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

Pena Gonzalez, R.

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.