when talking about claims to legitimacy. This research is centered on and interested in one specific sort of non-state actor, the criminal groups. However, before delving into them, it's helpful to locate this particular type in the spectrum of non-state actors.

This section addresses conceptual perspectives. Later, this will help to analyze and conceptualize specific cases. First, we explore problems with definitions of non-state actors, which will be pertinent to the socio-political contexts in which they seek legitimacy. This discussion will help us to classify them — specifically, how academic literature has proposed to categorize those non-state actors involved in violent actions or who performed themselves violently. Finally, a conceptual exploration of criminal groups is made in order to locate them into the range of violent non-state actors. That represents a first approach to these specific groups. The central interest is to propose a functional conceptual apparatus and guidelines to understand criminal groups' phenomena concerning their search for legitimacy.

1.3.1. What Is a Non-state Actor?

International relations and some studies in political science initially developed ideas on non-state actors. This concept can be situated as a disciplinary necessity to name and explain the involvement of some other actors in local, national, and international politics and economy (Higgott, *et al*., 2000). That mainly happened during the last decades of the twentieth century, when the nation-state, its sovereignty, and the Westphalia system, offered insufficient frameworks to explain new social, economic, and political dynamics. Their participation in the so-called international society was expanded beyond the international arena, including global, national, and local stages, particularly during the second half of that century. In particular, complexity around world politics increased at the end of the cold war, when Berlin´s wall fell, and the Soviet Union broke up. The Balkan wars in the nineties and then September 11 (particularly involving so-called 'violent new actors') also influenced the discussion.

These new actors were not states nor were they supposed to become sovereign, but began to seem of great importance in different areas of the political landscape. Moreover, most of them had their own agendas (local, national, regional, and even global), a pivotal element to locate non-state actors in legitimacy discussions. Hence, the notion of non-state actors appeared as a practical and convenient solution to include this phenomenon in the spectrum of many disciplinary analyses within the social sciences. It was now possible to name those new groups. However, the debate was mainly focused on how they were contesting and threatening state power. Nevertheless, the understanding of how politics happened in these new contexts was incomplete because this approach left aside two discussions. Namely, it did not address how these new actors might perform as if they were the state (emulating or simulating it, or negotiating and collaborating with other non-state actors). Also, the discussion was not interested in understanding hybrid situations, i.e., when social mechanisms allow individuals to simultaneously be a part of the state and a non-state actor, or to go between these categories (Krause and Milliken, 2009, 202). Both aspects are profoundly relevant to study criminal groups, where corruption and the border between legal and illegal tend to be blurred.

That latter point addresses the interesting problem: how to empirically draw the line between where the state ends and society begins? According to some scholars, this is a question that could be exclusively answered through a local perspective, and far away from generalizations. Also, it might highlight the indicators to differentiate a state from a non-state actor (Escobar, 2001). This involves an inquiry into the relation between political actors with formal authorities within a given social context, and how and why legitimacy is pursued and disputed there. Thus, any definition of a non-state actor needs to be based on an empirical discussion of the state.

The literature tends to frame the state as a counterpoint to non-state actors, but fixed ideas of the state obscure the complex power, influence, and sometimes even the existence of non-state actors. For instance, some non-state actors can enjoy grades of autonomy with formal authorities, while others can also have, seek, or claim state affiliation (Josselin and Wallace, 2001). To resolve this problem, ideas of state and non-state cannot be static or non-empirical, even when we recognize them as ideal types. This dilemma becomes even more important in disorderly contexts (i.e. “complicated” and “marginal”), where crime, corruption, and violence render hard distinctions shadowy. The complexity behind this can be summarized when recovering Akhil Gupta´s concept, “blurred boundaries” (1995), which comes from an of ethnography of the state carried out in a northern Indian village, where he confronted the traditional and supposedly definitive distinctions between the state and the civil society. Gupta explains well how he came to realize that while these categories are real and useful, they are discursively constructed.

> Rather than begin with the notions of State and civil society that were forged on the anvil of European history, I focus on the modalities that enable the State (and, simultaneously, that which is not the State) to be discursively constructed. Looking at everyday practices, including practices of representation, and the representations of (State) practice in public culture helps us arrive at a historically specific and ideologically constructed understanding of "the State." Such an analysis simultaneously considers those other groupings and institutions that are imagined in the processes of contestation, negotiation, and collaboration with "the State." There is no reason to assume that there is, or should be, a unitary entity that stands apart from, and in opposition to, "the State," one that is mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive of the social space. What I have tried to emphasize in this article is that the very same processes that enable one to construct the State also help one to imagine these other social groupings (Gupta, 1995, 393).

Postcolonial situations can pose intellectual challenges in using categories derived from Western European contexts. That is why Migdal´s definition of the state is quite useful. Both images and localized practices configure it and, beneath them, there are elements for the understanding of both state and non-state actors. The challenge is in how to operationalize non-state actors as social groups among others (of the multiple parts composing the state) with real practices developed in a power field marked by the threat and use of violence.

Following Migdal´s borrowing of a Bourdieunian concept, there is a dominant organization image within the field, coherent in a specific territory, which does not deny the interaction of other groups. Instead, these other groups help to build and shape social reality. Again, these thoughts are useful for particular social and disciplinary spaces where institutional constructions have historical and sociological peculiarities, and therefore, require different approaches. There are other disciplines and contexts, however, where ideal-types will be more accurate and helpful disciplinary tools. Empirical references are, again, needed in each case.[11]

Despite the common ambiguities around the definition of the non-state actor, the concept can be used in a practical form. In this research, a non-state actor will be understood as an analytical category to recognize (even when it's not possible to precisely define) those social groups and political actors through their own actions, practices, agendas, and interests that fit into narratives of being separate or distinguishable from the state. The category of non-state actors becomes helpful to explain social phenomena of those who participate in politics or social violence in a specific social space. Moreover, it helps to study how formal or legal authority is involved. This discussion is, of course, in deep relation with the search of legitimacy and the construction and use of power among these non-state actors. How and why they do so is explored in the next section.

1.3.2. Why and When? Non-state Actors In Search of Legitimacy

Non-state actors are political actors. As a result, claims to successful legitimation processes can emerge informally and through illegal or non-legal means. Legitimacy is not an exclusive attribute of the state or the legal or formal authorities. This is a key point, and inclines this research towards a descriptive perspective of legitimacy. Non-state actors can become legitimate or at least seek legitimacy. However, is that claim to legitimacy a quotidian practice of non-state actors, or is it a particular behavior for some of them? Are non-state actors searching for legitimacy as a pragmatic way to achieve their goals? Alternatively, are they ideologically or politically or financially motivated? Why and when does that claim happen? Political legitimacy might bring benefits for non-state actors. Depending on the case and context, it will invite support from a variable audience but also offer the advantage of performing action without being questioned. However, the question remains: is political legitimacy an end itself for a non-state actor, or is it the means through which other goals can be reached? And can these social agents dispense with legitimacy?

[11] In this regard, and following Schneckener (2017), the distinction between violent actors and the state might become impossible as a result of the potential existence of collusion, collaboration, and overlap between the categories.

This applies quite broadly: to multinational and global firms; international, regional, and local NGO's; militias, terrorists, vigilantes, criminal organizations and bandits in general. Therefore, the agendas and actions mentioned above will be part of the answer to why and when claims of legitimacy claims apply. The possibility of a non-state actor becoming legitimate is related to the expectations of these actors from the imaginary construction of political authority. That opens a wide range of possibilities. Some of them will be interested in co-operating or influencing in specific topics of society, others will pursue drastic changes such as eliminating the formal and legal system of government, or merely to toppling the current administration, just to suggest a few possibilities. Non-state actors can be moderate or radical, depending on their agendas and practices. According to some authors, non-state actors are interested in participating in norm-formation or regulation (Peters, Koechlin and Fenner, 2009). That becomes a necessity for them, and can include their involvement in policy processes through legislative mechanisms, lobbying, or other formal routes. Their motivations can be political, ideological, economic, or a mix. These can be categorized as legal.

By contrast, the non-legal might be interested in disturb or at least ignore established rules through disruptive conducts (which does not mean that only rebels act violently, as will be explored in the next section). Justifications and motivations tend to be less economic and more political and ideological (but this is not always rigid), and are often illegal or conflict with established law. However, grey zones are possible: non-state actors can expand or redefine their interest through time, so an evolution of a "peaceful" non-state actor into a violent one is possible, and vice versa. In other words, they can shift between both categories as part of their historical process. Nevertheless, a common attribute of non-state actors seeking legitimacy is their participation in defining social order, either through the constitution of authority, the establishment of a mandate, or the definition of the ruler and the ruled.

Non-state actors involved in legitimacy issues need to be analyzed as well from their posture towards the ruler and the ruled. Since they participate politically, they have to establish relations with formal authorities. However, given that the support they seek comes from the ruled, this relationship becomes crucial to achieve legitimacy. Some of these actors use state resources (for instance, its legal system) as a claim to legitimacy (Schlichte and Schneakener, 2016, 417), while others defy the state to accomplish the same goal. Non-state actors establish their position in relation to the status quo, which indicates the flexibility and contingency they employ when choosing to compete with, borrow from, cooperate with, or flatly reject the legal authorities' legitimacy. Another possibility is shared legitimacy.

Non-state actors, and rebels/bandits in particular, as organized parts of these societies, can reproduce the experience of the state, building on former experiences (Förster, 2015, 204). That configures a path for non-state actors to achieve political legitimacy. But some non-

state actors are violent; they use violence along with threats and intimidation to achieve their ends. To what extent can they achieve legitimacy? This question cannot be answered in the abstract, but requires empirical references. Nevertheless, some conceptual points are both necessary and helpful.

1.3.3. Violence as Catalyst: Towards a Taxonomy of Non-State Actors

In the decade or so after the Second World War, the social sciences showed little interest in investigating the role of a particular sort of non-state actors, largely due to economic, financial, and geopolitical reasons. But especially at the end of the Cold War, and as neoliberal policies and free trade agreements took off in capitalist countries, some new actors started appearing in the analytical landscape. Examples include international organizations and international cooperation agencies (both constituted by state memberships), corporations and banks, and special international entities (most of them defined by Public International Law). And little by little scholars began looking at some other non-state actors whose principal characteristic was the use or threat of violence to achieve goals (including to legitimate themselves or their activities). These other non-state actors were rebels like militias, guerrillas, terrorists, and vigilantes, but also, criminal groups and so-called "organized crime".

All of these groups were defined within international humanitarian law as social formations and conglomerates with a minimum degree of cohesiveness, and certain duration in their violence campaign (Krause and Milliken, 2009, 203). However, in the post-cold war era, violent non-state groups with relevance in politics became common (Halliday, 2001, 37). Some showed clear international (or global) agendas and actions, but most focused on national, subnational, and sometimes very local agendas. However, combined with the existence of previous groups that already had violent actions (some of them with a long history), the study of what has been called "violent non-state actors" commenced. As Stathis Kalyvas stated, "Studying war now (after the cold war) calls for taking internal conflict seriously — a hard lesson for hard-wired scholars to take on state unity and dismisses non-state actors as secondary" (2010, xi). The use or threat of violence became a catalyst to distinguish specific kinds of non-state actors. Grouping them into a more limited, neat category became epistemologically convenient, even though some of the original problems of conceiving of non-state actors remained.

Nevertheless, is a violent non-state actor always or only violent? Asking this is crucial because it takes the analysis to the matter of legitimacy. Violent non-state actors can select from a diverse gamut of choices to obtain their goals. For instance, using the concept of rebel diplomacy, Bridget Coggins argues that rebels "[…] often dedicate significant time and attention to non-violent, diplomatic engagement and that the scope, direction, and timing of their efforts can help us to better understand the dynamics of contemporary civil war" (2015,

99). According to her, rebels are capable of (and sometimes encouraged) to develop rebel diplomacy in their relations with other formal and informal authorities. This idea offers insight into the interplay between violent and non-violent tactics, and shows that without such and understanding a big part of the story can be missed. But if rebels can negotiate and use non-violent resources, why continue to call them violent non-state actors? To answer, we must address how violence is understood in this research.

The concept of violence involves a whole conceptual dilemma and has been understood from many perspectives (symbolic, structural, implicit, etcetera). Above all, this research seeks an operational understanding. Rather than selecting a static definition, three authors works serve to sketch a conceptual outline of violence in the context of this study.[12] This outline uses three phases to identify violent practices in the context of those actors seeking legitimacy: to recognize different sorts of violence and how they might connect; to understand how violent social contexts are built through violent connections; and to analyze the function of legitimacy in those cases and contexts. For the first phase, regarding recognizing violence practices, Johan Galtung´s (1990) ideas are useful. As he states, violence can be subcategorized into three different clusters. The first one, direct violence, is the most evident and easy to recognize; an individual beating or killing someone else is a banal but simple illustration. The second is structural violence, defined by marginalization, humiliation, and denigration of the subjects (this has a profound link with social order notions analyzed above). However, Galtung includes cultural violence, which involves "[…] the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (1990, 291).

For the second phase, regarding the understanding of how violent social contexts are built, Philippe Bourgois (2005) proposed the idea of a continuum of violent actions. He characterizes violent expressions as interconnected or associated actions, rather than isolated events. That opens possibilities to understand how violent people can also become victims of violence, but also to understand violence as social action attached to social context, rather than ephemeral acts. Finally, Hannah Arendt's definition from *On Violence* (2006) will be helpful for the third and final phase. Her thesis went against Freudian perspectives of what violence is. She did not think of it as irrational conduct by an ungoverned side of the human mind. She argued that violence always needs to be justified and, sociologically speaking, it is not an end itself but a means to an end. Hence, those "ends" or "goals" may be rationalized and so it should be with the use or threat of violence – which will have a direct relation to expected ends. Since those ends can be rationalized and attributed to a group or an individual,

[12] For instance, the World Health Organization has a common definition of violence, which at least ignores social problems around the phenomenon: "Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (WHO, 2014, 2).

the means to achieve it will by definition be rational, as Arendt argued: “Violence, being instrumental by nature, is rational to the extent that is effective in reaching the end that must justify it” (1970, 79). Hence, the use or threat of violence actually works as a catalyst to conceptualize violent non-state actors within the rest of social groups competing for legitimacy. In other words, violence helps us to distinguish some non-state actors from the rest.

Sometimes, the use or threat of violence is not enough to categorize the so-called violent non-state actors. What difference or similarities exist between them? That is relevant because, while they may be categorized into this group, that does not mean that they are always equal or even of the same category, especially given their complexity and variety. Researchers must distinguish and classify them to identify and understand their particularities (Schultz, Farah, and Lochard, 2004; Vinci, 2006). However, this work always runs the risk of oversimplifying phenomena. While some scholars have focused on creating a list of the many and different actors that could fit in because of their activities, some others like Vinci have focused on categorizing them with a political interest rather than academic. Considering the problems of mobilization faced by rebels, this type of work faces the problem of categorization as a tool to improve effectiveness in confronting insurgents and terrorists (2006, 61).

In order to present a progressively multi-dimensional understanding, Miklaucic proposes a typology to examine what he calls illicit power structures through four successive analytic ‘prisms': their ideologies, motivations, actions, and structures (2009). For this research, it will be a practical but ontological decision to distinguish them from two angles, namely: if the violent non-state actor shows interest or attempts to become legitimate; and by the use or threat of violence as a way to claim authority in three stages: current activities related to their agenda, social performativity with the formal ruler and ruled, and the pursuit of goals. However, the research focuses on Miklaucic prisms (and those three elements will be limited to criminal groups). The next section characterizes these groups.

1.3.4. Criminal Groups: Characteristics of a Violent Non-state Actor Regarding Legitimacy

In a rigid legal sense, crime and criminals refer to behaviors prohibited by law in a given time and space, which leads to a discussion of a non-legitimate people or activity from a normative perspective of legitimacy. But regardless of how it’s categorized, this activity and its perpetrators have powerful consequences for how society is shaped. Social reality (including criminals and criminal activity) is contingent, and what is criminal can become legitimate or even legal (and vice-versa). In other words, crime may achieve legitimacy (descriptive legitimacy). How this happens can be translated into specific questions: Why may some of these criminal groups call for legitimacy? What are the sources and resources of that legitimacy? And what does that mean for power configuration in those places? Chapter 2 addresses these issues at length with regard to empirical cases, but here follow

some brief notes. The aim is to locate and identify criminal groups as a specific sort of violent non-state actors and address conceptual problems over them.

Of all the possible violent non-state actors, criminal groups are only one of them, but they represent the academic interest of this study. Following Krause and Milliken, we are specifically looking for those social formations which, when dealing with legitimacy aspirations, attempt to generate artificial distance, either from the government or from people, by showing a degree of cohesiveness (with or without leadership), and certain duration in their violence campaign. That distance, built through discursive elements, violence, symbolic elements, etcetera, lets them produce the image of a differentiated social group within a society. Even when this works as a representation, it highlights two relations: one with formal authorities (most of the time, the idea of the state itself), and another with the idea of "common people". The idea of a separate group, criminal and violent, but striving to become legitimate, has empirical consequences which this research is aware of. Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly offered some thoughts on this when talking about rebels.

> When rebels secure territory, they must decide how they will interact with local residents. They can rob and rape them, they can recruit them, they can ignore them, or they can try to govern them – for better or worse. The choice a rebel group makes is always momentous for civilians. A surprisingly large number of rebel groups engage in some sort of governance, ranging from creating minimal regulation and informal taxation to forming popular assemblies, elaborate bureaucracies, schools, courts, and health clinics. Some also focus on organizing non-combatants for commercial pursuits" (2015, 1).

This idea relates to how literature and legal codes have attempted to define organized crime. Given its complexity, that task has become interesting but problematic. According to Grégory Auda, it was in the New York Society for the Prevention of Crime issue of 1869, where "organized crime" was used for the first time (2009). Its original use was to describe migrant Italian communities in New Orleans and New York, which were supposedly related to Sicilian mafia. However, phenomena of mafia and crime became complex during the twentieth century, and broader, profitable and global during post-cold war era and the beginning of twenty-first century. German scholar Klaus von Lampe has collected more than 200 academic, legal, and institutional definitions of organized crime (and keeps counting...) (2019), which illustrates the need for more accurate terms to describe and understand the phenomena of criminal groups, especially from a legal perspective (Serrano and Berdal, 2002, 8).

Conceptual complications on this topic have increased over time. Unlike what happens with other academic concepts, the debate appears divided between exhaustive characterizations of criminal behaviors that allow authorities to find parties guilty, and complex elaborations to explain complicated criminal phenomena. Difficulties to define the topic clash with formal and intellectual efforts to delimit it. Paradoxically, the main problem to do so seems to be the

ambiguity, that is, the flexible and multi-interpretable ways in which this definition has been discussed. For instance, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, define it in the following manner: "'Organized criminal group' shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offenses established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit" (2000). Ambiguity is the essential component of this definition.

A large variety of actors fit this definition, all guilty of the same illegality and the same behavioral ontology. Lumped together in this definition are not only drug traffickers and kidnappers, but fraudulent financial institutions like Lehman Brothers during 2008 financial crisis and non-regulated street vendors bribing corrupted police officers to sell legal commodities in Mexico City. Each of these clearly involves some financial trickery, reflects planning and coordination, and causes some unspecified harm to society. But classifying them in the same category obfuscates rather than clarifies. In addition to formal definitions, there are also imaginary constructions of what organized crime is; it happens in every society with criminal concerns and is shaped by media (from journalist constructions to cultural productions), legal and political discourse and, in a less direct way, also by the academic discourse. Hence, organized crime also becomes politically defined – as happens with most social concepts. But the conceptual problem is real: it results from the necessity to simultaneously address legal, social, academic, and political problems.

Von Lampe pointed out that there is a risk and an opportunity when dealing with definitions: "[…] 'organized crime' may evaporate in the hands of diligent researchers but [the opportunity is that] a lot will have been learned along the way about patterns of criminal cooperation and about illegitimate power in the hands of those who systematically and collusively violate or circumvent the law to the detriment of the common good" (2002, 197). In this research, we understand criminal groups as the organization of crime as a social phenomenon, rather than a completely separate social group. Moreover, when dealing with legitimacy, this organization of crime will involve 1) illegal activities, but also the effort of 2) creating the image of a cohesive, unitary organization with its own identity, 3) acting and performing in accordance with this identity, and 4) efforts at achieving or preserving legitimacy. Criminality is also understood as non-lawful conduct, which may fit into the first point referenced before. Both questions, how and why, will be answered in this research, and particularly with the cases analysis in the following chapters.

Meanwhile, this explains why we adopt "criminal group" rather than "organized crime" as a noun to refer to them. Kasper Hoffman stated that: "Part of the allure of a rebel group is its promise of a new and better society. Yet it is simplistic to think that rebels always stand in opposition to the existing socio-political order" (2015, 159). This is especially relevant when talking about criminal groups. Given that these groups are primarily motivated by economic

gain, could they also be interested in social and/or political change? Answers, of course, depend on specific cases, but none of these groups can avoid taking a position towards the socio-political order. Mainly because the current socio-political order is, in fact, the order in which those profits were possible and available in the first place, the analysis focuses largely on how this process happens. The next chapter describes how to tackle this problem methodologically.

1.4. Closing Remarks and Summary of Chapter 1

Given the vast academic work on political legitimacy, this research proposed the division between normative and descriptive political legitimacy. This twofold perspective helps this research to make operative a definition of political legitimacy. Between how political legitimacy should be (normative) and how it could be (descriptive), this research opts for the latter, while recognizing the relevance of the law and moral norms. Thus, state and non-state actors (especially illegal and violent ones) can perform practices of legitimation. Hence, even when the legality is a powerful source of legitimacy, it neither guarantees or denies political legitimacy. As a collective accreditation of political fiction, legitimacy is understood here as a social process building, rather than as a fixed conceptual unit. Consequently, political legitimacy will be perpetually attached to the socio-political setting of each analyzed case as well as to the local historical circumstances. Growing from those ideas, this chapter elaborated five considerations to design an operative definition of political legitimacy to empirically trace it under a descriptive perspective.

The first consideration addresses both ruler and ruled when defining legitimacy. The second consideration concerns recognizing the contingency in which legitimacy is built, i.e. its locality, temporality, and rationality. Thirdly, given that legitimacy is a relational concept, the hypothesis of legitimate parallel authorities' coexistence needs to be considered. The fourth consideration concerns the historical legitimacy-building process. Finally, as an ongoing process, the fifth consideration addresses the continuous necessity of the legitimate political actor to reconfirm itself and its legitimacy. In this regard, contingency becomes the rule and, as an ongoing process, leads legitimate political actors to a "never definitive victory". Deeply connected with this, this chapter also elaborated concepts closely related to political legitimacy such as the social order, sovereignty, and the state. By adopting the anthropology of the state as a conceptual framework, this chapter highlighted specific ideas emerging from these three concepts.

The social order is understood here as a set of social organization patterns that give societies predictability. In this regard, social order connects with legitimacy because it is through the latter that political actors change the former. It starts by altering the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, and follows by modifying collective ideas of belonging, cohesiveness, legality, trust, and sharing a common destiny or general will. Sovereignty was understood

here as a practice that could be more or less exercised by either state or non-state actors. When performing sovereignty, the same actions might also be read as practices of legitimacy. The state is understood not as a merely static body made up of officially recognized figures and institutions, but is dynamic, flexible and composed of multiple parts, legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, official and unofficial. Thus, specific communities can mirror many functions and practices of the state. Moreover, as a more organized part of these societies, rebels will be capable of and interested in doing so. This is what sets the path for non-state actors to achieve political legitimacy. Finally, rather than organized crime, this chapter proposed the category of criminal group, a type of violent non-state actor involved in legitimacy struggles by performing an artificial separation from the rest of society.

Chapter 2.
The Ghost of Robin Hood: Tracking Legitimate Crime

Among many violent non-state actors (including rebels/social bandits such as militias, guerrillas, and those labelled as terrorists), it is common to find interest in and concern about achieving legitimacy. For them, the primary motivation is often characterized as political, based on their discourses and narratives. Others, such as those we're calling criminal groups, who's interests are ostensibly economic, may in fact also pursue courses toward legitimacy. Behind many violent non-state actors' activities, pragmatic economic explanations often overlap with political goals, as when illicit profiting is made easier by obtaining social recognition or corrupting official authorities. But when criminal groups take part in complex legitimation processes, they begin to influence formal political processes as well as the local social order, and their effects on society are as much social and political as they are economic. By seeking legitimacy, these groups contest who, what, and how authorities previously portrayed them as illegal and, consequently, illegitimate. Hence, this becomes a social order contestation.

But are all criminal groups, in fact, rebels or social bandits? Are all illegal agents rebels? To answer, this chapter guides the analysis through four questions involving crime and legitimacy: *what*, *who*, *why* and *how*. *What* refers to the concepts of crime and illegality in terms of political legitimacy. Limits and analytical possibilities for both normative and descriptive perspectives of legitimacy are reviewed in this section, together with the relation of crime with social (dis)order. The second part critically answers *who* are the criminals by understanding crime as social phenomena rather than the activities of anti-social individuals and groups. The third part addresses *why* criminal groups and illegality may become interested in legitimacy. Finally, by incorporating analyses from the chapter 1, the fourth and final section deals with *how* criminals attempt to become legitimate.

With this general analysis established, we proceed to the specific research cases in the following chapters. This last section is used as well to synthesize the methods and epistemology behind the data collection for this research. It recovers past discussions to explore how legitimate attempts empirically take place. In other words, the methodological design prepared for this research is briefly explained –which intends to be useful to conduct research that specifically studies criminal groups seeking legitimacy. First, we examine the sources and resources of legitimacy and how they are used in order to achieve goals. This section ends with a relevant discussion for this research: What happens with legitimacy in contesting contexts? That is a specific interest in understanding if it is possible or not for two or more political actors to simultaneously share political legitimacy, this is, within same time and space. Answers and particularities around these questions synthesize both richness and relevance of the research.

2.1. Crime and Illegality as Social Phenomena

This first section digs into what criminality is, and shows how the so-called underworld often seamlessly meshes with the world. By understanding the social basis of crime, the extent to which it is part of the social order becomes clear. In that respect, we will keep an eye on the transformation of the criminal, the informal sovereign, into "a law unto himself" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005, 32). This is an exploration of a specific kind of criminal behavior that endeavors to produce legitimacy through performing the sovereignty that is supposedly exclusively a state capability. That could mean producing or reproducing the experience of government, but not only that. Many sources or resources of legitimacy could be used. In this regard, the idea of criminality will be understood as that "zone of darkness" and "[...] the perennial outside, an unruly and originary source of sovereign life, and thus a necessary condition for any claim to establish and defend a social order" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005, 32).

This analysis focuses on the legitimacy endeavors, and not necessarily on determining if they were successful or not. After a political actor becomes legitimate, the literature tends to separate the governance process into three aspects: output (about governing for the people), input (about governing by the people), and throughput (about ruling with the people) (Mazepus, 2017, 4-5; see also Schmidt, 2013). However, here our focus is on the legitimacy attempts made by criminal groups in contemporary times. That discussion needs to take into account how illegality shifts its interest into becoming legitimate, including the specific efforts, and not in what happened in a hypothetical case in which those attempts were successful.

The discussion is guided by the concept of political legitimacy to do so. Following the same literature categorization made in the first chapter, the first section locates how criminality is understood from a normative perspective of legitimacy. The second part turns to the descriptive perspective and makes the same analysis to argue how this latter perspective offers a better analytical opportunity for studying criminality linked to political legitimacy processes. Finally, this section ends making considerations around illegality becoming the heart of the social order, rather than a source of disorder. What happens when violence, insecurity, and lawlessness are not part of a contextual crisis but the context itself? Is crime always a sign of disruptive social behavior? How does political legitimacy help to explain scenarios without legality but with a determined social order? Answers to these questions are elaborated in this section as well.

2.1.1. Illegal Is Illegitimate: Limits of the Normative Perspective

From a normative perspective of political legitimacy, illegality is illegitimate by definition. Not only the legal approaches but also the philosophical perspectives around political legitimacy do not leave space for considering crime or its perpetrators as legitimate. Moreover, these two perspectives (philosophy and legal approaches) usually go together when analyzing illegality. The power of this link comes from the fact that the spirit of the legitimacy consensus resides in the current law. Following Duff: "[...] the criminal law purports to declare and enforce authoritative standards of value, in particular of moral value: it claims the authority to tell us how we should live, and to enforce its demands on us if we disagree or disobey" (2013). The normative perspective links legality with legitimacy by assuming that law is created with the people's general set of moral beliefs. Thus, people know they should act following the rule of law and that officials are legitimate who promote that behavior above all (Tyler, 1990, 19-20).

Following this understanding, when the law stops being a legitimate reflection of that consensus (often materialized toward a social contract), democracy offers mechanisms through which changes or updates are made. Therefore, what is outside of the law is illegal, thus illegitimate, and it always will be. The only possible change happens within the law. Moreover, this angle does not focus on the political dimension of lawmaking and law-enforcement, that is, when the law is the consensus of those with political power, rather than a broader population, which is closer to what the social contract pretends. The role of authority within this perspective is sharply associated to the one who followed the legal paths to achieve power. Consequently, no criminal can become a legitimate ruler, simply because the sole condition of being illegal disables any legit condition. Classic legal, ethical, and moral definitions of crime and illegality fit in this perspective. Together with punishment, here illicit behaviors are attached to measure and identify actions that damaged the public together with options to restore damages (Lamond, 2007). Therefore, no criminal can give benefits to the people except when he or she is already punished or as part of that punishment.

Additionally, because of the rigid role that ideal-type notions play in these perspectives, crime and criminals tend to look like fixed entities. However, while the former opens a bit of space for change, the latter reinforces the illusion of being perpetually illegal. In the case of crime, the illicit behavior, possible social changes affecting how an illegal practice transforms into a socially accepted one, is reconsidered through legal paths that legitimize it and, consequently, it becomes legalized. However, in the case of criminals, the story is different. It is not possible to "legalize" a criminal, only to make them recognized as a liability, and pay the punishment. Hence, criminal actors are merely a source of social disorder (by reaffirming and validating current law), but they could never create social order while illegal, since they are perpetually illegitimate (more ideas about crime and order come later in this chapter).

Finally, it is necessary to consider that law is not enough for this analysis but takes part in it. Cases of political legitimacy concerning illegality, even when they cannot be explained exclusively from a normative perspective, need to take into account how legality works in the big picture. In the end, criminals attempting legitimacy are constantly dealing with a narrative that helps to justify their illegality. Given that the law is not a big enough blanket to cover illegal actions, fairness and justice beyond the law will help to do this job. In other words, given that criminal actors cannot claim or look for legality as a source of legitimacy, they need to look for new or renewed sources and resources of legitimacy (Duyvesteyn, 2017, 673). Resorting to legal paths does not mean forgetting the interest in legitimacy. However, even then, it is necessary to insist that the law remains relevant as an analytical element. These elements continue being considered on the descriptive grounds of legitimacy, which is the basis on which this research is developed.

2.1.2. Illegal But Legitimate: Towards Descriptive Grounds

The descriptive grounds of political legitimacy open possibilities for making illegality legitimate. A fundamental reason for this is that every disciplinary angle included in this perspective works with change. Even when some disciplines may work as well with ideal-types, an ongoing empirical debate suggests certain conditions in which a crime or criminal could be considered legitimate. Moreover, exploring actual cases gives an opportunity to include particularities that could go against the idea of the law as the main source of legitimacy. This is especially relevant for unlawful contexts, where corruption and mistrust in official authorities could undermine obedience to the law. In the short and medium term, interdisciplinary approaches combining anthropology, sociology, and political science allow for a conceptualization of criminals becoming legitimate without taking into account changes in the law or dominant morality. In the long term, social flux between legal and illegal can be studied through historical analysis.

This perspective identifies variations in people´s decisions towards legitimacy. As a relevant audience for legitimacy, it is not possible to argue that people always consider legitimate what (or who) is legal. Many reasons can be working around each decision; however, a descriptive perspective of legitimacy opens the door for these phenomena. In the words of Arjona: "Insofar as people make choices considering the alternatives available to them, identifying the range of those options is an essential step toward theory building. Yet for the most part, the literature on civil war and organized crime are mute about this" (2017, 756). That could also be said for legitimacy literature outside the descriptive viewpoint. Regarding legitimacy as well as criminality, to look at regular citizens' behavior in contexts where criminal groups have a presence, may suggest that there is space for being legitimate without being legal.

Following the idea, the descriptive angle of legitimacy opens space to recognize different ways in which legitimacy is materialized. This idea is especially relevant when talking about crime, because violence, coercion, and fear can also shape how legitimacy becomes useful for the criminal groups. People cooperating (or not) with criminal groups are the two possibilities; however, following the debate on legitimacy, here we focus on the cooperating options as expressions of this descriptive viewpoint. These actions range from support, collaboration, and assistance, to participation, or even omissions, when discussing crimes with official authorities. All of them might be happening, and possibly more than one at the same time. For instance, Arjona said that obedience is a central form of collaboration (2017, 757), but in the meantime, people might be collaborating with the group as well. Again, fear and violence could be the trigger this. In any case, these possible behaviors enable the creation and maintenance of local orders that criminal groups tend to create and from which they gain benefits. Related to this outcome, "the order" is explained in the following section.

2.1.3. From Illegal to Legal: Changes in Social Order

After explaining how crime is understood from both perspectives, in this section links between crime and social order are explained. Is criminality a component that increases social disorder and vice-versa? Moreover, is social order possible in contexts of high criminality? From a normative perspective, the answer is clear: crime always goes against the social order – the only one, inserted into the current legal frame. Moreover, criminals are seen as destabilizing agents that put at risk any possibility of order. On the other hand, the descriptive perspective can explain possible social order scenarios in which legality is even wholly absent. The idea of social disorder (i.e., the hypothesis of social order's absence) brings other relevant questions. How should we understand contexts where violence, conflict, and chaos are not temporary periods of crisis, but are normal? This task points to the study of places where crisis are not context, but crisis acts as context (Vigh, 2008).

The starting point is to consider the changing power of criminals and their activities in their contexts. Often in these circumstances, crime stops being the exception and becomes part of daily life, followed by rules, living standards, and social exchanges. They are all ingredients in the complex social order in which a paradox happens, namely, crime becomes the rule. These hypothetical scenarios again are not fixed and require constant legitimacy in an attempt to maintain the status quo. Social order is both an input and an outcome of these struggles. Following Arjona:

> NSAGs [non-state armed groups] often transform the daily lives of those living in areas where they operate. Their coercion, violence, and disruption of formal and informal institutions can give rise to disorder, where locals experience high levels of uncertainty. However, these groups also bring about new forms of social order, where civilians and combatants tend to follow clear rules of conduct allowing for stable patterns of behavior and interaction to emerge (2017, 756).

Among these rules, criminal groups might tend to create regulations in political, economic, and social functioning. By doing so, these groups could set the basis for 1) establishing the dominant order, and 2) expecting obedience from people in the local area. In the long run, establishing this sort of local order becomes more convenient than coercive measures, even when there is no definitive formula on how to balance carrots and sticks. In the end, criminal groups will always be dealing with the task of justifying illegality. Furthermore, through this order, the groups will be able to obtain "[...] resources, accessing political and social networks, putting into practice their ideology, and gaining the recognition and reciprocity of local residents" (Arjona, 2017, 760). This idea explains why the social order is possible in contexts of criminality – even when it is not the desirable one concerning peaceful coexistence and democracy.

It is not possible to say that every criminal group, in every case, will make attempts to build and maintain its order; however, those who do not do so run the risk of resistance coming either from locals or official authority. In the end, the decision to establish a particular social order (or at least participate in its definition), is what enables us to distinguish criminal groups involved in political legitimacy struggles. Thus, the link between crime and social order is defined by political legitimacy. Criminal activities, as an illicit behavior defined by a specific legal code (approved, spread, and validated through official mechanisms following its legitimacy settings), may become a source of social order through the interest of a group in doing so. Those groups organize and concentrate the criminal activities within a defined time and space, and their boundaries tend to be blurred. Hence, when a criminal group participates in the definition of social order, it gets involved in a discussion of legitimacy, and these phenomena can only be explained from that perspective.

2.2. The Fiction of Counter-Society Actors

A possible heritage from the descriptive perspective is the fallacy of thinking of criminals as agents against society (unable to live in society or to create social order). After almost fifty years, Hobsbawm's "social banditry" concept was revisited. Dutch anthropologist Anton Blok pointed a lacuna in this sociological category: "What seems wrong with Hobsbawm's perception of brigandage is that it pays too much attention to the peasants and the bandits themselves. Before looking at them, it is necessary to look at the larger society within which peasant communities are contained […] Given the specific conditions of outlawry, bandits have to rely very strongly on other people" (2001, 18). Blok's critique reconsiders the criminal's role in society while upgrading society's influence on criminals. This statement needs attention given that, as stated earlier, illegality is a sociological output. In the end, societies define legal and illegal through their established rules, institutions, and mechanisms. Moreover, if bands or criminals are not isolated characters but social agents, then this needs to be taken into account when analyzing criminal phenomena.

Following this perspective, as counter-society agents or counter-state actors, criminals destroy society rather than create it, and break the rules without creating others. Therefore, illegality seeds chaos and needs crisis to exist. That is part of the reasoning of why criminals should be separate from the rest in jails and prisons (Foucault, 1995, 257). How true is this statement? This section answers that question using two analytical angles. First, by translating the blurred boundaries idea fully into a crime and illegality perspective. And second, by understanding the social circuits in which illegality works, involving many actors that do not enable to always strictly separate legal from illegal. However, despite the difficulties of grasping criminals as counter-society actors, some criminal groups make explicit and rational efforts in order to distinguish themselves from the rest. This feature helps maintain the discussion on political legitimacy.

2.2.1. Blurred Boundaries: Crime and Illegality

As discussed in the last chapter, boundaries between state and non-state actors tend to be blurry. However, when talking about criminal actors, this may become even more confusing. Law and illegality may become an obsession within "disordered societies", even a fetish (Commaroff and Commaroff, 2006, viii). For instance, several governments around the world have declared wars against crime (including drug-traffickers, piracy, smugglers, etc.). Within those wars, the discourse tends to portray the idea of people acting against society, considering them enemies that should be eliminated (the specific case of Mexico will be explored in the following chapter as part of the first research case). By considering the criminals as "them" (as opposed to "us") the idea of the social contract is destroyed, and with it, any notion of a social collectivity (Matravers, 2011, 81). People can play different roles in society: a citizen can simultaneously be a taxpayer, public officer, and a criminal. Acknowledging this simple fact exposes the myth of criminals as hypothetical outsiders to society.

The original context of Gupta´s blurred boundaries concept was developed to identify difficulties in recognizing the border between state and society in specific contexts. How is this idea helpful for a crime and legitimacy discussion? In the first place, it suggests where crime begins and ends, that is, the extent to which criminals are apart from society, expelled from the current social order, and capable or not of creating a new one. In the end, this debate recognizes, in the last section of this chapter, that some criminal groups will be interested in portraying the myth of separate social agents from the rest as a legitimacy strategy. Maybe, in this case, counter-society is not the precise description, but "outside agent" could work. Thus, it is necessary to consider that, despite the narrative efforts and other symbolic representations of criminal groups, there is no such criminal agent as a counter-state actor. That is precisely because society and its codes (legal, moral, ethical) are what give crime its condition (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012, 125). Moreover, criminals' efforts to justify or

change the current codes, and attempts to become legitimate, should be understood as a social change, but not as an activity against society.

2.2.2. The Myth of the Counter-Society: Circuits of Illegality

The second element to argue against understanding criminals as agents against society is to examine how crime works – especially the crime that requires organization. The expansion of crime during the post-cold-war era coincides with market liberalization, telecommunications improvements, and the sophistication of financial services. These processes are linked. Following Andreas, the promotion of free-market reforms and the prohibitions of the illicit drug market are based on an opposite philosophy (2013). While the ultimate goal of the free market is to maximize trade and avoid state intervention, the prohibitionist frame developed by several governments around the world aims precisely to the contrary, that is, to suppress the market through state intervention. Both projects theoretically cannot work together, but in practice they do. The state supposedly avoids direct market interventions, it takes an active part in controlling and stopping illicit trafficking. A similar apparent paradox happens with mafias and criminal organizations around the world: on the one hand, these groups operate flexibly, often copying the operations of legal corporations, and looking for the benefits of trade liberalization and new types of financial instruments.

However, on the other hand, these same groups tend to play the role of the state by carrying out services that the government no longer performs (Commaroff and Commaroff, 2006, 16), and at the same time function in some ways as traditional enterprises. From a criminological viewpoint, the economic perspective needs to be discussed. Based on a *homo-economicus* and rational choice perspective, it suggests that crime is just an option or kind of decision made within a wider economic context. For instance, inspired by utilitarian sociological elements, Becker worked on an economic approach to crime and punishment to develop his ideas. According to Becker, crime operates in a context in which everyone counts with enough information to decide. Thus, to commit crime becomes a rational choice based on the analysis of all available information (Becker, 1968). His findings seem closer to an economic model than a criminal behavioral approach; moreover, political and social implications remain relegated to a second level of importance. Legitimacy, of course, does not play a significant role from this point of view.

It is certainly common to study both illegal activities and criminal groups (i.e., organized crime) as an exclusively economic activity. Following ideas close to Becker´s work, prioritizing rational choice perspectives, this understanding assumes that profits (as the variable) and economy (as the discipline) are the analytical tools par excellence to comprehend it fully. Following this logic suggests that current illegal drug production may become lawful without changes except for the chief controlling the business (Wainwright,

2016, 266-267). Of course, economics matter. The financial stakes involved are enormous, and certainly motivate the business and what happens in between (Wainwright, 2016). Illegality makes the business increase across borders, for instance. However, economics are neither the last nor the only variable involved. Political interests are involved and are also analytical variables, as the legitimacy perspective suggests. An answer to apparent conflict lies in the circuits of illegality. It helps to recall the notion of blurred boundaries while explaining how criminal organizations function.

Empirically, despite the efforts to separate criminal members or groups from "the rest" of society, both criminals and non-criminals are embedded in social circuits in which certain legal actors also enable illegality. Within these circuits, social interactions take place, including legal and illegal behavior. Goods and benefits circulate through these channels but a wide variety of social expressions, as well. Thus, a non-criminal individual can be in touch with a criminal one, and form a circuit, as when an illicit drug consumer buys substances with the local dealer in a context in which consumption is not punished but sale is. Another example that draws this complexity is corruption. Often, corruption works as the tool that keeps illegality flowing (Ackerman, 1999). Is that corrupt public officer acting somehow outside of the state? The answer is no, and even more, that officer still forms part of the circuit of illegality, creating society rather than going against it. In any case, neither criminals nor non-criminals stop being part of the social circuit and, as a result, neither stops being part of society. That is why crime and illegality are more usefully understood as social circuits of illegality, despite certain political actors' efforts to draw a contrasting group or counter-society actor toward its own agenda, identity, and features (Escalante, 2012, 80-86). More on this perspective on crime will be elaborated in the following section as part of a discussion on the importance of criminal agendas.

2.3. Criminal Agendas and the Performance of Legitimacy

Why do criminal groups become interested in political legitimacy? Despite the complexity of drawing a sharp line between legal and illegal, specific criminal groups and individuals might portray themselves as either or both, depending on the circumstances and their specific goals. That is the first step towards legitimizing criminality, namely, to promote the idea that despite illegality, there is a higher cause that deserves attention and social respect. Not all illegal actors take this approach: legitimate-crime-circumstance seems to be more an exception than a rule. Even those criminal groups that indeed are dealing with political legitimacy dilemmas are unlikely to do so perpetually. Therefore, both criminals and illegality need to be understood as social phenomena, and the question of why a criminal group becomes interested in achieving political legitimacy deserves an answer centered on the specific social conditions (i.e., spatial, historical, and political) that enable this possibility in the first place, and then to consider the criminal actor's particular features.

This section explores why criminals seek political legitimacy while referring to previous arguments. Next, the analysis focuses on the role of criminal groups' justifications. Is crime always objectionable or punishable? When actors seek to cover crime and violence with the blanket of legitimacy, how is this defense constructed? This section elaborates on this perspective to understand why these groups may or may not become interested in legitimacy. Finally, the discussion explains the relevance of the agenda to understand why criminal groups seek legitimacy. That explanation helps to guide the next section (which discusses how to do research and look for criminal groups' attempts at legitimacy in the field) and to promote a general reflection useful when going deep into the following research cases.

2.3.1. Lessons from Diverse Scenarios

As part of an in-depth comparative study, Wolff asked himself why two different drug gangs in two different Brazilian cities developed such different authority functions towards local people (2015). Both gangs, one in Recife and the other one in Rio de Janeiro, were developing similar activities for a long time inherently related to drug trafficking and extortion. However, the Rio gang did develop sophisticated techniques, structures, and practices with the local population. This gang also developed a "[…] territorial monopolization […] that these groups could credibly offer protection to residents who […] sought them out to perform the most basic functions associated with the Weberian state" (Wolff, 2015, 22). On the contrary, Recife´s criminal gangs remained underdeveloped from the organizational perspective due to the lack of necessity to do so. That was because, in Recife, police presence has been much less violent than in Rio, in addition to a lack of people´s confidence in putting local gangs in charge of local security. Wolff´s research becomes useful from several perspectives. However, to answer why criminal groups may look for political legitimacy, context matters in terms of the relation between criminal groups and locals, legal authorities, and especially territory (i.e. geographical and spatial issues). The territorial monopolization of crime generates the needed conditions for these groups in order to expand and deepen their social and political functions with locals (Wolff, 2015, 23).

This perspective certainly offers a rational perspective in which both criminal groups and locals make deals and exchanges with expectations on both sides, although a certain level of uncertainty regarding these expectations should be acknowledged. Nevertheless, this angle underlines the radical differences in how criminal groups interact with both locals and official authorities, either in terms of developing authoritative structures or effectively providing public goods. In Recife real threats to criminal gangs' activities and business seemed not to exist, while in Rio local gangs have extensive experience of doing so in order to preserve profits. In this regard, the role of the official authority becomes relevant. Given the previously explained conceptual complication on defining who the illegal party is when analyzing criminal and legal authority struggles, rather than just look for the presence or absence of the idea of the state, it becomes important to focus on what kind of state is making or not presence

together with how these criminal groups react to this while relating to the space and to locals. As Wolff explains:

> […] Populations have a preference for both social order and material welfare over disorder and destitution, and they will tolerate or attempt to seek out some form of political authority to provide such benefits where they are lacking […] Criminal enterprises will seek to establish political and social control of territory in the absence of an effective authority that can mitigate the costs of illicit market competition […] Specifically, where the state is incapable or unwilling to effectively investigate and punish homicide, criminal groups will attempt to protect themselves by securing territorial sovereignty, which serves as a safe zone for market activity as well as physical survival. To the extent they achieve this, they may resemble primitive forms of predatory states […] Criminal groups will invest in improving their relationships with their host communities in order to reduce the cost of that control […] which by coercion alone may be exorbitant (Wolff, 2015, 22-23).

Every society develops mechanisms and mediations to resolve conflicts, enforce contracts, and administer scarce resources. Seeing how they work helps to understand the criminal's interest in legitimation. Wolff showed that criminal groups would not always develop an interest in legitimacy, including creating strong authoritative functions, providing public goods, etc. Context matters when developing an effective control of those mechanisms and mediations in the long-term run. Because boundaries between legal and illegal often blur, this process will not be completely "criminal" or completely "legal", and may be legitimate or not – as we would expect from the descriptive perspective.

Another example comes in the case of Jamaica, where an authority´s functions and personnel overlapping process produces what Jaffe called the hybrid State, i.e., "[…] an emergent form of statehood in which different governmental actors [including criminal organizations] are entangled in a relationship of collusion and divestment as they share control over urban spaces and populations" (2013, 735). She explains how several political formations emerged on the island and shared authoritative and administrative functions together with the official and legal authorities. Jaffe described how, from time to time, collaborations between local gang leaders and the police became the practical way to negotiate peace and order at the local level in Jamaica. Especially in marginalized urban areas, in order to shape and develop the authority, bureaucrats and illegal actors used both state functions and symbols. By doing so, these actors often worked together with the legitimacy of the so-called *dons*, local gang leaders that operate as brokers between legal authorities (i.e., the police) and local citizens. As a result, this hybrid state also produces and normalizes a hybrid citizenship (Jaffe, 2013, 740). This case confirms not only that certain concepts become reconfigured as a consequence, but also that the blurred boundaries can also outline the current political legitimacy structure.

2.3.2. Legitimate Justification: Does Crime Always Need to Be Justified?

Usually, the question of why lawbreakers attempt to become legitimate is closely related to a justification discourse. However, especially criminal groups with an interest in political legitimacy often deal as well with difficulties in managing and justifying violence. But violence can also be deeply productive in legitimizing a figure or organization by defining the limits of order and supplanting representation (Commaroff and Comaroff, 2006). Usually, the use of violence is not indiscriminate and instead has real objectives: “More violence then leads to less legitimacy; less legitimacy leads to even more violence and so on” (Schneckener, 2017, 805). And as Gambetta stated, “Being violent does not make one generally credible […] [and] The smart criminals must seek alternatives to violence” (2009, 123 and 125).

Peaceful means toward legitimacy such as criminal diplomacy, corruption, and alternative non-violent methods offer possible alternatives in this regard. When there is an interest in legitimation, any violence must be rationalized, as Arendt has argued, and the narratives justifying and rationalizing that violence will relate to how the criminal group understands its goals as well as the (legal and social) context (Schneckener, 2017, 803). Typically, these strategies involve both incentives and punishments, threats and promises, or ‘carrots and sticks’ in colloquial terms. The success or failure of adequately explaining rewards and punishments among the different publics may make or break a campaign for legitimacy.

When analyzing criminal justifications, social conditions are fundamental. The criminals’ justifications may come together with certain forms of social order restorations and material benefits for locals such as alternative policing and regulation instauration (Commaroff, 2010, 134). Behind the possibility for a criminal to justify himself, herself, or their actions, there is a pluralist democratic specter that gives space for alternative visions of truth and justice. Following Nivette´s idea on how democracy and crime come together, “[…] democracies face the constant challenge of balancing principles of individualism and inclusion with tensions brought by weak ties and self-expression” (2014, 99). In the end, even atrocity discourses need room for developing alternative visions of life and politics –and citizens need to respond with critical understanding. In this regard, these processes also reshape ideas about citizenship by redesigning how locals experience their rights in relationship to criminal groups. These groups may not only control (or seek to control) public life, but also develop a speech of belonging and generate new responsibilities, sometimes including citizen support (Arjona, 2017; Nivette, 2014, 94; Jaffe, 2013, 745).

If violence is always rational, then it needs to be justified even when it is not explicitly explained. This is equally true for crime and legitimacy. Common to all are binary explanations of social contexts codified into "friend" and "enemy", "us" and “them", and indeed this is common to governments around the world when facing criminal threats. Armed groups talk about "[...] 'defense' or [acting as a] 'guardian' of an established political and social order and claim to protect it from internal to external threats and enemies" (Schneckener, 2017, 799). However, justification does not automatically lead to legitimation:

it is only a step. The discourse needs to be coherent, convenient, and convincing, as well as consistently developed. Dagher has argued that non-state actors in post-conflict contexts seize state legitimacy. This scholar uses the concept of performance legitimacy, and says it is as a by-product of delivered governance outputs (2018, 91). His proposal is attractive on descriptive grounds of legitimacy, in which no legitimacy is perpetually granted. However, it is necessary to recognize that this phenomenon could be dialogical (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012): the official authorities can lose performance legitimacy in favor of criminal groups; illegal agents may also lose it to any other state or non-state agent.[13]

Criminality often works as the "[…] imaginative prism around which people [try to] figure out the problem of social dis/order" (Comaroff, 2010, 135). Behind that discourse, especially at the local level, there is a crisis in how authority is exercised that affects how security and law enforcement is understood and expected. Ironically, some criminal groups (among others) take advantage of this crisis in order to develop their own criminal rule in order to reduce this uncertainty. The key concept to understand is sovereignty, since it can justify crime. Stepputat proposed "formations of sovereignty" to conceptualize those political landscapes in which several sovereign claims coexist and overlap (2015). This concept developed with Hansen pushes beyond the idea of sovereignty as a practice, challenging the notion that legality is the only valid way to define social order. Extralegal practices can also promote alternatives of social order, and provide fertile grounds for criminal groups interested in political legitimacy to find room to justify their actions and themselves. The relevance of this concept resides in its flexibility to recognize different claims continually struggling against each other. Legitimacy is what finally locates one of them above the rest. In the end, any justification of crime is tacitly accepted and conforms to criminal agendas, and every claim is articulated and empirically materialized.

2.3.3. On the Importance of Criminal Agendas

Criminal agendas are usually positioned in relation to the current social order. This could be explicit or implicit, physically located or developed through symbols, speeches, songs, codes, or done in other ways. Through their agenda, criminal groups strive to justify their actions, point to a social renovation, or target specific or general issues or groups or regions. Criminal agendas are not exclusively attached to violence or coercion; violence will be involved in a justification when legitimacy is sought. In these cases, selective violence becomes a convenient method for administrating power and, consequently, this defines the limits and possibilities for other forms of obedience. If violence is indiscriminately used or becomes the only or exclusive source of order, obstacles quickly appear for the criminal group. Their

[13] Together with Bottoms and Tankebe (2012), Nivette (2014, 96) also underlined Weber´s usage of the word "cultivate" when talking about establishing a dominant legitimacy (1964). Weber used it as part of the establishing process of legitimacy, and suggests the non-perpetual condition of the concept, together with its necessity to constantly reinforce political legitimacy.

criminal activities not only become harder to realize or just impossible, but also people and other authorities (including the official one) can easily create resistance by decrying the lethal force used (Arjona, 2017, 764). The risk, in that case, is non-cooperation from local people and, consequently, the criminal group´s social order project disruption. In this case, legitimacy aspirations will be dropped.

The relevance of the agenda also explains why groups may look for legitimacy. As a political instrument, the agenda draws lines towards a political justification where crime and violence may be discursively situated as a secondary consequence. Within the agenda, economic profits, violence, and harm are subordinated to a political project in which the general will commands the cause, rather than a private interest or individual´s benefit. The agenda is always discourse. Thus, the expectations of completion are not as relevant as the means, symbols, and practices through which it is spread. The detection of the agenda will depend specifically on each case. It will not always be written. Speeches, symbols, anthems and songs, rituals, and other means are essential resources to detect, rationalize, and study it (as it will be explored in the next and last section of this chapter). Indeed, not all the criminal groups' legitimacy interests will be into the agenda –even when this one is explicit or implicit. Possible interests may be outside the agenda itself. Each case will define each of these possibilities, but within all of them, the agenda may become functional in order to carry out this kind of research.

Some criminal agendas not only present groups as trustworthy but also inspire trust among locals, as well.[14] This practice tends to improve success in illegal business by developing local civilian control. Some criminal groups have adopted that practice and started relying on local people, whose obedience could be due to fear, real loyalty, rational convenience, or a complex mixture of these reactions. On the other hand, criminal groups in this scenario may recognize that, by having confidence in locals and establishing trustful relations with them, the former can achieve supplies, intelligence, shelter, and recruits (Valentino, 2014, 94). In these cases, criminal groups act similarly to some insurgencies and rebels. However, unlike them, criminal groups do not often face limited resources troubles. Thus, it becomes interesting to see that material resources or violence may not be enough legitimacy sources. Some scholars have conducted research focused in Mexico and Colombia on how trust is not always or automatically a positive feature to promote peaceful societies. By comparing Italy´s North and South, Putnam initially said that social capital is always a positive societies´ feature towards a democratic consolidation (1993). He explained the mafia´s presence as a result of a lack of social capital in Southern Italy. Conversely, these scholars argue, the

[14] Trust Exchange between criminal groups and legal authorities offers a criminal agenda possibility as well. However, in this case, this relation is more precisely defined by concepts such as corruption or the blurred boundaries mentioned before.

question of whom the people trust and why is more relevant than the presence or absence of trust and social capital.

By borrowing the concept of social capital (also developed by Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman), Aguayo stated that social capital might vary into a positive or negative shape. In the first one, people support democratic values including the rule of law, and in the second one, the support goes for crime and criminals (Aguayo, 2014). On the other hand, Rubio observed how social capital might turn "perverse" by rewarding criminality practices that promote, protect, and preserve both crime and criminals (Rubio, 1997). From another perspective but on the same topic, Zizumbo-Columba proposed that high levels of trust within given communities do not always signal positive legitimacy for the dominant ruler (2010). By studying the case of vigilante groups in Mexico, he observed that high levels of cohesion might imply obstacles to cooperating with the ruler. Conversely, in this case, locals will find more incentive to trust and cooperate with vigilantes because these vigilantes are often more in touch with local welfare than the legal authority.

After reviewing specific experiences, the role of justifying, and criminal agendas relevance, this section closes by briefly summarizing a full explanation of why criminal groups become interested in political legitimacy. That answer is threefold. In the first place, because of a historical and political context that enables and allows it. Part of the answer of why criminal groups look for legitimacy is simply because they can do so. Hence, it becomes relevant to explain what enables that by looking into local politics and history. Criminal groups may also become interested in political legitimacy because achieving it is essential to guarantee domination or social control by granting access to resources. Finally, crime (even more than criminals themselves) will always need a justification when the perpetrator explains it. Criminals, in general, always have the option of preserving them as regular criminals by not challenging the status quo; this is, by respecting the established social order in which criminals are mostly explained as a consequence of deviant behaviors that deserve punishment. On the other hand, by justifying their actions, these actors indeed challenge the established order. This fact locates them under political specter and, when conveying aspirations to legitimacy, criminal groups contest who, what, and how previously pointed and pictured them as illegal. Hence, this becomes a social order contestation. That last point is remarkably relevant and takes to the ideas previously elaborated within this research, namely, the idea of violence as an instrument to achieve specific goals.

2.4. Sources and Resources of Legitimacy

The study of criminal groups attempting to become legitimate needs multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary investigation. However, how to track the footsteps of these Robin Hood-like figures? How does one collect this kind of data within contexts of criminality? Depending on the case, sociological, political, and anthropological elements might be

involved. Researchers might face two problems. The first one concerns the data collection process (what and where is the source); secondly, how to analyze them (which involves two tasks: how to understand it as a single piece and, later on, as a part of the big picture). The methodology proposed here is threefold. First, a theoretical and conceptual approach is presented. How can we combine social and political concepts regarding criminal actors and its legitimacy interest, with anthropological tools for the detection of practical and symbolic elements? The second component focuses on the audiences of the legitimacy claims. Who are the spectators for these claims to legitimacy? The third and last element refers to the sources and resources of legitimacy detection.

This dissertation has argued that there is not a single way to become politically legitimate. However, this argument brings a new question: Which sources and resources grant legitimacy? How a violent non-state actor becomes legitimate needs to be understood as a social process. But it will be always expressed and attached to specific symbols (Schlichte and Schneckener, 2015, 417), and practices (Förster, 2015, 204) embedded in social contexts. In order to make this phenomenon academically legible, these expressions will need to be systematically categorized and empirically recognized. This final section keeps those thoughts in mind. This analysis addresses the problem of the origins of legitimacy, particularly its sources and resources. In other words, here we are interested in categorizing what produces legitimacy. What sources and resources matter for violent non-state actors (in general) and criminal groups (in particular) to become legitimate?

2.4.1. Anthropology of the State and Legitimacy for Research on Crime

Before exploring the sources and resources of legitimacy, I discuss the methods. What is argued here is that state-idea and its outcomes are 1) profitable sources and resources to achieve legitimacy and 2) a useful analytical method to follow up this phenomenon. By state-idea we will understand the reification of the state´s institutionalized practices that take on "[...] an overt symbolic identity progressively divorced from practice as an illusory account of practice" (Abrams, 1988; quoted by Mitchell, 2006). This method can be employed for all those who pursue political legitimacy (including violent non-state actors), and even for the state itself. Hence, state outcomes may be profitable for those actors, even when they do not want to become official governmental entities or legal authorities (sometimes more legitimacy can be collected outside the rules than within them). This method proposes to look at the reproduction, emulation, or simulation of the state in legitimacy´s quests among political actors (including the state itself, which needs to reaffirm itself, even when this is not the interest of this research).

To do so, two key concepts will be used: the "state effect" (Mitchell, 2006), and "statehood practices" (Aretxaga, 2005; Maldonado, 2014). The former recognizes that the state is defined by a set of practices, processes, and their effects (Trouillot, 2001; Krohn-Hansen and

Nustad, 2005).[15] On the other hand, the latter refers to too many players competing to perform as small states within same time and space. Both fit into the scope of practices of sovereigns discussed earlier, by enabling the understanding of this behavior within non-state actors. States, as social processes, are constantly being remade, even in its absence. In this constant flux, the state does not necessarily disappear or weaken. A hypothetical state collapse does not necessarily means the end of all state outcomes. Here is useful a brief example. Criminal groups defy the state´s legality, but while doing so, they make use of state resource (for instance, local currency) in order to achieve profits from their activities. Thus, that criminal group is reinforcing the state's authority by making valid its currency. Simultaneously, the criminal group is challenging and reinforcing the state. This becomes even more complex when violence is involved – further chapters will come back to this theme.

As stated earlier, investigations on legitimacy have been discussed with an eye on the state. Either by being the legally valid guarantor or acting as the formal procedure endorser (just to mention two of many reasonable arguments), the state shapes the usual path through which the legitimacy process happens. That might indeed be a heritage of European political modernity, but nowadays this can be found within political configurations all around the world. How to deal with that concept in an investigation where the core is neither the state nor its components? The proposed solution addresses the state image as an analytical component when looking for legitimacy attempts. In other words, this proposal does not throw away the state element when talking about criminals attempting to become legitimate. On the contrary, the idea is included and considered, but from a "practices and images" perspective.

In the first place, we follow state in society idea explained earlier (Migdal, 2005). This concept leads us to observe that a) the state is a field marked by the use or threat of violence and b) that there are potentially many agencies participating in each state-building process. In this case, the "who" and "what" of the state means several actors operating simultaneously as the "real" authority. The methods to do so (i.e., the "how") involve legitimacy attempts in which practices, symbols, images, and performance matter as sources to analyze the process. In this case, criminal groups pretending to become a sort of local Robin Hood is one of those

[15] It is valuable to recover and keep in mind Mitchell´s own words on s*tate effect*: "We should address the state as an effect of mundane processes of spatial organization, temporal arrangement, functional specification, supervision and surveillance, and representation […] These processes create the effect of the state not only as an entity set apart from economy or society, but as a distinct dimension of structure, framework, codification, expertise, information, planning, and intentionality. The state appears as an abstraction in relation to the concreteness of the social, a sphere of representation in relation to the reality of the economic, and a subjective ideality in relation to the objectness of the material world. The distinctions between abstract and concrete, ideal and material, representation and reality, and subjective and objective, on which most political theorizing is built, are themselves partly constructed in those mundane social processes we recognize and name as the State" (2006, 185).

agencies acting in the field marked by the use or threat of violence, i.e., the state. Once the criminal group gets defined as one of those agencies, the second step consists of looking in the field for de facto sovereign practices (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005). That is the second conceptual tool. When many actors are playing and performing state functions, the monopoly of violence may collapse.

In that case, sovereignty becomes a practice that could be exercised or withheld by the legal authority (Krasner, 2001). Thus, it might be employed simultaneously by many actors. This might happen with high possibilities of violence. Non-state actors, especially violent ones such as the rebels mentioned earlier, may fit into the possible scenario of a fragmented sovereignty and try to exercise it. This does not necessarily mean that criminals will entirely sidestep legal authority. While some of them could look for legitimacy through the state (like Pablo Escobar in Colombia), some others might do so outside of it. With rebels in general, this is particularly important because their distance from legal and formal authorities often marks their course to legitimacy. The final possibility is the already mentioned set of concepts (state effect and statehood practices) and helps to illustrate those de facto sovereign practices. Even in the absence of the state, populations can reproduce the experience of it based on previous experiences (Förster, 2015, 204). Criminal groups in particular, as an organized part of these societies, can do so as well. By doing so, these actors start thinking in legitimacy terms, and their activities, goals, and relations become shaped by this interest.

The use of this methodology does not mean to automatically study criminal groups (or any other rebel group nor non-state actor) as if they were the state. On the contrary, this takes into consideration that, through a legitimacy review, 1) there might be scenarios in which non-legal and non-official agents could perform as the state. Moreover, 2) in those situations, criminals will not always act as purely economic and rational agents. That challenges the economic oriented explanations of criminal behavior (Becker, 1968) by taking them to political and sociological analytical stages. Finally, this 3) enables the possibility of scenarios with legitimacy without legality. For research purposes, it does not matter as a first concern if criminality is illegitimate, but if the illegality may attempt or succeed to become legitimate. To do this analysis, we take three conceptual tools from the anthropology of the state, all of them relevant to conduct this kind of legitimacy research.

Therefore, the state is directly and indirectly a valuable source and resource of legitimacy either by a) statehood practices and b) state effects. But, why is the state´s image still powerful when pointing to sources and resources within current legitimacy disputes? This leads us to disaggregate the state´s success in its historical process of consolidation, its role in symbolic and legal disputes, and in successful concentration of the use of violence. Charles Tilly´s thoughts are helpful for keep thinking on this. According to him, war making, extraction, and capital accumulation, were elements that shaped European modern state formation. However, none of those elements would have been possible without successfully

monopolizing the use of violence within their territory. In the beginning, this violence was one source among many, recognized Tilly. He distinguishes between the state's use of force and anyone else's (use or threat of) violence. However, the taming of the latter was essential for the former´s success.

That was the first step in making the state´s claim to violence credible (1985, 172-173). In this regard, at least two signs of the success of European states are: 1) massive pacification and 2) the monopolization of coercion means. Tilly draws a political entity, challenging with other political forms and authority claims, and looking for it makes its own violence credible for others. What is the difference between those first European states and current violent non-state actors looking for legitimacy? The answer recognizes that nowadays, the state´s image often acts as the hypothetical legitimate, a sort of phantom with implicit legitimacy. Violent groups, when looking for legitimacy, may borrow, steal, withdraw, emulate or simulate that image by producing state effects. In brief, the understanding of sovereignty as a practice will enable this method. This research takes the ethnographic understanding of the state, including both its practical and symbolic settings, towards building upon how criminal groups, in particular, might make use of the state image when pursuing political legitimacy.

By making power exercise objective, this anthropological perspective of the state helps to research and understand how authority becomes established in the local context. Moreover, it highlights a complex vision of the ruler and the ruled by recognizing it as a non-definitive process. In other words, just as the state-building process varies from case to case, so do the type and features of the actors involved in it. This includes, indeed, those non-formal and non-legal actors. This is the niche in which this research builds upon previous works, i.e., by taking this methodological instrument to the field of criminal groups particularly interested in becoming legitimate. Violent phenomena within societies are especially helpful for clarifying this, but there are other areas in which it may happen, including taxation, justice, and identity, among others. But this will be the main topic of next section, which categorizes proposals of the audiences of legitimacy, and the sources and resources of legitimacy. Both are presented in the following sections in order to make them recognizable in specific empirical circumstances.

2.4.2. The Audiences of Legitimacy: Four Types

Given that legitimacy is a relational concept (especially from a descriptive perspective) – someone has to give or withdraw it; thus, someone may win or lose it – there will always be audiences. This section aims to address the question of who they are and how to classify them. This task becomes essential especially for fieldwork as these audiences could work as robust sources of information. By categorizing them, the researcher cannot only recognize them but also collect valuable data by conducting interviews. Audiences of legitimacy (legal or not) often distribute their credits to several authorities simultaneously (Hansen and

Stepputat, 2005, 4). Moreover, they evaluate them and participate in local political processes by giving, withdrawing, or transforming legitimacy.

However, it is not necessarily the case when violence, threats, and fear define the outputs of legitimacy attempts (as is usual when talking about criminal groups). After all, these audiences have not only witnessed the legitimacy struggle (as a captive audience) but also participated in it (by giving or withdrawing it). In this regard, we follow the Schlichte and Schneckener proposal. Initially, they proposed it thinking of rebels. However, this classification fits into criminal studies because it responds to the legitimacy problem. They identified four types of audiences (2016, 419 and 2009, 248). Below they are listed and explained in the context of researching criminal groups:

a) Inner legitimacy audience inside the group. This is the hardest audience to reach for a researcher. Commonly, journalists, or NGO works and recently social media outputs on them are the easiest way to approach them. In this case, any self-expression from the group becomes of the first importance for the data collection. In the case of Michoacán, for instance, there is an editorial legitimacy attempt. By the publication and spread of many books, the local mafias pretended to present themselves as the actual legitimate power, a sort of local savior from the other powers and authorities. In this case, the criminal group members are the core example of this audience.

b) Supporters and followers within the local population, some of whom might eventually join the fighting ranks. In this case, the difficulty for a researcher to establish direct contact increases. Especially when the criminal groups are still active or influential in the local context, risks become higher, but their role is still crucial in order to explain the case. Another complication with this audience is to legitimately recognize if they are honestly supporting the criminal group or just responding to fear or threats. In any case, with this audience, it is possible to indirectly detect legitimacy features through secondary sources such as media or virtual expressions in social media. Other secondary sources include codes, moral beliefs, behavior, practices, rituals and other elements from which this audience may be part of (the last section of this paper take a broad look into this). Local supporters and adherents, too, are examples of this audience.

c) Specific local communities or a broader national audience. Particularly the locals become a robust source of information. However, contextual elements can inhibit or promote their willingness to talk. As said earlier, fear, insecurity or local codes linked to these emotions could impede the flow of information. However, these passions can originate into the exact contrary scenario; this is, promoting people to talk about this. Trusting the researcher is fundamental. Local religious members, local merchants, and peasants are representative members of this kind of audience.

d) The international arena, comprising of states, international organizations, transnational NGOs, foreign media, and spontaneous supporters either groups or individuals (but necessarily outside the conflict zone). Except for media and the supporters, this audience becomes the most institutional audiences, often expressing their positions through official statements. The relative distance from local phenomena usually makes this audience the easiest to approach for a researcher. Media, on the other hand, could oscillate between direct and indirect sources. Often, locality is what defines this. Any representative of those national or international institutions, such as the journalists themselves, are examples of this audience type of audience.

The four audiences may help to obtain empirical data on how criminal actors developed themselves in a legitimacy code. However, those audiences are not fixed. The reason is that legitimacy status invariably changes as part of numerous contingent social processes. This "never definitive victory" in their legitimating process (including the state), take actors to reinforce and recreate their legitimacy over time. To conduct this research, we got access to at least one informant from every audience type for each case. In total, this research obtained access to eighteen interviews (see Interviews Appendix). All of them should be considered audiences, in their local contexts, of the criminal groups' political legitimacy attempts. They are audiences since they were directly exposed to one or several sources and resources of legitimacy (see Table 1 explained below). In some cases (such as journalists, magistrates, churchmen, and activists), they also had experience working with victims of criminal groups in their localities, and even working to fight the criminal groups.

That makes them valuable information sources, not only as the previously mentioned legitimacy audiences, but also as knowledgeable citizens in their context. A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant. These interviews were codified later through the Atlas.ti software guided by the referred Table 1, which provided the analytical tags that also made operational the sources and resources of political legitimacy. The priority in every testimony and interview was detecting, understanding, and analyzing the local narrative habits around the matter of interest for this research, and locating them in the analytical frame explained earlier to offer an original and in-depth explanation of the phenomenon. Finally, in order to implement the comparative perspective analysis, the same methodological criteria, conceptual apparatus, and theoretical frame were applied to both research cases to maintain the comparability of the research.

2.4.3. Sources and Resources of Legitimacy: Where to Watch

The sources and resources of legitimacy usually make sense in very local dimensions. For the effects of this research, one might understand a source of legitimacy as the point of supply

from which emerge the actual legitimacy resources. In other words, a source of legitimacy acts as a semantic field from which specific legitimacy resources can emerge. Thus, each resource links to a source category. For the definition of sources, here we follow Schlichte and Schneckener again. For them, resources might subcategorize into three types: a) symbolic (what they say), b) performance-centered (what they do), and c) portrayal of the enemy (outside threats and established enemy images) (2015, 417-418). Those types work as semantic fields from where precise legitimacy elements may emerge, i.e., the resources. Therefore, each resource operates as a singular piece of material or non-material display through which sources of legitimacy and general attempts to become legitimate become visible and analytically operative.[16]

Each of the three sources of legitimacy, conceptually created by Schlichte and Schneckener, work as semantic fields. However, this research builds on their work by developing the idea of resources of legitimacy, i.e., material and immaterial legitimacy efforts that concretely objectify every source of legitimacy. The result of this work is Table 1, presented below. This table is an original contribution of this research specifically designed to research criminal groups interested in political legitimacy. For instance, both material as well as non-material resources of legitimacy in Table 1, result from an original research design taking the discussion of the anthropology of the state, towards the criminal groups' legitimacy phenomena. Seen from that perspective, all of these resources result from condensing the understanding of sovereignty and statehood as practices, but explicitly applied to the characteristics of a particular violent non-state actor, i.e., the criminal groups. Finally, the intention of expanding the sources of legitimacy idea into a broader spectrum of resources helps to make concrete, operationalized, researchable indicators for every resource.

Usually, given their scarcity, both sources and resources need correct management. This statement works for almost any political actor interested in becoming legitimate, but even more for violent non-state actors. Especially for them, those resources are not assured through time. Thus, they might have to pursue them continually. Table 1 below, presents a systematized proposal for studying criminal groups seeking legitimacy. All of them match with perspectives of statehood practices, state-effect, and sovereign practices. For rebels in general and criminal groups in particular, former state experiences build and shape direction of legitimacy sources and resources (Förster, 2015, 204). This may happen either by imitating or changing how violence was used or misused, how population was or was not listened to in their claims, providing or denying public services in opposition to what happened with legal authority or how cultural identities were or were not taken into account within formal governmental exercise. Moreover, these groups can be conscious of previous ignored

[16] According to Schneckener, "During the formation period of a group symbolic sources seem to be essential; in the long run, however, performance-based sources gain more importance for an armed group´s legitimacy" (2017, 807).

opportunities for cooperating with population or other informal authorities, and work together in order to achieve legitimacy. All of these possibilities, of course, are consistent with state-effect and statehood practices, ideas explored in the earlier section. This section is an operative exercise to identify, categorize, and describe sources and resources of legitimacy. In order to comply with the operative exercise mentioned earlier, Table 1 presented below shows a systematized proposal to study criminal groups' legitimacy cases.

Table 1. Operative Distribution of Legitimacy Sources and Resources for Criminal Groups

Main Source	Subtype Source	Material Resources	Non-Material Resources
Symbolic	Social Contract Offer	Granting Public services	Promote belonging and cohesiveness / Trustworthy mandate
	Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification	Publications / Written Codes	Founding narratives / Songs / Anthems / Public messages
	Symbol's Spread	Identity Symbols in Ornaments and Documents	Rituals / Values, Moral Beliefs / Religiosity
Performance -centered	Provision of Governing Institutions	Taxation and Economy	Security and Justice Managing (courts, sanctions, and judges) / Labor Regulations
	Philanthropy (Carrots)	Gifting	Promises and Hope Generation
	Coercion (Sticks)	Weapons and Ammo Control	Fear / Use or Threat of Violence
Portray of the Enemy	Expressions against Formal Authorities	Documents	Negotiations / Confrontations
	Expressions against Other (non-formal) authorities		
	Stance towards current law		

Together with the conceptual approach and the audience category, this table intends to offer the possibility of identify, treat, and systematize their data, but to compare between cases as well. For instance, by recognizing which of the sources or resources have greater or fewer legitimacy efforts, it is possible to draw a criminal group profile, which has to be inserted later into a broad historical explanation. Finally, this research needs to address violence from an academic perspective, since the legitimation process for criminal groups often involves violence. Violence act as a means rather than an end, an instrument to achieve goals (Arendt, 1970). Its employment might be regularly understood concerning those actors´ goals and codified into a legitimacy language. Many variations and mixes between how this table may work are possible because these groups are neither completely part of nor foreign to the social environment in which they are inserted:

> No matter how radical the political vision of a rebel group, its practices are always embedded in historically contingent values, norms, beliefs, and forms of governance. Thus, a rebel organization, which is endogenous to the political order within which it rebels, cannot avoid drawing on common cultural and political values (…) Indeed, rebels who fail to cultivate legitimacy among the civilian population act at their own peril, since they must rely on civilians for recruitment, intelligence, taxes, supplies, and labor (Hoffmann, 2015, 159).

Thus, in a way, attempts to deny legitimacy claims to these groups may be like trying to detach them from their own social contexts, an impossible mission. Relations between the ruler and the ruled consistently redefine their settings. Thus, social sciences studies can raise interesting questions. Is it possible to share legitimacy within same time and space? If so, does this sharing happen by peaceful or violent means? What does it depend on? Furthermore, these enable another subject, the hypothetical "without-legitimate actors scenario". In other words, is a social context without legitimate political actors possible? Specifically when referring to criminal contexts looking for legitimacy, it does not seem to be empty spaces. This is because formal and legal authority will always literally exist on the ground by symbolic, practical, and/or legal paths. Its presence/absence will always distinguish legal from illegal and, hypothetically, punish the illegal.

That is why certain criminal groups become deeply profitable – the following chapters will go deep into this discussion through empirical references. A criminal group or individual will a) contest this potentially lost legitimacy; b) share the same legitimacy, or c) create new spaces to claim and win legitimacy. In any case, this deactivates situations in which formal-legal authorities´ legitimacy is lost and no other actors can claim it. Violent non-state actors in general and criminal groups in particular, often or even never count on with legality; however, on the other hand, there are specific efforts of these groups looking and/or achieving legitimacy for themselves of their activities. Addressing this problem requires a combination of epistemological efforts and descriptive paths, i.e., specific cases with

empirical references. That is the philosophy behind the following case chapters analysis. They are briefly presented below.

2.4.4. The Michoacán-Sicily Connection: Towards Two Criminal Legitimation Processes

After reviewing the theoretical and conceptual dilemmas around legitimacy, crime, and social order, now comes the case analyses. The next two chapters analyze Michoacán social and political context, followed by the criminal legitimacy´s local context. In this regard, the criminal groups that appeared in the last two decades in Michoacán, a Southwestern state in Mexico, are the central research case within this comparative study. The following chapter exposes both context and criminal legitimacy´s local context in Sicily, a southern island in Italy in which a long-term mafia group has existed for centuries. Thus, Sicilian mafia works here as the second case that enables the comparison. That is why the sixth and last chapter of this research thoroughly discusses a comparison between both cases in order to expand the horizon of these phenomena, both conceptually and empirically.

Antonio Mazzitelli, a former representative of the Mexican branch of the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, published an academic text entitled "Mafias in Mexico?" (2016). Mazitelli argued that, despite the proliferation and expansion of Mexican criminal groups within the war on drugs, most of these groups are still far from the success and maturity of Italian mafia groups. According to him, the international fight against organized crime "speaks Italian", thanks to and as a consequence of these criminal organizations' success (2016, 29). Moreover, the author suggested that Mexican authorities need to understand that criminal threats are not as developed and organized, neither has the long-run history as for how the Italian mafia is and has. After this statement, Mazzitelli analyzed, described, and compared each of the biggest criminal groups in Mexico against the Italian mafias. After doing so, he recognized that only the Michoacán criminal group developed proto-mafia behaviors. Moreover, these groups received "high" and "mid-high" qualifications when analyzing the "mafia features" of each Mexican criminal group (2016, 52).

Even when Mazzitelli recognized a huge gap between both criminal groups' national scenarios (i.e., Mexico and Italy), he also stated that the Italian experience might be helpful for Mexican authorities and scholars in order to prevent the formation of similar structures as it happened in Italy (Interview in field no. 2, 2017). This idea is academically borrowed here; thus, the Sicilian case as a long run case study is recovered to compare with the closest case, i.e., Michoacán criminal groups. By doing so, the following pages delve into both cases offering original data recovered from primary sources (and secondary in some instances), and are analyzed in terms of political legitimacy. This pushes the discussion towards improving the understanding of how political legitimacy is reshaped by criminal groups around the world in specific social and political situations. Naturally, the previous concept and theory discussion guides the following chapters and shape the analysis.

2.5. Closing Remarks: Chapter II Summary

After elaborating how crime, criminal groups, and illegality come together with political legitimacy, the following are closing remarks thoughts derived from this second chapter. This chapter argued how, despite the criminal groups' efforts to portray themselves as separate social groups, they are embedded in a social context. As politically active social constructions, they influence the local social order. Not all criminals or criminal behaviors achieve, gain, or produce legitimacy. However, when this is the case, the descriptive perspective of political legitimacy is what enables us to carry out research. As political actors, when a criminal group deals with legitimacy, it will consequently deal with the sum of 1) illegal activities, but also the effort of 2) creating the image of a cohesive, unitary identity organization, 3) acting or performing like it, and looking for 4) achieving or preserving legitimacy. Under this conception, participation in the local definition of political legitimacy, criminal groups´ illegal behavior does not mean abandoning efforts at legitimacy.

This chapter argued why criminal groups are not counter-society or counter-state actors. Empirically, criminals and non-criminals are embedded and interacting in social circuits in which certain legal actors also enable illegality and vice-versa. Within those circuits, certain crimes and specific perpetrators will seek to justify it. Indeed, behind the intention of justifying crimes and lawlessness, there will be a pluralist democratic specter that gives space for alternative visions of truth and justice. In the case of criminal groups, the agenda plays a fundamental role. As a political instrument, it draws lines towards a political justification where crime and violence may be discursively situated as a secondary consequence of crime and illegality. Regarding the question of how criminal groups become interested in political legitimacy, this chapter offered a threefold answer. First, it develops from a historical and political context that enables and allows it. Second, achieving legitimacy is essential for the specific criminal group to guarantee domination or social control by granting access to resources. Finally, to become justified, crime needs to be explained.

Finally, this chapter made two methodological contributions for collecting data in contexts like those analyzed in this research – but which could also be used to research other cases. The first is the audiences of legitimacy. This idea was developed thinking about how to collect data in the field from criminal groups interested in political legitimacy. Given that legitimacy is a relational concept between the ruler (real or potential) and the ruled, therefore there will always be audiences, which become potent sources to approach to collect data in the field. On the other hand, this research proposed the operative distribution of sources and resources of political legitimacy for studying criminal groups. This table works across this research as a point of supply from which emerge the actual legitimacy resources. Each source makes sense in the local context as a semantic field from which specific legitimacy resources

can emerge. Insisting, both methodological propositions rest on understanding legitimacy as a relational concept from a descriptive perspective.

Chapter 3.
Tracking Local Robin Hoods: Criminal Groups and Legitimacy Attempts in Michoacán, Mexico

After four years of being started the Independence war in the former New Spain (Mexico today), the insurgency proclaimed their independence from the Spanish crown. The Constitutional Decree for the Freedom of the Mexican America was promulgated in Apatzingán, a city now located in the Southwestern state of Michoacán,[17] on October 22, 1814. The document was symbolically relevant for insurgents' contestation as an attempt to promote their own rule of law in the middle of a battle that lasted eleven years (from 1810 to 1821). On the same day 196 years later, former Mexican president, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, delivered a speech in Apatzingán commemorating the anniversary of the constitution and the beginning of two emblematic wars in the modern Mexican history: the bicentenary of the Independence (1810) and the centenary of Mexican Revolution (1910). The president used the occasion to talk about the achievements of José María Morelos y Pavón, the insurgent and independence hero who shaped the constitution and "[…] never agreed with the enemies of the Mexicans" (Calderón, 2010). Instead, he used the time to redefine the "new enemies of the nation": "Today, the enemies of the nation are others, but our duty to seek equality, security and protect the property of citizens and their freedom is the same", he said. Minutes later, the president gave a name to those enemies who, he said, are currently threatening both Mexico and Michoacán: "criminality" and "illegality" (Calderón, 2010).

The symbolic element was no longer the constitution, but the place itself. Apatzingán is a relatively small town[18] located in the middle of an interior region of Michoacán called Tierra Caliente (Hot Land). This region shares space with two other Mexican states (Guerrero and the State of Mexico), but it is principally located in Michoacán. However, Tierra Caliente was also the place in which local criminal groups were based and from where they have been operating since the middle of the 2000s (or even before depending on the version), and was the first battlefield of the Mexican war on drugs. Declared by Calderón himself, the war was announced a few days after he arrived at the presidency, in December of 2006. That happened in the middle of legitimacy struggles because of a close election result in which Calderón, from the right-wing party, won against the left-wing candidate by only 0.62% (INE, 2017). Some scholars have argued that war's declaration was a political reaction to electoral-crisis to regain political legitimacy (Meyer, 2015). However, he did not act alone, and he had the support of several actors when taking the decision (Astorga, 2015, 27-28).

[17] Actually, the current formal name of the municipality is *Apatzingán de la Constitución* (Apatzingán of the Constitution), as a reminder of the place in which the first independent constitution of Mexico and Latin America was signed.

[18] According to the last national governmental count (measure made between each decade national census), its population raised 128,250 inhabitants in 2015 (INEGI).

This war, however, unfolded very differently in different regions. Michoacán is Calderón's home state, which was symbolically relevant towards an acceptance of his security strategy and, possibly, his central governance. Twelve days before becoming president, Calderón discussed with the Federal Congress, in Mexico City, the necessity of increasing the security budgets in order run military operations in the country to fight criminal groups. The first one announced was the so-called *Operativo Conjunto Michoacán* (Joint Operative Michoacán). In this, several security institutions, mainly the Army, the Marines, and the Federal Police will operate in that state with the objective of "[…] fully restore the command of government authority over the territory and population of that entity" (Nuñez, 2006). Briefly stated, the former president presented it as the strategy "[…] to recover the normal life and tranquility of Mexicans who live in that state [of Michoacán]" (Calderón quoted by Nuñez, 2006). On the other hand, Michoacán is also the place of atypical criminal groups. First *La Familia Michoacana* (LFM) and later *Los Caballeros Templarios* (LCT) were quite peculiar groups in their campaigns to become legitimate, especially towards local society.

The case of Nazario Moreno, the LFM and LCT leader, is a good example. In December of 2010, he was shot to death by Mexican federal security forces. Months later, in March of 2011, the group´s name changed to LCT and developed a strange religious cult around Nazario, who according to local people appeared in the towns as a saint (Nájar, 2014). According to versions collected through interviews carried out in fieldwork, LCT started making initiation rituals, while creating and spreading their code of conduct. In the meantime, the criminal group kept committing crimes. Nazario was killed "again" in March of 2014, again by federal forces, and again in Michoacán, but during Enrique Peña Nieto's administration. That was how Nazario performed the art of dying twice. This chapter analyzes this process from a political legitimacy perspective, and focuses mainly (together with the next chapter) on the local criminal groups' performance. In fact, this legitimacy story is inserted inside a bigger one marked by the struggles of legitimacy among a broad diversity of political actors, both local and national, but with an interest in becoming the local ruler (the sovereign).

The data for this analysis comes from fieldwork conducted in Michoacán. That work is present in this and the following chapter through the methods described in the last section of the second chapter, and consists of semi-structured interviews in the field, digital ethnography, media and press analysis, and a literature review. First "the big picture", i.e., the Mexican war on drugs. This chapter describes and critically investigates how this war has unfolded – and continues in relatively different circumstances. Second, this chapter presents an overview of Michoacán from three angles: a description of the variety of actors, a summary of the evolution through these years of war, and an analysis of local geography. Across these sections the political legitimacy perspective is highlighted. The subsequent chapter analyzes where local criminal groups (both LFM and LCT) are located in the

constellation of local political actors. The criminal group's legitimacy analysis covers a range of almost a decade, from 2006 to 2014, in which these attempts can be attributed to the same criminal identity and agenda.

3.1. The Big Picture: The Mexican War on Drugs

After one month of assuming the presidency, Felipe Calderón made one of his first public appearances outside Mexico City. The war was already declared, and he appeared wearing an army suit and hat in Apatzingán, Michoacán. How to analyze and understand this war from a political legitimacy angle? What were their roots and consequences for Mexico and the region? What was the role that Michoacán played? Given that the criminal groups' legitimacy attempts were embedded in this context, before analyzing them the war and these questions need to be addressed to contextualize the big picture. After all, those legitimacy claims made by criminals were coexisting and struggling with other legitimacy claims coming from actors involved in this war – including especially the federal government's claims around the declaration of war. Following Tilly, this was a scenario of making violence and authority credible to others as a step towards becoming legitimate (1985, 172-173). Calderón, who did not have any kind of military background, had breakfast with troop members and commanders. He showed appreciation for the troops' efforts in the security tasks carried out in Michoacán (Herrera and Martínez, 2007). The war message was not only sent for the army members but also for the rest of the people.

It was not that seventy years later Mexico has again an army member governing, but that the messages and public displays had become codified in the terms of war. General Manuel Ávila Camacho was, in the 1940´s, the last Mexican president with a military background. After his administration, only civilians held the presidency, but all sustained cordial relations with the troops and their commanders, occasionally cooperating in campaigns against regime dissidents, as in the student mobilization of 1968 and the so-called *Guerra Sucia* (Dirty War) during the seventies (Lozoya, 1984; Matute, 1977). That cooperative relationship between civilian president and the army made of Mexico a sort of exception in Latin America regarding the non-threat of a military dictatorship. Unlike from many countries in Central and South America, in Mexico, the army has been historically seen as "the people themselves in uniform" (Mexican Army High Commander quoted by Moloeznik, 2008, 163). The army "survived" its institutional test when the PRI, the hegemonic party during the twentieth century, lost the 2000 election. The army showed loyalty to the state and not to the regime. However, the armed forces were about to face a higher test six years later, when the war on drugs was declared, and the army became one of the central characters fighting it.

3.1.1. War as Metaphor: From the Symbolic Dimension to Real Consequences

The September 11, 2002 edition of *The New York Times* included an editorial by Susan Sontag, "Real Battles, Empty Metaphors". In her text, Sontag made a critique review of the so-called war on terror undertaken by the former American president, George W. Bush. That war, she stated, has a "[...] peculiar nature. It seems to be, given the nature of the enemy, a war with no foreseeable end" (2002). She used as well other references of these sort of endless wars such as those declared against illness, poverty, or drugs. Sontag pointed out that, given the nature of those assumed "enemies", which cannot be terminated, thus the war on them cannot strictly end as well. That is why this is a metaphorical war, but with both real and powerful consequences. In other words, even when the idea of war may be metaphorical (in which discourses and representations play key roles), death, victims, bullets, and guns are all too real. The "war as metaphor" idea becomes helpful to understand the Mexican war on drugs declared four years later, in December of 2006. This one is not the first of its kind and nor the last one (for instance, in 1971 President Richard Nixon declared the first war on drugs in the United States, which President Ronald Reagan then redeclared in 1986.

Other countries around the world have followed suit with their own wars on drugs, in places such as Indonesia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Iran, and more recently the Philippines. In very practical terms, those wars on drugs (or against organized crime) usually are no more than a repressive drug policy models in which security forces employ lethal force to eliminate drug supply and demand (Rolles, *et al.*, 2013, 26-27). By doing so, both drug producers and consumers get criminalized and shape the background of this policy, which generates additional problems around violence, justice administration, human rights violations and an extensive list of atrocities codified into a war code and language (i.e., “friend” and “enemy”, “good” and “bad”, “us” and “them”). Sontag is not necessarily dialoguing with the new wars´ literature, whose debate attempts to improve the understanding of the changes in how armed conflicts happened, usually by expanding the comprehensive range of war concept (Berdal, 2003 and 2011; Kaldor, 2013). However, her idea works together with this debate in the attempt to demystify the political usage of the war in crisis contexts, and explain the contexts of those hostile claims in which citizens (alleged criminals in this case) become enemies of war.[19]

One of the legacies of the Mexican Revolution was the creation of a government regime that orbited around one political party. That one was, first, the National Revolutionary Party (PNR, founded in 1929) and later renamed as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, and which remains to date as one of the leading political forces in the country). Through that party, the Mexican State created institutions, bureaucracies, and power structures that allowed it to govern with carte blanche, and with more or less legitimacy for almost eighty

[19] Moreover, in the case of Mexico, during the first years of the XXI century, the federal government also launched a “war against piracy”. As a punitive strategy punishing the intellectual property rights violation, to some extent it could be understood as the predecessor of the war on drugs (Aguiar, 2010).

years depending on the time and location within the country. However, that period was not homogeneous. There is a stage that begins approximately at the end of the nineteen-sixties. Then, the Mexican political system gets transformed from an imperfect democracy (or under construction) and began to be called authoritarianism (Linz, 1964 and Meyer, 1977). The discourse of the Revolution decayed as a regime legitimacy resource (particularly after the student movement of 1968). Instead, the Mexican State showed a dependence on institutions and practices created around authoritarianism. That became the basis for the government exercise during those decades.

However, the eighties and nineties decades came with a gradual dismantling of the authoritarian regime in favor of neoliberal policies. As a result, Mexico joined the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which officially started in 1994 in the middle of internal economic and political crises (specifically the so-called *efecto tequila*) which included the assassination of the presidential PRI candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, plus PRI´s president, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, and the armed rising of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). In addition, the government started several privatizations of former central industries for the national economy. Six years later, the PRI lost the presidential election for the first time, and the right-wing party, National Action Party (PAN) won the presidential election. That moment in known in the literature as the failed transition to democracy because of the administration failures in transforming practices and structures from the authoritarian period. When Felipe Calderón, candidate for the same right-wing party, won the next presidential election with a low margin, Mexico was in the middle of the historical authoritarianism and young democratic attempts.

According to Astorga the cracking of the authoritarian structures, especially in the remote regions, produced local power structures reconfigurations, which explains the increase of violence and helped the government to justify the war (Astorga, 2007). In his first day, a couple of hours after becoming president, Calderón pronounced a discourse in which he said: "I know that restoring security will not be easy or quick, it will take time, it will cost money and even, unfortunately, human lives. However, take this for granted: this is a battle in which I will be at the front, it is a battle that we have to fight and that together we Mexicans will win crime" (Calderón stated in Núñez, 2006). Since then, many efforts were developed by his government to make war allusions. The discourse repeatedly turned into a binary "us" (the good ones) and "them" (the bad guys) who were also called "cockroaches", “termites", and "rats" (Calderón, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). Metaphorical messages such as Calderón wearing a military suit mixed with the real side of the war, such as an increased homicide rate. Indeed, since the beginning of Felipe Calderón´s term, the national increase in the total homicide rate in Mexico was directly connected to the increase of the drug-related homicide rate (LSE, 2014, 30). That trend continued between 2007 and 2010.

In February of 2007, Calderón again justified the war. "The alternative is very clear", he said, "either we rescue Mexico or we cancel the future of prosperity that the children of every Mexican deserve [...] and we will use the full force of the State to respond to those who defy authority and society [and] those who challenge institutions and put our country's future at risk" (Calderón quoted by BBC Staff, 2007). Michoacán was the state in which the war was about to start. It was a non-exclusive list of 8 states out of 32 that constitutes the country (some other may be added if necessary). In this sense, the Mexican war on drugs is another side of the same legitimacy story in which Michoacán criminal groups participated. Following Claessen's idea of legitimation as a process (1988), for the Mexican federal government, this war had the function of promoting its mandate. This effort was codified through symbols and practices rather than through legality and justice management, i.e., descriptive political legitimacy language. Even a successfully legitimate actor or institution will need to continually reaffirm this condition, and the Mexican state is no exception. However, in the case of this war, the war implied a sort of rehabilitation of the state's image after decades or even centuries of distance if not absence. In Michoacán, this absence and rehabilitation is what enabled the co-existence of simultaneous authorities and, potentially, legitimacy struggles. The following section analyzes the extent to which this was the case of Michoacán, as well as its symbolic war relevance.

3.1.2. Michoacán: The First Battlefield

Michoacán is practical and symbolically relevant for the Mexican war on drugs for two reasons. This was the first battlefield of the war, and Michoacán is Calderon's hometown state. For a government who was looking for support for this war, this first battle becomes relevant. Next section of this chapter will be dedicated entirely to the understanding of Michoacán, especially those elements which deserve to be highlighted to conduct a political legitimacy research. By now, here we are only locating the relevance of this first battlefield and its role in the stated big war on drugs picture. The federal government used that violence as a critical juncture to launch the war, starting precisely in Michoacán (Meyer, 2007). Moreover, the federal government counted on with local Michoacán politicians who supported the strategy, even when they were not necessarily from the same political party. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, Michoacán experienced criminal groups' struggles guided by the ambition of these groups to control local illicit businesses. One especially relevant moment of these fights happened in the municipality of Uruapan, close to the capital city of Morelia.

In the early morning of September 6, 2006, five human heads were dropped in the middle of a nightclub dance floor in Uruapan. Journal chronicles talked about 15 to 20 men with rifles arriving in three pick-up vans; they released the heads without saying a word (Martínez *et al.*, 2006). However, a *narcomanta* (a practice associated with drug trafficking dynamics consisting in leaving banners with written messages; more about this communication

strategy, spread as a popular practice among different criminal groups, could be found in Maihold, 2012) was left there with the following message: "*La familia no mata por paga, no mata mujeres, no mata inocentes. Sólo muere quien debe morir. sépanlo toda la gente, esto es justicia divina*" ("The family [of Michoacán] does not kill for pay, it does not kill women, it does not kill innocent people. Only those who deserve to die, should perish. Let it be known to all: this is divine justice") (quoted in Relea, 2006). That was a sort of presentation message towards society from the criminal group *La Familia Michoacana*. As Arjona and Hollister pointed out:

> The effect of violence on *freezing* may help explain why armed groups rely on symbolic violence, such as exhibiting the dead bodies of their victims in public places or gathering communities to witness the killing of locals: it might help to make civilians obey not only because they learn that disobedience carries serious consequences, but also because fear makes the psychologically *incapable* of reacting in any way but complying. As Hollister points out, "[t]hrough dramatizing punishments, an aura of imagined pain may be built around the painful experiences which can actually be inflicted" (Arjona and Hollister quoted by Arjona, 2017, 765).

Members of *LFM* recognized the authorship of committing that atrocity, but they tried to cover it with a justification. As explained later, not every crime or illegality needs to be explained. However, when this is the case, the criminal agenda acquires relevance as a political instrument through which the practices of legitimation make sense and become rationalized. The heads dropped were supposed to belong to former members of the local rival organization, the Zetas, a criminal group dedicated to drug trafficking and integrated by former army members in Mexico and Guatemala known for their bloody techniques to perform their illegal activities (Astorga and Shrink, 2010, 15-16: Logan, 2012, 6). Thus, in another way, that was also a violent political statement from LFM against their main rivalry. This action exemplifies the understanding of sovereignty as practice in the very last sense of deciding over who lives and who dies (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005). The event happened three months before Calderon's presidency began, and thus before the war declaration. Strictly, it justified government's argument in the sense of the necessity of taking extreme measures given the circumstances.

However, as explained in the previous chapter, criminal agendas are not usually or exclusively based on violence. Even when they are, that *narcomanta* was possibly the first legitimacy attempt made by *LFM*, it was followed by another certainly friendlier claim. Almost three months later (but again before the war's declaration), LFM paid to publish a disclaimer in the local newspaper. Together with a collection of justifications, the text also presented "who we are", its "mission", its "objective" and its reasons to be seen as a group. It goes from an enterprise discourse to a rebellious one, but never acknowledges them as criminals or drug traffickers. The entire disclaimer was published in *La Voz de Michoacán* and *El Sol de Morelia*, both local newspapers without circulation outside Michoacán

(2006).[20] In both cases, the publication date was November 22, 2006, days before the war on drugs declaration:

LA FAMILIA MICHOACANA

ABOUT US?

We are native workers of the Tierra Caliente region in the state of Michoacán, organized by the necessity to get out of the oppression, of the humiliation to which we were always subjected by people who have been holding power, which allowed them to perform all kinds of mischiefs and abuses in the state [of Michoacán], such as those of the MILLENNIUM Cartel, some others with the surname Valencia and other organizations, such as the band of the 30, which has been terrorized a large part of the state [of Michoacán] since the eighties to nowadays, especially in the areas of Puruarán, Turicato, Tacámbaro and Ario de Rosales, and who have carried out kidnappings, robberies, extortions and other crimes that harm the peace of Michoacán´s people.

MISSION

To eradicate kidnapping activities from the State of Michoacán, direct and telephone extortion, paid assassinations, express kidnapping, theft of trailers and cars, house robberies, by people like the mentioned above, and that have made of the state of Michoacán an insecure place. Our only reason is that we love our state [of Michoacán] and that we are no longer willing to let people´s dignity become run over.

Maybe at this moment people will not understand us, but we know that in the most affected regions, they understand our actions, because it is possible to fight these criminals, who settled down from other states and we will not let them enter into Michoacán to keep committing crimes.

We are totally eradicating in the entire state the sale of the LETHAL drug known as "ICE" or "ICE" [referring to methamphetamines], as it is one of the worst drugs that are causing irreversible damage to the society, thus it is going to be prohibited the sale of adulterated wine that, people say, comes from 'Tepito' [a well-known dangerous neighborhood in Mexico City], and we know that whatever comes from there has bad quality.

OBJECTIVE

To maintain the universal values of the people, to which they have full right.

By eradicating what we have proposed, although for this, unfortunately, we have appealed to very strong strategies on the part of us, since in this way we have seen that it is the only way to bring order to the state [of Michoacán], and we will not allow this [situation] to get out of control again.

[We will] Support people with food, literature, as well as classrooms to improve education in society: this is mainly directed to the rural area, which is the most marginalized, humiliated and especially in the Tierra Caliente region.

WHY DO WE FORM OUR GROUP?

[20] The original one was published in Spanish. Besides the analytical elements for this research, it was characterized by several grammatical mistakes as well. This translation did not attempt to correct them, but to reflect the original spirit of the message. The original newspaper page is included Appendix. See Picture 8.

When this *LA FAMILIA Michoacana* organization began, it was not expected to be possible eradicate kidnapping, paid-murders, scams, and the sale of the drug known as 'ice', however, thanks to the large number of people who have had faith, this great problem in the state [of Michoacán] is now being controlled.

LA FAMILIA is a group of people, which has been growing in such a way that; now, we cover the entire state of Michoacán. This organization emerged with the straight intention of combating the unrestrained crime that existed in our state [of Michoacán].

LA FAMILIA has made great progress, as we are fighting these evils little by little, but we still cannot claim victory, but if we can say that the state [of Michoacán] has improved in these problems by 80%. Also, we have eradicated the kidnapping in the same percentage.

People who work decently in any activity should not worry, we respect them, but we will not allow people from here or from other states to commit crimes or [the same will go for] those who control other types of activities.

When we started to organizing and propose to remove the retail drug sale from the streets, such as it was with the 'Ice', many people told us that not even in the first world countries they could reach to control it, and we are already doing it.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

What would you do as a Michoacán origin? Would you join *la familia* if you see that we are fighting these crimes? Or would you let them keep growing? ... Give us your opinion.

I ask you, father [as the family leader]: Would you like your son to walk the streets in danger of falling into drugs and crime?

Would you support this organization in its fight against these evils that attack our state [of Michoacán]?

The media have been very successful and objective in their comments on the events that occurred, which is appreciated for their impartiality and we thank these media for their comments on our actions.

Even in other countries, they have not already organized themselves to carry out this type of activity in favor of their people, and we have already started here. The expected success will depend on the support and understanding of the Michoacán Society.

SINCERELY,
LA FAMILIA MICHOACANA

After the severed heads event, the text was the second materialization of the agenda as a political legitimacy guideline. Although there was no direct reference to the Uruapan events happened weeks earlier, indirect statements about people committing crimes in Michoacán needs be understood as a connection between both legitimacy claims, one violent and one peaceful: carrots and sticks towards the same objective. LFM took a position towards them, but did not talk to them. The language is directed at the Michoacán people as an audience, including expressly direct reference to the family fathers (men to men dialogue). Invitations to support them, as well as to join them are included. Moreover, the narration portrays the idea of an enemy. It also built the idea of shared moral beliefs: those ambiguously called "universal values of the people", to which, they said, everyone has full right. Their fight is against criminals such as kidnappers, murderers, and meth traffickers. More legitimacy calls came out from this group, LFM, as well as LCT. Both are the same criminal group; however,

even his name change had political legitimacy implications. All of this is presented later in this chapter.

As said earlier, Michoacán became the first battlefield in this war. The *Operativo Conjunto Michoacán* (Joint Operative Michoacán) became the model for the war strategy in its very early stage. The model consisted of sending federal security institutions coordinated by the federal government and was later used in other Mexican states such as Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Guerrero, and Baja California. In the case of Michoacán, it is important to remember that the former governor, Lázaro Cárdenas Batel (grandson of the former President during the nineteen-thirties, Lázaro Cárdenas del Río), request the president to receive federal support to deal with local criminal groups (Astorga, 2015, 28). The strategy was mainly to dismantle the more prominent criminal organizations linked to the illicit drug trafficking in the country. However, scholars have proved a correlation between the operative implementation and the homicide increase (Zepeda, 2016; Merino, 2011). From a historical point of view, these operatives interestingly look like a state return. At least in the case of Michoacán, but not only, the federal government is anything but close to the local population. For instance, Maldonado argues that especially the Southern region of Michoacán became a sort of marginal region within the Mexican state (2010, 24). This real and symbolic remoteness produced the myth of entire lawless regions within Michoacán.

However, on the contrary, this supposed power absence generated local rulers, close to *cacicazgos*. After the implementation of the operative, the government carried out a sort of state return to the territory, but wearing the mask of security forces instead of other types of masks, such as healthcare, education, or employment. That is especially relevant because we are talking about one of the poorest and marginalized states in the country. Ironically, 2007 became the most peaceful year in the recent Mexican history (see Figure 1). Even in Michoacán, where the war started, 2007 was the third most peaceful year in the last 25. However, from 2008 and onwards, almost all indicators of crime rose, generally led by specific states. Michoacán was one of them. September of 2008 became an especially relevant month in both local and national agendas. On the evening of the sixteenth, during the Independence Day celebration (possibly the highest national commemoration), a fragmentation grenade was thrown in the main square of Morelia´s downtown, that is, in the core of Michoacán's capital city. Some civilians died and others were injured.

Hours later, the United States government, through its ambassador to Mexico, categorized the phenomenon as narcoterrorism (Gómez, 2008). In the end, that statement supported the war on drugs strategy together with the necessity of hard hand against the so-called cartels. However, neither LFM nor any other local group acknowledged the grenades, but it meant a war reinforcement in the region. When the grenade event happened, Michoacán was already one of the many battlefronts across the country. Each of those places had particular settings. In this case, the legitimacy perspective opens an analytical window through which it is

possible to analyze the local phenomenon. Each of these multiple actors will be reviewed later, especially concerning their legitimacy interest and the resultant conflict. Meanwhile, next section is dedicated to assessing the conflicts´ size and tendencies. This work is made through the recovery and systematization of violence variables available from public data.

3.1.3. The Real Battles: The Size of Violence in Michoacán

As Sontag said: even when the war is metaphorical, it has real consequences: real bullets, casualties, violence, and battles. The war impact was different depending on the state or region of the country. For example, while certain cities such as the Northern Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, reached higher homicide rates levels than Bagdad, Iraq, or Afghanistan at the height of recent wars, others like Mérida in the Yucatán peninsula, had the same levels of homicide as Canada (data for 2010 and 2012: Staff El Universal, 2009; Nolasco and Ávila, 2014). Some variables directly affecting this difference were the presence or absence of a) disputing local criminal groups, b) federal forces presence (like in the joint operatives), and c) geographical conditions (mainly related to transnational illegal routes). In Michoacán, the three conditions were present in addition to other particularities such as a historical absence of the state power and an excess of political actors performing state functions, especially those related to security and the monopoly of the use of force.

Before continuing with the analysis, a methodological comment needs to be made regarding the figures presented in this section. Three illicit behaviors were selected as variables analysis; these are homicides, kidnappings, and extortions. With exceptions, these three crimes used to be associated with larger criminal groups activities rather than solitairy criminal actions. Thus, these variables are helpful to trace changes in violent dynamics, mirroring the background political struggles. However, analyze Mexican criminal registers is challenging because of the dark figure of crime, a criminological term to refer the unregistered and non-reported crimes (Biderman and Reiss, 1967, 2). Both in Mexico and Michoacán, this number is always above the 90 percent. In other words, specifically in Michoacán, more than 9 out of 10 crimes are not reported in the official statistics (see Table 2). This pattern changes from crime to crime, and from state to state. Does this mean that there is no sense in studying this data? Indeed, official statistics present a problem. But one can make some sense of the data if the analysis carefully parses it by taking into account specific local considerations around these variations.

For instance, the homicide variable is analyzed here from two sources. In the first one, from INEGI, the dark figure does not indicate a problem. That is because of how the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (stands for INEGI, the Mexican federal agency for demography and economic analysis and one of the most prestigious institutions in its field within Latin America) collect the data. Since 1990, INEGI has registered the "deaths occurred by homicide" by concentrating the medical examiner archives from those who

received the corpses. Thus, they do not work with official reports from any justice institution. On the other hand, the second source is the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (stands for SESNSP, a federal bureau that concentrates criminal data from denouncing reports). That is the source for the 1) intentional homicides (differentiated in this case from the non-intentional), 2) kidnappings, and 3) extortions registers. Its database is built with the victims reported cases to authorities. In this case, yes we are dealing with the dark figure problem. Is it convenient to work with this data anyway? The answer is yes but the analysis needs to be careful and aware of these.

Table 2. Dark figure (%), Michoacán (2010-2016)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Michoacán	94.7	92.0	94.0	94.0	93.6	92.9	93.8

Source: *Encuesta Nacional sobre Victimización y Percepción de Seguridad Pública* (ENVIPE), INEGI.

For instance, it is helpful to trace significant changes in illicit trends, the increase or decrease in reported cases, and places in which people used to report these kinds of crimes. Moreover, even when it is not possible to accurately calculate precisely, homicides, kidnappings, and extortions used to have lower dark figures percentages (Ochoa, 2016). In addition, in the homicide variable, this database offers to distinguish those cases, in which the murders were intentional, which adds a violence charge to the action and shapes another sort of behavior from the perpetrator. Finally, regarding these methodological difficulties, it is necessary to affirm that not all these crimes are associated or responsible for the war on drugs dynamics, nor the army nor the criminal groups´ activities. However, here we are looking for data that might help to identify changes in the general trends that could contribute to portray how Michoacán, in particular, lived this context. Moreover, this information is also helpful to understand the scenario in which the legitimacy attempts, and struggles were made.

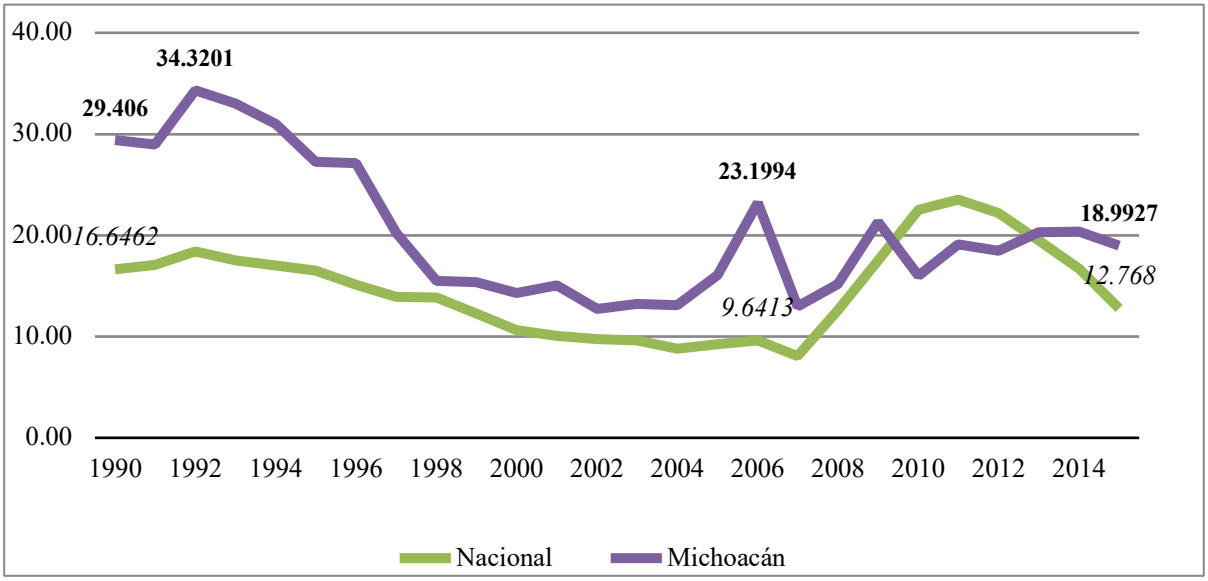
After explaining those considerations, the first analytical statement in this sense is that Michoacán´s violence is everything but new. The early 1990´s decade showed higher homicide levels than in the last decade (see Figure 1). Following the homicide data registered by INEGI, demonstrates Michoacán with higher homicide levels than the national number. That happened from 1990 to 2009. In the next year, Michoacán experienced a decrease and kept with lower rates than the national one until 2013. Furthermore, as said earlier with Mexico in general, the state of Michoacán had the lower homicide levels in 2007, the same year in which the war was launched. In the coming years, the rate raised in both cases and until 2009 for Michoacán and 2011 for Mexico. Many lectures can be given to this, but in this case, it becomes relevant the observe at least three trends:

1) In the year of 2005, the homicide rate was bigger than ever later within the context of the war on drugs, this before LFM publicly appeared through the Uruapan heads event and the message in the local newspapers. This number could explain the local struggles (later justified by LFM and LCT) in which these criminal groups became predominant in the state.

2) As will be explained later in detail, December of 2010 is especially relevant. In this month, the criminal leader group and responsible for many of the legitimacy attempts, Nazario Moreno, was supposed to be killed for the first time. That might have provoked a significant increase in homicides in 2011, the year in which civilian and local people rebellions against the criminal groups started as well.

3) While in the national rate it is possible to appreciate certain trends through the last 25 years, in Michoacán the trends stopped in 2005. Since then, there are drastic but constant "ups and downs", especially during 2005 to 2012, which coincide with the war on drugs period and the whole Calderón administration.

Figure 1. Homicide Rate per 100 Thousand Inhabitants, Michoacán *vs.* Mexico, 1990-2015

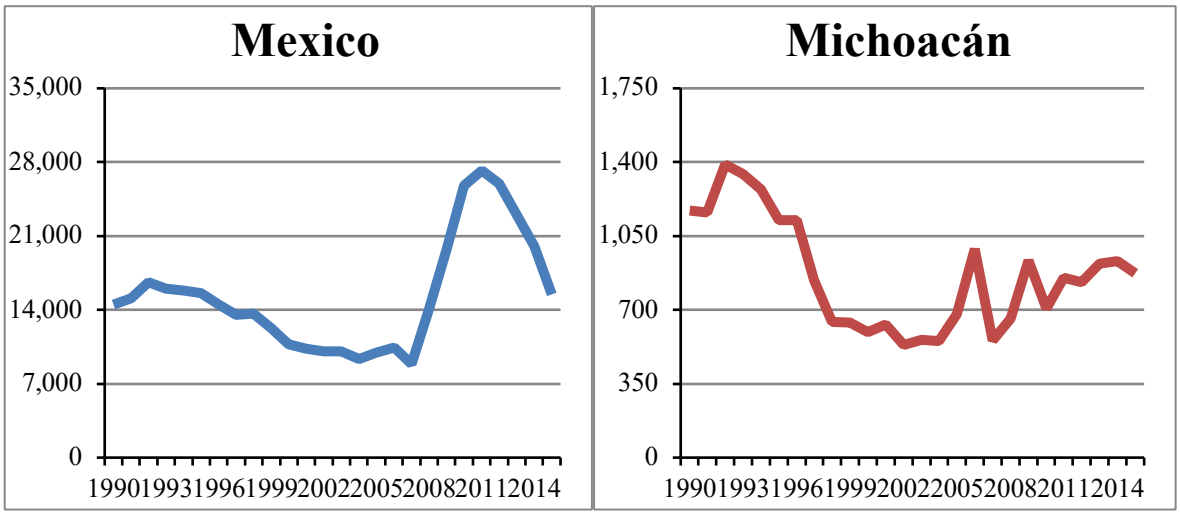


Source: Author´s calculations based on data from INEGI and CONAPO.

By taking a look on the total homicide cases (and not the rates), we can confirm the trend differences between the national and the local context. In this regard, is relevant to look at how both graphs "move" through the time for the same period of twenty-five years. Following Figure 2, we can look again to 1) the "violent past" of Michoacán in the early nineties, 2) the national rising trend in Mexico after the war on drugs declaration, which although is not that accentuated in Michoacán, and 3) the ups and downs in Michoacán within

the same period. This latter point shows that this trend was clear enough to be appreciated both figures, i.e., the homicide rate as well as in the total homicide cases.

Figure 2. Trends of Total Homicides in Michoacán *vs.* Mexico, 1990-2015

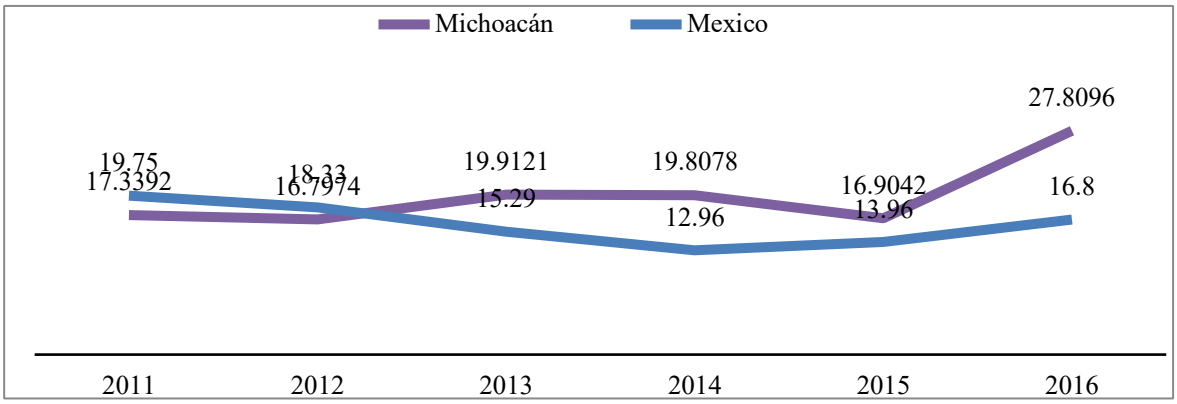


Source: Author´s calculations based on data from INEGI.

Regarding the SESNSP variables, this data was calculated for this research from 2011 to 2016. This period is relevant for this research case because the local criminal group suffered a significant change. As said earlier, LFM's leader, Nazario Moreno, was killed for the first time in December of 2010,[21] thus LFM turned into LCT, and the cult around Nazario was developed together with other rituals and legitimacy attempts. Nazario was killed for the second (and definitive) time in March 2014. This timeline, along with the criminal group's legitimacy analysis, will be explored in detail later. However, here it's important to highlight the significance of this period. Following the intentional homicides graph, the reports registered in the denounced cases show a couple of matches with the total cases in the INEGI database even when, as it was expected, the numbers are not equal. The first one is that Michoacán kept a lower rate than the national figure both in 2011 and 2012, and this trend change since 2013 and onwards. The second coincidence is to show Michoacán 2013 and 2014 as years with upward rates, and 2015 descending. However, in the SESNSP data, it is possible to appreciate a significant rise for 2016, reaching the highest level in the figure.

Figure 3. Denounced Intentional Homicides in Michoacán *vs.* Mexico, 2011-2016

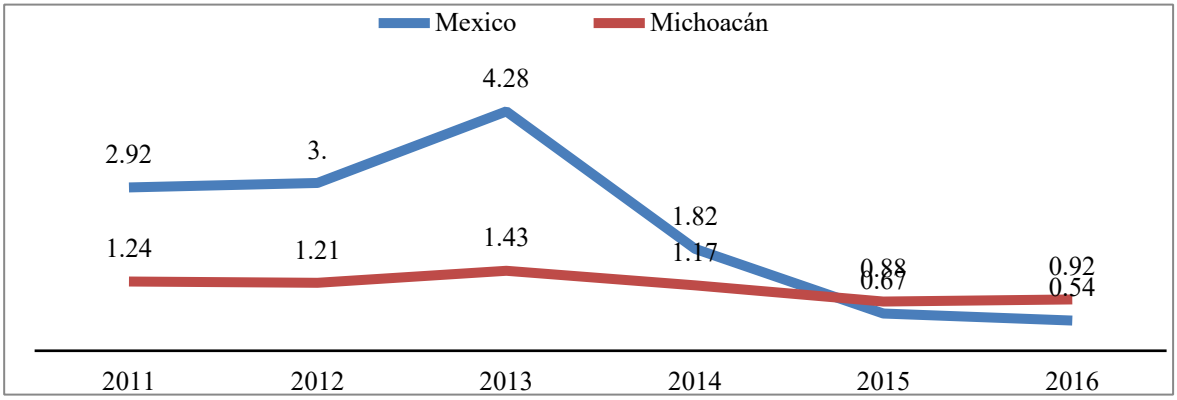
[21] Allegedly, locals in Apatzingán, Michoacán made a demonstration supporting Nazario. The people held up signs with the legend "Nazario will always live in our hearts", and "Rest in peace, Nazareo [sic]". See Pictures 3 and 4 in the Appendix.



Source: Author´s calculations based on data from SESNSP and CONAPO.

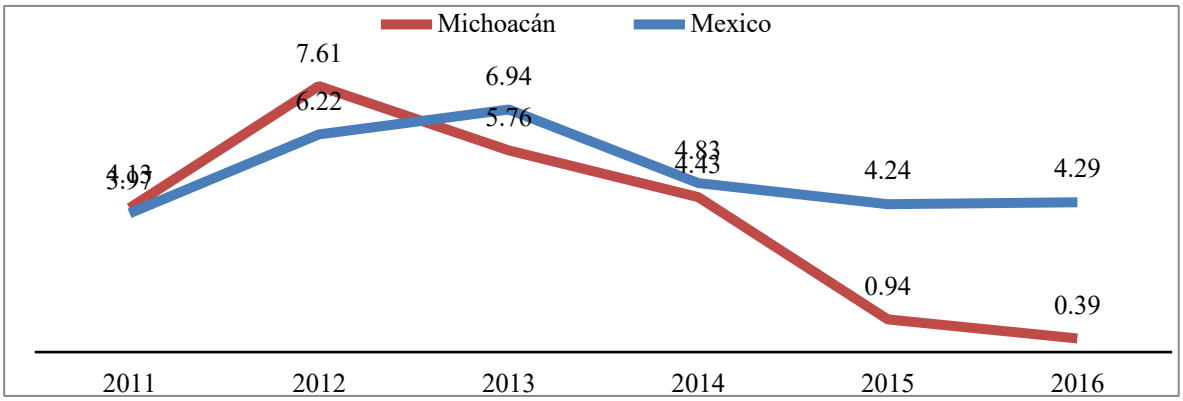
The other two variables from SESNSP, kidnappings, and extortions denounced, presented different trends between them. In the former, Michoacán does not show drastic changes; however, the possible reading is not that kidnappings keep stable in Michoacán but that the victim´s reports towards official authorities were (see Figure 4). Regarding the extortion cases, 2012 and 2013 were the years with high rates. In any case, this crime followed the national trend closely until 2014 (see Figure 5). Besides, it is relevant to take into consideration that these both crimes use to be reported by urban victims. In this case, most of the reports happened in the capital city, Morelia, relatively far away from the countryside and rural areas in which both LFM and LCT were based.

Figure 4. Denounced Kidnappings Rate per 100 Thousand Inhabitants, Michoacán *vs.* Mexico, 2011-2016



Source: Author´s calculations based on data from SESNSP and CONAPO.

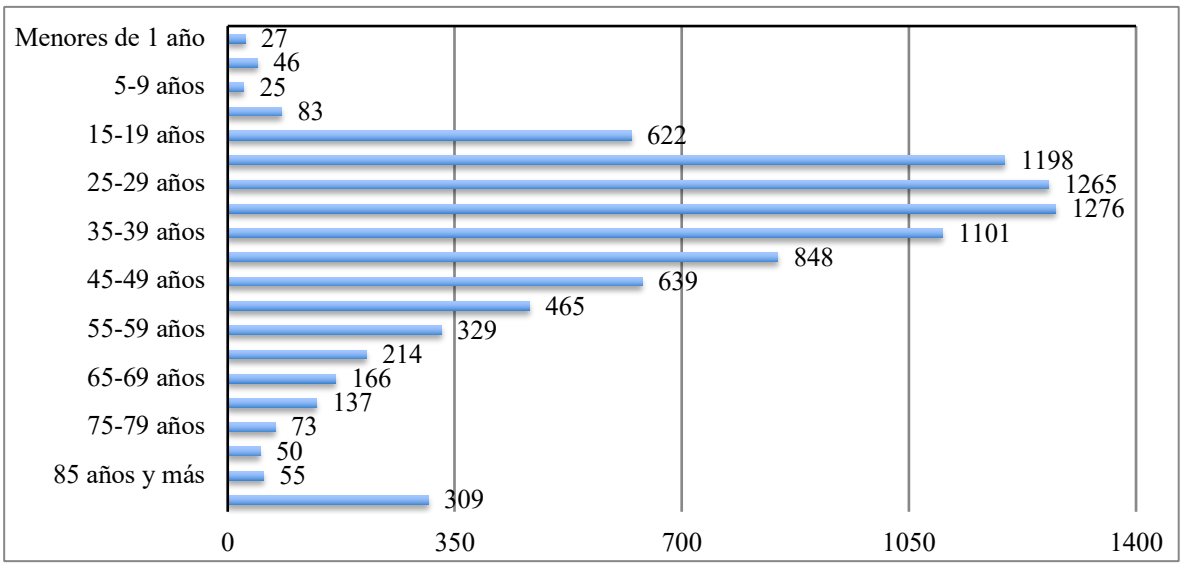
Figure 5. Denounced Extortions Rate per 100 Thousand Inhabitants, Michoacán *vs.* Mexico, 2011-2016



Source: Author´s calculations based on data from SESNSP and CONAPO.

Finally, the last figure presented in this section shows the age profile of the homicide victims in Michoacán during the studied period. A general Mexican trend within these years is that youngsters were the principal victims and killers. Michoacán is not the exception to this rule. Several investigations have been conducted trying to understand the role of young people in the violence dynamics. Many of them locate young people in marginal zones and low education or job expectations as the principal criminal groups´ cannon fodder (Ramírez, 2014; González-Pérez, *et al.*, 2012). Young people are used either for awareness of foreigners or officers in towns and highways (the so-called *halcones*, falcons), or as gunmen (*sicarios*). The crises in this regard is such big that the federal government made a national survey which was conducted by INEGI to understand how and why youngsters spend their free time, feel about their surroundings, and perceive the future, etcetera (INEGI and SEGOB, 2014). In the case of Michoacán, 4,361 of the homicide victims from 2005 to 2015 were between 15 and 34 years old. That is the 48.8% of the total (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Total Homicides in Michoacán by Age Group, 2005-2015



Source: Author´s calculations based on data from INEGI.

Since the first decade of the current century, Mexican demographers proved how a "demographic bonus" was coming for Mexico. This bonus means a change in the demographic structure due to population age, characterized by a swifter increase in the number of young people in productive age (Ordorica, 2010, 50). In other words, the bonus is a demographic opportunity to boost the economy based on a larger number of young people instead of older retired or not in working conditions. According to García, the bonus would take place between 2012 and 2033 (2010, 384). However, according to Giorguli, a prominent Mexican demographer, the bonus was not capitalized due to a lack of working conditions (Giorguli quoted by Sánchez, 2016). If that was not enough, the demographic bonus also coincided with a deadly trend era for youngsters in Mexico in general, as well as in particular states like Michoacán. This violence data will be returned to in the case analysis, since it is there where it begins to make sense. In the end, following Arendt once again, violence is not an end itself, but an instrument linked to ends. Even when particularly in Michoacán the political legitimacy struggles indeed were not the goal, they help to rationalize these data.

3.1.4. An International Overview: Michoacán Between the Caribbean Basin and Asia Pacific

Before delving into the Michoacán study, a broader (global and regional) overview of the Mexican violence crisis is needed in order to recognize how local consequences may modify the global trends and vice-versa. In this regard, transnational crime activities work into a sort of interconnected logic, sometimes even into a global scale (van de Ven, 2017, 25-28). For instance, a change in the pattern of cocaine consumption in Amsterdam could affect how local politics happen in a small settlement in the Colombian jungle, including the countless changes in social dynamics occurring in the middle. This shock might presumably result in a new scenario also susceptible to suffering potential changes as a result of a further modification of the dynamics (either, production, regulation, prohibition, enhancement, or deterioration of routes, changes in political configurations, and a large etcetera). The variables involved are neither fixed, and the local contexts have a relevant influence but always connected to the regional and global illicit trends.

Although the history of Mexican narcotics did not start with the War on Drugs nor in the recent present, a convenient starting point for this analysis is located during the 1980´s and 1990´s. In the first place, the Ronald Reagan´s war on drugs policy in the late 80´s, implied sealing Miami´s border, which was the main entrance of cocaine coming from Colombia. The strategy involved two faces: the "friendly", and the "bloody". The former was the "Just Say No" campaign led by Nancy Reagan. The latter consisted of a hard security repressive policy, especially abroad (Schroth, Helfer and Lanfair, 2011, 436-438). Later, this resulted in Plan Colombia, an integral security policy developed in this South American country in which the local forces were coordinated and commanded by the American military. As a result of the plan, the two most prominent criminal organizations in the Americas were

dismantled. Both Medellin and Cali cartels were taken down through the kingpin strategy -a security policy emerged from the American security agencies that consist in eliminating the "head" of each criminal group. Pablo Escobar, the leader of Medellin, was killed in December of 1993. Of course, within the dialectic logic explained earlier, that meant a significant change in the global configuration of drug trafficking.

For instance, from the nineties to the first decade of the twenty-first century, the drug trafficking through the Caribbean Sea fell 71 percent and was rerouted through Central America and Mexico (Aguayo, 2014). In other words, cocaine trafficking (whose only sowing point is Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia) keep flowing to the United States but using an alternative corridor – causing a sort of water effect phenomenon, in which a first “push down”, causes a second “pop up” elsewhere. According to John Bailey, this change let the formerly inexperienced Mexican criminal groups take the lead and the profits of the business from the proficient Colombian groups, which were struggling to survive (Bagley, 2009). That meant a full transformation of the criminal corridor settings in the Americas and transformed Mexican politics. It is useful to remember here that this regional change coincides with the Mexican transition in which the historically dominant political party (PRI) lost the Presidency, including a reconfiguration of several local power settings across the country. Following Aguayo, Mexican violence cannot be understood outside the Caribbean Basin. This region is the most violent on the planet and lives through constant flows going both from South to North (drugs and migrants), and North to South (money and weapons) (2014, chapter 5).

These are permanent ingredients in the war on drugs. However, another global geographical element needs to be included when talking about Michoacán, namely, the Asian Pacific. Even when LFM and LCT participated in the fundamental Caribbean Basin scheme, the Mexican West coast plays an essential role in this case. As will be seen later in detail, the port of Lázaro Cárdenas located in the western part of the country enables a full entrance to the Pacific Ocean. Journal and official reports identified exchanges between LFM and LCT with China: the criminal group sent iron and other mining extracts from the mountains in Michoacán, and they received in exchange precursors to fabricate methamphetamines. From 2008 to early 2013, 4.6 tons of iron were sent to China from Lázaro Cárdenas port, a quadrupling of export (Gil Olmos, 2015, 59). Finally, it is possible to argue that Michoacán plays a specific role, at least, into two global illegal market circuits, which are not disconnected. The first one is in the Caribbean Basin, including the illicit commerce occurring in the Americas, but especially from Michoacán to the United States. Both official and journal reports have detected meth production sent to Mexico's northern neighbor (Grillo, 2017). The second one looks at Michoacán’s connections to Asia, especially China. We will come back to these dynamics in the third section of this chapter. Meanwhile, the second section offers an explanation of conceptual elements to understand Michoacán´s current sociology.

3.2. How to Understand Michoacán: Many Actors, Complex State

In this section, the Michoacán context is explained through the conceptual approach proposed earlier in the first chapter together with a geographical analysis. They all configure analytical tools to achieve a broad understanding of the scenario that lets us proceed later with the review of criminal groups' legitimacy campaigns. The argument followed can be stated in a straightforward formula, but has a profound background: it is not that in Michoacán there is no state, but that there are too many political actors whose agency is developed into a state language (including sovereignty practices). Within these actors, the criminal actors have a crucial role in several aspects of public life, and this will be observed in the last section through their political legitimacy interests and attempts. Here we follow the ideas of Aranda in terms of authority excess in Michoacán, as well as the historical state experienced by local social agents (2014, 155). In particular, this is related to how certain *ranchero* societies later become greater drug traffickers as well as how these populations experienced the state, its sovereignty, and the general formal authority expectations (Interview in field no. 17, 2017).

> For several ranchero societies, the family is more important than society. Family is your network of kinship before than the citizenship of the state. The family is your domestic group, it is your core institution on which you are going to being cared, you will protect yourself, you will reproduce, and you will socialize. This idea of the family as the central nucleus also explains why after 30 or 40 years *la familia* of Michoacán concept emerged, [but also] the concept of caring for the Michoacán, the concept of Michoacán for the Michoacán people. All these in places where the State did not manage to build its sovereignty and it could not displace these other more informal sovereignties and over which control, sociability and the use of violence were more effective. All these values are being crystallized, but between the sixties and eighties, they become consolidated with the strong expansion of drug cultivation around Michoacán. The actual expansion of drug crops occurred in these territories where these family societies controlled inhospitable areas in which these families handled territorial control very well (Interview in field no. 17, 2017).

In other words, geography and family culture come together and historically shape the context. Both are elements that explain the transformations of a specific society, in which drug trafficking evolved towards producing such particular criminal groups formations. Since legality and illegality blur due to historical reasons, then what remains in the middle are two versions of legitimacy. On the one hand, there are the *ranchero* societies that have been performing their own authority for decades, in which drug cultivation was not precisely seen as a bad activity due to its illegality. On the other, there is an aggressive return of the official authority by attempting to bring back a version of order based in legality and the state monopoly of sovereignty. This analysis is guided by geography plus the cartography of social actors performing sovereign practices. In other words, to build the constellation of social actors having legitimacy interest, Michoacán´s Geography parallel to those actors performing as the state are analyzed in the following section.

3.2.1. Michoacán: Geography Matters

As one of the 32 states that compose Mexico, Michoacán is located in the Southwestern part of Mexico. His location and its natural resources are both strategic elements to understand the recent violent crises and the legitimacy struggles in which the state was (and possibly still is) inserted. Its population grew to 4,584,471 in the last count in 2015 (INEGI, 2015), of which 48.2% are men and 51.8% are women. Maldonado divides the state into five regions: 1) the avocado zone, 2) the Michoacán coast, 3) the South Mother mountain range, 4) the Michoacán and Jalisco (northern neighboring state) mountain range, and 5) the Tierra Caliente (hot land). All those regions are essential to explain the local context. However, each of them has a different role in the local criminal groups that is explained below. Moreover, violence and criminality in Michoacán can be traced back to a booming regional mining and agro-industrial economy, which developed alongside expanding drug trafficking (see Picture 9 on Michoacán regions; Maldonado, 2010).

The avocado zone is profoundly relevant for both licit and illicit activities. Mexico is the world's top avocado producer, and Michoacán is the leading state in that production (del Moral and Murillo, 2016). In 2016, this meant the first source of income for the local economy, even above from the remittances sent by migrants from Michoacán in the United States and income from tourism (Nájar, 2016). Forty-six out of the 113 municipalities of Michoacán produce avocados (Notimex, 2017b). This lucrative business was taken over by the local criminal groups. They control production by regulating offer and demand, levy a sort of tax through extortion (the so-called "*piso*" or "*cobro de piso*", which is analyzed later in detail), stealing fields from the original farmers, and by regulating felling trees and forest burns to transform them into avocado farming zones. The avocado zone frequently coincides with indigenous municipalities and borders with the flat region in the northern part of the state (the *Purépecha* zone), many of these towns are characterized by poverty and marginalization. The avocado agro-industrial area has more than 120 thousand internationally certified hectares that export about a billion dollars' worth of avocados per year, mostly to U.S. and European markets.

The second region, the Michoacán coast, is quite relevant as well. The central point is the Lázaro Cárdenas port, in the municipality of Lázaro Cárdenas. This port is one of the most developed on the Mexican Pacific coast. Its capacity enables commercial links with China, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Australia, Colombia, Central America, and the West coasts of the United States and Canada (Gobierno del estado de Michoacán, 2015; Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes, 2015). At the beginning of 2017, the National Economy minister inaugurated a new terminal in the port. It was the result of federal government investment. With this enlargement project, the port increased its moving capacity from 27 to 47 million tons (Notimex, 2017a). The relation of the port is, as said in the last section, crucial. The detected exchanges of metals (especially iron) going from the port to China and

receiving elements to cook meth proved a profitable business for criminal groups. In the words of the journalist Ian Grillo: “For Americans, your guacamole on game day, the metal in your kid’s remote-controlled car, and the beef in your burger may have passed through the Knights Templars’ hands—alongside the meth smoked by your local fiend” (2017, 456). From this port, thousands of tons of iron and other ores are extracted legally and illegally from communal land by transnational companies that have interwoven complex networks with armed groups. These ore exports are going mostly to India and China (Gledhill, 2014). Even further, according to Maldonado (2014) tons of precursor chemicals come back from these countries, basically on the same cargo ships and containers in order to make synthetic drugs in clandestine laboratories located in the state’s highlands.

The third and the fourth regions are the mountain zones in the state. The South Mother mountain range is especially relevant in this case because of the geopolitical role played in favor of the criminal groups´ interests. The relevance of this region increased given the interest of the criminals in controlling both mining production and the port. Thus, its geopolitical relevance added value to this region. In this case, we are talking about a sort of forgotten area by the government; in other words, this is a place in which the "state experienced" has not been close. Moreover, the zone has important unspoiled mineral resources, and exploitation becomes deeply profitable, especially for mining companies even when the activity is illegal. Local people argue that the most recent violence wave has been a coordinated effort between mining companies with interest in the area, and local criminal groups in an effort to break or displace the community and its communal institutions (Gledhill, 2014). Thus, criminal groups become a sort of regulatory entity making profits by administrating, exchanging, and controlling resources.

Finally, the last region is probably the most important for this research. Tierra Caliente (the hot land) is the origin, hometown, control area, and operation center of LFM and later LCT. Thus, it is not a coincidence that most of the legitimacy attempts registered for this research happened there, even when this is not a rule. In addition, around Tierra Caliente area there are other emerging agro-industrial complexes producing raspberries, blackberries, mulberries and loganberries, this is an industry supported by transnational capital. The export of Mexican berries has been growing since 2010 at rates over 30%. The largest market for Mexican berries is the United States, where 97.1% of imported berries come from Mexico; followed by the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Italy (Stupkova, 2016).[22] In the past people complained about the state’s difficulty to access this area together with Tierra Caliente. According to González y González, this is a “[…] region that ‘[d]ue to its isolation from well-trodden roads has earned the epithet Netherworld and been nicknamed ‘the abyss

[22] Michoacán has been for decades a national and worldwide berries producer and exporter. However, as happened with the avocado, the increasing demand for these fruits in recent years pushed producers to focus on this market. Indeed, together with the United States, Canada, and European countries, China has become a major consumer to which Michoacán producers have looked for supplying their demand.

of the globe' [moreover] more than remote […] it was virtually inaccessible because of the sierras, crags and ravines that surround it'; a place that caused such wonderment that it came to be catalogued 'as a house of horrors'" (González, 1991, 108 quoted by Aranda, 2013b, 47-48).

After that prompt recognition of the regions, this analysis continues tracing how violence phenomena happened in specific places within Michoacán. This work is conducted through the municipalities' homicide rate calculations with INEGI data. The rate calculations were made by a thousand inhabitants to make all the registers comparable between them. In the following maps, this data is presented for the years of 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015, and show how this variable evolved during this research (2005 to 2014). In other words, this goes from the first LFM struggles against the other criminal groups based then in Michoacán, until the second and definitive death of Nazario, which resulted in a transformation of the local criminal groups´ legitimacy setting. In the middle, several relevant events related to legitimacy struggles happened in Michoacán (see Table 3).

Table 3. Michoacán's Legitimacy Events Timeline

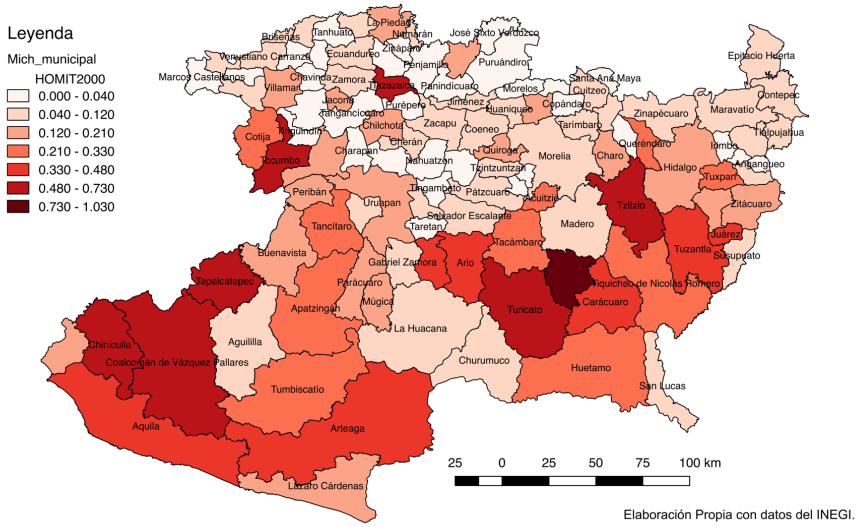
2006	September	LFM dropped the severed heads in the Uruapan´s nightclub.
	November	Publishing of the paid advertisement in local newspapers.
	December	The former president, Felipe Calderón, declared war on drugs.
2007	January	The Joint Operative Michoacán was launched.
2008	September	The grenade event in Morelia´s downtown.
2009	May	The federal government imprisoned 28 local public officers without judgment through the *Michoacanazo* strategy.
	December	The first death of Nazario happened.
2010	March	The change from LFM to LCT.
	And onwards	Religious rituals around of San Nazario, together with the spread of a series of published books by the criminal groups (this is analyzed in the last section of this chapter).
2011	April	Indigenous rebellion in the municipality of Cherán, located in the avocado region.
2013	February	First groups of vigilantes (*Autodefensas*) appeared in Michoacán, specifically in the region of Tierra Caliente
	January	The federal government sent a special commissioner, Alfredo Castillo (trusted person to current president Enrique Peña Nieto) who became the Commissioner for the Security and Integral Development of Michoacán (more of this together with Cherán and vigilantes events is explained later).

2014	January	The *Acuerdos de Tepalcatepec* (agreement of Tepalcatepec) was signed between the federal government and vigilantes groups. Through this document, the vigilantes were legalized and became official local police.
	April	Second and definitive Nazario´s death and the resultant change in the local criminal group´s legitimacy attempts setting.

Source: Overview based on newspaper reports.

The 2000 map works as a background context – given that none of the events related to this research had appeared yet. However, certain trends were already happening since then, such as the high levels of homicide in the Pacific coast, in Tierra Caliente, and mountain ranges. In particular, three regions violence is especially linked: the coast, the Northern Mother mountain range and Tierra Caliente. Within those zones, both LFM and LCT were positioned (even when they performed activities in practically the whole state of Michoacán). Moreover, in two cases there is a correlation between the highways and the municipalities with high homicide rates. The first one is on the coast. Except for 2005, both Lázaro Cárdenas (port municipality) and Aquila (the northern coast neighbor municipality) always displayed high rates.

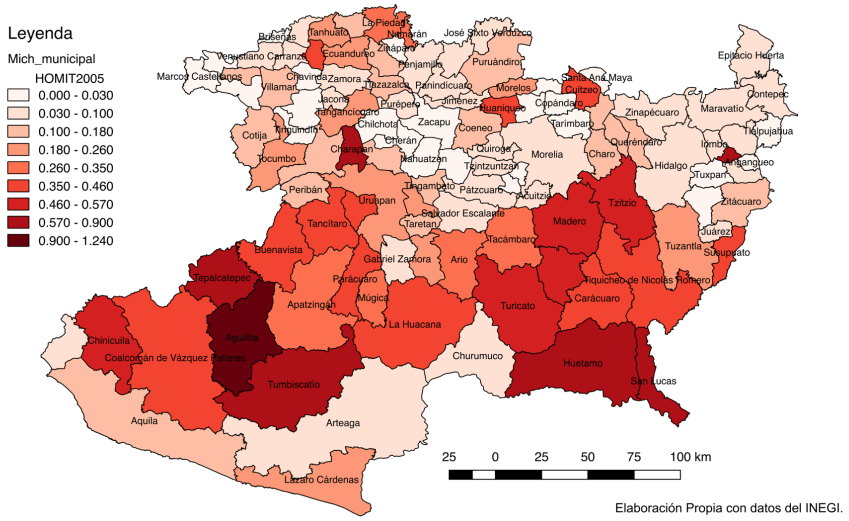
Map 2. Homicide Rate in Michoacán per Municipality, 2000 (INEGI)



Source: Built with data from INEGI.

The second case is precisely the set of roads connecting Tierra Caliente with the capital city, Morelia, especially those going from Apatzingán and La Huacana. The relevance of highways for criminal enterprises is not exclusive for Michoacán but for Mexico and the hemisphere as well. More about this and the role of the Mexican government will be explored in the following chapter, as part of the specific LFM and LCT political legitimacy sources and resources.

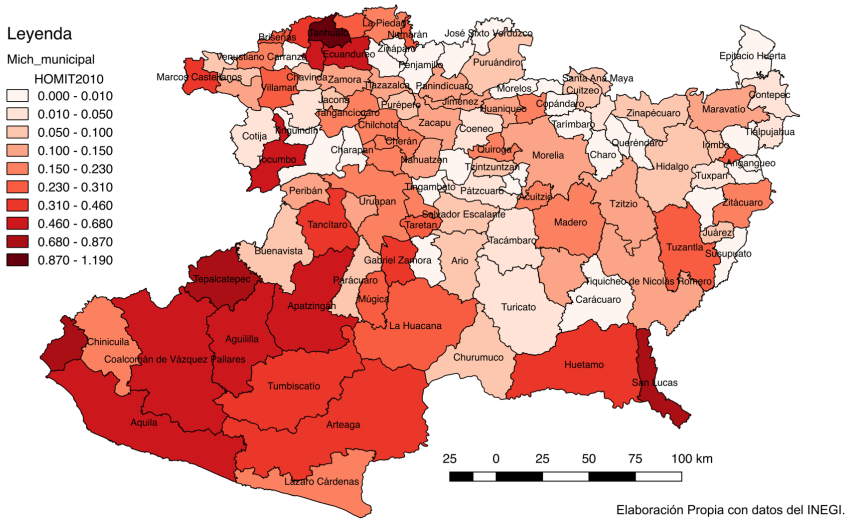
Map 3. Homicide Rate in Michoacán per Municipality, 2005 (INEGI)



Source: Built with data from INEGI.

Highways become relevant when considering that the region's primary transportation occurs through these paths (as in the country in general), given the absence of trains and the high costs of air travel. Hence, from a logistical point of view, illicit flows require the efficient use and control of transportation resources in order to keep the business moving on. During 2005, two analytical angles stated earlier need to be considered. The first one is the violent fight between the Zetas, the criminal group that had a significant presence in the state, and LFM, which was recently created. The second angle is the substantial increase in the state homicide rate, which was the higher during the analyzed period in this research (see Figure 1). Some elements such as the displays of violence might suggest a connection between both cases.

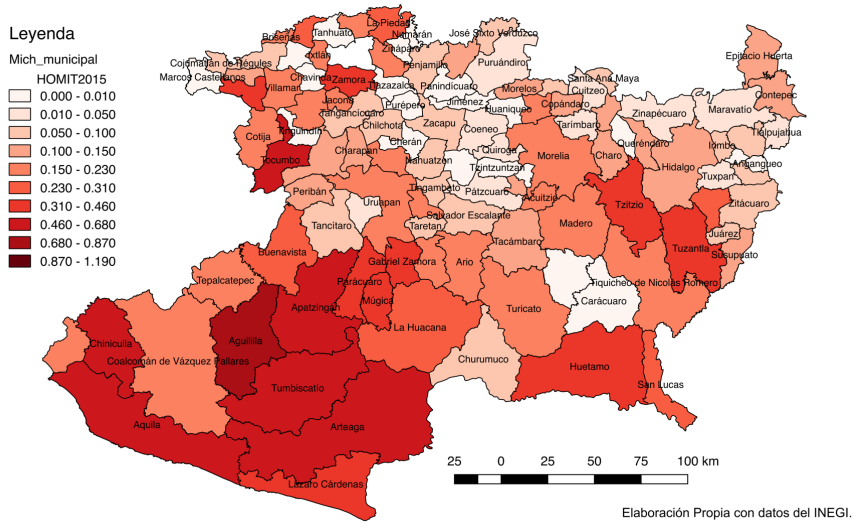
Map 4. Homicide Rate in Michoacán per Municipality, 2010 (INEGI)



Source: Built with data from INEGI.

Finally, for 2010 there is a sharp connection between the southern and coast rates (mostly from Tierra Caliente), together with the northern rates. In other words, if a vertical line is drawn on the map, the right side shows higher homicide rates than the left side (see Map 4). In 2010, after the first death of Nazario, no civil resistance appeared in Michoacán. These cases came up in the coming years. Finally, in 2015, Michoacán still is a violent state even after the last death of Nazario. Meanwhile, Tierra Caliente, the coast, and the southern mountains continue with the same high levels. For this year, LCT has been affected because of the open fronts including struggles with the army, the Mexican marine, the federal police, vigilantes, and even the indigenous rebellion in Cherán. In the meantime, a new criminal group from the state of Jalisco, started operating in Michoacán without an interest in becoming legitimate but in controlling the territory to administrate illicit business (Flores, 229). That resulted in a considerable increase in violence, especially in the northern part of Michoacán, in the Michoacán-Jalisco mountain range. During this time, local criminal groups still had operations and disputes but without becoming a single cohesive group.

Map 5. Homicide Rate in Michoacán per Municipality, 2015 (INEGI)



Source: Built with data from INEGI.

The next section is the last one dedicated to offering analytical elements to understand the local context. Before beginning a legitimacy analysis, another kind of mapping is required: the one in which the principal key actors involved in the local legitimacy struggles are located, described, and identified.

3.2.2. Cartography of a Pre-supposed Sovereign: State-effect, Statehood, and Sovereign Practices

This research is guided by the idea that, in Michoacán, it is not that there is no state, nor that it is weak. On the contrary, the primary characteristic is that there are too many actors with agency performing the role and function of the state. Michoacán could be seen as a case of "formations of sovereignty", a political landscape in which several claims to sovereignty simultaneously struggle, coexist, and overlap (Stepputat 2015). This excess of statehood practices and discourses, as well as the rejection of the notion that violence is the result of a deficit of democracy, can help better understand what is happening in the region. This has several consequences concerning the local definition of political legitimacy. In a context like this, who is legitimate and who is not is under constant pressure and contest. These ideas help to realize that claims to legitimacy in Michoacán are a permanent negotiation between various audiences, including the non-legitimate, the newly legitimate, and the public.

The discussion can take many shapes: either when the criminal groups justify themselves because the government does not do its duty, vice-versa, or when vigilantes justify their weapons because criminals threaten them. Legitimacy is always explicitly or implicitly at stake. This work has been called 'the cartography of a pre-supposed sovereign', namely, local political actors. That name acknowledges that sovereignty is a practice, a negotiation, a performance that is contextual and in constant flux, as chapter 1 demonstrated. These actors are listed below together with an explanation of their local legitimacy struggle role between 2005 and 2015. Below some ideas and examples of sovereign practices of state functions are given. Except for the criminal groups for which the specific considerations are below, this is not an exhaustive study of these actors. Several different disciplines have investigated each of them. The following section briefly describe the main participants in the constellation of legitimacy during this research.

Criminal groups (particularly LFM and LCT). As said earlier, LFM appeared around 2005 and was explicitly displayed in 2006, and turned into LCT in 2011. However, criminal history in Michoacán did not start with these groups. During the 1980s, Michoacán suffered a major agricultural crisis as a consequence of the exponential growth of marijuana and poppy seed cultivation. The *Milenio* and *Los Valencia* cartels emerged and centralized drug production and trafficking and started massive transfer of cocaine from Colombia to Mexico and the United States. They had the support of several politicians and police officers until early 2000 when the Gulf Cartel, seeking control over the Michoacán region, sent its armed wing, the Zetas. In 2006, the local groups expelled Zetas from Michoacán, with the remaining forces from the *Milenio* cartel merging into LFM. After several years of negotiations and alliances with local power elites, the cartel managed to become a strong organization with transnational networks and State political connections, in addition to running multiple "social" programs in order to maintain popularity amongst the population. There are even reports of the cartel running small supermarkets where items were sold under the market value in order to "help" the community (Falko, 2015). This is actually part of the larger political legitimacy story, which is analyzed in detail in the following chapter.

After becoming LCT, this group, under the leadership of Nazario Moreno Gonzalez, turned out to be one of the most peculiar criminal organizations in the country. Nazario was known to act as a benefactor to schools, churches, farmers, and more. He also wrote books, devised a code of conduct for every member of the criminal gang, and even created his own local religious cult. LCT also went to great lengths to develop mechanisms and practices that would further legitimize its activities and presence. A good example is the quasi-judicial system implemented by LCT. Under this system, if a member of society engaged in what was considered deviant behavior (rape, stealing, etcetera) then a three-phase punishment system unfolded. In this system, first members of LCT approached the perpetrator for a "chat". Second, physical punishment (euphemism for torture) was given. And third, if the behavior persisted, or if the transgression was deemed too disruptive, then execution was carried out (Falko, 2015). This information will be explored as part of the legitimacy analysis, but here it is examined in terms of the sovereign practices and state-effects performances. Before continuing, however, a conceptual disclaimer must be highlighted again.

In addition to what was explained in the first chapter, by adopting this idea, we try to demystify Calderon's government hypothesis of "us" and "them", as if criminals were completely distinct and disconnected from the rest of the population. However, in the case of Michoacán, both LFM and later LCT made explicit efforts to portray, shape, and display the image of a cohesive, unitary, and distinguishable group when attempting to legitimate themselves. These attempts included initiation rituals and their own code of conduct, representing a particularity of this case. Moreover, and recalling Migdal's definition of the state, Michoacán's criminal groups were part of the "multiple parts" with their own specific practices. Both LFM and LCT coexisted with the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, i.e., the federal and local government. In Migdal's terms, they all shape the state as a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence.

Government (both local and federal). In Michoacán, some crimes were attempted to be transformed into social causes. The hypothesis of political decision-making vacuum as a condition that let criminal groups look for legitimacy regularly appears among the local perceptions. Some scholars have argued that the absence of the state in some regions of Michoacán is historical. This argument fits with the hypothesis that the state´s "heavy handed return" to Michoacán in the context of the war on drugs and a securitization strategy, later resulted in an increase in violence (Gledhill, 2003). This return has been reviewed through the previous section of this chapter. However, to highlight the role of the government (both local and federal) into specifically Michoacán´s legitimacy dynamic, three events are essential. They are: 1) the Joint Operative Michoacán, 2) the imprisonment of several municipal authorities by the federal government (*Michoacanazo*), and 3) the designation of a special commissioner from the federal government for being responsible for the local security.

These three events are helpful to understand how the government emerged again in a supposedly non-state context and performed the State face into a very specific manner. As said earlier, the Joint Operative made of Michoacán the first battlefield after the declaration of the war on drugs, and become the first moment in which the government involved into the local legitimacy struggle. After the violence and drug trafficking conditions in the state of Michoacán, and in the context described earlier, the federal government decided on a punitive strategy to solve the problem. Seven thousand army members were sent to Michoacán to combat this new fluid "enemy", organized crime (Becerril, 2012). The strategy did not consider health problems, or solutions such as rehab centers, education and employment policies, crime prevention, or conflict resolution. The strategy was war.

In the second place comes what the Mexican media called *Michoacanazo*. At the end of May 2009, the federal government decided to imprison 28 of Michoacán´s public officers without any judicial procedure. Ten municipal presidents, one judge, and sixteen others with high positions at the local level. Those public officers were accused of having links with organized crime structures, and the apprehensions order were carried out by the army and federal police officers (Zermeño, 2009). However, each of them was released because the authorities could not demonstrate any charges against not even one of them. Even more, the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) issued a recommendation to the federal institutions involved in the *Michoacanazo* (General Attorney of Mexico (PGR) and the Public Security Secretary (SSP)) for the human rights violations against these public officers (CNDH, 72/2009 recommendation). Even though the procedures were completely wrong from a legal perspective, they represent a new era in the relation between the federal and local government, marked by mistrust (Zermeño, 2009). The local authorities were now seen either as corrupt or inefficient by the federal authorities in Mexico City. Moreover, the *Michoacanzo* could be read as a particular state-effect and sovereign practice, this is, through performing authority, justice, and combat against the corrupt local authorities, members of organized crime.

Whether this was real or not, the legal procedure could not produce evidence. The relevance of the case does not seem to be in the justice generation but in the effect of making it appear the state was carrying out justice. The third and last moment happened in the context of the *Autodefensas* crisis explained above. Parallel to the rise of popularity of these vigilantes groups, a political crisis occurred in Michoacán with the resignation of the governor of the state, Fausto Vallejo, because of health problems. In this context, the federal government designed a special plan to intervene in the state with the appointment of a special commissioner for security in Michoacán. It was the creation of a sui generis charge. Alfredo Castillo, who was very close person to President Enrique Peña Nieto, was appointed to the position. It was an ad hoc legal instrument that allowed the federal government a direct say over local politics, including the relationships and negotiations with the self-defense groups

and its leaders. The most important consequence of the negotiation was the signing of the agreements of Tepalcatepec.

After months of talks between both, the Mexican federal government and the armed groups, the signing occurred in January 2014 and meant a schism between the leaders of the movement, because at that time not everyone agreed with the particularities of the agreement, particularly in the idea of trust and/or collaborate with the government. It was an event full of performativity by the Mexican State (Lampérière, 2007, 57) with two consequences, one symbolic and one practical, on which *Autodefensas* were registered (including their weapons, guns, ammo, etcetera) and received uniforms. The symbolic consequence was their legalization. The practical consequence was to provoke confrontations between *Autodefensas* leaders. Thus, they became uncoordinated and finally were immobilized and unable to have a unitary speech. The agreements contained eight points among which the vigilante groups would become part of the municipal police. Of course, those members or groups who did not agree with the agreements and continued carrying weapons and defending themselves became, from that moment, illegal. They were no longer carrying out self-defense but criminal activity. In general, the federal government never stopped participating in the definition who is legitimate by defining itself as the legitimate one. Violence, justice simulation, negotiation, and creating an internal enemy represent examples of the state-effect.

Cherán Rebellion Movement. Located almost two-hours away from Michoacán's capital, Cherán is a small town with a little over 18 thousand inhabitants (INEGI). Cherán is one of eleven municipalities that are inhabited by the Purépecha indigenous people. They speak the Purépecha language, as well as Spanish. In the early hours of April 11, 2011, the local women lead an upraising against criminals, public officers, and political party members (Interview in fieldwork no. 20, June 2016). The rest of the local population followed them and rose up to confront illegal loggers and organized crime members who have been working together to exploit the community's forest first for its wood and forest resources in general (Gasparello, 2018), and second, once the forest is depleted, to claim the land for farming — mostly avocado, lemon, berries, and marihuana. The local authorities were complicit and by the time of the uprising, more than 80% of the 27 thousand hectares had been stripped of its trees (Ventura Patiño, 2012, 160). The community came out victorious from that first confrontation and began a political battle, which consisted of the capture and detention of the illegal loggers, who were taken into custody for almost a week. The head of the government at the municipal level was also expelled from the town, as well as the municipal police and all the representatives from every political party. After this political battle, a legal battle followed.

The people of Cherán sought to secure a governing system closer to their own customs and ways of life. This is how they laid out the work for instating the "usos y costumbres" (traditions and customs) model. "Usos y costumbres" is a legal term denoting indigenous

customary law in Latin America. Since colonial times, authorities have approved of communal self-governments, the use of indigenous customary law and juridical practice, and basically local forms of rulership with varying degrees of acceptance and formality. In its contemporary form, this system is usually based on the selection of community representatives through consensus in community gatherings. This was how Cherán overthrew the municipal government, and began a legal battle, which took them to the Electoral Tribunal for Federal Judicial Power (*Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación*). The town's people were asking for future municipal elections to take place in a model based on their idea of an autonomous government, and without political parties. Given their violent context, their claims were heard, and The Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (*Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación*) which is the supreme court of Mexico and the head of the judicial branch of the Mexican federal government, consisting of eleven judges, voted in favor (10 in favor and 1 against) of Cherán's petition.

The state gave the *Concejo Mayor* or Elders Council legal authority to govern as the municipal government. This included its local community security forces, and granted access to state resources, including the Federal budget that every Mexican municipality receives. For the purposes of this paper, and as previously mentioned, we are analyzing two points for each case 1) how legitimization was built based on the audience sought to legitimize the movement; and 2) the ways in which each movement negotiated with authorities. For the first point, we find that Cherán sought legitimacy within the town's people only, never outside. It was a battle for and by Cherán. Its people didn't look for allies or sympathizers — at least not overtly, outside of its own limits. And support by the town's people was overwhelming. At the end of 2011, a few months after local people led by women rose up and took over, the Electoral Institute of Michoacán carried out informative meetings with the population of Cherán, to inform about the self-governing practice based on 'Usos y Costumbres'. Then in December a referendum took place so that people could choose whether they wanted to remain in the party system in place for decades or change to the communal self-governing system. The result was very clear, with 4,846 community members in favor of the self-governing system, and only eight against it (Ventura Patiño, 2012, 169).

According to a member of the Elder's Council, at some point, one of the most charismatic leaders in the self-defense movement, Manuel Mireles, came to Cherán seeking possibilities for an alliance. However, the town's people opted for keeping its distance and remained focused on its own process, which they considered to be "just", "legal", and "able to grant them many more rights, more than before" (Interview in fieldwork no. 20, June 2016). The second important point is the type of negotiation maintained with authorities. The people of Cherán's position was firm and never open to negotiating the terms. Since the beginning, there was no intention to negotiate or to align with any other actor or group. The people always maintained the intention to form an autonomous government system. There was never the intention to spread the movement to even neighboring towns or vicinities, even though

some of those towns are also indigenous Purépecha, and thus share the same language and culture. Up to this day, based on fieldwork recently conducted, the idea still remains, throughout the council, to abstain from forming alliances or cooperation outside of the town's border. There's an additional factor, which has worked as a cohesive force, and that is the threat of political parties wanting to return. This has brought the town together again now to defend their recently gained and legalized autonomy. In this case, the legitimacy struggle was both through legality and extra legal means. We are talking about a special legitimacy case, which happened through both descriptive and normative grounds.

Vigilantes. This group appeared in Michoacán in the beginning of 2013. They were mostly men from the *Tierra Caliente* region who wanted to fight directly against LCT because of their abuses. Regarding the so-called *Autodefensas*, Schneckener proposed a three-pronged militia profile depending on their formation type, objectives, and stakeholders. Initially, each of them plays with "borrowed legitimacy" from those actors who pursue the same objectives and foundational interest. However, the next steps depend on how they manage that borrowed legitimacy. The threefold profile explained by Schneckener is as follows: counter-insurgency, counter-rival, and counter-crime. This latter definition explains the Michoacán *Autodefensas* profile. According to him, in this latter: […] militia violence is part of the fight against organized crime and (alleged) 'criminals'. Militias see themselves as safeguards for 'law and order' which includes the physical protection of marketplaces, villages or urban neighborhoods, the deterrence, arrest and prosecution of (presumed) offenders, the fight against corruption, the support of the police and the judiciary, but also extra-legal measures and forms of vigilante justice. Thereby, militias claim they provide security and protect the property of citizens, but especially of certain interest groups […] who often act as sponsors and stakeholders (Schneckener, 2017, 809-810).

In early March 2013, two years after the start of the movement in Cherán, one of the most prominent Mexican newspapers reported the existence of 68 paramilitary groups in the same number of Mexican municipalities. Guerrero (27), Chiapas (11) and Michoacán (10) topped the list (Staff Reform, 2013). Their emergence had historical and contextual explanations. On the one hand, the historical distance with the official authority, mainly their idea of the state, opened the window for local people to carry out the task of creating or recovering public security. On the other hand, the recent events in the region were enough motivation for them to take the big decision of deciding between keeping living under the yoke of crime and risking their lives trying to beat the local criminal groups. Hipólito Mora, a lemon farmer from Michoacán, founded the first self-defense group in that state in February 2013, in La Ruana (Buenavista Tomatlán municipality). The group aimed to end extortion and violence generated by the LCT, even if that meant to negotiate, cooperate, or collaborate with the government, or to kill them directly. As Mora said, self-defense groups were willing to let the government rule once they finished with the criminals.

During an interview, Mora was asked, “Do you have the antidote for scorpion?” referring to LCT as an insect metaphor, "The antidote is the government, together with its citizens”. "Will you lay down arms, if the government asks?” Mora was questioned by the interviewer and he answered: "Only when they, the leaders of LCT, die or when they are in prison” (Zamarripa, 2013). Self-defense groups were able not only to expand territorially through Tierra Caliente area in Michoacán. In just a couple of years, they had a presence in a big part of the state, were recognized and visible in the rest of the country, and even overseas. For instance, during August 2013, the Center of Social Studies and Public Opinion of the Mexican Congress raised a survey on self-defense groups. There, 72% of respondents said they are aware that in some communities across the country have emerged armed civilian groups or the so-called self-defense groups, and 42% said they were agree or strongly agree with the struggle of those groups against organized crime (CESOP, 2013). The liberating and anti-crime speech of the self-defense groups leaders, their presence in national media and the sympathy and/or public recognition of their fight and some of its leaders (particularly to José Manuel Mireles and Mora himself) caused this rebel movement to become a matter of national public interest.

Gradually, people of other Michoacán towns, former criminals (specifically former members of LCT, the so called *perdonados* or "the forgiven"), among others, joined them. Nevertheless, the self-defense groups in Michoacán achieved sympathy among various sectors of Mexican society. Almost a year after being formed, in May 2014, a video entitled #TodosSomosAutodefensas (we all are *Autodefensas*) circulated on the Internet. Businesspeople, politicians, religious leaders, and members of social organizations joined the message, not only from Michoacán but also from all of Mexico. José Manuel Mireles Valverde became the most representative and charismatic leader, and received solidarity and sympathy from these groups. The “First Meeting of *Autodefensas*” followed that video. The reunion held in Mexico City, where Mireles and Mora met with movement´s supporters. Mireles said at that time: "Here we are in the center of Mexico, from here we speak out...let all over the world hear us, the self-defense of Michoacán are willing to defend Mexico" (quoted by Baranda; 2014). The search for local legitimacy had reached a national scope.

However, the crisis in the coming months started with the public-officer Alfredo Castillo´s appointment, whose capacity to negotiate with *Autodefensas* leaders became an effective tool for the federal government to participate in local Michoacán disputes. Castillo achieved the signature of the agreements of Tepalcatepec, and a consequent division between the *Autodefensas* leaders. Years later, in February of 2016, Michoacán´s governor declared (for the second time in less than one year) the end of the self-defense groups in the state: "From now on the work of so-called self-defense groups is completed. There are no more armed civilian groups doing that work, which only concerns to the government. Anyone who may want to do this task must do it illegally" (Aureoles quoted by García; 2016). Afterward, other actors such as farmers, peasants, religious leaders played a role in the criminal group’s

attempts at legitimation. In the following pages, these attempts are described and analyzed. Hence, the next chapter is specifically dedicated to analyze LFM and LCT legitimacy endeavors.

3.3. Closing Remarks: Chapter III Summary

After elaborating on Michoacán's political legitimacy context, the following are closing remarks derived from this third chapter. In the first place, the LFM/LCT phenomenon is connected to the war on drugs launched in Mexico in 2006. In the case of Michoacán, this iron-fisted punitive strategy set the basis for a political legitimacy struggle that implicated several actors – LFM and LCT among them. Increased violence around Michoacán becomes rationalized through the different versions of the local social order clash. The war on drugs had and still has real consequences in terms of multiple sovereign bodies performing simultaneous legitimacy practices. In other words, Michoacán became a particularly contested legitimacy scenario. On the side of the Mexican federal government, Michoacán became a relevant symbolic war arena not only because was it the home state of the president, but also because the first army deployment was launched there.

On the side of the local criminal groups, but more particularly LFM, two particular actions were recovered in this chapter. Both matter deeply in terms of their political legitimacy interest at the beginning of Michoacán´s case analysis – during the following years, there were a collection of actions in this regard, but they are revisited in the next chapter. On the one hand, the event in which LFM dropped the heads of their alleged enemy, a rival and foreign criminal group. LFM left a *narcomanta* with a justification of illegality. It was not only the agenda´s spread but also crime justification and public explanation pointing to a legitimacy interest. On the other hand, the text published in the local newspaper and reproduced here was another action in which elements of locality and moral values were spread and addressed to the local people. Other political actors also emerged and had a presence in the field by clashing for the local social order definition.

Autodefensas, the people of Cherán, as well as the local and federal government are the prominent examples in this regard. LFM and later LCT were embedded in the same social context. Even when the analysis here centers on criminal groups, their legitimacy performance always takes place in relation to these other agencies. Michoacán became an intense arena to contest political legitimacy. The place experienced a saturation of authority practices (codified into sovereignty exercise, state-effect, statehood practices). This condition only increased through the next years when other social agents also took part. Within this context, from a general political legitimacy evaluation, Michoacán is appreciated by the simple equation of many actors, many of them state actors. As a result of the political legitimacy contestation, the context exhibited a multiplicity of authority and not an absence

of it. Each of the political actors in the social order constellation of Michoacán performed sovereign as well as political legitimacy practices.

Chapter 4.
The Art of Dying Twice: Legitimacy Sources and Resources of La Familia and Los Caballeros Templarios

Although the politics of legitimacy are usually relevant for political actors, in some instances armed actors might also seek to establish social order and acquire broad support. In particular, legitimacy becomes indispensable for criminal groups pretending to improve their "[…] self-understanding ('who we are') and [self] placement into a wider historical and societal context" (Schneckener, 2017, 804). This idea is useful to guide the analysis of Michoacán criminal groups´ legitimacy campaigns. By studying LFM and LCT's politics of legitimacy, this chapter discusses: 1) their influence and participation in the definition of local social order; 2) the construction of a legitimacy audience; and 3) the sources and resources composing and building the group´s identity – inside the organization as well as how this identity was embedded in an extensive socio-historical context. In the case of Michoacán, local criminal groups made attempts, endeavors, displays, and practices that provide plenty of material for a study of the politics of legitimacy. In other words, LFM and LCT made use of the descriptive angle by attempting legitimacy without abandoning their illicit condition. Below, these efforts are systematized, explained, and analyzed across this chapter as empirical references related to the previous conceptual discussion.

From 2006 to 2014, both LFM and LCT developed a language of legitimacy (including speeches, messages, symbols, and rituals) which in turn shaped practices of legitimacy. How so? The answer does not rest exclusively on the shoulders of these illegal agents but in their contexts as well, including the other social agents involved in contesting legitimacy (together with their audiences). Therefore, the investigation needs to go from the general to the particular. In other words, it is first required to detect and describe the extended legitimacy context. It then becomes possible to situate the criminal groups' legitimacy performance itself. The review of the general legitimacy panorama was made in the previous chapter, including the aforementioned formations of sovereignty contestation (Stepputat, 2010). Thus, here we can review and analyze the legitimacy endeavors performed by these criminal groups within that time and space. Most of the data come from fieldwork, specifically through semi-structured interviews carried out in the cities of Michoacán, Zamora, Uruapan, and Cherán — all in Michoacán and Mexico City.[23] In addition, material objects collected during fieldwork complete primary sources complemented with secondary sources such as local, national, and international newspapers, and specialized literature as well.

The analysis has been guided through the sources and resources of legitimacy categorized in the second chapter (Table 1), together with the concepts' instrumentation previously

[23] Given the topics of this research and the questions during the interviews, anonymity was promised to every informant independently of their willingness or not for being quoted anonymously.

discussed. First the "Symbolic" sources are explored, followed by the "Performance-centered" sources, and ending with the "Portrayal of the enemy" sources. Each type of source is later divided into subtypes, each of which consists of material and non-material resources depending on how each endeavor was empirically carried out. Afterward comes a special section, which consists of a detailed analysis of the LFM and LCT editorial production. During the period studied here, at least five books were written, edited, published, and spread on behalf of or supporting these criminal groups' activities and their members, especially its leader. This phenomenon is, at least, original within the specter of criminality around the world and in the recent history. These books run across the three types and subtypes of legitimacy sources identified within this research. Hence, symbolic, performance-centered, and representational portrayals of the enemy are identified and explained in this section. Even when several elements coming from these books take part in the first section, a particular revision of them is realized in the second section as an example of a legitimation attempt that cuts across the sources and resources of legitimacy (summarized in the Table 4).[24]

Table 4. Summarized Operative Distribution of Legitimacy Sources for Criminal Groups

Main Source	Subtype Source
Symbolic	Social Contract Offer
	Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification
	Symbols Spread
Performance-centered	Provision of Governing Institutions
	Philanthropy (Carrots)
	Coercion (Sticks)
Portrayals of the Enemy	Expressions against Formal Authorities
	Expressions against Other (non-formal) authorities
	Stance towards current Law

4.1. *La Familia* and *Los Templarios:* Sources and Resources of Legitimacy

[24] These editions are named here the "criminal editorial production". The analysis is conducted in the second section of this chapter and seeks to understand how the books worked for building the identity of the criminal group, constituting their narrative, and justifying their criminal agency and activities.

Before delving into the analysis of criminal groups and the war on drugs, three characteristics of the social context should be emphasized: religiosity, masculinity, and the Mexican social and economic crisis.[25] These elements need to be treated separately because they shape the general Mexican scenario, and not exclusively Michoacán. Moreover, their relevance is due to how they shaped the socio-political background in which, in this specific case, LFM and LCT displayed their legitimacy interest. In the first places comes religiosity. Mexicans are not becoming less religious but less Catholic. Although Mexico is one of the most Catholic countries, Catholicism is currently suffering a historical crisis of believers. According to the 2010 census, almost ninety-three million of Mexicans declared themselves Catholic plus eleven million more professing other religion (INEGI, 2010). At the beginning of the twentieth century, 99.5% of the total population in Mexico was Catholic; in 2010, the percentage decreased to 82.7% (DataR, 2018, with information from INEGI, 2010). In other words, it is not that Catholics stopped their faith altogether but that most of them converted to another religion or cult. In 2010, only 4.7% to 17.3% of non-Catholics declared themselves atheists; the rest were Protestants, Pentecostals, Evangels, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other sects (DataR, 2018, with information from INEGI, 2010). The national faith context is still Christian.[26]

The second element is *machismo*. This needs to be understood as result and producer of a generalized gender violence context. In addition to the enormous but countless cases (due to the lack of data produced by the denounces absence) of domestic violence suffered by women, the war on drugs context dramatically expanded the cases of women victims. Indeed, although during these contexts homicide victims largely consist of men, "[...] it does not imply that homicides against women have not increased" (Zepeda, 2016b). As a consequence, increasing homicide among men corresponds with the rate among women, although perpetrators tend to be men or, at least, violence happens in a context of hyper-masculinity (Interview in the field no. 6, 2017). As a reaction, together with NGOs´ assistance, local congresses around the country had created and launched gender alerts, a public policy addressing to use human, legal, and financial resources in order to tackle the violence against women. So far, to the moment in which this research was worked, 56% of Mexican territory is under gender alert (Conavim, 2019).[27] Collaterally, this public policy strategy has become an indicator of how bad the situation within a given region is.

[25] As social features of Mexico and Michoacán in particular (religiosity, machismo, and the crisis) have a dialectic function in the LFM and LCT legitimation performance: they make sense of many of these legitimacy practices, which in turn also produce consequences in the local social order.

[26] Indeed, this contextual factor is essential because LCT drew in their legitimacy claims of prior existing Christian symbolism and imagery (see Picture 1 in the Appendix).

[27] The Gender Alert against Women Violence (*Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres*) is the public policy mechanism used in Mexico to face and eradicate violence against women in a given territory. It includes designing and promoting actions, protocols, and budgets to prevent and eliminate this type of violence. In order to be decreed, it needs to be requested by local, national, or international organizations based in diagnosis and should be approved by local congresses.

In Michoacán, gender alerts started in June of 2016 and were promoted by Circe López, a local NGO leader who later was accused of defamation after denouncing sexual abuse accusations against a university teacher who participated in the group in charge of promoting the gender alert (Redacción Animal Político, 2018). Finally, the last relevant social element to describe the context concerns the political and economic crisis that took place in Mexico during the eighties and nineties. In Galtung's terms, structural violence took the form of neoliberal economic transformations increased exclusion (1990). Along with the dismantling of social and economic rights, privatizations, and accelerated electoral democratization, also increased generalized crime, suicides, undocumented migration to the United States, and gender violence, as was the case in Ciudad Juárez (Fuentes Díaz y Fini, 2018, 14). The consequences of this crisis in the mid and long term were marginalization, humiliation, and denigration of the subjects, which generated structural violence that eventually led to both cultural and direct violence (Galtung, 1990, 295). In the case of Michoacán, this machismo and gender roles featured prominently in the behavior of the local criminal groups.

Now the analysis addresses the specific criminal groups´ legitimacy attempts in which their influence is a more or less evident. This section pays special attention to "[…] capturing 'state effects' in a range of sites. This involves studying how state-like institutions and practices produce […] 'isolation', 'identification', 'legibility', and 'spacialization' effects – creating publics, interpellating subjects, classifying and regulating collectivities and producing jurisdictions with territorial boundaries" (Jaffe, 2013, 736). As said before, this legitimation trajectory investigation starts in 2006, when LFM dropped their enemies' heads in a local nightclub. This action should be understood as the first legitimacy attempt. As a violent exhibition of beating the enemy, it also exhibited a sort of self-presentation by naming the enemy, i.e., who they are not. That was a traditional differentiation ritual between "them" and "us" (Todorov, 2007), but also as a distinction between "friend" and "enemy" (Schmitt, 2001). The argument of an external threat to the local interests (i.e., the local rivalry criminal group Los Zetas) motivated this first attempt at drawing the line between two allegedly different criminal groups. On the one hand, one with local roots and social cause (LFM), and on the other, a foreigner and selfish group non-engaged with local development, i.e., the Zetas – criminal group initially constituted by Mexican army former members (see about this Correa-Cabrera, 2017 as well as Aguayo and Dayán, 2018).

This argument was spread by LFM discourse, in which the Zetas played the role of the foreign threat that was exclusively taking advantage of the locals. A couple of months after the nightclub event, an insertion appeared in two local newspapers as a sort of peaceful introduction to locals (the entire text was transcribed in the last chapter). However, this message needs to be placed into the same legitimation track. In this case, the discourse inside this prose worked as LFM's explanation and justification of criminal activities in order to apprise locals of their reasons and origins. The two events launched this criminal political

legitimacy process that seemed to start declining as of the first half of 2014, when, Nazario, the criminal group leader was beaten. However, those attempts became intensified when LFM turned into LCT, as will be seen later.[28]

In the manifesto published in 2005 by LFM, the criminal group was self-described as "[...] native workers of the Tierra Caliente [...] organized by the necessity to get out of the oppression [and] humiliation" from other cartels. Moreover, following the same document, their mission was to "eradicate" crimes from Michoacán, and motivated by their "[...] love to our state [Michoacán]". Their objective, they stated, was to maintain "[...] the universal values of the people" (La Familia Michoacana, 2006). According to Wolff, "[…] the lack of regular and effective state presence in a given community is the primary condition under which some form of non-state entities will develop authoritative functions, whether in response to residents seeking order and material welfare or an imposition on them" (2015, 21). Criminals may or may not try to fill this gap. In this case, a complex overlapping and struggling between criminal groups and other local agents shaped the scenario.

Following Claessen, due to the short but intense period of disputes, LFM and LCT kept mostly in the track of legitimation rather than reaching the legitimate condition (1988). As a result, these criminal groups privileged the over-exposition as a visibility strategy towards building a legitimate authority. The following section explicitly attempts to describe and explain this process through the state-effects coming out from both LFM and LCT after that kick-off legitimation interest described before. During fieldwork, these practices were nuclear ideas to look for. Following the idea, those state-effects are also explained as practices of sovereignty and legitimacy that fill, compete, challenge, or withdraw authority presence in the local context. This methodological model structures the following sections. The first one centers the analysis in describing and analyzing Michoacán´s criminal groups' legitimacy attempts through the effective distribution of legitimacy sources and resources for criminal groups explained in the second chapter (Table 1). Each practice is examined and categorized as legitimacy resources belonging to a particular legitimacy source. Symbolic

[28] LFM and LCT efforts toward becoming self-published, publicly advertised and plainly notorious is a feature that distinguishes them from other mafias and criminal groups. Possibly the most prominent efforts in this regard rotate around Nazario Moreno, both groups former leader. A material and immaterial collection give prove of this and shape a collection of legitimacy sources and resources. Both LFM and LCT constitute a sort of *continuum*. Despite Aranda called LCT "[…] a new [criminal] group" (2013b, 62) this research encountered that both LFM and LCT took part of the same group given their legitimation continuity, but in different stages. Thus, in the most radical perspective, here we are not talking about two different groups, but two stages enclosed into one legitimation history. In the first place, the legitimation endeavors around the period from 2006 to 2010 correspond to LFM. Later, after Nazario Moreno´s false assassination, the following legitimation events can be attributed to LCT and up to 2014, when government agents finally assassinated Nazario. Hence, this person together with his character robustly influenced the legitimating profile and process.

sources come first, followed by the Performance-centered sources, and finishing with the Portrayal of enemies sources.[29]

4.1.1. Symbolic Sources

LFM and LCT continually promoted themselves as criminal or political groups, which offers material for an analysis of symbolic legitimacy. Initially, LFM displayed efforts to gain locals´ sympathy. In this regard, secrecy and discretion did not seem to be an option; on the contrary, the most visible seemed the best option to announce the criminal group´s presence and declare legitimacy as the collective accreditation of political authority. Symbolic sources played a relevant role. This phenomenon becomes interesting from the criminal and political legitimacy point of view: although criminals, both groups preferred to be publicly observed as part of their legitimacy strategy. Between not being perceived by formal authorities, and being seen by locals to gain acceptance, Michoacán´s criminal groups seemed to choose the latter. Material and immaterial symbols were deeply relevant towards addressing this objective, either by promising or building social contract benefits for locals and spreading material and non-material discourses. Following Table 1, the symbolic sources are categorized into three subtypes: proposed social contract, agenda´s spread and/or justification, and symbol's spread.

4.1.1.1. Proposed Social Contract

The "proposed social contract" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) granting public services (material resource), b) promoting belonging and cohesiveness, and a trustworthy mandate (non-material resources). In this regard, no material resources were detected in this research (in the sense of public services granting), whereas there were massive efforts fitting in the non-material specter. Here, social contract offering bases its symbolism on the criminal groups' endeavors for establishing the basis for a shared destiny understanding under their lead. Following this idea, belonging is probably one of the most apparent elements behind this legitimacy subtype source, i.e., the criminal group's offering of a social contract. This could even be understood as a negotiation with locals. Both LFM and LCT discourses are full of references to local elements – from introducing themselves as genuine *michoacanos*, to using local heroes and symbols as part of their discourse. Actually, is locality that built the political legitimacy *continuum* between LFM and LCT. Moreover, the discursive use of foreigners (blaming other cartels such as the Zetas or the local Valencia cartel for not taking care of Michoacán and its people) worked in order to consolidate this

[29] With relative differences, and according to several interviews carried out, each of these attempts failed more sooner than later. Thus, locals realized that this criminal group was not different from "the rest", referring to other criminal groups. Hence, locals started expecting the same violence and abuses, which finished with any possibility of a trustworthy mandate. In this regard, the political legitimacy analysis mostly rests on those first attempts rather than in their further consequences.

local identity (Lomnitz, 2016b, 23). LFM and LCT pushed a discourse towards creating an othering conflict.[30] Within the manifesto published by LFM in November of 2006, the group introduced themselves as "[…] native workers of the Tierra Caliente region in the state of Michoacán" (La Familia Michoacana, 2006). This was the beginning of LFM and LCT local philosophy:

> [LCT and LFM promoted] a very local philosophy, in which Michoacán has the right to protect ourselves, and we as Michoacán people have the right to decide on our future and that no external forces could come to harm us, or to control us. And it was a philosophy that consisted of loving our neighbor, and for looking after the poorest people [...] suddenly they seemed to have good intentions, and Nazario developed a whole doctrine with philanthropic aspects, he went into the communities [...] There were many communities mainly in Tierra Caliente that protested when Calderón said that he had killed El Chayo [...] then at the beginning it was very peaceful and everything seemed done with good intentions. [For instance] There were aspects in this regard such as the absolute prohibition of crystal-meth consuming (Interview in field no. 1, 2017).

Again and again, references to locality, protection, and belonging shaped a discourse attempting to build trust and reliability on the criminal group – starting from the idea of the family as a cohesive trustworthy unit. The idea of family works as a secure shelter. On the other hand, LFM did try to create a trustworthy mandate by spreading several statements expressing that they will not damage children, women, or "innocent people". Ironically, LFM and LCT attempted to ban (certain) substances consumption, which in the end was the same as any legal government stands in the world. The banning of crystal meth consumption for local people and (especially) their members, is an example in this regard –despite, as said before, that enormous profits resulted from selling this drug mainly to the United States (Interview in the field no. 1, 2017). Moreover, the LCT code also forbade its members from drinking alcohol. In the same sense, but concerning LFM, according to local versions, this criminal group was chasing and punishing common thieves in the region of Tierra Caliente (Interview in field no. 2, 2017). Indeed, this feature concerns the security provision analyzed in detail later, but from the perspective of a trustworthy mandate, it was an action that pointed to achieving political legitimacy – this security provision also works as a material resource. These were actions linked to governance pretentions explained in their agenda.

4.1.1.2. Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification

The "agenda´s spread and/or justification" subtype source of legitimacy becomes expressed through a) publications and written codes (material resources), and b) founding narratives, songs, anthems, and public messages (non-material resources). Spreading a criminal agenda does not necessarily mean justifying it. However, in this case, both actions seemed to go with

[30] As it is explained later as part of the "portrayal of the enemy" source, and in the criminal editorial production analysis, especially these criminal groups corresponded the Mexican federal government discourse during the war on drugs in terms of creating an artificial social division between "us" against "them".

each other. Flashing back to this legitimacy trajectory, when LFM dropped their enemies' heads, the *narcomanta* accompanying them stated: "this is divine justice". This statement is relevant regarding several legitimacy sources and resources; it concerns a wide range of them, from a trustworthy mandate, a public message, justice managing (including security provision and sanctioning), fear spreading, and a general violence administration attempting. Moreover, values diffusion and moral beliefs were spread within the discourse when the *narcomanta* stated that, LFM, "[…] does not kill for pay, it does not kill women, it does not kill innocent people. Only those who must die will die". In the case of the published text in local newspapers, something similar can be appreciated. By publishing "About us", their "Mission", the main "Objective", and "Why" the group was made up, LFM fully spread and explained their agenda. Around these statements, contradictions took place between the criminal group's sayings and actions, but from an anthropological perspective, it does not matter if this was true or not but how these messages were displayed.

The LCT´s superlative agenda´s dissemination happened four years after the LFM newspaper manifesto and that first *narcomanta* in Uruapan. By distributing their code (*El Código de los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán*), a pseudo-religious booklet reviewed in detail later, LCT announced not only their creation but also their moral values and general objective. In this case, it is interesting to observe that the audience seems to point towards LCT´s members rather than locals or the general population. However, this contrasts with the fact that the booklet distribution precisely aimed to reach locals rather than only or exclusively criminal group members. The booklet appeared in bus stops, outside houses, in local markets and minimarkets, and in public spaces (Interview in field no. 7, 2017). Indeed, for many locals receiving or only noticing the code, this was a sign of fear or alert. That was a reasonable reaction considering that, at this point, the criminal group (former LFM) had had bad experiences when managing other social contracts. Besides, violence levels in the whole state of Michoacán substantially increased during this period, i.e., from 2006 to 2010 (SESNSP and INEGI, figures one to five in Chapter III).

However, the agenda´s spread went further beyond the *narcomanta*, the newspaper presentation, and the code. Every one of the published texts had a relevant aspect in this regard and attempted to publicize and underline the group´s agenda. Each of these books is carefully analyzed below. Meanwhile, the criminal group leader's memoir offered a full explanation of his actions and beliefs together with his influence on the criminal group actions and decisions. The criminal group also allegedly paid a local journalist to "tell their truth" without being influenced by the federal government interests (Interview in field no. 1, 2017). Several videos currently available on YouTube were uploaded to several Internet sites. In most of them, Servando Gómez, nicknamed "La Tuta", the second leader in charge, showed himself escorted by several armed men while explaining, justifying, and making several statements around the so-called war on drugs launched by the Mexican federal government, including the criminal group's public security diagnosis.

Finally, regarding the "agenda´s spread and/or justification" as a source of legitimacy, LCT created and published an anthem, a non-material resource which takes part in the mentioned source. Even when folkloric songs dedicated especially to LCT were released, there is a singular video uploaded to YouTube, this is, the "*Himno OFICIAL de los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacan*" (OFFICIAL Anthem of the Knights Templars of Michoacán),[31] whose lyrics states as following while martial music sounds:

I am a Knight Templar,
a soldier to the order of the temple,
I do represent the oppressed peoples´ feelings in this nation.
I am a Templar fighter,
everything for a better world,
I was pointed, I was rejected,
and several times humiliated,
that is why I am Now I am a rebel,
A rebel from the heart,
[…]
I do have an impeccable conduct,
because I do have to respect everybody
protecting every Christian,
and always looking for the truth
[…]
helping the helpless will always be the objective
[…][32]

Again, the "rebel" role is underlined by claiming to defend a social cause. The lyrics combine an implicit defense of a criminal stance, together with a portrayal of LCT as the representatives of the nation´s oppressed people. The war language is present as well by using the idea of the soldier. Religious references appear in these lyrics such as the Christian defense, but also by presenting an individual who was previously humiliated and came back as a social protector. The purpose of this anthem is not clear, but it clearly appeals to political legitimacy with these constituents. Of course, these attempts were complemented by the performance-centered legitimacy sources, which are more practical than symbolic.

4.1.1.3. Dissemination of Symbols

The "symbols spread" subtype source of legitimacy becomes expressed through a) identity symbols in ornaments and documents (material resources), and b) rituals, values, moral beliefs, and religiosity (non-material resources). On the last floor of SEDENA´s (National

[31] Available on YouTube, uploaded by the user "Guardia Michoacana CT", on May 11, 2012, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6RbZjP_h_4, consulted on June 12, 2018
[32] This is my translation from Spanish.

Defense Secretary) headquarters, in Mexico City, the Mexican Army created the Museum of Narcotics. Not open to the public, this place was designed to show the troops' and army's efforts to eradicate drug trafficking in Mexico. The last section in this museum is called "*Narcocultura*" (Narco-culture), and one of the main pieces is a shrine together with a saint image, a sword, and a golden book: pieces of the LCT material resources of symbols spread, i.e., the criminal identity symbols in ornaments and documents. The image is of Saint Nazario, and the book is the code. Gold and other expensive jewelry can be seen in the image, the shrine, beside a sword and the main edition of the code with its cover and sheets made of gold.[33] The religious side of LCT deserves special attention, especially the role of *San Nazario*, i.e., LCT leader´s self-sanctification.

In this regard, together with the editorial production, LCT was original enough to develop their unique morality together with its religious symbols and rituals. The political legitimation relevance around these phenomena takes to the moral usage towards affiliating and convincing new and old members. After Nazario´s "first death", in December of 2010, even when the person did not die, a saint was born, i.e., San Nazario. How do religion and criminal groups come together? When mixing Michoacán's case with the political legitimacy lens, interesting analytical advantages pop up. Across all these criminal group attempts to perpetuate their rule, one of them was produced from a religious perspective. Nazario consistently presented himself as a strong man and iconized leader, which also worked as a mechanism to legitimize him and the criminal group in general. By taking advantage of the confusion arising from that alleged death of its leader, this criminal group developed a religious narrative together with Christian-medieval imagery based on the personal-cult of this person, Nazario Moreno, now Saint Nazario.[34]

Moreover, the "Templar" seal needs special attention. Also known as the Order of Solomon's Temple, the Knights Templar were a Catholic military order active in Europe between the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. To some extent, the Templars were related to the crusades, historical battles in which the faith of Europe was decided between Christianity and Islam. Around the Templars had existed an imaginary of mystery, secret society and, furthermore, faith loyalty. There is no doubt about how this imaginary inspired, at least, the aesthetics of LCT and particularly Saint Nazario's creation. Michoacán criminals adopted the uniform and created discourses, symbols, and codes following this historical reference. The Saint Nazario phenomenon needs to be inserted into this context. Even when it is not possible to prove or

[33] Additionally, gold made up medallions confected with the Templars´ cross, as well as guns and rifles with the same characteristics could be seen in this Museum. See the Pictures 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

[34] The local context plays a fundamental role and, as explained earlier, Christianity continues to work as a powerful source of bonding. Beyond Nazario´s commitments, across all religious settings, Christianity makes sense in a scenario in which strict the Catholic faith might somehow decrease, but in which people might still stick to a moldable Christian imaginary despite variations – as with Santa Muerte or Jesús Malverde (Aguiar, 2018).

not saint Nazario´s and its cult success, the Templar religion sought recruitment (Lomnitz, 2016a), which reveals a substantive part of its political legitimacy perspective. Saint Nazario´s cult developed the image of a white bearded man looking alike Jesus Christ, but wearing the medieval Knight Templars uniform with a big red cross in a white tunic.[35]

Together with the image of San Nazario, the *Código de Los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán* took part in this religious display and legitimacy performance. The code worked in a similar way to the Taliban's code of conduct, the so-called *Taliban La'iha*, or the "criminal constitution" of the Brazilian criminal group *Primeiro Comando da Capital*. The former worked as the Taliban code of conduct. Even when in practice all kinds of abuses occurred, through the code the terrorist group controlled the rank while attempted to prevent or limit the emergence of rogue elements (Hamid, *et al.*, 2018). Meanwhile, the criminal constitution from the *Primeiro Comando* set the limits on what members can do to one another or even to the local population (Hamid, *et al.*, 2018), very similar to the LCT code in this regard. Journalistic reports also described ceremonies organized by LCT dedicated to showing faith to Saint Nazario (Castellanos, 2012b). During fieldwork, at least one prayer dedicated to San Nazario (and also to God) was found, which is transcribed here:

Oh Lord mighty powerful,
Free me from every sin,
Give me blessed protection,
By Saint Nazario.

Protector of the poorest,
Knight of the peoples,
Saint Nazario, give us life,
Oh, blessed eternal Saint.

Blessed light of the night,
Defender of the sick,

[35] Currently, the Knight Templar reference also plays a role in European and North American extreme right-wing politics. An example of this is the "Knight Templar International", a Christian militant group based in the United Kingdom. It began in 2015 with a commitment to "combat" Muslim expansion and immigration coming from Islamic countries. The Templar symbolism serves as inspiration for this movement, whose reference to the medieval crusades help to shape the hate discourse. After Nazism and Fascism, far-right movements particularly in Western European countries find in the Templar's historical sense and iconography the sources for justifying hate, intolerance, and violence against Muslims, but not exclusively. Following Koch, these new twenty-first century "crusaders", "Crusader symbols and anti-Islamic rhetoric help to consolidate individuals, groups, organizations, parties and movements in Europe and in the United States (and elsewhere) under a transnational framework, by reviving the crusader heritage and presenting it as an appropriate response to Jihad, even though just for propaganda purposes. Thus, Christian symbols and rhetoric provide a religious justification and inspiration for a physical struggle against a religious enemy" (2017, 20). LCT and this far-right movement coincidentally got inspiration from the same source. However, what is interesting to highlight is that in two different contexts, and by two different collectivities with also different objectives, found in the same source, the Templar imaginary, the inspiration to justify atrocities based on social distinctions for their alleged "holy" mission.

Saint Nazario our saint,
I always entrust myself to you,

Glory to Godfather,
I dedicate you my rosary,
Give us health and more work,
Abundance in our hands,
Let our people become blessed,
I beg you, Saint Nazario.[36]

According to Stepputat, social relations do not have to be spatial; "They can also be temporal, with claims to sovereignty shifting between night and day, or they can be related to specific domains, such as the spiritual.[37] Religion, for example, can provide (sovereign) protection for members an representatives, but as it happened during the Guatemalan civil war, such protection may also break down" (2015, 132). In this regard, as Grillo said, "The pseudo-ideology, Nazario found, was a cement that could bind his criminal empire together" (Grillo, 2017, 250). At its time, political legitimacy interests motivated the creation of that cement. After all, as Tilly reviewed, the European modernity and the empire of the nation-state resulted only when the means of power became concentrated instead of religion (1985). Before, religiosity worked as a primary legitimacy source that enabled a sense of identity, essential to consolidate the State centuries later. With the sources for this research, it is not possible to talk or not about Nazario´s or LFM/LCT success in this regard. However, it seems that these illegal agents systematically spoke a sovereign language that had become criminally codified.

4.1.2. Performance-Centered Sources

According to Grillo, led by Nazario, LFM "[…] installed an alternative justice system, in which local bossed judged and punished those who carried out 'anti-social' crimes such as robbing or raping […] But the Maddest One added his *loco* twist. He pronounced in the name of the lord and punishment was in the style of Old Testament justice. Alleged criminals were flogged, like in Roman times, or even crucified" (2017, 261). This quote fairly illustrates how the performance-centered sources became materialized: by combining secular and

[36] This is my own translation from Spanish. The original prayer is printed in the afterwards of the book *Palabra de Caballero. Los Caballeros Templarios. Un movimiento insurgente*, which is analyzed later in this chapter. See Picture 7 in the Appendix. The original text is presented here respecting the original drafting mistakes: "Oh Señor todo poderoso, Líbrame de todo Pecado, Dame protección Bendita, A través de San Nazario. Protector de los Más Pobres, Caballero de los Pueblos, San Nazario danos vida, Oh bandito Santo eterno. Luz Bendita de la Noche, Defensor de los enfermos, San Nazario Santo Nuestro, Siempre en ti yo me encomiendo. Gloria a Dios Padre, Te dedico mi Rosario, Danos salud y más trabajo, Abundancia en nuestras manos, Que nuestro Pueblo este Bendito, Yo Te pido San Nazario [sic]" (Morales, no year).

[37] Similar phenomena involving spirituality and authority building took place during the African civil wars. According to Duyvesteyn, "[…] in both Liberia and Somalia the form of rule was highly personalized during the wars. The leaders heading the factions were interested in getting to power. They used identities and religion or beliefs to strengthen their legitimacy" (2000, 110).

religious claims. In the end, thee are sovereignty practices in all of them. In fact, the justice system was not the only alternative; every state-effect by LFM and LCT became an alternative. Later they became alternatives to other agents' statehood practices as well – such as *Autodefensas*. Following the Table 1, the performance-centered sources are subcategorized into three subtypes: provision of governing institutions, philanthropy (carrots), and coercion (sticks). The two latter are grouped into one unique section in order to sharpen the analysis.

4.1.2.1. Provision of Governing Institutions

The "provision of governing institutions" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) taxation and economy (material resource), and b) security and justice managing, as well as labor regulations (non-material resources). In Michoacán, the criminal provision of governing institutions claims did emulate the state institutions in four fields: 1) security provisioning, 2) justice system exercise, 3) imposing taxation (shaped by extortion practices), and 4) imposing economic and productive activities regulation. Each one of these was objectively materialized, and that happened in a two-fold manner. Either when 1) the criminal group did fulfill governance gaps that the legal authority left (presence vs. absence) or, 2) with the criminal group explicitly challenging legal authority (presence vs. presence) – and sometimes combining both scenarios, which interestingly, also fit into the symbolic sources. As security providers, LFM claimed the responsibility of taking care of minor criminals (such as street-robbers and small drug sellers), markedly during the first years. That shot pointed to control while monopolizing regular crime, drug selling, and drug consumption – as explained before in the case of crystal meth known as *hielo* (ice) *foco* (bulb) (Interview in field no. 2, 2017). Since 2006, some locals noticed that LFM members were managing to punish ordinary thieves (Interview in the field no. 7, 2017).

There were stories of several youngsters accused, beaten, and publicly exposed in local public spaces coincide – indeed, as a case of overlapping, this feature also fits into the symbolic source of legitimacy. This alleged security also worked as a demonstration of power and business control. From another angle of security provision, these criminal groups attempted (and sometimes succeed) to take control of highways, ports, and strategic communications around the state of Michoacán. By controlling paths and routes, LFM and LCT consolidated the presence of their mandate while controlling territory. Paradoxically, instead of making highways secure due to the criminal group's control, they became particularly insecure hot spots around the Michoacán, as well as in many other parts of the country. In this regard, it becomes relevant to underline the highways' role in Mexico´s economy and its link to criminality. During Felipe Calderón's administration, not only was the war on drugs launched, but also the so-called "biggest highway infrastructure project in the country´s history", i.e., an extensive national highway development program. These projects built or renewed more than fourteen thousand kilometers of highway, three thousand less than what

was initially promised. More than 351 billion Mexican pesos were expended on this project, more than double in comparison to the former government, in a country that was already lacking trains and other transport infrastructure apart from highways (Martínez, 2012).

As a consequence, control of criminal highways became a trend in several Mexican states such as Guerrero and Morelos in the South (Peña, 2014 and 2017). Michoacán was not the exception in this regard. As explored in the cartographic analysis, many of Michoacán's municipalities with the highest levels of criminal violence coincide with the main highways. The worst were municipalities with highways connecting 1) with central regions inside the state, 2) with neighboring Mexican entities, 3) the highway to the United States, 4) the roads in the coastal zone and 4) the highway to Lázaro Cárdenas port, consistently have high crime rate levels – the case of the port is profoundly relevant for the local and national economic productivity, as will be explained later.[38] The modus operandi in order to ensure highways control was usually to install more or less developed random checkpoints. Even when it is not easy to determine criminal group´s success or not in this regard, those high levels of violence on the highways reveal them as disputed zones.

Indeed, this control works as a display of visibility and power, useful for creating legitimacy. When traveling around highways during fieldwork two elements are standardized. First, there is an advanced practice for locals related to developing expertise on which road is secure and which is not. Additionally, people know what time is the best for traveling in this regard. Secondly, several busy or abandoned checkpoints could be seen on the highways (especially in the smaller ones). Almost everyone installed them — not only criminal groups, but also the municipal, local, and federal government, as well as locals around *meseta purépecha*, the Mexican army, vigilantes (in *Tierra Caliente*), and social movements such as students near the capital city.[39] Controlling paths and highways needs to be understood as a contested sovereign practice in which several social agents participate, and which is not related to a security provision discourse (indeed, highways become more dangerous as a consequence), but as a power display by becoming visible. Furthermore, there was a small jump from managing security to also administrating justice. According to local NGOs members' testimonies interviewed, criminal groups' members in Michoacán used to wait outside rural Public Ministers (the official local justice branch in Mexico) to wait for specific victims. The objective was to offer them the justice that they could not find with the legal officers. That was the case with *Tierra Caliente* women who were suffering from domestic violence. In this context, *machismo* persists. Hence, several cases like this appeared every day (Interview in the field no. 6, 2017).

[38] See Michoacán map in the Appendix.

[39] During interviews, informants reported that criminal groups have developed several checkpoints in Lázaro Cárdenas port. However, given the security condition, it was not possible to attend this zone in order to conduct fieldwork there.

After asking for justice from the town judge, and not receiving it or being re-victimized, members from LCT waited outside for women in order to offer immediate "justice" to their problem. Most of these women were suffering from physical, emotional, and economic violence. It was justice that official authorities denied or simply could not offer. A brutal example in this regard was the case of women whose were asked to keep weapons in their backyards (this point is analyzed below as part of the "coercion" subtype resource of legitimacy). In this case, the criminal group attempted to convince her that they were making a social revolution (Interview in the field no. 6, 2017). Whether to accept or deny criminal group´s justice administration became almost irrelevant; in the end, their approaching was intended to create a link that could immediately benefit their illegal interests. In this regard, these practices made use of the legal authority´s mediocre justice administration. However, despite the pragmatism behind these actions, criminal groups followed operating by a political legitimacy code, which possibly was poorly managed in the long run given the locals´ loss of trust.

> We knew about the case of a woman who suffered violence at home. So she went with the judge to denounce him [her husband]. In the presidency, public officers told her: "you are lying, you have no witness", all this shit that they say to women. This woman came out, and someone approaches her and asks to tell her concern. Of course, women are so sensitive, crying, and desperate [...] so they [criminal group members] start telling her: "I do understand you, and I do believe you [...] we do know about you, where you live, your husband´s name". The women said: "I went here to ask the authority to give a lesson to my husband. Not to kill him, only to scare him, but no one listens to me, because I am tired that he is always taking off my money, beating me, etcetera". This woman did trust in these guys who belong to *narco*, and they indeed scare the husband without killing him. That is why they are organized because they do know how to manage these problems. Then, the woman did trust on them and spread the voice. These women did not think that someone would ask for paybacks. However, the payback was to keep drugs, weapons, protect gang members (Interview in field no. 6, 2017).

Finally, the practice of extortion deserves special attention connecting two subtype sources of legitimacy under the performance-centered category, i.e., governing institutions providing both carrots and sticks to local society (philanthropy and coercion, reviewed above). Concerning the former, rather than taxing administrators, both LFM and LCT were mostly violent extortionists. Extortion is a practice that embodies a singular state-effect. In the sense of providing governing institutions, in this case extortion means performing the sovereign practice of an alternative institution of taxation, administration, and security. Extortion is a frequent illegal practice in Mexico and Michoacán, which increased in the context of the war on drugs (see Figure 5). Moreover, in this context it acquired both practical and symbolic meaning. The rent extracted from extortion victims has a practical relevance (in the end this is real profit for criminal groups), but the symbolic act of portray as a non-elusive authority in the front of local people becomes even more relevant –this concerns the sticks and carrots subtype legitimacy sources. Regarding the institution-providing dimension, by extorting, LFM and LCT did attempt to substitute the formal and legal taxing and security providing

authorities especially with street vendors and farmers.[40] LCT in particular attempted to make this "official" by issuing *papeletas*, i.e., receipts in saying the payment occurred "in time and form" (Interviews in the field no. 1 and 7, 2017).[41]

4.1.2.2. Philanthropy and Coercion: Carrots and Sticks

The "philanthropy" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) gifting (material resource), and b) promises and hope generation (non-material resources). On the other hand, the "coercion" subtype becomes expressed through a) weapons and ammo control (material resource), and b) fear and use of threat or violence (non-material resource). Not only in Michoacán, but also in the whole country, extortion carried out by a criminal group is known as *cobro* or *pago de piso* (floor charge or floor payment). As said earlier, extortion has a practical function of giving earnings. It also helps to develop a political legitimacy interest of providing alternative institutions to those of the state. Nevertheless, the case of Michoacán (and especially LCT) is one of those in which this practice was taken further beyond as a legitimacy source because of their *piso* victim's range, and how this crime went from a friendly introduction (carrots), to an extreme violent practice (sticks).

Following Tilly´s definition of legitimacy as the probability that other authorities confirm the decisions of a given authority (1985, 171), *piso* in Michoacán attempted to give LFM and LCT authority over other authorities. As a result, victims of extortion included businesspeople, smaller food vendors, farmers, and even public officers.[42] Quantitatively, *piso* in Michoacán was not very different from in the rest of the country. However, qualitatively, it was bribery masquerading as a tax. LCT charged *piso* to rich businesspeople, *taquerías*, and food vendors selling in the street corners alike. Sometimes, *piso* charging did not start with violent threats but with the promise of benefits. This was the case with *tortillerías* business (tortilla selling stores), which received the offer of being helped to expel foreigners´ competition from Jalisco, the neighbor state, who were gaining clients against Michoacán´s *tortilleros* because of their house delivering system. LFM first created hope and later became violent:

---

[40] Regarding the farmers, according to journalist reports, as a matter of interest of the "provision of governing institutions" subtype resource of legitimacy, LCT in particular promoted aggressive labor regulation systems for peasants working in avocado and berries fields (Aranda, 2013b, 53; Padgett and Martínez, 2011).

[41] That paper configured a state-effect by converting a regular paper with symbols and seals into an "official" document with real effects regarding possible violence consequences for those who did not pay the *piso*. As can be seen, many of the empirical references as is the extortion can be framed in more than one source of legitimacy. For instance, in this case, the *papeletas* entails with a relevant symbolic charge despite that here it has been tagged into the performance-centered sources.

[42] Some of the local business that suffered *piso* charging that were mentioned when carrying out fieldwork, and that match with journalistic reports, are cafeterias, restaurants, night clubs, public transport operators, and *tortillerías*, among others. Moreover, the violence increasing reached levels that caused *autodefensas* reaction: "If you did not want to [pay] *piso* they would say, well, we will get your business [...] and in the case of Tepalcatepec [...] they started to take things away from you, and later women, and then not only women but also their daughters [...] and that is why they rebelled" (Interview in field no. 7, 2017).

> When these guys [LFM] began to expand, they went with local *tortilleros*. [LFM] built structures in each city, where there was a "head guy" of the "plaza", who reported to the dome in Tierra Caliente [...] They called the *tortilleros* and told them: "We are here, we are *La Familia Michoacana*, we belong to the people, we do not kill children nor women, we come to eradicate the other groups, and we want the best for Michoacán. That is why we are asking people for what problems you have". At that moment, the problem of *tortilleros* was the unfair competition of tortilla sellers from Jalisco [...] Michoacán *tortilleros* said: "Well, these [Jalisco] bastards are our problem, because we do not know how do these fucking *jalisquillos* do to sell tortilla kilos for only eight pesos, while we can barely sell it at ten pesos" [...] Of course, the authority did nothing [...]. Thus, [LFM] told them: "give us a week and that problem will be over, we will take care of it". Later, [LFM] went to *jalisquillos*, and told them: "from now on, you will stop selling tortillas here, if not, we are going to kill you off". After doing so, LFM came back with local merchants: "It is done. We are not going to charge you money, we come to help you". However, later there was a quota [*piso* charge], but later they did loose control and became violent" (Interview in field no. 1, 2017).

Local farmers also suffered the transition from a "friendly" *cobro de piso* to a violent way of doing so. This was the case with avocado and berry producers, which, as said earlier, are two of the main economic activities in Michoacán. Avocado producers were asked to pay a percentage of the profits but, initially, some received promises of advantages as a result of paying the *piso* such as security provision and better access to new markets. However, this quickly changed, and farmers received threats and robberies from the criminal group members themselves. For instance, LCT arbitrarily calculated the total farmer profits and the extortion percentage and killed those who did not pay. Another extortion practice was forcing to regulate avocado production in order to manipulate the final price through the offer and demand variables, i.e., speculate with the price (Interviews in field no. 3 and 5, 2017). Initially, some farmers were convinced to participate in this price manipulation by promising better profits resulting from the price increase.

Nevertheless, LCT's friendly request quickly transformed into a violent claim, as it was with *tortilleros* and street vendors (Interview in field no. 5, 2017). As a result, during certain periods, avocado and lime prices rose dramatically in the whole country (Staff Reforma, 2014; Interview in field no. 20, 2016 and no. 5, 2017). Indeed, the avocado was not the only product involved in this criminal economic dynamic. At least lime, berries, grapefruits, meat, chicken, and pork did suffer the same consequences. In some instances, such as what happened in Cherán, local criminal groups managed to cut down trees and profit from the wood and seed more avocado plants that increase the so-called green gold profits explained in the last chapter. In this regard, both LFM and LCT developed marijuana and poppy seed fields that constitute the "regular" drug trafficker's primary source of income (together with crystal meth). As seen before, the *cobro de piso* practice was not only a taxing administration

activity but also worked as a protection system from other potential extortionists and robberies (Interview in field no. 3, 2017), as well as an economic and productive regulation.[43]

That is why, although fitting into the performance-centered sources, it came accompanied by symbolic sources. The *piso* influenced in the attempt for regulating significant economic activities for Michoacán such as the local agro-industrial activities, mining and the port control to more common activities as small food shops and even piracy commodities selling (Interview in field no. 3, 2017). The cases of mines and the port control deserve special attention. By 2012, Michoacán was the number one iron producer in Mexico. More than 27.2 percent of total production was from Michoacán mines (Secretaría de Economía, 2013). As a result of iron´s price increase during the first decade of the twenty-first century, Michoacán's iron extraction rose as well. By 2014, around fifteen percent of the mining territory in Michoacán was granted to non-Mexican companies such as Ternium, Arcelor Mittal, Endeavour Silver Corp, and AHMSA (Hernández, 2014). However, LCT took control of several extraction stages, concretely in the mines between Tierra Caliente and Lázaro Cárdenas port. From that moment, their criminal authority over taxing, regulation, and governance began.

When it came to mining, carrots also quickly transformed into sticks. In the first place, LCT managed to charged *piso* to mining companies for safely transporting their shiploads. Sooner they also dealt with non-granted mining companies in order to allow them to exploit already working mines usually administered by transnational firms. This "criminal granting" mirrored the state by organizing and establishing minimum quotas for interested companies. Moreover, LCT pushed mining companies to pay more to *ejidatarios* (landlords) for continuing the concession; of course, the criminal group's profitted from this as well (Hernández, 2014). Finally, the role of the port begins here. LCT not only controlled the Mexican customs in Lázaro Cárdenas ports, but also used the port in order to establish commercial exchanges with China. LCT sent iron and received inputs to produce crystal meth in exchange, that is, chemicals to develop the same *foco* that the criminal group banned to be neither sold nor used by locals. Lázaro Cárdenas' port location on the Pacific Ocean makes it a privileged spot in commerce between North America and Asian Pacific countries. In this case, the absence of official authority was relative, given that customs officers still worked there but were commanded by a criminal authority compelled through violence, corruption, or both.

These methods also spread through how the local criminal groups administrated justice and courts for locals. Previously, it was explained the case in which LCT attempted to punish

[43] Given these situations, the high extortion levels in Michoacán explored in the last chapter (see Figure 5) are not surprising, even considering that these figures correspond to the cases reported to the local official authorities.

accused perpetrators of domestic violence in one woman's case. The case was not only relevant to the governing institutions' provision perspective. This action also has a sticks and carrots analysis angle. On the one hand, Michoacán´s Templars justice complying became translated for this woman (and any other individual in more or less similar conditions of impunity) into promises to generate hope. However, as happened in the other cases reviewed, this carrot quickly became a stick. Providing solutions and justice turned into an inevitable payback for LCT, in the form of hiding weapons and ammunition in the women's backyards. Indeed, as seen in Table 1, guns and ammo control is a particularly relevant aspect of the "coercion" subtype source of legitimacy. Finally, before continuing with the last legitimacy source, below is a case that sheds light on another angle of the performance-centered source phenomena. As part of their political legitimacy interest, LCT developed a particular relation with legality and illegality.

Some criminals may politically deal with their "illegal" condition, and some others may not pay attention to this. Their decision has symbolic consequences concerning their standing towards the law. In the case of LCT, a bizarre combination of positioning and ignoring formal law could be seen. According to testimonies collected during fieldwork, the criminal group used to violently occupy ranches and haciendas. The owners were kidnapped and threatened with murder if he did not to sign papers to transfer the property to LCT members. However, after signing the documents, the owner was usually killed anyway (Interview in the field no. 9, 2017). Despite the atrocity in these narrations, the knotty legal-illegal dealing becomes clear: there was a bizarre interest in legality, i.e., to correctly transfer the property to the criminal group according to the current law, while performing several illegal actions in order to achieve this objective. Both LFM and LCT transformed philanthropy into coercion.

4.1.3. Portrayals of Enemy Sources

As part of an interview with Channel 4 News from the United Kingdom, Servando Gómez "La Tuta", LCT leader after Nazario´s "second" death, said: "[...] we are a needed harm, here we are unfortunately or fortunately, otherwise, here there would be another group" (Channel 4 News, 2018). The interview happened in January of 2014, i.e., in the final stretch of the political legitimacy trajectory studied here. However, quoting "the enemy" is useful to start talking about this last legitimacy source: portrayal of the enemy. The idea of a "needed harm" is more or less transversal to the general LCT portrayal of the enemy. Behind this sentence, there is a whole pessimistic discourse pointing out that worse threats could come to Michoacán. Given that, LCT criminal governance attempts became represented as a sort of least worse-case scenario. In this regard, and Following Claessen again, the constant necessity of pointing and blaming "enemies", speaks to how these criminal groups spent more time in the process of becoming legitimate, rather than being legitimate. Following Table 1, portrayal of the enemy sources are subcategorized into three subtypes: expressions against formal authorities, expressions against other (non-formal) authorities, and stances

towards the current law. In this case, the three subtype sources of legitimacy are expressed through a) documents (material resource), and b) negotiations and confrontations (non-material resources).

4.1.3.1. Expressions Against Formal Authorities

A couple of years after the Mexican federal government launched the war on drugs in Michoacán, the former president, who declared it, became himself a new enemy – initially, only the Zetas were the enemy, as will be analyzed below as part as the expressions against other non-official authorities.[44] This statement was explicit in the book *Palabra de Caballero* (Morales, no year). Despite the fact that several references like this could be found in other books, in this alleged independent journalistic report, LCT is supposed to tell "their truth". As part of that truth, the author criticized several official Mexican institutions such as the armed forces and the Federal Police because of their actions in Michoacán. For instance, the federal government is accused of launching a "cowardly attack" against LFM, whose members were only complying "[...] with the exercise of their freedom to watch over and give security to local population given the alert of Zetas´ comeback [to Michoacán]" (Morales, no year, 52). This quote is particularly interesting regarding the *continuum* between LFM and LCT as a sole political legitimacy trajectory. These are lines defending LFM in a book dedicated to defending LCT prestige.

Five pages later appears a chapter titled "*¿Cuál fue el delito?*" (What Was the Crime?). By defending LCT members, the author also suggested that the official authority unnecessarily criminalized a social leader (i.e., Nazario), rather than a criminal (Morales, no year, 57-58). What is interesting is that neither the federal nor the local government were "enemies" in the first place – or at least there were no references addressing them. On the contrary, in the first message displays made by LFM, the discourse across the manifesto, the *narcomantas*, and etcetera did not address but other non-state organizations. These other social groups were criminal groups, the Zetas (the foreigner criminal group), and Valencia (but, according to LFM discourse, not acting in favor of locals' best interests). Both references are analyzed below, and shape cases of expressions against other non-formal authorities, the second subtype source of legitimacy under the "portrayal of the enemy" source.

4.1.3.2. Expressions Against Other (Informal) Authorities

[44] According to Barnes, relations between criminals and official authorities oscillate between confrontation (high competition), enforcement-evasion (low competition), alliance (low collaboration), and integration (high collaboration) (2017, 971). This typology helps to look at how LFM and LCT oscillated between these stages depending on the agent involved. For instance, while confrontation shaped the relation with the federal authority, when dealing with local authorities the relation was closer to integration or, at least, alliance. This sort of interaction shaped relevant sides of this criminal group´s enemy portrayal.

The first statement regarding a stance against an enemy, in general, was Uruapan´s severed heads event. In that case, the Zetas were the perfect scapegoat to build the first statement against an "enemy". In other words, before confronting any official or legal authority, LFM first went against another criminal group. In 2006, LFM launched a campaign to "expel" the Zetas from Michoacán. Following what LFM argued in public messages including the manifesto published in the newspaper, the Zetas were working together with remaining forces from the Milenio cartel. This was also the case of the Valencia cartel, which also had a presence in Michoacán. Usually, the language of Mexican security institutions used to explain this through territoriality. Fighting for the "plaza", a euphemism for the "place" in this logic is the event in which two or more criminal groups or gangs dispute the control over a specific territory. In this logic, "control" essentially means the faculty of defining who can and who cannot do illegal business in that place. Fighting the "plaza" is almost automatically understood as violent confrontation. In this regard, the severed heads event in Uruapan indeed matched this formula.

4.1.3.3. Stances Towards the Current Law

LFM as well as LCT enemy portrayal was also developed indirectly, i.e., by not addressing "the enemy" explicitly but implicitly. By doing so, both criminal groups displayed stances against the official law and attempted to define their own. However, this was neither automatic nor instantaneous. Initially, when LFM published their manifesto in the local newspaper, the group explicitly stated in their mission to "eradicate" from Michoacán a set of crimes such as theft and kidnapping (2006). In other words, to some extent, the first LFM stance towards the current law implied compliance with it and urged others to enforce it. However, as part of this criminal group's mutation into LCT, the stance changed towards creating (and implementing) their law. That happened by indoctrinating potential members. The aim of this indoctrination was to inspire local loyalty to LCT, and not to "the enemies". These enemies included the official state authority (and especially the federal government), as well as other criminal cartels such as Los Zetas (foreign) or Los Valencia (local).

Eventually, other social agencies that also disputed political legitimacy became potential enemies, especially for LCT – such as *autodefensas* or the case of the indigenous movement in Cherán. Indeed, these indoctrination methods were used to recruit new members, or to threaten local public-officers to collaborate with the criminal group. According to testimonies, a bus took attendants to Morelia, where they stayed for a week studying *Pensamientos* (the book with Nazario´s thoughts), eating only rice and beans, and waiting for Nazario, who attended on the last day, giving them a speech while dressed in white (Interview in field no. 7, 2017). That was how Nazario's rules "[…] kept troops in line and gave the movement a semblance of purpose, a mission. His *narco* hit men were not just carrying out wanton murder. They were waging holy war" (Grillo, 2017, 262-263). Countless violent confrontations occurred around Michoacán and beyond, motivated through by

"enemy" struggle, while negotiations with "enemies" were not registered during this investigation.

4.2. Across Legitimacy Sources and Resources: The Forbidden Books of Michoacán

At least five books were printed and distributed under the "publishing seal" and signature of LFM and LCT. Across this criminal editorial production, the three types and subtypes of legitimacy sources were identified. Publishing dates are not clear but all of them were done within the period analyzed here. Amazingly, LFM and LCT legitimacy interests were written down and constitute what here is called the criminal editorial production in Michoacán, which condenses the propaganda methods carried out by these groups.[45] All of these texts were apparently written by criminal group members (especially their leader, Nazario Moreno), as well as supporters. None of the texts were sold but were freely distributed across the state of Michoacán, at bus stops and local stores (Interview in field no. 1 and 7, 2017). The intention was to advertise the criminal group´s ideas, agenda, and identity.

These books run across the three types and subtypes of legitimacy sources identified within this research. Therefore, symbolic, performance-centered, and portrayal of the enemy elements are identified. The books attempted to spread and justify the criminal agenda, while they promoted belonging and cohesiveness. It also contains elements of founding narratives and served as a vehicle to promote and spread images, values, religious and moral beliefs, and a whole identity setting. Moreover, the books work together performance-centered sources by proposing the provision of governing institutions. Finally, the books also made stances towards the enemy, including formal and non-authorities as well as stances towards the current law. In other words, the criminal editorial production should be analyzed as a transversal case in which legitimacy is pursued through a wide range.

Before delving into the aggregate analysis here I present a quick overview of each of the books, together with a general description focused on the narrative style as well as the alleged author. These are: 1) *Me dicen "El más loco"* (They Call me "The Maddest One"), Nazario´s autobiography allegedly written by him; 2) *Nazario ¿Idealista? ¿Renovador? ¿Justiciero? Usted juzgue* (Nazario Idealist? Renovator? Justice Man? Judge yourself), written by J.J. Colorado but with a similar drafting style to the former book; 3) *Código de los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán* (Code of the Knights Templars of Michoacán), with no author; 4) *Palabra de Caballero. Los Caballeros Templarios. Un movimiento insurgente* (Knight´s Word. The Knights Templars. An Insurgent Movement), written by Edgardo Morales

[45] Five is the number of editions that were encountered during this research. However, other texts may be added to this criminal editorial production, such as the newspaper insertion mentioned earlier in this chapter and other random texts supposedly written and spread by these criminal groups, for instance, the *narcomantas*. Hence, for the effects of this research, these five books make up the analysis corpus. All the quotations are my own translations from Spanish.

Shertier; and, 5) *Pensamientos de La Familia Michoacana* (Michoacán Family Thoughts), supposedly written by Nazario as well.[46] All of these texts present different narrative voices (heterogeneity) but addressing towards the building of one truth, i.e., the legitimation of their their criminal agenda (homogeneity). From a political legitimacy lens, what could be analyzed is a set of written and dispersed legitimacy efforts developed by many discursive routes.

Each of these five books is in a different literary genre. This means that they have completely different narratives, and the prose indeed varies from text to text. From a legitimacy perspective, these texts connect criminals' political discourse interest with moral justifications, ethical assessments, obedience guidelines, the portrayal of enemies, and the apologetic portrayal of a leader, i.e., Nazario. Moreover, when official authorities banned these books in order to stop LFM and LCT spreading (especially *Me dicen "El más loco"* and the code) it only increased a sort of mysticism around them.[47] Independent of gaining or losing any kind of legitimacy, these were political attempts to gain traction in terms of legitimacy among their constituents. The literary genre within these books goes from the first person tale in Nazario's memoirs (reference 1) to the third person propaganda (reference 2), and the "external" journalist investigation (reference 4). Within this corpus, there is also a moral dictation and conduct rule (reference 3) and random thoughts on self-improvement (reference 5).

4.2.1. "El más loco": Nazario´s Memoirs

Possibly the most politically relevant text from LFM and LCT is Nazario Moreno´s autobiography. This book, together with *Usted Juzgue* condenses the legitimacy endeavors based in charismatic authority attempts in the Weberian sense (1964). This book was published, printed, and distributed around Michoacán, particularly within the zone of *Tierra Caliente*. The Mexican Army prohibited both reading and carrying this book. Moreover, the army and the federal police banned it, and argued that it promoted apology for crime. A quick reading of Nazario´s memoirs shows messianic prose combined with a stereotypical heroic bandit. Nazario seems to be playing Jesus Christ role or a random Catholic saint because of the book's moral ideas. Moreover, this holy role mixes with Robin Hood (Nazario presents himself as a social vindicate of the people, his people, which is a long-standing practice in Mexico during the post-revolutionary period). In this regard, he may be seen as an example

[46] The author had complete access to four out of five of these books. In the case of *Pensamientos de La Familia Michoacana*, only random pages were consulted; thus, there is no clarity on the extension or physical characteristics of this one. However, these pages together with fieldwork data let discuss its implications in the criminal legitimation process and consequent editorial production in Michoacán.

[47] Initially, the books were founded by the Mexican army in *casas de seguridad* (security houses), a euphemism for drug traffickers' hideouts, together with illicit commodities such as drugs, guns, cash, and cell phones. Onwards, the army elements associated carrying these books with being part or support LFM or LCT, which caused an aura of illegality and for forbid mysticism (Interview in field no. 7, 2017).

of the traditional bandit displayed by Hobsbawm: an agrarian leader who is willing to make sacrifices for the good of his people. Pancho Villa is one of the examples Hobsbawm offers (2000).[48]

However, these are just the superficial aspects. There is much more behind the book in terms of legitimacy. Nazario´s memoirs show a figure that is more than Hobsbawm's bandit and a dangerous serial murderer self-styled Robin Hood, which is a close description to what he was (2000, 2-3). Nazario´s memoirs are narrated as an autobiography reported by a self-declared hero, who quickly started his narration introducing himself and speaking about his birth: "My name is Nazario Moreno González, my friends and family call me Chayo. Now, suddenly, I decided to write the most important events of my life; both the good and the bad, because like every human being, I have made mistakes and successes" (Moreno, 2011, 4).[49] Some pages further, he continues giving details on his birth: "I was born on March 8, 1970, at 5 o'clock in the morning. I think that is why I like to get out of bed at that time, a habit I have had since I was a child" (Moreno, 2011, 10). Moreover, Moreno described the poverty in which he was born: "[...] there was simply no hope at all" (Moreno, 2011, 5).

Finally, Nazario also explained his nickname's origins, "*El más loco*". According to him, people portrayed himself as a brave child and man who was crazy enough to face challenges that required fearlessness — either riding a bull in a local town festival or fighting against bigger and stronger guys. Early in the book, Nazario denies that his is writing in order to justify his actions and portray himself as “a little angel”. Those who think that, he continued, “[…] are wrong and will check it as they move forward in reading these, let´s say, confessions, experiences or reasons for my actions towards society" (Moreno, p. 4). However, his words contradict himself even more quickly as he starts justifying his actions and decisions: "First of all, I find myself in the imperative necessity of explaining the truth about my conduct to the Mexican people, since it has been altered maliciously by the PAN [National Action Party, Felipe Calderón´s political party] government and its journalists [...] who have attacked me viciously, misrepresenting my actions and my desire to bring a change in the conditions that prevail in our homeland, since so far the only thing that is offered to my compatriots is desolation, hunger and injustice" (Moreno, 2011, 5-6).

Nazario also described his life as a journey towards becoming a famous character at the moment of writing, but underlining his humble origins. The story starts with his childhood, followed by his travel to California as an illegal migrant together with his brother as a youngster, and his return to Michoacán as a successful and wise person who was ready to

[48] In the case of Nazario, it was not Pancho Villa but Emiliano Zapata, the other revolutionary Mexican *caudillo*, who appeared like an influence for the criminal leader in particular and the group in general. As an example of this, is Zapata one of the characters who appeared in the cover of *Usted Juzgue*, another book of the criminal editorial production that is reviewed next. See Picture 5 in the Appendix.
[49] I have translated all quotes from LFM and LCT books to English from Spanish.

bring justice, progress, and benefits to his people. Nazario wrote in the middle of the war on drugs in Mexico. Thus, his background prose let him start telling his truth about his actions. Besides, in Nazario narrations, there is an individual claiming discourse in which poverty and scarcity work as the foundational beginning. Nazario, for instance, underlined his penurious situation explained through a poverty discourse, which eventually is heroically surpassed by turning weakness and setbacks into strength and braveness. In his words:

> We, those who were born with the saint upside down, that is, those of us who were poor, suffered and fought a lot and on countless occasions we exposed our lives to earn money, even illegally, and although I admit that we were outside the law, we did not have another way, because all the doors were closed to us due to our ignorance and lack of office because schools and culture were closed to us "; also, because (sic) we did not care a damn for the government or anyone (Moreno, 2011, 7).

Furthermore, *Me dicen "El más loco"* has a particularity that deserves special attention: an epilogue included at the end of the book and entitled as *Capítulo de lágrimas y luto* (Chapter of tears and mourning). One hundred and one pages compose the whole book. However, this epilogue starts on page 84 and follows until the end. The prologue´s context off from the text itself is fascinating in this regard. At this point, the narrator stops being Nazario, and a third narrator, a high criminal group commander explains on behalf of the other commandants that Mexican federal forces have killed Nazario and that they have agreed to do not make changes on the original manuscript. The murder description takes eight out of eighteen pages in the epilogue and is composed of heroic exploits developed by Nazario on the day of the attack, together with the funeral honors made after he was murdered. Full respect is expressed to the former LFM leader: "It was so much our pain and regret that many of us let the tears go out and we militarily salute him [Nazario´s dead body] as a sign of obedience and respect towards his bloodied and mutilated body" (Moreno, 2011, 90).

In the remaining pages in the epilogue the narrator switches to several people who assumedly met Nazario when he was alive. This section is entitled "Opinions of People who met and dealt with Nazario Moreno in his Various Life Stages". Indeed, his mother, a "friend, and advisor", a "collaborator", and a "combatant" gave some of these testimonies. This book was published in 2011, and Nazario was supposedly killed in December of 2010. However, he was not truly assassinated until 2014. Thus, random timing occurred with this epilogue's content and intention. In any case, either talking about the text or the epilogue and even if it was Nazario himself who wrote it, the legitimation interest is still there. In the end, telling his own story is a self-empowering action, which reinforces the legitimacy interest by a) introducing the group/leader; b) justifying actions, intentions, beliefs, and plans; and c) spreading the agenda. Moreover, there is an enlightened spirit in being able of telling the own story: not everyone has deserved to do so, which stands for concede the intelligence of those who did it. Besides, especially *Me dicen "El más loco"*, exhibits an individualist perspective

by giving the impression that Nazario can and actually had improved his circumstances together with those of local people.

*4.2.2. "*Usted juzgue*": The Third Person Perspective*

The second published book by LFM/LCT is *Nazario. ¿Idealista? ¿Renovador? ¿Justiciero? Uzted juzgue*.[50] The invitation to judge the criminal leader is rapidly resolved in the text, prologue shows admiration for Nazario after reading his memoirs: "From the day I finished reading the book *Me dicen el más loco* by the authorship of Nazario Moreno González, I had a huge desire to know more details of this singular character who had intentions to improve the situation of his family, his acquaintances and of all humanity, inspired by fictional characters" (Colorado, 4). According to Grillo, Nazario did not attend school; however, he was moved to learn to read by Kalimán, a cult Mexican radio-comic from the seventies (2017, 239-245). Kalimán was a wise superhero that wore a white dress and turban, with mental powers and was a martial arts expert. As expected for a character like this, he always fights and defeats evil, while stating wise phrases in each of his heroic adventures. Nazario´s admiration for Kalimán became explicit in the cover of *Usted juzgue* (see Picture 5 in the Appendix), where his disseminated face appears above Kalimán´s, but also shares space with Ernesto Che Guevara (revolutionary leader in the Cuban revolution), José María Morelos y Pavón (Mexican insurgent hero during the Independence war), Emiliano Zapata (Mexican insurgent hero during the Revolution), and Porifirio Cadena, a Mexican *radionovela* hero less known than Kalimán. There, Nazario shared and actually led the constellation of national and super heroes (see Picture 5). Indeed, Nazario confirmed himself Grillo´s hypothesis:

> I never attended the school for the simple reason that the one I had on my ranch never had a teacher, as it happened in many of the rural areas. I grew up practically wild. I learned to read and write only when I was more than ten years old in order to be able to read Kaliman and other fashion magazines [...] Kaliman's words were famous about that the most powerful thing was "patience and the human mind", and because of that, I practiced [a sort of hypnosis] with animals [...] now that I am an adult I feel like if I have something strange in myself that make me understand some things in animals. In certain occasions, I know in advance what they are going to do [...] I cannot explain that phenomenon, but that is the way it is […] (Moreno, 2011, 16-19).

This book's prose is excessively baroque, including constant positive adjectives around Nazario´s virtues together with those of "his group". Actually, these adjectives seek to justify violence and crime — again, working toward legitimacy. Nazario, said the author, was the "[…] boss of a well-organized group of men determined to carry their ideals, as they say, to the triumph [to the point that they defeated] other bands of dangerous drug traffickers" (Colorado, 9), referring to *Los Zetas* and the initial events in 2006 and before. Moreover,

[50] In fact, *Usted juzge* drafting is quite similar to *Me dicen "El más loco"*: with excessively long and wordiness sentences and constant typos and deficient orthography. Moreover, the font and edition work look very similar as well when comparing both texts.

Nazario and the group were described as people who, while trying to defend their territory, “fell into the scope of crime" (Colorado, 9), a euphemism to avoid calling them criminals and drug traffickers. In this regard, Nazario and LFM repeatedly relativize: our work "[...] has two faces: everything depends on the color of the lens with which they are seen [...] given that you cannot live with madmen that attack peaceful families with no mercy [hence] I applaud and approve, also with no mercy, the justice applied by Nazario. It is historical and biblical justice: 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'" (Colorado, 13-14). Naturally, the third person voice, supposedly external agent in this context, is supposed to contribute to the argumentation legitimacy.

> Nazario is or was [here, the author doubts on the truthiness or falseness of his death in 2010] an idealist who covers himself with the skin of a wolf in order to defend himself from traps and betrayals, but in his heart, he is cheerful, playful, charismatic and of noble heart. Energetic to impose fear, jovial to the laughter and extroverted to tell jokes or funny details that have happened. All this is clearly shown or between lines in the book of his authorship.
>
> [...]
>
> To Nazario Moreno there are things that torture his heart that is why we have to understand him more for his feelings than for his actions. He is made up of flesh, bones, blood, and feelings, apparently in the same proportion. What occurs is that he hides his inner and intimate feelings, perhaps believing that if he exposes them he will be considered as a man with weak personality.
>
> [...]
>
> Violence is justified morally when all other paths are closed and cover the path of ideals, progress and social justice. That is why the revolutions supported by the people may be illegal at the beginning, but historically they claim themselves, as they are strong because of their moral basis. (Colorado, 24-27).

In *Usted juzgue*, Nazario is explicitly compared to Robin Hood.[51] The author does not hesitate to associate him with those who "[...] fought against the established order, helped the poor, imposed their particular concept of justice on the territory dominated by them, who were defamed, [and] persecuted by the law representatives" (Colorado, 5). Even when the book is supposedly written to offer an impartial overview of Nazario and his group, and keep open the title question (*Usted juzgue*, judge for yourself), the author solved it in the page 24 out of 103. Naturally, the judgment is positive, and more than a criminal, both Nazario and LFM are brave men fighting for ideals rather than criminals, kidnappers, murderers, etc. It is especially interesting the description made of Nazario: “[…] an idealist who covers himself with the skin of a wolf in order to defend himself from traps and betrayals”. To support this point, the author drafted a justification that works as a legitimacy discourse because he morally justifies violence and calls the criminal group actions “social justice”.

[51] In fact, besides the Robin Hood comparison, the text makes some other associations whose characters deserve to be enlisted here. In this regard, within *Usted juzgue*, Nazario and the myth of his death are compared to Adolf Hitler: Pedro Infante (famous Mexican singer and actor during the middle XX Century); Jorge Negrete (a close profile to Infante); Carlos Gardel (Argentinian Tango singer and composer); Cantinflas (Mexican comedian and actor); Emiliano Zapata (Mexican revolutionary leader); Pancho Villa (Mexican revolutionary leader); Mahoma; and the pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

4.2.3. El código: Criminal Commandments

Among all the books produced as part of the Michoacán criminal editorial production, the *Código de los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán* is probably the most serious and ceremonious one. Across its twenty-four pages, fifty-three commandments and one final oath are addressed to group members. They are identified as the Knight Templars order, a simile of the medieval Templar crusaders (whose image appears in the code´s cover) and whose origin was explained earlier. In this regard, the explicit moral and commanding drafting recalls the Christian Ten Commandments. Since then, LFM stops being mentioned and LCT appears: "LCT of Michoacán was born on March 8, 2011, its main mission is to protect the inhabitants and the sacred territory of the free, sovereign and secular state of Michoacán" (1). Notions of "good" and "bad" are sharply distinguished across the prose by combining theological and secular references with behavioral directives. From a political legitimacy perspective, it is intriguing to whom the code was speaking to. Even when since the first commandment the code´s audience supposedly is the order members, local people in Michoacán were possibly the secondary audience given the distribution made either in public spaces and neighborhoods in Michoacán.

Moreover, perhaps local people were the first audience and the code worked as an agenda-spreading tool. There were at least two editions of the code. The one which was spread was a small easy-reading booklet, but the Mexican army seized a book edition golden made-up (some ideas about this are coming later). Grillo and Sicilia´s description of LCT as New Age mafia are in the code. A wide range of values and ideologies are promoted across the commandments: God´s existence; fight against "materialism"; "injustice and tyranny across the world"; "moral values" defense; patriotism; freedom of expression, consciousness, and faith; as well as the "natural justice", i.e., the "right of peoples and nations to govern themselves". This set of positions is complemented by other attitudes expected from the members such as humility, courage, nobility, courtesy, honesty, dignity and honor (1-11). Moreover, the code forbids group members conduct such as brutal violence. "Offensively drunk" behavior (8) and drug consumption are prohibited as well – the code obligated the members to pass anti-doping tests. Kidnapping is forbidden and lethal force is regulated through Council member's authorization since pleasure murdering or murder for money are not allowed (16-17). LCT's code is the document that proves how this criminal group became a modern criminal and political organization, which created a discourse combining religion thoughts and messianism with human and political rights.

Punishments are stipulated as well: if a member commits a fault or loses his loyalty towards the group, he will be killed together with his relatives, and his belongings will be seized by LCT: "In the case that, unfortunately, I betray my oath, I beg to be executed by the order as a traitor [...] I consent, if I fail my word of honor, to be executed by the arms of good companions or be devoured by the wild beasts of the forest" (23-24) (this fragment was

written in capital letters in the original text). Of course, that empirical evidence exhibits all kinds of contradictions between these commandment expectations and actual violence and crime activities carried out by the criminal group. However, rather than looking for consistency between practices and what was professed in these books, the interest here is to understand the legitimacy angle in this story. In this regard, the fact of combining medieval rites with philanthropic activities together with violence, drug-trafficking, extortion and the creation of an alternative justice system and taxing managing may be, indeed, contradictory, but shapes the silhouette of an atypical criminal political legitimacy case. Hence, the code is a material synthesizer of these phenomena, together with an instrument of internal discipline and a public warning to locals of who rules.

4.2.4. Palabra de Caballero: The (Independent?) Journalist's Angle

The fourth book analyzed here is *Palabra de Caballero. Los Caballeros Templarios. Un movimiento insurgente*. This baroque text has a different narrative style. Edgardo Morales, a local journalist, was marginalized by Michoacán's journalism guild after publication (Interview in field no. 1, 2017). Presented as the result of an independent journalistic research work, Morales and his book was an original work of propaganda, useful in a legitimacy strategy because of his independence. In 2012 he denounced threats and harassment from a Mexican army commander as a result of his book, and defended his work as a literary production, which should be protected under the freedom of expression that any journalist should be granted (Castellanos, 2012a). However, the propaganda tone is addressed by justifying the text as LCT replying right. Thus, Morales is attempting to provide "the third position" reasons and arguments in the context of the war on drugs (no year, 4). According to him, the first position is the government's, the second is society´s, and the third is the organized crime stance. Interestingly, this is the first (and possibly only) LFM or LCT reference as "organized crime":

> "[...] in this process [of the war against organized crime] there is the third position], the so-called organized crime, the one that must have its reasons and fundamentals, the one that perhaps has something to manifest to the society and that, like everyone, I believe they must have the opportunity to defense themselves. That is why the idea of carry out a journalistic research work arises from the framework of our freedoms, [a work] which gives society the basis to deliberate its position and achieve a clear vision of this war announced by the [Mexican] government (Morales, no year, 4).

After presenting that justification, Morales narrated how he received a letter from an LCT member with the criminal group positioning towards the current political context on Mexico and Michoacán. Days later, on March 6, 2012, Morales describes receiving a phone call from a person called Marcos. According to Morales, Marcos told him that the LCT member's interest in a face-to-face conversation to discuss LCT's general positioning (Morales, no year, 14). Two hours later, they met up in an agreed point of Michoacán and traveled towards the region of *Tierra Caliente*. After minutes driving, at some point, Morales was asked to lie

down on the van's couch and to cover his face with a mask in order to keep the secrecy of the meeting place, i.e., LCT headquarters. Despite the possible tension, Morales does not hesitate in saying that he felt secure at all times: "In the end, I was sure that they had only invited me to know his position and [afterward] I would return safely to my home" (Morales, no year, 16). Later, Morales said he received food and, then, the conversation started even when he never said the name or the names of the people with whom he met, but who spoke on behalf of Michoacán's people: "'*Don*, I express to you the true feeling of the majority of Michoacán's about the government's actions'" (Morales, no year, 21).

This book adds another layer to the LCT, which is the existence of a social organization, political aims, and social mobilization. Along the conversation that Morales had with these supposed LCT members, the criminal group was called "insurgency", "people's movement", "civil resistance", "fraternity", and "Social Organized Movement" (capital letters in the original text). Moreover, several political legitimacy elements shape the prose. For instance, Morales quotes the interviewer when he explains that this "movement" emerges as a "[…] reconnaissance of all men and women who, from the bowels of the lands of Michoacán, […] defend the ideological principles of those who truly sought order, justice and freedom for our people" (Morales, no year, 39-40). After his interview, the journalist wrote a set of brief chapters in which, motivated by his data, he posed questions around LCT. One of them is "What was the crime committed by Chayo [Nazario] to die that way?" to which he responds:

> […] there are precedents which [point that], rather than the society, it has been the government who undertakes a campaign against those who, according to them, are criminals and do not fit into their form of government, [this statements, according to] peasants, professionals, students, leaders of opposition to the Mexican political system and other society sectors (Morales, no year, 57-58).

Journalistic discourse has legitimacy built in. Although in this case the text was more fictional than journalistic, it's supposed objectivity and truth made it seem like actual reportage. But leaving aside the contradictions and lack of rigor, what is of the first relevance is the legitimacy function displayed in the text. After declaring the government guilty of pursuing LCT, Morales finished his book by stating that he had already gave "voice" to each of the "positions". Therefore, by doing so, he concludes that LCT is an insurgent movement defending a marginalized society by appealing to Nazario's postulations (Moreno, 62).[52]

4.2.5. "Pensamientos": The Doctrine

[52] Together with the statements describes, this book also includes in the four last chapters, a set of texts dedicated to make a critique of how the Mexican and Spaniard far right wing is affecting and may be dangerous to the country's development. As a result, the prose emerged was a mixture of facts and fiction.

The last book analyzed as part of this corpus is *Pensamientos*. Although this research had restricted access the full text,[53] still there is a political legitimacy interest in this manuscript, which is studied here. That is, how Nazario explicitly used this book as a teaching instrument during forced courses in which the attendants were local public officers, criminal group members, and local entrepreneurs, among others. These courses were designed as spaces for spread either LFM or LCT agenda -especially from a moral belief viewpoint. The courses used to last days or even a whole week. *Pensamientos* is a book of Nazario's thoughts expressed in short statements, using the language of self-improvement, allusions to God, and instructions on how to overcome life's difficulties.[54] A typical sample sounds like this: "If you want you can become a good Christian [...] [to do so] you should not worry about building walls or barriers, but bridges to unite peoples" (Moreno, no page). Grillo, Nazario himself, and informants interviewed during fieldwork, all talk about the self-improvement learning that the criminal leader received at rehab centers in California (Grillo, 2017; Moreno, 2011; Interview in field no. 7, 2017). Nazario also uses Messianic language and biblical connotations that locate Nazario as a source of confidence and inspiration, as well as a leader who deserves a following.

> I asked God for strength and He gave me difficulties in order to make me strong [...] I asked for wisdom and gave me problems to solve [...] I asked for prosperity and [He] gave me muscle and brain to work [...] I asked for courage and [He] gave obstacles to overcome [...] I did not receive anything that I asked for, but I received everything I needed.
>
> [...]
>
> Everyone sees the suffering as an evil, I do not think so, because when the pain becomes peace liberation is when you can learn to live with it and, curiously, that pain disappears and becomes peace. Blessed are the sick because they will be healed; blessed are those who mourn in solitude because they will be comforted by the word of God.
>
> [...]
>
> If someday you feel like if you want to cry, talk to me, I do not promise to make you laugh, but I can cry with you [...] If someday you feel sad, look for me, I do not promise to make your day happy, but I can be with you. If someday, you want to have someone, come running to me because maybe I can listen to you, my friend (Moreno, no pages)

This collection hints at elements outside the texts that also relate to legitimacy, a discourse beyond the texts themselves. For instance, in *Me dicen "El más loco"*, the red cover with Nazario's face in black tones presents the leader's face in propagandistic language, like the covers of Mao Tse Tung's red book or Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*' –indeed, a coincidental propaganda element across totalitarian regimes with charismatic leaders. Moreover, this face is recovered in *Usted juzgue*'s cover, where "*El más loco*'s" face is surrounded (but clearly above) Kalimán's, Che Guevara's, et al. Additionally, *Usted juzgue's* background cover is

[53] The only pages analyzed were included in a Power Point presentation, so the selection is not personal while also the entire composition and extension of the book is unknown for this research. Power Point slides were obtained during fieldwork from an informant.

[54] Actually, each of these thoughts appeared signed by "*El más loco*" (The maddest one).

made by the colors of the Mexican flag and shield as patriotic symbolism. A last but equally relevant example is the Code cover and general material composition. Even after several people gave testimony of the Code's paperback distribution in zones of Michoacán, the Mexican Army confiscated an edition with a golden cover. According to Gerard Genette, in a literary text, there was an accompanying production that "[...] surround it and extend it, precisely in order to present it" (2001, 1). He called this the paratext, a set of heterogeneous practices and discourses residing in the external presentation of the book, but linked to its text. In his words:

> "[...] the paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public. More than a boundary of a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a threshold, or [...] a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text) [...] Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimate by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, and influence that -whether well or poorly understood and achieves- is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it" (Genette, 2001, 1-2).

In the case of Michoacán's criminal editorial production, that "vestibule" or "undefined zone" appears constantly. Propaganda could start either in the cover, in the quotes, or across every symbol printed; but also in the actions surrounding the production and distribution of these peculiar editions. Moreover, it is steadily dialoguing with the criminal agenda even without mentioning it or even avoiding to doing it. Elements of legitimation rest both inwardly and outwardly. For example, the code and its bloody conduct rules were masked under golden and pseudo-sacred pretentions. Certainly, official authorities participated in this phenomenon by creating an aura of controversy and mystery when they banned and burned those books, especially in the case of Nazario's memoirs. Even though each book had an audience and a different narrative style, it is also relevant to analyze how every element works in the overall political legitimacy attempt. In other words, the strategy to which it responds deserves attention as well. In the end, neither the text nor the paratext works alone.

What matters most for this discussion is the legitimacy intention over, inside, and beneath these texts, observing these books as an entire cultural production. This criminal editorial production condensed a discourse launched by LFM and boosted by LCT combining religious thoughts, messianism, and modern political values, accompanied by an attempt for building a feudal regime based on nationalism and localism but with capitalist and global criminal business visions. Having this case in mind, the Sicilian mafia is reviewed in the following chapter. This review combines both context and criminal group analysis into one single chapter to portray the Sicilian mafia´s political legitimacy profile. As said earlier, Michoacán is the primary analysis case within this research; however, the Sicilian case

becomes deeply helpful to generate an interesting comparison regarding the conceptual research interests. Later, the sixth and last chapter focuses on both research cases comparison. In the end, together with their differences and similarities, both contexts lead to a fundamental question: why and when do criminal groups seek political legitimacy?

4.3. Closing Remarks: Chapter IV Summary

After elaborating on the particular LFM and LCT political legitimacy efforts, the following are closing remarks derived from this fourth chapter. In the first place, LFM and LCT took part in one sole legitimation history. In other words, independently of the debate about if LFM did or did not turn into LCT, both criminal groups did shape one single political legitimacy continuum. Moreover, this legitimacy sequence took place in the same context (the Mexican war on drugs with the particularities of Michoacán) and the corresponding local history. Furthermore, the case of these criminal groups of Michoacán is atypical due to their interest in becoming publicly and widely noticed. Although criminal, both groups preferred not to become unnoticed but publicly observed as part of their legitimacy strategy. Between not being perceived by formal authorities, and being seen by locals to gain acceptance, Michoacán´s criminal groups seemed to choose the latter. Preferring visibility LFM and LCT kept mostly on the track for legitimation never reached their goal.

Material and immaterial symbols were deeply relevant towards addressing this objective, either by promising or building social contract benefits for locals and spreading material and non-material discourses. Regarding the symbolic sources of legitimacy, belonging was the angle in which both LFM and LCT spent the most effort. The element of locality was a discourse articulating the general legitimacy endeavor structure. To push it, both criminal groups also pointed enemies, first against other local and foreign local criminal groups, and later against the Mexican federal government and concretely the former president, Calderón. In this regard, these groups followed the artificial discursive distinction between “us” and “them” initially promoted during Calderón´s administration to justify the war. LFM and LCT were also particularly active when spreading their criminal agenda, including a varied set of material and non-material symbols. Particularly since the emergence of LCT, these symbols became explicitly religious. The image, general iconography, and social context of Saint Nazario give proof of this.

However, the political legitimacy profile launched was far from becoming purely religious. Finally, regarding the sources, LFM and LCT stood against non-state enemies, while later the official State authorities eventually became enemies. While reviewing the criminal editorial production, this chapter found how the general LFM and LCT legitimation discourse mixed elements of political modernity with pre-modern and modern values. As a result, eventually LCT became a post-modern political agent who created a discourse combining religious thoughts and messianism with human and political rights; initiation rituals and

prohibitions with progress promises for locals; as well as a feudal regime based on nationalism and localism but with a capitalist and global criminal business vision. This post-modern combination contained one a constant: bloody criminal behavior with no respect for human dignity. In the end, despite the particularities, both violence and legitimacy endeavors were embedded in a context of disputed authority, as well as contested versions for defining the social order.

Chapter 5.
Cosa Nostra: Tracking Sicilian Mafia's Political Legitimacy

At 2012, *El Komander*, popular Mexican "narco-singer", released his new single entitled "La mafia se sienta en la mesa" (Mafia Takes a Sit on the Table). *El Komander*, the artistic name of Alfredo Ríos, as well as other performers of the so-called *narcocorridos* (or, as it was later named, *movimiento alterado*) were forbidden to perform public concerts in Mexico. That was also the case in Michoacán, where a local public officer argued that Komander's ban was due to the lyric´s songs, which touch "very sensitive topics" (Velázquez, 2018). Certainly, most of his songs are dedicated to assert Mexican "narcos" as stylish and brave popular heroes. However, the lyrics of "La mafia se sienta a la mesa" were slightly different. Instead of glorifying exclusively Mexican "narcos", this song did "[…] a twentieth-century history seen from the mafia's point of view" (Ravveduto, 2014), in which "someone" in Sicily did start "everything": "*En un pueblito en Sicilia, un hombre empezó las cosas. Fue el padrino en la familia y fundó la Cosa Nostra. Desde Italia a Nueva York, traficó vino y tabaco. La mafia lo bautizó, fue el primer capo de capos*" (In a small town in Sicily, a man started everything. He was the godfather in the family, and founded the Cosa Nostra. From Italy to New York, he trafficked wine and tobacco. The mafia baptized him; he was the first chief of chiefs).[55]

In this research, it is not an overriding concern to decide if "everything started" or not in Sicily. However, it becomes relevant to underline this song as a narrative habit that connects the social imaginary about criminal groups from two allegedly distant cases such as Mexico and Italy. How remote are they? And even more, how different or similar? The Italian case in general and Sicilian in particular count with a significantly long history of the mafia's existence. Indeed, this southern island´s past and current context cannot be understood or explained without analyzing how the mafia experience influenced the social life setting since the nineteenth century. According to Jane and Peter Schneider, the ghost of the "myth of Sicily" has been constantly prowling Sicilian studies. This myth, they argued, suggests that Sicilian history can only be explained through mafia's history, like if there were no other players in the historical construction of Sicilian culture. As a consequence, a set of non-modern features such as familism, corruption, and patriarchy use to be understood as a mafia heritage to Sicilian society, rather than as a broader socio-cultural construction (Schneider and Schneider, 2005).

Thus, social investigation on Sicily has often been in need to fight back the preconceived idea of a pre-modern society in which mafia only makes stronger this condition. Indeed, the

[55] At the moment of writing these lines, the video clip on YouTube has more than 15.5 millions of reproductions. Indeed, later in the song, *El Komander* continues honoring Colombian, Japanese, Russian and Mexican mafias while keeps looking to that "small town in Sicily" as the place where everything started. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgGOW6Aoks8

"myth of Sicily" tends to cancel or diminish other agencies. From a political legitimacy perspective, the myth is not only impossible but also unreasonable. As a relevant social agent, CN is a historic Sicilian player who participated in the social order setting while interacting with other local, national, and transnational agencies (Schneider and Schneider, 2005, 502-503). In this regard, mafia is an agent between others that, in the case of Sicily, despite their heterogeneity joint around an anti-mafia movement that has been becoming powerful in the last decades by disputing CN´s influence in defining the local social order through political legitimacy practices. This research agrees with the idea of fighting back the "myth of Sicily" even when, also in terms of political legitimacy, local political agents had historically shaped their endeavors in relation to CN and vice versa. To do so, special attention is given to the interaction between CN and these other players that also configures local power and, even more, the state as Migdal discussed it (1988).

The Sicilian mafia is a significantly older criminal group case. As a result, this case helps for comparison because it offers a wide specter of sources and resources of legitimacy across different historical stages. The outcome is diverse data for new insights on what are commonalities between both cases, and what is specific. Sicilian mafia analysis dates back to the middle nineteenth century and even before – that means, even before the creation of the Italian State. In this regard, Sicily´s case requires making use of historical references with relatively more frequency. However, this research makes use of both primary and secondary sources. On the one hand, it comes back to previous works to document CN's historical performance in terms of political legitimacy while, on the other, it also makes use of original data collected in fieldwork carried out during November of 2018 and February 2019 in the Sicilian towns of Palermo, Catania, and Partinico. In this research, CN works as a secondary analytical case. Nevertheless, it gives the analytical pattern to conduct the comparison. However, before getting into the last and comparative chapter, this chapter is exclusively dedicated to analyze, first, briefly around CN as a political legitimacy agent in Sicily. Later, the second and most relevant part in this chapter addresses explicitly CN legitimacy endeavors also guided by the Table 1 structure.

In other words, this chapter structure is the same as in Michoacán´s except that here it is compelled in a single chapter instead of two. In the case of Michoacán, the context description (chapter three) and the criminal group political legitimacy performance (chapter four) were divided. However, here both were gathered into one single. Initially, CN´s context is explained by analyzing how to locate the criminal group and the concept of the mafia in the Sicilian and Italian recent history. It involves doing what, in the case of Michoacán, was called drawing the "big picture" of the political legitimacy context. It includes recognizing how the criminal group is one among other local political agents performing practices of legitimacy. Later, following Table 1, the second and most relevant section addresses CN´s sources and resources of legitimacy analysis. Finally, and also following Michoacán´s chapters' structure, an emblematic in which CN´s political legitimacy interest runs across all

legitimacy sources is analyzed. That case is the 2019 procession of Saint Agatha in Catania. After this, the whole case comparison comes on the sixth and last chapter where, based on the cases' references, the conceptual discussion is expanded, and the cases are compared, contrast, and jointly analyzed.

5.1. The Big Picture: The Sicilian Mafia in Sicilian History

Across the literature on the Italian mafia, there is a lively debate on what the mafia is, and denials of the mafia's existence were common for decades (Santino, 2011, 5). Before the eighties, when the *mafioso* Tomasso Buscetta broke the omertá to reveal the CN's structure, names, rituals, and organization, there were voices claiming that the mafia was no more than a myth. As for how Santoro called it, in order to get to the current debate, mafia studies has also passed through a "recognition problem", based on identifying those elements and features characterizing mafia phenomenon (2015, 7). Currently, although the aforementioned difficulties in defining organized crime (Von Lampe, 2002 and 2017), the debate is still evolving. For instance, while conceptions of the mafia have tended to point towards underlining and understanding "how" mafia shapes and is shaped by the society in which it happens (Santoro, 2015; Santino, 2015), organized crime conceptions primordially deal with answering "who" is the criminal, as if they were not immerse into a broader social context. Before exploring the Sicilian mafia political legitimacy performance, it is needed an exploration on this case, context, and concept. Given the historical background of the case, this needs to start by analyzing how CN is intimately tied up with Italian State formation.

5.1.1. Mafia and the Italian State: Parallel Histories?

Across its history, the Sicilian mafia (as well as the Camorra and the ´Ndrangetha with their specificities) has had displayed authority practices in their very local context. Since these practices did contain political content around defining the ruler and the ruled, they deserve special attention from a state-building perspective. Similar to the case of Michoacán, these practices have been continuously linked to formal authority. In this case, the complexity is not minor but certainly much more ancient. In the case of Sicily, this phenomenon of authority overlapping is called *intreccio* or "interweaving". As a result, during certain times, the institutions of the state cannot be distinguished from informal and criminal structures. Moreover, other local agents need to be included to decode the local political legitimacy equation. Thus, how the legal and illegal agent relate becomes relevant, which points the analysis towards a state-building investigation. What is the relationship between CN and the Italian state? Any answer will need to take in consideration that, differently from Michoacán, the Sicilian mafia parallels (or even predates) the modern Italian state, which first unified in 1861.

Since Italian unification, mafias and the state have coexisted. However, despite the blurred line between where the mafia ends and the state begins, during certain episodes, the mafia acted close to what is expected from a modern state. For instance, as Dickie said, the Italian criminal organizations did have a broader territorial presence within "their" regions compared to the Italian state presence during the *Risorgimento* – the process headed by Giuseppe Garibaldi through which Italy was first unified as a single country (2015, 30). Another example in this regard is homogeneity, a modern conceptual expectation that almost no modern state complied with. Indeed, as will be seen in the second section when analyzing the criminal group's political legitimacy performance, CN experienced periods of more unification than the Italian state. That was the case even after the Second World War. Between the sixties and the nineties, CN seemed unified through *omertà* (the code of silence which will be explained later as part of the legitimacy performance analysis), and other inner rules reviewed later (except for certain exceptions as *pentiti*), whereas the Italian public officers and some official institutions "[…] acted in different ways, with some parts preferring to collude with mafia organizations (by fear or interest), and other parts choosing to fight the mafia" (Catino, 2014, 206).

Sicily's history before the Risorgimento, wanders between the forgetfulness and indifference of different metropolis. Neither the Naples kingdom nor the Spanish crown (even under different dynasties) worried about installing a strong authority on the island. On the contrary, as long as minimum control and order were guaranteed, these empires continually negotiated with local landlords operating under feudalist regimes. As a result, these landlords became private security guarantors that kept peasants submissive and established a sort of local economic and violence administration inside the island. To what extent these people became later *mafiosi* is hard to answer. However, when the modern Italian state was born, their first decades during the nineteenth century were not very different from the latter empires in this regard. This research does not argue that, during this period, CN was a state into the state, nor the state itself, but that the criminal group was developing legitimacy practices as well as statehood practices by providing governing institutions. Even when there was not yet a name to call it, mafia was already able and prepared to keep doing authority functions. Despite the creation of the new central authority:

> "[...] the State failed to monopolize the use of physical force in large areas of western Sicily and, therefore, could not hope to enforce legislation. It is only in this context that the origin and development of *mafia* can be understood. *Mafia* was born of the tensions between the central government and local landowners on the one hand, and between the latter and peasants on the other. At the same time, however, *mafia* helped manage these distinct but interrelated tensions and struggles since it provided a specific code through which members of the various social classes and groups arranged themselves" (Blok, 1974, 92).

As a tension and struggle manager, especially CN comply with a mediation and directive function that fills the space of a more or less absent State authority. By the time state-building

was promoted in Sicily (especially in the first decades of the twentieth century), the mafia was already functioning in Sicily. Gambetta stated that the mafia is primarily "[…] a specific economic enterprise, an industry which produces, promotes, and sells private protection" (1993, 1). Whereas on the other hand, from a political perspective, a recurrent analytical starting point is to consider mafias, and specifically CN, as an anti-state agent –or, to be more precise, *the* parallel or anti-state agent *par excellence* in Sicily (dalla Chiesa, 2014, 3; Gunnarson, 2008, 54). However, in the end, both perspectives recognize CN´s mediation and decision functioning in Sicily's local public life. According to this perception, the mafia is a counter-state agent as reviewed before, whose ambition and political objective points against the current and legal state authorities. However, there is no evidence of CN attempting to somehow fully replace them.

Moreover, indeed the Italian state-building process has happened, through different historical moments, through a relation between the mafia and the legal authority of corruption, mediations, and negotiations; but also of confrontation – especially with Benito Mussolini, and during the eighties with the *Maxiprocesso* –as will be explained later in this chapter together with its political legitimacy relevance for the case. Especially since the early twentieth century, the Italian state has sought to create a discourse of pre-modernity around the mafia. After the Second World War, Italy removed the monarchy and became a democratic republic. Under the new political system, this posture on mafia was reinforced by the central government, which looked especially at the mafia in Southern Italy as a symbol of backwardness in the region (Dickie, 2015, 335). It was believed that with progress the mafia would naturally disappear. That argument was close to Putnam´s, who explained the difference between North and South of Italy by the presence or absence of social capital (1993).

Therefore, is CN a counter-state agent? For Santino, this perception is a "diffuse" understanding of the phenomenon, which has also contributed to create what he calls the "most diffused stereotypes" on the Sicilian mafia (2011, 5-7). Capodici and Moccia think that mafia is "[…] almost a state into the state" (2016, 10). They follow the words of Pietro Grasso, a former Sicilian judge in charge of prosecutions against CN members, who defined mafia as a "power parallel to the state". According to Capodici and Moccia, that explains why mafia has been able to promote rules whose respect became imposed as if they were laws (2016, 11). Dickie´s definition of mafia closely follows this argument. He argued that *mafiosi* are much more than only brutal delinquents. Given that mafia infiltrates the State institutions such as the police, judiciary, local councils, and ministries, thus mafia conforms a "parallel governing class in Southern Italy" (2015, 30). This does not suggest two States struggling against each other, but one sole susceptible to become captured by criminal organizations by taking their attributions and tasks into criminals´ hands. However, behind this observation, Dickie did also observe the essential contradiction when it comes especially to mafia and the state in Sicily: despite CN's illegal agency that conceptually opposes it to

the legal authority, quickly in its history mafia did spread throughout the formal institutions to the point when it becomes impossible to determine "[…] where does the sect end, and the State begins" (2015, 93). Consequently, at least in the case of Sicily, the development of CN and the Italian state cannot be separated.

5.1.2. The Mafia and the Social Order in Sicily

At least in the case of mafia studies, scholars and legal frameworks had improved their conceptions to the point of recognizing that mafia understanding needs to consider how the criminal organization had influenced the Sicilian and Italian socio-cultural setting and vice versa (Santoro, 2015; Dickie, 2015; Santino, 2015; La Spina, 2015; Merlino, 2014; Gambetta, 1993). However, at the same time, especially the CN have historically developed practices and rituals that enhance the criminal group´s cohesion, identity and unity, i.e., influencing and potentially defining the local social order definition –more about this will be explained along this chapter. This means that those scholars dealing with mafia phenomena need to simultaneously tackle the fact that CN is both social agent and social system (Interview in field no. 18, 2018). Indeed, that tension sets the primary analytical challenge for when it comes to understanding the CN. It involves analytically capturing CN's political legitimacy component as a criminal agent output, while understanding and having a look into how the social conditions interact with the agent, i.e., mafia as a social order input and output. As said earlier, this dilemma is more or less recurrent along the scholars and had produced fruitful debates addressing the sociological dimension of criminality.

Jane and Peter Schneider have contributed to that debate when arguing that "[…] a closer look at the social and cultural aspects of the mafia reveals it to be an engine of insecurity, its order-enhancing structures and solidarity-building rituals frequently distorted by rivalries and provocations" (Schneider and Schneider, 2003, 82). They also studied the "inside" mafia angle, observing "[…] a secretive fraternal order whose norms and ritual practices situate its members 'outside' normal society and, in their minds, 'above' it" (Schneider and Schneider, 2003, 101). Both observations coexist and one does not cancel the other. Paoli´s argument that the CN provides normative order makes sense from the point of view of this tension (Paoli, 2003, 124-125). As a provider of local historical order, CN becomes a politically relevant agent that also sets and promotes their own rules, while dealing with other agents to keep their mandate. Somehow, Paoli´s argument reconciles the tension. However, from the political legitimacy perspective, it is necessary to go deeper into how that order is preserved, reformulated, or lost over time.

5.1.3. Sicily and the Concept of the Mafia

Given the already explored complication of the mafia-State relations, and because CN have been historically holding a political interest in terms of defining the local social order, the

concept of mafia becomes both relevant as difficult to outline. How to define this criminal group from a political legitimacy perspective? While CN has historically played like a distinctive agent, at the same time it has not been against the Italian State destruction, nor has developed any political statement tending to that. Nando Dalla Chiesa pointed out a profound observation around this problem. While criticizing the limits and possibilities of a war against the mafia, he detected and remarked that those who are promoting it might found that: "[…] the anti-state is not so anti-state as it seems. Alternative and opposed to the rule of law but enveloped and communicating and communicating with the state of affairs, what works in the concreteness of every day. Outlaws but socially and morally legitimate" (2014, p. 3). This research argues that CN did participate in shaping the local social order through both contingent and systematic sovereignty practices.

Moreover, the state is neither homogenous nor unified (Das and Poole, 2004; Migdal, 1988). Hence, as it was with Michoacán as the previous research case, this criminal group needs to be taken into account as one of several parts of the state, coexisting with one dominant image of it, but all of them continually defining the state image as a whole. As a result, CN legitimacy analysis relates to the definition of the social order. Hence, rather than a counter-state, from a political legitimacy discussion, the mafia and specifically CN is realized here in two senses. First, given their sovereignty and legitimacy practices, as a relevant local social agent participating in the definition of the domestic social order. And secondly, CN needs to be considered as a social system through which, in the case of Sicily, power and violence have been historically mediated (Blok, 1974). Santino presented a close this idea when he questioned himself about mafia´s politically accountability. According to him, mafia is a political subject in a double sense:

> 1) As criminal association, is a power group and a political one in a Weberian sense having the essential characteristics of this group category, namely: a) a set of rules (ordering), b) a territorial dimension, c) physical coercion, d) an administrative apparatus able to ensure compliance with the norms and enforce physical coercion.
> 2) The mafia, as a criminal association and with the social bloc of which it is part, constitutes a broader system of power, and is a source of production of politics in the overall sense, as it determines or contributes to determine decisions and choices concerning the management of power and the distribution of resources (Santino, 2011, 39-40).

Finally, and before proceeding to CN political legitimacy performance, following the argumentation here is needed a conceptual stance around the word “mafia”. Indeed, the mafia has been used as an umbrella term (Santoro, 2011, 2). Not only as a synonym for organized crime, but also to refer to a certain way of structuring groups and social relations – such as groups in power, or specific social fields. Moreover, “mafia” also stands for broadly referring to hierarchical and cohesive illegality. Nevertheless, this umbrella concept has been built through time as a result of both empirical CN references, as well as for a large set of features linked to mafia notion usually produced by mass media. Thus, to clarify the concept, mafia

discussion here runs across empirical, theoretical and conceptual references based on the Sicilian mafia. The issue of the mafia and its interest in legitimacy stresses what Santino called the "*produzione mafiosa della politica*" (mafia production of politics) (2011, 40). This approach to the notion mafia enables a focus on how legitimacy was and is explicitly searched by CN, as well as how this search has been participating in the local social order definition. This performance is analyzed in detail and with empirical references in the following section, which follows the operative distribution of legitimacy sources and resources for criminal groups presented in Table 1.

5.2. The Sicilian Mafia: Sources and Resources of Legitimacy

After briefly reviewing the conceptual and historical dimensions of the Sicilian mafia and its political legitimacy interest, now the central question addresses the sources and resources of legitimacy with which CN has been historically and is currently participating in the Sicilian context. CN´s long history has changed over time in struggling with legitimacy. In this regard, the time frame for this research case is considerably longer than the previous, and the sources of legitimacy have not been constant, consistent, and static but unsteady, contingent, and firmly attached to the specific historical stage. Thus, in order to provide data for this issue, this section makes use of both primary and secondary sources. The former was collected during fieldwork; however, for building the latter, this research makes usage of other studies already published about this case. Currently, during the twenty-first century, CN has been experiencing a relatively weak period in terms of authority confirmation. That results from the strengthening of a local anti-mafia movement whose legitimacy relevance for CN, as well as for the Sicilian context, is analyzed later as part of the "portrayal of the enemy" source.

Indeed, Sicily has been experiencing a proportionally direct relation between CN´s undermining of legitimacy and the anti-mafia movement's enhancement of political legitimacy. However, this phase is not an exception but a confirmation of how important political legitimacy is to explain the whole criminal and political configuration in Sicily. "Totò" Riina, the *capo di tutti i capi* commanded the violence of CN during the nineteen eighties and nineties, died at 87 in November of 2017 in a hospital at the Northern city of Parma. Riina was serving his 26 life sentences. Bernardo Provenzano, Riina´s successor and CN´s operational boss of all bosses, also died in July of 2016. After Provenzano´s death, the *The New York Times* stated: "While its extortion and protection rackets survive, however, the Sicilian Mafia has never fully recovered from the backlash to its bloody legacy" (Roberts, 2016). Indeed, that legacy was covered by a historical authority-building struggle, covered with many political legitimacy specters. Analyzing that backlash, then, needs to be done through a legitimacy lens, in which CN´s tops and downs become visible and rational. Before enlisting the empirical references, here it is needed to underline an analytical warning that will be observed across the data. On the contrary to Michoacán, where LCT and LFM were

interested in having the most exposure possible, when it comes to heir political legitimacy claims CN has historically been in the shadows.

For instance, after the First World War, the mafia did not appear publicly as a result of the iron-fisted strategy carried out by the fascist government. However, after the Second World War, CN made a sort of comeback precisely expressed through political legitimacy claims. Consequently, from the sixties until the early eighties, Sicilian CN did expose their mandate without more significant resistance. In terms of political legitimacy, this promoted a more prominent campaign for legitimacy. Since the late nineteen-nineties, CN has had to retreat into the shadows again as a result of the anti-mafia movement's success. Of course, this has an impact on the mandate intensity and profile, as well as in its political legitimacy performance. A relevant and interesting output from this, concerns that this criminal group's political legitimacy performance have historically rested less on material resources (although there have been some), whereas is plenty of non-material and internal manifestations including founding narratives, catholic symbols, initiation rituals, and internal codes. Following Claessen again, this CN´s preference for a non-material legitimacy performance is explained because this group spent long periods being an authority (whose legitimacy was mostly based in violence and fear) rather than trying to become one (1988). Except for the recent decades and the Mori operation period (both explained later), CN´s challenge was usually to hold the legitimate authority based in fear and violence, rather than achieving it.

Finally, before delving into the CN analysis, two interrelated characteristics of the Italian social landscape should be mentioned: religiosity and the role of the family. According to Doxa, an Italian research center, by 2014, three out of four Italians were Catholic (2014). Moreover, according to the same source, the majority of the population support secularized values (such as freedom of expression and non-religious education); also 62% believe that the dogmas and precepts of the Catholic Church condition the lives of people in general. Moreover, even 75% of the non-Catholics shared this opinion (2014). This is indeed materialized in the importance of the family in the Italian social structure and practices, including patriarchy and hierarchy, and particularly in the most religious areas. Indeed, following the same survey, only the Northwestern part of the country held a more significant part of atheist and agnostics with 41%. The South, where Sicily is located, counted with only 20% of the people declared atheist or agnostic (2014). Through several practices, CN grounded its legitimacy interest on these features as will be seen below. To structure a discussion that later enables the comparison, the coming sections follows the Table 1 on the Operative Distribution of Legitimacy Sources and Resources for Criminal Groups.

5.2.1. Symbolic Sources

Regarding CN´s symbolic sources analysis, the referred CN preference for not becoming publicized as a group never meant not to be publicly known as the local and severe authority,

whose mandate is as real as their existence despite the shadiness. Moreover, the symbolic sources profile from CN exhibits how relevant it has been for this group's internal cohesion rather than for external obedience. To some extent, it seemed that this criminal group had understood the latter as a consequence of the former. In other words, the symbolic legitimacy displaying first pointed towards gaining loyalty and discipline from *mafiosi* (current and potential), and later the respect from locals, and not the other way around. Since the local people's support comes as a consequence rather than the main objective, many of the CN symbolic sources had also the *mafiosi* as a legitimacy audience. As a result, the idea of internal cohesion before outward expression dominates the global Sicilian symbolic legitimacy setting. It is not that CN disregarded the interest in discipline and loyalty from the general Sicilian population. However, symbolic sources of legitimacy show that inner cohesion is primary, and the rest comes as a consequence.[56] How do these two elements, not-publicity and inner-cohesion over popular support, shape CN´s symbolic legitimacy ground? Following the Table 1, the symbolic sources are subcategorized into three subtypes: social contract offer, agenda´s spread and/or justification, and the spread of symbols.

5.2.1.1. Proposed Social Contract

The "proposed social contract" subtype source of legitimacy becomes expressed through a) granting public services (material resource), b) promoting belonging and cohesiveness, and a trustworthy mandate (non-material resources). Regarding these non-material resources, CN used legitimacy to improve the referred interest in enhancing the inner structure: hierarchy and structure.[57] On the one hand, the Sicilian mafia is hierarchical and needs a commandment to guarantee loyalty. Its structure is designed that way, so the hierarchy spills into the criminal group.[58] For instance, regarding the hierarchy, through a sort of "division of labor", CN decides who order crimes (the *mandanti*) and who commits them (the *sicari*)" (Schneider and Schneider, 2003, 98). On the other hand, regarding the structure, Santino explained how every *famiglia mafiosa* has "[…] a variable number of '*soldati'*, the so-called 'man of honor', organized by dozens, and a *capo* [chief]; three or more contiguous families integrate a *mandamento*, which has its own *capo*" (2011, 24). Family reference, in this case, works parallel as a symbol of trustworthy shelter (very similar as in Michoacán), but also as a practical parameter of structuring the criminal group hierarchy.

---

[56] Interestingly, these inner ties efforts enhancing does not necessarily mean that every *mafioso* knows all CN´s members, Varese recovered the words of Antonio "Nino" Calderone, a *pentito* who said that, despite being a secret society, not even those who have grown inside CN since childhood "know the identity of all the affiliated" (2017, 14).

[57] As it was with LFM and LCT, also in this case the research did not get data on the CN granting public services as a material resource in the social contract offer subtype.

[58] In this regard, Schneider and Schneirder argued: "[…] the *cosca* is structured internally along lines of age and privilege, with new recruits, the 'soldiers,' being expected to take greater risks and receive lesser awards" (2005: 503).

In the end, however, this double function points towards internally promoting belonging, cohesiveness, and a trustworthy mandate. In other words, building an internal social contract that later is spread towards the locals in the shape of a ruler and ruled relation. Moreover, externally (this is, towards the local Sicilian people), rather than promoting a trustworthy mandate as a symbolic legitimacy element, CN attempted to offer a strong mandate especially during the second half of the twentieth century, in which any social contract possibility was guided through docility from locals and official authorities (Dickie, 2015). Impunity is the key word here. Since the nineteen-eighties, Sicily has been experiencing a directly proportional relation between impunity and the mafia´s symbolic legitimacy success. As long as impunity has been decreasing, so any mafia social contracts offered some possibility – for example, in the eighties the Maxi-Trial explains this switch. As a consequence, CN became unable to offer any strong mandate during the following decades. In other words, the effective mafia production of politics, as Santino defined it (2000), directly depends on the successful exercise of corruption and impunity practices between *mafiosi* and official authorities. It was because of this why dalla Chiesa suggested, in his Anti-mafia manifesto, that "legitimacy" is one out of the five mafia-forces that anti-mafia should dismantle in order to succeed (the other four being "material invisibility", "conceptual invisibility", "expansiveness", and "impunity").

Although it is not an exclusive CN practice (Schneider and Schneider, 2003), *omertà* needs to be considered as a powerful resource of legitimacy in the social contract offer dimension. *Omertà* practices of honor are those in which individuals keep silent on certain illegalities or deviant actions in favor of prioritizing the criminal group´s integrity as a superior interest. This spirit recalls the Hobbesian idea of a social contract in terms of conceding to a superior entity the individual willingness in order to preserve a social order (Hobbes, 1998; Hurd, 1999). However, in this case, the pact does not address the individual faculty for killing others (*homo homini lupus*), but the faculty of keeping silent in favor of the superior entity, i.e., the criminal group. As an unwritten code, *omertà* is a non-material resource of legitimacy that denies the legal authority by compelling the illegal through silence (Sergi, 2014). In other words, *omertà* has not only the practical function of preserving the secrecy of the perpetrators against the potential threat that the law might represent. Moreover, this code has a powerful symbolic role in internally configuring a social contract between the CN´s members.

5.2.1.2. Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification

The "agenda´s spread and/or justification" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) publications and written codes (material resources), b) founding narratives, songs, anthems, and public messages (non-material resources). As in the case of Michoacán, here the proposed social contract bases its symbolism on the criminal groups' endeavors to establish the basis for a shared destiny. As a particular non-material resource, the myths are related to the criminal group agenda´s spread and justification. In this case, the mafia-

founding narratives, as symbolic sources of legitimacy, play a significant role in both sides. Regarding the agenda´s spread, this is done by by promoting a general explanation of the criminal group's existence. On the other hand, as an agenda´s justification, myths also work as epic or heroic justifications of the criminal group´s preservation. The mythic and apologetic stories of Osso, Mastrosso, and Carcagnosso as well as Beati Paoli´s, play the symbolic role in this regard. Both stories played both roles. Moreover, both stories help to improve the inner cohesion of the group in the sense of the already reviewed social contract offer subtype source of legitimacy. Given that the audience of both aimed more the actual and potential members, rather than the general public, they work for promoting belonging and cohesiveness, which in the end is also a symbolic source but related to the aforementioned social contract offer field.

Indeed, in Sicily, *mafiosi* spread their founding myth narratives. Balandier described the sociological function of myths in explaining and shaping the historical sense of social order (1970), and Migdal observed a connection between the acceptance of the state´s myth and the state´s desired social order (1988). In this case, two versions have been running. According to the first one, around the fifteenth century, three Spanish brothers and knights escaped from the Iberian Peninsula and shipwrecked in Trapani, in the South of Sicily. The brothers Osso, Mastrosso, and Carcagnosso later settled in different regions where nowadays the three bigger Italian criminal groups are based. Osso, the older brother, stayed in Sicily and founded CN; Carcagnosso made it to Naples, where he founded the Camorra; and, Mastrosso crossed the strait of Messina, arrived in Calabria in the Southern part of continental Italy, and founded the ´Ndrangheta. According to scholars, especially this latter criminal group still using this narration as part of their initiation ritual (Dickie, 2015, 29; Paoli, 1994, 217). Osso, Mastrosso, and Carcagnosso's exile is an exceptional story in the sense of strongly uniting the three criminal groups at least in origin. Somehow, the allegory of their separation serves as anticipated destiny.

During the following decades, each criminal group seemed to have a separate or at least distinct story, although they kept dealing with the Italian state and under the same historical process. Especially in terms of identity, each of them built their own path. The second founding myth focuses mainly on CN and Sicily during a random period between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to this story, a secret cult in Sicily named Beati Paoli acted as a fraternity of pre-modern vigilantes that challenged local political and religious powers and carried out justice across the island. Their secrecy, power, and challenging of authority were defining features as the mafias' predecessors. Beati Paoli's myth reinforced another myth, namely, that the mafia grew out of Sicily's feudalist peasant past, whereas CN rose hand in hand with the capitalist, liberal and modern Italian nation-sate (Schneider and Schneider, 2011, 10). Given that no historical references to the sect have been found, this reference becomes more into a powerful mythical narration rather than a historical allusion. Journalistic versions say that Toto Riina, *capo di tutti i capi*, handed copies among

mafiosi of the novel *I Beati Paoli*, initially published in the Sicilian press at the beginning of the twentieth century, and later as a book (Domínguez, 2016).

In this case, the fact that CN welcomed and treasured their founding narrative, either factual or mythological, shows its interest in legitimacy. In the end, these founding myths especially work in improving criminal groups' inner cohesion. Moreover, by condensing an identity, these stories draw a single origin that promotes group identity based on pride, selectiveness, bravery, and more. As a narrative tool, the stories are also powerful enough to encourage belonging and embrace a shared destiny (such as how other identity discourses do so as well). The myths also serve to discursively confirm that mafias are real and formal organizations, rather than social behaviors or lifestyles: even when anyone can pretend to be a "man of honor", not everyone can become one. It is only the criminal group itself who accepts and denies membership. In the end, despite the truthfulness or falseness of these myths, the rationality accompanying the stories uncovers their relevance as a narrative tool and identity builder, both elements concerning political legitimacy.

Finally, in the field of written codes, Dickie´s book reproduced a copy of a sort of mafia handbook dated in 2007 enlisted inner rules in a single typescript sheet full of misspells (2015, 129). This text is considerably smaller and discrete compared to the LCT code. Moreover, in this case, the code is also addressing CN´s members, rather than locals in Sicily or an ambiguous general audience. LCT, for instance, also addressed their members in the code´s prose; however, the distribution plan launched by the Mexican criminal group offers a completely different publicity profile in this regard. Across this CN´s code, moral beliefs and values (concerning the symbols spread, analyzed in the following chapter) take part shaping the expected behavior of the elements. Among them were to respect the wife, as well as criteria to not accept new CN members – anyone having relatives in the police, or who had emotionally cheated on his family, having bad behaviors, or anyone who does not stick to traditional moral values (Dickie, 2015, 128-129). In this regard, these cases also show how these groups made justified crime on the one hand, but also their particular agenda on the other. Finally, this is another example in which, even when categorizing implies artificially locating each empirical reference within one of the sources and resources, in the practice the empirical references overlap.

5.2.1.3. Dissemination of Symbols

The "symbol's spread" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) identity symbols in ornaments and documents (material resources), and b) rituals, values, moral beliefs, and religiosity (non-material resources). In this regard, here it is convenient to analyze carefully CN´s initiation rituals. Although this practice has been least performed by CN in the recent years, the whole platform works as symbol spreading platform. On the one hand, it enables the empirical basis of the criminal group´s fictional membership. On the other, the ritual

involves a variety of symbols that shape the group´s identity. As it became publicized, the membership also became a restricted feature within CN: "[…] mafia offers its members the privilege of exclusivity and belonging. A symbolically laden rite of entry and effort at lifelong socialization states them 'outside' normal society and, in their view, 'above it'" (Schneider and Schneider, 2005, 503). In order to achieve this goal, the magic that spread the initiation rituals become essential. In this regard, following Catino, the initiation rituals (as well as the *omertà*), embody the spread of values and moral beliefs between the CN members. All of them, non-material resources of legitimacy inserted in the symbols spread dimension. In his words:

> Rules exist both within a family, and between families: a system of formal regulations, sometimes in written form, of formal criminal constitutions. These rules discipline organizational life, from the recruiting phase on.3 Initiation rites too are strictly regulated, in ways that differ from organization to organization and with varying levels of rigidity. The oath taken to be a member of the organization, as a *man of honor*, is binding for life,4 and it requires a subordination of all allegiances to mafia membership. Honor and secrecy (*omertà*) are key inspiring principles of members' duties (2014, 180-181).

In the case of CN, initiation rituals are also the space in which material symbols become materialized. Indeed, many identity symbols have been used such as blood, religion, and secrecy get combined within this ceremony. According to different versions, the mafiosi get together with new members around a table with a gun and knife at the center. The "Godfather", i.e., the mafioso who is inviting the newbie, explains him the rules and afterward pricks his finger to extract blood that is spilled over the image of a Catholic saint image, usually the virgin. The image burns into the newbie's hands who repeat the oath: "If I betray the Cosa Nostra, let my flesh burn like this sainted woman" (Dickie, 2015, 41).[59] The prick is what allegedly gives the name to the ritual: the *Punciuta*, Sicilian for "sting".[60] Only affiliates can attend the ritual (Varese, 2017, 16). Although the ritual wanders between ambiguous reality and media spectacularism (movies have already reproduced it), as a narrative habit it helps to realize a relevant piece on the importance that CN gives to symbolic legitimacy. According to a Palermitan magistrate, CN had to change the ritual nowadays as a protection strategy. Given the judicial investigation improvements, then for Sicily´s official authorities become easier to trace *mafiosi* through recognizing who did attend the ritual, as well as who were accompanying (Interview in field no. 4, 2018). The practices might change, but the symbolism persists. Perfect metaphor for CN´s history.

[59] Varese made a suggesting point when remembering that, within the Occidental culture, swearing entails entering the sphere of religious forces. Thus, he continued, as a solemn liturgy contains three elements: the promise of loyalty, the invocation of fearing superior forces, and the punishment for perjury (2017, 18).

[60] Across this ritual, the symbolism is constantly operating around specific elements. The blood, for instance, works as a bond creation. The oath, on the other hand, enhance honor while reaffirming the idea of belonging and cohesiveness. Finally, legitimacy is borrowed from an already legitimate symbol as it is the virgin image.

Also, on the grounds of non-material resources, religiosity and moral beliefs come together when it comes to CN's spread of symbols. The Sicilian mafia not only borrows Catholic iconography in symbols, practices, and the general belief setting for legitimacy purposes, but has translated Catholic morality as the justice parameter to the point in which the Catholic faith works as the rule that *mafiosi* should respect. In other words, religiosity is a political legitimacy reference that structure CN while also organizes morality standards. According to the Italian magistrate Roberto Scarpinato, "The head of Cosa Nostra, Michele Greco, was a practicing Catholic, who died in prison without with the Bible in his hands without collaborating with justice. Pietro Aglieri, an important leader of the mafia, during the period of his hiding, made a priest come to his retirement to celebrate mass. After being captured, he got a degree in theology. He has always refused to cooperate with justice since his Catholic formation had taught him that the important thing is to repent before God and not before men — the same opinion as Riina's wife, Ninetta Bagarella" (2011).[61] Following this logic, a *mafioso* does not rule his life through men´s rule, but trough God´s mandate.

5.2.2. Performance-Centered Sources

According to Sciarrone, the mafia is a phenomenon of a secret society, which also needs a certain degree of social recognition (2016). His idea hits into a critical CN angle. That is, while indeed this criminal group prefers to keep in the shadows regarding publicity avoidance, at the same time, as an illegal social agent interested in political legitimacy it also needs to be simultaneously recognized as an ultimate authority. How to manage this contradiction? The answer somehow addresses to the understanding of the "performance-centered" sources of legitimacy. To some extent, the actions undertaken under this source umbrella make CN visible, whereas the "portrayal of the enemy" sources also make them visible but as a result of CN´s enemy´s interest – as will be explored later, after this section. In other words, this section analyzes the actions that CN launched for becoming visible although shadowy, while achieving and preserving social recognition and authority building. Afterward, by analyzing CN's stance against their enemies, a section will examine the actions launched by other local social agents making CN visible but to undermine the same social recognition and mandate. Following Table 1, the performance-centered sources are subcategorized into three subtypes: provision of governing institutions, philanthropy (carrots), and coercion (sticks). The latter two are grouped into one unique section in order to sharpen the analysis.

5.2.2.1. Provision of Governing Institutions

[61] This is my translation from the transcript of the discourse made by Elisa Norio. More on religiosity as a source of legitimacy for CN is analyzed later in this chapter when reviewing the case of the procession of Saint Agatha.

The "provision of governing institutions" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) taxation and economy (material resource), and b) security and justice managing, as well as labor regulations (non-material resources). The Sicilian case shows how the mafia was able to provide governing institutions for decades by crisscrossing the local cultural code with *mafiosi* power, through violence, corrupting official authorities or simply by becoming the *de facto* authority. An example of this is the already referred idea of *intreccio* or "interweaving", as well as the hinge function that mafia displayed as factual government models – usually as solving-conflict or mediation agents. Usually, by promoting and protecting this institution providing, CN extracts concrete benefits that not necessarily are exclusively economic profits, but indeed political recognition and reaffirmation. In other words, this is criminal mediation launched and consolidated the criminal group's mandate. Particularly before the anti-mafia movement enhancement, CN did this to the point that quietly and violently spread the idea that no Sicilian public life can happen without the mob (Schneider and Schneider, 2003). In the words of Sciarrone:

> Mafia groups can find opportunities for growth where it is problematic to guarantee the protection of property rights and the execution of contracts. In these cases, they can behave as a sort of private government of the economy, specializing in the production and sale of protection, or proposing themselves as mediators and guarantors of transitions that take place in contexts characterized by high uncertainty. It is important to point out that the mafias are not an anti-State, they rather seek cohabitation with the institutions (2016).[62]

Moreover, rather than seeking local support or sympathy, the Sicilian mafia has historically sought local resignation to the mafia´s authority. This is different from Michoacán. There, the criminal group displayed a confusing public portrayal oscillating between a friendly criminal group in the discourse, and a bloody violent one in the practice. In Sicily, the mafia did not register friendly claims in this sense. On the contrary, the historical public display pointed towards a strong criminal authority – especially after the Second World War and until the nineteen-eighties and nineties. Actually, challenging that premise is at the core of the anti-mafia fight and also of some academics. Schneider and Schneider did so with the aforementioned Sicilian myth concept (2005), but also Santino, Santoro, Dickie, and others. Either from activism or from the field of ideas, both have been counteracting CN´s symbolic legitimacy. However, as said earlier, CN needs to be understood in different historical stages. During the second half of the nineteenth century, i.e., after the Italian unification, from a legitimacy perspective, CN could be described as a feudal but strong mediator and authority.

To some extent, the Italian mafia and the Italian state have had significant legitimacy clashes during the nineteenth century after the Risorgimento, later against Mussolini´s fascist government, and finally in the last decades of the twentieth century in the context of the Maxi Trial. These confrontations have been happening due to how political authority has been

[62] This is my translation from Italian.

configured in those regions where the mafia has and had a presence, and the legal and official authority has had some or none at all. That is, where the effective power displaying of the national state had been weak and, as a consequence, "[…] *mafiosi* were invested by a variety of public functions" (Paoli, 1994, 213). By acting as judges, mediators, as well as protectors, argued Arlacchi, *mafiosi* became a sort of condensation of what was expected from the state. Following his idea: "[…] honor transformed itself into authority, and finally into legitimacy. The legitimacy, then in its turn, turned into a further source of confirmation and amplification of honor" (1983, 114-115). Hence, interestingly legitimacy worked as an instrument that enabled the whole authority-building process on the one hand, but not only. In the case of CN, it also seemed to feed the sense of honor that in the end reinforce *mafiosi´*s mandate. This cycle started lasted until the First World War ended, when CN became Mussolini´s enemy during the Mori´s operation – which is analyzed later as an "expression against formal authorities" subtype source.

The first explanation on mafia studied by Italian official authorities took place during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, it did not talk about "the mafia" but about the "*questione Meridionale*" (the Southern question). For Anton Blok, whose work is an obligated reference in the study of the mafia in Sicily, given the developing differences between the Italian regions, the Southern question was the background in which nineteenth century *mafiosi* operated as violent entrepreneurs that served as mediators between the town and country, i.e., the state and the countryside (Blok, 1974; Watts, 2016, 70).[63] However, this criminal proto-institutionalism lasted with ups and downs during the twentieth century. Moreover, this mediation is part of all the set of tangible mafia elements that became visible as a result of the formation of a central government apparatus (Blok, 1974, 89-90). Nevertheless, more than not having a clue on the phenomenon, Italian official authorities exhibited contradictory diagnoses that only detected a phenomenon of infiltration (Puccio-Den, 2015, 75). Interestingly, while in practice both mafia and public officers were actually interacting (i.e., the *intreccio*), in the legal definition the formal authority was unable to

[63] In this regard, CN has an interesting similarity with LFM and LCT regarding the economy angle. This is, that both developed governing functions addressing to regulate the local agro-industrial and farming production. Coincidentally, in both cases the citrus were deeply relevant in this regard. This phenomenon is analyzed in the last chapter.

recognize the mafia.[64] This idea again recalls how interrelated and interconnected are the Italian state and the mafia historical processes.[65]

Somehow, quickly in the nineteenth century, the Southern question became more a legitimacy problem of the early Italian political modernity, rather than only a criminal one. As effective but atypical power holders, *mafiosi* held an unusual position during these years –that, indeed, persisted with more or less similarity during the twentieth century. On the one hand, *mafiosi* did count with active political and territorial control experience (Arlacchi, 2007, 152-159). However, as mediators, the mafia was not necessarily against the central government. On the contrary, their existence and persistence addressed that middle point: between being the real ruler while letting the central government exist and realize their governing limitations. In an interesting article, Santino analyzed and described sixteen historical moments of the mafia between 1861 and the early years of the twentieth century. His intention was to underline how the mafia already surrounded Sicily´s public life, even when it was discretely or barely named. Since then, he argued, the mafia has been building its "political subjectivity", the core activity of mafia association, which also involved the formal authority (2015, 71). As a result, quickly in the story, state and mafia became nearly indistinguishable, and the twentieth century only contributed to the confusion and complexity.

---

[64] This drastically changed in the eighties of the twentieth Century, when the Italian penal code was modified. With this new "anti-mafia law" (Santino, 2011, 17) the Italian law stopped punishing "the criminal" as an individual *mafioso*, and start doing so by punishing the *associazione di tipo mafioso* (mafia-type association), i.e., to punish the resulted bonding from belonging the mafia. By unifying La Torre and Rognoni law projects presented, this apparently small change was a significant legal improvement that later contributes to two goals. In the first place, eliminated the ambiguity and uncertain contour of this social phenomenon. The law eliminated the culturist confusion about who is and how a Mafioso looks like and, instead, established a criminological criterion in order to define and punish how mafia associations are (Puccio-Den, 2015, 80). Moreover, two types of illegal associations were codified, criminal and the mafia association, in which the presence of intimidation, the associative bond, the subjection, and the *omertá* configured this innovative legal type. After more than a century dealing with the mafia, the Italian State had finally achieved its own RICO laws –that is, the set of regulations used in the United States in order to dismantle local mafias (Dickie, 2015, 595). In the second place, once the penal code started to distinguish between the criminal association and the *mafiosi* association, the judicial system legal capacities significantly improved and the biggest trial against the mafia in the Italian history was launched: The Maxi Trial. The relevance of this law deserves to be included here literally in order to observe how the Italian legality did transform a criminal type from an individual prosecution to a social and relational phenomena: "The association is of the mafia type when those who are part of it, make use of the force of intimidation of the association bond and of the condition of subjection and of silence that results from committing crimes, to acquire directly or indirectly the management or in any case the control of economic activities, of concessions, of authorizations, public tenders or services or to realize profits or advantages unfair for oneself or for others, or in order to prevent or hinder the free exercise of the vote or to obtain votes for oneself or others in election consultations" (quoted in Santino, 2011, 18).

[65] Two ideas need to be underlined and reiterated in this regard. In the first place, at least in the case of Sicily, the Italian State formation holds an intimate link to criminality. Second, and from a legitimacy perspective, who gets on top as the dominant authority results from the foundational interconnection between the legal and illegal authority.

From a practical perspective, CN has historically attempted (and usually successfully) to comply with specific governing duties. Gambetta, for instance, suggested that the main one in this regard is the security provision service (1993). He named this security as a private one. However, the mafia "service" is directly related to the government´s lack of security provision. The action that embodies this idea is the extortion, named as *pizzo* and also with particularities as it was reviewed in the case of Michoacán. Indeed, as happens in Michoacán, in Sicily the practice of extortion connects all performance-centered legitimacy subtype sources: provision of governing institutions, philanthropy, and coercion. From the perspective of the institutions providing, any likeness with the legal state taxation is no coincidence. How many influence and inspiration does *pizzo* took from state taxes is hard to measure. Despite similarities, Varese observed a distinction. According to him, "Mafia taxation is personalized, unlike (at least in theory) than that imposed by the State, and often men of honor ask for additional payments in kind" (2017, 39). Nevertheless, both *pizzo* and state taxation have a powerful similarity: paying them validates the social norms of who is asking for it, either the mafia or the state. On the other hand, *pizzo* is also a platform through which CN has handed out Sicilians several sticks and much fewer carrots.

5.2.2.2. Philanthropy and Coercion: Carrots and Sticks

The "philanthropy" subtype source of legitimacy becomes expressed through a) gifting (material resource), and b) promises and hope generation (non-material resources). On the other hand, the "coercion" subtype becomes expressed through a) weapons and ammo control (material resource), and b) fear and use of threat or violence (non-material resource). Across the Italian criminal groups, *pizzo* is a practice that condenses the mafia seal of authority affirmation, although this is mostly through fear and the use or threat of violence, but without promises of benefits or generating hope across locals. CN and the *pizzo* in Sicilian is not the exception but a particularly illustrative confirmation of this. According to Dickie, *pizzo*'s term originally comes from the medieval prison life in Naples. Those inmates who recently arrived at the prison had to pay several sorts of informal taxes charged by the veteran inmates, including one for the small space in which they slept. To not pay that *pizzo* meant to suffer punishments that went from insults to being assassinated (2015, 56). Following the idea, Santino argued that:

> The activity [of asking for pizzo], controlled by a '*camorrista di giornata*', consists in extortion, practiced *una tantum* or repetitively on non-affiliated prisoners. The '*pizzo*' (from *vagnarsi u pizzu*: bathe the beak) or the '*lampa*' (the candle to ascend in front of a sacred image) is a ticket that you pay to '*fancisi*', i.e., to the affiliates, for buy security and protection" (2015, 43). Besides, as a powerful phenomenon, pizzo phenomenon has historically become "[...] one of the fundamental practices of mafia action. *Pizzo* is a crime that has the function of accumulation and territorial domination, while being a form of criminal taxation, in competition with the State (Santino, 2011, 72).

As a criminal-political performance, asking for *pizzo* becomes a validation of the same set of social norms imposed by mafia (Di Trapani and Vaccaro, 2014, 15). This has both symbolic and practical utilities for CN. As a performance, it helped to reaffirm authority. In practice, it transformed basic needs such as authoritative functions into favors and obedience, i.e., sticks. In other words, this research understands *pizzo* as an overwhelming sovereign practice through which CN displays performance-centered sources of legitimacy by shaping the provision of governing institutions, but most importantly, oscillating between violently offering carrots and (mostly) sticks to victims, who eventually become the ruled. More than a simple extortion, as a practice it reunites the elements that configure how the ruler and the ruled relate in contexts where the state authorities are neither completely distinguishable nor completely distinct. Probably, the most relevant empirical reference in order to sharpen this is assassination of Libero Grassi by, presumably, CN members.

Addiopizzo is a Palermitan NGO dedicated to fighting *pizzo* practice since 2004. Its slogan appeals not only to conviction but also to a sense of dignity concerning those who ask as well as those who pay for *pizzo*: "*Un intero popolo che paga il pizzo è un popolo sensa dignità*" (An entire people that pays for pizzo, is a people without dignity). The phrase was inspired by Libero Grassi, a Sicilian entrepreneur who produced pajamas in Palermo. CN assassinated him in 1991 for his opposition to paying *pizzo*. Indeed, Grassi´s words went against a relevant resource of legitimacy spread by CN when extorting fear. Moreover, his diagnosis was accurate: by spreading this fear, CN attempted to undermine locals´ dignity through *pizzo*, while simultaneously enhanced the criminal group's authority. Grassi opposed this practice when no one else did and made his opposition public on national TV: "I do not pay because I do not want to renounce to my entrepreneur dignity" (quoted in Di Trapani and Vaccaro, 2014, 32). Actually, after the first ask for "contributions", Grassi asked help to the police. As a consequence, three extortionists were incarcerated. However, that provoked that *pizzo* petitions became dangerous threats (Dickie, 2015, 691). Grassi decided to publish a letter in the local media addressed to his "*Caro estortore*" (dear extorter):

> I wanted to warn our unknown extorter to save the phone calls from the threatening tone and the expenses for the purchase of fuses, bombs, and bullets, as we are not available to make contributions and we put ourselves under police protection. I built this factory with my own hands, I have been working for a lifetime, and I do not intend to close...If we pay 50 million, they will then return to the office asking for more money, a monthly fee, we will be destined to close up shop in a short time. This is why we said no to the 'Geometra Anzalone' and we will say no to all those like him (Grassi in the *Giornale di Sicilia*, January 10, 1991, quoted in Addiopizzo, 2018).

Since Grassi´s assassination, especially the Palermitan civil society has progressed in conforming anti extortion organizations. Addiopizzo and SOS Impresa, an entrepreneur association born in Sicily´s capital for the same purpose, are clear examples in this regard. In the case of the first one, since the very beginning, Addiopizzo realized that legitimacy was the game they need to play in order to challenge *pizzo* as a spread and respected norm by

Sicilians. Somehow, Addiopizzo´s story can be followed through stickers. One day before being founded, in 2004, Palermo woke up with a large number of stickers pasted across its downtown streets. The stickers included the phrase: "*Un intero popolo che paga il pizzo è un popolo senza dignità*" (An entire people that pays *pizzo* is a people without dignity) (Addiopizzo, 2018). Once working, the NGO carried out a project that is still working today. By offering legal advising, Addiopizzo approaches to local shops to convince them of 1) do not pay *pizzo*, 2) denounce with the police the extortion, and 3) promote to expand the anti-*pizzo* culture. The cherry on the top of this process is also a sticker with a cross that states: "*Consumo critico. Addiopizzo. Pago chi non pag*a" (Critical Consume. Addiopizzo. I pay to those who do not pay [pizzo]).

Indeed, the strategy involves not only producers and sellers but also (and especially) consumers (Di Trapani and Vaccaro, 2014, 45). Consumers supposedly also realize that they share responsibility in the definition of social order when it comes to mafia presence. The sticker can be found in Palermo and is also a sign of affiliation to the NGO. Currently, according to their webpage 999 businesses are affiliated to Addiopizzo, more than 13 thousand consumers support them, and 184 schools are currently involved in anti-*pizzo* training (checked in March 21, 2019 at www.addiopizzo.org). Addiopizzo designed and carried out the creation of a list that includes both businesses and consumers committed to anti-*pizzo*. After collecting them, the NGO printed a booklet and uploaded it to their website. Publicity and spread were the main idea. A member of explained a poster stick to a wall of Addiopizzo´s headquarters, at Palermo: "Those are declaration of gangsters about Addiopizzo, they are evaluating to either extort or not shops affiliated, and said, 'There will be more problems than the advantages [profits] to get to them [to extort]'" (Interview in field no. 14, 2018). Indeed, the police and judges are also working together with the NGO. Behind this strategy of adding more and more to their cause, there is much more than solidarity. There is a web that first points to become consolidated and, second, to enhance the inner ties against mafia. Interestingly, this might sound pretty much like the mafia's symbolic agenda.

As long as CN was united through inner ties, it became much easier to build and later operate the mandate. Indeed, if the mafia and anti-mafia struggle is played out over legitimacy, the case of *pizzo* and Addiopizzo is an emblematic example. While narrating how the NGO Addiopizzo was created, Di Trapani and Vaccaro quoted a Sicilian merchant resistant to the anti-*pizzo* mission. According to the authors, the man said with deep conviction that, in Sicily, "[...] everything is mafia, thus nothing is mafia. We are all *mafiosi*, so the mafia is a way like another to order society, to do what the central government does not know or does not want to do" (2014, 13). Since the last decade, Addiopizzo´s have been making firm steps towards changing the situation. Nevertheless, the merchant's statement as well as Addiopizzo's success confirm the aforementioned directly proportional relation, in which the mafia´s (in)capacity to perform violence and ruler functions defines how mafia´s legitimacy performs. This statement can be traced across history: strong mafia during the late nineteenth

century or post Second World War on the one hand; and weak mafia during fascism or since the late nineteen-nineties and current century.

Even when *pizzo* is still being practiced, as an ongoing phenomenon Addiopizzo has successfully undermined CN´s legitimacy. This organization "[…] clearly represents a discontinuity element within anti-mafia´s history" (Di Trapani and Vaccaro, 2014, 127). They have done and continue to do so by "spreading the values of social justice and honesty in a difficult social environment plagued by Mafia" (Vaccaro, 2012, 23). One of the criticisms of the organization is that, so far, the strategy is mostly working in the wealthy neighborhoods of Palermo while the most marginal zones still work under mafia rule (Dickie, 2015). Indeed, this is a symptom that reinforces that this is an ongoing phenomenon in Palermo and to some extent in Sicily. In any case, the context in which Addiopizzo has been succeeding is the same that was described under a strong promotion of the culture of lawfulness. In this regard, it can be argued that denying paying *pizzo* is also a "rebellion behavior for legality". Despite being an illegal practice, since it was the mafia who promoted and validated the norm, and it was also the mafia who was mainly defining the social order, thus, to defy and not follow it becomes a rebel attitude.

Currently, there are no trustworthy figures on how many extortion cases have been happening, as well as how many of them have *mafiosi* as the responsible. However, at least on the streets of Palermo the *pizzo* spirit is still prowling around. On the one hand, the locals who still have in mind the symbolic "mafia arriving" for asking *pizzo*: glue in the businesses entrance lock (Interview in field no. 14, 2018) as well as neighbor's whispering.[66] On the other hand, there are the migrants coming from Africa and Asia who either do not fear or at least react different to both mafia and *pizzo* practice. As analyzed earlier, when it comes to *pizzo* migrants also get related as perpetrators or as victims. For instance, as perpetrators, Varese argued that CN difficulties in asking *pizzo* to human traffickers coming from Northern Africa are due to their lack of contacts. Moreover, the Sicilian mafia has also problems in charging landing *pizzo* as traffickers can easily change the arriving point into the island, putting this activity out of mafia control (Varese, 2017, 47). On the other hand, as victims, the migrant business owners that become victims of *pizzo* certainly doubt to ask for help to the police due to their legal situation (Interview in field no. 14, 2018). Organizations such as Addiopizzo together with official authorities such as the police and judges still have significant challenges in this regard.

[66] In this regard, Addiopizzo had already documented the how CN, at Palermo, charges *pizzo* differently depending on the neighborhood. Moreover, usually this geographical distribution for asking *pizzo* uses to coincide with the local police patrolling distribution (see Picture 13). In this regard, to some extent, pizzo in Palermo also works for CN as neighborhoods control mechanism through which the criminal group mark affirms their presence in the territory depending on the area of the city.

The use or threat of violence is a non-material resource of legitimacy inserted in the "Coercion" subtype source. *Pizzo* is, in this regard, a practice that makes this resource visible. However, during the nineteen-eighties and nineties, CN increasingly displayed violence with public assassinations. Some of them were against emblematic victims in Sicilian history.[67] These events took Sicily outside of the shadows, while reinforcing the CN's (bloody) authority. In other words, the eighties and nineties mafia violence, served for making public stands against their enemies, i.e., those whose interest was against mafia control and social order definition. However, the last decades have been contrastingly different regarding violence. As said earlier, from a legitimacy perspective, CN has been undermined in the last decades as a result of confrontations especially against the anti-mafia movement. A consequence the criminal group´s violence has decreased. However, the absence of violence does not mean absence or cancelation of the CN´s political legitimacy performance. Santino exposed an idea around this. First, as a private type, mafia violence implies in the first place rejecting the Weberian monopoly of the state's use of force. Second, it makes competition for the internal and external command prevail in order to impose "[...] the mafia control on the social context, on the daily life and the economic and political choices" (2011, 31). In the third place, since violence and impunity used to go together in Sicily, then mafia violence was usually a part of how both formal and factual authority was established.

Finally, Santino made an interesting parallel with Arendt´s instrumental understanding of violence: mafia violence is an instrument, i.e., a channel through which the essential mafia objectives can be achieved. Moreover, he said, this idea is inscribed in a vision in which it is legitimate to look for self-justice without involving the formal authority. As a result, violence is a non-renounceable attribute of the mafia (2011, 31-33). In this regard, abandoning the use of violence would also mean renouncing their authority and, consequently, one of the main sources of legitimacy. To some extent, Dickie coincided with the latter point by stating that, without violence, there is no mafia. However, he also followed the idea that violence is not the end nor the last goal by admitting, for the mafia, violence is only "the beginning" (2015, 346). For instance, to corrupt the legal institutions, cut the citizens' life options, avoid justice, and transform mafia´s mediation into the tribunal's alternative are goals that this scholar listed between the achievements that mafia can gain through violence. Indeed, these ideas on mafias and violence enable to start this section on CN sources and resources of legitimacy. As it was

[67] The shift could be explained through the tragic appearance of emblematic victims, the so-called "excellent cadavers" (Schneider and Schneider, 2001, 431; Paoli, 2003, 12) and the work they did against mafia before being assassinated precisely by *mafiosi*. During the seventies, eighties, and nineties, mafia killed well-recognized local individuals with diverse professional profile and ideology. These people common denominator was precisely their labor against CN. The "excellent cadavers´" symbolism was powerful enough to inspire and improve the anti-mafia work and, consequently, to undermine CN political legitimacy by unifying this movement that became the most significant criminal group threat to its mandate. Contrary to what used to happen with the so-called *Lupara Bianca*, i.e., mafia victims who have been killed in a way their corps cannot be found, the "excellent cadavers" were publicly exposed. With more or less public attention, each assassination took a place in the public debate domain and inspired new generations and sympathizers to keep anti-mafia actions. Along the "excellent cadavers" profile there are journalists, bishops, judges, authorities, etcetera.

in the case of LFM and LCT, violence becomes instrumental, and this also affects the political legitimacy discussion.

5.2.3. Portrayals of the Enemy

Before starting this analysis, it is necessary to consider that, given this criminal group shadowy presence, most of CN expressions against enemies have actually been reactions. In other words, the historical relation between the Sicilian mafia and other social agents oscillates between a lasting ambiguity and contingent and spontaneous stances against those enemies. Possibly, the first "mafia enemy displaying" was Mussolini´s regime, when the attacks against the mafia were swift and aggressive that CN did not react enough quick nor strong to make a stand against fascism. However, especially over the last several decades, CN faced what can be considered new powerful but peaceful enemies, i.e., the heterogeneous anti-mafia movement. Di Trapani and Vaccaro argued that "[…] a force prevailing outside the law, like the mafia, could not do without triggering a reaction against it" (2014, 15). In this regard, CN has a particular stance towards the current law. As a consequence of the mafia´s role in the state-building process in Southern Italy, as well as the resulting interweaving with the legal authorities, the Sicilian mafia was not necessarily portraying and standing against an enemy or the current law as long as their authority did not become questioned. This oscillation is analyzed above. Following Table 1, "portrayal of the enemy" is subcategorized into: expressions against formal authorities, expressions against other (non-formal) authorities, and stances towards the current law. The three subtypes are expressed through a) documents (material resource), and b) negotiations and confrontations (non-material resources).

5.2.3.1. Expressions Against Formal Authorities

During the last decade of the nineteenth century and up to before the First World War, the Italian state made more or less successful efforts towards democracy, whereas the Southern question remained both vague and real. Nevertheless, when the Great War began, the deep inner division provoked two postures among Italian politicians regarding whether to participate or not in the war. Among those who agreed with military involvement was Benito Mussolini, who promoted one of the first nationalist discourses in Italy in the twentieth century. In May 1915, Italy signed an agreement with London stating that, in case of winning, the regions of Trentino, Alto Adige and Trieste (which belonged then to the Austro-Hungarian Empire) would become Italian (Irimiás, 2014). In the Italian commanders´ mind, nationalism and unification were the keywords during the war. In this regard, the Southern question was not an issue during war times and, thus, given for granted inside the unification discourse. However, when the war ended, winning territories stopped being the priority, and the task was now to promote unification by improving the central government commandment.

Mussolini found on CN in particular and mafias in general, his main enemy to that purpose (Woodiwiss, 2017, 247). That was the first time that CN faced the formal authority as an enemy. The “Mori-operation” carried out in Sicily by the fascist Italian government after the First World War was the first and perfect example in this regard. In charge of Cesare Mori, also known as the “Iron Prefect” due to his iron-fisted actions against CN in Sicily, this operation intended to undermine the mafia´s authority publicly: *mafiosi* were aggressively captured, their families held as hostages, and their possessions sold at ridiculously low prices. As a consequence, around 450 *mafiosi* arrests were carried out all around the island, as well as countless violent intimidations (Dickie, 2015, 272). The political legitimacy game was indeed being played but mostly through the violence and fear arenas. However, as discussed before, this game not only concerns the agents disputing legitimacy but also the audiences of that legitimacy interest. This case was not the exception. When the Second World War started, Mussolini's regime turned his sight again to the North and, by doing so, gave breath to the "Southern question".

For CN, this meant a rest from the repressive fascist dictatorship that lasted for decades given the fail of fascism during the war. Scholars of mafia identify this mafia comeback as a sort of resurrection that, indeed, also shaped the mafia´s most violent version in Italian history (Dickie, 2015; Schneider, 2018). Democracy also returned eventually but, before, the war's aftermath brought the Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories (AMGOT) to Sicily. The AMGOT was a transitory governing body mainly commanded by the United States and the United Kingdom and mostly implemented in the Axis countries. At 1943, after the Husky Operation (code name for the military operation Allied Invasion of Sicily) launched, the Allies invaded Sicily and installed the AMGOT that lasted until February of 1944. Despite apparently being a short time, the AMGOT period served as a transitory stage from which mafia took advantage to recover political relevance. Almost from its ashes, *mafiosi* quickly resumed, in the devastation of the Allied government and the people in the war-devastated streets.[68]

Under the AMGOT administration, the foreign authorities faced many difficulties in establishing order. As a British former police officer and member of Sicily´s AMGOT contingent described the situation after landing in Syracuse, in the Southeastern part of the island: "Apart from being told that we were to endeavor to re-establish the civil administration, particularly the police, in areas captured by the Allies, and to liaise between the Allied Forces and the public, we had received neither pre-training nor directives of any

[68] Among the mafia studies, the notion of *intreccio* is close to the “hinge” idea and, somehow, attempts to tackle these cases. Translated as "interweaving", it refers to corrupt scenarios in which mafia involves its political or economic interests into the public authorities´ agenda (Schneider and Schneider, 2003, 18; Rakopoulos, 2018, 184). However, this idea restricts the action to pragmatic corruption; on the contrary, understanding mafia as a hinge presumes to take these actions beyond towards a political legitimacy interest.

kind on the type of work we were expected to carry out" (Rawlings, 1987, 35). Although the destruction, *mafiosi* knew the field and the codes and were indeed prepared to do the job. After observing to what extent AMGOT officers and *mafiosi* became intimate to establish local law and order, Sicilians withdrew their confidence from AMGOT (Dickie, 2015, 323). Nevertheless, instead of playing against the mafia's interest, this output was utterly convenient for the criminal group in order to restore their mandate. On the other hand, the new Italian democratic era would sooner or later have to face how to deal with the mafia´s return, and its power increasing. Henceforth, especially within the two immediate postwar decades, CN´s power became more and more effective all-around Sicily. This process implied widespread violence and, as a reaction, a heterogeneous anti-mafia movement emerged shaping also the local legitimacy panorama.

Some of the anti-mafia members should be considered as "other non-formal authorities" (and, thus, analyzed in the coming section. However, some others were legal and official authorities and, hence, needs to be analyzed since they belong to the CN's stance against formal authorities. This is the case of Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, whose names and faces can be currently found all around Palermo in particular and Sicily in general – as a matter of fact, Palermo´s airport was named *Aeroporto Falcone Borsellino*. Very close to Palermo´s port, in the corner of the principal avenue Via Cala and the small alley Via Mura della Lupa a big mural is featured with a picture of Falcone and Borsellino together. Made by the photojournalist Tony Gentile in March of 1992, the shot portrays two smiling accomplices. Are these two judges, assassinated by the mafia, the strongest anti-mafia symbol? The question is certainly hard to answer. However, Falcone and Borsellino have indeed become a symbol that unites almost all of the anti-mafia sectors, and a representation of the general stand against the mafia.

Their historic weight is especially relevant in terms of legitimacy because, on the one hand, their death condensed years of the anti-mafia fight which, eventually, undermined CN´s legitimacy; and on the other, their symbolism works as an actual civil society power that threatens any political legitimacy chance for the mafia currently. Both Falcone and Borsellino were born in Palermo, in 1939 and 1940 respectively. Their careers inside the Sicilian judicial field brought them to closely work with Rocco Chinnici, an anti-mafia judge. Rocco was one of the first inside the Sicilian legal system in understanding a legitimacy aura around the mafia. Therefore, Chinnici looked for public support to the anti-mafia cause by leaving his office at Palermo's Justice Palace and attending schools and public events to speak about anti-mafia and, of course, about mafia (Dickie, 2014, 606). His assassination in 1983 in a car bomb by *mafiosi* caused public commotion. To some extent, Falcone and Borsellino were inspired by Chinnici's example and promoted justice against the mafia from a broader space that was not limited to courts, but which began and finished precisely at courts. According to Santoro, three new actors joined the arena of Mafia studies during the eighties and

increased knowledge of the the phenomenon: the historians, the judges, and the *pentiti* (2011, 13). Falcone and Borsellino were fundamental in the inclusion of the latter two.

During the nineteen-eighties, Falcone and Borsellino lead the first and emblematic Sicilian Pool Anti-Mafia. Together with other magistrates and judicial men, the pool boosted the greatest anti-mafia legal achievements in the twentieth century: the *Maxiprocesso* (Maxi Trial). The relevance of the Poll and the Maxi Trial was the success that both had in taking CN out of the shadows, pointing them out as culprits of Sicily´s security and violence, and questioning the criminal group's authority, including their practices as *pizzo*. Held between 1985 and 1986, the Maxi Trial collected legal evidence against Mafiosi thanks to Tommaso Buscetta´s witness declarations. As the very first official *pentito*, Buscetta´s declarations were the first to be heard by the Sicilian judicial system.[69] These helped Falcone to launch the Maxi Trial by collecting data from the first hand, but also implied to definitely confirmed CN existence, which for some was still considered as a myth. The Maxi Trial made use of a relevant legal changed happened years before. Only days after General dalla Chiesa´s assassination, a substantial law change related to mafia prosecution was approved into the penal code. Pio La Torre and Virginio Rognoni promoted and achieved the urgent approbation of those projects of law that each of them proposed in the Italian parliament.[70]

Leaded by Falcone, the Anti-mafia Pool achieved to detect CN members participating in the so-called French Connection (the drug trafficking scheme through which tons of heroin was smuggled from Turkey to the United States and passing by Marseille, in France, and Canada), as well as in the Pizza Connection (a judicial investigation conducted in the United States by the DEA and FBI, through which was found that millions of dollars from heroin selling were laundered through pizza parlors owned by CN members) (Chepesiuk, 1999, 105-108). However, based on Buscetta´s confessions, the Pool finally arrested 366 *mafiosi* during September of 1984. More than three years later, in December of 1987, the verdict indicated life imprisonment for nineteen CN members including Riina, and other shorter sentences as well as 114 absolutions (Dickie, 2015, 638). Nevertheless, the Maxi Trial success did not only rest on the penalties but also in how the structure was uncovered mainly thanks to many conversations between Falcone and Buscetta.

Falcone and Borsellino assassinations by CN are the only expression registered against them. On May 23, 1992, as Falcone and his wife were coming back to Palermo, hundreds of kilograms of explosives that had been installed by mafia on the highway detonated. The explosion caused their death, as well as other police officers that were accompanying

[69] More than a decade before, in 1973, Leonardo Vitale also confessed and became the very first *pentito*. However, judges did not take his words seriously by adducing madness. Due to that, all the alleged by Vitale were declared innocent.

[70] The already referred Rognoni-La Torre law resulted from this process. Falcone and Borsellino participated in its design whose legal relevance helped changing how the legal prosecution against mafia was made.

Falcone. The attack was executed by the "man of honor" Giovanni Brusca. Less than two months later, on July 19, Borsellino was also assassinated. A car bomb parked outside his mother´s house exploded and caused his death together with bodyguards and police officers that were accompanying him. Riina ordered both attacks. And, of course, both had a legitimacy intention, which was to publicly display that mafia´s power was still valid, no matter if it was by violent means. Currently, former offices of Falcone and Borsellino, inside Palermo´s Justice Palace work as a museum in which it is explained how and with which resources (technological, political and judicial) they did fight mafia. Inside Falcone´s office, a big wooden shelf shelters the several original Maxi Trial folders. Besides, on his desk, there is a package of the favorite Falcone´s cigarettes. The symbolism of those rooms draws a before and after in Sicily´s modern history.

Finally, in recent times, the Palermo mayor Leoluca Orlando became one of the last representative examples of CN´s formal authority enemy.[71] Orlando is a Sicilian politician who was Palermo´s mayor from 1985 to 1990, later from 1993 to 2000, and also currently since the 2012 elections. Moreover, he has also been elected to the Italian Chamber of Deputies as well as the European Parliament. Since his first electoral victory, Orlando held an openly anti-mafia discourse, which has also been coherent with his mandates. Although his many controversies with the parties opposition as well as with civil society members, he is still being recognized for the legacy of honesty anti-mafia fight that he had been building for decades. "At least he is indeed honest", said a Sicilian NGO member (Interview in field no. 13, 2018). At 2001, Orlando published *Fighting the Mafia and Renewing Sicilian Culture*, a sort of *memoirs* that also reviewed Sicily´s transition towards the twenty-first century. In the first line of the Prologue, he stated: "It was June of 1999 when Palermo finally ceased to be a Third World city –a city of which a French traveler in the previous century justly said that 'even the lemon and orange blossoms smell of corpses'- and became a great European city at last" (2001, 1).

According to Orlando, 1999 was the first year with no mafia-related murders (and only eleven in total). Hence, on the summer of that year he felt a "[…] survivor´s special guilt, and also a survivor´s unique responsibility: to tell the story as it happened" (2001, 2 and 8). Palermo and Sicily´s success, argued Orlando, is due to a civic conscious change towards improving

[71] Another example in this regard is Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa, General Division at the Italian Carabinieri. At 1982, dalla Chiesa became the Palermo prefect and the coordinator of a national anti-mafia campaign. His appointment symbolized the "State's desire to present a strong public anti-mafia posture, so was his assassination an assertion [from mafia] of utter disrespect for that effort" (Schneider and Schneider, 2003, 100). General dalla Chiesa fought against the red brigades, a Marxist-Leninist Italian armed organization. As a result of his successful work, dalla Chiesa was later appointed as anti-mafia coordinator in Italy. His appointment as Palermo prefect, in charge of stop mafia violence in the whole Sicily, lasted only a bit more than four months. On the night of September 3, 1982, a "man of honor" murdered dalla Chiesa and his wife inside his car. According to journalistic reports, the assassination was ordered by Salvatore "Totò" Riina, former CN´s capo di tutti i capi (Verdú, 2017).

a culture of lawfulness. Mass media, culture, education, and urbanism were the four channels through which the strategy did run, he argued. Nowadays, Orlando has switched his agenda towards a new topic: support the migrants coming mostly from Africa (van der Zee, 2017). Geographically, Sicily has become relevant not only for the migration coming from Africa to Italy but also to the whole of Europe. According to a Palermitan magistrate, countless boats with refugees and migrants, in general, are currently arriving in Malta. However, given this island's small size, the easiest and almost exclusive option is to get afterward into Sicily (Interview in field no. 4, 2018). Together with NGO´s, Orlando has led a campaign to cancel the residence permit, the paperwork that any Non-European citizen needs in order to legally stay within the Schengen space. The battle is open. However, in the meantime, migration has been changing Sicilian public space, including the mafia and its legitimacy expectations.[72]

5.2.3.2. Expressions Against Other (Informal) Authorities

After the Second World War, and as a result of the more and more clear mafia presence, little by little a new agent took part in the Sicilian political legitimacy landscape, i.e., the Sicilian anti-mafia movement. During the second half of the twentieth century, the anti-mafia emerged as a platform to challenge CN´s authority, mainly built out from a left political identity (Schneider and Schneider, 2001, 431). During the nineteenth fifties and sixties, specific individuals and small groups promoted anti-mafia actions. However, as a movement, it started to become much more expanded and organized during the seventies and onwards. Hence, increasing its work and structure meant also increasing effectiveness in disputing legitimacy against the mafia. Initially atomized, the anti-mafia movement eventually became more organized in spite of its heterogeneity. As said earlier, some of the anti-mafia members belong to the official authorities, while many non-state actors shape the rest of this anti-mafia movement. The specter includes NGO´s such as Addiopizzo and Libera; think tanks

[72] Based on the data collected, two argumentative lines concerning how CN and migration come together were detected during this research. First, no relation has been observed between the two phenomena. Since no criminal records had already associated some link between migrants and mafia, then no elements prove neither of the associative possibilities (Interview in field no. 4, 2018). The second line points to suggest that CN and migrants are indeed related. Within this line, migrants appear both as the new local mob as well as victims of several crimes –threats, prostitution, extortion, human trafficking, and etcetera (Varese, 2017, 39-47). Three paths are opened up in this regard: Confrontation, collaboration, and complication. As confrontation, Vice News reported that Nigerian gangs in Sicily (especially one called Black Axe) might be either challenging or competing with CN mostly in drug and human trafficking (Modarressy-Tehrani and Dedman, 2017). Vice News made public a video in which two CN bosses' debate on how to control Black Axe. On the other hand, as collaboration, The Guardian reported that an unusual collaboration between CN and Nigerian mafias was taking place in Palermo´s streets (Tondo, 2016). Finally, as complication, this hypothetical scenario suggests that migration and CN are not related with migrants and refugees except as for victims, which might be making things difficult for CN. Although Sicilian criminal groups, Italian or Nigerian, did find already business opportunities in migrants' disgrace, since most of the migrants come from difficult backgrounds in which violence and threats are common, then mob´s threats impact find higher resistance from migrants (Latza Nadeau, 2018). Moreover, on the contrary to locals, these people arriving in Sicily do not carry with the cultural and historical fear to the mafia, which makes CN to improve intimidation, and, somehow, legitimacy tactics – this scenario seems to be particularly happening with specific crimes such as pizzo (Varese, 2017, 37-38).

dedicated o mafia studies such as the Centro Siciliano di Documentazione "Giuseppe Impastato"; and journalists as Pino Maniaci and its broadcasting media Telejato. For Sicilians, realize to experiencing public life beyond and without mafia is possible, becomes an incentive that in the end delegitimizes mafia.

After the Second World War, the confrontation between mafiosi and local civilians became violently explicit. Hence, implicitly, it meant to recognize the hostility, antagonism and, thus, enmity. For mafia, violence was the common denominator for answering the anti-mafia challenges. This practice became an involuntary manner of portraying mafia´s enemies. Hence, following the silence and discretion code, CN never spoked publicly about their "enemies" except for intimidating them and, usually, materially eliminating them. Giuseppe Impastato, a Palermitan journalist and activist also known as "Peppino", was possibly one of the first CN non-formal authority's enemies. He was the son of a *uomo di onore* (Italian for "man of honor", which is the euphemism for *mafioso*). However, during his adolescence, Peppino turned ideologically leftist, broke up with his family, and became an anti-mafia activist. At 1977, Peppino created Radio Aut, an independent streaming radio through which mafia activities were publicly condemned, which naturally might provoke dislike from CN since the criminal group was being pointed as a social harm. CN´s legitimacy, impunity, and mandate might be at stake as a result of Peppino´s work. A year later, he did run for the municipal elections of Cinisi, in Sicily. However, in May of that year, dynamite on the train rails provoked Peppino´s death. Initially, the official authority (allegedly corrupted by the mafia) did not blame CN. However, his death moved civilians (including his mother and brother) to investigate the crime, who helped to prove the mafia´s responsibility (Varese, 2017, 207). As Cavadi pointed out, Peppino´s case exhibits two complications of the mafia´s conceptualization: 1) borders (how to trace where does mafia ends and formal authority begins), 2) agency (mafia a social actor and mafia as social system that structures social order):

> [Peppino´s case show that] it became impossible to separate the condemnation of mafia (as a system) from the contrast with mafia (as subjects). It is relatively easy to write books or launch proclamations or hold rallies against the mafia (in a generic, absent, anonymous sense); but it is another matter to be critically related to this or that mafia member with name, surname, and address. For Peppino the mafia had a face, indeed dozens of faces: the face of the father, of uncles, of neighbors, of family friends...Distinguish, in each of them, the human dimension [...] from the social role of the mafia [...] is really challenging (2018, 43).

Another emblematic case of expression against a non-formal authority, was Giusseppe Puglisi´s assassination, also by a CN *uomo di onore*. On September 15, 1993, the Catholic priest Puglisi was assassinated outside his home in Palermo. Pino, as he was known, became a sort of anti-mafia priest. His work focused on Brancaccio, a Palermitan neighborhood close to the central train station allegedly under mafia control. Puglisi was brave enough to spoke loud against mafia during the liturgy during a time and place in which that might literally

imply a life risk. Moreover, aside of breaking the silence on mafia through sermons and homilies, he also opposed to letting mafiosi lead the processions, Catholic festivities and rituals with great relevance for the local people – more about this will be analyzed later. Probably, his most visible work was done for children. He rescued children from the streets by giving them new chances, and worked to change their mind on Mafiosi, often seen as idols (Corvaia, 2012, 60). Pino was murdered on his 56th birthday. A "man of honor", Salvatore Grigoli, shot him once and years later would confess the crime as well as reveal Pino´s last words: "I was expecting you", words that inspired Marco Corvaia´s book title: *Pino se lo aspettava* (Pino was expecting it). Twenty years later, in 2013, Pope Francis beatified Pino, who became a martyr. Currently, his tomb inside Palermo´s cathedral is an important symbol for the anti-mafia catholic congregation. Violence against *pentiti* needs to be considered as part of the mafia´s portrayal of its enemies. Indeed, most of the cases suffered aggressive and spectacular violence addressed directly to the *pentito´*s families (Moss, 2001, 327). As a performance, that violence was intended to send a message to current and potential traitors that could affect the organization's interests. Fernando dalla Chiesa is one of the most prominent leaders and minds promoting anti-mafia and son of one of the general dalla Chiesa. In his text called *Manifesto dell´ Antimafia*, he stated that the manuscript drafting was:

> […] born close to and due to these considerations. From the conviction that the fight against the mafia: a) is not only or above all a question of magistrates and forces of order; b) it is not a phenomenon that directly concerns only three or four regions of Italy; c) cannot consist only in a peaceful and painless process of future generations legality education; d) nor can it be exhausted in the complaint" (2014, IX).

Finally, migration and specifically Nigerian gangs in Palermo and operating throughout Sicily´s ports might become (or possibly already are) another potential non-formal enemy for CN. To what extent these newly arrived gangs may become an enemy is an ongoing process. However, in case of being so, the dispute will definitely happen through the clash of sovereign practices. As Varese stated: "The most worrying element for the Sicilian mafia is the arrival in Palermo of foreigners, who question the territorial sovereignty of CN, do not respect the rules and in some cases are willing to confront the local mafia" (Varese, 2017, 45). Indeed, violence might become a potential output from that possible clash. Given that the control of those sovereign practices is in the middle of the dispute, two scenarios might pop up in terms of enemy portraying. First, as part of a collaboration scheme, if both criminal groups act as homogeneous illegal agents, hence an outcome might be violence addressed against CN enemies or people who threaten their authority in general. On the other hand, under a confrontation scheme, the result might be more widespread violence in Sicily – at least until any local agent, including of course the government, recover the sovereign practices exercise.

5.2.3.3. Stances Towards Current Law

In Sicily´s capital city, Palermo, the twenty-first century started with the celebration of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The convention started in November and, by December the document was already finished and ready to be signed by the parties. “With the signing [...] the international community demonstrated the political will to answer a global challenge with a global response. If crime crosses borders, so must law enforcement", said Kofi A. Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations in the document´s foreword (2000, iv). The symbolism of celebrating in Palermo was relevant for the locals. Sixteen years later, at 2016, both local and national governments signed the Pact for Palermo, through which millions of euros were invested in infrastructure projects for the city. Later, at 2018, Palermo was declared the Italian capital of culture. This is consequence of how CN have been standing towards the current law since the late nineties to nowadays. The CN code during the Mori operation was to hide from the authoritarianism. Later, impunity became the stand towards the law since the Second World War and until the Maxi Trial. However, afterward, the equation changed the power balance, and CN became shady again. Authoritarianism is not anymore the law but the effective rule of law.

The literature on criminal groups, organized crime, and the mafia has continually dealt with understanding how these phenomena and the political system come together (Vanucci, 2015; Dino, 2015). Are authoritarianism and totalitarianism regimes that inhibit the creation or consolidation of criminal groups? Is democracy fertile ground for the emergence of these groups? Although these questions will not be addressed here, taking a look at the Italian experience under Mussolini´s government might be helpful for that discussion. Unlike the previous democratic efforts, since fascism took power in Italy the victories against mafia were more evident than ever before. As Dickie pointed out, since Mussolini declared himself as the dictator, in 1925, the southern question became solved through straightly fighting the criminal organizations and, at the time, gave him the perfect enemy to defeat and forge the nation (2015, 272). As it is expected from a dictatorship, quickly in the story, severe and violent punishments were carried out in order to dismantle any other power that challenged the central government, as the mafia did. Organically, Sicily became the first battlefield.

According to the Palermitan NGO member’s words, Palermo is currently a “safe place”, in which although the existence of CN, being a victim of violent crime is becoming less and less possible: “When we work in the streets at night paying stickers […] we know that for sure, if something happens, there will be like [police] helicopters and cars [for taking care of us]” (Interview in field no. 14, 2018). According to the United Nations, the number of mafia-type homicides in Italy decreased almost 80% between 1992 and 2012 (UNODC, 2014). Massari calculated this decrease by the criminal group and her data showed that CN homicides went from 152 in 1992 to only 10 in 2010 (Massari, 2013, 83). The percentage decrease in this case is of 93.4%. Compared to the other Italian criminal groups, CN experienced the more significant reduction in this regard: ´Ndrangeta´s decrease in the same period was of 54.7%, Camorra of 85.7%, the Sacra Corona Unita (a smaller criminal group

in the Southern region of Apulia) is of 66.6%, and the total decrease including CN´s numbers is of 80.3%, such as UNODC calculations including up to 2012 (own calculations based on Massari´s data).

Compared to what the seventies and eighties showed, the change in fatal violence cases is evident. However, as Massari herself stated in her chapter, “Murder is the paradigmatic expression of mafia power” (2013, 83). Thus, other non-pragmatic expressions still happening already that are also relevant in order to make an analysis of the current legitimacy conditions. Which are those expressions and how to detect them in order to do a political legitimacy analysis? What is currently the role of mafia violence for either recover or consolidate a mafia mandate? Indeed, Palermo and Sicily in general had gone through a significant public life transformation based on improving their justice procuration and administration, as well as through shocking moments –as a consequence of emblematic victims such as Falcone and Borsellino, but also as a result of the big picture consequences. According to Varese, 557 fugitives were captured in Sicily between 1992 and 2006, a figure that illustrate the prosecution hard work (2017, 35). However, beyond police and courts, another transformation occurs, i.e., that one happening in the streets that shaped the rise of the so-called “civil society”.

To some degree, the current century has been the background in which Sicilian civil society crystalized. In 2017, *The Guardian* categorized Palermo as a resilient city, i.e., capable of healing and recovery. Palermo, it was argued, moved from being a mafia battlefield to cultural capital, referring to the Italian capital of culture award (Tondo, 2017). As a social change, it was the result of a consecution of forces switching several conditions, including the legitimacy setting — for instance, how Sicilian civil society promotes anti-mafia professionally through a constellation of both professional and sustainable NGOs, including Libera and Addiopizzo. The former was born "[...] with the purpose of involving and supporting all those who are interested in the fight against mafias and organized crime", through these commitments: [...] the law on the social re-use of assets that have been confiscated from organized crime; the education of democratic lawfulness promotion; the fight against corruption; the camps for anti-mafia education; the support of victims of the mafia and their families; the campaigns promoting social justice policies; and the projects on jobs, development, and anti-usury activities" (Libera, no-date).

Generally speaking, the strategy of CN towards the enemy as well as towards the current law has been not making public stands against them. On the contrary, CN´s enemies (including the anti-mafia) have systematically pointed out *mafiosi* as the enemy (Dalla Chiesa, 2014; Vaccaro, 2012). In other words, we can speak about CN´s enemies because their enemies have spoken loudly. Speaking loudly and publicly about the mafia became a strategy that the anti-mafia followed to challenge the violent reaction that CN experienced during the nineteen eighties and nineties. At least in Palermo, people now speak about the mafia; different from

the CN, which now has adopted a strategy of silence in order to go unnoticed (Interview in field no. 4, 2018). *Io ricordo* (I remember), is a documentary released in Sicily in 2008. Produced by the "Progetto Legalità" Foundation and directed by Ruggero Gabbai, the movie is a trip through Sicilian mafia violence from the victim´s perspective. In the film, a father tells his small son about mafia violence consequences in Palermo. The narration is almost pedagogic, taking the kid on a journey through the emblematic places and people of Palermo´s anti-mafia community, along with interviews with victims´ relatives.

At some point, while the man tells the boy about how the pool anti-mafia created the files for launching the Maxi process, he abruptly stops and asks the kid: "Gelato?"; the boy, who wears a t-shirt with "It´s not about being a winner. It´s about being a champion", quickly answers: "Yes, but keep telling me the story, papa" (Gabbai, 2008). The anti-mafia movement has for decades been pushing towards portraying a public image of who and what the mafia is while attempting to fight it through education and justice. *Io ricordo* is a relevant example in this regard. As a "portrayal of the enemy" strategy, whereas CN portrays their enemies almost exclusively through committing violence against them (either discrete or scandalous), anti-mafia chooses an educational strategy based on speaking out against the mafia. By doing so, the anti-mafia also forced CN to implicitly take a stand and portray mafia´s enemies as well. Currently, Palermo´s primary use the film in order to teach the students about mafia, anti-mafia, as well as a speaking-out strategy: by talking about it, both on the streets and in the schools, a path through which mafia´s authority might become undermined opens (Interview in field no. 13, 2018).

5.3. Across Legitimacy Sources and Resources: *La Festa di Sant´Agata*

Francisco de Zurbarán, painter during the Spanish Golden Century, created "Santa Águeda" between 1630 and 1633. The painting represents the image of this Catholic woman saint, Águeda or Agatha, standing with a sober expression while holding her breasts on a tray. This iconography alludes to the martyrdom lived by Agatha during the torture that killed her, in the third century AD. Allegedly, she rejected Quintianus, the Sicilian proconsul under Decio´s Roman Empire. Agatha had already offered her virginity to Jesus Christ and defender herself until her death (Kissin, 1992, 20-21). Quintianus ordered her torture that consisted, among other things, of cutting off her breasts. After Agatha´s death, the Mt. Etna volcano located in the Sicilian town of Catania, exploded. The lava did not enter the city, and the miracle was attributed to Agatha, who became the Saint patron of Catania – as well as for breast cancer patients, among others due to the breast reference (Kissin, 1992, 19). Since centuries ago, around February 5 is celebrated her memorial at Catania, an eastern-maritime town in Sicily. Saint Agatha´s procession planning lasts months and, as the second most massive Catholic procession in the world (only after the Holy Week in Seville, Spain), it is and has been the Catania celebration (Merlino, 2014, 120).

5.3.1. The Sicilian Mafia and Catholic Processions

How did the mafia and specifically CN become related to Saint Agatha and her procession? Moreover, what is the criminal political legitimacy interest behind the ritual? During the last decade, Italian, Sicilian, and foreigner press reported that, according to the local prosecution, CN controlled the whole ritual preparations and execution between 1999 and 2005 (Staff Proceso, 2010; EFE, 2008). The Sicilian mafia decided who was the organizing coordinator, the procession´s route, coordinated public vendors, organized the fireworks spectacle, etc. As a consequence, as it is argued here, this relation runs across the three sources of legitimacy that are studied here. Specifically, even when all the Italian criminal groups have become related to religion through different manners (always Catholic or, at least, Christian), Saint Agatha´s rite at Catania is a representative example of how a single phenomenon becomes involved into and across all the criminal groups sources and resources political legitimacy analyzed in this research. Granting public services; promoting belonging and cohesiveness; displaying public messages; spreading images and identities as well as rituals, moral beliefs and religiosity; providing taxation by asking *pizzo* and regulating labor; offering leisure events and gifting; creating fear and, finally, standing against formal authorities. All of these are material and non-material criminal resources of legitimacy that CN performed through Saint Agatha´s procession.

Indeed, historically Italian mafias have been constantly related to Catholicism through different paths (Merlino, 2014; Dino, 2008).[73] According to the *pentito* Calderone, the image of the Virgin of the Annunciation is used for CN´s *punciuta´*s rite. In *Gli uomini del disonore. The Sicilian mafia nella vita of the great pentito Antonino Calderone*, by Pino Arlacchi, cited by Deborah Puccio-Den, this ritual, which took place in 1962 in Catania, is recounted by Calderone himself: "Uncle Peppino asked Calderone: 'With what hand do you throw?' and then he poked with a pin of hook the index finger of the hand that Calderone had indicated him, in order to spill some drops of his blood on a small sacred image. It was the Virgin of the Annunciation, the patroness of the Cosa Nostra" (Calderone quoted by Arlacchi in Puccio-Den, 2011, 311). The *Madonna dell'Annunciazione* has been also associated as CN´s patron saint (Merlino, 2014, 118). Another *pentito*, Leonardo Messina, confessed how he was responsible of organizing the procession of Our Lady of the Annunciation. He also narrated how he walked next to the saint during the procession and also confessed sarcastically that there was no way in which the priest did not realize that CN was organizing it (Dino, 2008; Merlino, 2014, 118).

[73] Across all the possibilities in which both agents have been related, collaboration, submission, victimization, and confrontation are representative examples. Regarding the confrontation, only until 1993 (the same year in which the priest Giuseppe Puglisi was murdered) Pope John Paul II claimed to *mafiosi* for their crimes during discourses precisely pronounced at Sicily; while on June of 2014, Pope Francis excommunicate all *mafiosi*.

When it comes to religiosity, the Sicilian case needs to address how CN and Catholicism interweave (Dino, 2008). From a political legitimacy perspective, it produces both pragmatic and ideological syncretism. Pragmatically, CN attempts to embody the moral capital and authority that the Catholic institution and faith have within a Catholic society such as Sicily. On the other hand, ideologically, CN embraces Catholic beliefs and uses them as a source for promoting practices through which validates their internal and external practices. Initiation rituals are examples that condense that syncretism. While it has the pragmatic function of reinforcing authority, it also makes use of Catholic symbols worshiped by *mafiosi* (Melino, 2011, 67). Saints are already legitimate symbols useful for CN, who attempts to borrow or transfer veneration to the criminal organization. Catholic processions are also great examples in this regard. As well-rooted centennial rituals, to control them meant to acquire or reinforce authority. Nevertheless, the mafia also shows respect to the saint and ritual. By doing so, CN looks to borrow or transfer the locals' respect and devotion to the symbols (already legitimate) towards them.[74]

Dino argued that, after the Falcone and Borsellino assassinations in 1992, the Sicilian mafia entered into a crisis due to local discredit. When Provenzano led the organization, CN saw in religion a platform through which to change its bad reputation. Religiosity, she argued, "[…] gives identity and strength to criminal organizations" (Dino quoted by Staff Proceso, 2010). During the procession of 2004 at Catania, the *fercolo* that contains Saint Agatha´s relics stopped in front of the house of Catania´s mafia boss Giuseppe Magnion, who left the jail days before, and stayed there for a few minutes. Fireworks were thrown during that stop. Moreover, undercover agents photographed members of Santapaola´s family next to the *fercolo* carrying the reliquary casket that later seated in the front lines during the mass at Catania´s cathedral (Melino, 2014, 122; Dino, 2008, 29). According to journalistic reports, Santapaola´s members are CN´s representation at Catania (Staff La Razón, 2008). Why did CN attempt to control Saint Agatha´s festivities? Any analysis needs to consider how, as a public power display, it also influenced the criminal group´s identity.

5.3.2. Saint Agatha´s Procession: 2019 Edition

Currently, Saint Agatha´s procession works as a politically disputed field. Furthermore, Saint Agatha´s symbolism operates as a holistic legitimacy resource through which political disputes between local agents take place. The 2019 edition of the procession lasted more than a month, from January 2 to February 12. Nevertheless, the main activities took place from February 3 to 5. In the first, the procession for *l´offerta della cera* (the offer of wax) (see Picture 11 in the Appendix). The next day was Aurora´s mass as well as the *Giro esterno*

[74] In this regard, Merlino argued: "Evidence suggests that the practice of financing, organizing and performing a central role in religious processions in honor of local patron saints has occurred throughout the history of the organization [CN]" (2014, 109).

(external tour), in which Saint Agatha´s relics went around the outside neighborhoods in the city, a rainy day that made it slow. Finally, the great mass took place at 10 am with Saint Agatha´s image at Cathedral´s dais (see Picture 12). After the mass ended, the time for the *Giro interno* (internal tour) came. This could be considered one of the most, if not the most relevant moment during the whole procession, i.e., the time when Saint Agatha´s relics went out of the Cathedral and traveled through via Etnea, the main Catania´s downtown street. However, things went particularly different during the 2019 edition.

A few meters after going out of the Cathedral, the *fercolo* stopped. An enormous number of devotees were surrounding it, while also the security cordon was broke, and crowds were across the path in which Saint Agatha´s was supposed to walk through. After minutes of confusion and chaos, Claudio Consoli, the *capo-vara* (the chief of the procession coordination staff), ordered to come back to Cathedral. The decision turned the situation even more troubled. A man yelled at Consoli: "*Pagliaccio*!", "*Buffone*!" (Clown), whereas during the live streaming, a commentator for the local TV qualified the decision as sad but fair "mostly due to security [conditions]". "Is a sad and sour epilogue", replied her colleague, "Sour but fair", she insisted. "This is a truly complicated moment, a very hard one!" replied another commentator. Only one thing became clear: there were no conditions to keep walking and, thus, comply with the ascending towards Saint Julian church. The *giro interno* would not be complete this year. After coming back to Cathedral, and in the middle of confusion, Monsignor Barbaro Scionti who remained standing on the *fercolo* during the chaos, took the microphone and said:

> *In il nome del Padre, del Figlio, e dello Spirito Santo. Dobbiamo fare una preghiera di riparazione, perché quello che è avvenuto è molto grave. I devoti di Sant'Agata, con Sant'Agata, non sono ostaggio di nessuno. I devoti di Sant'Agata sono per Sant'Agata [...] Cari delinquenti, perché di questo si tratta, cari delinquenti, siete soli e isolati. Adesso fate silenzio perché dobbiamo pregare. Questa e la risposta.*
>
> ---
>
> In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We must make a prayer of reparation, because what has happened is very serious. The devotees of Saint Agatha, with Saint Agatha, are not hostage to anyone. Saint Agatha devotees are for Saint Agatha [...] Dear delinquents, because this is what it is about, dear delinquents, you are alone and isolated. Do silence because we have to pray. This is the answer.

After his speech, the *fercolo* entered into the church. Indeed, Scionti was somehow not only diagnosing what was happening in the middle of the chaos, but also defining accused, accusations, and even solutions. Nevertheless, the question remained: who are these *delinquenti?* Was the Monsignor referring to irresponsible devotees that did not behave properly and let the procession continue? Was he suggesting a sort of organized plot? Maybe both? Mattia Gangi, a local journalist, wrote a column for *Catania Today* which stated: "With that reprimand launched against the "delinquents" […] the church seems to have proposed

the ancient question that has always permeated the celebration of Saint Agatha: who takes, for real, the decisions within the path? Is it the people and, with it, also the criminal organizations or, instead, the authorities of the State, the Committee for the Celebrations and the Archdiocese? This is a question which might seem to have been answered by the *capo-vara* with his behavior" (2019). Indeed, the references "*siete soli*" and "*ostaggio*" are the proof of the existence of a dispute for who has the devotion: between the "delinquents" and the faithful. For this research, Scionti´s words need to be analyzed 1) together with the very particular moment in which they were pronounced, 2) as well as considering the procession´s history and 3) as part of narrative strategies.

In this regard, it does not matter if Scionti or Consoli knew who interfered, and why, with the procession. It is also irrelevant if those "delinquents" were a reference to *mafiosi*. What really matters is to realize how the procession receives real and potential challenges, which involve how different local agents have been and still interested in having, preserving, or challenging the control of the procession. The church, the state, and the mafia have been involved in this dilemma in recent Catania history. Emphasizing the aforementioned idea, Saint Agatha´s procession is a field in which local political legitimacy becomes challenged. The procession has two characteristics that produced this scenario. In the first place, the various and potentially confronted agents that have been politically using and currently use the rite. And second, the many sources and resources of political legitimacy involved in one sole celebration. In the end, by controlling the procession, the agents might obtain a tool through which they can display themselves as well as their political presence towards a significant audience and together with an already valid and very well appreciated ritual. Additionally, as a political tool, the procession is a way to access to how the city is social and politically structured and restructured.

5.4. Closing Remarks: Chapter V Summary

After elaborating on the particular CN context and political legitimacy efforts, the following are closing remarks derived from this fifth chapter. In the first place, Sicilian CN needs to be understood in the historic Italian state-building context. In this regard, certain CN political legitimacy practices have been as modern as the Italian state. This centennial accompaniment experienced between the official authority and the mafia gives the pattern to explain, if not Sicily´s history, at least how CN performed their political legitimacy attempts. Indeed, CN did and still participates in the Sicilian social order shaping through contingent and systematic sovereignty practices. Besides, rather than a counter-state, this chapter adopted a twofold CN definition. First, defined as a criminal group interested in the local social order definition. And secondly, defined as a local social system through which power, authority, and violence become mediated, i.e., CN as the mafia production of politics source. Moreover, this chapter describes how Sicily also became a profoundly and high-density contested political legitimacy field.

Especially over the last five decades, Sicily has experienced a dense concentration of political agents taking place in the local social order definition. In Sicily, however, although the heterogeneous composition of these political agents, many of them joint under the anti-mafia claim. As a consequence, CN faced a massive resistance that, in the last decades, undermined their political legitimacy specter and capacity. This chapter argued how CN has been going and coming from the shades when it comes to their political legitimacy claims. After the First World War, the mafia did not appear publicly as a result of the iron-fisted strategy carried out by the fascist government. However, after the Second World War, CN made a comeback expressed through political legitimacy claims. Consequently, from the sixties until the early eighties, Sicilian CN exposed their mandate without more significant resistance. In terms of political legitimacy, this promoted a more prominent display of mafia legitimacy.

However, since the *pentiti* phenomena, the Maxi Trial and the judicial achievements against the mafia, the rest of the nineteen eighties and most of the nineties became decades of contestation for political legitimacy. Finally, during the current century years, CN had to become shadowy again due to a lack of success precisely in the legitimacy arena against the aforementioned anti-mafia movement in Sicily. However, generally speaking, CN´s preference for a non-material legitimacy performance is explained because this group spent long periods being a local authority rather than trying to become one (1988). Regarding CN sources and resources of legitimacy, this criminal group is and has been much more orthodox when attempting legitimacy. Orthodoxism is particularly evident in two CN´s legitimacy attempts. First, by CN's preference to not appear publicly over becoming publicized in the sense of having a public presence, as well as advertised, i.e., spreading identity symbols. Finally, the second orthodox feature concerns how CN permanently prioritizes inner cohesion over popular support, which in the end is another manner of gaining and using legitimacy.

Chapter 6.
Reshaping Crime and (Dis)order: Towards a Comparison

Almond and Verba published *The Civic Culture* in 1963, one of the first quantitative studies to comparatively examine political culture across five countries – the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Mexico. While elaborating on the analytical advantages of comparison, they argued: "In order to compare political behavior cross-nationally, one must be able to specify dimensions of political behavior that apply to all the systems", hence, it becomes needed to develop "[…] a means of conceptualizing politics in ways that have wide applicability" (1963, 55). How to epistemologically develop those means? Moreover, to what extent do these become fixed parameters to guide the investigation? Comparative research brings not only opportunities but also challenges. By comparing, new understandings might open opportunities for improving the analysis, but also run the risk of close other. Methodological rigor is the rule in this regard, whereas the conceptual consistency from the beginning to end carries the investigating patterns. By doing it correctly, comparing adds new analytical perspectives to the specific cases but, most importantly, pushes forward the conceptual discussion on the analyzed phenomenon.

Case-comparison investigations on armed conflicts require meeting certain criteria in order to become analytically productive. In the first place, they must be "[…] representative of the phenomenon at hand [and the two cases need also to be] significant examples". The second requirement is that "[...] the cases must be comparable. They must show similarities in order to present enough evidence to test the hypotheses". The third requirement is that "[...] the two cases must also differ in critical variables so as to highlight the factors that are more general and those that are specific to each particular case". In other words, similarities are as relevant as differences. Considering the two sides means to structure the cases selection properly, but also relevant outputs might come out from considering both. Finally, the fourth requirement takes to underline how relevant the comparison method might produce new insights on each one of the selected cases: "[...] the cases must also be able to bring to the fore the particularities of the actors, their interests and instruments. These requirements promote the use of a substantial narrative" (Duyvesteyn, 2005, 18-19).

Those ideas and requirements have guided this comparative research, but most specifically this comparative and analytical last chapter. Criminal group comparisons need to consider not only how the cases differ, but how specific contexts influence each difference or similarity. Hence, by addressing a review of what varies and what is similar between both cases, a first broad comparative panorama becomes drawn. This descriptive exercise also works as the starting point from which the comparison transforms later into an analysis guided by specific examples and, finally, into a conceptual discussion. Neither similarities nor differences are always sharply distinguishable. On the contrary, under particular

circumstances, a customary practice of LFM/LCT or CN may simultaneously fit into an understanding that comprehends both categories. For instance, thinking about the Italian criminal groups, Dickie pointed out that, "Organizational rituals and structures are a liturgical device designed to transform young men into professional criminals and convert a simple life as a delinquent into a vocation for barbarism" (2015, 47). As an analytical statement, the quote could also apply to Michoacán´s criminal groups between 2005 and 2014.

Given this existence of similarities and differences between both cases, what kind of criminal legitimacy-construction process does each experience offer? This question guides this last chapter by considering political legitimacy as a gear that enables building bridges of understanding towards other dimensions regarding the criminal phenomenon. First, once reviewed the empirical cases data in the previous chapters, the first section in this chapter elaborates how that data and those cases push forward the conceptual discussion on legitimacy and crime. Afterward, following again the Table 1, this chapter starts by conducting the comparative review. By following this structure, the comparative analysis is guided through extracting how each case performed every source and resource of legitimacy explained across this research. In other words, by grouping every source, subtype source, and resource of legitimacy, similarities and differences are sharpened but also analyzed. That is an extensive, explicit, and descriptive exercise starting from the observation of the data recovered for the two cases. By enlisting, grouping, and ordering both what is alike and what contrasts, hence the instances become closer together with the data presented across the previous chapters.

This investigation started by reviewing and reflecting on the literature review about the main concepts. That implied recognizing both conceptual discussion tracks such as the current debate status, as well as taking a stance towards it. Inspired on following that path, here the analysis starts by coming back to concepts for contributing to the debate. Once the cases were explained and developed, the main idea is to summarize and elaborate how, together, Michoacán and Sicily move forward the discussion when it comes to how criminal groups and political legitimacy come together. Ironically, it is through other concepts by which the discussion is fed. The state, sovereignty, and the social order are core ideas that have been directly and indirectly guiding the theoretical framework, the methodology and, as a consequence, the data collecting process. Indeed, by working as analytical platforms, these other concepts also led this final step. As it is needed, constant references to the cases will be made to the research cases to support and illustrate the argumentation. In the end, neither legitimacy nor criminality are fixed ideas. Hence this exercise is another valuable opportunity to continue thinking about them.

6.1. Criminal Groups and Legitimacy: Pushing Conceptualization

The first chapter of this dissertation affirmed that authority is not synonymous with legitimacy. So how are they related? Is legitimacy a noun, a verb, or maybe an adjective? In other words, is legitimacy a thing, a condition, or an attribute? And what about authority? Underneath these ideas rests a meaningful political and sociological discussion which this final section addresses, namely, how Sicily and Michoacán advance the discussion to understand how authority and legitimacy relate to each other. Without being operationalized, this question of how they relate extends beyond this research. Thus, in order to organize the discussion, henceforward authority idea is divided into three other concepts already discussed: the state, the social order, and sovereignty. From each of these ideas deeply attached to the idea of authority, emerge conceptual thoughts to rethink the legitimacy debate resulting from the analysis of the cases. As seen earlier, high-criminality contexts that also have the presence of criminal groups with legitimacy pretensions, are fertile grounds for pushing forward this discussion. Hence, after going deep into empirical references, now the discussion closes by coming back to the conceptual level while recovering the empirical outputs coming from both Michoacán and Sicily.

The authority building process, as explained in the first chapter, is both dynamic and contingent. These features justify focusing the analysis on the descriptive perspective of political legitimacy, which empirically explores how legitimacy actually occurs, rather than how it might or should do so according to pre-established conditions. Also, in the theoretical discussion, as part of the work of designing an operative concept of legitimacy, five considerations were presented. These were 1) to consider the ruler, the ruled, as well as those also pretending to become the ruler (agents); 2) to recognize the contingency in which legitimacy struggles happen (context), 3) to note the hypothetical of legitimate parallel authorities (coexistence); 4) to review the historical process in which legitimacy has been evolving in a specific place (history); and finally, 5) to recognize the current legitimacy setting moment into an ongoing social process (continuity). These five issues have been present across the research, and here are recovered to structure the conceptual thoughts that the cases of LFM and LCT in Michoacán, and CN in Sicily, offer in terms of political legitimacy.

Before getting there, here is what this research answers to the question of how legitimacy and authority relate to each other. Despite the differences between the sets of political legitimacy resources displayed and developed, LFM and LCT share with CN the continual effort for building authority. The paths might be different or similar, but the end goal did not change: to establish an authority-building process. While traveling this path, these criminal groups face reactions from both formal authorities, other pretending legitimacy agencies, and especially relevant, from the audiences of this legitimacy interest. However, traveling the legitimacy path does not eliminate or cancel but reaffirms the authority-building process – including those with legitimacy, those wanting it, and those sharing it. As a result, political legitimacy clashes are instrumental to the constant and contingent authority-building process.

In other words, legitimacy and authority get related through the former being a useful instrument during shaping and deciding on the latter.

However, as an instrument, no legitimacy related clashes happen outside that authority-building process, while no authority disputes exclude the usage of legitimacy. Furthermore, since political legitimacy is instrumental to the definition of the ruler and the ruled, it tends to be used, and not merely accumulated. Its value depends on what is exchanged or what it is used for. In this regard comes the relevance of the criminal groups. As particular social agents whose separation from society is merely fictional, their interest in participating in the legitimacy clashes does not make them political agents – in the end, every individual is already more or less a political agent while existing in society. However, these atypical criminal groups' existence speaks more about the context's exceptionality in terms of the authority-building process, rather than the criminal groups´ hypothetical rarity. As such a useful and irrevocable instrument for taking part in the authority-building process, those scenarios in which political legitimacy is accessible for criminal groups does not lack authority. On the contrary, they have an excess of it. Legitimacy becomes as divisible as multiple agents looking for power appear. To address how these ideas impact the concepts, some thoughts follow.

6.1.1. Political Legitimacy, Criminal Groups, and the State

1. Agents. As a social phenomenon, several agents compose the state. The studied legitimacy disputes in Michoacán and Sicily allow seeing how blurred the boundaries are allegedly separating a) state and non-state actors and b) legal and illegal political agents –producing political legitimacy coexistence, as analyzed below. In this regard, the state does not weaken or disappear but becomes reaffirmed through recognizing the many parts making up its political composition. For instance, with its centenary existence, CN has been participating in Italian state building – especially but not exclusively in Sicily. LFM and LCT also influenced Mexican state building despite their relatively short small existence compared to CN. Criminal non-state agents, combined with an increased legitimacy dispute in a given context, do not eliminate but reaffirm the state as a dominant political order. In this regard, the state needs to be understood as a complex, non-rational, and non-homogenous agent composed of many parts but providing societies governance expectations and predictability patterns.

2. Context. The state, as a social phenomenon, changes. Hence, legitimacy struggles might be an engine to either boost or speed up these changes. Moreover, criminal groups like CN, LFM, and LCT are both outputs and inputs of this contingent process. Taking criminal groups' public displays as a variable, Michoacán between 2005 and Nazario´s 'second death', might be similar to Sicily during the post-war period until anti-mafia became a real resistance. This can also be seen from the perspective of the formal authority. Currently, Sicilian judges

portray a deeply different image of legal authority, which has practical consequences in terms of crime and violence. Authority claims coming from these groups were consistently related to the state idea, independently of the context, but it is the context that defines how this idea takes form.

3. Coexistence. Criminal groups with political legitimacy pretentions tend to cannibalize the state as a powerful symbol and reference of authority. However, this scenario is mostly possible in contexts where authority coexistence is either a reality or an attempt. In the case of extortion practices, both piso and pizzo based their violence, profit expectation and, most important, political intentions on the idea of emulating, simulating, and embodying the state. This is basically fictional since the state is not this rational and unidirectional entity, nor can it be substituted as easily as this performance pretends. Nevertheless, the idea of the state works as an inevitable reference point for these criminal groups when designing and displaying specific attempts of authority-building towards local people, but not only them.

4. History. The state has margins. Beyond them, the social and political dynamics need special analytical attention and considerations. Moreover, these margins result from each historical state-building process. The history of the Italian state as well as of the Mexican state has a particular perspective when seen from Sicily or Michoacán. However, even as an analytical category, margins are not always equal nor work the same way when it comes to political legitimacy. Since state experiences differ, especially in the marginal regions, authority expectations and mandate acceptance might differ from case to case. History serves for identifying specificities. By considering and recognizing the margins, it is possible to find different models of legitimacy-building resulting from both: a particular authority expectation, and also singular mandate acceptance conditions. Practically, the material and non-material resources of legitimacy from LFM, LCT, and CN resulted from there.

5. Continuity. Legitimacy renews the state and its multiple parts. As an ongoing process, both legitimacy and the state are under contingency. However, if the legitimacy struggle itself pushes this contingency, it becomes deeper when criminal groups also take part. Illegality has an expectation of social disapproval in advance. Thus, to counter this, criminal groups appeal to discourses and actions of profound change as what means to switch legal to illegal and building authority from there. This pushes the contingency together with the resistances that these attempts find and face. In Sicily, the anti-mafia movement provoked (and still provokes) profound changes in the state idea, practices and institutions. However, its existence is due to CN's challenge. In Michoacán, *autodefensas* is also a good example in this regard but with less success in terms of stopping the violence.

6.1.2. Political Legitimacy, Criminal Groups, and Sovereignty

1. Agents. As a practice, sovereignty can potentially reside in as many hands as agents dispute political legitimacy. In these circumstances, the several agents performing sovereign practices do not lead to a lack of authority but an excess of powers potentially confronted. As a consequence, the more agents simultaneously involved, also means the more authorities having or exercising the right over other's life and death as the ultimate expression of sovereignty. Following Arendt (1970), violent actions in which either LFM, LCT, and CN participated, despite the particularities, could always be rationalized through the understanding of the final goals, which might be a combination of political, economic, and cultural motivations. Legitimacy serves as a catalyst through which the analysis becomes organized.

2. Context. Sovereignty practices become visible thanks to legitimacy. Moreover, in the same way in which understanding sovereignty as a practice helps to realize that the state is not monolithic, also legitimacy disputes make visible that the sovereign is not an object. Thus, depending on the context, the formal authority could concentrate these practices, but another possible scenario is that dispersed sovereignty practices also clash against each other. Practically every source and resource of criminal legitimacy collected and analyzed in this research has an angle of political aspiration to build a political mandate to decide on the rest. That means that (independently of its success or failure) both criminal legitimacy performances attempted to build authority towards making the criminal group the local sovereign. Located behind what shapes this "act of deciding on the rest" are the sovereign practices. Finally, when displaying publicly become covered by the blanket of legitimacy to make them socially acceptable.

3. Coexistence. Apart from making them visible, legitimacy also helps to enable the simultaneous exercise of several practices of sovereignty – which does not imply the existence of several simultaneous sovereigns. These practices take place independently of whether or not they are covered by legitimacy. Nevertheless, as such a powerful political instrument, legitimacy allowed LFM and LCT in the first place to justify their sovereignty practices as a stance that challenged and resisted the status quo. Later, the resistance that these groups faced were also sovereign practices filled with legitimacy discourses as well. As a result, the coexistence of sovereignties became enabled thanks to the political legitimacy setting. Every social agent in Michoacán during the analyzed context pretended to influence or define the local social order through looking for public acceptance or condescension, and displaying public presence. Within a context of contested coexistence of sovereignty practices, the shortest route to keeping in the dispute is through staying inside legitimacy arenas.

4. History. In spite of the specificities that every context has for the legitimacy definition, practicing sovereignty is a historical *continuum*. Ancient as well as recently created criminal groups would have the same chance to act as sovereigns as long as they become interested in

political legitimacy. CN, for instance, as part of its historical oscillation between retraction and relatively public exposure, continually recurred to performing diverse sets of sovereign practices –some of them involving legitimacy and some others not. LFM and LCT, on the other hand, despite being such recent when compared to the Sicilian mafia, also quickly started their political performance by exercising a wide range of sovereign practices including, indeed, the right to decide who lives, who dies, and why.

5. Continuity. As an analytical category, the monopoly of violence is not legitimate if the sovereignty is not monopolized as well. In other words, as long as sovereign practices from various social agents are taking place into one sole context, no concentration of sovereignty is possible and, thus, violence will spread due to the multiple agents claiming or threatening with using it. Following the argument, the monopoly of violence is neither a condition of the state nor an indicator of social order presence, but an ongoing result of sovereignty monopolization. Indeed, this condition also could change through time and, again, legitimacy is instrumental to that modification. Consequently, violent non-state actors are not a consequence of a lack of the state´s monopoly of violence but of the fact that sovereignty, as a practice, can be potentially exercised by almost any other social agent. Instead, as long as the official authority legitimately monopolizes sovereignty, violence will also be monopolized.

6.1.3. Political Legitimacy, Criminal groups, and Social (Dis)Order

1. Agents. Legitimacy conflicts serve for observing different versions of social order within the same place. Even though these versions may become explicit through public messages or representations, due to its illegal condition, particularly criminal groups with legitimacy interests face the necessity of spreading their social order vision. For instance, the anti-mafia movement pushed CN to implicitly contrast their social order version (based on violence emerging from their symbolic existence and factual presence) against the culture of lawfulness promoted by the anti-mafia. On the other hand, the explicit public communication carried out by LFM and LCT forced them to criticize the status quo and, consequently, uncover their "alternative" version of social order for Michoacán. The more agents involved, the more probabilities of different social orders as long as these agents experience legitimacy struggles.

2. Context. Although promoting or having a specific version of social order, criminal groups involved in legitimacy struggles are somehow products, shapers, and transformers of the current local social order. In other words, each social order context contains while receive affectations coming from these groups. As social agents, these criminal groups are not separated from the society from which have emerged. Moreover, any effort to contradict this statement could be understood as part of how criminal groups discursively build their alternative social order version. Although this statement may be obvious, no other context

besides Michoacán might produce the exact case of LFM and LCT, such as no other context besides Sicily is the space in which CN could emerge. Both are products of particular social orders that later alter the same social order no matter their success or failure in becoming legitimate.

3. Coexistence. Empirically, there is no such thing as social disorder due to parallel authorities' coexistence. As a normative perception of social order, social disorder chases to filling both social and political expectations based on ideal conceptions. In other words, having or lacking social order is not a possibility since every society becomes somehow ordered. In the best scenario, the social order needs to be improved notably in the reviewed cases, which might be guided by human rights respect criteria. However, even in these violent and high-criminality contexts, there is a social order that could be rationalized. An instrument to do that is by studying how and why the legitimacy disputes are taking place. Comparing similarities and differences between Michoacán in Sicily was inspired by translating the disorder into order. To some extent, political legitimacy helps to rationalize the social order analysis in the context of a presumable disorder.

4. History. Historically, the social order definition process has winners and losers. Following the idea, especially for criminal groups, taking part in the legitimacy struggles means the possibility of losing the game of defining the social order. Whereas standard criminals (i.e., criminals without aspirations to political legitimacy) do not need to justify their actions nor develop a political stand, the studied cases did so explicit or implicitly and, thus, played the game of modifying the current social order. In that case, it is not that these groups did not influence the resulting version of social order, but that they will become discredited. Although that does not kill their future legitimation possibilities, in the short term the chances of taking place in the social order definition will be shortened. Indeed, during this research developing, LCT and CN need to be considered as losers in each of their contexts.

5. Continuity. As another contingent element, the social contract as a core part of the social order will be permanently renewed. In order to trace these renewals, legitimacy contestations work as a useful research tool. To some extent, the existence of social groups attempting to become political legitimate from the criminality may be due to either accompanying the social contract formation in the long run or as a result of significant social contract breakdowns historically produced. CN is a close example of the first case. Its existence within the Sicilian context is as modern as the local and national legal authority. On the other hand, both LFM and LCT are close examples of the second scenario, in which their emergence could not be disconnected from several and relevant failures in the local modern social contract.

6.2. Michoacán-Sicily Connection: Comparing Sources of Legitimacy

The distance between Palermo, the capital city of Sicily, and Morelia, the capital city of Michoacán, is 10.6 thousand kilometers. What kind of bond allows the comparing of such remote places? By the beginning of the twentieth century, Dante and Theresa Cusi, born in Italy, arrived in Mexico with their two small sons and bought cheap land in Michoacán. The Cusi family was the desired type of immigrant during the *porfirismo* period, when president Porfirio Diaz aspired to develop the country through Western European standards. These lands later became the municipalities of Lombardía and Nueva Italia. During the 30s, as a result of the post-revolutionary ideology, the peasants of Nueva Italia and Lombardía working for Cusi´s family rice plantations launched an original strike. Instead of demanding land rights, as was common, instead the claim was for labor rights (Pureco, 2008). Nevertheless, by the late 30s, president Lázaro Cárdenas (also the former governor of Michoacán) expropriated the lands to the Cusi, which became collective property, i.e., *ejido*. However, after this period, Cusi´s Italian-ness interweaved with the Mexican-ness identity as well as the other way around.

According to Gurwitz, "The Cusi´s connections with Italy and with fellow Italian immigrants shaped their business practices even as they became increasingly invested in the Mexican nation" (2015, 94). Almost eighty years later, the former lands of the Cusi family retook the national spotlight. A group of armed civilians fighting LCT called *autodefensas* emerged in Nueva Italia, a strategically located point in Michoacán. Positioned in the Southern part of the city, Cuatro Caminos (four paths) is the cruiser point from which highways run to every cardinal point in Michoacán: to the North (Uruapan), South (Lázaro Cárdenas port), West (Morelia), and East (to Apatzingán). Cusi family exposes how a small case might entwine such distant places through complex and diverse social dynamics. This case connected Michoacán with Italy such as also the atypical criminal groups analyzed in this research do so. The following section guides the comparative analysis by following the Table 1 that also structured the cases analysis. However, before addressing each source of legitimacy, this comparison needs to first comparatively analyze both political contexts where the legitimacy performance took place.

In this regard, Michoacán and Sicily were characterized by being highly contested political legitimacy scenarios. Sullivan suggested the existence of "Criminal enclaves" as "[...] areas where lawbreakers [...] exert political and social control. Essentially these areas are ‘other governed spaces’. The state may or may not be absent — although its hold is certainly challenged — but other informal governance structures, such as gangs, wield substantial political influence or control”. Moreover, he continued, "These enclaves could also fully supplant the state when it is absent or lacks solvency, which I define as the sum of legitimacy and capacity" (2019). In these cases, despite the intermittently effective criminal control, rather than criminal enclaves, from a political legitimacy perspective Michoacán and Sicily need to be defined as contested enclaves as a result of the dense presence of social agents involved in the local social order definition. Indeed, the local criminal groups were one

particularly relevant social agent –but one among others in the end. Moreover, the criminal group´s political legitimacy interest emerged, in both cases, from the importance given to define or preserve such social order.

Moreover, social, political, and historical contexts also produced different legitimacy performances in both cases. CN is as modern as the Italian state, whereas LFM and LCT emerged in a very particular Mexican context but with deep roots in local Michoacán social and political history. As a result, while in Michoacán the over-exposition of LFM and LCT produced intense and visible amounts of material and non-material legitimacy resources, the shadowy presence of CN Sicily produced a concentration of non-material sources. Bringing back Claessen (1988), whereas LFM and LCT kept in the legitimation track (which to some extent explains the preference for being publicly visible and, thus, develop and spread primarily material legitimacy resources), CN indeed had long periods being an authority (whose legitimacy was mostly based in violence and fear) rather than trying to become one (which to some extent explains the preference for not becoming publicly visible and, thus, develop and spread primarily non-material legitimacy resources). Indeed, the recent decades with anti-mafia resistance, and the Mori operation are exceptional periods in this regard. Also related to the historical conditions, during long periods, CN sought to preserve the status quo. On the other hand, LFM and LCT had a disruptive vision of social order based on having enemies who were already ruling before them as well as those pretending to do so later, such as the federal government or *autodefensas*. Nevertheless, this difference produced a similarity: both became zero-sum political legitimacy contexts. In other words, Michoacán and Sicily became arenas in which the legitimacy gained by the criminal group eventually was struggled by another local social agent and vice versa – either legal or not, local or not.

6.2.1. Comparing Symbolic Sources

How appropriate is it to compare these criminal groups in Michoacán and Sicily? For this research, the answer points to an immeasurable epistemological opportunity. Both are criminal groups that have portrayed, performed, and launched actions to gain or preserve political legitimacy for their illegal activities. The differences between the two are as analytically significant as the similarities. This comparison starts with the symbolic sources of legitimacy. This research encountered two criminal groups taking different paths but heading towards the same objective: developing symbolic sources of legitimacy towards defining the local social order. In Michoacán, there was an interest in expanding the criminal group's legitimacy inside as well as outside, whereas CN has favored belonging, cohesion, and internal strength over publicity. But both used symbols as legitimacy sources to attain a conducive social order to continue with crime activities, contesting the official authorities, and becoming legitimate albeit illegal.

Table 5. Symbolic Legitimacy Sources and Resources for Criminal Groups

Main Source	Subtype Source	Material Resources	Non-Material Resources
Symbolic	Social Contract Offer	Granting Public services	Promote belonging and cohesiveness / Trustworthy mandate
	Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification	Publications / Written Codes	Founding narratives / Songs / Anthems / Public messages
	Spread of Symbols	Identity Symbols in Ornaments and Documents	Rituals / Values, Moral Beliefs / Religiosity

Following the Table 5, the symbolic sources are subcategorized into three subtypes: social contract offer, spread and/or justification of agenda, and spread of symbols.

6.2.1.1. Proposed Social Contract

The "proposed social contract" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) granting public services (material resource), b) promoting belonging and cohesiveness, and a trustworthy mandate (non-material resources). While both sought to create a social contract, each criminal group commanded a different audience. While in Sicily the social contract was more an inner rule creation, in Michoacán the criminal group expected obedience from both crime group members as well as locals – including legal authorities and civilians. In other words, CN inner legitimation resulted in external obedience, whereas LFM and LCT were simultaneously attempting to create obedience across every flank. Following Buscetta´s argumentation during the Maxi Trial, CN interest has been always prioritizing to improve inner group cohesiveness. On the other hand, in Michoacán, the purpose seemed to mainly expand their rule of law by spreading their (quickly failed) idea of a criminal trustworthy mandate. On the other hand, regarding belonging, each criminal group attempted to promote it by modeling the political and institutional destiny as well as the general social order of their native lands.

Indeed, territorial identity characterizes each of these political legitimacy performances. Despite the particularities, it was generally reflected in the valuation of geography and a cult to the territory, which helped to shape the political legitimacy discourses of LFM and LCT. References appeared either inside the criminal editorial production, or in *narcomantas*. To some extent, the criminal groups of Michoacán expressed a sort of nationalism by spreading

the idea of a common destiny based on locality.[75] On the other hand, in the case of Sicily, an expression of the land-attaching can be found in analyzing how CN related to other Italian criminal groups: by respecting other territories (i.e., "sovereignties") CN expected the same from the Camorra, the ´Ndrangheta, and the Sacra Corona Unita. The territorial identity also implies a political interest. *La presenza è potenza* (presence is power) is a typical phrase among *mafiosi* that also describes LFM and LCT's political attitudes (Dickie, 2015, 694). On the other hand, regarding cohesiveness, both criminal groups´ made use of similar social features addressing social organization. These were: structuring, hierarchy, familism, honor, and *machismo*.

As explained earlier, the Sicilian mafia is and has been historically hierarchical. However, LFM and LCT also exhibited hierarchical practices concerning not only the relevance of the charismatic leader, but also through the rituals of affiliation and commandment designation. This hierarchy works in both cases for, in the first place, practically ordering practice implementations (who commands and who obeys). Nevertheless, it also reaffirms the groups´ agency by transferring authority from the group to the leaders. Deeply related to hierarchy, familism is a standard feature on the grounds of "group structuring". In both locations, as a referential institution, the "family" works as a binary. First, as a central symbol, it promotes internal and sometimes external authority. Second, as an umbrella idea, it also gives patterns to organize the criminal group internally. In the case of CN, *le famiglie* is the base of the organization and does not necessarily mean blood ties between the members –even when this could be the case (Santino, 2011, 24). As the organizational base from which the affiliation and authority become structured, the institution of family in Sicily helps to support an idea of loyalty and belonging.

An individual cannot abandon the family except by betraying their 'relatives'. Belonging to CN is also non-renounceable, a life commitment. Failing at this might consequently become a major betrayal. This image is well transferred from the family idea in this case. Whereas, in the case of Michoacán, following Lomnitz the idea of family worked as a discursive element and a symbolic vehicle in which criminal group´s morality rested –explicitly talking about LFM. The Mexican family, he argued, results from a complex interdependence between the state and family, in which "[…] the rise of the national State is based on, but it is also done at the expense of the authority of the family" (2016a). Moreover, he continued in the case of Michoacán, as a result of the migration dynamics to which these families are exposed (separation, uprooting, remittances), as an institution, the family becomes simultaneously individuals´ source of support and abandon (Lomnitz, 2016a; Maldonado, 2014, 164). LFM emerged from this complex social context. Also related to family is the

[75] An example in this regard comes from the *Código de los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán*, in which is stated that: "The Order fosters patriotism through expressing pride in one's own land and its achievements, and by recognizing the role corresponding to the nations and the duties towards humanity" (No name, No date, 7).

honor working as an element of cohesiveness, i.e., a non-material resource of legitimacy in the category of social contracts.

Even when, initially, honor is a discursive element, later it becomes empirically reflected. In the case of Sicily, to become a *mafioso* is synonymous with being an *uomo di onore*; on the other hand, LCT published their code of honor. In other words, honor empirically takes shape in respecting the internal rules (for instance, the *omertá* or the LCT code commitments); thus, hierarchy starts to make sense and acquire authority. Finally in this regard, *machismo* is also a shared element related to the groups´ structuring. Indeed, masculinity plays a relevant role in organizing the legitimacy intentions of such type of criminal organizations. Nevertheless, it needs to be mentioned that, in both Michoacán and Sicily, *machismo* is part of the analyzed practices, symbols, and general power setting.[76] As men-centered and asymmetrical groups, these cases of criminal groups tend to exclude, if not eliminate, women inside the organization (Santino, 2011, 25). Both criminal groups developed patriarchal modes of rule, not only towards internally structuring the group operation, but also when these groups disseminated their mandate among locals. Moreover, *machismo* also worked for improving the aftermath´s efforts of criminal governance.

In the case of Michoacán, LCT re-victimized and humiliated women by taking advantage of the violence that they were already suffering at home, together with the impunity from the official authorities when women ask for justice. LCT members offered them the justice the women did not find in the official courts, and later were asked to "pay for the favors" already received by keeping weapons in their backyards (Interview in field, 2017). On the other hand, in the case of CN, women were essentially excluded:

> […] the exclusion of women and their symbolic status can be explained mostly by the use of violence by the Mafia and the establishment of the reputation necessary for the industry of protection to prosper. Gender norms have mostly supported these two essential tools of Mafia trade. Nevertheless, an exclusively functional explanation of gender norms does not suffice to account for Mafia members' behavior as it appears in court and in statements made by state witnesses (Pizzini-Gambeta, 1999, 176).

Indeed, besides to this functional explanation, Pizzini-Gambeta also argued that *mafiosi* shyness might help to understand women´s exclusion of CN: "Contrary to macho mystique Mafia members generally seemed ill at ease in the presence of women [...] this surprising shyness with women stemmed from the fact that specific gender norms were crucial to distinguish the Sicilian Mafia from other criminal societies, and to assess the reputation (1999, 176-177). Other researchers have argued in favor of a more active role of women inside criminal organizations, by either being aware or even to be willing to support men by endorsing their criminal activities (see more in Fiandaca, 2007 and Ingrascì, 2007). On the

[76] Across *machismo* symbolism, both cases exhibited the use of guns, masculine leadership, marginalization of women (both inside and outside the criminal group), as well as brutality regarding the use of violence.

other hand, Dino explored the role of women in the anti-mafia movements and argued that women also have been struggling to find stable and lasting forms and structures of participation (2016). In the end, from a political legitimacy perspective, women's subordination within these criminal groups was reflected both internally and sometimes externally. The consequences were not minor. The aftermath of masculine organization models such as patriarchy and *machismo* hierarchy, are expressed as violence, domination, and the attempts of building criminal governing models.

6.2.1.2. Agenda´s Spread and/or Justification

The "spread and/or justification of agenda" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) publications and written codes (material resources), b) founding narratives, songs, anthems, and public messages (non-material resources). Indeed, regarding the agenda´s spread and justification, the relevant difference between both cases concerns publicity. On the one hand, LFM and LCT expressed several and different willingness to being advertised. Within a relatively short period of nine years (especially compared to CN), these criminal groups performed such diverse as constant attempts in order to either introduce themselves towards local people, as well as make their presence and identity evident. Behind these attempts, LFM and LCT addressed a political discourse towards the audiences of their legitimacy attempt caused by the different contexts, as it is explained later as part of the "portray of the enemy" sources. Nevertheless, this difference does not indicate the lack of an agenda, nor the absence of trials to spread or justify their message. On the contrary, LFM, LCT, and CN were criminal groups with an agenda whose usage was simply different. What were the differences in this regard?

In Michoacán, the criminal groups constantly attempted to be seen and noticed. Dropping human heads in a night club, publishing paid insertions in local media, spreading *narcomantas*, distributing and disseminating the criminal editorial production, video-recording the leaders for YouTube videos, developing a religious identity, and spreading an anthem, are all examples of this. Nevertheless, CN´s case is significantly different in this regard. The Sicilian mafia did not merely want to become public. Indeed, the secrecy even worked for CN as a legitimacy resource to keep the organization cohesive, structured and organized. Beati Paoli myth; as well as the founding narrative of Osso, Mastrosso, and Carcagosso; both rest on the mystery of heroic but excluding, and secret societies, which somehow inspired CN´s essence and agenda´s spread profile. Inner mafia institutions such as the *omertá* or the initiation rituals reinforced the Sicilian mafia as a secret organization whose existence wandered between dealing with a phantom and a reality. The role of *pentiti* becomes extremely relevant in this regard. Indeed, before Buscetta´s confessions, the "mafia-

as-myth" hypothesis remained in the Sicilian conversation (Dickie, 2015, 607). As a result, to not become publicized was a success for CN´s interests.[77]

Undoubtedly, in the two cases, the criminal groups had a criminal agenda. Additionally, also in both cases, it was spread. The difference in this regard relates to the audience of that message. In the case of Michoacán, the audience was multiple. The manifesto, published in 2006 by LFM, used the local press to spread their agenda in a quite clear way –stating the criminal group´s mission, vision, objectives, and etcetera. The code addressed LCT members, while also to locals due to how it was printed and distributed. Moreover, the courses in which public officers and general locals were forcefully taken to study *Pensamientos*, the book allegedly written by Nazario, was also an explicit agenda´s spread action across the local audience. On the other hand, CN´s agenda´s audience was mainly (if not exclusively) their members. In this regard, the initiation rituals combined with the closed and hierarchical structure worked as space and opportunity to conduct this action. Finally, to some extent in both cases, the goal of spreading it was for promoting belonging and cohesiveness –also symbolic sources but under the non-material resources expressions of the social contract offer.

6.2.1.3. Dissemination of Symbols

The "symbol's spread" subtype source of legitimacy becomes expressed through a) identity symbols in ornaments and documents (material resources), and b) rituals, values, moral beliefs, and religiosity (non-material resources). In this regard, the religious factor holds a great relevance in both cases while also presents differences and similarities. As a similarity, one that might be obvious but still needs to be underlined is that both groups made religion a source of legitimacy. However, while LCT opted for creating a new religion from the very beginning from which create legitimacy, CN preferred to take control of an already legitimate centennial religious ritual. From an orthodox Catholic perspective, comparing Saint Agatha and Saint Nazario might be profane. As a centennial Saint, Agatha is part of the Roman Catholic Church's history including the social acceptance towards its faith. On the other hand, Nazario is a self-proclaimed divinity whose existence is inevitably attached to his bloody leadership of a violent criminal group.

However, from a criminal legitimacy perspective, the same parallel becomes a profoundly fruitful analytical vehicle. As a powerful symbolic source of legitimacy, religion was used in both locations. In the case of Michoacán, it was under LCT's appearance when religion became a central instrument of legitimacy; despite the fact that Nazario had already offered messianic discourses and practices since the times of LFM – especially in his autobiography.

[77] In this regard, anti-mafia understood how valuable this element is for *Mafiosi*. That is why one of the succeeded political flags from this movement was and still is to talk about mafia in order to combat the secrecy.

On the other hand, although criminal groups all around Italy have historically established close political and moral relationships with the Catholic Church and specifically when it comes to local patron saint processions (Merlino, 2014, 109), currently Saint Agatha´s case has a special relevance for political legitimacy. Both scenarios reveal a political interest in material and immaterial religious culture. Although the image of a saint (apocryphal or not) acted as the receptacle in which political desires and intentions were deposited and withdrawn, these phenomena are not restricted to saints.

On the contrary, from the saints' image, criminal groups propelled a whole set of moral beliefs, authority-building, and social acceptance. On the material grounds, images and the imaginaries were used for promoting the cult around Catania´s Saint Agatha, a complex baroque aesthetic environment. In the case of Nazario, it was an aura of medieval warfare aspiring to vindicate LCT. Lomnitz suggested that, in Michoacán, LCT endeavored to institutionalize a rite and a proper Templar mythology, which, he argued, is still somewhat opaque (2016). CN, on the other hand, also had interest in commanding an already institutionalized rite based on an already spread Catholic religiosity. In other words, whereas in Michoacán a religion conceived from pieces of a complex set of beliefs was displayed with a legitimacy interest, in Sicily, the same attempt was made but by capturing an already legitimate religious ritual related to an already legitimated sacred image.[78] The resulting symbolic sources of legitimacy from the cases of Saint Agatha and Nazario have a significant difference: ideological consistency. Whereas Michoacán displayed syncretism across what might be called as the "Templar religion", CN presented orthodox practices by respecting Catholic images, beliefs and codes.

The Templar code shows how such different, distant and ambiguous ideas and ideologies shape their ethical and moral guidelines: the "fight against materialism", nationalism, patriotism, "natural justice and the fundamental rights of men", self-determination of nations, freedom of expression, serving "the only God", protecting women, abstaining from alcohol, lying or "being immoral" (No author, No date, 1-8). Although CN displayed moral values and codes of conduct, these commandments were not as syncretic as it was the case of LCT and, to some extent, LFM. Instead, CN promoted (also through a consistently ambiguous manner) a sort of co-validation to the Catholic commandments and moral beliefs without forcing it to fit distant visions into each other. Nevertheless, both criminal religious interests produced concrete similarities in terms of symbolic legitimacy and in which saints became involved. The initiation rituals are illustrative examples. Allegedly, CN used saints´ images to burn them during the initiation ritual. Afterward, the oath is pronounced. In this regard,

[78] As an example of how Saint Agatha is an already legitimate, during the procession period, local shops at Catania decorate their shop windows by converting them into shrines dedicated to Saint Agatha. See Picture 10 in the Appendix.

somehow the ritual withdraws the Saint symbolic honor and, by doing so, to the criminal organization as well.

In the Templar code, the fifth commandment stated: "Every member of the order [...] should be under oath, which will be made under a ritual established by the Council" (No name, No date, 2). As a result of the initiation ritual and the oath, also the code of silence is another example of how religion and particular saints became useful for transferring legitimacy from morality towards the criminal organization. In Sicily, the *omertà* is an inner mafia institution whose lack of respect (by *pentiti*) would produce the beginning of the first great inner breakdown of the mafia, by weakening the ties inside the criminal group. On the other hand, the seventh commandment of the Templar code demands the "knights" to "respect the SILENCE VOTE [since] is absolutely forbidden to spread our activities or secrets" (No name, No date, 2. Capital letters in the original text). The cases of Saint Agatha and a self-sanctified Nazario are somehow the tip of the iceberg of two different criminal groups and religious institutions relationship models.[79] The deep roots of this phenomenon reveal that the relationship between the church and the mob in Michoacán is not as symbiotic as it is in the Sicilian case.

Actually, Michoacán is atypical in this regard. Generally speaking, Mexican and Italian criminal groups usually share a close relationship with the Catholic Church. In both cases, it is not strange that criminals may be interested in following Catholic rituals and staying more or less close to the local church hierarchy. Moreover, they could even build temples or become powerful sponsors. Nevertheless, Mexico is indeed atypical in the sense of the lack of syncretism and LCT took it further beyond. As a result, apocryphal but secular saints such as Santa Muerte, Malverde and the aforementioned Nazario appeared in the Mexican landscape (Aguiar, 2018, 128). Although these saints are not disconnected from the spiritual atmosphere of the Catholic religion (Roush, 2014), the Catholic Church has attempted to continuously distance from these apocryphal saints.[80] As forbidden but legitimate cults, their rituals and material culture become clandestine and, thus, associated with illegality. That trend has more or less spread throughout Latin American:

> The popular saints in Latin America are nourished both by the original cultures of the region and by the colonial experience, in particular, the Hispanic Catholicism of the sixteenth century. Likewise, the popular saints understood as icons and religious practices result of the syncretism of the cultures

[79] In the case of Saint Nazario, despite the adoption of a Catholic baroque style iconography, this apocryphal condition is precisely the line where the Catholicism spirit ends. Onwards, the saint became more a source of a criminal political message rather than a cult (Interview in the field no. 17, 2017).

[80] Sponsoring might take different shapes. In Mexico, former Cardinal Norberto Rivera, maximum Catholic authority in the country, recognized within an editorial published in 2010 that bishops received *narcolimosnas* (alms coming from drug traffickers), which were presumably used to build and improve chapels (Rivera quoted in Martínez, 2010). On the other hand, the *pentito* Leonardo Messina, Our Lady of the Annunciation procession organizer, said there was no way in which the local priest did not notice it (Merlino, 2014, 118).

> brought by slaves to the colonies, such as voodoo, and the different influences of the diversification of religiosity in the region since the second half of the twentieth century. Among these emerging influences can be identified millenarianism or New Age, but also forms and lifestyles linked to criminal activities (Aguiar, 2018, 129).

From a journalistic perspective, Gil Olmos argued that the Mexican popular saints emerged as a consequence of the sum of crises (of violence, impunity, and corruption) happening in the country since the late nineties. These men and women, he pointed out, were not sanctified by an ecclesiastic hierarchy but by the popular faith (2017). In other words, despite the contempt from the Catholic Church, the believers who do not stop being loyal to traditional Catholic saints also do the job of reconciling both mystical worlds and transforming them into a single world. Is hard to say with empirical evidence that this was the case of Nazario. Compared to other cults, it seemed much more contingent and localized but mostly attached to the Nazario´s leadership itself. However, his case could not be detached from the general context described by Gil Olmos. On the other hand, the procession of Saint Agatha, including its social acceptance and devotion, lives utterly independent from the criminal presence. Its strength is not attached to specific junctures, thus is not contingent. Neither the saint nor the ritual needs to build or consolidate its acceptance since it is already active. On the contrary, the rite has a historical legitimacy that several local actors seek to capitalize on their favor – not only CN.[81]

Religion is in Mexico and Italy a fount from which robust and reliable symbolic legitimacy sources and resources might emerge. By adopting and using especially Catholic symbols as part of their legitimacy aspirations, the local criminal groups made us of already recognized symbols that count already with public acceptance. Thus, borrowing legitimacy from them is a convenient idea. However, and even when Italy and Mexico have shown scenarios of either collaboration or understanding between criminal groups and the Catholic hierarchy, disputes motivated by the use of these symbols had also been taking place. In Sicily, the case of the priest Pino Puglisi referred earlier represents an inspiration of how Catholicism and pacific pastoral work full of dignity might defy mafia´s rule. Michoacán has the example of the priest "Goyo", Gregorio López Jerónimo, whom as parish priest of Apatzingán cathedral, in Michoacán, supported the *autodefensas* while also mediated between LCT members and local population in order to prevent violent crimes. Goyo was sent to Mexico City in 2016, from where he recorded a video. Speaking about Michoacán, he proclaimed phrases such as: "we cannot remain silent" "prayers are not enough", and "the worst thing that can happen to us is to get used to the smell of death, to bury the faithful" (quoted in Arrieta, 2018). Pino and Goyo cases belong to the very local level, i.e., the below part of Catholic hierarchy.

[81] Examples in this regard are how local shops share (and, somehow, compete with) global trademarks for advertising themselves in a big screen installed besides the cathedral during the days of procession. Moreover, each year Catania´s shops transform one of their shop windows into a sort of shrine dedicated to Saint Agatha. The procession´s organizing committee was awarded the best of the year.

From the higher side, in recent times the Vatican has reacted notably differently to both cases. Whereas Pope Francis excommunicated all *mafiosi* in 2014, at the beginning of 2015, he wrote an email to an Argentinian legislator in which he confessed his worry on the Argentinian security conditions and wrote: "Hopefully we are in time to avoid Mexicanization. I was talking to some Mexican bishops, and the thing is there of terror" (quoted in Rebossio, 2015). During the mass celebrated on February 5, 2019, in the middle of the procession celebrations, the priest claimed: "*La forza di Agueda è la forza di Catania*" (the force of Agatha is the force of Catania). These words have deep meaning in terms of the political legitimacy analysis carried out here. While Agatha holds that relevance, Nazario is not, neither was, the force of Michoacán nor Tierra Caliente. However, that was the intention, i.e., to turning Saint Nazario into a forceful symbolic point of reference around which identity and sympathy would be joined. Beyond the success or failure of each of these two cases, both represent different paths towards reaching the same point: religion as a source of symbolic legitimacy.

6.2.2. Comparing Performance-centered Sources

As it has been argued during this research, criminal groups´ authority building involves more than exclusively understanding the economic profit from illegal activities. In this regard, transcending economic explanations of criminal groups opens the door to an analysis of political legitimacy. Moreover, as social agents, the context becomes crucial when determining specificities. Michoacán and Sicily are two legitimacy-contested scenarios, with dense practices of authority. In this context, local criminal groups performed actions in their campaigns for legitimacy. In this regard, criminal group practices work as analytical vehicles in order to study criminal groups' legitimacy. These practices have been understood and analyzed here as part of the performance-centered sources of legitimacy. The practices have also been analyzed as legitimacy and sovereignty practices due to how they involve the creation of mandate and influence the local authority-building process. In this regard, the comparison of these sources presented below, displays how both criminal groups attempted to create or reinforce the provision of governing institutions. Moreover, the provision of carrots and sticks in both instances was deeply attached (if not a consequence) to the referred institutions provision.

Table 6. Performance-centered Legitimacy Sources and Resources for Criminal Groups

Main Source	Subtype Source	Material Resources	Non-Material Resources

Performance -centered	Provision of Governing Institutions	Taxation and Economy	Security and Justice Managing (courts, sanctions, and judges) / Labor Regulations
	Philanthropy (Carrots)	Gifting	Promises and Hope Generation
	Coercion (Sticks)	Weapons and Ammo Control	Fear / Use or Threat of Violence

Following the Table 6, the performance-centered sources are subcategorized into three subtypes: provision of governing institutions, philanthropy (carrots), and coercion (sticks). As it was in the previous chapters, the latter two are grouped into one unique section in order to sharpen the analysis.

6.2.2.1. Provision of Governing Institutions

The "provision of governing institutions" subtype source of legitimacy is expressed through a) taxation and economy (material resource), and b) security and justice managing, as well as labor regulations (non-material resources). In this regard, in the two cases, these groups managed to act as providers of institutions directing to regulate issues on the local public and daily life. For instance, both criminal groups promoted regulations on alcohol and drug consumption. According to Tomasso Buscetta´s declaration, the first *pentito*, the habit of drinking alcohol is forbidden for members of CN. If a member fails to comply he can be expelled from the organization.[82] On the other hand, LCT also launched drug consumption regulations to ban specifically meth consumption and punish both consumers and sellers – LCT members had explicitly forbidden drug and alcohol consumption according to the Code commandments (No author, No date). Moreover, as security and justice managers, in Michoacán and in Sicily the criminal groups also punished those who did not follow their rules – such as thieves, other criminal groups´ members, and of course a countless number of innocent victims. In the end, CN as well as LFM and LCT acted intermittently as mediators between a weak rule of law and their criminal mandate. In this regard, the analyzed cases fit in the "criminal group" concept developed here as an active criminal organization.

Another example in this regard concerns how criminal groups attempted to create labor regulations, economic control, and taxation mechanisms in the local agro-industrial area. As

[82] During a declaration, Buscetta himself argued, "[…] a drunken person has no secret while a *mafioso* must keep self-control and decency in every circumstance. I never met an alcoholic man of honor, neither in Sicily nor anywhere else" (quoted by Varese, 2001, 234-235 in Arlacchi, 1994, 159).

a result of the remarkable territorial roots, both cases evolved an interesting economic administration in criminal-agricultural production: Michoacán and Sicily are important agro-industrial production and distribution centers. At some point, this territoriality was expressed through the attempts of controlling the agricultural production – coincidently, both places have been relevant producers of citrus fruits in different periods of history.[83] To some extent and at some point, both locations experienced the presence of criminals pretending to become legitimate authorities by controlling the local farming production (see Blok, 1974 and Maldonado, 2013b). Indeed, this example also speaks about a particular capitalism interest from CN, LFM, and LCT – which, of course, evolve over time. The transversal mechanism to promote and preserve these regulations was the extortion. This practice connects, in both cases, the two performance-centered subtypes sources of legitimacy.

On the one hand, this practice worked as a provision of governing institutions by establishing the criminal group as an effective ruler able and capable enough to charge the extortion and have control over people. However, extortion sharply displays how these criminal groups used carrots and sticks in how these groups approached locals and spread fear and use of violence under a discourse of more effective governance –usually compared to the legal governance. As crimes, neither *pizzo* nor *piso* are committed individually but collectively, and on behalf an organization. In general, extortions might have or not personal or group authority. Nevertheless, in these cases, the charge claim is made on behalf LFM, LCT or CN, and with the "institutional" backrest. By doing so, these criminal groups use or attempt to use the group structure as an added value which supports and strengthens the claim. To do so, the set of symbols, practices[84] and general representations alluding to the group´s identity and parallels developed, serve as platforms through which extortion also play as authority claims for victims. By charging and collecting *pizzo* and *piso*, criminal organizations obtained ruling advantages.

Charging *piso* and *pizzo* helped these groups to keep in touch with the community and spread their presence, identity, and interests. Moreover, extortion demanding allowed controlling territories, business, markets, and local dynamics in general. As profiting mechanisms, *piso* and *pizzo* in these cases not only became materialized as taxation and economy material resources, but also and most importantly, as power-reaffirmation devices (non-material resources). However, the context conditions including the reactions from other local agents (from victims to legal authorities, etcetera) as well as the violence magnitudes marked a significant difference. Indeed, in both contexts, extortion needs to be understood as a

[83] According to Watts, "[…] by 1880 Sicily had become the largest supplier of lemons and lemon byproducts in the world" (2016, 74; also, see in this regard Dimico, *et al.*, 2012). On the other hand, Michoacán is currently the leading Mexican state citrus producer with 1 million 300 thousand tons produced in 2018 (Redacción Cambio, 2018).

[84] The case of CN adding glue to the commerce's entrance locks is a good example. Currently, the symbolism behind this old practice makes businesspeople to fear the mafia extortion (Interview in field no. 14, 2018).

sovereign practice and authoritative claim. Unlike drug trafficking, which might be considered a victimless crime given that both parties are usually willing to participate in the transfer (human and animal trafficking are evident exceptions in this regard; see more in Costa, 2009, 6-7), extortion has a perpetrator and a victim.

6.2.2.2. Philanthropy and Coercion: Carrots and Sticks

The "philanthropy" subtype source of legitimacy becomes expressed through a) gifting (material resource), and b) promises and hope generation (non-material resources). On the other hand, the "coercion" subtype becomes expressed through a) weapons and ammunition control (material resource), and b) fear and use of threat or violence (non-material resource).[85] The practice of extortion is more or less worldwide spread throughout urban and rural contexts. In Japan, the Yakuza there is the practice known as *sōkaiya*, a term referred to organized extortionists who either blackmail or prevent companies blackmailing (see more in Szymkowiak, 2002). In the former Soviet countries, the term *kompromat* refers to a local political practice based on obtaining material to publicly defame people who later receive extortion threats in order to keep their reputation (see more in Markowitz, 2017). Also is the case of the Mexican *cobro de piso* and the Italian *pizzo*. Almost all criminal groups in both countries have somehow practiced it (and are currently doing so). In these cases, the extortion is not contingent but a systematic practice, in which both victim and offender establish a hierarchical relationship (Pérez, *et al.*, 2015, 119). Moreover, this relation is not limited to the "extorting moment"; on the contrary, it lasts before and after the extortion as a re-affirmation of who rules, who does not, and who obeys whom. That means a relation full of sticks with significantly less carrots. According to the *Encyclopedia of White-Collar and Corporate Crime*, extortion is:

> […] the use of threats, violence, or force to extract unlawful gains and rewards to which one is not morally or legally entitled. […] The threat of harm could be to property, personal safety, privacy, or economic interests, which makes this a major concern for governments and business firms alike. A central ingredient of extortion is a severe imbalance in the power relationship between the offender and the victim—the former has the power to cause a kind of harm that the victim feels cannot be avoided unless payment is made (Barker, 2013, 381).

Indeed, extortion is not always nor everywhere a sovereign practice and, thus, not always a sticks and carrots provider. In order to become so, the "severe imbalance in the power relationship" becomes crucial. Without it, the crime would be closer to bribery (Azaola, 2009, 119). Furthermore, in order to become that sovereign practice, the presence of a criminal group interested in political legitimacy also becomes imperative. Allegedly, criminal groups

[85] When it comes to weapons and ammo control, this research only found data for Michoacán. It addressed how LFM and LCT asked local women to keep them in their backyards as paybacks for practical favors such as justice managing. No similar data was found in the case of CN, which does not mean that the Sicilian mafia did not create some firearms control scheme during its existence.

tend to generally operate around the so-called illegal markets. Within these spaces, the criminalization business opportunities that become much more profitable for those who controlled its circulation – indeed, profits become much more rentable than if both markets and commodities were legal. Here it becomes relevant to underline that illegal markets are neither automatically nor instantaneous violent. On the contrary, as it has been insisted, as an instrument, violence appears as long as it enables specific conditions, and depends on other conditions such as the business´ nature, as well as the victims or legal authority reactions. However, both *cobro de piso* and *pizzo* exhibit an interesting mutation in this regard.

In both cases, this "severe imbalance in the power relationship" gets mixed with the presence of criminal groups looking for political legitimacy. As a result, the practice of extortion becomes also political. Given that, at least three conditions need to be met to consider it a sovereign practice: 1) the existence of an authority discourse, 2) a state-emulation standing, and 3) the invocation of the extortion in the name of the criminal organization. Michoacán and Sicily are cases that join these conditions. LFM and LCT on the one hand, and CN on the other, developed an authority discourse by performing extortion. Paying either *pizzo* or *piso* becomes, aside from the explicit act of charging, into an informal but powerful recognition of a sort of parallel taxing.[86] By doing so, even when the extorting was or not regular through time, the "authority" charging it was indeed consistent. Another similarity is how relevant it was for both criminal groups to spread fear among victims. Notwithstanding, speaking about the differences, there is a remarkable one between both scenarios. While in Michoacán the authority discourse was spread loudly, in the case of Sicily the strategy was closer to a silent but strong presence.

As a modern social order model, the state is a non-elusive paradigm that inspires criminal groups formation and operation.[87] Nevertheless, when these illegal groups distance themselves from the legal authority and develop agency as a result of a political legitimacy interest, the potential aftermath is clashes between legal and illegal groups. To some extent, the European modern state experience followed the same route, i.e., occupying the public responsibilities previously offered by landlords, armed retainers of the monarch, and churchmen (Tilly, 1985, 181). The tithe is an example. As an inherited institution, it eventually mutated into the modern state's taxation – since feudal periods but later consolidated during capitalism (Scott, 1998, 65). Nowadays, since neither *pizzo* nor *piso* substitutes for the state´s taxation, charging it produces a state emulation due to the power displaying accompanying it. Simultaneously, charging *pizzo* and *piso* means to compete with the state taxing authority. As a result, extortion and legal taxing coexist and compete as parallel sovereign practices taking place in these particular regions of Mexico and Italy.

[86] Indeed, parallel taxation is a wide practice among rebel groups (Schlichte and Schneckener, 2015, 418. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, Hezbollah in Lebanon, or the FARC in Colombia are examples in this regard.
[87] In the case of Michoacán, how LCT controlled *piso* by issuing *papeletas de cobro* as if they were official stationery gives a example on the state emulation.

Although also clashes take place as a consequence, both practices play a role within the large components and interactions shaping what is called "the state".

Following the idea, these extortions could also tend to follow the state´s mandate (at least briefly or ephemeral) of bringing back benefits to "contributors". Because of the social contract offer behind the proposal of paying and receiving benefits in exchange, this element holds particular relevance in terms of political legitimacy. As Gambetta underlined for CN, in some cases the benefits from paying illegal protection are real, immediate, and tangible (1993, 15-33). Since the criminal groups become contingent rulers, then they could be seen as social problem-solvers (for instance, controlling street delinquency or providing public services), or even mediators with the legal authorities. This "illegal protection" might come as a result of the vulnerabilities found in the local context that results from the lack of protection of the legal authority to guarantee rights or properties. In those cases, victims of extortion might also become satisfied clients, as well as loyal ruled (Guerrero, 2011). However, in this case it is argued that CN as well as LFM and LCT are much more than only protection entrepreneurs or administrators. On the contrary, the political interest set a platform through which factual and symbolic mandates become unveiled.

Another significant difference addresses how distant both state-building processes are concerning the criminal groups. As explained earlier, CN is as ancient and modern as the Italian state, while LFM and LCT have extensive histories in Michoacán – for instance, the case of the cartel Milenio, Los Valencia (see Maldonado, 2014, 161-164), or even what LFM itself has said about Los Zetas. In other words, these criminal groups in Michoacán need to be explained as social outcomes from the local, national, and transnational history, combined with specific conjunctures marked by, among other features, poverty, marginalization, and criminalization. Consequently, this atypical criminality results from tradition and social conditions. On the other hand, given its longevity and influence in the Sicilian history, the also atypical CN is not a result but a producer of local tradition and social conditions. The Sicilian mafia has decades leaving structural sediment in the society that takes different shapes. It is not a conjuncture but a structural phenomenon (Santino, 2011, 9). Therefore, behind the historical difference related to how these criminal groups have been associated with each state-building process, there is a particular distinction. That is, to what extent the criminal group is a product (such as LFM and LCT) or a producer (as CN) of society in every context.

6.2.3. Comparing Portrayals of Enemy Sources

In both cases, having enemies is a significant political expression. However, the difference in this regard is between the criminal group naming their enemy themselves (as it was the case of LFM and LCT) or the criminal group was named as an enemy by their enemies (as in the case of CN). Indeed, the existence of a legitimacy-contested scenario in both cases, in

which every criminal group disputed and performed their political legitimacy aspirations, results from the creation and existence of the idea of "enemies". Both cases have unusual social contexts in which legitimacy becomes, if not scarce, at least remarkably valuable due to this contesting. Moreover, by comparing the "portrayal of the enemy" sources, this disseration argues that these were zero-sum legitimacy scenarios. Legitimacy lost by one actor was gained by other. In the end, regardless of the mediation function that criminal groups complied at some point, as well as the promoted arrangements (for instance through corruption, *intreccio*, subordination, etc.), Michoacán and Sicily became arenas in which, at some point, the legitimacy gained by a criminal group eventually was struggled by another local social agent – either legal or not, local or not, such as the state (in the form of security forces, local or central authorities), NGO, militias, etc. Means of disputing might also change, but the fight was (and is still) consistent.

Table 7. Portrayal of the Enemy Legitimacy Sources and Resources for Criminal Groups

Main Source	Subtype Source	Material Resources	Non-Material Resources
Portray of the Enemy	Expressions against Formal Authorities	Documents	Negotiations / Confrontations
	Expressions against Other (non-formal) authorities		
	Stances towards current Law		

Following the Table 7, portrayal of the enemy sources are subcategorized into three subtypes: expressions against formal authorities, expressions against other (non-formal) authorities, and stands towards the current law. In this case, the three subtype sources of legitimacy become expressed through a) documents (material resource), and b) negotiations and confrontations (non-material resources).

6.2.3.1. Expressions Against Formal Authorities

Around eighty years separate the Italian Mori-operation from the Mexican war on drugs. However, their similarities are numerous. Both were legal agents, i.e., formal authorities, pointing the criminal groups studied here as the public "enemy". As iron-fisted policies, both were presented as strategies, carried out by armed forces, and were inspired by the objective of materially eliminating criminal groups mainly formed by national citizens –which in both cases were identified as "counter-state agents" or "state-enemies". Nevertheless, the two scenarios contrast in one way that indeed makes all the difference: while the European case

happened as part of an authoritarian regime, in the Latin American scenario, democracy was the context. During the Mori-operation, those CN members who survived the aggressive government contestation had no other choice than hiding. Whereas the war on drugs still as an ongoing process whose mark on the recent Mexican history still shaping the social, legal, political, and institutional destiny of the country.

In the case of Michoacán, the enemy-portrayal angle during the war on drugs was more or less exceptional compared to the rest of the country. If the Mexican government during Calderón´s administration attempted to "play the war game", LFM and LCT were exceptional cases in which, through discourses and symbols, the criminal groups accepted the challenge. Moreover, from a classic war strategy analysis, by the time of Nazario´s second death, LCT had already accumulated too many war enemies, i.e., armed (or willing to be armed) social agents interested in materially eliminating LCT (Schmitt, 2004). Among others formal agents in the list, there were: the federal police, the army, and the marines. In the context of the "Mori-operation", carried out in Sicily by the fascist Italian government after the First World War, on May 26, 1927, Mussolini pronounced the Ascension Day speech. The discourse was and still is fascinating from the political legitimacy perspective. As a progress bulletin of the fascist dictatorship, it was intended to inform about the progression of the "renewed" Italian state.

> Someone of you may ask me: when the fight against Mafia will end? It will, not only when there are no more mobsters, but when the memory of the mafia will definitely disappear from the memory of Sicilians.
>
> […]
>
> What have we done, Fascists, in these five years? We did something huge, secular, monumental. What is that? We have created the Italian unitary State. Consider that from the Empire onwards, Italy was no longer a unitary State. Here we solemnly reaffirm our doctrine concerning the State; here I reaffirm my formula of discourse at La Scala in Milan, "all inside the State, nothing against the State, nothing outside the State" (Mussolini, 1927).

For the fascist Italian regime and during the interwar period the fight against the mafia was one of the notable achievements. Indeed, for Mussolini the fight against the mafia attempted to consolidate his regime as well as the idea of a unitary Italian state. Both were at stake during the twenties and until the Second World War started. Interestingly, Mussolini used a pretty similar medical metaphor to what former Mexican president Calderón also used more than eighty years later to justify the war on drugs. Somehow, both assumed himself as a medic saving the patient (Italy and Mexico) from a serious disease (mafia and organized crime) (see Table 8). In this case, Michoacán and Sicily experienced stands from the formal authority against the local criminal groups. From this particular angle, both criminal groups were firstly pointed as enemies precisely from the legal authority. However, it needs to be emphasized that despite the similar metaphors used in constructing images of the enemy in

both discourses, the difference is that one was under an authoritarian and totalitarian regime, whereas the other took place in the context of democracy and human rights.

Table 8. Mussolini *vs.* Calderón speeches against criminal groups

Benito Mussolini, 1927	Felipe Calderón, 2008
"Let's see. Since many of you do not know yet how extent is the phenomenon, I bring it to you as if on a clinical table: and my scalpel already engraved the body […] But do not think that this has not cost anything […] All the fascists must know that the *Arma dei Reali Carabinieri* is one of the columns of the fascist regime". (Mussolini, 1927).	"When I became President, the scope [of organized crime] was no longer tenable. I arrived at the operating room knowing that the patient had a serious medical condition; but when he was opened, we realized that he was completely invaded and had to be healed at any cost" (Calderón quoted by Moreno, 2008).

At some point, in both cases the criminal groups later made expressions, and concretely confrontations, against the formal authority in terms of enemy portraying. In the case of Sicily, it lasted decades. Before and after launching the already reviewed Maxi Trial process during the eighties (which also was a relevant stand from the official authority against CN as an enemy), the Sicilian mafia managed to take aggressive stands against official authorities. General dalla Chiesa assassination is an example in this regard. However, Falcone and Borsellino's assassinations were even more emblematic and clear messages in this regard. In any case, the method was the same: killing prominent government individuals who openly defied CN´s mandate and interests. The murders combined CN´s features: publicity combined with shadiness.[88] The criminal organization did not recognize the actions although the judicial investigations later proved the criminal group indeed made the killings. On the other hand, LCT used the allegedly journalistic book *Palabra de Caballero* (Morales, no year) to portray Calderón´s administration as the enemy that was attacking and treating them like criminals, and not as a "popular and insurgent movement", which is how especially LCT is self-described in this book (Morales, no year, 31).

6.2.3.2. Expressions Against Other (Informal) Authorities

Regarding the non-formal authorities, the story was not profoundly different from the expressions against formal authorities. Given the dense presence of social agents disputing legitimacy, CN on the one hand and LFM and LCT have historically faced non-formal authorities either pointing them as enemies, or these criminal groups pointing towards enemies. This could be divided into two subgroups: general civil actors, and other criminal groups. In Sicily the anti-mafia movement holds the main position and served for CN indirectly delineate their enemies portray in the last decades. That included some official

[88] In this regard, an interesting exception is Leoluca Orlando, the mayor who had make expressions against CN and, as it was analyzed before, has been portrayed himself as an anti-mafia politician.

authorities but non-official such as journalists (for instance, in the referred case of Peppino), religious people (as in the case of Pino), and more recently in the history the complex and well-organized Sicilian constellation of NGOs. On the other hand, in Michoacán, the non-formal authorities holding tagged as LFM and LCT are, among others, the *autodefensas* and the concrete case of Cherán and its indigenous movement (Interviews in field no. 15 and 20, 2016; Gasparello, 2018). Moreover, given the exposure that the *autodefensas* had, national and local press also played a relevant role in this regard. Of course, in this case to have a common "enemy" did not mean to join forces. On the contrary, the disputes between these social agents produce numerous political and also armed clashes (Fuentes Díaz, 2018).

Regarding the subgroup of the other criminal groups, both cases exhibit differences. In Michoacán, even before the federal government launched the war on drugs, LFM had already pointed, attacked, and expelled "the enemy" during the bloody event in Uruapan´s nightclub, i.e., the Zetas. However, this was not an isolated case. In the manifesto published months later in the local press, LFM introduced them as native workers organized in order to get rid of the "oppression" and "humiliation" from the Millennium and Valencia cartels, both criminal groups based in Michoacán before LFM. Using a discourse of locality, LFM threatened "foreign criminals" to do not come to Michoacán: "[…] we will not allow people from here or from other states to commit crimes" (LFM, 2006). The discourse later evolved to the point where Calderón's administration and the right wing were identified as enemies in *Palabra de Caballero*. This does not mean that these criminal groups were, in practice, as homogenous as the discourse suggested. On the contrary, the dynamics of corruption, extortion, and violence existed along an uneasy and ill-defined border between illegal and legal. In this regard, neither LFM nor LCT was different from the other Mexican criminal groups.

Contrastingly, CN's relations with other Italian mafias seemed more organic and without open hostility. The more or less mutual respect toward territories, members, and codes, might be called a *pax mafiosa*. Nevertheless, what seems more clear is that neither Camorra, nor ´Ndrangheta, nor the recently formed Sacra Corona Unita, together with CN´s control of the local Sicilian criminals, produced that *mafiosi* portrayal of the enemy of another criminal group. [89] However, the anti-mafia movement did force CN to define their enemy involuntarily. Indeed, the anti-mafia members themselves fulfilled this lack of willingness from CN. Quickly, the anti-mafia understood the importance of speaking, pointing out, and having distance from their enemy, i.e., the Sicilian mafia. CN's response was mainly (if not exclusively) to violently eliminate this peaceful but powerful enemy. Moreover, a significant difference with Michoacán is how the heterogeneous anti-mafia movement managed to portray itself as a single entity despite their actual and ongoing disputes between the different

[89] Nowadays, Nigerian mob arriving in Sicily would possibly motivate something different in this regard, but this research has no more elements to suggest any direction or possibility.

actors that were part of it. In the end, stopping the mafia as a shared belief works to promote their cause. The numerous LFM and LCT armed and unarmed enemies never formed a single front.

In Sicily, a large part of the anti-mafia movement has been focusing on extortion as a way to confront CN and dispute the mafia´s control. This is an outstanding idea from a political legitimacy perspective that launched the non-formal authorities in Sicily. Addiopizzo´s squad, for instance, is still perfectly aware that economic profits from *pizzo* are not significant for the mafia compared to how it is politically profitable (Interview in field no. 14, 2018). Consequently, they decided to fight that angle and dispute with the mafia the authority built with the extortion victims. To do so, anti-mafia had spent time, imagination, funds, and human resources in planning the execution of the strategy, which is continually renewing whereas, in Michoacán, the story is different. The reaction that *piso* (together with other crimes committed by LFM and LCT) faced was mostly headed by *autodefensas*. Although the legitimacy dispute was also in the core of the movement, a number of conditions made of the context an enormously violent one. As a consequence, reactions did not have time, imagination, funds, or human resources to maintain the reaction aside from the bullets and blood. Moreover, as an armed group, the *autodefensas* were constantly oscillating between either collaborating or challenging the official authorities. That point contrasts between *piso* and *pizzo*.

6.2.3.3. Stances Towards Current Law

Apart from being interested in becoming legitimate, as a valuable political tool, it does not seem that this legitimacy was always used in the same way or for opening the same doors. In that sense, these criminal groups´ stances towards the law differed due to how each got to the status quo. In Michoacán, the alleged intention was to change it, whereas in Sicily was to preserve it. For LFM and LCT, legitimacy worked as a way to gain spaces, sympathy, fear, confidence, and quorum mainly across the local population. Legitimacy helped to attain authority and was a cheaper way of ruling than coercion – which does not mean that any of these analyzed criminal groups resigned the use or threat of violence. The several attempts for displaying the criminal group´s presence in the public space can be understood through this logic – for instance, through spreading material and non-material identity resources. Moreover, at least in the discourse (as well as in practice from time to time), LFM and LCT argumentation appeared either subversive or at least disruptive: change the current social order. That is, tending to remove institutions, authorities, and challenging the status quo. Even when none of these claims were incoherent, the discourse of vindicating lost causes is a constant reference. On the other hand, in Sicily, the status quo defense was consistent within CN at least after the Second World War and before the anti-mafia movement strengthened.

CN legitimacy sought to maintain (their?) order in the first place, which meant to preserve the status quo including the authority image as well as specific institutions whose structure was influenced or commanded by the criminal organization given its historicity. Besides, by promoting a membership exclusion scheme, the Sicilian mafia controlled the hierarchy by guarantying the creation of an economization of power, which also served as legitimacy capital. Also related to the stance towards the current law, here it's necessary to emphasize a significant distinction, namely, the enormous difference between the amounts of violence and the levels of (in)justice. In Michoacán, high and increasing levels of criminal violence have been taking place since the war on drugs was launched. Mixed with the impunity crisis, it produces a central component to explain the social circumstances in which LFM and LCT appeared and developed. [90] Whereas, especially since the eighties, Sicily has been experiencing decades of pacification led by a broad and heterogeneous social movement focused on fighting the mafia. Moreover, as it has been previously argued, the effectiveness in the justice procuration and administration became and still being crucial in this regard.

Coming back to Michoacán, impunity and violence became the seal. The lack of trust in official authority represents a significant difference from Sicily. This difference became entrenched in the law. Motivated by the Palermitan case, the Italian penal code was reformed to make a substantial change regarding extortion: not only are those asking for *pizzo* guilty, so are those who pay it (Interview in field no. 4, 2018). The legal change is that now the "mafia association" rather than the "*mafioso*" is punished. Also, in 1997, the Italian Supreme Court clearly established that paying for protection would be considered illegal (Dickie, 2015, 692). On the other hand, the article 390 of the Mexican Penal Code states that extortion is punished with two to eight years in jail, and doing so through "criminal association" or being current or former public officers are aggravating factors (H. Congreso de la Unión, 2018). However, since the government measures the dark figure, 2012 presented the lowest figure with 92.1% of non-reported crimes. During the following years, and until 2018, the range kept between 92.8 (2014) and 93.8 percent (2013) (ENVIPE). Impunity is the *de facto* rule in Mexico.

Regarding justice access and administration, especially in the current situation, where the war on drugs and the anti-mafia movement coexist, the comparison exposes two completely different worlds. In Sicily, the aftermath of the *Maxiprocesso* produced judicial professionalization, a culture of lawfulness, NGOs supporting the legal work, increase in people´s confidence towards authorities, and a general legitimization of the denounciation as a tool for repairing damages. It is a critical juncture and an inflection point in recent Sicilian

[90] For instance, whereas in Michoacán 14,625 murders were registered between 1992 and 2010 (INEGI), CN has the attribution of 792 during the same period (Massari, 2013). Indeed, while Michoacán´s figure includes the total assassinations happened in the territory, and the CN´s figure only consists of the cases happened anywhere as long as they were attributed to the criminal group, in the end, it helps to illustrate how drastically different are the two locations in terms of brutal violence.

history, as are the Falcone and Borsellino assassinations, whose social acceptance and relevance was marked by the results of the *Maxiprocesso*. On the other hand, Mexican justice lacks any of these features. Incompetent judges, the absence of the rule of law, violence against NGOs, and lack of confidence in authorities results in a huge absence of denunciations of crime in more than 90% of the cases since 2011 and currently. Those 366 *mafiosi* arrested in September of 1984 represent the beginning of a different way of understanding justice in Sicily. Indeed, each criminal group based its stand towards the law based on this. That is, whereas LFM and LCT based their stance on the necessity of changing the status quo (while both denouncing and committing injustice), CN grounded its evolution in the basis of the status quo; thus, this criminal group tried to resist change.

The Mexican war on drugs produced not only impunity but also inconsistency regarding justice. During the six years of Felipe Calderón's administration, from the 9,233 people arrested and accused of offenses related to organized crime. This is a high number explained by the many federal armed forces deployed around the country, Michoacán included. However, only 1,059 of them were convicted, and only 682 served their sentence. That means that only 4% met a legal fate, which meant being declared guilty or innocent (Saúl, 2013). Moreover, with these numbers it is almost impossible to judicially know how much justice was lost during these cases. That is because of the bad management from the authorities. During the war on drugs, it became a common practice to show arrested people in a sort of press conferences in which the authorities "shared" the big or small victories of the war. Nevertheless, by doing so, official authorities were violating the presumption of innocence by exhibiting individuals as guilty without being judged before. As a human right, the presumption of innocence was neglected for the arrested people. That also reproduced cycles of illegality, impunity, and increased the lack of confidence in authorities. Added to the high levels of violence, particularly Michoacán became contrastingly different from Sicily in this regard.

Deeply related to the violence and injustice dimension differences, it is interesting to observe how the legal authority reacted to extortion in both cases. While Addiopizzo enhanced an alliance with the Sicilian judicial system that involved promoting and accompanying victim´s denunciation, *autodefensas* and the general civil society of Michoacán never had support from authorities. As a result, each criminal group faced different complications: CN currently avoids asking for *pizzo* with people affiliated to Addiopizzo, whereas LFM and LCT promoted a sort of infiltration of *autodefensas* groups through the *perdonados*. Walking through the cities of Palermo and Catania gives a constant sensation of being watched. Multiple signs with the phrase "*area videosorvegliata*" (area under video surveillance) can be seen all around the streets. Despite converting the street areas into urban panopticon, anti-mafia magistrates and NGOs found in the video surveillance an anti-mafia tool that, combined with fighting impunity, push to either inhibit or make of *pizzo* a "shadowy activity", made only under discretion (Interview in field no. 4, 2018).

6.3. Closing Remarks: Chapter VI Summary

After elaborating on the comparisons between LFM and LCT on the one hand, and CN on the other, the following are closing remarks derived from this sixth and last chapter. In the first place, and as a result of the cases´ analysis, specific thoughts addressing the state, the social order, and sovereignty were presented in this chapter re-considering certain concepts. Regarding the state, several agents compose it; while as a social phenomenon, it changes. On the grounds of social order, different versions of legitimacy can exist within the same place. Similarly, parallel authority does not mean social disorder. On the contrary, both or more agents involved will be building an order despite hypothetical clashes. Finally, as a practice, sovereignty can potentially reside in as many hands as agents dispute political legitimacy. Moreover, when it comes to criminal groups, sovereignty practices become visible thanks to legitimacy as a catalyst that makes distinguishable actions towards building authority from criminal activities. In this regard, the practices of sovereignty work as a historical continuum. This helps to explain how the same sovereign code was used in such different contexts as Michoacán and Sicily, but performed by more or less similar criminal agents as LFM and LCT on the one hand, and CN on the other.

Regarding the comparative analysis, this chapter argued that both scenarios, Michoacán and Sicily, were characterized by being highly contested political legitimacy scenarios. This resulted from the dense presence of social agents involved in the local social order definition. Among all of these, the local criminal groups were one particularly relevant social agent – but one among others in the end. Indeed, although every context deal with a degree of criminality, the exceptionality in these cases is the struggle resulting from the perpetrators' legitimacy interest. Moreover, the criminal group´s political legitimacy interest emerged, in both cases, from the importance given to define or preserve such social order. However, there were differences between both cases. Pursuing publicly was one of them. While in Michoacán, the over-exposition of LFM and LCT produced intense and visible amounts of material and non-material legitimacy resources, the shady presence of CN Sicily produced a concentration of non-material sources. This was because LFM and LCT remained in the legitimation process, whereas CN had long periods of legitimate condition when the groups became authorities – the recent decades and the Mori operation are exceptional periods in this regard. This chapter also underlined another difference concerning the longevity of each criminal group.

While CN is as modern as the Italian state, LFM and LCT emerged in a very particular Mexican context but with deep roots in Michoacán´s social and political history. This difference influenced each political legitimacy performance by pointing to diverse social order definition objectives. Whereas CN sought to preserve the status quo (due to how it was set historically since the post-war era), LFM and LCT had a disruptive vision of social order

– based on having enemies who were already ruling before them as well as those pretending to do so later such as the federal government or *autodefensas*. Nevertheless, this difference produced a similarity: both became zero-sum political legitimacy contexts. In other words, Michoacán and Sicily became arenas in which the legitimacy gained by the criminal group eventually was struggled and gained by another local social agent and vice versa – either legal or not, local or not. On the symbolic sources of legitimacy comparison, this chapter exhibited how LCT and LFM were interested in expanding their legitimacy both inside and outside the group –this is, towards the general local population. On the other hand, CN has been more interested in pushing belonging and cohesiveness, primarily towards internally strengthening the group, rather than becoming publicized.

Regarding the performance-centered sources of political legitimacy, the comparison showed how both cases attempted to create or reinforce the provision of governing institutions. Moreover, the provision of carrots and sticks in both instances was deeply attached to the referred institutions' provision. Finally, addressing the enemy portraying, both cases presented a similarity and a difference. The similarity addresses the fact of the enemy-portraying existence as a result of the contested political legitimacy scenario. The different concerns of the criminal groups indicated or was indicated by those enemies. On the one hand, LCT and LFM made constant efforts identifying and delineating their enemies. On the other, in Sicily, it happened the other way around as a result of CN being identified by numerous enemies – many of whom eventually joined the heterogeneous but successful Sicilian anti-mafia movement. Also, as a result of the comparison, this chapter stated that, in contexts of high criminality, the analysis of different aspirations for political legitimacy serves to rationalize the social order behind the apparent disorder. However, political legitimacy has another empirical instrumental function when it comes to authority. As an instrument, no legitimacy related clashes take place outside of the authority-building process, and no disputes of authority exclude the usage of legitimacy.

Conclusions

According to Thomson Reuters' Web of Science, a database in which the recurrence of academic terms can be easily traced and analyzed over time, from 1945 to 2019, the concept of "political legitimacy" was used in 39.1% of searches related to "Government Law". In second place comes "Public Administration" at 20%, followed by "Business Economics" at 15.6%. In other words, according to this database analysis, what here has been called the normative perspective of legitimacy involves 74.7% of academic production related to political legitimacy since 1945 (Clarivate Analytics, 2019). Other research perspectives that might be close to the descriptive perspective appear only as relatively minor categories, such as "Social Science other topics" (12.476%), and "Sociology" (11.522%), followed by "International Relations" (6th, 9.533%) and "History" (7th, 9.452%), while "Anthropology" placed at 18th (2.331%). These data reveal the dominant perspectives on the topic. However, how has this concept appeared over time in the academic literature?

Again, according to Thomson Reuters' Web of Science, academic interest in political legitimacy has been continually increasing in the last decades. In 1995, only 69 academic works were published. However, by 2017 there were 1,106, an increase of 1,503% (Clarivate Analytics, 2019). In other words, while the academic interest in political legitimacy phenomena has exponentially increased, the descriptive perspective has dominated the debate. By promoting the descriptive angle, this research attempts to challenge given notions emerging from the political legitimacy discussion, but also involving criminal groups debate. In the end, the cases of Michoacán and Sicily indicate to the necessity of re-defining what has allegedly already been learned, and show the value of thinking outside the box, beginning with a hypothetical legitimate but criminal political agent. These conclusions are organized by first answering the main research question, then connecting that to the conclusions drawn in every chapter's closing remarks. Finally, afterward are presented ideas intended to push the conceptual discussion of political legitimacy by combining theory, concepts, methodology, and practical cases' references, i.e., from data across sections.

Answering the Research Question

The main research question addressed here was why and how criminal groups look for political legitimacy. That is, in other words, the understanding of the criminal groups' legitimation process. This research answers that question as follows. The existence of a conflictive authority-building process is not a synonym for social disorder. On the contrary, the social order exists as a consequence of the interactions of several legal and illegal actors. In that sense, as embedded agents in society, this research answers that criminal groups will look for political legitimacy to take place in the local social order definition when this is under dispute. Consequently, in these contesting contexts, there is no political legitimacy

vacuum. Given that the definition of the social order is being challenged, one or more political agents will attempt to define it. Therefore, for criminal groups, an interest in legitimacy becomes an instrument: that is, no more and no less than a tool to participate in both the conflict and the definition of the social order. Sicily and Michoacán are both particularly dense contexts due to the saturation of statehood practices. Behind every legitimacy attempt performed by the criminal group, there will be the intention of these groups to define the local social order over other versions coming from other actors.

Pushing the Debate Over Legitimacy and Criminality

Detecting the division between the normative and the descriptive political legitimacy perspective helped this research to make this definition operational. Instead of offering a new conception, the operational proposal based the argument over five considerations designed to follow how the political legitimacy contesting process takes place, i.e., how political legitimacy could be empirically traced under the descriptive perspective. The first consideration addresses both sides of the coin when defining legitimacy; that is, the ruler as well as the ruled. The second recognizes the contingency of how legitimacy is built. That involves three analytical elements: locality, temporality, and rationality. Third, given that legitimacy is a relational concept, to consider the hypothesis of legitimate parallel authorities' coexistence. Fourth, to acknowledge the presumption of contingency since the understanding of political legitimacy requires studying not only the current moment of the legitimate authority but, also, how it became legitimate and how it was lost from another. Finally, as an ongoing process, the fifth consideration addresses the perpetual necessity of the legitimate political actor to reconfirm itself and its legitimacy. First comes the legitimacy campaign itself and, afterwards, comes the probability of becoming the authority among authorities.

As quoted earlier, Tilly understood legitimacy as the probability that other authorities confirm the decisions of a given authority (1985). His idea matches broadly with each of the considerations stated here. However, rather than a possibility, here it is argued that legitimacy is the instrument with which a given authority got access to that possibility to confirm its mandate. Moreover, when it comes to criminal groups, Claessen's distinction between being legitimate and legitimation (1988, 24) blurs, given that both are instrumental. That is because criminal groups involved in legitimacy dilemmas need to simultaneously deal with and have access to both stages, i.e., become legitimate while taking place in the legitimation process. To some extent, this is the case of other actors, including the state; however, criminal groups searching for legitimacy find a powerful source denying them legitimacy. As explained in this research, even when legality is a powerful legitimacy source, it does not definitively guarantee or deny political legitimacy. However, it will play a significant role for the actors pursuing legitimacy as this instrument in order to define the local social order.

Indeed, the contingency of being an ongoing process leads to a condition of a “never definitive victory” of political actors in their legitimation process. This fact also influences the understanding of concepts deeply related to political legitimacy such as the social order, sovereignty, and the state, which in this research were mostly developed by following the literature on the anthropology of the state. On the other hand, since societies produce the state, specific communities can also reproduce the experience of the state. Therefore, especially the non-state actors who according to the definition of the state followed here are already somehow part of it can be capable enough and interested in reproducing the state experience. Moreover, as a more organized part or extract of these societies, rebels will be even more capable and interested in doing so. This is what sets the path for non-state actors to achieve political legitimacy. Inside this constellation, rather than organized crime or similar notions, this research developed the category of criminal groups. As peculiar violent non-state actors, a "criminal group" might become involved in legitimacy struggles by performing an artificial separation from the rest of society.

Consequently, rather than studying organized crime and the state as alleged separated social groups, this research addressed the organization of crime as a social phenomenon, which may or may not relate to the phenomena of political legitimacy. When a criminal group dealt with legitimacy (as seen in the cases of LFM/LCT and CN), this criminal organization involved 1) illegal activities, but also the effort to 2) create the image of a cohesive, unitary organization with its own identity, and 3) acting or performing like it, all while aiming to 4) achieve or preserve legitimacy. Under this conception, as part of their participation in the definition of local political legitimacy, criminal groups´ resignation to legality does not mean to get rid of legitimacy´s interest. That is why criminal groups, despite the efforts of portraying themselves like that, are not counter-society or counter-state actors. Empirically, both criminals and non-criminals are embedded and interacting in social circuits in which certain legal actors also enable illegality and vice-versa. However, how common it is for criminal groups to pursue legitimacy is a question that needs to be addressed in other similar studies. Only then will it be possible to know if Michoacán and Sicily are typical or are exceptions.

Moreover, how criminal groups become interested in political legitimacy demands a threefold condition. Because of a historical and political context that enables and allows it, because achieving it is essential to guarantee domination or social control by granting access to resources, and finally, because in order to become justified, it might be necessary to explain criminal activity. This research made two methodological contributions for collecting data in contexts like those analyzed here. The first addresses the audiences of legitimacy. Given that someone has to provide or withdraw it, someone else may win or lose it. Therefore, there will always be audiences, which become potent sources of approaching and collecting data in the field. This research proposed the operative distribution of sources and resources of political legitimacy for studying criminal groups. As a point of supply from

which emerged the actual legitimacy resources, each source makes sense in the local context as a social, political, cultural, economic, and semantic field from which specific legitimacy resources can emerge. Both methodological propositions rest on understanding legitimacy as a relational concept from a descriptive perspective.

The Contested Legitimacy Arena of Michoacán

Regarding the case of Michoacán, there is no possibility of disconnecting LFM/LCT from the war on drugs launched in Mexico in 2006. As an iron-fisted punitive strategy, it influenced the increasing violence around the country but concentrated in specific states and regions, including Michoacán. The war, metaphorical but real in its consequences, holds a general legitimacy relevance that became maximized in Michoacán as the first battlefield and Calderón´s home state, the president who launched the war. Moreover, in terms of this war´s logic, in which the federal government attempted to draw a discursive line artificially separating "us", i.e. "the legal people" and "them", i.e. "the criminals", in Michoacán this effort was reciprocated first by LFM and, later, by LCT. These criminal groups displayed, since their beginning, identity efforts intending to distinguish themselves from the rest of the society and to justify their own authority and foster enmity towards the federal government. For them, also metaphors and discourses with practical consequences became the vehicle shaping the message. This research presented, specifically in the case of Michoacán, how Hobsbawm´s concept of the bandit needs to be framed in a broader social scenario. In this regard, Nazario´s cult of personality and legitimacy intentions based on charismatic domination in the Weberian sense need to be understood in the context in which it was embedded. It emerged from there, and only there begins to make sense.

Following Blok´s critique of Hobsbawm: "Before looking [to the bandits] it is necessary to look at the larger society within which peasant communities are contained" (2001, 18), and also the context from which the phenomenon emerges. However, with relative independence from this, the high criminality incidence trends taking place in the state, together with the already existence of LFM, made the context even more particular in terms of a political legitimacy contestation. Since the legal authority was not complying nor being efficient with public security tasks, thus the criminal group launched a discourse of taking care of locals' security, which quickly evolved into a governance discourse. This political legitimacy contesting only increased through the next years when other social agents such as Cherán movement, *autodefensas*, the different official authorities levels as well as when LFM turned into LCT. Within this context, from a general political legitimacy evaluation, Michoacán is appreciated by the simple equation of many actors, many state. In other words, far from the absence of authority, the contestation of political legitimacy led to an excess of authorities. Each of the political actors in the social order constellation of Michoacán (as well as Sicily) performed sovereign practices. This research was conducted explicitly for analyzing the case

of the local criminal groups. Both LFM and LCT legitimacy aspirations were the contestations codified in this legitimacy language.

Indeed, regarding Michoacán´s criminal groups, this research found a political legitimacy *continuum* between LFM and LCT. Indeed, that continuation is marked by the increase in the legitimacy efforts intensity and frequency. This research found how, thinking about that increasing, the general legitimation discourse had elements of political modernity in the beginning, and eventually mixed pre-modern and modern attributes as long as LFM turned into LCT. By the last years analyzed for this case, LCT became a post-modern political agent who created a discourse combining religion thoughts and messianism with human and political rights; initiation rituals and prohibitions with promises of progress for locals; as well as a feudal regime based on nationalism and localism but with a vision of a capitalist and global criminal business. Of course, this post-modern combination are marked by bloody criminal behavior with no respect for human dignity. In the end, despite the particularities, both violence and legitimacy endeavors were embedded in a context of disputed authority, as well as contested versions of the definition of social order.

The Contested Arena of Legitimacy in Sicily

On the other hand, as an auxiliary but much more ancient research case, Sicily and the CN needed to be framed into a historic Italian state-building context. In Sicily, the centennial accompaniment experienced between the official authority and the mafia gives the pattern to explain, if not Sicily´s history, at least how CN performed political legitimacy attempts. Indeed, CN participates in shaping Sicilian social order through contingent and systematic sovereignty practices. Rather than a counter-state, this research defined CN from a political legitimacy perspective and followed the idea of the mafia's production of politics in a twofold phenomenon. First, given their sovereign practices, as a relevant local social agent participating in the definition of the domestic social order, and second, as a local social system through which power, authority, and violence become mediated. As in the case of Michoacán, especially over the last five decades Sicily has become a field of deeply and high-density contestation of political legitimacy. The main difference, however, is the effectiveness (at the expense violence suffered) that the agents against CN showed when uniting their political legitimacy claim against the mafia's.

The heterogeneous composition of the anti-mafia movement of the post-war reveals it. Since the dawn of the current century, the maturity reached by this mafia-contesting agent has translated into professionalism, expertise, and constant local support. CN is currently acting in the shadows, and rates of mafia violence have decreased significantly. This victory has a legitimacy explanation and angle based on the success of changing the setting of who rules and why they rule. Anti-mafia campaigns changed the social order by playing the political legitimacy game, as has been the case with CN. On the other hand, CN has been much more

orthodox when attempting legitimacy, especially compared to LFM and even more with LCT. Orthodoxism is particularly evident in two CN´s legitimacy attempts features. First, by preferring to not appear publicly over becoming publicized in the sense of having a public presence, as well as advertised, i.e., spreading identity symbols. Secondly, CN permanently prioritizes inner cohesion over popular support, which in the end is another manner of gaining and using legitimacy.

Comparison as a Catalyzer of Legitimacy

When comparing, this research contrasted empirical data while pushing the conceptual debate. As Mitchell argued when elaborating on the idea of the state-effect (2006), depending on the context, criminal groups´ political legitimacy might be pursued by material and non-material, representational and real, subjective and objective means. While in Michoacán, the over-exposition of LFM and LCT produced intense and visible amounts of material and non-material legitimacy resources, the shadowy presence of CN in Sicily produced a concentration of non-material sources. This was because LFM and LCT remained in the legitimation process, and thus needed that visibility, whereas CN had long periods of being an authority and only in recent times had to become public – which was done mostly through violent assassinations. However, in the end both contexts exhibited puzzling combinations of efforts in the direction of achieving legitimacy. Even when the disputing means and motivations changed, reflecting differences and similarities, political legitimacy was the same tool used in local disputes. Moreover, Michoacán and Sicily became arenas in which the legitimacy gained by the criminal group eventually was struggled by another local social agent and vice versa – either legal or not, local or not. On the other hand, the central discrepancy between what Michoacán and Sicily showed happened in terms of social order. While CN pretended to preserve the status quo due to how it was set historically since the post-war era, LFM and LCT had a disruptive vision of social order based on having enemies who were already ruling before them as well as those pretending to do so later such as the federal government or *autodefensas*. In both cases, however, legitimacy was instrumental to that goal.

This research also found that, in contexts of high criminality, the analysis of political legitimacy aspirations serves to epistemologically rationalize the social order behind the apparent disorder. As a concept, political legitimacy works as an auxiliary analytical tool to make sense of statehood practices proposed by the anthropology of the state (Migdal, 1988; Mitchell, 2006; Hansen and Stepputat, 2005) either coming from criminal groups or other social agents, including to recognize the clashing of encountered social order visions coming from these. However, political legitimacy has another empirical instrumental function when it comes to authority. These relate through the former being a useful tool in shaping and deciding on the latter. As an instrument, no legitimacy related clashes take place outside that authority-building process, while no authority disputes exclude the usage of legitimacy. By

doing so, social agents are primarily political, and for the criminal groups, the condition of illegality becomes an extra relevant element shaping the phenomenon. Therefore, criminal groups struggling for legitimacy do not eliminate the authority-building process; instead, it becomes reaffirmed. Also, as a consequence, violence related to criminal groups´ legitimacy is as instrumental as any other violence.

Towards a Broader Conceptual Debate: The State, the Social Order, and Sovereignty

Derived from these ideas, some thoughts regarding the state, the social order, and sovereignty invite a re-consideration of given concepts and discussions referenced in this research. Regarding the state, as a social phenomenon, several agents compose it and contingently changes. Hence, legitimacy struggles work as an engine to either boost and speed up or slow down changes in the authority claiming history of the state-building process. Therefore, political legitimacy disputes renew the state and its multiple parts. Criminal groups with political legitimacy aspirations influence the state building process, usually by borrowing its image as a powerful symbol and reference of authority. Finally, the state has margins, where these changes might be more frequent or at least will need special analytical considerations. On the grounds of social order idea, legitimacy conflicts serve for observing different versions of these within the same place. In the case of criminal groups involved in legitimacy struggles, these are somehow products, shapers, and transformers of the current local social order although promoting or having their version. Related to the social contract, as a core part of the social order it will be permanently renewed.

Indeed, winners and losers will be an output coming out from this process, while this does not cancel the current existence of social order, whatever it is. Moreover, parallel authority coexistence does not mean social disorder. On the contrary, both or more agents involved will be building an order despite hypothetical, potential, and actual clashes. Lastly in this regard, as a practice, sovereignty can potentially reside in as many hands as agents dispute political legitimacy. Moreover, when it comes to criminal groups, sovereignty practices become visible thanks to legitimacy as a catalyst that makes distinguishable actions towards building authority from simple crimes. In spite of the specificities that every context has for the legitimacy definition, practicing sovereign is a historical continuum. That is what explains that the same sovereign code was used in such different contexts as Michoacán and Sicily but performed by more or less similar criminal agents as LFM and LCT on the one hand, and CN on the other. Finally, the legitimate monopoly of violence idea needs to include sovereignty within these cases. That conducts to observe that this monopolization is not legitimate as long as the sovereignty (as a practice) is not monopolized as well.

Final Thoughts: Routes for Continuing Researching

Finally, some observations and recommendations arose from the findings for future research. One suggestion is to carry out more investigations on the descriptive grounds of political legitimacy to keep learning how authority empirically takes place and changes over time. This is not to say that normative research is not useful. However, it is the intention to underline that certain social phenomena can be better analyzed through the lens of being less normative and more descriptive. Following the idea, such as how this research added the idea of legitimation practices, keep researching through this lens would lead to producing other concepts on the descriptive grounds of political legitimacy. On the other hand, although this research recovered specific references on the external factor, it would be indeed interesting to have new investigations where this external variable becomes highlighted. That implies considering new research from the locality angle, but also to focus on cases in which the criminal groups' legitimacy interest could be strongly analyzed from their regional, transnational, and even global dimensions.

Moreover, regarding a public interest angle, locality still is relevant for public policymakers related to security and justice. For them, the understanding of how and why criminal groups become involved in political legitimacy struggles is useful to design strategies to challenge actual or potential social orders based on criminal groups governance. Ignoring this conceptual re-think could lead to blindness towards how the authority building process takes place, potentially resulting in violence and widespread human rights violations. Moving to the cases, another suggestion concerns to expand the research on Michoacán to the present times under these methodological and conceptual parameters. Currently, the Mexican press is still reporting on and making references to LCT. Since 2015, the year in which this research stopped collecting data, Mexican violence has been increasing and acquiring extra complexity dimensions. One of them concerns hypothetical residual criminal groups operating after leaders like Nazario had been killed or captured. This hypothetical scenario is close to the Colombian context since the twenty-first century and onwards, where the so-called Bacrim (Spanish acronym for criminal bands) resulted from the war against Cali and Medellín criminal groups. In any case, the legitimacy angle used here serves to study other cases as long as they still embedded into political contestation frames.

To what extent this is the case in Michoacán is a question that still needs a political legitimacy answer that leads to public policy decisions that help current and potential victims. Related to Sicily, this research found in the migration phenomenon happening in the island interesting and divergent information. How CN and the Sicilian political legitimacy landscape changed, reacted to, and were affected by migration needs to be researched. The challenge is immense in terms of describing modifications in criminal tendencies under migration dynamics without criminalizing migrants. Finally, from this research, it is suggested to continue and increase comparative studies addressing criminal groups interested in political legitimacy. Moreover, while doing so, it is suggested to twist concepts with empirical references and coming back to ideal-types to improve them. Understanding that the criminal groups will

look for political legitimacy to take place in a disputed definition of local social order helps to explain how societies become ordered, especially when they are apparently becoming less ordered.

Appendix

Picture 1. Saint Nazario´s Shrine seized from LCT by the Mexican Army and the Código de los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán. Museum of Narcotics, Mexico City, Mexico.

Picture 2. Set of gold made medallions and guns seized from criminal organizations by the Mexican Army. Museum of Narcotics, Mexico City, Mexico.

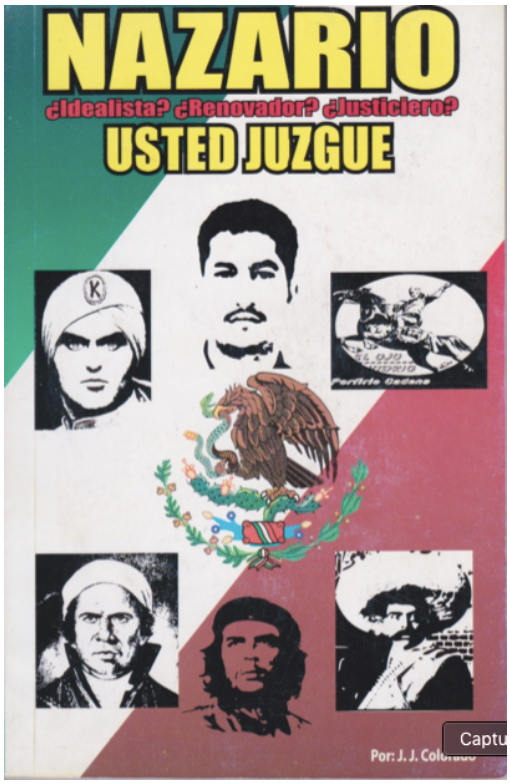
Picture 3. Demonstration supporting Nazario. Apatzingán, Michoacán, Mexico.

Three days after Nazario Moreno´s killing, a demonstration took place in Apatzingán, Michoacán. A man holds up a sign that reads in Spanish "Nazario will always live in our hearts". December 12, 2010. Source: (AP Photo/Primera Plana), Photographer: Anonymous.

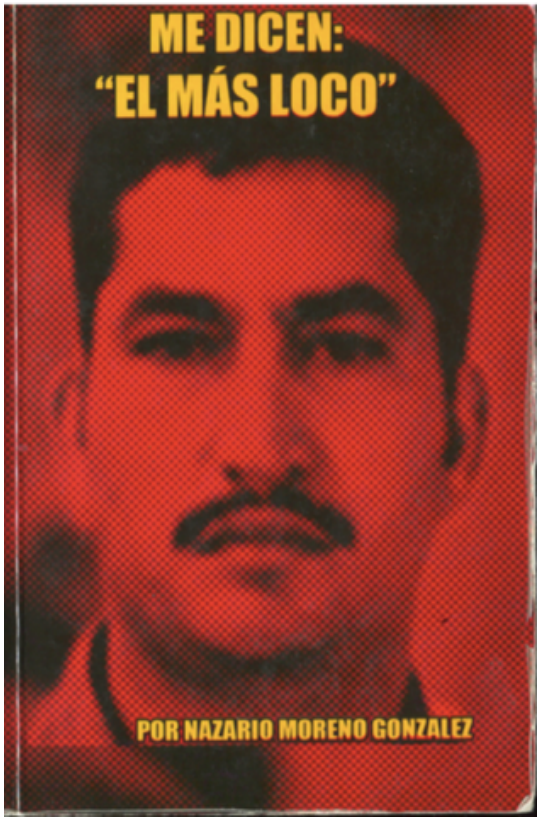
Picture 4. Demonstration supporting Nazario. Apatzingán, Michoacán, Mexico.

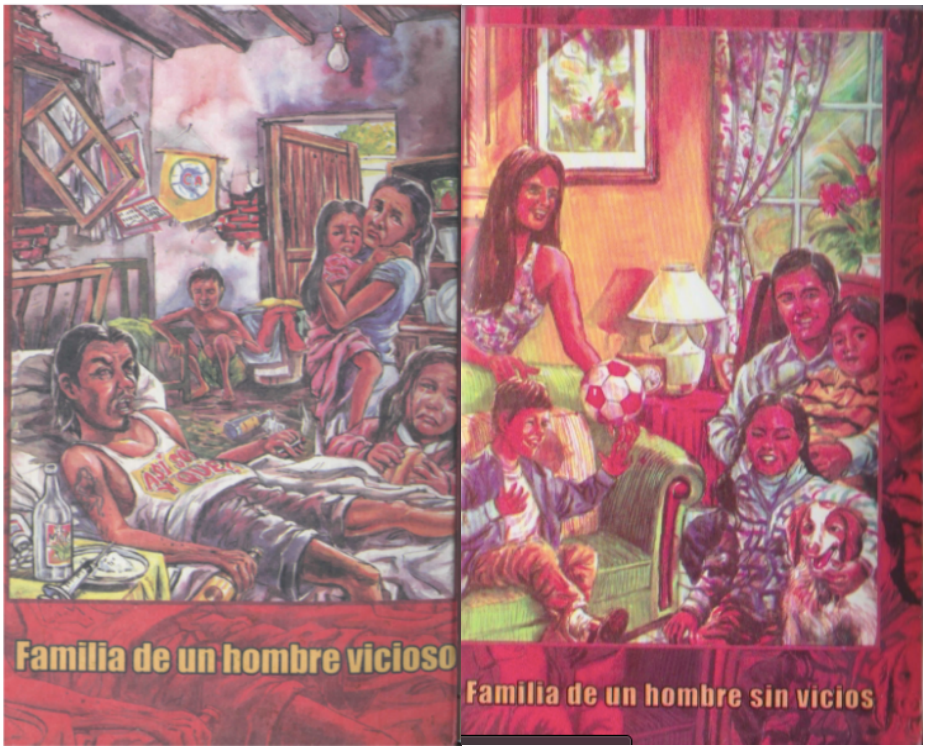
The weekend after the first demonstration, another one happened in Apatzingán. Local people hold up signs that read in Spanish "Rest in Peace, Nazareo [sic]", referring again to Nazario Moreno. December 18, 2010. Source: Notimex.

Picture 5. Cover of the book *Nazario. ¿Idealista? ¿Renovador? ¿Justiciero? Uzted juzgue*

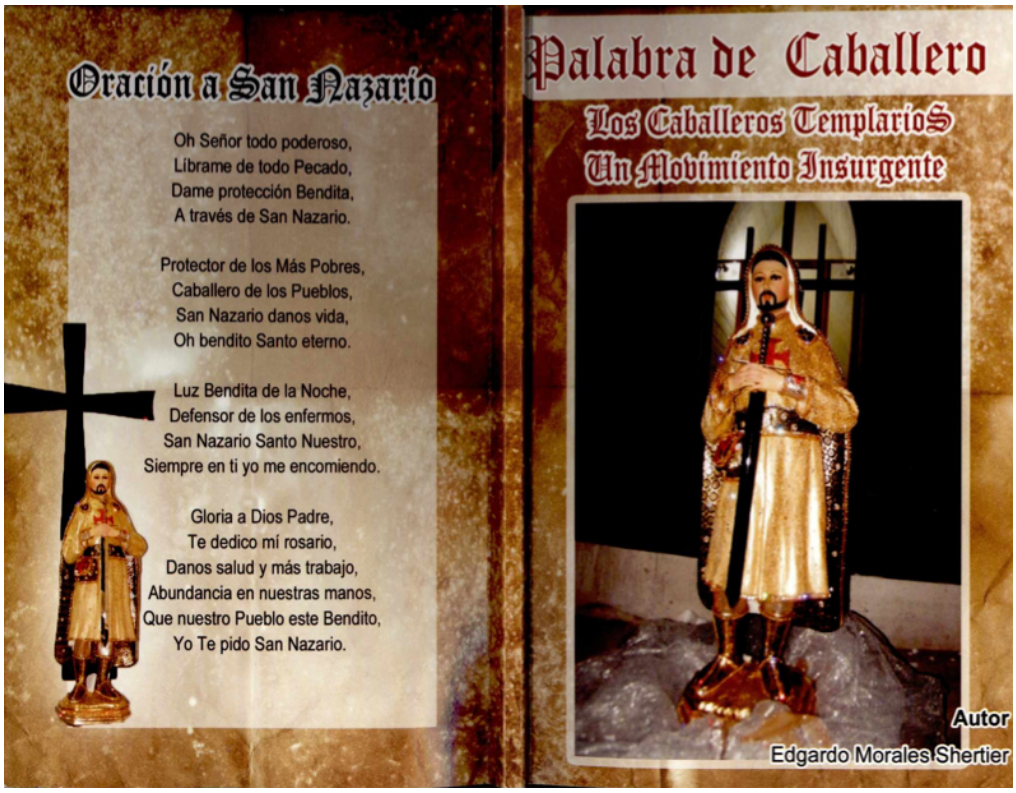


Picture 6. Parts of the book *Me dicen "El más loco"*





Picture 7. Cover of the book *Palabra de Caballero. Los Caballeros Templarios Un Movimiento Insurgente* and pray to Saint Nazario in the back cover.



Picture 8. Manifesto of LFM in *El Sol de Morelia.*

El Sol de Morelia

Policiaca-A19

MIERCOLES 22 DE NOVIEMBRE DEL 2006

25 personas han acudido al MP

Rindió declaración director del Cereso Mil Cumbres

Se llamará a otros funcionarios ante esa instancia

Delfino GARCIA CORTEZ

Ante el agente tercero del Ministerio Público de la Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado se presentó ayer el director del Cereso "David Franco Rodríguez" o "Mil Cumbres", para rendir su declaración en torno a los hechos suscitados el pasado fin de semana en dicho penal, donde el resultado final fue de cuatro abogados de oficio y un interno muertos.

Otros tres custodios que estuvieron en el lugar de los hechos también fueron declarados, lográndose de esta manera obtener algunos datos importantes que podrían llegar a las autoridades a dar con las personas que participaron en la introducción de las armas al citado penal.

En este sentido, tanto el director Rogelio García, como los tres custodios se reservaron hacer comentarios en relación a su declaración ante el Ministerio Público, sólo se concretaron a decir que ellos al igual que muchos, están interesados en que se esclarezcan las cosas.

Cabe destacar que mediante datos proporcionados por fuentes oficiales de la Procuraduría General de Justicia en el Estado, se logró saber que desde el día el artero asesinato de los abogados hasta ayer, se han declarado a 25 personas, entre internos, custodios, empleados administrativos y el director del penal.

A 20 internos y personas que participaron en los hechos, se les practicaron pruebas de rodizonato de sodio, dando positivo los internos Juan Partida Zúñiga, Jorge Alva-

Rogelio García, director del Cereso Mil Cumbres, fue declarado en la PGJE respecto a lo ocurrido en el penal a su cargo.

rez Arcila, así como Arnoldo Villanueva Herrera, este último, se pegó un disparo en la cabeza y resultó intoxicado con cocaína.

Asimismo, se conformo que las armas utilizadas en los sangrientos hechos, son una pistola tipo Revólver, marca Colt, calibre 357 Mágnum; la segunda también era tipo Revólver, marca Smith and Wesson, calibre 38 Especial.

A este respecto, el área de servicios periciales dictaminó lo siguiente: la bala extraída al herido Teodoro Partida Zúñiga, es de calibre .357 Mágnum; así como los disparos que presentaban los demás cadáveres, lográndose determinar de esta manera que fueron los reos los que privaron de la vida a los abogados, en tanto que uno de los internos en su desesperación se pegó un tiro en la cabeza y murió. (I)

Consignan a 16 pseudopolicías

Un total de 15 pseudopolicías del municipio de Turicato fueron consignados ayer por el agente del Ministerio Público de la Federación a través de la Subprocuraduría de Investigación Especializada en Delincuencia Organizada (SIEDO)

Entre los consignados está el director general de Seguridad Pública Municipal y 15 de sus policías, quienes fueron entregados al juzgado Séptimo de Distrito de Procesos Penales Federales en el Distrito Federal, con sede en el Reclusorio Preventivo Sur.

El jueves por la noche personal del Ejército Militar encontró a dichas personas portando armas de fuego y en posesión de cartuchos de uso exclusivo del Ejército, Armada y Fuerza Aérea, sin la autorización correspondiente, integrándose así la averiguación previa PGR/SIEDO/UETA/078/2006.

Cabe destacar que los sujetos pretendieron justificar la portación de las armas, argumentando ser elementos de la Policía Municipal de Turicato, sin embargo, no pudieron acreditarlo.

De acuerdo con las investigaciones, los indiciados llegaron desde sus lugares de origen al municipio de Turicato, Michoacán, entre los días 16 y 17 de noviembre, donde buscaban ser contratados por autoridades locales como elementos de la Policía Municipal.

Cabe destacar que, por instrucciones del recién nombrado director general de Seguridad Pública Municipal, Jesús Piedra Villalobos, los hoy consignados fueron enlistados y armados con rifles AR-15, calibre .223, pistolas calibre .9 mm y 38 Súper, sin haber presentado la documentación que acreditara su personalidad, sin la observancia de un proceso de selección, sin previo adiestramiento y sin otorgarles los nombramientos correspondientes.

A través de las investigaciones efectuadas por la SIEDO, se tuvo conocimiento de que Jesús Piedra Villalobos es familiar de José Vázquez Piedra, presidente municipal de Turicato, Michoacán, y cuenta con antecedentes de haber estado cinco años en prisión por los delitos de robo y asalto.

Entre los detenidos se encuentran tres ex policías municipales, dos procesados por el delito de homicidio; dos más son ex elementos del Ejército Mexicano, uno de ellos declaró haber cumplido una sentencia en las Islas Marías en virtud de que fue detenido en 1996, en Tamaulipas, con más de 400 kilogramos de marihuana.

Otros dos de los indiciados fueron detenidos y sentenciados, uno por el delito de lesiones por disparo de arma de fuego, y otro por el ilícito de tráfico de personas. (I)

LA FAMILIA MICHOACANA

¿QUIENES SOMOS?

Trabajadores nativos de la región de Tierra Caliente en el Estado de Michoacán, organizados por la necesidad de salir de la opresión, de la humillación a la que siempre fuimos sometidos por personas, que siempre tuvieron todo el tiempo el poder, lo que les permitió realizar todo tipo de pillerías y atropellos en el Estado, como los del Cártel del MILENIO, algunos de apellido Valencia y de otras organizaciones, como la banda de los 30, que ha tenido aterrorizada desde los años ochenta hasta la fecha, a gran parte del Estado, sobre todo en las áreas de Puruarán, Turicato, Tacámbaro y Ario de Rosales, y que han realizado secuestros, robos, extorsiones y otros delitos que perjudican la paz de los michoacanos.

MISIÓN:

Erradicar del Estado de Michoacán el secuestro, la extorsión directa y telefónica, asesinatos por paga, el secuestro express, robo de tráilers y automóviles, robos a casa-habitación, por parte de gente como la mencionada que han hecho del Estado de Michoacán un lugar inseguro. Nuestra única razón es que amamos a nuestro Estado y ya no estamos dispuestos a que la dignidad del pueblo sea atropellada.

Quizá en este momento la gente no nos entienda, pero sabemos que en las regiones más afectadas; comprenden nuestras acciones, ya que es posible combatir a estos delincuentes, los cuales se establecieron provenientes de otros estados y a quienes no dejaremos que entren a Michoacán a seguir delinquiendo.

Se está erradicando en su totalidad en todo el Estado la venta al menudeo de la droga LETAL conocida como "ICE" o "HIELO", por ser una de las peores drogas que están haciendo daños irreversibles a la sociedad y se va a prohibir la venta de vino adulterado que se comenta viene de "Tepito", y sabemos que lo que viene de ahí es de mala calidad.

OBJETIVO

Seguir manteniendo los valores universales de las personas, a los cuales tienen pleno derecho.

Al erradicar lo que nos hemos propuesto, aunque para esto, desgraciadamente se ha recurrido a estrategias muy fuertes por parte de nosotros, ya que de esta forma hemos visto que es la única manera de poner orden en el Estado y no vamos a permitir que esto se salga de control de nuevo.

Apoyar a la gente con despensas, literatura, así como aulas para mejorar la educación de la sociedad; esto dirigido principalmente al área rural, la cual es la más marginada, humillada y sobre todo en la región de Tierra Caliente.

¿POR QUÉ NOS FORMAMOS?

Cuando empieza esta organización de LA FAMILIA Michoacana, no se esperaba que fuera posible que pudiera llegar a erradicarse el secuestro, asesinato por paga, la estafa y la venta de droga conocida como "hielo", pero gracias al gran número de personas que han tenido fe, se está logrando controlar este gran problema en el Estado.

LA FAMILIA somos un grupo de gente la cual ha ido creciendo, de tal forma, que en la actualidad abarcamos todo el Estado de Michoacán. Esta organización surgió con la firme intención de combatir la delincuencia desenfrenada que había en nuestro Estado.

LA FAMILIA ha logrado grandes avances importantes, al ir combatiendo poco a poco estos males, pero aún no podemos cantar victoria, pero sí podemos decir que el Estado ha mejorado en estos problemas un 80%. Y hemos erradicado el secuestro también en el mismo porcentaje.

Las personas que trabajan decentemente en cualquier actividad no deben preocuparse. Nosotros las respetamos, pero no permitiremos que gentes de aquí o de otros estados cometan delitos o quieran controlar otro tipo de actividades.

Cuando empezamos a organizarnos y a proponer quitar la venta de drogas al menudeo de las calles como el "Hielo" muchos nos dijeron que ni en los países del primer mundo lo habían podido controlar, y ya lo estamos haciendo.

PARA REFLEXIONAR

Tú qué harías como michoacano. ¿Te unirías a la familia si ves que estamos combatiendo estos delitos? o ¿Dejarías que sigan creciendo? ... Danos tu opinión.

A tí padre de familia pregunto: ¿Te gustaría que tu hijo anduviera en las calles en peligro de caer en las drogas y en la delincuencia?

¿Apoyarías a esta organización en su lucha contra estos males que atacan a nuestro Estado?

Los medios de comunicacion han sido muy acertados y objetivos en sus comentarios ante los acontecimientos ocurridos, cosa que se les agradece por su imparcialidad y damos las gracias a estos medios por sus comentarios sobre nuestras acciones.

Aún en otros países no se han organizado para realizar este tipo de actividades a favor de su pueblo y aquí ya empezamos. El cual esperado dependerá del apoyo y la comprensión de la Sociedad Michoacana.

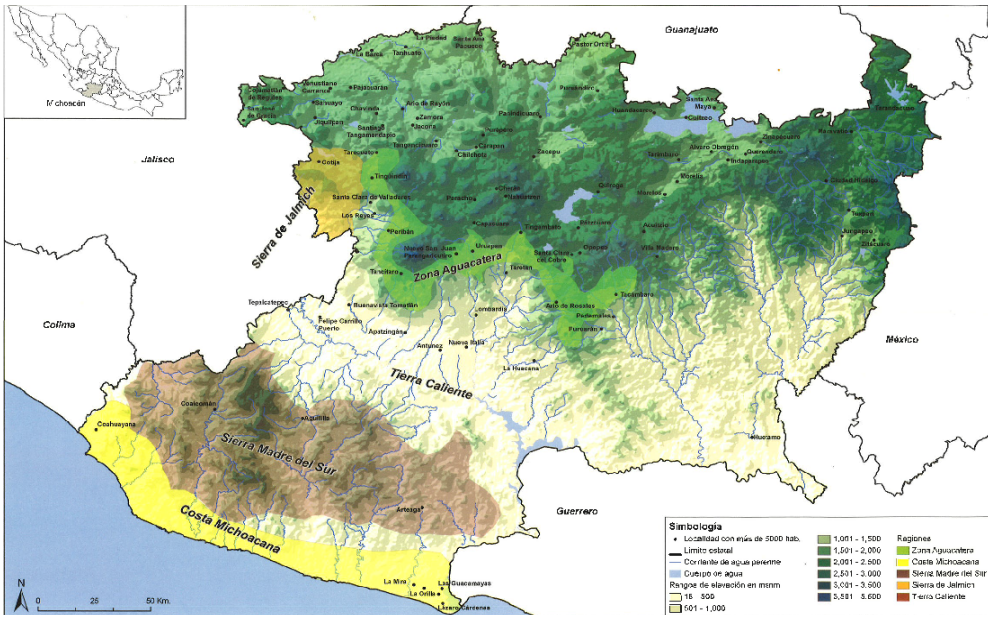
ATENTAMENTE

LA FAMILIA MICHOACANA

Inserción pagada

Source: La Familia Michoacana (2006), "La Familia Michoacana", in *El Sol de Morelia*, November 22.

Picture 9. Michoacán Regions.



Source: Maldonado, 2010.

Picture 10. Shop windows in Catania, Sicily, during Saint Agatha´s 2019 Procession. The left shows the 2013 award for the most beautiful in that year.

Picture 11. Wax street vendors at 2019 Saint Agatha´s Procession, Catania.

Picture 12. Saint Agatha´s *fercolo* during the 2019 procession mass, Catania.

Picture 13. Palermo´s map indicating neighborhoods by *pizzo* charging distribution, Addiopizzo´s headquarters.

Sources

Ackerman, Susan (1999), *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Addiopizzo, (2018), "Il Giornale di Sicilia pubblica la lettera al "Caro Estortore", in *Addiopizzo website*, January 10, URL: http://www.addiopizzo.org/index.php/il-giornale-di-sicilia-pubblica-la-lettera-al-caro-estortore-2/

Aguayo, Sergio (2014), *El México de la sociedad organizada, los poderes fácticos y Enrique Peña Nieto*, Mexico, Ink.

Aguayo, Sergio and Dayán, Jacobo (2018), *The Zeta Yoke. Northern Coahuila, 2010-2011*, Mexico, El Colegio de México.

Aguiar G., José Carlos (2010), "La piratería como conflicto. Discursos sobre la propiedad intelectual en México", in *Íconos. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 138, pp. 143-156.

Aguiar G., José Carlos (2018), "Criminalidad y santos populares", in Blancarte, Roberto (coord.), *Diccionario de religiones en América Latina*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica – El Colegio de México.

Aguirre, Jerjes and Amador Herrera, Hugo (2013), "Institutional weakness and organized crime in Mexico: the case of Michoacán", in *Trends in Organized Crime*, 16:02, pp. 221-238.

Almond, Gabriel and Verba, Sidney (1963), *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Andreas, Peter (2013), *Smuggler Nation. How Illicit Trade made America*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Arcidiacono, Eugenio (2015), "Mafia ed estorsioni nelle regioni del Centro-Nord: uno studio esplorativo attraverso le denounce", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 297-324.

Arendt, Hannah (1970), *On Violence*, New York, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Aretxaga, Begoña (2005), "Maddening States", in Zulaika, Joseba (ed.), *States of terror. Begoña Aretxaga´s Essays*, Reno, Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada.

Aretxaga, Begona, and Joseba Zulaika (2005) *States of terror*. Reno, E-U.: Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada.

Arjona, Ana (2017), "Civilian Cooperation and Non-Cooperation with Non-State Armed Groups: The Centrality of Obedience and Resistance", in *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 28:4-5, pp. 755-788.

Arjona, Ana; Kasfir, Nelson; Mampilly, Zachariah (2015), "Introduction" in Arjona, Ana; Kasfir, Nelson; Mampilly, Zachariah, *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Arlacchi, Pino (1983), *Mafia Peasants and Great Estates. Society in Traditional Calabria*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Arlacchi, Pino (1994), *Addio Cosa Nostra. La vita di Tommaso Buscetta*, Milano, Rizzoli.

Arlacchi, Pino (2007), *La mafia imprenditrice. Dalla Calabria al centro dell´inferno*, Milano, Gruppo editoriale il Saggiatore.

Arrieta, Carlos (2018), "Pide padre Goyo 'no acostumbrarse al olor a muerte' en México" [newspaper article], in *El Universal*, March 23, URL: https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/pide-padre-goyo-no-acostumbrarse-al-olor-muerte-en-mexico

Astorga, Luis (2007), *Seguridad, traficantes y militares. (El poder y la sombra) Tiempo de Memoria*, Mexico, Tusquets.

Astorga, Luis (2015), *¿Qué querían que hiciera? Inseguridad y delincuencia organizada en el gobierno de Felipe Calderón*, Mexico City, Grijalbo.

Auda, Grégory (2009), "Le crime organisé, un perception variable, un concept polemique", in *Cahiers de la Securité*, 7.

Azaola, Elena (2009), "El comercio con el dolor y la esperanza. La extorsión telefónica en México", in *URVIO. Revista Latinoamericana de Seguridad Ciudadana*, 6, pp. 115-122.

Bagley, Bruce (2009), "La Conexión Colombia-México-Estados Unidos", in Aguayo, Sergio and Benítez, Raúl (eds.), *Atlas de la seguridad y defensa de México 2009*, Mexico, CASEDE.

Balandier, George (1970), *Political Anthropology*, New York, Pantheon.

Banfield, Edward (2003), "The Problem of Social Order", in Hechter, Michael and Horne, Christiane (eds.), *Theories of Social Order*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Baranda, Antonio (2014), "Realizan autodefensas reunión nacional", [newspaper article] in *Reforma*, Mexico City, May 28th.

Barker, Kevin (2013), "Extortion", in Salinger, L. M., Encyclopedia of White-Collar and Corporate Crime (Vol. 2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks, California.

Barnes, Nicholas (2017), "Criminal Politics: An Integrated Approach to the Study of Organized Crime, Politics, and Violence", in *Perspectives on Politics*, 15:4, pp. 967-987.

BBC Staff (2007), "Calderón: 'Ni tregua ni cuartel'", [newspaper article], *BBC*, London, URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_6351000/6351167.stm

Becerril, Andrés (2012), "Los hechos del sexenio: 2006-2007 en busca de la paz social", [newspaper article] in *Excélsior*, November 25.

Beck, Ulrich (2004), *Poder y contrapoder en la era global. La nueva economía política mundial*, Barcelona, Paidós.

Becker, Gary S. (1968), “Crime and Punishment: an Economic Approach”, in *Journal of Political Economy*, 76:2, pp. 169-217.

Beetham, David (1991), *The legitimation of power*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.

Berdal, Mats and Serrano, Mónica (2002), “Introduction”, in Berdal, Mats adnd Serrano, Mónica (eds.), *Transnational Organized Crime and International Security*, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Berdal, Mats (2003), “How ‘new’ are ‘new wars’? Global economic change and the study of civil war”, in *Global Governance*, 9:04, pp. 477–502.

Berdal, Mats (2011), “The ‘new wars’ thesis revisited”, in Strachan Hew, and Scheipers, Sybille, *The Changing Character of War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Biderman, Albert and Reiss, Albert (1967), “On Exploring the Dark Figure of Crime”, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 374, pp. 1–15.

Blok, Anton (1974), *The Mafia of a Sicilian village, 1860-1960: A study of violent peasant entrepreneurs*, London, Harper and Row.

Blok, Anton (2001), *Honour and Violence*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Bottoms, Anthony and Tankebe, Justice (2012), “Beyond Procedural Justice: A Dialogic Approach to Legitimacy in Criminal Justice”, in *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 102:1, pp. 119-170.

Bouchard, Michel (2011), “The State of the Study of the State in Anthropology”, in *Reviews in Anthropology*, No. 40, vol. 3.

Bourgois, Philippe (2005), “The Continuum of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador”, in Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Bourgois, Philippe (eds.), *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing, pp. 425-434.

Burger, Thomas (1977), “Talcott Parsons, the Problem of Order in Society, and the Program of an Analytical Sociology”, in *American Journal of Sociology*, 83, 2, pp. 320-339.

Calderón Hinojosa, Felipe (2011a), “Palabras del Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, licenciado Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, durante la comida con miembros de la comunidad judía de México” [discourse], Mexico, Federal Government, March 14th, URL: http://calderon.presidencia.gob.mx/2011/03/palabras-del-presidente-de-los-estados-unidos-mexicanos-licenciado-felipe-calderon-hinojosa-durante-la-comida-con-miembros-de-la-comunidad-judia-de-mexico/

Calderón Hinojosa, Felipe (2011b), “El Presidente Calderón durante el evento Diálogo Ciudadano” [discourse], Mexico, Federal Government, December 1, URL: http://calderon.presidencia.gob.mx/2011/12/el- presidente-calderon-durante-el-evento-dialogo-ciudadano/

Calderón Hinojosa, Felipe (2012), “El Presidente Calderón en la visita al Campo Policial no. 1, Fuerza Civil de Nuevo León” [discourse], Mexico, Federal Government, January 9th, URL:

http://calderon.presidencia.gob.mx/2012/01/el-presidente-calderon-en-la-visita-al-campo-policial-no-1-fuerza-civil-de-nuevo-leon/

Calderón, Felipe (2010), *CXCVI Aniversario de la Constitución de Apatzingán. El Presidente Calderón en el CXCVI Aniversario de la Constitución de Apatzingán* [discourse], Morelia: Presidencia de la República. URL: http://calderon.presidencia.gob.mx/2010/10/el-presidente-calderon-en-el-cxcvi-aniversario-de-la-constitucion-de-apatzingan/

Campana, Paolo and Varese, Paolo (2015), "La cooperazione nelle organizzazioni criminali:il ruolo della violenza e della parentela", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 199-219.

Capodici, Rosalia Monica and Moccia, Antonio Michele (2016), *Lo stato nascoto. Le trattive che portarono alla pax mafiosa*, Palermo, Salvatore Insenga Editore.

Castellanos, Francisco (2012a), "Autor de libros sobre los Templarios acusa acoso del ejército", in *Proceso*, July 21.

Castellanos, Francisco (2012b), "El Chayo, santo patrono de la Tierra Caliente", in *Proceso*, August 4.

Catino, Maurizio (2014), "How Do Mafias Organize? Conflict and Violence in Three Mafia Organizations", European Journal of Sociology, 55:2, pp. 177–220.

Cavadi, Augusto (2018), *Peppino Impastato. Martire Civile*, Trapani, Di Girolamo.

CESOP (2013), *Encuesta telefónica sobre los grupos de autodefensa*, LXII Legislature, Mexican Federal Congress, August.

Channel 4 News (2014), "Finding La Tuta: On the trail of a Mexican drug lord". in *Chanel 4 News YouTube Channel*, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX7dbLW-47M

Chepesiuk, Ron (1999), *The War on Drugs: An International Encyclopedia*, Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio.

Claessen, Henry (1988), "Changing legitimacy. State Formation and Political Legitimacy", *New Brunswick*, NJ: Transaction, pp. 23-44.

Clarivate Analytics (2019), *Thomson Reuters' Web of Science* [Database], Several years consulted, URL: https://clarivate.com/products/web-of-science/databases/?parentKey=555184,539593

Coggins, Bridgett L. (2015), "Rebel Diplomacy: Theorizing Violent Non-State Actors' Strategic Use of Talk", in Arjona, Ana; Kasfir, Nelson; Mampilly, Zachariah, *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Colorado, J. J. (No year), *Nazario Idealista? ¿Restaurador? Justiciero? Usted juzgue*, No editorial information.

Comaroff, Jean (2010), "Anthropology and Crime: An Interview with Jean Comaroff", in *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 33:1, pp. 133-139.

Comaroff, Jean and Comaroff, John (2006), "Law and Disorder in the Postcolony: An Introduction", in Comaroff, Jean and Comaroff, John, *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Comisión Nacional para prevenir y erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres (CONAVIM) (2019), "Alertas de Violencia de Género declaradas", en CONAVIM website consulted on May 2019, Mexico, URL: https://www.gob.mx/conavim

Consejo Nacional de Población (several years), *Proyecciones de población* [database], Mexico, CONAPO, URL: http://www.conapo.gob.mx/es/CONAPO/Proyecciones

Correa-Cabrera, Guadalupe (2017), *Los Zetas Inc.: Criminal Corporations, Energy, and Civil War in Mexico*, Austin, University of Texas Press.

Corvaia, Marco (2012), *Pino se lo aspettava. Il racconto de la vida e della morte di Padre Puglisi*, Palermo, Navarra Editore.

Crossman, R.H.S. (1987), *Biografía del Estado moderno*, Mexico, FCE.

Costa, Antonio Maria (2009), "A knowledge crisis about a crime that shames us all", in UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, UN, Vienna.

Cruz, Anne J. (1999), *Discourses of Poverty: Social Reform and the Picaresque Novel in the Early Modern Spain*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

Dahl, R.A. (1956), *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Dahl, R.A. (1991), *Modern Political Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall.

Dagher, Ruby (2018), "Legitimacy and post-conflict state building: the undervalued role of performance legitimacy", in *Conflict ¡, Security and Development*, 18:2, pp. 85-111.

Dalla Chiesa, Nando (2014), *Manifiesto dell´Antimafia*, Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore.

Dalla Chiesa, Nando (2015), "L´espasione delle organizzazioni mafiose. Il Nord-Ovest come paradigma", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 241-265.

Das, Veena and Poole, Deborah (2004), "State and Its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies", in Das, Veena and Poole, Deborah (eds.), *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press.

DataR (2018), "México, ¿siempre fiel?", in *Reforma*, Mexico City, March 25 2018.

del Moral Barrera, Laura Elena and Murillo Villanueva, Brenda (2016), "Producción y precio del aguacate
Duff, Antony (2013), "Theories of Criminal Law", in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer Edition, URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/criminal-law/

della Porta, Donatella and Vannucci, Alberto (1999), *Corrupt Exchanges. Actors, Resources, and Mechanisms of Political Corruption*, Aldine de Gruyter, New York.

Di Trapani, Pico and Vaccaro, Nino (2014), *Addiopizzo. La revoluzione dei consumi contro la mafia*, Cagliari, Arkadia Editore.

Dickie, John (2015), *Historia de la mafia. Cosa nostra, ´Ndrangheta, Camorra de 1860 al presente*, Barcelona, Penguin Random House.

Dimico, Arcangelo, *et al.* (2012), "Origins of the Sicilian Mafia: The Market for Lemons", in *The Journal of Economic History*, 77:04.

Dino, Alessandra (2008), *La mafia devota: chiesa, religione, Cosa Nostra*, Rome, GLF editori Laterza.

Dino, Alessandra (2015), "Mafia, politica e democrazia: il potere e le stragi in Italia", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 177-198.

Dino, Alessandra (2016), "Antimafia e movimenti delle donne. Protagoniste, culture e linguaggi", *in Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla criminalità organizzata*, 2:3, pp. 3-23.

Domínguez, Iñigo (2016), "La leyenda de los Beati Paoli", in *El País Semanal*, December 18, URL: https://elpais.com/elpais/2016/12/18/eps/1482015941_148201.html

Doxa (2014), "Religiosità e ateismo in Italia nel 2014" [survey report], in *Doxa*, URL: https://www.bva-doxa.com/religiosita-e-ateismo-in-italia-nel-2014/

Duyvesteyn, Isabelle (2005), *Clausewitz and African War. Politics and strategy in Liberia and Somalia*, Taylor and Francis, New York.

Duyvesteyn, Isabelle (2000), "Contemporary war: Ethnic conflict, resource conflict or something else?", in *Civil Wars*, 3:1, pp. 92-116.

Duyvesteyn, Isabelle (2017) "Rebels and Legitimacy; An Introduction", in *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 28:4-5, pp. 669-685.

Early, Timothy (1997), *How Chiefs Come to Power*. *The Political Economy of Prehistory*, California, Stanford University Press.

EFE (2008), "La Cosa Nostra controlaba la tradicional fiesta religiosa de Santa Agata" [newspaper article], in *La Razón*, February 2.

Escalante, Fernando (2007), "Baile de mascaras. Conjeturas sobre el Estado en América Latina", in *Nueva Sociedad*, 2010. pp. 64-77.

Escalante, Fernando (2011), "Prólogo", in Migdal, Joel S., *Estados débiles, Estados Fuertes*, Mexico, FCE.

Escalante, Fernando (2012), *El crimen como realidad y representación*, El Colegio de México, Mexico City.

Escobar, Arturo (2001), "Culture sits in places: reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization", in *Political Geography*, 20, 139-174.

Ernst, Falko (2015) “Legitimacy matters: Los Caballeros Templarios and the mutation of the Mexican organized crime”, Journal of Money Laundering Control, 18(2), 137 – 152.

Fiandaca, Giovanni (2007), *Women and the Mafia: Female Roles in Organized Crime Structures*, New York, Springer-Verlag New York.

Flores Pérez, Carlos (2016), “Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación: elementos a considerar sobre la reconfiguración de las organizaciones del tráfico de drogas en México”, in Aguayo, Sergio and Benítez, Raúl (eds.), *Atlas de la seguridad y defensa de México 2012*, CASEDE, Mexico.

Förster, Till (2015), “*Dialogue Direct*: Rebel Governance and Civil Order in Northern Côte d’Ivoire”, in Arjona, Ana; Kasfir, Nelson; Mampilly, Zachariah, *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 203-225.

Fossen, Thomas (2011), *Political Legitimacy and the Pragmatic Turn*, Utrecht (PhD Thesis), Utrecht University.
Fossen, Thomas (2013), “Taking Stances, Contesting Commitments: Political Legitimacy and the Pragmatic Turn”, in *The Journal of Political Philosophy:* Volume 21, Number 4, pp. 426–450.

Foucault, Michelle (1995), *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prision*, New York, Vintage Books.

Frank, Lawrence K. (1944), “What is Social Order?”, in *American Journal of Sociology*, 49, 5, pp. 470-477.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio (2018), “’El Estado son ustedes’. Zona gris y defensa comunitaria en Michoacán”, in Fuentes Díaz, Antonio and Fini, Daniele (cords.), Defender al pueblo Autodefensas y Policías Comunitarias en México, Mexico, BUAP-Ediciones del Lirio.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio and Fini, Daniele (2018), “La emergencia de la defensa comunitaria. Violencia y respuestas frente a la inseguridad en México”, in Fuentes Díaz, Antonio and Fini, Daniele (cords.), *Defender al pueblo Autodefensas y Policías Comunitarias en México*, Mexico, BUAP-Ediciones del Lirio.

Gabbai, Ruggero (2008), *Io Ricordo* [film], Palermo.

Galtung, Johan, “Cultural Violence”, in *Journal of Peace Research*, 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1990), pp. 291-305.

Gambetta, Diego (1993), *The Sicilian Mafia. The Business of Private Protection*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Gambetta, Diego (2009), *Codes of Underworld. How Criminals Communicate*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Gangi, Mattia (2019), “‘Cari delinquenti, siete soli’, i fedeli sono 'spaccati' e la festa si chiude nella ‘vergogna’”, in *Catania Today*, February 6, URL: http://www.cataniatoday.it/cronaca/cari-delinquenti-siete-soli-i-fedeli-sono-spaccati-e-la-festa-si-chiude-nella-vergogna-6-febbraio-2019.html

García, Adán (2016), “Declaran, otra vez, fin de autodefensas”, [newspaper article] in *Reforma*, Mexico, February 12.

García, Brígida (2010), “Población económicamente active: evolución y perspectivas”, in García, Brígida and Ordorica, Manuel (cords.), *Población*, Mexico City, El Colegio de México – Los grandes problemas de México (collection), vol. 1.

Gasparello, Giovanna (2018), “Respuestas comunitarias a la violencia en Cherán: seguridad, participación, reconstrucción del territorio y de la sociedad”, in Fuentes Díaz, Antonio and Fini, Daniele (cords.), *Defender al pueblo Autodefensas y Policías Comunitarias en México*, Mexico, BUAP-Ediciones del Lirio.

Geertz, Clifford (2004), “What Is a State if it is not Sovereign? Reflections on Politics in Complicated Places”, in *Current Anthropology*, 45, 5.

Gellner, Ernest (2003), “Trust, Cohesion, and the Social Order”, in in Hechter, Michael and Horne, Christiane (eds.), *Theories of Social Order*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Genette, Gérard (2001), *Paratexts. Threesholds of Interpretation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Gil Olmos, José (2015), *Batallas de Michoacán. Autodefensas, el proyecto colombiano de Peña Nieto*, Mexico, Proceso.

Gil Olmos, José (2017), *Santos populares. La de en tiempos de crisis*, Mexico, Grijalbo.

Gilley, Bruce (2006), “The Meaning and Measure of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries”, in *European Journal of Political Research*, 45, 3, pp. 499-525.

Gledhill, John (2003), “Neoliberalismo e ingobernabilidad: caciquismo, militarización y movilización popular en el México de Zedillo”, El Colegio de Michoacán, in *Revista Relaciones*. 96.

Gledhill, John (2014), “Indigenous autonomy, delinquent states, and the limits of resistance”, in *History and Anthropology*, 25:4, pp. 507-529.

Gobierno del estado de Michoacán (2015), *Puerto Lázaro Cárdenas* [official report], Mexico, Gobierno del estado de Michoacán URL: http://puertolazarocardenas.com.mx/Docs%20pdf/marcolegal/pmdp%202015_2020.pdf

Gómez, Natalia (2008), “Atentados en Morelia: *Narcoterroristas,* los ataques en Morelia: EU” [newspaper article], in *El Universal*, September 17.

González-Pérez, Guillermo Julián, *et al.* (2012), "Impacto de la violencia homicida en la esperanza de vida masculina de México”, in *Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública*, 32:5, pp. 335-342.

Grillo, Ioan (2017), *Gangster Warlords. Drug Dollars, Killing Fields and the New Politics of Latin America*, New York: Bloomsbury.

Guerrero, Eduardo (2011), “Violencia y mafias”, in *Nexos*, September 1, URL: https://www.nexos.com.mx/?p=14469

Gunnarson, Carina (2008), *Cultural Warfare and Trust: Fighting the Mafia in Palermo*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Gupta, Akhil (1995), "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State", in *American Ethnologist*, 22:2, pp. 375-402.

Gurwitz, Beatrice D. (2015), "Italian Immigrants and the Mexican Nation: The Cusi Family in Michoacán (1885–1938)", in *Immigrants and Minorities*, 33:2, PP. 93-116.

H. Congreso de la Unión (2018), "Código Penal Federal", in *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Mexico City.

Habermas, Jürgen (1976), 'Legitimation Problems in the Modern State', in Habermas, Jürgen, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habermas, Jürgen (2000), *La constelación posnacional. Ensayos políticos*, Barcelona, Paidós.

Halliday, Fred (2001), "The Romance of Non-state Actors", in Josselyn, Daphné and Wallace, William (eds.), *Non-state Actors in World Politics*, London, Palgrave.

Hamid, Shadi; Felbab-Brown, Vanda and Triunkas, Harold (2018), "When Terrorists and Criminals Govern Better Than Governments", in *The Atlantic*, April 4 2018, URL: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/04/terrorism-governance-religion/556817/

Hansen, Thomas Blom and Stepputat, Finn (2005), "Introduction", in Hansen, Thomas Blom and Stepputat, Finn (eds.), *Sovereign Bodies. Citizens, Migrants and States in the Postcolonial World*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio (2001), *Empire*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Held, David (1989), *Political theory and the modern state*, Southampton, Camelot Press.

Hernández Navarro, Luis (2014), "La empresa *templaria*", in *La Jornada*, February 11, 2014, URL: http://www.jornada.com.mx/2014/02/11/opinion/017a2pol

Herrera, Claudia and Martínez, Ernesto (2007), "Vestido de militar, Calderón rinde 'tributo' a las fuerzas armadas" [newspaper article], in *La Jornada*, January 3rd, URL: http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2007/01/04/index.php?section=politica&article=003n1pol

Hetcher, Michael (2003), "The problems of social order", in Hechter, Michael and Horne, Christiane (eds.), *Theories of Social Order*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Heyman, Josiah (1999), *States and illegal practices,* Berg, Oxford and New York.

Higgott, Richard A., *et al*. (2000), "Globalisation and non-state actors", in Higgott, Richard A., *et al.* (eds.), *Non-State Actors and Authority in the Global System*, London, Routledge.

Hobbes, Thomas (1998), *Leviathan*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hobsbawm, Eric (2000), *Bandits*, New York, New Press.

Hoffman, Kasper (2015), "Myths Set in Motion: The Moral Economy of Mai Mai Governance", in Arjona, Ana; Kasfir, Nelson; Mampilly, Zachariah, *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Hurd, Ian (1999), "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics", in *International Organization*, 53:2, pp. 379-408.

Ianni, Octavio (1995), *La sociedad global*, México, Siglo XXI.

Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2000), *The Kosovo Report. Conflict, International Response. Lessons Learned*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Ingrascì, Ombretta (2007), *Donne d'onore: Storie di mafia al femminile*, Milano, Bruno Modadori.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2000), *XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000* [database], Mexico, INEGI, URL: http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/ccpv/2000/default.html

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2005), *II Conteo de Población y Vivienda 2005* [database], Mexico, INEGI, URL: http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/ccpv/2005/default.html/

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2010), *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010* [database], Mexico, INEGI, URL: http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/ccpv/2010/

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2015), *Encuesta Intercensal 2015* [database], Mexico, INEGI, URL: http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/enchogares/especiales/intercensal/

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (several years), *Defunciones por homicidio*, Mexico, INEGI.

Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística and Secretaría de Gobernación (2014), *Encuesta de Cohesión Social para la Prevención de la Violencia y la Delincuencia (ECOPRED) 2014*, Mexico, INEGI-SEGOB.

Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística (several years), *Encuesta Nacional sobre Victimización y Percepción de Seguridad Pública* (ENVIPE) [database], Mexico, INEGI.

Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística (2010), *Panorama de las religiones en México 2010. Encuesta nacional sobre creencias y prácticas religiosas* [database], Mexico, INEGI.

Instituto Nacional Electoral (2017), *Atlas de Resultados Electorales Federales 1991-2015*, Mexico, INE.

Irimiás, Anna (2014), "The Great War Heritage Site Management in Trentino, Northern Italy", *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 9:4, pp. 317-331.

Jaffe, Rivke (2013), "The Hybrid State: Crime and Citizenship in Urban Jamaica", in *American Ethnologist*, 40:4, pp. 734-738.

Johnson, Devon, Maguire, Edward R, and Kuhns, Joseph B. (2014), "Public perceptions of the legitimacy of the law and legal authorities: Evidence from the Caribbean", *Law and Society Review*, 48(4), pp. 947-978.

Josselyn, Daphné and Wallace, William (2001), "Non-state Actors in World Politics: a Framework", in Josselyn, Daphné and Wallace, William (eds.), *Non-state Actors in World Politics*, London, Palgrave.

Kaldor, Mary (2013), "In Defence of New Wars", in *Stability*, 2(1): 4, pp.1-16.

Kalyvas, Sthatis (2010), "Foreword: Internal Conflict and Political Violence: New Developments in Research", in Chenoweth, Erica and Lawrence, Adria (eds.), Rethinking Violence. States and Non-State Actors in Conflict, London, Belfer Center studies in international security.

Kissin, M.W. (1992), "The Patron Saints of Breast Screening", in *The Breast*, 1, pp. 19-24.

Koch, Ariel (2017), "The New Crusaders Contemporary Extreme Right Symbolism and Rhetoric", in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 11:5, pp. 13-24.

Krasner, Stephen D. (2001), *Soberanía. Hipocresía Organizada*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2001.

Krause, Keith and Milliken, Jennifer (2009), "Introduction: The Challenge of Non-State Armed Groups", in *Contemporary Security Policy*, 30, 2, 202-220.

Krohn-Hansen, Christian and Nustad, Knut G. (2005), "Introduction", in Krohn-Hansen, Christian and Nustad, Knut G. (eds.), *State Formation. Anthropological Perspectives*, London, Pluto Press, pp. 3-26.

La Familia Michoacana (2006), "La Familia Michoacana" [paid insertion], in *El Sol de Morelia*, November 22.

La Spina, Antonio (2005), "Riconoscere le organizzazioni mafiose, oggi: neo-formazione, trasformazione, espasnione e repressione in prospettiva comparata", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 95-122.

Lamond, Grant (2007), "What is a Crime?", in *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 27:4, 1, December, pp. 609–632.

Lampérière, Anick (2007), "La historiografía del Estado en Hispanoamérica. Algunas Reflexiones", in Palacios, Guillermo (coord.), Ensayos sobre la nueva historia política de América Latina, El Colegio de México, Mexico.

Latza Nadeau, Barbie (2018), "'Migrants are more profitable than drugs': how the mafia infiltrated Italy's asylum system", in *The Guardian*, February 1, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/feb/01/migrants-more-profitable-than-drugs-how-mafia-infiltrated-italy-asylum-system

Libera (no year), "About Us", in *Libera International website*, URL: http://www.liberainternational.eu/?page_id=10

Linz, Juan J. (1964), "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain", in Allardt, Erik and Littunen, Yrjö (eds.) *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party System. Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology*, Helsinki, Westmarck Society.

Logan, Samuel (2012), "A profile of Los Zetas: Mexico's Second Most Powerful Drug Cartel", in *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel*, 5:2, pp. 5-7.

Lomnitz, Claudio (2016a), “La religion de los Caballeros Templarios”, in *Nexos*, July, 1st URL: https://www.nexos.com.mx/?p=28783

Lomnitz, Claudio (2016b), “Michoacán: fantasia de La Familia, fantasia del Estado”, in *La nación desdibujada. México en trece ensayos*, Mexico City, Malpaso, 2016.

Lozoya, Jorge Alberto (1984), *El ejército mexicano, 1911-1965*, Mexico, El Colegio de México.

LSE (2014), *Ending the Drug Wars*, London, OSF-LSE Ideas.

Lund, Christian (2006), “Twilight Institutions: An Introduction”, in Lund, Christian (ed.), *Development and Change*. *Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa*, The Hague, ISS, 37-4, pp. 673-684.

Maihold, Günther (2012), “Las comunicaciones criminales: el caso de las narcomantas”, in Aguayo, Sergio and Benítez, Raúl (eds.), *Atlas de la Seguridad y la Defensa de México*, Mexico, CASEDE.

Maldonado Aranda, Salvador (2010) *Los márgenes del Estado mexicano. Territorios ilegales, desarrollo y violencia en Michoacán*, Mexico, El Colegio de Michoacán.

Maldonado Aranda, Salvador (2012), “Drogas, violencia y militarización en el México rural. El caso de Michoacán”, in *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 74(1), pp. 5–39.

Maldonado Aranda, Salvador (2013a), “Geografía de la violencia en México. Enfrentar el crimen en medio de narcotráfico y la delincuencia organizada”, in *Boletín Gaucho de Geografía*, 40, pp. 13–33.

Maldonado Aranda, Salvador (2013b), “Stories of Drug Trafficking in Rural Mexico: Territories, Drugs and Cartels in Michoacán”, in *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 94, pp. 43-66.

Maldonado Aranda, Salvador (2014), “You don’t see any violence here but it leads to very ugly things’’: forced solidarity and silent violence in Michoacán, Mexico, Dialectical Anthropology, 38, pp. 153–171.

Manin, B., Stein, E., Mansbridge, J. (1987), “On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation”, Political Theory, 15(3), pp. 338–368.

Mansbach, R., Y. Ferguson and D. Lampert (1976), *The Web of World Politics: Non-State Actors in the Global System*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

Markowitz, Lawrence (2017), “Beyond Kompromat: Coercion, Corruption, and Deterred Defection in Uzbekistan”, in *Comparative Politics*, 50:1, pp. 103-121.

Martínez, *et al.* (2006), “Arrojan 5 cabezas humanas en centro nocturno de Uruapan” [newspaper article], in *La Jornada Michoacán*, September 7, URL: http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2006/09/07/index.php?section=estados&article=037n1est

Martínez, Nurit (2010), “Iglesia reconoce ‘narcolimosnas’”, en *El Universal*, November 1, URL: http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/181549.html

Martínez, Martha (2012), "Carreteras: cumplir a medias" [newspaper journalist research], in *Reforma: Enfoque*, October 12, 2012.

Massari, Monica (2013), "Chapter 4: Guns in the Family – Mafia violence in Italy", in *Small Arms Survey. Everyday Dangers,* Geneva, Cambridge University Press.

Massari, Monica (2015), "Per una fenomenologia della violenza mafiosa", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 221-237.

Matheson, Craig (1987), *Weber and the Classification of Forms of Legitimacy*, in *The British Journal of Sociology*, 38, no. 2, pp. 199-215.

Matravers, Matt (2011), "Political Theory and the Criminal Law", in Duff, R.A. and Green, Stuart, *Philosophical Foundations of Criminal Law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Matute, Álvaro (1977), "Del Ejército Constitucionalista al Ejército Nacional", in *Estudios de Historia moderna y contemporánea de México*, UNAM-IIH, México, 1977.

Mazzitelli, Antonio L. (2016), "¿Mafias en México?", in Benítez, Raúl and Aguayo, Sergio, *Atlas de la seguridad y defensa de México 2016*, Mexico, CASEDE-Instituto Belisario Domínguez.

Mazepus, Honorata (2016), *What makes authorities legitimate in the eyes of citizens?: An investigation of perceived legitimacy in different political regimes*, PhD Thesis, Leiden: Leiden University.

Mazepus, Honorata (2017), "What makes political authorities legitimate? Students' ideas about legitimacy in five European democracies and hybrid regimes", in *Contemporary Politics*.

McCullough, A. (2015), *The legitimacy of states and armed non-state actors: Topic guide*, Birmingham, University of Birmingham.

Merlino, Rosella (2012), "From a Man to a 'Man of Honour': The Role of Religion in the Initiation Ritual of the Sicilian Mafia", in *The International Journal of the Humanities*, 9:11, pp. 59-69.

Merlino, Rosella (2014), "Sicilian Mafia, Patron Saints, and Religious Processions: The Consistent Face of an Ever-Changing Criminal Organization", in *California Italian Studies*, 5:1, pp. 109-129.

Merquior J. G. (1980). *Rousseau and Weber. Two Studies in the Theory of Legitimacy*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Meyer, Lorenzo (1977), "Historical Roots of the authoritarian State in Mexico", in Reyna, José Luis y Weinert, Richard (eds.), *Authoritarianism in Mexico*, Philadephia, Philadelphia Institute of the Study of Human Issues.

Meyer, Lorenzo (2015), "Felipe Calderón o el infortunio de una transición", in *Foro Internacional*, Mexico, El Colegio de México, 55:01, pp. 16-44.

Meyer, Maureen (2007), "En la encrucijada. Tráfico de Drogas, Violencia y el Estado Mexicano", in *The Beckley Foundation Drug Policy Programme*, Washington Office for Latin America, November, pp. 1-14.

Migdal, Joel S. (1988), *Strong Societies and Weal States. State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Migdal, Joel S. (2001), *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Miklaucic, Michael (2009), "Contending with illicit power structures: a typology", in Peters, Anne, *et al.* (eds.), *Non-state Actors as Standard Setters*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Mitchell, Timothy (2006), "Society, Economy, and the State Effect", in Sharma, Aradhana and Gupta, Akhil (eds*.), The Anthropology of the State. A Reader*, Pondicherry, Blackwell Publishing, pp. 169-186.

Modarressy-Tehrani, Caroline and Dedman, Harriet (2017), "The Mafia and a Nigerian Gang are Targetting Refugees in Sicily", in *Vice News*, October 21, URL: https://news.vice.com/en_ca/article/kzgnxy/the-mafia-and-a-nigerian-gang-are-targeting-refugees-in-sicily

Moloeznik, Marco Pablo (2008), "Las Fuerzas Armadas en México: entre la atipicidad y el mito", in *Nueva sociedad*, 213, January-February.

Moreno, Javier (2008), "'Yo no me considero de derechas'", in *El País*, June 15, URL: https://elpais.com/diario/2008/06/15/internacional/1213480808_850215.html

Moreno, Nazario (2011), *Me dicen "El más loco"*, No editorial information.

Moreno, Nazario (No year), *Pensamientos de la Familia Michoacana*, No editorial information.

Morales, Edgardo (No year) *La palabra de Caballero. Los Caballeros Templarios. Un movimiento insurgente*, No editorial information.

Moro, Francesco N. and Sberna Salvatore (2015), "La mafia uccide al Sud? Un´indagine sulla violenza mafiosa nelle aree d´insediamento non tradizionale", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 267-296.

Moss, David (2001), The Gift of Repentance: a Maussian Perspective on Twenty Years of *Pentimento* in Italy", in *European Journal of Sociology*, 42:2, pp. 297-331.

Mussolini, Benito (1927), "Discorso dell' Ascensione" [Discourse], in *Storiologia* [Website], URL: http://www.storiologia.it/mussolini/ascensione.htm

Nájar, Alberto (2014), "Nazario Moreno: la leyenda de la resurrección del 'primer santo narco' de México" [newspaper article], in *BBC,* February 5, URL: http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2014/02/140204_michoacan_mexico_leyenda_narco_que_puede_resucitar_nazario_moreno_templarios_narcotrafico_an

Nájar, Alberto (2016), "Los daños ocultos que provoca el aguacate, el "oro verde" de México" [newspaper article], in *BBC*, October 11, URL: http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-37581668

Nivette, Amy (2015), "Legitimacy and Crime: Tehorizing the Role of the Cross-national Criminological Theory", in *Theoretical Criminology*, 18:1, pp. 93-111.

No author (No year), *Código de los Caballeros Templarios de Michoacán,* No editorial information.

Nolasco, Mariana and Ávila, Joel (2014), "Si los estados de México fueran países…" [newspaper article], in *Animal Político*, July 21, URL: http://www.animalpolitico.com/blogueros-salir-de-dudas/2014/07/21/si-los-estados-de-mexico-fueran-paises/

Notimex News Agency (2017a), "Puerto Lázaro Cárdenas se convierte en uno de los más importantes de AL: SCT" [newspaper article], in *Milenio*, AprIl 4, URL: http://www.milenio.com/negocios/puerto_lazaro_cardenas-michoacan-nueva_terminal-sct-ruiz_esparza-milenio_0_932307026.html

Notimex News Agency (2017b), "Michoacán, líder mundial en producción de aguacate" [newspaper article], in *El Economista*, June 25, URL: https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/empresas/Michoacan-lider-mundial-en-produccion-de-aguacate-20170625-0028.html

Nuijten, Monique (2004), "The 'hope-generating machine' and the positionality of the anthropologist", in Kumar Giri, Ananta, *et al.* (eds.), *The Development of Religion, the Religion of Development*, Eburon Delft, pp. 52-58.

Núñez, Ernesto (2006), "Defiende Calderón gasto en seguridad" [newspaper article], in *Reforma*, December 13.

O´Kane, Rosemary (1993), "Against Legitimacy", in *Political Studies*, 41, 2, pp. 471-487.

Ochoa, Stephanie (2016), "Baja cifra negra de homicidios y desaparecidos" [newspaper article], in *Milenio*, October 15.

Ordorica, Manuel (2010), "Las proyecciones de la población hasta la mitad del siglo XXI", in García, Brígida and Ordorica, Manuel (cords.), *Población*, Mexico City, El Colegio de México – Los grandes problemas de México (collection), vol. 1.

Orlando, Leoluca (2001), *Fighting the Mafia and Renewing the Sicilian Culture*, Encounter Books, New York.

Paoli, Letizia (1994), "An Underestimated Criminal Phenomenon: The Calabrian 'Ndrangheta", in *European Jorunal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice*, 212:3, pp. 212-238.

Paoli, Letizia (2003), *Mafia Brotherhoods: Organized Crime, Italian Style*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Padgett, Humberto and Martínez, Dalia (2011), "La república marihuanera", in *Emequis*, August 8, 2011.

Peña González, Rodrigo (2014), "Del corredor seguro al corredor de la violencia. Análisis de una franja violenta en Morelos", in Peña, Rodrigo and Ramírez, Ariel, *Atlas de la seguridad y violencia en Morelos*, Mexico, UAEM-CASEDE, pp. 224-235.

Peña González, Rodrigo (2017), "La ciudad de Acapulco. Análisis de los caminos de la violencia y crimen en México", in *Revista de Estudios de Políticas Públicas*, 2017:76, pp. 107-119.

Pérez, Vania, *et al.* (2015), “Evolución de la extorsión en México: un análisis estadístico regional (2012-2013)”, in *Revista Mexicana de Opinión Pública*, January - June, pp. 113-135.

Peter, Fabienne (2016), "Political Legitimacy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Stanford.

Peters, Anne, Koechlin, Lucy and Fenner Zinkernagel, Gretta (2009), “Non-state actors as standard setters: framing the issue in an interdisciplinary fashion”, in Peters, Ann, *et al.* (eds.), *Non-state Actors as Standard Setters*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Pizzini-Gambetta, Valeria (1999), “Gender norms in the Sicilian Mafia, 1945-86”, in Arnot, Margaret L. and Usborne, Cornelie, *Gender and Crime In Modern Europe*, London, Routledge.

Pizzini-Gambetta, Valeria (2008), “Women and the mafia: A methodology minefield, Global Crime”, in *Global Crime*, 9:4, 348-353

Puccio-Den, Deborah (2011), “‘Dieu vous bénisse et vous protège!’ La correspondance secrète du chef de la mafia sicilienne Bernardo Provenzano (1993-2006)”, *Revue de l’histoire des religions*, 2, pp. 307-326.

Puccio-Den, Deborah (2015), “La construzione giuridica della prova de mafia, o la storia di un teorema”, in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 73-94.

Pureco Ornelas, J. Alfredo (2008), “Actores políticos y lucha por derechos laborales en la Tierra Caliente de Michoacán. Las huelgas de Lombardía y Nueva Italia, 1930-1933”, in *Relaciones. Estudios de historia y sociedad*, 29:115, pp. 213-248.

Putnam, Robert D. (1993), *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Rakopoulos, Theodoros (2018), “The Social Life of Mafia Confession Between Talk and Silence in Sicily”, in *Current Anthropology*, 59:2, pp. 167-191.

Ramírez, Ariel (2014), “Entornos sociales y familiares generadores de desventajas sociales”, in Aguayo, Sergio (coord.), *Atlas de la seguridad y violencia en Morelos*, Mexico, CASEDE-UAEM.

Ravveduto, Marcello (2014), “Se la mafia diventa un hashtag” [newspaper column], *Fanpage.it*, URL: https://www.fanpage.it/se-la-mafia-diventa-un-hashtag/

Rawlings, Frank (1987), “Allied Military Government in Sicily and Italy 1943 - 1944 by a Public Safety Officer”, in *The Police Journal*, 60:1, pp. 35-44.

Raz, J. (1985), “Authority and justification”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, pp. 3-29.

Rebossio, Alejandro (2015), “El Papa pide a Argentina que evite la ‘mexicanización’ de la violencia” [newspaper article], in *El País*, February 24, URL: https://elpais.com/internacional/2015/02/23/actualidad/1424718244_507350.html

Redacción Animal Político (2018), "Activista es acusada de delitos contra el honor por denunciar acoso de un profesor en Michoacán", in *Animal Político*, February 10, URL: https://www.animalpolitico.com/2018/02/vinculan-activista-denunciar-acosos/

Redacción Cambio (2018), "Produce Michoacán millón 300 mil toneladas de cítricos en 2018" [newspaper article], in *Cambio de Michoacán*, December 2, URL: http://www.cambiodemichoacan.com.mx/nota-n49089

Relea, Francesc (2006), "Cuando las cabezas ruedan en Michoacán" [newspaper article], in *El País*, October 6, URL: https://elpais.com/diario/2006/10/08/domingo/1160279554_850215.html

Rivera Velázquez, Jaime (2014), "Crimen organizado y autodefensas en México: el caso de Michoacán", in *Perspectivas*, FES Seguridad, June.

Roberts, Sam (2016), "Bernardo Provenzano, Who Led Sicilian Mafia, Is Dead at 83", in *The New York Times*, July 13, URL: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/14/world/europe/bernardo-provenzano-boss-of-bosses-of-sicilian-mafia-is-dead-at-83.html?module=inline

Robertson, Roland (2005), "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity", in Featherstone M. Lash, S. y Robertson, Roland (eds.), *Global Modernities: from Modernism to Hypermodernism and beyond*, London, Sage Publications.

Rolles, Steve *et al.* (2013), *Ending the war on drugs. How to win the global drug policy debate*, Transform Drug Policy Foundation - México Unido contra la Delincuencia.

Rotella, Sabastian (2002), "Milosevic Says He's the Victim", in *Los Angeles Times*, February 15th, URL: http://articles.latimes.com/2002/feb/15/news/mn-28153

Rothstein, Bo (2009), "Creating Political Legitimacy. Electoral Democracy Versus Quality of Government", in *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53, pp. 311-330.

Roush, Laura (2014), "Santa Muerte, Protection, and *Desamparo*. A View from a Mexico City Altar", in Latin American Research Review, 49, pp. 129-148.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1999), *El contrato social*, Mexico, Losada Océano.

Rubio, Mauricio (1997), "Perverse Social Capital. Some Evidence from Colombia", in *Journal of Economic Issues*, 31:3, pp. 805-816.

Ruggiero, Vicenzo (2006), *Understanding Political Violence*, New York: Open University Press.

Sánchez, Verenise (2016), "Perdió México su bono demográfico, la esperanza es el bono de género: Silvia Giorguli" [Interview], in *CienciaMx*, July 8, URL: http://www.cienciamx.com/index.php/ciencia/humanidades/8938-perdio-mexico-su-bono-demografico-la-esperanza-es-el-bono-de-genero

Santino, Umberto (2011), *Breve Storia della Mafia e dell´Antimafia*, Palermo, Di Girolamo.

Santino, Umberto (2015), “Per una storia delle idee di mafia: dall´Unità d´Italia al questore Sangiorgi”, in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 37-72.

Santoro, Marco (2011), “Introduction. The Mafia and the Sociological Imagination”, in *Sociologica*, 2011:2, pp. 1-36.

Santoro, Marco (2015), “Introduzione”, in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 7-34.

Saúl Rodríguez, Lilia (2013), “De 9 mil detenidos por cimen organizado en 6 años, 682 purgan condenas”, in *Animal Político*, February 26, URL: https://www.animalpolitico.com/2013/02/de-9-mil-detenidos-por-crimen-organizado-en-6-anos-682-purgan-condena/

Scarpinato, Roberto (2011),“Il Dio dei potenti e il Dio degli ultimi: quale Dio, per quale umanità?” [Discourse], presented at the "Giovanni da Udine" Theater, September 29.

Schneider, Jane (2018), “Fifty Years of Mafia Corruption and Anti-mafia Reform”, in *Current Anthropology*, 59:18, pp. S16-S27.

Schenider, Jane and Schenider, Peter (2003), *Reversible Destiny. Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo*, California, University of California Press, 2003.

Schenider, Jane and Schenider, Peter (2004), “Mafia, Antimafia, and the Plural Cultures of Sicily”, in *Current Anthropology*, Volume 4, Agust-October 2005, pp. 501-520.

Schenider, Jane and Schenider, Peter (2001), “Civil Society Versus Organized Crime”, in *Critique of Anthropology*, 21:4, pp. 427-446.

Schenider, Jane and Schenider, Peter (2011), “The Mafia and Capitalism. An Emerging Paradigm”, in *Sociologica*, 2, pp. 1-22.

Sciarrone, Rocco (2016), “La territorializzazione del potere mafioso: controllo del territorio e nuove geografie di espansione” [conference paper], presented at the seminar *La territorializzazione del potere mafioso: controllo del territorio e nuove geografie di espansione*, Firenze, March 10.

Schlichte, Klaus (2009). “With the State against the State? The Formation of Armed Groups”, in *Contemporary Security Policy*, 30:2, pp. 246-264.

Schlichte, Klaus, and Schneckener, Ulrich. (2015), “Armed Groups and the Politics of Legitimacy”, in *Civil Wars*, 17(4), pp. 409-424.

Schmidt, V. A. (2013), “Democracy and legitimacy in the European Union revisited: Input, output and ‘throughput’”, in *Political Studies*, pp. 1–21.

Schmitt, Carl (2001), “Una definición de soberanía”, in Orestes Aguilar, Héctor, *Carl Schmitt, teólogo de la política*, Mexico, FCE.

Schmitt, Carl (2004), *The Theory of Partisan. A Commentary/Remark on the Concept of the Political*, Michigan, Michigan State University Press.

Schneckener, Ullrich (2017), "Militias and the Politics of Legitimacy", in *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 28:4-5, pp. 799-816.

Schroth, Stephen; Helfer, Jason and Lanfair, Jordan (2011), "'Just Say No'", in Kleiman, Mark E. and Hawdon, James E. (eds.) (2011), *Encyclopedia of Drug Policy*, Washington, Sage.

Schultz, R. H., Farah, and Lochard, I. V. (2004), "Armed Groups: A Tier-One Security, Priority", INSS Occasional Paper 57, Colorado, USAF Academy.

Scott, James (1998), *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, New York, Yale University Press.

Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes (2015), *Programa Maestro de Desarrollo Portuario de Lázaro Cárdenas 2015-2020*, [official report] Mexico, Gobierno Federal, URL: http://puertolazarocardenas.com.mx/Docs%20pdf/marcolegal/pmdp%202015_2020.pdf

Secretaría de Economía (2013), *Perfil del mercado del hierro-acero*, Mexico, Dirección General de Desarrollo Minero.

Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública (several years), *Incidencia delictiva* [database], Mexico, SEGOB.

Seidman, Steven (2016), *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory*, London, Wiley-Blackwell.

Sergi, Anna (2014) "Organised Crime in Criminal Law. Conspiracy and Membership Offences in Italian", in *King's Law Journal*, 25:2, pp. 185-200.

Sicilia, Javier (2015), "Prólogo", en Gil Olmos, José, *Batallas de Michoacán. Autodefensas, el proyecto colombiano de Peña Nieto*, Mexico, Proceso.

Sontag, Susan (2002), "Real Battles and Empty Metaphors", [newspaper article] in *The New York Times*, September 10th, URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/10/opinion/real-battles-and-empty-metaphors.html

Soper, Philip (1984), *A Theory of Law*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.

Sullivan, John P. (2019), "Criminal Enclaves: When Gangs, Cartels or Kingpins Try to Take Control", in *Stratfor. Threat Lens*, July 10.

Staff El Universal (2009), "Ciudad Juárez, la más violenta del mundo" [newspaper article], in *El Universal*, November 14, URL: http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/73684.html

Staff La Razón (2008), "La mafia también ejerce su control sobre las procesiones en Sicilia" [newspaper article], in *La Razón*, February 2, URL: https://www.larazon.es/historico/la-mafia-tambien-ejerce-su-control-sobre-las-procesiones-en-sicilia-WJLA_RAZON_39242

Staff Proceso (2010), “La iglesia y las relaciones ‘non sanctas’ con la Cosa Nostra” [newspaper article], in *Proceso*, October 11.

Staff Reforma (2012), “'Canoniza' narco a capo” [newspaper article], in *Reforma*, July 10.

Staff Reforma (2013), “Tienen autodefensas en 68 municipios” [newspaper article], *Reforma*, March 1.

Staff Reforma (2014), “Revive el agro en Michoacán” [newspaper article], *Reforma*, May 13.

Stepputat, Finn, and Hansen, Blom (2001), *State of Imagination*. USA: Duke University Press.

Stepputat, Finn (2015), “Formations of Sovereignty at the Frontier of the Modern State”, in *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research*, 1, pp.129-143.

Strange, Susan (2002), “The Westfailure system”, in Tooze, Roger; May, Cristopher (eds.), *Authority and Markets. Susan Strange´s writings on International Political Economy*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 241-250.

Stupková, L. (2016), “Global Value Chain in Agro-export Production and Its Socio-economic Impact in Michoacán, Mexico”, in *AGRIS on-line Papers in Economics and Informatics*, 8:25 - 36.

Szymkowiak, Kenneth (2002), *Sokaiya: Extortion, Protection, and the Japanese Corporation*, New York, Sharpe.

Thornhill, Chris (2008), “Towards a Historical Sociology of Constitutional Legitimacy”, in *Theory and Society*, 37, 2, pp. 161-197.

Tilly, Charles (1985), “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime”, in Evans, Peter *et al.* (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Todorov, Tzvetan (2007), *Nosotros y los otros*, México, Siglo XXI editores.

Tondo, Lorenzo (2016), “Mafia at a crossroads as Nigerian gangsters hit Sicily's shores”, in *The Guardian*, June 11, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/11/mafia-palermo-nigerian-gangsters-hit-sicily-shores

Tondo, Lorenzo (2017), “The resurrection of Palermo: how the mafia battlefield became a cultural capital”, in *The Guardian*, March 27, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/mar/27/resurrection-palermo-mafia-battlefield-culture-capital

Trouillot, M.R. (2001), “The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization”, in *Current Anthropology*, 42, 1, 125–38.

Tyler, Tom R. (1990), *Why People Obey the Law*, London, Yale University Press.

Tyler, Tom R. (1997), “The Psychology of Legitimacy: A Relational Perspective on Voluntary Deference to Authorities”, *Personality and Social Psychology Review* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates), 1(4), 323.

Tyler, Tom R. (2008), "Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation", *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, pp. 375-400.

United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2000), *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto*, Vienna-New York, United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2014), *Global Study on Homicide 2013. Trends, Contexts, Data*, Vienna, United Nations.

Vaccaro, Antonino (2012), "To Pay or Not to Pay? Dynamic Transparency and the Fight Against the Mafia's Extortionists", in *J Bus Ethics*, 106, 23-35.

Valentino, Benjamin A. (2014), "Why We Kill: The Political Science of Political Violence against Civilians", in *Annual Reviews of Political Science*, 17, pp. 89-103.

Van de Ven, Katinka (2017), "Illicit Performance and Image Enhacing Drug Markets", in Nelsen, Hans and Siegel, Dina (eds.), *Contemporary Organized Crime. Developments, Challengues and Responses*, Studies of Organized Crime, Utrecht, Springer.

van der Zee, Renate (2017), "He fought the mafia and won. Now this mayor is taking on Europe over migrants", in *The Guardian*, April 18, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/apr/18/he-fought-the-mafia-and-won-now-this-mayor-is-taking-on-europe-over-migrants

Vannucci, Alberto (2015), "Imperfette simbiosi. Protezione, corruzione, estorsione tra mafia e politica", in Marco Santoro (coord.), *Riconoscere le mafia. Cosa sono, come funzionano, come si muovono*, Società Editrice il Mulino, pp. 125-176.

Varese, Federico (2001), *The Russian Mafia. Private Protection in a New Market Economy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Varese, Federico (2011), *Mafias on the Move. How Organized Crime Conquers New Territories*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Varese, Federico (2017), *Vita di mafia. Amore, morte e denaro nel cuore del crimine organizzato*, Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore.

Velázquez, Javier (2018), "Prohíben a Komander cantar narcocorridos en Expo Fiesta Michoacán", [newspaper article], *Contramuro. Noticias de Michoacán*, Morelia, URL: https://www.contramuro.com/prohiben-a-komander-cantar-narcocorridos-en-expo-fiesta-michoacan/

Ventura Patiño, María del Carmen (2012), "Proceso de autonomía en Cherán. Movilizar el derecho", in *Espiral. Estudios sobre Estado y Sociedad*, 19:55, pp. 157-176.

Verdú, Daniel (2017), "Muere Totò Riina, el 'capo de capos' de la mafia siciliana" [newspaper article], in *El País*, November 17, URL: https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/11/17/actualidad/1510901034_741628.html

Vigh, Henrik (2008), "Crisis and Chronicity: Anthropological Perspectives on Continuous Conflict and Decline", in *Ethnos*, 73:1, pp. 5-24.

Vinci, Anthony (2006), "The Problems of Mobilization and the Analysis of Armed Groups", Parameters, Spring, pp. 49-62.

von Lampe, Klaus (2019), "Definitions of Organized Crime", Database available in URL: www.organized-crime.de/organizedcrimedefinitions.htm

von Lampe, Klaus (2002), "Afterword. Organized Crime Research in Perspective", in van Duyne, Petrus, von Lampe, Klaus and Passas, Nikos (eds.), *Upperworld and Underworld in Cross-Border Crime,* Nijmegen, Wolf Legal Publishers, 2002, pp. 189-198.

Wainwright, Tom (2016), *Narconomics. How to Run a Drug Cartel*, London, Ebury Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (2006), *Abrir las Ciencias Sociales*, Mexico, Siglo XXI.

Watts, Michael J. (2016), "The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960; a story of violent peasant entrepeneurs, by Anton Blok", in *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 43:1, pp. 67-91.

Weber, Max. (1964), *The theory of social and economic organization*, New York: Free Press.

Wheatley, Steven (2009), "Democratic governance beyond the state: the legitimacy of non-state actors as standard setters", Peters, Anne, *et al.* (eds.), *Non-state Actors as Standard Setters*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

Wolf, Michael Jerome (2015), "Building Criminal Authority: A Comparative Analysis of Drug Gangs in Rio de Janeiro and Recife", in *Latin American Politics and Society*, 57:2, pp. 21-40.

Woodiwiss, Michael (2017), *Double Crossed: The Failure of Organized Crime Control*, London, Pluto Press.

World Health Organization (2014), *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014*, Luxembourg, WHO/UNDP/UNODC.

Wrong, Dennis H. (1979), *Power. Its Forms, Bases and Uses*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Wrong, Dennis H. (1993), "Review", in *Contemporary Sociology*, 22, 6, pp. 812-813.

Zamarripa, Roberto (2013), "Entrevista Hipólito Mora, 'Se acabaron las cuotas'", in *Reforma*, Mexico City, July 4.

Zepeda, Raúl (2016a), *Violencia en Tierra Caliente: guerra criminal e intervenciones federales de 2000 a 2014*, Mexico, El Colegio de México, Master thesis.

Zepeda, Raúl (2016b), "Violencia contra las mujeres en la guerra contra las drogas", in *Nexos*, June 30.

Zermeño, Jesica (2009), "'No hubo un usted disculpe'" [newspaper article], in *Reforma*, November 22.

Zizumbo-Colunga, Daniel (2010), "Explaining Support for Vigilante Justice in Mexico", in *Americas Brometer Insights*, 39, pp. 1-12.

Interviews Appendix

Interview no. 1. Andrés Resillas. Journalist. Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 2. Antonio Mazzitelli. UNODC Mexico City´s office Director. Mexico City, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 3. Armando Mendez. Beekeeper. Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 4. Carlo Marzella. Magistrate. Palermo, Sicily, Italy. November 2018.

Interview no. 5. Cinthia Alemán. Entrepreneur Assistant. Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 6. Circe López. NGO member. Telephonic Interview. Mexico City – Morelia, Mexico. June 2017.

Interview no. 7. Emilio Pérez. Journalist. Zamora, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 8. Giovanna Gasparello. Researcher. Mexico City, Mexico. June 2017.

Interview no. 9. José Luis Segura. Priest. Telephonic Interview. Mexico City – Apatzingán, Michoacán, Mexico. April 2017.

Interview no. 10. Josefina Cendejas. University Researcher. Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 11. Laura Roux. University Researcher. Zamora, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 12. Lia Bijnsdorp. Entrepreneur Professional Assistant. Telephonic Interview. Mexico City, Mexico – Rotterdam, The Netherlands. April 2017.

Interview no. 13. Marco Panebianco. Museum Guide. Palermo, Sicily, Italy. November 2018.

Interview no. 14. Marco Vuturo. NGO member. Palermo, Sicily, Italy. November 2018.

Interview no. 15. Pedro Chávez. Councilor. Cherán, Michoacán, México. June 2016.

Interview no. 16. Pino Maniaci. Journalist. Partinico, Sicily, Italy. November 2018.

Interview no. 17. Salvador Maldonado. University Researcher. Zamora, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 18. Salvo Vitansa. Journalist. Partinico, Sicily, Italy. November 2018.

Interview no. 19. Verónica Oikión. University Researcher. Zamora, Michoacán, Mexico. May 2017.

Interview no. 20. Víctor Hugo Campanur. Councilor. Cherán, Michoacán, México. June 2016.

Other Inputs Related to Fieldwork

Museum of Narcotics. Mexico City, Mexico. January 2018.

Museum Falcone and Borsellino. Palermo, Sicily, Italy. November 2018.

Saint Agatha´s Procession. Catania, Sicily, Italy. February 2019.

This investigation researches on contexts of disorder or crisis, in which criminal actors gain legitimacy. By affirming that criminal groups are already social agents, this research argues that they gain political legitimacy to the extent that criminal groups engage in an authority-building process. Thus, it focuses on two instances in which criminal groups launched campaigns—or at least engaged in planned activities— in order to gain political and social legitimacy. La Familia Michoacana (LFM) and Los Caballeros Templarios (LCT) de Michoacán, on the one hand, and Cosa Nostra (CN), on the other, offer rich and instructive cases to examine. Precisely, the research asks for how these groups seek to forge legitimacy, as well as for what are their strategies for that purpose.