

**Governing the Mexican Drug War: A Political Geography of
Public Security and the Organisation of Everyday Violence**

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ABSTRACT

To make a contribution to the literature on governmentality and space, this thesis asks how does the War on Drugs (WoD) in Mexico produce spaces within which individual subjects are formed and controlled? More specifically, it demonstrates how the spatial organization of the northern border city of Tijuana and the aims of the WoD constitute distinctive identity formations and policing practices. Thus, the thesis advances the understanding of how urban space in Mexico has been imagined as a battlefield, shaping the territorial deployment of federal security personnel, and the military policing of strategic urban centres. To make this contribution, the thesis focuses on three concepts that are at the core of the analysis of governmentality: government, power, and space. Drawing on Foucauldian discourse analysis and four months of ethnographic fieldwork in Mexico, the everyday intimate spaces of the WoD ground the analysis of key geographical imaginaries and the spatial practices of security personnel and ordinary residents of Tijuana. Overall, the thesis underscores the centrality of controlling urban spaces for the WoD, showing how this has been achieved from individual households to the streets. In drawing attention to the spatiality of the WoD, the thesis thus offers a critical account of how entire territories and groups of people in Mexico, irrespective of their social class or ethnicity, have become subjects of an overarching project to discipline and kill.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Setting the Scene

H. What does a narcotrafficker look like? I mean, how do you tell the difference between a criminal and someone, let's say, 'normal'?

P. There's no way to tell that [here she made a long pause, went to the kitchen and brought with her a glass of water] ... there's no way to distinguish between inside and outside because everything is moving and people keep flowing. Many people from all over the country left the city when the violence began. The [national] census in 2010 went completely wrong, because the pollsters didn't show up, or they simply couldn't get into the neighborhoods, or they were driven away, or people didn't open their doors. Everybody was hidden behind the hundreds of fences that popped up all over the city...the city itself became like a single fence.

Paty, interviewed in 2015 (my translation)

Visible through its repetition, the gruesome details of its display, and the anonymity of its perpetrators, the violence instigated by the War on Drugs (WoD hereinafter) in Mexico is evident all over the country. At the time of writing, over 150, 000 people in Mexico have been killed in WoD related violence between December of 2006 and 2015 (Open Society Foundations, 2016). These homicides occurred within the context of the WoD declared by the then president Felipe Calderon in 2006 as a response to "(...) not a problem of public security but the breakdown of institutions and the loss of State control" (Calderon, 2010). Attributed to the emergence of powerful private armed actors and an upsurge in crime, the framing narrative of the war focused on the fiascos of the country's recent democratic transition. The language of state failure and the need for a war against crime to re-order the country prompted both the multiplication of military personnel deployed in anti-narcotic tasks and an escalation in violence.

Through a combination of client-patron networks, corporatism, sporadic deployments of state terror (Koonings & Kruijt, 1999; Williams, 2011), and 'micropolitical' violence (Knight, 2013), Mexico had remained distant from the trajectory of instability, military dictatorship, and state terror practices that marked Latin America during much of the twentieth century. The WoD changed that trajectory and modified the pre-existing geographical patterns through which violence had historically been exerted and distributed.

Notwithstanding the ubiquity of the violence initiated by the Mexican WoD, the extent of its effects upon the lives of the country's citizens remain a disputed issue. Paty's description of the inconsistent nature of the events, including the erosion of the distinctions between inside and outside (who belongs to the city and who does not) as well as friends and criminals, summarizes the generalized state of confusion that ordinary people must deal with daily. At first glance, in the context of the war in a city like Tijuana, in Northern Mexico where Paty lives, there is no way to determine with any accuracy the identity of criminals, or the origin of the violence. Just a few weeks before our conversation took place, two blocks away from where she lives, a severed human head was left behind with a banner attached signed by an, until then, unknown criminal group. That is the context of her assumption about the loss of any limits within the city

During her interview, she was trying to explain to me how the episode of the severed head, similar in its form to those that proliferated in the city seven years previously, warned that worse was yet to come, as '(...) everything began exactly like this, with bodies hanging from bridges, and decapitated bodies around the corner'. She also suggested that the state's powers, represented by the perceived failure of the state's instruments to even count the population of the city, could not do anything against that violence.

The episode Paty referred to was not the only one of its kind though. After a few years of calm following Operation Tijuana (2007-2010), violence has been rapidly increasing since 2013. While I was in Tijuana in 2015, during my first week there I heard about 7 gang style homicides (executions and decapitations,). The one Paty drew upon to make her point about the confusion of the moment was not even reported by the news outlets. Overall, hiding became the only response the residents of the city found logical amid the disorder of the city. Paty's experience speaks to the impact the WoD has had upon the organization of the spaces of everyday life and the taken-for-granted codes of conduct that govern the understandings and movements of Mexican citizens.

1.1 Argument and Research Questions

The radicalization of state violence and the proliferation of collective forms of organized aggression is not exclusive to Mexico. Across the rest of Latin America and in other postcolonial locations, the proliferation of forms of unregulated violence, state terror, and disorder that denote the advent of a 'nervous state under pressure' (Comaroff &

Comaroff, 2006: 2-5) have become the norm (Davis, 2010; Glebbeek & Koonings, 2015). In this context, the increase in homicide rates, insecurity, and violence in Latin America, are explained as residual manifestations of the fragmented and fragile state formations of the region (Davis, 2010). Accordingly, these processes are considered to be an extension of what the literature has called “violent democracies” (Arias & Goldstein, 2010). The ‘new Latin American violence’ (Koonings, 2012); namely the symbiosis between state (police, military, judiciary) and criminal non-state actors, high crime rates, considerable levels of electoral competence, and the urbanization of violence, has led to the emergence of hybrid forms of governance (Morton D., 2012; Rodgers, 2006; Garmany, 2009; 2014).

Yet, the existing literature on ‘new’ Latin American violence and the Mexican WoD has so far been unable to convincingly explain the recent incorporation of Mexico into this cycle of regional violence, the extent of the transformation it has effected on the state’s mechanisms of control and regulation, and its specific impact on the organization and form of socio-spatial relations. In addition, the existing scholarship has scarcely addressed the heterogeneous impact the WoD has had on the governance of the cities under police surveillance. Paty’s commentary about her inability to discern between outside and inside, and the collective evasion that has followed it, remind us that the WoD’s influence upon the organization of the socio-spatial contexts is far more pervasive than has been acknowledged by the available scholarship on this theme.

Given this gap, this research investigates the implementation of a series of military operations in strategic urban centers between 2006 and 2012 in Mexico to combat drug trafficking. My hypothesis is that the WoD has contributed to a substantial modification to the organization and exertion of power in Mexico, transforming the ways in which individuals are governed. Under the form of a nation-wide and temporally unlimited military policing, state violence has reconfigured the territories and practices that formed the political organization of the country. Accordingly, the WoD has produced spatial arrangements through which Mexicans’ individual behaviors are guided by positioning and targeting subjects as potential criminals.

Structured around its representation of the Mexican territory as battleground, the WoD has contributed to the political reclassification of both territories and individuals as criminogenic by linking geographical position and criminal status through forms of statistical, ethnic, and class differentiation. In classifying individuals, cities, villages, and municipalities as intrinsically criminal, it has allowed forms of violent intervention in urban and rural settings to manage territories and populations.

Expanding upon existing state mechanisms of control and regulation, the WoD has formulated novel technical, strategic, and tactical responses to govern unruly territories and populations in urban contexts. It has shifted the previous geographical distribution of violence from the chronic repression of social protests in the countryside during the twenty century, to the military policing of unruly cities at the dawn of this century. The modification of the political geography of state violence, the articulation of the territory as a boundless battlefield, and the authorization of kinetic force to enforce a cycle of endless preventive violence, and the configuring of Mexican political subjects as potential criminals, marks the emergence of a novel terrain for government. Within it, the spheres of state dominance have been broadened, eroding legal and symbolic protections for individuals deemed unworthy.

Through the case of Tijuana, a Mexican northern border city, presented by the Mexican government as a successful model of intervention and policing in the general context of the WoD (Shirk, 2014), this research interrogates how rationalities and practices of state violence culminate in the reconfiguration of socio-spatial contexts and inform the configuration of new forms of political agency. Paty's vignette illustrates in its own specific way the palpable presence of this transformation by suggesting the twofold modification of both the urban space and her fellow citizens.

The spaces this research investigates result from imaginative geographies materialized and legitimated by narratives that position violence, criminogenesis, and disorder as inherent to particular spaces. Within them, wider narratives underpinning social and ethnic hierarchies, practices of male-superiority, and differentiations between modern and backward meet in the streets of Mexican cities, allowing for the identification of populations to be governed (Wright, 2011). Residents and federal police officers' movements and discourses to negotiate this conflicted space are used as indications of the networks of power that traverse the city and that make it intelligible for its users.

The broad objective of the thesis is therefore to examine the role the WoD has had on the behaviors of Mexican citizens through the modification, manipulation, and organization of urban spaces: streets, avenues, gathering places such as squares, and the household. It responds therefore to a gap in the literature on the WoD with the following research question:

- **A:** how does the WoD in Mexico produce spaces within which individual behaviours are organized and shaped through both militarized tactics and everyday violence?

The subsidiary research questions are:

- **Ai:** What are the historic conditions that enabled the emergence of the WoD as a program of pacification of unruly territories and populations?

- **Aii:** What are the ethical imperatives, identity assumptions, and spatial imaginaries that inform the WOD?
- **Aiii:** How is the reorganization of the political geography of insecurity effected by the WoD displayed, deployed, and grafted inside the spaces of daily life, marking, separating, and demarcating specific spaces and individuals as insecure?
- **Aiv:** How does the WoD's regimentation of urban spaces and subjects shape the behaviour of Mexican citizens?

1.2 Contribution of the Research

Through the lens of the Mexican WoD, the thesis responds to the call of scholars such as Garmany (2009), and Trouillot (2001), for research that empirically identifies the forms through which the state is constituted and embodied in daily life by means of governmental techniques and procedures. With this aim, the thesis builds on literature situated at the intersection of the fields of governmentality, power, and space which conceptualizes the integration of forms of political rule and economic exploitation, in processes through which individuals are governed by the production, regulation, and control of space (Chatterje, 2009; Feldman, 1991; 1997; 2001; 2004; Garmany, 2014; Herbert, 1996; Graham, 2010; Gregory 1994;1995; 2004; Foucault, 1977; Legg, 2007; Osborne & Rose, 1999; 1994; Rose, 2004; Sanchez, 1997; Weizman, 2007). By building on this body of investigation, the thesis tackles a gap in the literature on the Mexican WoD that concerns the articulation between spatiality and power. The literature on the Mexican drug war has focused predominately on the analysis of the state's strategies (Astorga, & Shirk, 2010; Watt & Zepeda, 2012), the drug cartels' organizational forms and tactics (Bunker, & Sullivan, 2010; Campbell, 2010), the history of drug trafficking (Astorga, 2003; 2005; Enciso, 2013; Grillo, 2011; Knight, 2012), macro-level processes (Dube, García-Ponce, & Thom, 2015; Paley, 2014), and decisions (Aguilar & Castañeda, 2009; Fuchs, 2017; García, 2011; González, 2009; Kenny, & Serrano, 2012) shaping the militarization, design and implementation of the WoD.

Despite this work, little is known about the way in which socio-spatial contexts are shaped by the implementation of the WoD, and conversely, how these contexts affect its implementation. For that reason, to understand how power exerted through the WoD acquires longevity and is materialized, a perspective considering how spaces are rendered visible, shaped, and intervened upon is needed. Exceptions to this gap are the works of Boyce, Banister & Slack (2015); Campbell (2009); McDonald (2005); Mendoza, (2008); Morton

(2012); and Wright (2011; 2013): each contributes to an emerging literature on the Mexican WoD's spatial implications.

Boyce, Banister & Slack (2015) explain from a constructivist point of view how the use of spatial metaphors (e.g. *la plaza*) has shaped political strategies in the Mexican WoD. They understand the function of these metaphors as ideological devices, whereas I trace a direct link between their emergence and the configuration of a new spatial distribution of state violence. At the fringes of Ciudad Juarez (along the northern border) Campbell (2009) examines the everyday entanglements of drug-trafficking, and discusses the thin lines between crime and law. Melissa Wright (2011; 2013) examines the effects the WoD has had on strategies of gentrification and policing of public spaces in Ciudad Juarez. Conversely, Morton (2012) has partially addressed the relation between the urbanization of Mexico and the WoD, and Mendoza (2008) in her ethnography on drug trafficking in a small rural village in Sonora, explored the interaction between spatial imaginaries, the village's layout, and the everyday articulation of narco-trafficking. McDonald (2005) sets out ethnographic evidence from a rural village in southern Mexico that demonstrates the impact of the WoD on the urbanization of this village.

This thesis adds to this body of literature that addresses the spatialization of the WoD in three ways. First, it develops a detailed analysis of the geographical imaginations shaping the implementation of the WoD (chapter 6). Then, it examines the transposition of these imaginations into specific vocabularies, spatial understandings, and practices of both the state (chapter 8) and ordinary citizens (chapter 7 and 8). The work of Wright (2011; 2013) provides evidence of the local discourses and practices of the municipal police in Ciudad Juarez, yet her work does not account for the relation between the geographical imaginations that underwrite the WoD and the policing of the city she explores.

Second, in examining the understandings of the residents of Tijuana, original and fresh evidence is presented regarding the ways in which spatial manouvres, urban understandings, and uses of the city have been altered by the implementation of the WoD (chapter 7 and 8). Finally, as the literature has focused overwhelmingly on the case of Ciudad Juarez, by examining Tijuana, I have provided an alternative narrative on the heterogeneous and complex ways in which crime and state violence have intertwined, modifying everyday routines, and the imagination of its city space.

In more general terms, the research provides a consolidated understanding that space and context are central to the formation and organization of the antinarcotics and anti-crime policies implemented by the Mexican state. In analysing the space of the city of Tijuana, the thesis refutes one of the mainstays of the literature on the WoD and the state's strategy,

namely that *la plaza* (chapter 6) articulates a reliable conceptual map to trace drug trafficking activities and the identity of criminals. In doing so, it provides a more nuanced approach to the heterogenous dynamic of the violence produced by the WoD, and demonstrates that the space of the city, and the way individuals act within it, is a crucial site to understand the role the WoD has on the production of insecurity in Mexico (Chapter 7 and 8).

In addition, in analyzing the Mexican northern border city of Tijuana, this research presents evidence of the ways in which this densely regimented space is managed in order to govern ‘the displaced, the enemy, and the unwanted’ (Weizman, 2011:13). Thus, the exploration of the governmental and spatial dimension of the Mexican WoD, makes empirical contributions to a debate that concerns the ways in which the command of space and individuals is achieved through the violent alteration of socio-spatial contexts (Azoulay & Ophir, 2010; Chatterjee, 2009; Garmany, 2013; Garmany, 2009; Graham, 2010; Koonings & Kruijt, 1999; 2007; Weizman, 2007; 2011). The exploration and analysis of the conflation between the myriad of regulations that traverse this city, and the transformation produced by the WoD in the microphysics of its constitutive spaces, shows how individuals are managed and killed at the geographical intersection between the Global North and the South.

1.3 Significance of the Research

The WoD is lethal in two intertwined senses. The first concerns the exertion of an unchecked violence on behalf of national security and the preservation of the territorial integrity of the state. The second is far more elusive, and consists of a sequence of ethical, identity, and geographical assumptions that underwrite its implementation. In sum, putting these assumptions into practice has divided the country into a series of conflictive spots that need to be intervened, cleaned, and secured by militarized policing.

The explanations and responses elaborated so far have addressed these two domains separately, ignoring both the links that connect them, and the multiple circuits through which history, action, and thought are interlocked in its implementation. Examining the links between the exertion of violence and its rationalization may help us to gain an understanding of how the military policing of Mexico came to be. It also helps us to understand how the production of identities through geographical imaginations is inherent to the exertion of violence. Additionally the analysis of the intersection between the violence of the WoD and spaces through which it is realized contributes to a more thorough understanding of how aggression is reproduced in local contexts through individuals’ understandings and practices.

An explanation of these aspects of the WoD may prove beneficial to scholars, policy makers, local stakeholders, and NGOs working on political violence, urban violence, and human rights. In very practical terms it may be useful in providing a sense of the ways in which local social dynamics interact with national forms of policing. Accordingly, attempts to restrain violence may benefit from understanding how the use of urban spaces is shaped by practices and narratives of violence. Also, in providing evidence of the violent disciplining of populations in a space located in the global South, the research may prove useful for scholars interested on the functioning of governmental rationalities in non European contexts. Thus, the exploration of the Mexican WoD offers a lens through which better understand the entanglement of unmitigated state aggression and geographical imagination in a context in which, as Comaroff & Comaroff (2006: ix) observe, “(...) the great historical tsunamis of the twenty-first century appear to be breaking first on the shores (...) of the global South.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis and Summary of Key Arguments

In chapter 2 I lay out the theoretical foundations of the research. Drawing on Foucault’s concept of governmentality and the associated secondary literature, I critically discuss three concepts central for the analysis of the WoD: government, power, and space. The chapter is split into three parts, the first opens with an analysis of the theoretical propositions of the concept of governmentality and its analytical scope. The second section examines Foucault’s notion of power as an action upon the actions of others. It bridges the investigation of the rationalities that aim to govern individuals, and the organization of the spaces in which individuals are shaped and guided. In the third section of this chapter, I discuss the concept of space, an analytical operation logically established in Foucault’s investigation of the intimate spaces in which individuals are made governable. I also provide the theoretical assumptions to guide the further analysis of the WoD

Chapter 3 sets out the methodology of the thesis This methodology combines analysis. of discourse (including linguistic and visual representations) and four months of fieldwork in Mexico City and Tijuana in 2015 that drew upon observations, and interviews. The research design, epistemological approach, and research process are detailed as are the documents, research sample, and processes of selecting and accessing spaces and participants. The research design is based on a combination of ethnographic and analysis of discourse techniques selected to capture the WoD’s practices and mechanisms of control, as well as the examination of its spatial implications. The amalgamation of these techniques accounts for

the method of the thesis and follows from the theoretical engagement with Foucault's notion of governmentality and its limited engagement with space and violence. In this chapter, key issues surrounding the research process are discussed. First, the ethical and safety protocols that needed to be established prior to the research and then revised in light of lived experience are discussed. Second, the relation between the data gathered and the knowledge produced are considered.

Chapter 4. As the WoD prolongs and redefines the practices of control and regulation that define the Mexican state during the twentieth century, this chapter sets out the historic background that inform the spatial organisation of Mexican politics that will later define the scope and aims of the WoD. I focus on the territorial and political dilemmas that delineated the conflicts and challenges that structured the command of the national space and its populations during the twentieth century. This chapter is broken down in three sections. The first section addresses the territorial/governmental nexus that structured the form of the political regime after the Mexican revolution in 1910. Then in the second section, I examine the formation of the single party that controlled the government of the country for seventy years and the ways in which it socialized individuals and spaces into state objectives. In the third section, the role of the army within the ongoing pacification of the countryside and the government of unruly populations is analysed. This section shows the links between the geographical distribution of state violence and the ensuing organization of the WoD as both a counter-narcotics, and counter-insurgency, operation.

Chapter 5 extends the analysis of the historic conditions that enabled the WoD. The first section analyses the deterioration of the instruments of control and regulation of the Mexican state and the exhaustion of its economic foundations. In the ensuing section, the increasing social unrest, the implementation of counter-insurgency operations, and their intersection with counter-narcotics operations are discussed as part of the analysis of the spatial distribution of state violence. In the third section, the economic and political restructuring of the country during the 1980s is analysed. As part of the radicalization of the repressive instruments of the state in the context of this economic and political crisis, the fourth section examines the codification of drug trafficking as a national security problem. Finally, the period that followed the ratification of NAFTA is analysed, a period decisive to the intensification and urbanization of the WoD.

In Chapter 6 I begin the first of three empirical chapters by exploring the form the state's strategies of control and regulation took under the WoD during the presidential term of Felipe Calderon (2006-2012). This period illustrates the modification of the geography of the state violence through the deployment of military personnel in strategic urban locations. The objective of this chapter is to explore the ways of thinking that authorized the expansion of the military policing from the countryside to Mexican cities. The chapter looks specifically at the geographical imaginations through which such expansion occurred. I argue that the mobilisation of a consistent martial rhetoric helped to mobilize the ideological and material resources that legitimized the exertion of kinetic violence over criminalized populations. In the final sections I analyse the conceptual and statistical operations through which Mexican territory was partitioned by the state into clear-cut sections called *plazas*. Overall, this chapter exemplifies the relation between the imagination of territory, the exertion of violence, and the production of spatial practices of intervention.

In Chapter 7 the investigation moves towards the northern border of Mexico, and specifically to the city of Tijuana. This chapter bridges the analysis of the representation of the country as a battlefield with the further examination of the pacification of this city (2007-2010) carried out in chapter 8. The chapter analyses the historic, demographic, and urban organization of Tijuana to explain its socio-spatial structure and the series of regulations that organize its existence. It aims to introduce the reader to the material and discursive conditions that structure and regulate the movements, aims, and fears of its residents. Through an analysis that combines the examination of the residents' experiences of the city's urban space with the exploration of its built structure, this chapter explains the divisions that segment the city and represent it as a dangerous space that needs to be policed. Overall, this chapter exemplifies the importance of the urban space for the distribution and materialization of the mechanisms through which individuals are governed.

Chapter 8 examines the implementation of Operation Tijuana through the lens of federal police and residents' oral stories. In examining their contrasting stories about the proliferation of violence in Tijuana before, during, and after its pacification, I demonstrate the imbrication of WoD's political-tactical assumptions with reformulations of the residents' representations of the city. I argue that the representation of the city space as a battlefield enables and authorizes particular forms of patrolling and subjection, informing the residents' behaviours. The WoD's proposition that the space of the city is a battlespace became real through the militarized patrolling of its spaces and interstices, making its residents governable through

fear and compulsion. In combination with the diffuse and pervasive violence of the organized crime, the WoD deepened the vulnerability of Tijuana's residents, reinforcing the conceptualization of the city as a dangerous place

Chapter 9 reviews the key arguments of the thesis and provides an overall conclusion. I summarize how in constructing the national space as a battleground the WoD produced a novel understanding of the territory of government in which subjects have been positioned as potential criminals. It has authorized the unchecked exertion of state violence and recast entire regions of the country as unruly and dangerous. By problematizing the vocabularies, ideas, and categorizations that underpin the WoD, and the way in which the command of space is achieved through it, this research makes thus an original contribution to the literature on the spatialization of the WoD. Moreover, in tracing down and in questioning the power relations that organize the WoD's order of violence (embodied in the mapping of the country as a battleground, the everyday boundary making practices of the state, and the avoidance strategies of ordinary citizens), this research provides a critical perspective on how power is exerted in this context. In unsettling the entrenched meanings of the WoD, new spaces of political dialogue and understanding can be opened. Thus, I demonstrate that the thesis has delivered a distinctive understanding of the Mexican WoD by drawing upon original evidence and underlining the centrality space has in the organization and exertion of power. Lastly, I consider how some of the key findings could be built upon in future research.

Chapter 2. Governing Unruly Populations and Spaces

2.1. Introduction

In 2006, Felipe Calderon, President of Mexico, proposed deploying the military to recover territories controlled by drug trafficking organizations. A project to ‘clean up’ the country, the Mexican War on Drugs (WoD) imagined Mexico as a battleground and a contaminated place. The WoD was perceived by the government as a mechanism to intervene and make Mexico a safer country once again. The program failed disastrously as military abuses, crime, and homicide rates increased. Part of the wider trajectory of the Mexican state-making process, the WoD redirected pre-existing punitive mechanisms of control and regulation implemented throughout the twentieth century in the countryside towards the governing of strategic urban centers. The WOD and the federal policing of the country were predicated upon the constitution of spatial systems of inclusions and exclusions within which individuals’ identities have been structured accordingly. This was achieved by classifying Mexican territory and its subjects through basic antinomies: risky/safe, citizen/criminal, friend/enemy, sick/healthy. These forms of opposing identities were embedded in statements about public health, individual well-being, policing, the legitimate exertion of violence, and spatial categorizations such as *la plaza*, and the notion of the ‘everywhere criminal’. Accordingly, the discourse of the war on drugs has defined entire regions of the country as criminogenic, enabled forms of military policing, identified Mexican citizens as potential criminals, and informed individuals’ daily movements in navigating the increasingly threatening geography of the country.

Despite its evident failure, the strategy succeeded in expanding the state’s control over its population, strengthening the army’s power, and enlarging the federal security agencies’ scope of action. In doing so, the Mexican WoD has configured an emergent mode of governing populations in Mexico, producing simultaneously both Mexican territory and its citizens as risky and threatening. In visibly rendering Mexican territory as a conflictive and criminal zone, the WoD has fostered the articulation of rules of police engagement, and citizens’ understandings regarding the appropriate modes of self- conduct. Structured as a strategic map upon, and through which, different actors perform, the articulation of the territory as a battleground has thus enabled strategies of political intervention and for Mexican citizens to adapt their conduct based on these interventions.

The analysis of the WoD as a project of regulation and control of the Mexican people faces a twofold theoretical problem. First, how is power articulated, and spatialized? Second,

how are political subjectivities formed and imposed in the spaces within which power is exerted? Building upon Foucault's (1977; 2003; 2004) analysis of power, governmentality, and disciplinary mechanisms as well as auxiliary literature on power and space (Dean, 2003; Dillon, 1995; Feldman, 1991; Gregory, 1995; Legg, 2007; Madanipour, 2003; Rose, 2004; Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006), this chapter will lay out the theoretical foundations for exploring the formation of subjects and the production of spaces in the context of the WoD. As entry points and routes to investigate the WoD, the concepts of governmentality and power are in line with Foucault's general interest in the formation and functioning of ways of thinking, i.e., the rules and regulations that govern a society (Elden, 2003). The discussion of Foucault's concepts I propose here seeks to construct a critical route to problematize a series of themes that converge in the organization and functioning of the WoD. Particularly Foucault's analysis of the uses and interpretations of spaces to control and regulate people are important as they link the formation of subjects, the regulation of their behaviors through their active participation, and the formation of regimes of domination.

To this extent, the general concern of the notion of governmentality is the analysis of the amalgamation of a logic of power that has as its target the regulation and control of individuals through the management of their freedom. As the 'conduct of conducts' and the management of possibilities, this concept provides a conceptual route to analyze the practices and rationalities involved in the implementation of the WoD (Foucault, 2000: 341). Relevant to the research on the WoD are Foucault's observations on the relation between the production and regulation of spaces and the formation of identities. This is particularly evident in his investigation (1997) on the assemblage of disciplinary practices, rationales, and spaces through which, and where, subjects are guided and positioned in their relations to each other. These problems and explorations are situated in the context of his analysis on the techniques to regulate human behaviours in institutional settings (Foucault 1977; 2003; 2004).

By examining them, the relationship between the conditions that enable the exertion of power and the organization of subjectivities will be exposed, recognizing simultaneously the functional links between space and political identity. Foucault's investigation on power, and auxiliary literature on the organization of space and the regulation of individuals, will provide the conceptual guidelines to explain the relation amongst the regimentation of individual behaviors, the control of spaces, and the development of strategies to govern them.

Thus, as said earlier, the analysis elaborated in this chapter will lay out the conceptual tools to examine the political rationalities that inform the WoD, and understand how the domination of the Mexican people by the Mexican state is accomplished. In the following chapters, these rationalities will be linked with the broader Mexican state-making process to

understand how the WoD has enabled the redefinition of the objects and spaces of governance.

The chapter proceed as follows. First drawing on Foucault's writings and secondary literature on governmentality, analytical distinctions are drawn regarding governmentality's historic and theoretical assumptions. It aims to clarify the analytical extent of the concept so as to arrive at an understanding of its theoretical scope, providing assumptions to guide the further examination of the WoD. In setting out its three interrelated uses as a structural form of regulation, a process of rational technification of the exertion of power, and a domain of cognition, governmentality's analytical importance for the examination of the research's theme will be clarified. I then seek to understand what links governmentality to the formation of subjects and Foucault's concept of power as an action upon the actions of others and oneself. The second section explores the notion of power underlying Foucault's exploration on the modern forms of subjectification. The argument emphasizes the implications of the relationship between political agency and the organization of epistemological divides or grids of intelligibility for the command of the individuals' behaviours. Special emphasis is placed on the formation of subjects as a twofold process: as subjection and subjectification (Foucault, 2000). Finally, the third section discusses the notion of space in the context of the processes through which individuals are positioned, and the regulative process through which they are produced, as subjects. This jump is logically established by Foucault's (1997) attention to the intimate spaces in, and through which, individuals are made governable. To show how agency is formed through the purposeful representation and manipulation of space, the analysis built on Foucault's (1977) investigation of the disciplinary mechanisms to inspect and reform individuals. The processes of codification through which space is regimented will be discussed, and later, how practices of governmentality become spatially embedded producing various forms of regulation, control, and surveillance of individual conduct will be explored. In drawing upon Foucault's analysis of disciplines and the notion of geographical imaginations (Gregory, 1995; 2004), an analytical route will therefore be established to analyse the spatialization of the WoD.

2.2. Governmentality

As Walters & Henrik (2005) have noted, the term governmentality operates on different levels of meaning that define diverse analytical emphasis and orientations. Accordingly it can be understood in three correlated ways. Firstly, as a particular understanding of government, secondly, as historically specific form of power, and finally as

a form of political analysis (Dean, 1999; Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006; Walters & Henrik, 2005).

2.2.1. Governmentality and the conduct of conducts

In the first sense, governmentality regards the forms in which individuals are governed and made governable. Its discussion is situated within Foucault's analysis on the emergence of a power over life that targets individuals' bodies through disciplines and the social body through biopolitical techniques (Foucault, 1979). Sovereign, disciplinary, and biopolitical arrangements cohabit and converge in the social space, reflecting the organization of this 'intrusive and self-formative' biopower through which human beings turn him- or herself into a subject" (Foucault, 2000: 327; Legg, 2007: 7).

Accordingly, the notion of governmentality describes the way in which social norms are embedded in individual behaviours, as well as the emergent resistances produced when these norms are internalized by citizen-subjects (Ettlinger, 2011). Hence, it is interested in the (rational) organization and development of regulation, control, and disciplining to orientate the behaviour of subjects. Along these lines, government is what Foucault (2008: 1) describes as a set of "(...) modalities and possible ways that exist for guiding men [sic], directing their conduct, constraining their actions and reactions, and so on" (Foucault, 2000: 312). The singularity of the process lies in the way in which these conducts are brought about. People, as Foucault (2000: 312) observes, are guided "(...) by their own verity", i.e., through the production of truth (Dean, 1999; Dillon, 1995).

Governmental logic is thus constituted by practices of control, coercion, violence, and regulation that entail particular ways of doing and saying the truth concerning subjects' individuality and forms of collective identity (Dean, 1999). These practices of regulation and control imply multiple relations between the ways in which people are governed by others and the ways in which they are shaped to govern themselves. So, the notion of governmentality encompasses firstly the practices, rituals, and representations of an individual's relation with him/herself. Secondly, it encompasses the centralized authoritative manoeuvres, such as forms of state intervention (e.g., welfare programs, police-military searches, census), to regulate populations. Finally, it encompasses local strategies and technologies for the management of individuals' behaviours such as schools, hospitals, prisons as well as any specialized authorities that exert forms of power over individuals through these settings (Agnew, 2007; Osborne & Rose, 2004).

Governing as a process of truth production implies two simultaneous aspects. The first entails the production of the soul of the citizen through the production and regulation of statements about the individual's self, subjectivity, and individuality. The second is described as the whole array of practices through which individuals have come to govern themselves through the production, and talking about, the truth of being an individual, a subject, and a citizen. Governing is, above all, a process for forming individuals through the production of truth (Burchell, 1993; Dillon, 1995; Elden, 2001; Foucault, 1978; 1985).

Governmentality also defines a stage of the process of the technification and rationalization of power, and its configuration as an art of government or "(...) a mode of governing population" (Dillon, 1995; Elden, 2001: 3). It is an all-encompassing activity concerned with all aspects of living: from the government of oneself to the biopolitical control of populations (Lemke, 2002). In this regard, Foucault's analysis of governmentality is part of a broader political and philosophical project that investigates the relation between authority and identity through the advent of modern mechanisms of control and regulation of human behaviour in institutional and urban settings (Dean, 1996; Jessop, 2007). Central to this project is the analysis of the apparatuses ruling the constitution of the 'modern soul', and the techniques to secure life, intertwined with the consolidation of the sovereign power through the modern state (Foucault, 1977; Dillon, 1995; Dean 1999).

Governmentality is thus the theoretical description of the processes that link the formation of subjects through practices of self-government with forms of political rule and economic exploitation. It traces a connection between domination and individual agency unearthing the relation between the formation of human soul (Elden, 2001), and the actions taken by self upon the self. So, governmentality's object is the interaction between technologies of domination and technologies of the self, or in other words, how individuals act upon other individuals and how those individuals also act upon themselves. Although expressing a desire for fostering conditions conducive to human freedom, the implementation of specific forms of government concerns the regulation of the action of others by the rational application of appropriate technical means. The analysis proposed by governmentality thus focusses on the integration of forms of knowledge, strategies of power, and technologies of the self to make sense of the depth and breadth of forms of domination and exploitation. (Lemke, 2002).

2.2.2 Governmentality as Historic Problematization

Situated within the limits of the eighteenth century European cities, Foucault's investigation into these techno-mechanisms for the management of human life focuses on two

sets of interrelated phenomena. The first is the emergence of the different urban and demographic problematics associated with the industrialization of Europe and the problematizations of how best to rule that followed the dissolution of Christian imaginaries and the medieval world (Dillon, 1995; Driver, 1985; Foucault, 2000). It is a problem that concerns the challenge of medieval forms of representation and their instantiation of power brought about by the “(...) infinite possibilities in movement and function” provoked by both the industrialization and the demographic growth (Franklin quoted in Usher, 2014: 555). Foucault’s work thus drew attention to the emergence of population, the organization of the town, and the nascent form of consciousness about the social structures produced by the emergence of mass population and its unpredictable mobility.

Three interrelated problems form the core of his investigation into the rationalities and strategies produced to deal and manage this radical modification social political structures. Firstly, the problem of the ‘living space’ or the spaces in which the growing number of human beings were going to be distributed. Secondly, the problem of how to best distribute those individuals, and finally, how to arrange the problems of proximity, arbitrariness, and asymmetry resulting from that growth (Foucault, 1986: 2). This is what Foucault (1991: 93) called the ensemble of population, i.e., the combination of men and things (“wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility,”) in a continuum of semi-natural processes and arrangements.

Posed at the intersection between the ordering of territories, the organization of towns, and the domestication of individuals in demographically expansive contexts, the governing of individuals developed as a detailed form of intervention and management of the minute details of peripheral sets of relationships (Elden, 2007). In other words, governmentality has as its object interventions upon, and regulation of, the interaction between a series of natural phenomena and artificial process (“an agglomeration of individual, houses, etcetera”) (Foucault, 2007(b): 21). Thus, governmentality is this combined dynamic of behavioural management, rational knowledges, and forms of intervention upon socio-natural processes by means of the all-encompassing and pervasive form of power described above.

In this last sense, the term entails the emergence of a comprehensive problematization of life, a terrain of calculability where knowledge functions as a technology of power, forming a distinctive way to think and understand the management of human affairs. That is to say, it refers to the multiple and intrinsically modern practices in which knowledge, political imaginaries, ways of representing, and speaking are operationalized to make the world a calculable entity and the people calculable subjects (Dillon, 1995: 333). Therefore, governmentality describes multi-level processes of intervention –epistemological, ethical,

political- through which human beings and things become calculable objects, i.e. accessible to technologies of knowledge.¹ (Dean, 1999; Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006). In the following section the conditions upon which this type of analysis can be implemented to understand the WoD are explained.

2.2.3 *The analysis of governmentalities*

As a descriptor of complex and heterogenous modes of calculation, intervention, and regulation, the notion of governmentality makes it possible to problematize the organization of novel subject positions and the redefinition of spaces of governance. Engaged in the investigation of ways in which governing is conceived and rationalized, the analysis of governmentality has as its object the modalities through which government is operationalised and executed (Dean, 1999; Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006). It implies the examination of the bodies of knowledge, the forms of representation, and the political imaginaries through which individuals govern others and themselves (Dillon, 1995). Thus, as a mode of analysis, governmentality investigates the relation between government and thought (Dean, 1999: 19), i.e. the forms of reason embedded in the different practices of governing individuals. These forms of reasons, explains Dean (1999: 19), are collectively held points of view or mentalities which are "(...) bodies of knowledge, belief, and opinion in which we are immersed". Dean identifies (1999: 20-27) 4 dimensions of analysis through which these mentalities are deployed. These aspects articulate the practical conditions upon which individuals perform, perceive, and construct themselves:

1. *Episteme* or the analysis of the ways of thinking involved in the production of truth. It includes forms of calculation and rationalization involved in the government of individuals.
2. *Identities*. This aspect concerns the forms of objectification through which individuals are inscribed within the discourses that govern them, that is, the ways in which human beings are conceptualized in relation to the behaviour expected from them:

Are we to be governed as members of a flock to be led, as children to be coddled and educated, as a human resource to be exploited, as members of a population to be managed, as legal subjects with rights, as responsible citizens of an interdependent society, as autonomous

¹ Such as techniques of observation, evaluation, and differentiation (see Foucault M., 1977).

individuals with our own illimitable aspirations, as value-driven members of a moral community (Rose, 2004: 41).

3. Forms of *visibility* or the ways through which reality is represented to make it amenable to intervention. In this regard governing implies the codification of the relations between subjects and spaces to instigate forms of perception, produce opportunities, and regiment any possible activity. These forms of visibility, as will be analysed in the ensuing section on power, define how the objects to be governed are connected. In other words, it establishes how they are constituted in space.
4. *Techne*, or the technical means through which government is achieved, i.e., the procedures, tactics or mechanisms implemented to fulfill the objectives defined governmental activity.

2.2.4 A governmentality of the WoD?

Directly engaged with France's and Europe's state-making processes, governmentality's analyses of the articulation between institutional networks and knowledge to regulate individuals through forms of self-control are rooted in a distinctive place and historic-specific context. At the core of its concerns is the way in which physical aggression, especially state-sanctioned violence, reduced its visibility giving way to a variegated set of constraints internalized by every individual. This is to say, it focuses on the propagation of subtle forms of coercion throughout the social body.

In multiple and radical ways, the historical experience of Mexico is remote from such trajectory. Lomnitz (1992: 197) argues that manifestations of scientific techniques to produce aggregated knowledge of the population, associated with practices of governmentality, first emerged in the nineteenth century in Mexico. However, he claims it was a myriad private corporations, loyalties, and constituencies such as the church, which controlled this knowledge preventing the formation of a coherent autonomous public sphere, a key condition of possibility for the governmentalization of the European states. Fundamental for the representation of the state and the nation as a functional and unitary whole, statistics, maps, and reports served the contradictory and fragmentary interests of specific communities in Mexico. In that regard, scientific knowledge-based interventions to govern populations and territories became contingent on authoritarian, clientelistic-based, and fragmentary interventions. In the long term, blended with traditional knowledges, this combination of authoritarianism and governmentality produced political practices halfway between the

accuracy of the national census and the incontrovertible and quasi-messianic decisions of Mexican presidentialism. Thus Lomnitz (1992: 208-211) concludes that when implemented in Mexico, governmentality succeeded poorly in its aim to impose scientific order, regularity, and rigour to the government of the country.

Along these lines, Centeno (2001: 292-300) argues that Latin American political formations challenge Foucault's assumptions on power-knowledge and the intrusive, but discreet, logic of governmental techniques. A colonial past, perennial struggle to confirm territorial limits, quasi-military ruling apparatus, and the precarious constitution of a local bourgeoisie and correlative liberal subjects are among the factors that have impeded the governmentalization of Latin American states. Violence on the other hand has not receded but been fully integrated into the normal functioning of modern Latin American electoral democracies (Goldstein & Desmond, 2010). Consequently, alongside the non-coercive mechanisms of power, physical demonstrations of power and explicitly violent manifestations have exceeded the implementation of what in contrast may seem to be innocuous disciplinary or security mechanisms.

Nonetheless, these authors lose sight of two aspects central for the examination of governmentalities. First, the potential amalgamation between liberal/scientific and authoritarian governmentalities. Dean (1999) for example, through his examination of authoritarian governmentalities, has demonstrated the convergence between illiberal forms of governance and biopolitical techniques seeking to produce obedient subjects rather than free individuals. That means that modes of self-governance are produced in myriad contexts and coercive methods are also indirectly productive of subjects that recognize themselves within the order of the state.

Governmental projects do not follow necessarily a unifying rationale and violence can, and has been, incorporated into broad networks of control and surveillance. Accordingly, opposite types of power relations may occur across different instances, combinations, scales, locales, and spaces in projects of government (Legg, 2007; Rose, 2004). It means that authoritarian political rationalities and technologies can converge with liberal rationalities, enabling and overlapping with one another through contradictory strategies and mechanisms. To this extent, Craib's (2004) investigation on the cartographic practices of the Mexican state has showed the convergence between disciplinary, client-patron, and governmental practices in the construction of Mexican territory as a homogeneous polity. Additionally, the investigations of Azoulay & Ophir (2013); Feldman (1991; 1997); and Caldeira, (2000) have demonstrated – as discussed in the following section- how violence, as a “semantically modal and transformative practice” (Feldman, 1991: 20), is also productive of forms of

intelligibility, spaces, and behaviours. Individual freedoms can be, with contradictory consequences, regulated through practices of control in which violence and more subtle forms of disciplining converge. Garmany (2009) for example has demonstrated how in contexts with high crime and violence rates, such as Brazilian favelas, forms of self-governance remain operative, shaping individuals' behaviors and producing conformity among citizens in Brazil. Rodgers (2006), by building on Nicaragua's recent experience of violence, has concluded that the classification of the population into valid and invalid segments has precipitated forms of violent governance. This has produced an indirect form of governmentality through the creation of states of exception at the local and/or micro-levels. In short, capillary ways of controlling populations and the sovereign desire to make power visible through the direct enforcement of punishment are not contradictory strategies or mutually exclusive (Comaroff, 2006). They intersect, overlap, exceed, or replace one another according to specific configurations and necessities.

The second aspect is that governmentality describes a form of representation and control of human affairs that relies upon the production of 'regimes of truth'. Governing through the truth involves the operationalisation of knowledge and the establishment of a matrix of political thought and action (Rose, 2004). Whether produced through the rules of scientific discourse, or the combination of origin myths, metaphors, moral rhetoric, and ethical vocabularies (Feldman, 1991; Rose 2004), these regimes of truth concern '(...) what counts for knowledge at any given moment' (Povey as quoted in Rose, 2004: 29). Thus, projects of government are assemblages of techniques, institutional networks, and strategies that aim to act upon the actions of others, or one's self, by building upon conceptions of the nature, extent, and distribution of authorities, and the principles that should guide their action (Dean; 2009; Legg; 2007; Rose, 2004).

So, despite the differences between Latin America, and Europe, the recurrence of violence, or the precariousness of the instruments of scientific and technical knowledge, governmentalities are not exclusive to European or other highly industrialized contexts. Produced through the rationalized exertion of power, and the production of truth statements, the WoD is thus contestable in terms of its assumptions, epistemologic presuppositions, moral content, and ethic vocabularies.

In this context what does it mean, theoretically, to speak about governmentality when studying the Mexican WoD? It means conceptualizing the WoD as a project of governance that seeks to act upon the behaviour (or conduct) of Mexican citizens. It also implies identifying and analysing the presuppositions, assumptions, forms of political representation, classification, and intervention through which Mexican citizens have been made governable

on behalf of the war against narco-trafficking. It also entails the critical examination of the practical conditions in which individuals perform and construct themselves, as well as the the subject positions that have emerged from these processes. As will be explained in the following chapters, the WoD has made possible forms of state intervention that rely simultaneously on capillary, internalized, and more implicit forms of subjection, as well as, on the desire to regulate every single interstice of the everyday life by making (state) power visible. Visible and invisible forms of power intertwine in the WoD and this demonstrates the expansion of state power across the whole society.

Accordingly, the WoD draws on a variety of methods, forms of visualization, and vocabularies linked to the history of the country's military policing and the government of its underclass. Thus, analysing the WoD as a project to govern the behaviour of Mexicans means engaging with a critical problematization of the ways in which this project has represented the territory as a battlefield and all Mexican citizens as potential criminals. Moreover, it requires an examination of the mechanisms, procedures, and forms through which this process has been disseminated and embodied, structuring behaviours and producing forms of self-governance. The relevance of this approach lies in the observation and analysis of local struggles as well as the problems and unintended effects arising from the implementation of practices aiming to shape the behaviours of Mexicans

Common to the investigation of the rationalities that govern individuals is a conception of power that focuses on the relationship amongst the formation of subjects, the articulation of grids of intelligibility, and the command of space. In order to understand the mutual implication between these aspects and its relation with the broader understanding of governmentality, this concept of power is analysed below. It will underscore the relation between subjection and the formation of grids of intelligibility as a way to understand how individual are governed.

Then, in the ensuing section the relationship between space and power is developed in order to link the explanation on governmentality with the regimentation of space as a basic condition for the formation of subjects.

2.3 Power

Underwriting Foucault's analysis on the organization, control, and regulation of conduct through the production of truth is a conception of power understood as a relationship amongst individuals and with themselves, whose object is producing preferred behaviors. Articulated through a set of processes in which dominance, control, and regulation are

practiced, power flows through social interactions that push, urge, or compel. Accordingly, Foucault discerns amongst types of power relations that position social interactions. (Foucault, 2000: 341). That is to say, power is a multiple, and fluid articulation of positions that account for a diverse set of possible arrangements that emerge at the intersection between the architectural and the corporeal (Feldman, 1991: 127).

He also distinguishes between domination and power. Whereas power functions as a strategic situation, i.e., as an action upon the action of others, domination concerns a restrictive force that forces, breaks, or destroys, reducing an individual's room to manoeuvre (Foucault, 2000). The government of individuals becomes possible at the intersection between power and domination, by structuring the correlative modalities that exist to orientate and constrain actions and reactions (Foucault, 2008). Therefore, governing implies the construction and organization of 'a field of possibilities' within which behaviours are shaped and orientated by means of sophisticated techniques of surveillance, calculation, and differentiation (Foucault, 2008: 340; Hoffman, 2010: 174).

As Foucault himself posits, the problem of power is "(...) to see how men [sic] govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth" (Foucault, 2000: 230). Fundamental for the operation of power is its integration into discursive practices encoded in wider regimes of truth or fields of rationality. These regimes of truth are sets of statements and rules concerning the relationship between the structures of individual agency and the structures of the world, normally considered as an object external to the knowing subject. Regimes of truth concern every technical aspect of human existence, traversing the codes that signify and enact relations between individuals and with themselves. They encompass ways of thinking and questioning, systems of rules, vocabularies, and procedures that form grids of intelligibility which orientate forms of cognition and action (Dean, 1999).

If the truth is a localized and identifiable system of rules for the production of statements, within which people and things are produced as subjects, it means that the world is not a fixed ground upon which action and thought occurs, nor is the subject the originator of action and values. Rather, action and places occur as effects of "situated practices" (Feldman, 1991:1), self-reflexive ways of doing and expressing truth that frame sequences within which behaviour takes place. Thus, power-knowledge comes about as a "(...) network of relations (...) rather than a privilege that one might possess," (Foucault, 1977: 26) and is materialized through practices. Power-knowledge is thus "(...) the overall effect of its strategic positions" (Foucault, 1977: 26). This relational nature of power-knowledge and its network-like formation is a distinctive spatial distribution of patterns in which those relations

are instantiated. This formation sheds light upon the contingent operations that authorize and fix systems of rule and legitimation.

In establishing truth claims about the credibility of any act and/or object, these fields of rationality function as constitutive landmarks, whereby what is correct, normal, possible and even probable it is established. Horizons of intelligibility established through recognition codes put into action behavioural sequences arranged through ethnic, race, class, gender or any other cultural canon. In enabling classifications, divisions, and segmentation, these recognition codes frame reality (Feldman, 1997) by producing spatial formations, and strategies of inclusion and exclusion with definitive roles in the production of individuals' subjectivities in urban everyday life (Dean; 1999; Elden; 2001; Feldman, 1991; 1997; Foucault, 1995; Rose, 1996).

The paradoxical distinctiveness of this order of convergent relations of power is the constitution of individuals as agents of their own domination by their production as free agents. Understood as the proliferation of choices and possibilities to act, freedom is integrated into the circuit of control and regulation by embedding it into regimes of truth. This is because while empowering a high degree of autonomy, regimes of truth instigate forms of conformity and obedience without resorting to explicit violence. By eliciting agency and incorporating subjects as delivery vehicles for the exertion of power upon themselves, forms of self-governing that hold people accountable to broader forms of control and regulation are enabled (Feldman, 1991). A crucial feature of these networks of power relations, the socio-technical instrumentation of the body as a spatial unit of power allows for the instrumentalization of forms of government at distance or 'remote-control' (Azoulay & Ophir, 2013; Ettliger, 2011; Garmany, 2009). These networks of structured commands, normative dispositions, and crafted behaviours are instantiated through innumerable social practices that articulate relational sequences of action (Feldman, 1991), or as Dean (1999: 21) puts it, routinized and ritualized ways of doing things.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995: 23) explains the form and functioning of this power, when he details the 'birth' of the 'modern soul' and a "(...) new power to judge. The soul is both the "duplicate" of the body upon which discipline is effected and the resulting assemblage of knowledge built by means of sophisticated techniques of surveillance, observation, normalization, calculation, evaluation, and differentiation. Although the history of modern punishment is tied to the analysis of the subjection of individuals to institutionalized practices and discourses, it is the production of subjects able to act and be "trapped" in discursive networks that shapes the main argument about the function of power. Thus, power is a relation that is exerted as form of knowledge over individuals, which triggers

discursive practices productive of reinforced forms of individuality and subjectivity. These discursive practices are bound up with techniques of judgement through the production of truth, which is nothing more than a system of rules within which "(...) the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power [are] attached to the true" (Foucault, 1984: 74)

This power individualizes subjects categorizing them through the formation of identities and codes through discourses.² So, the core of the inquiry into the construction of the modern soul is a question about how men become subjects in two intertwined senses:

"(...) subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to" (Foucault, 2000: 331).

Thus, being governed through the production of truth implies the production and constraint of the individuals' subjectivity through their own self-knowledge. It makes the individual their own medium for the exercise and reproduction of power, inscribing him/her as an active agent that is both able to act through and by those truths, while being subject to them as well. Governing others is thus to make them speak, using their own possibility to name the world and act in it. It implies, first and foremost, shaping their will to act in accordance to what is thought to be true. So, power requires the use of the subjects' own possibility to speak, and inwardly articulate the truth of their relations with the exterior world. In this sense, the question asked about governing others is more precisely how subjects constitute themselves, producing relationships with themselves and others through practices of knowledge.³

So, becoming a subject is a twofold process that on one hand implies the subjection of individuals, as they submit to domination. On the other hand, an individual becomes a subject as she constructs herself through her identification with the social position she has been assigned. In this last sense, as a form of subjectification, becoming a subject implies the correlation between acting and freedom (Fassin, 2013: 7). Consequently, governing is fundamentally a matter of the construction of a "(...) field of possibilities in which the behaviour of active subjects is able to inscribe itself (...)" (Foucault, 2000: 340), by means of

² As Foucault states, power "(...) categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize, and others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects (Foucault, 2000: 331).

³ The meaning of knowledge, here, as it is noted by Dillon (1995: 325) is more than just "ideas"; it implies vast institutionalized formations, persons, "(...) theories, projects, experiments, and technologies that are so integral to the government of conduct in modern societies."

seduction, incitement, induction, prohibition, constriction, or making things more or less probable (Dillon, 1995). Governing oneself and others thus involves how subjects constitute themselves, that is how they produce relationships with themselves and others through these practices. It is related to intensified practices of exclusion and reassuring practices of homogeneity, as well as being dependent on the location of roles, the creation of behavioural standards, and shaping forms of self-regulation.

To explain the practical links interweaving the functioning of these grids of intelligibility, the authorization of behavioural patterns, and the formation of subjects, Feldman (1991; 1997) provides an example suggestive of forms of subjection in a context similar to Mexico. He focuses on the productivity of violence and its role in the organization of urban space and individuals in Northern Ireland. Although Foucault (Foucault M., 2000) distinguishes between power and violence, he also explains that “power can never do without” violence (Foucault as quoted in DeAngelis, 2011: 175).

Similarly, a branch of the literature on governing processes and violence in post-colonial contexts has convincingly demonstrated how violence is productive of subject positions, combines with others forms of power relations, and is structured through regimes of social practices that emerge (Azoulay & Ophir, 2013; Feldman, 1991; Legg, 2007; Weizman, 2007). Culturally encoded and intertwined with the organization of social space, violence incorporates individuals into its circuits of domination by making them docile out of compulsion and fear (Azoulay & Ophir; 2013).⁴ Accordingly, violence is constitutive of fields of social representation, and performative force, i.e., a “semantically modal and transformative practice” (Feldman, 1991: 20). In enabling behaviours and local meanings, violence introduces differentiation amongst actors and produces forms of self-identification. Historically and spatially situated, violence is one among myriad practices that govern human beings (DeAngelis, 2011).

Feldman’s (1997) investigation into the ‘ocular strategies’ that frame and organize the exertion of violence in Northern Ireland exemplifies the functioning of the horizons of intelligibility through which behaviours are enabled. Accordingly, in selecting the targets of hostility, Feldman notices that the structured fields of rationality shaped through the cycle of codification and exertion of violence function as the “(...) performative infrastructure of every material act (...)”. This creates a dynamic in which:

⁴ These findings coincide with Dean’s (1999: 131) observation that governmental forms of power rely alternatively on non-liberal means to rule individuals deemed unworthy or “... to be without the attribute of responsible freedom”.

“Any act of personal destruction and social disfigurement is typified by immediate absorption back into this regressive and mimetic temporal scheme where each act of violence repeats another and both epitomizes and renews the dualism of the political culture in time and space”
(Feldman, 1997: 36)

As an action upon the action of others, violence is predicated upon the articulation of forms of credibility. Within them, truth claims and politically correct modes of seeing and interpreting are delimited in such a way that every subject is inscribed within a circuit that determines its identification as potential subject of aggression,

“In Northern Ireland each sectarian assassination victim, each detainee interrogated and tortured, each prisoner incarcerated, each army or police patrol ambushed has been subjected to a ritualized gaze, an exposure that is an endowment of power to the aggressor” (Feldman, 1997: 30).

The targeting of specific types of individuals, thus involves practices of identification and submission, i.e. their subjectification in the sense previously discussed, which occur at the intersection between these authorized modes of seeing, and the effective exertion of violence. The forms of ocular aggression Feldman (1997: 29) analyses, embodied in circuits of ‘visual prosthetics’: “the surveillance camera, the helicopter overflight, the panoptic architecture of the interrogation room and prison, and the aimed gun”, exemplify the operation of these circuits of action and knowledge. Paradoxically, through the exertion of violence, subjects are individualized and integrated into a web of power/knowledge that makes them self-accountable by means of their categorization as targets. Therefore, applied through the mediation of the representations that construct individuals as enemies, violence ‘(...) partakes of the actual productive game of power’ (Azoulay & Ophir, 2013: 135). Subjection is produced through the interventions, discourses and statements regarding the possible identities of the human beings under the ocular examination.

In a similar way, the horizons of intelligibility enabled by the WoD that categorize particular kinds of individuals and territories as unruly and criminogenic, have authorized the exertion of force and assigned subject positions to Mexican citizens. In the context of increasing crime rates and violence, Mexican citizens have ended up recognizing themselves as potential suspects, unsuccessfully retreating to their homes to avoid heavily policed and

increasingly dangerous public spaces. In doing so, individuals have adapted to the standard imposed by the authorities' characterisation of Mexican cities, and their residents as deeply suspect.

Disseminated throughout the social body and enacted through individuals' self-governance, an additional condition is implied in the exertion of power: the regimentation of the spaces in which individuals are situated. How spaces are imagined and the distribution of individuals across them are central for the operation of power are fundamental to the implementation of the WoD. The analysis of the constitution of subjects in Foucault's work provides an opening to think about the spatiality of power relations by establishing a methodological agenda with two main geographical assumptions (Foucault, 1980). Firstly, that the study of power should begin from the bottom, in the scattered microphysics of power in everyday life (Lemke, 2002; Jessop, 2007).⁵ Secondly, that power circulates and is executed from myriad points, from individual bodies to other sites (e.g., bedrooms, schools, barracks, etc.), permeating every aspect of social life. To make individuals governable, the form, disposition, regulation and imagination of space is condition *sine qua non* for the formation of subjects (Driver, 1985). The examination of how social action is embedded in the world through relations of power forwards an analytical route to thinking through the relation amongst power, space, and the regulation of individual behaviours.

In the following section, the notion of power is situated in the context of Foucault's concerns on space as medium of order (Legg, 2007). The analysis builds mainly on *Discipline and Punishment* (1977) to illustrate the links between space, subjection, and how power is spatialized. From it, one can then move towards the analysis of the modes in which space is brought into existence, modelled and refigured to govern individuals.

2.4 Power and Space

An 'outward unfolding' (Scarry, 1985: 40), civilization is contingent on the progressive occupation, modification, and regulation of spaces exterior to the human body. In this regard, as Osborne & Rose (2004: 209) have noted, space conditions the possibilities and dynamics of human life. In establishing forms of existence, space shapes the parameters of action and defines practices of regulative abstraction, symbolic intervention, as well as material appropriation (Chatterjee, 2009; Gregory, 1995; Huxley, 2007). The demarcation,

⁵ Where the interplay between specific force relations takes place and practices are articulated. This in the context of his analysis of micropractices of individuals' management⁵ (Foucault, 1995) and biopolitical technologies exerted through the bodies of a population (Foucault 1979, 1991).

division, distribution, modification, and integration of spaces shape the configuration of groups and individuals (Elden, 2013). Space and identity are extensively entangled through the appropriation and modification of the landscapes and intimate “spaces of existence. In this regard, space grounds, frames, and informs human agency by positioning and distributing individuals across it (Gregory, 1995). Central to this process are the ways in which space is imagined and represented as it informs modalities of intervention and identification, producing structures of exclusion and separation (Gregory, 1995: 456).

A branch of the literature on space and power has encouraged us to see the built environment as a foundational element in the organization of social space, alternatively conditioning activities, distributing opportunities, inflicting pain, and distributing power (Azoulay & Ophir, 2013; Caldeira, 2000; Chatterjee, 2009; Graham, 2010; 2016; Low, 2003; Madanipour, 2003; Weizman; 2007). By means of its direct integration within the organization and formation of political subjects, Caldeira (2000) and Low (2003) for example have successfully demonstrated how built space in residential locations structures mechanisms of exclusion and segregation by informing the identity of their residents. Building on the experiences of India and Israel respectively, Chatterje (2009) and Weizman (2007) have investigated the roles architecture, and its destruction, have in inflicting durable pain and achieving control over behaviours. In this regard, they have analysed the ways in which the re-ordering of space is deeply involved in the governing of individuals. Along the same lines, Huxley (2009) explains how space is incorporated as an element in the operative rationales of government, influencing the conduct of subjects by fostering environmental qualities. Conversely, contingency, creative agency, and everyday processes impact on the organization and dynamic of spaces, challenging their embedded meanings and impositions (Craib, 2004; Yeh, 2017).

In this context, governing is a matter of structuring spaces to make them amenable for intervention, distributing forces, segmenting energy, locating intensities, and redirecting movements to regulate and control individuals (Chatterje, 2009; Rose, 2004: 31; Weizman, 2001). Analysing the relationship between power and subjection requires attention to the importance of the spatial conditions that make possible the constitution of political identities and the governance of individuals.

As Feldman (1991: 8) observes, the control and regulation of individuals, is a “(...) matter of regimenting the circulation of bodies in time and space in a manner analogous to the circulation of things”. Intertwined with the control of space, the analysis of the formation of subjects is concerned with the localization of the routines, habits, and techniques within which power is materialized. Therefore, situated at the intersection between bodies, built

environment, social performances and representations (Madanipour, 2003), space is central to understand how power works

A spatial focus enables one to understand how power penetrates onto everyday life, projecting forms of occupation, visualization, and movement, fostering tangible transformations in the ways in which individuals and communities organize, move, and use public spaces. In addition, it concerns the recognition of the spatial arrangements where power is embodied, indicating the importance of the particular and the local in its relationship with broader strategies of control. To this extent, a spatial arrangement involves the interrelation and interplay of rationalities, practices and geographies that produce or manage different kinds of conduct. They are the embodiments of the forces that shape conduct (Weizman, 2007; Huxley, 2007). Space thus interplays with the languages and practices of representation which express how “(...) locales and agents are to be connected with one another, what problems are to be solved and what objectives are to be sought” (Taylor, 1984: 176).

Foucault's investigations on the constitution and modelling of individuals emphasize the importance of space, from the urban organization of the city and the distribution of individuals across it to the management of their vital process. Power is actively constituted in the city, across its streets and through its walls, and realised through populations and individual bodies (Curtis, 2002; Hunt, 1996).

Focused on the analysis of the plurality of social spaces instigated by both the demographic expansion and industrialization of Europe, at the crux of these processes it is the emergence of population as a problem (Foucault, 2000: 215). At issue is how to (best) distribute the growing number of human beings for efficient and effective production, and in doing so, to manage the problems of proximity, arbitrariness and asymmetry resulting from that growth (Curtis, 2002). Such processes foster the political rationalizations that seek to make individuals' bodies amenable to intervention. Governing is therefore managing populations in and through the spaces in which these developments occur. The city becomes the quintessential political space and backdrop through which the correlative concept of government, power, and space are thought. Whether it is about the micro-regulation of workers, students, soldiers, and/or inmates in particular spaces (discipline), or the control of whole populations (biopolitics), the urban fabric acts as the medium in which things occur

and power is structured in endless relationships bounding up subjects and objects (Curtis, 2002; Usher, 2014).⁶

Thus, while the body acts as the main target in this process of refinement and intervention, there is an unavoidable link between what happens to individuals and the places designed to produce the desired effects of the techniques put into operation to gain access to those bodies. As Foucault (1984) himself explains, it is people's own practices of freedom in particular places that determines the direction of power and the final integration of space within broadest circuits of domination. The relation between spatial environment and the rule over bodies can thus be conceived as an "(...) sphere of coexisting heterogeneity" (Massey, 2005: 9). In other words, it is a relation mediated and produced by institutions, individual understandings (of the self), and domains of cognition which make behaviours and the world amenable to intervention (Massey, 2005). Space emerges as a contingent 'force-field' established between objects permanently negotiated, resisted, and re-configured (Gibson-Graham, 1996). The built environment is thus traversed by a set of relations that concern the distribution of the relations of power within which individuals become subjects (Hannah, 1997).

Foucault's (1977) examination of the forms through which individuals are disciplined is a good case in point to illustrate the entanglement between subjectification and space. The analysis of the spatial organization of the disciplines is relevant as it distinguishes theoretically amongst place specific regimes of practices, the importance of the different locales through which power is materialized, the roles forms of rationalization have in the implementation of projects of governmentality, and the historically contingent nature of these mechanisms.⁷ Spatial analysis here thus defines instruments to understand how power is spatialized through regimes of practices, rationalizations, and bodies.

At its core, *Discipline and Punish* (1977) explores three intertwined themes. Firstly, it explores the technical interventions developed to separate, classify, and order individuals. Secondly, it identifies the regimentation of human spaces as a central concern for the administration of modern urban agglomerations. (Driver, 1985; Elden, 2003). Finally, it analyses the series of understandings, representations, and techniques from which disciplinary mechanisms emerge. The underlying assumptions of this disciplinary model of spatial

⁶ Central in this development is the emergence of the police, which rather than just contemporary focus on law enforcement, entails a type of rationality about urban administration (Elden, 2003; Foucault, 1984).

⁷ In addition, it challenges structuralist explanations that attribute fixed interests to the state, by situating social life in a process of movement and contestation that occurs in the organization of the everyday life. Moreover, these spaces allow to observe how the power of state is formally and informally 'subcontracted to remote, local, and specialized authorities'. See Coleman & Agnew (2007) for a detailed discussion of these topics.

regulation illustrate the connection between the representation of space, the distribution of individuals, and the ulterior implementation of mechanisms for the regulation of human bodies.

At the base of disciplinary dynamics and procedures are the medical interventions developed to control “the plague-stricken town”, which Foucault observes, is the “(...) utopia of the perfectly governed city” as it synthetizes the sovereign aspiration to total order (Foucault, 1977: 198). The diagram of “the plague-stricken town” is built upon a single aspiration: the partition of urban geography into clear and transparent sections, as well as the allocation and distribution of positions for the residents of the city according to individualizing distinctions. An uninterrupted circuit of surveillance, ‘omnipresent and omniscient’, to control the details of every aspect relevant for the correct functioning of the city, this order aims to see and control everything through the individualization of its residents and the segmentation of space. “Rulers”, says Foucault (1977: 199), “dreamt of the state of plague” to make the city and its residents governable. Disciplines are in this context intensive techniques of observation that alongside the spatial formations arising from its implementation, such as the camp, or the Panopticon, act as means of general visibility (Elden, 2001: 139).

As forms of visibility, disciplinary mechanisms are articulated at the intersection between the knowledge developed to individualize the residents of towns and the practices implemented to allocate individuals, as well as control and segment the urban space.⁸ Understood as optical devices, the disciplinary codifying apparatuses incorporate space and subjection in a complex system of individual observation by the authorities and self-observation by individuals themselves. Accordingly, a more fundamental question about the relationship between power and space underlies the examination of disciplines. Jackson & Hanlen (2015: 16) formulate it as follows “(...) how [does] an ordering of knowing [have] its specific correlates in spatial practices?”

Foucault points out a *continuum* of spaces and practices through which individuals are disciplined and power is embedded. The body, the asylum, the monastery, the prison, the military camp, the school, all spaces he examines, are regimented by means of enclosure and partition. Through them, a series of exchanges and flows of information, orders, and physical training, organize, distance, and rank bodies in relation to one another and among spaces themselves (Foucault, 1977). Behavioural patterns and obedience are instigated through the

⁸ In line with this proposition, the formation and arrangement of the mechanism to discipline individuals, act in parallel with the juridical power of the sovereign, by organizing the social space through the production of forms of visibility.

classification of individuals according to distinctions between reason/unreason and normal/abnormal (Taylor, 1984: 175). These classifications establish connections between groups and subjects, creating objects of observation that can be knowable (Foucault, 1977; 1989). Observation and classification introduce order by making possible the production of knowledge.

Disciplinary spaces expose myriad points for the execution and exertion of power, including the inner states of individuals and multiple agencies, institutions, and sites (schools, board unions) connected to the state and/or economic structures. Constituted through relations of measurement, normalization, treatment, and rehabilitation which are not typically relevant to sovereign power (Foucault, 1991), these spaces describe an intensive “institutional time-space geometry” (Philo, 1992). Aiming to make space transparent for the purposes of intervention by means of enclosure, isolation, and circumscription, disciplinary formations thus organize the subjection of individuals through the regulation of bodily movements and the deployment of time through rigorous schedules (Foucault, 1977).⁹ At the centre of this project of absolute transparency and spatial hyper-regulation is the Panopticon. The Panopticon is a tower in a prison from where every cell can be observed; however, it is designed such that inmates cannot tell if they are being observed, or if there is even an observer in post. Thus, inmates assume they are always being watched and regulate their behaviour accordingly. This mechanism designed to make the inmate complicit in her own surveillance, the Panopticon is the entity that allows the inscription of the order of the plague town onto the individual body. It does so, by shaping their desires and most intimate movements.

Through techniques of surveillance, using the subject’s own possibility to speak and inwardly articulate the truth of their relationship with the exterior and others, individuals internalize the power relations at the basis of the Panopticon. In internalizing such relations, individuals become subjects by conforming to the indications and procedures of the permanent surveillance. In doing so, the exertion of direct violence is reduced, conformity is elicited, and the individuals’ freedom remains as the basic condition that makes possible the functioning of this process (Feldman, 1991: 127).

Regulated through timetables, rhythms, and dressage, these forces position individuals within that order, becoming the means to make the body a unit of power through its seamless

⁹ The disciplinary techniques Foucault (1977) identifies are surveillance; regulation; classification of groups of actors establishing boundaries; distribution of bodies in space (relative to the classification, hierarchization, the establishing of groups of individuals; standardization; normalization (setting, invoking, requiring, or conforming standards); exclusion (negative side of normalization).

analysis and arrangement. Thus, individuals become the very medium of power, as self-government is instigated at the intersection between the codification of space, the classification of individuals, and the assigning of positions according to that order (Foucault, 1977). In this regard, disciplinary space is regimented fundamentally through an intensive process of enclosure, and codification. Individuals are classified according to functional orders within spaces and their subsequent distributions across them are essential to the general command of the political order. Space, central to this process, emerges from the division, classification, and positioning of individuals across it.¹⁰

Overall, Foucault's analysis of discipline shows how regimes of governmentality articulate coherent systems of social practices and discourses through which spaces are represented, modelled, and intervened upon to make subjects governable. In other words, Foucault's explorations of disciplinary relations of power explain how power spatializes by defining boundaries, representing categories, creating zones of full visibility, and risk classifications. Such is the case of the 'plague-stricken town', whose demarcation by means of strict segmentations and mechanisms to inhibit the circulation of disease, formulates the space of the city as a map to enable the unlimited intervention of the sovereign to these ends. Ruling in this sense is at first an operation of visualization dependent on the formation of limits that aim to clarify the fields in need of control and intervention.

The concept of imaginative geography (Gregory, 1995), illustrates the connections amongst discursive operations, institutional interventions, the codification/production of space, and the command of individuals. In observing how bodies are regulated through socially embedded interpretations of identity and space, Gregory (1995) details the links between the construction of identity, the constitution of spaces, and the governing of subjects. Imaginative geographies are spatial views of things by means of which individuals are inscribed and positioned in particular contexts through the implementation of a series of divisions, exclusions, and oppositions (Gregory, 1995: 457). The imaginary element of this concept implies the ensemble of constructed meanings and representations, inscribed within broader societal narratives that frame and organize the distribution of socially shared meanings that create the world as a coherent unit through which individuals act. These imaginaries have performative and normative properties—they articulate the horizons of credibility through which truth claims are integrated (Taylor, 2004: 23-25). In other words,

¹⁰ In this regard, Hoffman (2011), Legg (2007), Prieto (2012: 87) have argued that in Foucault's analysis on power relations, the attention to spaces is accessory of his more fundamental interest on abstract social structures. According to this interpretation, built space is for Foucault "ontologically unimportant" and secondary to understand that power is exerted through regimes of practices, failing in capturing the complexity of concrete places.

these geographical imaginations are a set of procedures (representational, symbolic, technical) through which difference is represented and distributed in space, organizing a coherent system for the understanding of the distribution of the resources and individuals in a given space. It implies essentially the practices of visualization and representation that allow one to frame and construct a ‘... fragmented polity [as] an aesthetic and visual unity and [give] an imagined entity a very material tangibility’ (Craib, 2004: 8). In this regard, these geographical imaginations belong to the vast repertoire of knowledges and discourses informing the collective points of view through which actions are performed.

Accordingly, distinctions drawn by these geographical imaginations establish objects, set boundaries, and designate identities for individuals and spaces alike. Such distinctions are embedded in complex rules of meaning, ordering rationalities, techniques, and practices that make things able to be seen in specific ways. As ‘tableaux vivant’ (Foucault, 1977: 148), these imaginative geographies are grids of intelligibility through which difference is distributed, places are assigned, classifications enabled, and order is imposed by folding distance into difference and distinguishing the “self” from the “other” (Gregory, 2004: 17). Through the production of synoptic effects, i.e., the purposeful production of an aggregate and selective view of an aspect of reality that aims to differentiate it, to make it amenable for knowledge, intervention, and management, these geographies constitute subjects in space by shaping their performances and interventions.

Concerned with the implementation of a series of tactics to order (and bring order to) the territory of Mexico, the WoD has returned to the sovereign project of absolute territorial transparency in seeking to determine the territorial basis and limits of its power. The output of these processes of demarcation and designation integral to imaginative geographies are comparable by analogy to the practices of division that intersect in the WoD. In a similar fashion to the ‘plague-stricken town’, the WoD’s designers conceptualised Mexican territory and its residents as if they had been infected by crime. Dividing the country’s territory into *plazas* –or market-places- whose control was contested by shifting constellations of drug cartels, this territorial re-configuration of space has allowed for ongoing state violence. As the representation of the country as a crime-ridden territory has gained emotional purchase and a practical form, the militarized policing of the country has intensified. The focus of the research for this thesis will be on how imagining the territory and its residents as criminogenic has animated specific types of interventions, and how these interventions have constructed particular spaces as dangerous. Police-military deployments, institutional interventions, and other regulatory practices through which territorial divisions have

intertwined with the imaginative geographies of Mexican territory have produced substantial modifications to the spatial organization of the country.

The Mexican WoD lacks the accuracy and effectiveness of the disciplinary mechanisms described by Foucault. Notwithstanding, it seeks omniscient control of Mexico and its subjects by representing multiple spaces and their residents as unruly. The spaces the WoD has created have structured a continuum between the state interpretation of insecurity and the zones of exclusion brought about by the implementation of the military policing of urban centres. This all-encompassing visualization of the country as a criminal space and its residents as criminal suspects has instigated a collective social distrust from the state to citizens, citizens to the state, and citizen to citizen. As will be discussed in the case of Tijuana, many feel at risk of being mistaken for a criminal while simultaneously feeling vulnerable and overexposed to a complex array of violence (including different police bodies –municipal, state, federal-, the military, and criminal organizations). The representation of urban spaces as dangerous, particularly in the city of Tijuana, has shaped their use and impacted upon the life of the city on a daily basis.

In representing the war on drugs as battle over territory carried out by the state, the distribution of Mexican citizens either as criminals or potential suspects has enabled distinctions between outside/inside and security/insecurity, producing forms of visibility and truth. In rendering specific objects visible and assuring political coherence with the WoD's project of control and regulation, the normative geography of the war has developed into an informal guideline for the military policing of the country and the exertion of coercive force. The empirical chapters will analyse how the WoD's 'space program' (Herbert, 1996), has used the concept of *la plaza* and the thesis of ongoing inter-cartel conflict to produce a confusing political geography through which federal police personnel navigate uncertainty and danger.

In overall terms, the examination of the spatial practices of the WoD, through the conceptual guidelines formulated by Foucault's analysis and the auxiliary literature on the government of subjects and spaces will help to problematize the multiple interactions, practices, and rationalities that constitute it. It allows me to address the motifs (racialized demons, culturally specific fears, etc.) that reveal the rationalities underlying the classification of particular spaces as zones of criminal activity and the categorization of entire populations as criminal. Moreover, this standpoint problematizes the geography of the Mexican WoD, making visible the spatial arrangements that authorize the exertion of force, founded mainly on the opposition between the federal government and the criminal organizations deployed across a national battleground.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the theoretical framework of the thesis and discussed the different concepts and assumptions that structure it. In discussing the notion of governmentality I set out the relationship amongst power, space and subjection. I asserted that the concept of governmentality explains how political dominance expands between the limits of the public and private, regulating every aspect of human existence. Later I showed how the concept of governmentality sheds light on the problem that concerns the organization of power through everyday spaces and techniques, from architectural details to bodily habits, by governing individuals at a distance. Accordingly, the notion of governmentality exposes the processes of production for spatial practices and for subjectification. It constitutes the processes of seeing and discrimination through which subjects are formed. These practices form identities by means of techniques of self-government and the ways in which individuals are driven by others. Secondly, to understand how individuals are governed through the production of truth and the articulation of practices and discourses, I discussed Foucault's concept of power. Thirdly, in observing the relation amongst subjection, self-governance, and identity, I claimed that the analysis of spaces is central to understanding power and how/when/where/why it is materialized. Space, by means of its imaginary and practical demarcations, is fundamental to understanding how dominance is exerted. Thus, I have argued that the command of space is central for the regulation of individuals.

To conclude, at the intersections amongst power, space, and subjection, the concept of governmentality provides analytical routes for understanding how space and subjection converge in the organization and implementation of the WoD. The WoD, in turn, should be understood as an amalgamation of logics of power through which individuals are controlled and regulated. Following Foucault's concepts of power and government, routes are opened to problematize the authoritative discourses and the dividing practices of the WoD. Productive of spaces and identities around criminal categorizations, the WoD's conceptualization of the urban geographies of the country will be analysed as an amalgamation of logics of power through which Mexican citizens are controlled and regulated.

Chapter 3. Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodology used in this thesis. It is divided into three parts. In part 3.2, I briefly address the epistemological framework underpinning Foucault's analysis of governmentalities. In part 3.3, I describe and analyse the process of carrying out a Foucauldian analysis of the WoD. This includes a critical explanation of the sources, analytical operations, and forms of verification implemented to analyse the rationalities that underwrite the WoD. In part 3.4, I explain why and how I implemented an ethnographically orientated approach to data collection. This ethnographic approach consisted of three techniques: semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation. Within this section I first critically explain how I accessed spaces and participants. Second, I outline how I applied ethnographic techniques to gather and analyse the data. Third, I explain the ethical and safety challenges that emerged during the fieldwork. Finally, I discuss how data was analysed and explain how themes were formulated.

3.2. The Point of Departure

To address the governmental aspects of the WoD, I engaged with the analytics of governmentality's proposition that one should examine four lines of force through which power is rationalized and exerted: episteme, identities, forms of visibility, and *techne* (Dean, 1999; Legg, 2007; Rose, 2004).¹¹ Less formally, these are the categories of thought, performative identities, representations, and technologies through which people, places, and things are made governable. These rationalities demarcate the subjects, objects, practices, and spaces to be governed, as well as set out the means through which governance should be applied (Rose, 2004). I also incorporated what Foucault (1977) called the microphysics of power, looking at the points through which it is executed. By doing so, the everyday in Tijuana became an object of observation to understand how the WoD has been effectively produced and lived.

In focusing on the microphysics of power, the thesis builds upon Foucault's (1980) notion of the conditions of possibility that allow for the emergence of specific constellations of power-knowledge. The concept of conditions of possibility is a way to conceptualize the

¹¹ See chapter 3 for a full discussion of the theoretical and analytical implications of these categories.

constitutive structure of reality, i.e. “(...) not the cause to an effect, but rather formation that allows an understanding of causation to emerge” (Armstrong, 2015: 12).

The examination of the conditions of possibility of the WoD entails the analysis of the regimes of truth that underwrite the power relations that have produced it. The truth, in this case, is ‘(...) what counts for knowledge at any given moment’ (Povey as quoted in Rose, 2004: 29) and what guides the activities of individuals.¹² Loosely speaking these are the foundations of Foucauldian analysis, which seeks to identify specific discursive formations that articulate the political rationalities that define the limits and forms of acceptable agency and action within a regime of governance (Martin & Stennerb, 2004; Merlingen, 2011).

The power relations that structure the WoD are contingent upon: 1) the intersections of rationalities –categories of thought- that frame its formulation, organization, and direction; 2) the built spaces upon which it has been implemented; and 3) the people of Mexico subject to its practices of surveillance. These forms of knowledge, spaces, and individuals define sites of empirical exploration, identify different types of data, and suggest different strategies to gather and interpret it. Thus, along these three units of analysis, different methodological strategies and techniques to gather data were implemented. In the next section I address the investigation of the rationalities that structure the WoD and then the methods employed to examine the actual spaces and individuals governed by it.

3.3 Researching the WoD Rationalities

3.3.1 *Analysing the History of the WoD*

The analysis of the WoD as a project of government involved the identification of the arguments, tactics, and categories that framed the ‘problem-solutions’ of the Mexican WoD. These ‘problem-solutions’, according to Rose (2004), refer to the scope, ethical imperatives, and identity assumptions that play out in the formulation of interventions, strategies, and tactics of government. Accordingly, the investigation focused initially on the ideas, vocabularies, and practices through which the government of the spaces and individuals posited by the WoD has been defined.

In investigating the role of thought in imagining and performing the spaces for the implementation of the WoD, I first engaged with the history of the state-making process in Mexico. I aimed to locate and identify the points of transition, fault lines, and geographical divides that made the organization of the WoD into an all-encompassing form of policing of

¹² See chapter 3 for a full discussion of these themes.

unruly cities possible. As the research is interested in observing changes in the ways power is exerted in Mexico that have been provoked by the WoD, an historical contextualisation of the mechanisms of control and regulation needed to be developed in order to render exceptions and regularities visible.

I traced counter-narcotics strategies back to the historic trajectories of the practices and mechanisms of control of the Mexican state. In examining the state-making process, I was able to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the system of political practices that have organized and authorized the exertion of violence in Mexico. In doing so, a critical point of view grounded in the past is offered in order to problematize the emergence of the regimes of truth concerning the WoD. This disrupt the points of view expressed by state officials and other accepted narratives that have reinforced their problem framings and practices.¹³

I examined the history of military policing in Mexico and society-state relationships using a broad scope of critical studies (see chapters 4 and 5). These studies (Craib, 2004; Davis, 1994; 2006; 2010; 2012; Gillingham, 2012a; 2012b; Gillingham & Smith, 2014; Knight, 2010b; 2012; 2013; Pansters, 1997; 2012; Rath 2013; 2016) provided solid and informed counterpoints to the existing literature on Mexican politics that has focused on the apparent all-powerful executive branch as unlimited source of decisions and order (Carpizo, 1978; Cosio, 1976; Rios, 2012; Snyder & Angelica Duran-Martinez, 2009). It allowed me to build an accurate picture of the subnational and national forces that intervened in the construction of the Mexican polity. This enabled me to identify and analyze the history of the forms of violence at the heart of the WoD that have also been decisive in the state-making project, situating both in broader historical, political, ideological, and social contexts.

The analysis of pre-existing authoritarian structures, geographies of violence, and social hierarchies (both ethnic and class based), that shaped the imagined and actual spaces of state interventions, helped to better delineate the role of the WoD in Mexico and its links with Mexican political history. This historical turn was thus a necessary step.

3.3.2 *Analysing the Rationalities of the WoD*

The next stage of the analysis of the rationalities underpinning the WoD concerned the identification of the sites through which the WoD constructs, and acts upon, reality by framing Mexico as a battleground. The question I asked was which objects and artefacts could account for the rationalities shaping the WoD? In other words, which mechanisms of

¹³ For a definition of regime of truth see chapter 3 p. 50-55.

delimitation and identification are operationalized in governing specific populations and spaces?

Rose (2004: 201) observes ‘relays of inscription and accumulation’ make intelligible the domains that needed to be intervened and governed by disparate government projects. Broadly speaking these relays of inscription and accumulation refer to the devices that preserve and make stable the networks of meanings and materialities through which the governing of events and things is exerted. Central to these mechanisms is the role that language has in their formulation and composition, making governmental domains thinkable and manageable. Working as an ‘intellectual technology’, language allows the inscription of reality into the processes of government through a “(…) range of materials and rather mundane techniques” (Miller & Rose, 1990:7). Examples of the inscription devices through which language is materialized are written reports, drawings, pictures, numbers, charts, graphs, and statistics. All are mechanisms that enable the re-presentation of individuals and places thereby authorizing actions upon this reality.

At the core of the operation and delineation of the Mexican WoD is the representation of the territory of Mexico as a battleground and all of its residents as potential criminals through specific geographical imaginations and vocabularies. To account for their content, forms, and dynamics, I examined four groups of relays of inscription articulated between 2006 and 2012. It is through these four relays that I locate the ethical-political assumptions of the planners of the WoD, as well as the broader structures of sense and meaning-making orientating their calculations. They are:

1. Mexican government statements; state discourses; power point presentations; press reports, press briefings; published operative manuals; transcripts of interviews issued by the Mexican executive branch, and the different security bureaucracies (The Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of the Interior), as well as the National Defense Secretariat (Army), the Naval Secretariat (Navy), and the Federal Police. Homicide Statistics published by National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) were also used.
2. Statistics of homicides collected by national media outlets, journalistic reports, and reports by international and national human rights organizations;
3. Maps and reports released by the U.S. government regarding the size, operating conditions, and financial resources of Mexican security agencies;
4. Maps of drug trafficking routes and the territorial distribution of drug cartels circulated by national and international media outlets.

A note on researching security issues in Mexico needs to be introduced at this point. It is obvious that no state wishes to reveal its protocols or practices that are at odds with human rights norms. Thus, in Mexico, a high level of secrecy and silence permeates the state's activities on security themes. This is compounded by the lack of efficient instruments of legal accountability. Crimes are underreported, abuses by state agents are denied, there is a lack of prosecutions, and accusations of the purposeful manipulation of evidence by state agents, make the analysis of the military and police behaviours difficult.

Thus, to navigate the challenges, and to provide a reliable account on the rationalities underpinning the WoD, I decided to look at the documents publicly available, and released by the Mexican federal government, as well as the reproduction of its plans in public discourses. The first set of official documents was used as an entry point to the expectations, plans, ethical quandaries, and geographical assumptions of the federal government. Within these documents classifications of risky territories emerged, priorities were set, and territorial distributions of crime were identified by the government. I mainly focused on the ways in which two tropes within the official documents: *la plaza* and the battle over turf, were central to representations of territory. Then I identified relations between these tropes and a series of metaphors instigated by their dissemination across social space. As such, this collection of governmental sources was used as indicators of state activity and the geographical imaginations underwriting its operation.

Themes emerged such as the rhetorical framing that identified drug trafficking as a disease like cancer, as well as the representation of the military interventions as 'cleaning operations'. Through the identification of these 'master signifiers' (Mutlu & Salter, 2013: 113-121), patterns organizing 'in-group and out-group identities' (Hansen, 2006: 131-158), as well as key antinomies like criminals/state, narco/police, enemies/citizens that separated unruly territories and populations were identified. It allowed me to identify and categorize the conceptual operations carried out by the Mexican government in relation with the definition of identifiable threats. The homicide statistics, used by the Mexican government and some scholars (Molzahn, Rios, & Shirk, 2011, 2012; Trans-Border Institute, 2013) as proxies to identify patterns of violence and delimit risky spaces and individuals were contrasted with figures collected by NGOs and the INEGI on unreported crimes, and triangulated with abuses by Mexican security forces reported by human rights organizations.

The second group of sources allowed me to track patterns and precise distributions of violence, intervention, and abuse by the state security agencies, putting forward discrepancies between the outbreaks of violence observed by official sources and state interventions. Local

and International Human Rights NGO's have produced thorough analyses of policing activities, identifying patterns of abuse. By triangulating the official information with the vast array of independent reports and the works of critical scholars, it was possible to identify the framing of the state's reports and statistics, as well as the extent of its policing powers. Triangulation also revealed the partiality of the official interpretations and their role as informal practices of territorial classification.

The reports released by the U.S. government through the State Department and agencies like the Drug Enforcement Administration linked the rationality of the WoD with the broader security concerns of the United States. Specifically maps released by the U.S. embassy in the context of the Merida Initiative, a cornerstone of U.S.-Mexico cooperation in security issues, specify the relations linking border security, the policing of Mexican territories, and the classification of unruly spaces identified as drug-trade routes.

The maps and diagrams designed and published by media outlets were used to illustrate how the distribution of drug-related activity was visually transposed to enforce the depiction of Mexico as a battleground. More than 60 of these maps were analysed, from which I selected a small sample that were representative of the general aims of these diagrams, i.e. provide a coherent structure to the otherwise capricious and irregular enterprise of drug trafficking. Tellingly, the Mexican government did not release any official map of the WoD. Thus, it was through these unofficial visual devices, built upon the government's official's documentation that the WoD acquired visual consistency. The redistribution and circulation of these maps is difficult to track but their persistency as a mode of understanding the WoD holds regardless of the ideological orientation of the media outlets that produced them.

I tracked daily three Mexican newspapers: *La Jornada* (centre-left), *El Universal* (centre-right) 1, and *El Financiero* (centre-right) from November of 2013 to October 2017. Representative of different ideological stances, these newspapers allowed me to investigate how the official WoD discourse was reproduced through them. Additional information on the size of troop deployments in different cities and the performance of different authorities was extracted from these sources. Maps were also extracted from these newspapers regularly.

Through the dispersed testimonies, indirect accounts, official sources, and independent reports on the Mexican WoD, I could identify and analyse the intellectual operations, the representations, and constructed meanings conditioning the codes through which the territorial space of Mexico and its populations were rendered visible as criminogenic. In the ensuing section I explain the rationale of the analytical and methodological operations to examine the rationalities that have shaped the WoD.

3.4 Researching the Everyday: Spaces and Individuals

The analysis of the government's plans and geographical imaginations underpinning the WoD led me to examine the shape of these interventions and the spaces of everyday life in which they have been implemented. As suggested by the theoretical literature on governmentality (see chapter 2), the interface between forms of personhood (subject positions) and spatial contexts is a crucial site for understanding how power is dependent simultaneously on everyday practices and normative outcomes (Rodgers, 2006).

Methodologically, the shift towards the spaces of daily life bridges the analysis of antagonisms at a national level with the everyday experiences of violence. The 'descent into the ordinary' (Das, 2007) from the 'high altitude' (Scott, 1985) of programs of state intervention sheds light upon how the territorial ambitions of officials are enacted, resisted, embodied, or ignored in actual spaces, and by actual bodies. By situating the larger claims made by the state on the insecurity of the country in the context of interventions to manage them, one can examine how they take on substance through '(...) the flesh and blood of detailed instances' through which they materialize (Scott, 1985: xviii.). Thus, the purpose of undertaking an analysis of the situated social practices and their interaction with the WoD was to capture its embedded meanings.

The instruments of analysis derived from literature on governmentality proved insufficient to address the practical intersections between the ideational processes traversing the WoD and corporeal manifestations in urban spaces. Despite its broad interest in the formation of subjects, the literature on governmentality has focused mainly on ways of thinking about governance, rather than examining existing spaces and subjects (Cruikshank, 1999; Dean, 1999, Larner & Walters, 2004)

Driven by the nature of the empirical field and my intended focus on the geographical and discursive spaces of the WoD, I selected an ethnographic approach because it privileges experience and engagement with situated practices through fieldwork (Finley, 2016; Salter, 2013). It enabled a direct access to the 'immediate now' (Fassin, 2013: xi), expanding the possibilities for capturing how the broader regularities that articulate social life are rendered visible in specific and exceptional ways.

In doing so I aimed to capture how the WoD was (re)produced in mundane practices. This required studying political practices at a given site, showing how these practices are embedded and embodied, and offering accounts of how ordinary people and police officers explain the WoD, in order to foreground their voices to analyse how they made sense of it

(Crane-Seeber, 2013; Huysmans, 2006). Thus, through an ethnographic approach I sought to investigate how power relations intrinsic to the WoD impacted upon the lived spaces of the society in which they are materialized and embodied.

From the vast array of methods labelled as ethnography (life stories, textual analysis, questionnaires, etc., [Gobo, 2008: 2-13]), I carried out participant interviews, informal conversations with ordinary citizens, members of the military, and police personnel as well as participant observation during my fieldwork in Mexico in 2015. Hence, in tandem with the top-down analysis of discourses of the WoD, a bottom-up examination was undertaken. In the following section I discuss the details of my fieldwork and how the different methods I undertook were implemented.

3.4.1 Selecting and Negotiating Access to the Spaces of Research

A considerable amount of the data analysed in this thesis was generated from 4 months of fieldwork carried out in Mexico City and Tijuana between April and July of 2015. In deciding the length and location of the fieldwork I considered three circumstances: my financial resources, the possibility to negotiate access to the spaces under examination, and the relevance of the locations for the case under study. Regarding the available resources my sponsor established six months as a limit to the time I could spend outside of the UK doing fieldwork, otherwise it would reduce my monthly stipend, so I adjusted my fieldwork to that requirement.

In terms of access, before undertaking the fieldwork, I lived in Mexico City for 31 years and visited Tijuana several times for recreational purposes. As a result, I had a considerable knowledge of the country, geography, culture, and history. I am also a Mexican national and a Spanish native speaker. Additionally, I had well-established social and professional networks in both cities. As a consequence, a high level of embeddedness on my arrival to the city was in place. Prior to the fieldwork I had selected Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez as cases to study the implementation of the WoD, as they are representative locations within the landscape of military operations undertaken during the period analysed (2007-2012). Before going back to Mexico, Ciudad Juarez became a dangerous place to research. Insecurity and high levels of street violence made it a risky place to carry out interviews, observe the functioning of the city, and spend time there, particularly given the nature of my research. This was confirmed by my existing contacts in the city. So I abandoned the idea of going there and focused exclusively on Tijuana.

To begin, I interviewed federal police and military personnel in Mexico City, the location of their national headquarters. Later I would fly up north to Tijuana, 4 hours away from Mexico City by plane to interview ordinary citizens, track the traces of military operations, observe the city, and see how individuals had modified their behaviour in response to military surveillance. Tijuana, set at the most western point of the Mexican side of the Mexican-US border, is a city that holds a firm reputation as a ‘dangerous space’. In the social and geographical imaginaries of the border, Tijuana is a place of transition, symbolically summarizing all the transgressions associated with the drug-trafficking world (Katsulis, 2008). Tijuana also has been a central location in the demographic and economic expansion of the northern border that took place from the 1980s. Additionally, it was the site of one of the first urban military deployments of the WoD in 2007. Moreover, by 2015 when I carried out my fieldwork, Tijuana was the safest city along the US border, even though during the weeks I stayed there (July 2015) an average of six people were murdered per week, allegedly in drug-related violence.

As confusion is the norm in the WoD, oppressive levels of uncertainty and suspicion are imposed upon those who live in the spaces in which it has been implemented as well as on those who enforce it. Hence, my access to the circuits of military, police personnel, and regular residents of Tijuana was dependent on luck, and a ‘threshold of secrecy’ (Feldman, 1991: 11) imposed by the public atmosphere of fear and distrust regarding the communication of crime and security-related issues.

In this context of suspicion, I was initially a potential snitch, or a covert journalist, in the eyes of the military personnel or police. As it will be explained in the next section, those members of the Mexican armed forces and Federal Police who I contacted and initially indicated a willingness to be interviewed ending up refusing based on the fear that I was a journalist, a situation I deduced only in hindsight.

Finally, a combination of good luck and expanding my pool of different contacts granted me access to a smaller group of army and police personnel. The way I gained access to them through trusted intermediaries who could vouch that I was not a threat created a better atmosphere, easing the exchange. Having gained access to them, the codes of loyalty and secrecy specific to the military and police force –especially with the former--determined the limits to what I could ask or know (Coleman, 2016; Fyfe, 1991).

In Tijuana, this distrust is accentuated by the widely held view that criminals and the local (municipal) police forces are accomplices, or much worse, members of a single organization. In fact, crime and law are considered a blurred continuum. Many of my civilian informants admitted later that I was initially considered suspicious because I was curious

about things that only journalists, the police, or criminals would want to know. Thus, being able to establish a good rapport quickly supplemented the serendipity of my fieldwork, opening access to a wider range of people who were living amongst the drug-related violence in the city.

My identity as a researcher gave me a high profile amongst my informants which initially restricted the exchanges. This was something I had to negotiate permanently in order to gain further access to different contacts. My activities were an ongoing matter of concern. After a month, following the advice of one of my informants, I left Tijuana. She said:

“Look, asking questions as you’re doing here is not normal. We are here because X told us she knew you, but people don’t like questions. I thought ‘who is this guy who comes from who knows where and want to know things’. Police might think you’re a journalist, and the police don’t like journalists. Don’t say you’re investigating anything” (fieldwork notes. My translation)

I interviewed people in public spaces in both Tijuana and Mexico City for convenience and safety reasons. First, given the sensitive nature of the research topic, and to minimise risks to myself and my informants, public spaces guaranteed a more or less neutral setting to walk, and talk to people without attracting attention. They are also busy locations which provided a safe space to hold conversations. This aspect was central as Tijuana was particularly insecure. Public spaces created higher levels of trust amongst me and my informants.

A central aspect of the military operations examined in this thesis was how they disrupted the public spaces in which they were implemented. Consequently, my objective was to select spaces that would allow me to observe and engage with those transformations. In Tijuana, I originally planned to observe the urban life of the city along the border entrance to the US and downtown which is right next to the border. I had the intuition that the life of the city gravitated around such places, and that military displays should be highly visible here. Finally, public spaces, and specifically streets, are spaces of intensive exchange. In the street, the social practices of the city’s residents converge, and it is in the streets where encounters, transactions, and movements fundamental for the structure of the city occur (Finlay, 2016; Grosz, 1998).

During the fieldwork, I had to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and relax my approach to the spaces I was willing to access to interview some of the participants or to observe dynamics pertaining to the WoD. In Mexico City, for reasons detailed in the

following subsection, I agreed to interview people (federal police and military personnel) in locations determined by them on at least three different occasions. All were public spaces located in places I was familiar with but I did not choose them myself.

In Tijuana, on the other hand, negotiations to secure the participation of interviewees, particularly those that had direct experience of violence, included visiting them in locations I had not planned. In five different occasions, unexpectedly, I was invited to their homes to interview them. Those interviews proved fundamental to understanding the intimacy of the violence and its literal penetration into the households of Tijuana's residents. They also allowed me to see spaces of the city which I could not access otherwise. In this regard, the journeys between the different locations I ended up visiting to interview people became a source of unplanned and immediate knowledge. Thus, the city itself became object of intensive investigation. I will explain this further in a subsection that follows below.

3.4.2 The Participants

Purposive, opportunity, and snowball sample techniques were used to invite participants to this research (Kemper, et.al. 2013). I defined two groups of people to be interviewed: security forces' personnel and ordinary citizens. The first group included members of the police and military. The aim was to investigate the modes in which the state's representations on the WoD operate through the individuals enforcing Mexican counter narcotic policies. By tracing their assumptions and beliefs, I could correlate them with their institutional and professional environment, the wider ideological and political context, as well as the historical configuration of the military policing of the country. So, I did not seek to discuss sensitive issues concerning urban patrols or what role they played in them.

The sample of participants who were from the military or police personnel was initially based on a professional network I forged in Mexico. During my first year and a half in Newcastle, I kept intermittent contact with key informants in the Mexican Armed Forces and Federal Police that I had met while I worked as instructor in courses provided by the University I previously worked for in Mexico. Of my initial ten possible informants, all but three withdrew before formalizing plans for interviews. Two more withdrew after carrying out pilot interviews via Skype from Mexico. They refused to sign any form of written consent for obvious reasons. As they wanted to remain anonymous, signing a sheet of paper as proof of their consent to be interviewed was a risk they did not want to take. Their interviews were not used in the final analysis but were useful in defining the approach to future interviews, as I will detail below.

My identity as a researcher played a role in the withdrawal of those members of the army who had initially agreed to participate. It was not stated explicitly, but the fact that I introduced myself as a PGR student doing research in a foreign university, and the additional paperwork to ensure the fulfilment of the ethical guidelines set by the university (i.e., consent and research briefing forms) created an instant unease in the members of the armed forces who expected to keep our contact under the radar. Learning from the experience of these initial false-starts, I secured the consent of state security agents verbally from that point onwards.

Through the remaining police officers and soldiers willing to participate, I gained access to nine more individuals belonging to both security agencies and one member of the federal Attorney General's Office. Thus, in Mexico City I interviewed twelve male individuals. Eight of them had participated directly in the operations implemented during Felipe Calderon's presidential terms.

The second group consisted of ordinary citizens living in Tijuana. In a similar vein, by interviewing them, I sought to explore the effects the WoD had upon their behaviours. From Newcastle, I contacted a local researcher from the University of Baja California and personnel from local NGOs running shelters for migrants (*Casa del Migrante*; *Casa YMCA de menores migrantes*). In addition, I also had a network of middle class acquaintances in the city. As one of the core objectives of the fieldwork in Tijuana was to explore the effects of the WoD upon its residents, I needed as diverse a representation of its residents as it was possible for me to get. The sampling process in this case was guided by who lived in the city that I could get access to.

Through the local researcher I negotiated direct access to a group of people who had experience of drug-related violence. All of them were women. They had all lost at least one relative in violence related to drug cartels or the police (state or federal). My access was conditioned by my relationship with the local researcher. My own network of acquaintances in the city provided me with access to a series of individuals, who in turn introduced me to more people. It became apparent over time that a cohesive sample was being accessed through this method as the violence that took over the city between 2005 and 2010 had consistently affected everyone.

Within the group of ordinary citizens and aiming to understand the uneven effects of the WoD upon the different types of residents and users of the city, I engaged in conversations with migrants. After preliminary conversations with residents of the city, I became aware of their symbolic importance for the social order of the city, so I included migrants and their stories as part of the investigation of the effects of the WoD in the city.

I did not specifically set out to engage with them, but while I was exercising in a small park, a group of them gathered in the same area hiding from the local police who harass them regularly. One of them began a conversation with me about the exercises I was doing and gave me some advice about them. The conversation then moved towards the reasons why I was in the city—my accent made it evident that I was not from Tijuana. Three more joined in the conversation. I later asked them to talk about their experiences in order to include them in my research. I talked with them separately on three different occasions. Their unexpected participation allowed me to gain insights into the regimes that regulate the urban life of Tijuana, and their own negotiations of them. I also interview personnel of NGOs working with migrants in the city, to explore from a more institutional point of view, the challenges these individuals have to face.

Overall, the focus on a diverse range of residents of the city assisted me in moving beyond class, occupation, gender, or place specific limits (Silverman, 2013). I engaged with a diverse range of people: small business women and men, students, working class people, middle class people, migrants, young professionals, local researchers, NGO personnel, and residents of the outskirts of Tijuana who subsist through the informal labour market. This diversity enabled me to observe the effects of the WoD across different social spaces and geographies. It also provide a good sense of the ways in which the multiple articulations of the city operate upon a broad range of individuals.

The limitations of my approach are clearer regarding the federal police and military personnel I interviewed. These individuals' stories reflect a mind-set consistent with the well documented abuses committed by the security forces (analysed in chapter 6). Yet it is difficult to tell given the size of the sample how the differences between the various institutional backgrounds (each of these organizations have distinct organizational cultures, forms of training, supervision, professional norms, and disciplinary regulations) affected their performances. On the other hand, I did not get access to any member of Tijuana's upper and upper middle classes, which would have allowed me to further diversify the social composition of my sample.

In the following sections I address the practical implications, analytical, and ethical challenges of the interviewing process

3.4.3 Interviews and Informal Conversations

I carried out 12 interviews with federal police and military personnel in Mexico City. Additionally, I interviewed one police officer working under the jurisdiction of the federal

Attorney General's Office. In Tijuana, I interviewed 25 women and men. About 50 hours of recordings were generated.

I was not allowed to record the interviews with military personnel. Thus, in four cases interviews were not recorded, as it was a condition they established for their participation before the interviews took place. Written notes were taken instead, and these were immediately transcribed alongside my recollections of these encounters. All participants were guaranteed personal anonymity and authorization to record and interview them was granted to me. I only kept the real names of those who participated in their capacity as personnel of the NGOs that work with migrants in Tijuana. Every single participant was verbally provided with information regarding her or his participation, the objectives of the research, and how the information would be use according to rules of the UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research (UK Research Integrity Office, 2014).

In 2014, I carried out a couple of pilot interviews via Skype with military personnel. I followed a strict set of questions that asked aspects related to the stereotypes around drug traffickers, drug trafficking, how the cities that have been intervened by the state security forces looked like, and how they distinguished between drug traffickers and ordinary citizens. As these pilot interviews failed for reasons mentioned earlier, I reconsidered my strategy.

Taking advantage of my identity as a Mexican national, I soon realized that a combination of informal conversations and semi-structured interviews were the best devices to gain a deeper understanding of the interviewees' everyday perceptions. On the other hand, the tense conditions that preceded the interviews with military and police personnel were paradoxically eased when they felt free to talk about their experiences without feeling constrained by questions they could interpret as indirect questionings of the policing operations of the WoD.

Therefore, the overall approach to these interviews was structured around a short set of questions that aimed to encourage the participants to talk for longer periods and elaborate as much as possible with minimal input from me. Depending on the situation and the interviewee, I might ask them to elaborate or clarify specific points (Corbin & Mose, 2003); however, these were primarily unstructured interviews. These interviews were formalized as researcher-interviewee exchanges and mediated through pre-arrangements that established my identity as a Mexican PhD student studying in the UK carrying out fieldwork in Mexico to gather data for my research and the identity of the interviewee.

This interview schema was a conscious choice. Different ethnographic accounts on violence and unstructured interviews provide examples of the types of negotiations, implications, and challenges that are present when undertaking fieldwork in violent contexts

(Nordstrom & Robben, 1995; Ratelle, 2013; Wood, 2009). To navigate these issues required building up a deep understanding of the field and its cultures and their ways of speaking (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Building a good rapport was essential for the success of unstructured interviews (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

My familiarity with semi-structured interviewing was initially developed through my previous employment: I worked for 7 years as a social worker in *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* in Mexico City.¹⁴ Interviewing people on a regular basis during that period of time made me aware of the need for flexibility to adapt to diverse circumstances and themes that could arise. I also understood that semi-structured interviews could provide a sense of intimacy and freedom impossible to get in a structured interview setting. This made it more likely that I would obtain powerful and vivid testimonies on the lives of my interviewees, and more importantly, the possibility to give voice to people that has been deprived of the possibility to be heard (Corbin & Morse, 2003). This was especially the case with the residents of Tijuana, and to a lesser extent Federal Police officers, who being immersed in the rigid hierarchical structures of the police were in their own ways deprived of the possibility of challenging their superiors.

At the same time, semi-structured interviews can fail as people react adversely, refuse to talk, or restrain from further elaboration. Thus, while some interviews produced excellent results, sometimes for reasons that are still not apparent to me, others failed completely or did not produce the quality of data I had anticipated. When interviews failed or produced low quality data, I reflected upon them in order to deduce alternative ways to proceed and to consider whether particular themes were exhausted or should not be subject to conversation. The interviews were thus an ongoing learning process through which the WoD revealed its multiplicities.

I also had many spontaneous conversations with Tijuana's residents. These allowed me less structured access to their experiences, current concerns, and general impressions of their city. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, these conversations rarely were about the WoD or drug trafficking. Mostly, they revolved around issues concerning the city's decay, the atmosphere of insecurity, or the opinions people had about migrants. In sum, these conversations helped me to glean what Jovchelotvitch & Bauer (2007: 4) consider a 'more valid' and 'spontaneous' rendering of the informant's perspective.¹⁵ The data gathered from these conversations allowed me to situate the events I was researching within a broader set of

¹⁴ An administrative division within the government of the city

¹⁵ See also Finlay (2016: 44).

everyday fears and local meanings. The length of these conversations lasted between a few minutes and an hour. To record this data, I always took notes after the conversation.

All the interviews were conducted in Spanish and subsequently translated into English. With translation, the main challenge has been to remain faithful to the sense originally conveyed in the statements and navigating the jargon and syntax directly linked to a variegated set of shared cultural references, and strategies of communication. In this regard, as Reynolds (2016) observes, translating is an act of re-creation and re-invention that situates into a different cultural context, socio-political universes that never fully fit into the moulds provided by languages foreign to them. In trying to remain clear and faithful to the voices of those who participated in the research—the same applies to the documents translated from Spanish to English throughout the thesis—I tried to keep the translations as close as possible to the original. When it was not possible, I specify in each case the words in English I used that do not have an exact equivalent in Spanish. Along the same lines, I provide additional explanations of terms and events that might otherwise be obscure, detailing how words and expressions might have particular unexpected meanings—if one translated them directly—according to the contexts in which they are used.

3.4.4 The Questions

In interviewing my informants, I proceeded as follows. First, I explained the purpose of the interview, which was to get their views on the WoD and their experiences of it. Variations of this initial statement were offered according to the person interviewed. For example, with police officers I explained to them that I was interested in understanding how they perceived the cities where they had been working. Later, I specified that they were free to talk about any topic they were interested in related to that general theme. In the case of the police and military personnel, I benefited from the fact they knew each other, and that I had been introduced to them by someone they already trusted. That made me a less risky proposition, and in some cases, it was a decisive factor in getting them to talk freely.

In successive interviews, I drew upon what I had been already told by in previous interviews. Thus, when similar issues came up in different conversations, without revealing identities, I mentioned that while someone else had already talked about the topic, it would be interesting knowing the informant's specific take on the issue. In every interview, I raised the same three themes: 1) their impression of cities in which they had been stationed; 2) how did they distinguish between criminals and ordinary citizens; and 3) what was the experience of

being a federal police officer like in the WoD, including their impressions of their levels of stress and the originating sources.

In interviewing ordinary citizens in Tijuana the procedure was similar: I introduced myself, explained the purpose of the research, which in this case consisted in finding out about the presence of the military in the city and their thoughts on the general situation of insecurity during these times. I then told them I was also interested in knowing how it had been for them to live under such circumstances. Finally, I stressed that they were free to tell me what they wanted, could end the interview at any time, and/or ask that the interview be stricken from the record. As they spoke to me, depending on the content of their stories, I asked specific questions about the issues they were talking about. The strategy was successful in general terms due to the participants' willingness to talk and the fact that I had been introduced to them by third parties who they trusted. Here again, this factor was decisive in the process of gaining a better understanding of the participants' circumstances.

In regard to the migrants I interviewed, the process was the same, but in their case, I specified I was interested in the risks they faced in the context of the heightened policing of the city. Conversations with the first two groups of participants were 2 hours long on average. In some cases I interviewed them twice.

Lastly, in the case of the participants who were members of NGO groups in Tijuana, I carried out structured interviews that sought to get more data on migrants in the city. In each case, I asked 5 questions:

- 1) What are the activities does your NGO undertake in relation to migrants in Tijuana?
- 2) What are the main risks facing migrants?
- 3) What is the role played by the local police in the treatment of the migrants?
- 4) Have you noticed any change in the perception/treatment of migrants by the permanent residents of the city?
- 5) What strategies do the migrants follow to adapt to the hostility of the local authorities towards them?

There are things that I am still no able to fully explain in relation to the openness of some of the participants who belonged to the coercive apparatus of the state. Particularly some of the federal police officers made extensive and detailed accounts of their activities, disclosing events and facts that clearly involved acts of torture, corruption, and abuse. I have to be clear that in no way did I asked directly, or indirectly, any question related to these themes. When these issues came up, I let them talk and explain in their own terms how they

understood these acts and their relation within the broader order of things to which they were discussing. They did not show any doubt, remorse, or surprise. I did not show doubt, nor did I question them about the morality or legality of their acts for two reasons: 1) my own safety, and 2) a genuine desire to understand what they were telling me on their own terms. In the context of increasing violence and state abuses in Mexico, it is often better knowing too little rather than too much. On the other hand, these stories revealed their understandings of the problems they face while policing specific places. Many of these stories concerned their own vulnerability and the way they dealt with it, (see the chapter on Operation Tijuana)

How aware were they that what they were telling me could be a crime? I am still not sure. Were they bragging about it? It is possible, and that would be a reflection of the normalization of abuse and crime by the Mexican law enforcement agencies, a situation that has been extensively documented, as I discuss in chapter 5. Was it the truth? It is impossible to say solely on the basis of their testimonies. Yet their words are consistent with the historic and well documented behaviour of the coercive branches of the Mexican state (Davis, 2012; Rath, 2013). Be as it may, it has direct implications in terms of the ethics of this research, my own safety, and the analytical value of these stories in constructing a consistent narrative about what it is like to live under the WoD. These experiences also influenced the strategy I followed to analyse the data I collected and construct a reliable argument. In the following subsection I discuss the ethical implications. I then move to the epistemological consequences and analytical strategies implemented to organize and give meaning to this data.

3.4.5 Ethical and Safety Challenges

To undertake research on testimonies about violence and crime, involves the important ethical and risk issues, especially concerning the relationships amongst neutrality, ethics, power imbalances, the safety of the researcher, and the safety of participants. It is essential to note that there are no operational standard procedures about how to best do this, only a series of general recommendations that emerge from the literature. The American Anthropological Association (2012) indicates for example: “The individual anthropologist must be willing to make carefully considered ethical choices and be prepared to make clear the assumptions, facts and issues on which those choices are based”. Yet, on dealing with testimonies about violence, Smyth and Robinson (2001: 8-9) indicate that it “... may be ethically impossible to remain rigidly within the research role”. Performing neutrality is itself a strategy, either to manage risks, or to gain access to information it would not otherwise be obtainable (Sluka, 1995; Clark, 2012).

Thus, how did I negotiate these tricky issues? Firstly, I underwent and passed a thorough ethical review process at Newcastle University in 2014 and carried out a deep of reflection about the ethical implications of this research. In this regard, this research adhered to the principles, procedures, and minimum requirements of the Framework for Research Ethics (The Economic and Social Research Council, 2015) to avoid risks and guarantee the safety of participants of this research. Thus, it was carried out with integrity, quality, and transparency; participants were fully informed about the purposes, methods, and uses of the research. Confidentiality of information and anonymity of respondents were respected, and all the participants took part voluntary and free of coercion

In considering the unavoidable relation between research and intervention to minimise risk of psychological risk and assure the safety of participants I followed an empathy strategy detailed in different works by Bell (2001), Johnson (2009), Parker & Ulrich (1990). That means that I insisted beforehand that informants could stop and withdraw at any time they decided, and most importantly, that I would not discuss what I was told with anyone not involved with the research. I also informed them about the methods, purposes, uses and consequences of the research. I refrained from asking questions about sensitive topics (e.g., weapons, the form of policing operations, et cetera). Moreover, in the interest of protecting the participants' confidentiality, and facilitating the acquisition of otherwise inaccessible data under dynamic field conditions, participants were not required to sign a written consent form (American Anthropological Association, 2012). At a minimum, I obtained verbal consent from all my informants to use the information they provided for academic purposes.

During the fieldwork, and in the particular case of the police, as most of the testimonies involving references to potentially illegal actions occurred in the context of ongoing conversations, I kept listening without showing any particular reaction. I let them continue, explain themselves, and keep going with their stories. I did not report them because I considered it impractical and unsafe in the context of the poor administration of justice in Mexico (detailed in chapter 6). In addition, these individuals made statements in the context of a verbal agreement that obligates me to respect their anonymity. In negotiating this ethical and safety dilemma, I opted to keep their testimonies in their capacity as products of specific circumstances that speak to the institutional, ideological, and political structures at work in the WoD. My neutrality in this case was strategic at two different levels: 1) it kept me safe; and 2) it gave me access to information I could not get otherwise. I am no apologist for abuses committed by the police, yet in the context in which these statements were made to me, they speak of unexplored forms of vulnerability, and violence provoked by the Mexican WoD.

Overall, I do not have a definitive answer to the ethical dilemma that the research raised. Instead by opening the possibility to discuss how these experiences are traversed by broader forces, I think I was able to organize an alternative account to the hegemonic understanding of the WoD in Mexico. This was an intellectual commitment to remain respectful to one of the values the WoD has eroded: critical thought as a means to foster the conditions necessary to overcome existing forms of oppression and violence in Mexico. Adopting this position had important consequences in assessing the value of the oral stories I drew upon to support my arguments and how I wove them with the rest of the evidence I collected. In the following section I broach some considerations in this regard.

3.4.6 Transcribing-Epistemic Value

As Feldman (1991), Knowles (2000), and Vila, (2000) have observed, identities are constructed through narratives. Consequently, oral stories are markers of broader networks of meaning that speak of the taken-for-granted codes of conduct that govern peoples' behaviours within the social realm (Knowles, 2000). Articulated narratively, these broader networks of meaning express discursive frameworks that structure individuals' positions within constellations of power-knowledge, that allow and shape specific forms of agency. As Feldman, (1991: 13) suggests, "(...) the narrator speaks because this agent is already the recipient of narratives in which he or she has been inserted as a political subject."

Building on these propositions, by examining the oral stories, I believe it is possible to open a window to the broader socio-spatial relations within which individuals are immersed and through which coherent identities and forms of behaviour are constructed (Knowles, 2000). In this regard, the value of the narratives collected in my fieldwork reside not in their uncovering of unknown facts, but in the way in which they express socially defined positions within which individuals are inscribed, and through which they act in the world, shaping facts and realities (Vila, 2000). Yet, the relation between agency and structure is not unidirectional, but an object of constant negotiation, expressed in the multiple ways in which individuals frame their existence as the oral stories gathered in this research suggest.

Therefore, in voicing the experience of those who live in Tijuana, and the practitioners of the WoD, I aimed to articulate an alternative account to state policy documents and official narratives. As said earlier, the oral stories of those who participated in this research elaborate upon broader narratives that concern an inventory of choices and possibilities. In a fragmentary way they account for lived experiences and the options individuals have access to in a context determined by violent exchanges. As observed by Vila (2000) and Knowles

(2000), such accounts are shaped by conventions of storytelling –beginning, middle, and end- and are accordingly, sequences of events artificially ordered and filtered through personnel recollections, interests, and perceptions which are socially informed. In other words, they describe the real according to spatially and temporally specific positions. Their analytical value lies exactly in how they speak of these positions, and what they say about the socio-spatial context from which they speak. In other words, they are not ‘true’ descriptions of reality, but narratives within which individuals perform their identities (Vila, 2000).

Drawing on Riessman (2003: 13) and Vila (2000: 20), I have constructed a metastory, a document that through editing and signifying what was conveyed to me in aggregate presents a hybrid but ‘realistic’ account of what happened at specific times and places to specific individuals. Thus, the realistic tone of the two chapters about Tijuana - those that draw upon the oral stories of ordinary citizens and police personnel-, is a strategy that has two objectives. First, remaining faithful to what these individuals conveyed by reducing as much as possible any type of interference in my accounts that might stem from my aims as a researcher. Second, articulating and conveying in a consistent form an alternative narrative that is built upon the everyday experiences of the users of Tijuana’s urban space. This enables me to explain the ways in which power relations intervene in the organization of the socio-spatial context of Tijuana as well as how the interventions are articulated by its residents and users. In doing so I seek to problematize the state’s script on the WoD’s and the classifications that underlie it.

Inevitably, I am only providing a partial account mediated by a succession of non-voluntary interferences. The main limitations were the spatial and temporal limits of the fieldwork and that practices of transcribing and translating are productive of meaning (Reynolds, 2016; Riesmann, 1993: 13). Both acts impose an alien order (semantic and narrative) to the original narrative and linguistic structure of these oral stories gathered through the interview process. I am also aware that my Mexican nationality, and a shared cultural background, conditioned how people talked to me and how I negotiated the challenges of approaching my informants. Misperceptions and doubts produced by the general atmosphere of distrust of the city had a role in participant’s stories. Yet, while accepting the heavily subjective nature of the tools used to gather and analyse the data that I use to support the arguments of this thesis, I am confident that by engaging in ongoing critical reflection I have been able to represent and explain both the voices of those who are implicated and the processes that frame such voices. Being critical in this context means to problematize and make visible the myriad ideological, political, and spatial conflicts that traverse the WoD in order to disrupt its’ taken for granted ethical and political assumptions. These oral stories

have thus been validated by situating them within broader urban, ideological, institutional, and political structures that made them possible in first place. These broader structures in turn have been rendered visible by drawing upon scholars' accounts, journalistic reports, official statistics and reports regarding homicides, the territorial composition of the city, and local political dynamics.

3.4.7 Observing Tijuana

My examination of Tijuana expanded to the analysis of its urban planning. In Tijuana, a city designed to allow the movement of all sort of things, the spaces of the city prolong the effects of the social forces that regulate urban life and produce distinctive forms of segregation. Living arrangements, as demonstrated by Knowles (2000) and Madanipour (2003), are equivalent to urban experiences. Thus, an indirect way to shed light upon the different experiences, movements, and affects involved in the production of violence is delve into their mutual entanglement. Sites like the border, the business district, and the downtown area are illustrative of the aims, aspirations, and regulations embedded into the design of the city. Moving between them allowed me to account for the different types of mobilities required to negotiate the city. It also brought me into contact with people from different social backgrounds with different spatial references.

To record the spatial composition of Tijuana, I had two methods: walking and taking pictures. Initially I implemented an impromptu strategy to purposefully walk and observe how the city was connected and inhabited. The street-level gaze that develops walking across the city allowed me to explore areas that are forgotten, or ignored, by more orthodox forms of analysis, yet these areas provide valuable data regarding the design and purpose of the city (Coverley, 2006). Moving across areas with little foot-traffic and travelling on routes outside of touristic and commercial zones provided useful data on how the city beyond the downtown core and the business district is primarily designed to be used by cars as the spaces to open to pedestrians diminish, even within residential neighbourhoods. While walking I observed the organization of urban forms that authorize particular forms of movement and uses of city amenities, particularly the predominance of Tijuana as a port of entry into the United States. Pictures of these spaces illustrate how urban space is being deployed, which otherwise would be difficult to translate into textual descriptions

Participant observation in a city the size of Tijuana (256 square miles) has clear limitations as a technique to gather data. As Caldeira (2000:11) suggests, as an ethnographic method, participant observation was designed to access the social universe of villages. Urban

areas and processes of violence occurring across multiple neighbourhoods and spaces are less suitable to be reported through ethnographic observation. Notwithstanding, in tandem with the examination of policy documents, the oral stories of its residents, scholars' accounts, and the history of the city, the observation of Tijuana's urban spaces revealed important features of the processes shaping the everyday life of its residents.

3.5 Analysing data

In the preceding sections I have identified conditions that intervened in collection, organization, and presentation of the data I gathered in my fieldwork. Lastly, I will set out how data was analysed. After transcribing the interviews and my field notes, I would conduct thematic analysis. Thematic analysis consists of identifying and reporting themes within data, and then examining in aggregate the thematic patterns that have accumulated (Aronson, 1995). Themes were identified by bringing together recurring words, geographic references, and experiences. Key themes arising from discussions with residents of Tijuana included the partition of the city into clear-cut sections (west/east), the identification of risky populations, the decay of city, and the difficulty of distinguishing between criminal activity and the actions of the state. In the case of the police/military personnel, key themes were the inherent threatening nature of northern border spaces and the impossibility of distinguishing civilians from criminals. Subsequently, I looked for subthemes and relationships between themes. To uncover relationships, I extracted categories from the oral stories and mapped them onto the analytical units that arose from my theoretical framework, primarily, government, power, and space. These categories and themes were simultaneously related to the themes that had emerged from the analysis of the state discourse of the WoD. This was a process revised and refined on an ongoing basis, including during the writing up stage of this thesis.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have set out and discussed the methodology of the thesis and the different stages of the research. First, I discussed the methods implemented, their epistemological implications, and the theoretical foundation of my methodological orientation. Second, I described why Foucauldian discourse analysis and an ethnographic approach were selected. Third, I critically discussed the sources, spaces, and people with whom I engaged, how I gained access to them, and the methods used to collect, analyse and interpret the data generated from these engagements. These methods are a combination of discourse analysis that included linguistic and visual representations, in addition to ethnographic techniques (semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and personal observations, including photography). This is a method attuned to the features of the notion of governmentality as set out in chapter 2. I also highlighted the various dilemmas regarding the subjective and partial nature of the knowledge produced in this research as well as the ethical challenges that emerged and how I negotiated them. In the next chapter, I outline my theoretical framework in more detail.

Chapter 4. The State in Mexico: Power and Space in the Twentieth Century

4.1 Introduction

The massive deployment of military personnel and federal police ordered by the Mexican president Felipe Calderon in 2006, needs to be understood against the historical interrogation of the conditions of possibility of the WoD. In situating the analysis within the limits of the Mexican state-making process, it becomes clear that the territorial organisation of the Mexican state determines the structure and purpose of the WoD as a program of security and territorial ordering. Framed by constant threats of secession, civil war, and foreign invasion, it is the contested nature of the territory that informed the instruments to govern it, and the ensuing definition of national security. Therefore, the practices of territorial control that organised the priorities of government following the 1910 Mexican revolution need to be addressed to explain the emergence of the WoD as an instrument of governance.

The main premise of the analysis developed in this chapter is that by the end of the Mexican revolution (1910-1920) the simultaneous construction and pacification of national territory determined the organisation of a single party, a powerful presidential institution, an army whose main function was to police the national territory, and a legal regime that situates the state as the undisputed producer of political space. The *de facto* organisation of the Mexican territory as a buffer space for the U.S. in the last quarter of the twentieth century, in tandem with the erosion of the political foundations of the Mexican state, modified the internal balance between its constitutive elements. Thus, the neoliberal restructuring of the country, started in the 1980s –addressed in the following chapter- altered relationships within the state apparatus, establishing a new reliance on its authoritarian and punitive instruments.

Conjointly with the following chapter, this one provides the reader with the elements to situate the Mexican counter-drugs strategy in the context of the organisation and transformation of the state, focusing on both the historical conditions that made it possible and its instruments of government. By explaining the sequence of multi-level events, interlocked institutional changes, and political challenges that frame its emergence, I will set out the conditions for the analysis of the spatial politics of the WoD, i.e. its condition as a project for the organisation of power, visualisation and distribution of places, roles, and individuals in space. By the end of this chapter the institutional and historic arrangements that authorize and inform the accepted forms of violence, and the foundations of the military policing of the territory, will become evident.

The analysis draws on English language-based critical scholarship on Mexico's state making process and primary sources (reports, newspapers, and webpages). It proceeds in three sections, exploring Mexico's political history in the twentieth century and focusing on the foundational structure of the contemporary state-society relations.

The overall focus of the examination is the organization of the instruments of government, violence, and the transmission of power. The first two sections cover the first part of the century to the 1960s and focus on the organization and structure of state practices of control and regulation, examining the territorial/government nexus through the examination of the legal propositions of the post-revolutionary state, the foundation of the state-party and its political-economy. The organisation of the state apparatus and the ensuing foundation of a state party following a protracted civil war (1910-1920) are seen through the lens of the territorial dilemmas of Mexican politics (the latent possibility of secession via domestic conflict or foreign invasion). A peculiar spatial practice derived from that experience informs both the legal regime and the agents of the state coercion, specifically the army, which suggests that the specific geopolitical-territorial dilemmas of Mexico imposed a particular type of political development. At the centre of the state project and its politics is the legal stabilisation of its territorial understanding, which requires clearly defined borders, the stability of the state's position in relation to its subjects, and the means to enable territorial integrity.

The second section explores the formation of the 'party in arms' (Kilroy, 1990), the PRI, as the condition upon which individuals are socialized into and informed by state objectives. The third section explores the relations amongst the army, the organization of the state party, and the pacification of the countryside as an ongoing process. Manifestations of the precarious and contested stability of the state as well as the role and political mandate of the military, factor into the analysis of how regime legitimacy, military policing, and territorial control intersect with the conservation of the state and the emergence of the WoD. It will make visible the spatial divide through which state routines of violence are structured and exerted: the countryside as an object of army surveillance and cities as objects of milder forms of disciplining, which include sporadic military crackdowns upon protesters. Finally, the third section explores the role the military has in the organization of the state power, and the relevance of its participation in the consolidation and stability of the post-revolutionary political regime. Moreover, it demonstrates the political relevance of the Mexican army to the civilian management of state affairs

4.2 The Post-Revolutionary State-Population Nexus

This section examines the forms of representation and insecurity shaped by the geographical structure of the Mexican state in the twentieth century, in order to understand how violence is exerted and later how the WoD changes the coordinates of its production. In doing so, it explains the forms of identification allowed by the modern territorialisation of the state and its emergent geography of power.

After a 10-year civil war (1910-1920), Mexico faced two immediate and interrelated challenges: the pacification of its territory and political control over it. Central aspects of the aftermath of the civil war, both were variations on the prolonged construction and affirmation of Mexico as an independent state. In the nineteenth century, the state making process had revolved around factional disputes over remaining colonial privileges, the consolidation of territorial control against foreign invasions, and the creation of a liberal regime of power (Escalante, 1992; Higgins, 2004; Ochoa, 2011). The unmitigated competition between opposing political factions, the territorial disarticulation of the country, the lack of technical means, and the threat of territorial secession had made impossible the establishment of any viable system of representation and equality before the law (Lomnitz, 2001). More importantly, it threatened the country's viability as an independent nation (González, 1952). As noticed by Hamnett (2004), at the crux of the problematic Mexican nineteenth century were decades of deteriorating government finance in the late colonial period, as well as the unsuccessful territorial consolidation fostered essentially by the Spanish administrative incompetence. As a consequence, the nineteenth century saw plenty of domestic conflicts between factions split regionally and ideologically around different projects of administrative organisation (federalist vs centralists), and political and economic constitution (liberals vs conservatives). Additionally, after independence from Spain, the country was invaded multiple times, including the so-called Mexican-American War -1847 where it lost half of its territory, as well as reverting to a French sponsored monarchical empire (1863-1867) (García, 1971; González, 1952; Hamnett, 2004).

The problem of governing in Mexico at the time concerned the preservation of territory, disputes over the construction of a civil society through the formation of democratic citizens (Craib; 2004: 19), and the abolition of corporate privileges (Escalante, 1992; Ochoa, 2011). As such, Mexico was a typical case for Latin America; all the states in this region confronted similar geographically, socially, and racially fragmented milieus, and were shaped by long international and domestic armed struggles (Davis, 2010; Pansters; 2012). Although largely unresolved, these disputes were temporarily sorted in Mexico when

the liberal party expelled the French invaders in 1867 and took as its mission the constitution of an economically viable country. The project to constitute democratic people was partially abandoned for the same reasons that made it impractical from the beginning: an anarchic and non-coherent territorial space.¹⁶ The liberal project gave way to a dictatorship crafted to overcome enduring political instability, foster economic development, and provide a strong government.

Conceived to conserve the territorial integrity, at the core of Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship (1876-1911) was a project that aimed to economically modernise the country, producing a national market by binding up the domestic accumulation of capital, to the financial international currents (García, 1971; Higgins, 2004). In this respect, between 1875 and 1896, railroads increased over 1000% going from less than 580 kilometres to 11, 500. Mining laws were altered to encouraged foreign investment and titles for mining operations increased, doubling for example the production of silver. Communal lands (*ejidos*) were abolished. This exacerbated an already extremely unequal distribution of wealth and the concentration of privileges in a small elite of foreign and national investors (Callcott, 1965).

Following an unsuccessful attempt to electorally compete and win the presidency against the long-standing dictatorship led by Porfirio Díaz, in 1910 a group of landowners in Northern Mexico rose up in arms. Pursuing a limited agenda of liberal rights that aimed to substitute Porfirio Díaz '(...) within its own system' (Higgins, 2004: 102), the rebellion unleashed a series of social tensions. Rapidly escalating into a national armed conflict that mobilized rural and urban masses alike, the rebellion expanded throughout the country across regional, sectional, class, and racial divides. Historically unresolved political and economic contradictions around property rights, land distribution, subaltern classes' economic rights, inter-oligarchic conflicts produced by the uneven modernisation of the country, and a fundamental struggle for the redistribution of land were at the basis of the civil war.

Gilly (2005) argues that the Mexican Revolution was both a popular and bourgeois movement, 'a kind of half-way house', with two main regional poles, Chihuahua in the north, and Morelos in the south. In the north, it broke out in zones of contact between big economic enterprises such mining companies or haciendas –a type of *latifundium*- where rapid structural change occurred. In the south, on the other hand, peasant agriculture came into conflict with the expansion of sugar plantations. The conflation of aggressive extraction projects in the

¹⁶ Focused on the organization of democratic institutions and the eradication of corporate privilege, this liberal regime aimed to create 'democratic people', i.e., free individuals and a mode of political obedience organized around the disposition towards self-government, underpinned by the universal observance of the rule of law (Escalante 1992; Ochoa, 2012).

country with the dictatorship produced the necessary alignments to trigger armed resistance (Davis D. E., 1994; Hamnett, 2004; Higgins, 2004; Knight, 2010b).

The Revolution has been analytically divided in two stages: at the outset, an armed movement from 1910 to 1920, followed by two decades of ‘institutional’ revolution (1920-1940). While any reduction of the territorial or social complexity and spontaneity of the different local social agents that conformed the armed movement would simplify its nature (see Tannenbaum, 2008), three factions within the armed movement have been recognized: Villistas (Francisco Villa, murdered in 1923), Zapatistas (Emiliano Zapata, murdered in 1923) and Carrancistas (Venustiano Carranza, murdered in 1920) (Knight, 2010b; Williams, 2011). Both Villistas and Zapatistas articulated the popular element of the revolution; the former integrated within its political agenda, a combination of agrarian and labour claims, incorporating a myriad of small landowners, peasants, industrial workers (miners), shopkeepers, and cowboys. The latter, led by Emiliano Zapata was an agrarian movement located in the state of Morelos. Williams (2011: 157) notes that both Zapatismo and Villismo were the ‘peasant responses’ to social and economic disruptions engendered by the liberal reforms of the previous century:

“Brought about by the uneven ravages of ongoing primitive accumulation and the dislocation that characterises intensified land expropriation, the violent passage from subsistence to wage labour and from simple revenue to surplus value, Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa’s desires to redefine traditional ties to the land were symptom of the incursions of capitalist accumulation as it transfigured into new and more complex forms toward the end of the nineteenth century”.

The Carrancistas, on the other hand, banded together a more homogenous set of land owners and middle-class sectors interested in returning to a moderate constitutional order - Carranza, governor of Coahuila was himself a rich land owner (Córdova, 1973; Gilly, 2005; Hamnett, 2004; Williams, 2011).

Amid the conflict, a constitution was drafted and published in 1917 laying out the foundations of the future government of the country.¹⁷ A compromise solution that aimed to

¹⁷ Initially the rebels overthrew Diaz (1910-1911), and defeated an ulterior attempt of restoration by President Huerta (1913-1914). After 1914, the rebels fought among themselves until the Carrancistas triumphed over the Villistas and Zapatistas.

satisfy all factions, the constitution granted the distribution of land -Art. 27-, and the protection of labour rights -Art. 123- (Gilly, 2005). At the crux of the constitutional project were the political codification of the state's foundations by defining its absolute ownership of territory, the means to enable its integrity, and the inscription of Mexican individuals and communities within the state through a broad program of social reform.¹⁸ By outlining areas of exclusive jurisdiction, the constitution set the basis for the further expansion of the state's regulatory powers, and the political integration of the masses through the official party.¹⁹

A good example of the constitution propositions is Article 27. There, the main political and territorial premise of the state is indicated: "In the Nation is vested the direct ownership of all natural resources..." from "precious stones, rock-salt and the deposits of salt formed by sea water..." to "... petroleum and all solid, liquid, and gaseous hydrocarbons" (quoted in Parenti, 2011:190). The Nation, the equivalent of the popular will, in turn delegated its control through the Constitution, passing it over to the state (Williams, 2012).²⁰

Thus, Article 27 established the state as the surveyor, distributor, and last legal entity to define Mexican territory. The enforcement of the article through simultaneous acts of expropriation, partition, and distribution constituted the central tenet of modern Mexican politics (Craib, 2004; Gilly A., 2001). In this regard, we can think about Article 27, as well as the rest of the constitutional provisions, as acts of denomination in line with Miller & Rose's (1990: 7) idea of language as an 'intellectual technology', i.e., a mechanism that renders reality amenable to intervention "(...) inscribing reality into the calculations of government (...). In this sense, the constitution provided the 'visual' guides that rendered the territory as a legal and political entity bounded up with the state's power to intervene, modify and govern it. It can also explain the extension of a shared understanding and vocabulary between authorities and the potential beneficiaries of the constitutional provisions on the purpose of government.

By legislating the relation between the state and population through the territorial affirmation of the state, and introducing the idea of the Nation as the original owner of land and resources, the constitution enabled an understanding of public property rights in radical opposition to that which dominated the nineteenth century (Craib, 2004; Gilly A., 2001;

¹⁸ This program of social reform included the distribution of lands, the regulation of labour relations, the organisation of a program of secular education and economic nationalism.

¹⁹ In addition to the regulation of ownership rights and labour relations, the constitution considered the state regulation of education and the church as the other two primordial domains of government. Between 1930 and 1980, the state prolonged these jurisdictional areas into specific areas of interventions such as broad forms of public investment in infrastructure, government-formed enterprises, public investments, direct and indirect subsidies to industry and the overall intervention in the economy (Higgins, 2004; Knight 2010b).

²⁰ "(...) implying that the will of the state *was* and *is* the de facto will of the people" (Williams, 2011: 11).

Kourí, 2017). In this regard, the previous legal regime of public ownership had set the primacy of the ‘individual right to private ownership’ (Kourí, 2017: 3). According to the constitution of 1857 the state had limited authority to depose individuals from their properties.

Private ownership within the constitutional legal regime of 1917 didn’t disappear but was subsumed within a new hierarchical order, conceding to the state a larger authority to intervene and regulate: “(...) the ownership of lands and waters... corresponds originally to the Nation, which has had and has the right to transfer their control to private individuals and constitute private property” (Text of art. 27 as quoted by Kourí, 2017: 3 –my translation). As Kourí (2017: 3–my translation-) emphasises, it did not mean the eradication of private ownership, but the reconfiguration of state authority: “what had considerably changed, for historical and political reasons, was the definition of the nature of the state’s powers to intervene as the representative of the nation, the original owner”. In inverting the relation between public and private ownership, the state situated itself above every individual and this, for Gilly (200: 143), made article 27 “(...) the centre piece of the constitutional construction”.

Tacitly concerned with the spatial control of the country, the explicit rationale of the constitutional agreement was to lay down the foundations for a strong state by eradicating the main causes of disagreement: territorial fragmentation fostered by contradictory and conflicting regimes of land ownership and the deregulated activity of foreign investors (Córdova, 1973; Knight, 2010b; Williams, 2011).²¹ Accordingly, it set the conditions to impose limits to the property rights of foreign companies and big landowners. It also opened the door for far-reaching social reforms (Hamnett, 2004; Kourí, 2017). By claiming the right to the subsoil, the constitution granted the Mexican state a legal basis to expropriate and nationalize oil fields in 1938, expand its role as the principal agent of economic progress, and distribute lands to satisfy the demands of the peasantry that initially made them rise up in arms. The affirmation of Mexican sovereign rights to subsoil deposits put concrete limits to the ability of foreign governments to intervene on behalf of private interests, particularly oil (Hamnett, 2004: 224). To this extent, Article 27, as Gilly (2001: 142 –own translation) puts it

“(...) grants the nation the original property of the territory from which private property is constituted as a right the nation can transfer to private individuals... In this juridical-conceptual architecture, soil

²¹In 1917 the civil war had not finished, yet the constitutional text was approved and consistently functioned as main axis of the post-revolutionary state until its reform in the 1990s.

and subsoil are national properties. The ejidatario holds the property, the oil producer, or the miners, the license”.

In strong continuity with the overthrow of the dictatorship, the constitution of 1917 restated the conditions to produce a functional ‘police state’, i.e., a regime “(...) capable of creating good order and sovereign mastery that would allow for the implantation and extension of bourgeois rule”. (Williams, 2011: 11; Higgins, 2004)-. In line with the politics of a centralized regime of power, the program of the post-revolutionary government moved away from being a mere impersonation of Diaz though. By sanctioning national ownership of the territory, the constitution introduced a regime through which “(...) new relationships of reciprocity and dependency between the state (...) (Craib, 2004: 220) and individuals were created. In this sense, the whole structure of social and political rights established by the constitution produced new forms of political representation, citizenship, and practices of governance.

The organisation of agrarian reform communities (*ejido*), which the Mexican state undertook as part of its territorial premises, exemplifies the type of state-society relationship fostered by the post-revolutionary regime. Enabled by Article 27, the territorial partition of the country side into *ejidos*, as explained by Craib (2004: 219-220) had a basic role in the reconstruction of social relations, forms of political command, and expansion of the mythology of the state:

All times have their spaces through which ideologies are inscribed, codes embodied, histories redefined, and social relations reconfigured. Postrevolutionary Mexico's was the *ejido*. The *ejido* functioned as a primary mechanism for returning land to the pueblos, redistributing it to the landless and fulfilling the promise of the revolution. It also constituted the means by which to create new relationships of reciprocity and dependency between the state and rural cultivators. Over the remaining half-century, it became the ideological and material space—the metaspace—upon which the postrevolutionary regime built its foundation.

A community organisation granted by the political regime, the *ejido* regimented the social space of *campesino*'s communities in accordance to the state's political needs, but guaranteed in return a piece of land. Conceptualized as a rupture and a rejection of the prior

political and social order, both the *ejido* and the constitution introduced a sense of ideological renovation and inclusionary politics, setting the basis for the emergence of a nationalist political identity.

4.2.1 *Nation, mestizo identity, and power*

Despite the peasantry's military defeat in 1920, land reform remained at the core of the ideology of the post-revolutionary political regime. As a "closed system of controlled meaning" (Craib, 2004: 204), the, the post-revolutionary nationalism reformulated the competing regional interests, class divergences, and multiple ethnic tensions in terms of a purportedly homogenous community. The post-revolutionary national community reappraised the indigenous and the *mestizo* as the central components of its proposal. At the basis of the popular revolt that underpinned the civil war, both *mestizos* and Indians were thus removed from their problematic agrarian landscape, and reframed as the new subjects of Mexican history.²²

To understand the extent of this change, it needs to be remembered that Spanish colonial domination was built upon a system of racial differentiation that had whiteness as its basic measure of social value. Embedded in deeply ingrained structures of economic inequality and political exclusion, this racial ideology had the form of a pyramid in which social privilege and whiteness coincide at its highest level, while at its bottom lay a mass of non-white citizens (Lomnitz, 1992). Within this system of castes, Indians, *mestizos*, and black populations occupied the very margins of this architecture. In this context *mestizo* was a category that referred "(...) to both biological and cultural "mixing" of Spanish and Latin American indigenous peoples" (Moreno, 2008: 286).

While Mexican liberals in the nineteenth century abolished slavery and 'Indianness' as legal category to construct a country of citizens free and equal, whiteness remained a basic measure of value, "(...) the only position where wealth and high status were in homeostasis" (Lomnitz, 1992: 276)". Inequality remained racially codified and a mass of non-white citizens included "(...) a ragged mass of peons, peasants, and workers, many of whom were practically slaves", remained in opposition to a class of 'white hacendados (sic) and of national and foreign investors" (Lomnitz, 1992: 276).

²² It is beyond the scope of this chapter and research to analyse the ideological assimilation of the peasantry. Yet, both Lomnitz (1992; 2001) and Gilly (2001; 2005) examine in depth the role of this agenda within the post-revolutionary ideology. Regarding the cultural manifestations of this assimilation Silva (2011) and Monfort (2013) analyse the interrelation between popular culture, film and Mexican nationalism.

Reframed as a form of racial condition, poverty was explained through the persistence of recalcitrant Indian or *mestizo* features, functionalizing both the old colonial structure of privilege, and its system of racial differentiation in the context of a society of ‘free individuals’. Being Indian or looking like one became synonymous with backwardness, poverty, ugliness and stupidity (Navarrete, 2016).

Within post-revolutionary nationalism, the racialized subject of Mexican liberalism was recast. To coordinate the military victory with a durable project of pacification, existing ethnic and regional differences were subsumed within the mythical origin of the Mexican nation. A single narrative stating that mixtures of Spanish and Indians produced the *mestizo*, someone completely different and better, an original synthesis between the European, and the native civilizations (Gamio, 1916). While affirming its national distinctiveness, the invention of the *mestizo* nation allowed the state to negotiate between three contradictory goals within its project of government: 1) retaining economic modernization -associated with the West-, as one of the basic aims of the revolution, 2) containing foreign political interventions and 3) dissolving the agrarian agenda into the broader national interest (Lomnitz, 1992).²³ To this extent, “the reappraisal of the *mestizo*, of the Indian and the Spaniard created a formula that was anti-imperialist in the sense that the country’s aperture to foreign interests was to be controlled by the national community” (Lomnitz, 1992: 279).

Politically neutralized, the peasantry’s inclusion through the *mestizo* idea became vital to the proposition that the state was situated above every individual’s interest. On the other hand, reclaiming the symbolic incorporation of the *campesino* in post-revolutionary nationalism, the state allowed itself to assert its national scope, and distinctive identity, in relation to the rest of Latin America and the world (Lomnitz, 1992; Bartra, 2002). Yet, despite reclaiming its indigenous influences, Mexican nationalism did not prevent the permanence of the social practices linked to the Spanish system of castes. Itself a form of racism and segregation by purposefully simplifying the ethnic complexity of the country and reifying the existing indigenous populations, the discourse of *mestizaje* remained attached to the logic of the whiteness as supreme social value. Embedded in discourses and practices of social mobility and inequality, and reinforced by an inordinate cult to European culture, being white or “whitening oneself” (Lomnitz, 1991: 278) was still considered in Mexico a necessary condition to socially excel (Moreno, 2016; Navarrete, 2016).

²³ In its sense of technological improvement and production of material benefit. For an analysis on the relation between nationalism and modernization see (Lomnitz, 2001; Williams, 2011).

That is not to say that the peasantry did not resist this model of inclusion, or that it was entirely successful.²⁴ In 1929 for example only 1% of the ‘(...) approximately two hundred thousand hectares of distributed land had been restored to their original campesino owners’, and following the most aggressive stage of the state’s program of land distribution in the 1930s, barely 18 million hectares were distributed (Williams, 2011: 161). In fact the state’s agrarian project, grew within itself the seeds for future conflict, disorder, and violence. In collision with the increasing urbanization and industrialization of the country, mounting tensions accumulated around the failed distribution of land, producing new forms of dissent and conflict (Walsh, 1984; Williams, 2011). It would be impossible to refer in a single chapter, least of all in a section, to all the contradictions, tensions and conflicts produced around the government’s agrarian program. What seems clear though is that the purposeful government’s choice of a program of national industrialization was realized at expense of the peasantry. Agricultural prices were kept artificially low to reduce the cost of food in urban centres. In addition to this fiscal stimulus, credits were directed to large-scale agro-businesses whose production was essentially exported. The long-term decline of prices benefited working-class consumers, but the effect was devastating for the peasantry linked to the *ejidos* on what were normally low-quality lands. In general terms therefore, the countryside subsidized the industrial and urban development of the country.²⁵

Yet by defining the legal conditions for the state’s management of the economy and the new relation between the state and the population, the constitution set the foundations for a stable political regime and the organization of an economic nationalism that allowed for the nationalization of petroleum (1938), the enlargement of the public sector, an extensive project of land distribution, and the expansion of the economic and political regulatory powers of the state.

At the basis of the ideological sanction of the mestizo identity was the redefinition of the territorial premises of the Mexican state in the aftermath of the civil war, that implied both the moderation of the historic causes of disagreement, and the reorganization of the spatial distribution of violence. This will be examined in the sections below by founding new relationships of reciprocity between the government and the citizens and reorganizing its role as absolute owner of the territory, the Mexican state produced forms of representation and security that distinctively shaped the exertion and geographical structure of power during the

²⁴ In 1980, at least 3 million peasants were landless (Sanderson, 1984: 3), and in 1992 after a substantive modification of the article 27 the government’s project to distribute land was definitively finished (Salinas, 2002).

²⁵ Gillingham (2012b), Padilla, (2008), Sanderson, (1984) have produced outstanding accounts on this matter charting the finegrained details of the process.

twentieth century. The examination of the forms of identification allowed by the modern territorialization of the Mexican state casts light upon the ethnic and racial divides that upheld the emergent geography of power of the post-revolutionary state. Geography that will be radically modified by the end of the century when the WoD takes over the pacification of the Mexican northern border. But before it happened, and in addition to the nascent constitution, two more mainstays were integrated into the state structure: a single party and a professional army.

4.3 The Single Party

In line with the previous section that tracked how individuals are governed and inscribed within the post-revolutionary order, this section analyses the changing relations between the single party founded after the 1910 civil war and the territorial premises of the state earlier discussed.

While it established the legal and ideological foundations of the post-revolutionary politics, the constitution of 1917 did not end the hostilities or armed struggle. Remaining armed political factions, divisions internal to the victors, localized boss-rule, pervading private networks of power, and U.S. government hostility challenged the new constitutional legal order, the peaceful transference of power, and the overall effectiveness of the nascent government. As Gillingham (2012b) puts it, “the end of large-scale fighting in 1920 had left Mexico with a collapsed state, newly fluid property rights, and a society in arms”.²⁶ In that circumstance, to construct a durable political regime, the triumphant alliance resorted to a combination of three methods: coercion, clientelism, and social reform (Knight, 2010b: 241). Central to this endeavor was the formation and organization of a single political party in charge of both disciplining urban and rural populations as well as pacifying the circulation of power amongst the military elite. It did so by distributing the economic and politic benefits of the nascent industrialization of the country through the corporatist organization of society. At the intersection between coercion, clientelism, and social reform the emergent political party became the monitor of the lines of enmity and friendship structured around the reterritorialization of the Mexican state after the civil war. It is the changing relation between these elements (the party and the territorial premises of the state) that determines how individuals were governed and inscribed within the post-revolutionary political order.

²⁶ The Villistas and Zapatistas, the *campesino* movement, were defeated definitively between 1919 and 1923, and the last successful insurrection of that decade brought Alvaro Obregón and the ‘Sonoran dynasty’ to power. Sonora is a northern border state-(Knight & Rodriguez, 2011).

The interaction and relation between clientelism and social reform is explained in detail in the following paragraph where Knight (2010b: 264) also defines the first of these terms:

“By ‘clientelism’ I mean the discretionary distribution of rewards to a favored group, by a personal leader (caudillo or cacique), in return for support, while ‘social reform’ connotes a broader, more disinterested, even ‘universal’ distribution of benefits, according to defined principles, rather than discretionary authority. Bribery and nepotism are extreme forms of clientelism. Needless to say, the boundaries between the two phenomena are blurred: agrarian and labor reform obeyed broad principles, which carried weight; but their implementation often involved discretionary authority and clientelist bias”

As a form of political incorporation, clientelism enabled a system of hierarchical affiliation that benefits the accumulation of power and coercive leverage for powerful patrons. The organization of a single party and the political regime through client-patron networks aimed to subordinate individuals either by voluntary obedience or through the informal and coercive leverage of the patrons.

The de facto alliance with the urban populations –bureaucrats, middle classes, and industrial labourers- of Mexico City, directed the revolutionary leadership’s development policy and the political strategy towards a program of “urbanization-led industrialization (Davis, 1994; 2010).²⁷ Along the lines of this alliance, the political regime constructed its political agenda, the discursive and materials lines of political friendship and enmity, and the instruments to police them. After the definitive military victory over the agrarian factions (Zapatistas and Villistas), the challenge of how to implement an effective and durable government persisted. The search for a functional framework to limit the ambitions of the different chieftains within the revolutionary leadership thus drove the foundation of the single party (Hamnett, 2004). Fundamental to the synchronisation of the myriad of opposing interests and groups, following the lead of the alliances geographically located in Mexico

²⁷ Davis (1994; 2010) argues that the historic accumulation of social capital (geographical, economic, politic, symbolic) in Mexico City, the precariousness of revolutionary coalition triumphs, and the economic collapse of the country, made the emergent leadership dependent on this alliance to preserve its victory, obtain funds, and defeat the remaining opposing factions.

City, the party resorted to a combination of clientelism and social reform to consolidate its power (Camp, 1992; Hamnett, 2004).

At the crux of its foundation was the presidential concern to hold power, de-escalate presidential succession processes, and give the president total control over them.²⁸ Buttressed by a mixture of discretionary distribution of favors, ideological uniformity and ‘universalist’ distribution of benefits –granted by the constitution- the party provided the organizational means to pacify the circulation of power. By disciplining and co-opting individual and masses into a culture of bureaucratic obedience, the party linked the domestication of the competing social interests to the permanency of the presidency (Hamnett, 2004; Knight, 2010b).

An elite pact, the party surfaced in 1929 after the assassination of the president Alvaro Obregón. Under the name of *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Party), the PNR incorporated state-level political leaders (regional bosses) in return for federal government patronage and set clear rules of succession to elective offices reducing the time in office to a single term.²⁹ Initially a ‘confederation of *caciques*’ (Hamnett, 2004: 235), the party gradually removed the military component from its ranks, through a series of arrangements that purposefully sought to reduce the army’s political influence and depersonalized the command of the party organization.³⁰ The generals who founded the party were the same people who gradually narrowed down the influence of the army through a series of changes that professionalized it, and incorporated the population according to sectorial affiliations, granting a larger influence to the president as the commander of the whole structure.

Reflecting the political and social circumstances of the time, as well as the political alliances between the president and specific social sectors, in 1938 the name of the party was changed to *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (Mexican Revolution Party), the PRM.³¹

²⁸ For example, between 1918 and 1928 murder was the main mechanism to access power and regulate rivalry between factions. Emiliano Zapata was murdered by the supporters of Venustiano Carranza (president between 1917 and 1920). Carranza in turned was murdered by Alvaro Obregón who became president afterwards. Francisco Villa was murdered in 1923 by a hit man hired by Obregón. In 1928 Obregón, still president was also murdered.

²⁹From the presidency and state governorships to senators, federal deputies, state deputies, and municipal presidents.

³⁰ Cacique or Caudillo are the Spanish terms used by the literature on Mexican politics to designate the type of personalised and patrimonialist leadership characteristic of Mexican politics (Pansters, 2012).

³¹ Economic recession, a product of the prolonged instability, and aggravated by the Great Depression (1929), threatened any further advancement of a progressive agenda. Despite its military defeat, the peasantry found itself in the 1930s at the center of the disputes around the leadership of the PNR. The elected president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) allied with the peasantry to create an independent political base. Out of interest and political calculation to strengthen his position vis-a-vis other political factions and the former president, Cárdenas committed to far-reaching social reforms with an emphasis in the distribution of land and the expropriation of the oil industry (Gilly, 2001; Knight, 2010a). In addition to it, and despite the organisation of the PNR, political dissent was always potentially disruptive and military rebellion a latent possibility. The party

Consisting of four sectors –organized labor, a peasant union, the army, and the ‘popular’ sector –professional and civil services-, the corporative organization of the party pursued different aims that converged with the general goal to centralize power. Through the integration of constituencies from different occupational categories, president Cárdenas expected to channel their interests, discipline their behavior through the distribution of benefits, and unify the different leaderships around presidential authority. In this sense, the incorporation of the army as a sector, aimed to counterbalance it, and regiment its political participation according to the party regulations and hierarchies. By doing so it expected to foster a transition into civilian leadership, and simultaneously avoid the transformation of the military into a differentiated caste that acted in pursuit of its own interests (Camp, 1992).

A final change of name occurred in 1946 when the party became *Partido de la Revolución Institucional* (Revolutionary Institutional Party). The PRI preserved the corporate structure of the PRM, but its new denomination reflected the widening of the party membership, its changing social composition, predominant urban orientation, and the incorporation of the military within the popular sector (Davis, 1994; Hamnett, 2004).

This change had as its institutional manifestation the organization of the *Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares*, CNOP (National Confederation of Popular Organizations). Through it a diverse set of mainly urban-based occupations were included within the Party: artisans, small agriculturalists, small industrialists, shopkeepers, professionals, youth workers, students, school teachers, bureaucrats, neighborhood organizations, agricultural cooperative members, artists, bus drivers, and the military (Davis, 1994).

The military retreated as a differentiated sector though did not modify the weight it had upon the party’s system of values, or its influence on the organization of the state security apparatus. A ‘fortress of loyalties’ (Marcos, 1985), the party assimilated the military ethos of rank, discipline, militancy, and loyalty, contributing to its ability to incorporate and order opposing factions and individuals (Camp, 1992). And, as we will see in the next section, its withdrawal of the party was parallel to the privileges it gained by policing the countryside.

Consisting of a series of interlocking cliques and social and sectorial divides, the party was welded together by a combination of personal loyalty, distribution of favors, ideological conviction, opportunism, and above all the figure of an almighty president (Williams, 2011). Using the existing forms of regional and local control and coercion in its favor (local bosses,

re-organisation proposed by Cárdenas aimed to reduce this problem and strengthen his position through a new institutional arrangement ((Davis,1994; Hamnett, 2004).

militias, and communal orders), the corporatist organization of society attempted to link every ordinary citizen to the broader political system that culminated in the president.³² The president in turn had the right to elect its successor, remove governors, and decide upon a series of other meaningful matters concerning the organization of the party (Pansters, 1997; Knight, 2013).³³

During the PRI's uninterrupted hegemony (1946-2000), the president's decisions over national development and control of the party's networks of patronage, in addition to its legal attributions, conferred him an enduring influence over the direction of the state. Carpizo (1978: 74) –my translation- notes 11 conditions that gave the president the central role within the political regime: 1) chief of the party and access to vast amounts of patronage; 2) the weakening of Congress; 3) the subordination of the Supreme Court; 4) its control of the economy through the Central Bank and hundreds of state-run enterprises; 5) the army's institutional subordination to the president; 6) control of mass-media; 7) the control of the economic resources of the federal government; 8) the constitutional and meta-constitutional attributions to control presidential succession and state governorships; 9) the control of the country's foreign policy with no congressional checks; 10) the direct control of Mexico City through a designated representative; 11) the psychological submission of Mexicans, i.e., "(...) in general the predominant role of the Mexican executive is accepted without questioning it".

Some of these conditions still remain, making the president a fundamental and powerful player within the political regime. However, important modifications have occurred. For example, in 1997 Mexico City elected a mayor from an opposition party (the leftist *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD) –Party of the Democratic Revolution- to govern for the first time. Similarly, there has been a progressive reduction of the PRI's control of the mass-media. Additionally, in 2000 the PRI lost the presidency for the first time since its foundation in the context of an increasing electoral competition. All these factors have significantly eroded presidential hegemony.

Given the centrality of the presidential institution for the functioning of the political regime, its periodical renovation became one of the most important political events in the life of the country. Despite increasing electoral competition, and the defeat of the PRI in 2000, the

³² For example, in 1960 nearly 25% of the population was registered in the party (Joy Langston, 2001).

³³ Mexican presidents rule for non-renewable six year terms during which they have command over all important policy matters. Because of the party's organization as an alliance of military chieftains, reelection was forbidden and remains so. While the PRI controlled access to presidential power, the succession remained an opaque and discretionary procedure presumably controlled by the president (Cosío, 1974; Carpizo, 1978). Despite contemporary modifications to the institutional organization of the Mexican government, at least in formal terms, the president still exerts similar functions and serves for the same time frame.

election and succession of the president has remained the central piece of political regime setting, controlling the rhythm of all other political activity in the country.

Notwithstanding the tight control exerted by the PRI, elections did not disappear but were encouraged, and low levels of electoral competition occurred periodically and systematically. Underpinned by a handful of political parties, the main one being the conservative and Catholic *Partido Acción Nacional* –National Action Party- PAN, state-controlled elections offered the regime a chance to legitimize its actions while giving opposition parties a few seats in Congress.³⁴ This proved essential for the stability of the system by retaining the notion that everyone's interests could be advanced. The continual distribution of benefits sponsored by the state (permits, subsidies, licenses, price controls), circulated through the party's membership. The additional co-option of opposition leaders by providing them with public positions gave room to maneuver and negotiate between contradictory interests.

When the economy worked satisfactorily, the system delivered tangible and credible benefits. At its apex, as an historiographic understanding of the Mexican state claims (see Brandenburg, 1964; Cosío, 1974; Carpizo, 1978), the political system, run by the party bureaucracy on behalf of the president and his coterie, seemed an almighty, stable, and non-militaristic, corporatist regime able to exert an all-encompassing social control over every individual in the country. As an observer puts it, the PRI was "(...) an organism outside of which no access to political power or influence would be possible" (Hamnett, 2004: 236). As a result, Mexico was an exception within the Latin American landscape of military dictatorships.³⁵

Yet, these interpretations disregard the role that state violence, and specifically physical aggression played in the negotiation and imposition of the PRI's political goals. More importantly, they overlook the extent to which the government remained dependent on the military to police political fault lines. Persuasion, party discipline, convenience, and opportunism were supplemented with pervasive forms of state terror, inflicted by both military and paramilitary forces.

³⁴Things changed notably in the 1970s where less collaborationist parties surfaced. A process that eventually obliged, among other economic and political factors, the PRI to concede better, transparent and fair terms of electoral competition.

³⁵ All of Mexico's presidents since 1946 have been civilians, and no serious coups or rebellion have occurred since the creation of the PNR.

4.4 The Geography of State Violence

In this section the spatial organization and distribution of the Mexican state violence after the 1910 Civil War is analyzed. Here, the examination of the form and nature of the political order that emerges from the revolution is supplemented through a close inspection of the mechanisms that governed the rural regions and populations, and the role the army had. It aims to observe the way in which, in parallel to the corporatist disciplining of the Mexican citizens, the urban/rural division of the country -linked to the industrialization of the country- favored the military governance of unruly and predominantly rural pockets. In brief, it will shed light upon the role of the Mexican military in the twentieth century and the geographical nature of its interventions, central for the further implementation of the WoD.

The state's acquisition of a mass base through the organization of an official party and the gradual expansion of state's regulatory powers over land, property, labor, education, and the development of a national ideology had a formidable effect on the stabilization and adaptability of the political regime.³⁶ The nominal subordination of the army guaranteed a nonviolent transmission of presidential power, and in general terms, the alliance of contradictory interests embodied in the party succeeded in pacifying the country. Yet the reduction of 'macro-political violence' was proportional to the inability of the national government to get rid of localised but extensive forms 'micro-political' violence (Gillingham, 2012b; Knight, 2013).

I draw on Knight's (2013) classification of the forms violence took in Mexico after the revolution and parallel them to the development and consolidation of the PRI's regime. Macro-violence, he explains, indicates forms of violence collectively organized and directed to seize or transform the state or national project. It encompasses major rebellions and the struggles between the different chieftains for national power. Micro-violence refers to a variety of decentralized, everyday, and privatized forms of violence with a clear political orientation, functional to the overall political regime, and exerted to order, control, and regulate behaviours of dissenting populations. Knight (2013: 38) puts it as follows:

“By ‘micro-political’ I mean violence that is collective and geared to some (limited, often local) socio-political purpose: most clearly, it

³⁶ For example, an indication of the political success of the regime is found in the economic development of the country. Between 1940 and 1968 the gross domestic product grew at an average rate of 6.4% and manufacturing output 8.2% per annum. In addition to it, the government amplified its control to access to capitalist markets through multiple and varied bureaucratic mechanisms from transport concessions and national export quotas to street vendors' permits. (Gillingham & Smith, 2014). In these terms, the Mexican state was apparently successful in its centralizing endeavour.

involves outright political conflict over elections, candidacies, political jurisdiction, and the pursuit of office. More broadly – and here I am stretching the qualifier ‘political’ – it includes the collective struggles of workers and peasants (and their opponents: bosses and landlords, as well as other workers and peasants).”

This classification of violence according to geographical scale provides an account, on one hand, for the fragmented and ongoing nature of the state-making process. On the other, it notices the fragility of the foundations of the Mexican political system or, to be more precise, its fault lines, which located where privatized modes of violence met with the formal state-apparatus of violence.³⁷

Linked to the accrued irresolution of the social demands that had initially triggered the revolution, a mounting inequality instigated by state fiscal and agrarian policies, and conservative political dissatisfaction with the ideological orientation of the state, multiple and diverse forms of political contestation remained, instigating conflicts in the periphery of the system. The periphery of the system was predominantly rural given the seat of the national powers in Mexico City and the urban orientation of the government. The spatial and economic articulation of the country informed thus the background of the protest. The post-revolutionary landscape was built upon the strategic industrial orientation of the post-revolutionary coalition and the increasing urban demographic growth, both instigated by the intensive transference of economic resources to urban centres, mainly Mexico City. Subsidized by the countryside and peasantry, the political regime’s project of modernization opened the door to localised and heterogeneous forms of resistance and protest.

Gillingham & Smith (2014:12) explain the process of economic subordination of the countryside in the years following the party’s institutionalisation and its mode of modernization, with the policy of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI):

Rural workers, above all, paid the bills for ISI. Population growth was not matched with land or credit; the agrarian reform was curtailed amid accusations of congenital low productivity. The role of

³⁷ The distinction made between both macro and micro-violences make sense in historic hindsight since from the point of view of the present, it is relatively easy to judge the dimensions and implications of different events. More complicated is to apply the same criteria to the present. However, for the purposes of this description, Knight’s classification remains valid

agriculture was to supply export crops to the north and cheap food to the cities, permitting the low urban wages that enabled industrialization. The state supported agribusiness through massive irrigation projects and tax breaks and credits, policies that—combined with price controls—undermined ejidatarios and smallholders. Between 1939 and 1947 the purchasing power of agricultural workers declined 47 percent; corn prices, adjusted for inflation, fell 33 percent between 1957 and 1973. Meanwhile fiscal policy failed to redistribute wealth from richer urban to poorer rural zones. The “Mexican miracle” presupposed, in short, a systematic transfer of resources from countryside to city and from south and centre to north.

The conflicts that emerged from this context, an overwhelming amount of which were based in rural locations, evolved from electoral disputes and peasant and labour protests, to localised forms of insurgency.

A far cry from the model of a rational unitary actor with clearly delimited zones of intervention and bureaucratized violence, the Mexican state proved incapable of managing public order in this context. Gillingham (2012b) notices for example how inefficient and inaccurate the Mexican state’s cognitive apparatus was with regards to its ability to ‘monitor’ –describe and quantify, and interpret’, violence, by the beginning of the 1950s. Consequently, the extent and length of practices of violence in Mexican provinces remained an obscure object of speculation subject to the scarce resources and intelligence devoted to understanding it. As he himself notices (2012: 164), “Early leaders of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (sic) (PRI) were unsure as to how violent the countryside genuinely remained; they often suspected the worst and kept their suspicions as quiet as possible; and quite often they seem to have been right.”

Among the conditions of possibility for these gaps in the coercive capacities of the Mexican state are the contested position of the post-revolutionary coalition, the extraordinary leeway granted to the army to hold power, and the fragmented geography of the country, as well as the collusion between the federal security forces and local networks of power for personal and mutual advantage in a context of national intra-elite disputes and changing alliances (Davis, 2010; 2012; Gillingham. 2012a; Gillingham & Smith, 2014; Knight, 2013; Koonings, 2012; Padilla 2008, Pansters, 2012).

On the other hand, the difficult topography of the country remained an obstacle to consolidate a coherent state. The vast and isolated spaces, shaped by mountains in the

north and highlands in the south had historically served as refuge of rebellious groups and pockets of unrest; controlled by informal networks of power and local chieftains after the revolution, these regions remained a source of constant troubles (Stratfor, 2009)

Along regional, class, and ethnic divides, pacification became an ongoing process, in which peasant, indigenous communities (Gillingham, 2012b; Montemayor, 2010b; Padilla, 2008), and industrial workers (Hodges & Gandy, 2002) became the main objects for selective repression and control. The formal mechanisms devised to regulate conflict and socialize the population into sectorial identities, restrained by strong hierarchies reminiscent of the army's discipline, were supplemented by both the state's formal security apparatus (the military and the police) and pre-existing local and regional forms of control and regulation.

A reflection of a heterogeneous landscape of struggling forces and a territory still fragmented by opposing interests, the cooperation between the federal forces and the multiple local forces, from caciques (strong men), to armed gangs and para-military groups, occurred across the organization of arrangements of convenience cemented through diverse forms of corruption and co-optation. Gillingham (2012a) documents the horizontal relationship between local armed actors and the federal army in Guerrero and Veracruz (both southern states) in different moments between 1920 and 1950. Rath (2013) explains at length how, for example, General Maximino Avila Camacho, governor of Puebla (1937-1941), relied on, and organized, local networks of caciques (strong men) and paramilitary groups to get rid of political dissidents.

In addition, Knight, (2013) and Rath (2013) provide multiple examples of the presence of caciques and para-military armed groups controlling regional politics and negotiating the pacification of their local spaces of power with the federal government during the twentieth century. Padilla (2008; 2012) on the other hand, describes the protracted atmosphere of fear and violence in the southern state of Morelos, where radical agrarian movements kept struggling to receive the benefits of the land distribution promised by the 1917 constitution. The alliance between the military and local caciques was used to crackdown and eradicate these movements. For Davis (2012) and Gillingham (2012a; 2014), it speaks of a state much more precarious than the traditional images produced by its 'cultural managers'.

4.4.1 *The Mexican Army and the State Violence*

The role the military took in this context explains the scope of the state's coercive instruments, the limits of the civilian-military relationship, and the separation of war and policing according to an urban/rural divide, i.e., an intensive and direct military policing of the countryside and a civilianization of the policing of city spaces. Although much less prominent than its Latin American counter-parts, the Mexican military's assistance remained fundamental to the disciplining of unruly populations and spaces (Rath, 2013; Ronfeldt, 1975).³⁸

Having renounced any intention to compete for, or seize by force, the presidency towards the end of the 1940s, the military's withdrawal from the PRI turned them into a full time constabulary force.³⁹ Geographical and political circumstances shaped this particular outcome: the proximity to the United States and the absence due south of a probable enemy discouraged the political visibility of the army.⁴⁰ In addition, the simultaneous challenge to consolidate a stable regime, achieve economic development, and hold power, drove the intentions of some sections of the military leadership to subordinate the army and shrink its political participation (Davis, 2010; Rath, 2016).

The post-revolutionary army was socially heterogeneous and a reflection of the nature of the civil war itself. Competing agrarian, urban and industrial interests were represented in the different military factions, which in turn mirrored Mexico's regional diversity. Southern radical agrarianism, coexisted with more conservative sections linked themselves with novel forms of land concentration that followed the reconfiguration of the political order after the revolution. In the early stages of the post-civil war period, the main generals seem to have understood that to gain stability, the military needed to be controlled and have its power reduced its power. Alvaro Obregón (1920-1924), president, general and member of the already mentioned Sonora dynasty, had to this purpose dispersed the military into multiple zones across the country, and had their members too rotating constantly to avoid conspiracies and further challenges (Camp, 1992).

³⁸ Its size for example has been always considerable inferior to other Latin American States. In the 1970s just 0.13 % of the total Mexican population was in the military in contrast with approximately 0.6% in most Latin American countries. In terms of the state's expenditures the Mexican military received 0.86% of the GNP while most of the Latin American states got between 2 to 3% (Camp, 1992:2).

³⁹ The political leadership was with one exception from 1920 to 1946 military.

⁴⁰ As Grayson (1999:11) puts it, "After all, Guatemala and other Caribbean Basin countries posed no threat to Mexico, while its armed forces could not even hope to repel an attack launched by the United States—in the extremely unlikely event of a conflict between these neighbors, who share a border 2,000 miles long".

Changing alliances and constant military rebellions (1923-4, 1927, and 1929) in the two decades after the revolution speak of a transition towards civilian leadership that was not by any means simple, smooth or fully achieved.⁴¹ Drawing on persisting regional hotbeds of violence ingrained in a difficult topography, military cadres resisted and opposed any attempt to reduce their public participation, encouraging the creation of militias, instigating rebellions, and practicing insubordination (Davis, 1994; Rath, 2013). Ultimately, a favorable economic conjuncture from the 1940s to the 1960s, a genuine hope for a lasting peace, and the competition and alliances among different constituencies (industrial workers, peasants, bureaucrats, the military itself), favored an informal arrangement whereby the army voluntarily confined itself to supervising contentious elections, disciplining governors and municipal authorities, and operating as a counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics force mainly in the countryside (Camp, 1992; Ronfeldt, 1975).⁴² Through its mandate to police vast areas of regional and local instability, mainly in the countryside, the military negotiated its own legal impunity and local operational autonomy in exchange for its obedience to national authorities (Davis, 1994; Gillingham, 2012b; Rath, 2013; Gillingham & Smith, 2014).⁴³

Gillingham (2012: 187-188) explains at length the multiple functions the army fulfilled in the countryside as follows:

In towns and cities the army controlled crowds, the press, gamblers, prostitutes, elections, and even municipal governments. Soldiers investigated banditry, robbery, and murder and arrested suspects; they sometimes guarded prisons in the bargain. Army commanders were critical determinants in the provincial balance of power: they frequently decided which faction to arm (with Mausers, as *defensas rurales*) and which to disarm (under the provisions of *despistolización*). And they committed violence themselves, in a confused world of half-formal policing missions and half-informal

⁴¹ President Cárdenas (1934-1940) for example, himself a general, encouraged the creation of peasant factions in the south to deal with military chieftains, and in Mexico City allied with urban workers and the military to counterbalance the increasing power of the local police, in hands of residual elements of the overthrown dictatorship (Davis, 1994; Rath, 2013).

⁴² Davis (1994) recounts in detail the multiple and conflictive alliances and negotiations that informed the articulation of a national government in Mexico after the revolution drawing on the experience of the Mexico City management. A fascinating work itself, it is a good example of the contingent nature of the political arrangements that produced durable institutions.

⁴³ On the other hand, in addition to the activities the military carried out, a wide scope of other actions supplementing its civilian role were undertaken such as applied medicine, dentistry, vaccination campaigns, road construction and repairs, reforestation and placing food supplies, and disaster relief (Camp, 1992; Kilroy, 1990; Ronfeldt, 1975).

political maneuvering. Formally, routine rural work meant garrison duty, patrols, and escorts, the mere presence of troops fulfilling a significant deterrent role. When deterrence failed, small detachments went to suppress gunfights and clear up village vendettas. Larger conflicts—waves of cattle-rustling or banditry, inter-village feuding, or the intensifying of local agrarian disputes that such phenomena reflected—drew larger responses: formations of several companies, sometimes reinforced with reservists, who embarked on regional sweeps that were often counterinsurgencies in all but name, complete with opponents who fought back.”

For his part, Rath (2013: 121) describes the military policing in the state of Puebla in the 1940s, noticing that its mission was essentially to get rid of political opponents by deterring or exterminating them: “(...) when soldiers did police work, it was sometimes conducted in the military style of violently countering a threat rather than accumulating evidence for legal trial. Army officers could organize or carry out torture and extrajudicial executions with impunity”

In exchange, they were free to engage in land speculation and logging, create private monopolies that supplied military equipment, smuggle contraband goods, protect alcohol monopolies (Rath, 2013) and, as Astorga (2005) argues, participate in the drug trade. In this specific regard, Baja California is an early example of the links between drug smuggling and the military.

Accordingly, after 1940 the army’s territorial organization and distribution was shaped to prevent any form of generalized unrest, suppress agrarian resistances, and protect Mexico City from disorder or armed rebellion (Gillingham, 2012a; Rath, 2016; Ronfeldt, 1975). Gillingham (2012b) and Rath (2013) describe the territorial distribution and strategic deployment of the military in the 1940s, observing the dual mission of regional military command to police the countryside with flexible units, keeping the bulk of the equipment and troops for the defense of Mexico City:

“The mainstay of rural repression and policing was the army, by far the most powerful violent agency, mustering some 55,000 men in four divisions, forty-seven infantry battalions, and twenty-one cavalry regiments. It was a two-tiered military. The divisions, containing the best troops, tanks, and artillery, were reserved to defend the capital

against disorder or military rebellion, while the inferior, often undermanned infantry and cavalry units were stretched thinly across the thirty-three provincial Military Zones. The cities housed regimental garrisons; strategic or conflictual cabeceras were garrisoned by companies or platoons; rural conflict zones were patrolled by flying columns” (Gillingham, 2012b:175)

This wide mandate was supplemented with sporadic, but consistent acts of repression over workers’ and students’ demonstrations in urban settings.⁴⁴ The distinction between urban and rural military engagements resulted from the negotiated retraction of the military from competing for national political power, and the persistence of grassroots violence in the countryside and the highlands. Linked to the government’s conscious decision to foster economic growth through industrial development, the spatial distribution of the different instrument of government (coercion, co-optation, and disciplining), followed the fault lines inherited from the revolution.

Deepened by the industrialization of the country, agrarian protests persisted, instigated by both the unequal distribution of its benefits, and the purposeful effort to facilitate the development of the cities at expense of the countryside. As mentioned earlier, the macroeconomic priorities of the state orientated public investments to manufacturing and exporting agriculture. Agriculture was artificially regulated through price controls, selective credits, tax breaks, and massive irrigation projects that mainly benefited agribusinesses at expense of smallholders and *ejidatarios*. At the receiving end of this program, salaries were kept at their lowest with only scattered protests due to the indirect rural subsidy. Consequently, between 1939 and 1947, the purchasing power of agricultural workers declined 47% and corn prices reduced their value 33% between 1956 and 1973. The winners in this process were the big land owners, industrialists and urban dwellers (Davis, 2017; Gillingham & Smith 2014: 12)

Since the macroeconomical priorities of the government were disproportionately placed in manufacturing and export agriculture, the disadvantaged and main resistance to this project was concentrated in the countryside (Davis, 1994; Padilla, 2008). In exchange for the control of local fiefdoms, operational autonomy, and legal impunity, the military committed to the

⁴⁴ Mounting labor and student protests in Mexico City were repressed. Some examples are the occupation of the National Polytechnic Institute in 1942, the replacement of striking telegraph workers and the repression of electricians and oil industry workers in 1958, the disciplining of striking railroad workers in 1959 and medics in 1965 all of them demanding wage increases. (Camp, 1992; Hodges & Gandy, 2002; Smith, 1996).

pacification of the country and granted its overall obedience to the civilian leadership (Rath, 2013). How precarious and fragile this arrangement was can be seen through the series of measures the civilian leadership took in the wake of its birth, a measure of the extent of the mutual distrust. To further its control over the army, the civilian leadership cut its budget, kept it technologically underdeveloped, restricted any form of cooperation with the United States' army, and imposed controls over the regional circulation and distribution of military officials to avoid lasting agreements between them and the local forces. By shrinking federal expenditures, isolating the army from international influences, and excluding it from the party's organization, civilian leaders sought to fragment the army's power, depoliticize it, and avoid challenges to the national government (Camp, 1992; Kilroy, 1990).

Yet the commitment between the army and the civilian leadership succeeded in at least four ways: 1) since 1940 all Mexican presidents have been civilians; 2) there have not been any military coups; 3) the military's participation as public servants, although growing since the 1980s, has been carefully limited, and; 4) no armed rebellion has succeeded in overthrowing the national government.

The specifics on the extent of the military's political influence remain opaque to public scrutiny for reasons that concern the hermetic nature of the Mexican state and the lack of accountability instruments. Relying on anecdotal evidence, Camp (1992) suggests episodes of political blackmail by the army officialdom to its civilian counterparts in the context of the repression of student protests in the late 1960s. Negotiating its intervention in exchange for budget increases and focused programs of technological and organizational modernization, the army progressively augmented its influence, evident in its increasingly public visibility. On the other hand, Kate Doyle (2004) refers to the difficulties when investigating the Mexican army as follows, "trying to report intelligently on the Mexican military is like trying to see in the dark - it's all shadowy outlines and no details. The army is famously secretive, opaque, and hostile to public scrutiny. Just ask the people who write about it." Be as it may, the role the military had within the government of individuals in Mexico in the first half of the twentieth century speaks of both, the fault lines that underpinned and shaped the state violence, and the precarious consistency of the civilian-military relationship. As will be discussed in the following chapter, it anticipates, to a great extent, the army's ulterior participation in the counter-narcotics tasks and its prominent role in the pacification of strategic urban centers in the twentieth-first century.

4.5 Conclusions

To conclude, in Mexico the military achieved a distinctive position within the post-revolutionary political arrangements, which granted it a predominate position within the distribution of favors and the control of territory. Yet its relevance has been obscured by the *sui generis* relation between the civilian leadership and the army. This is a result of the interplay between the political and economic strategies of the civilian leadership, the latent risk of territorial disintegration, and the need to pacify the country. These conditions influenced the role the army has played in Mexico, in contrast with the rest of Latin America. I now make a few broader concluding observations with regards to the form of Mexican politics, the spatiality of the exertion of violence, and the role of the army.

Firstly, the socio-spatial and economic features of the country enabled the constitution of a distinctive organization of the state instruments of control and regulation, as well as a geographical distribution of the exertion of violence. The combined experience of the problematic process of decolonization, the conservation of the territory, and the constitution of a unified polity shaped a state project organized around the definition of the spatial limits of the nation, and the pacification of its unruly spaces

Secondly, the organization of a single party and the tactical subordination of the military followed the trail of such redefinition, as well as the formulation of the strategies, tactics, and rationalities through which the Mexican individuals would be integrated into a broader national project. The idea of the Mexican subject as an amalgamation of the European and indigenous identities is consequent with that aim. It laid out the foundations for the control and regulation of Mexico in the twentieth century.

Thirdly, the economy with sought to produce a national unit territorially consistent with the logic of the industrialization of the country, structured a distinctive geography of resistance, state violence, and military policing. It in turn, determined the role of the Mexican military as a permanent counterinsurgency unit, and a constabulary force. The geography of state violence took the form of an urban/rural divide. The latter was the predominant space of military incursions, repression, and sporadic forms of martial governance (see next chapter). Finally, the Mexican state distanced itself from the history of military coups in Latin America through a successful, although nonetheless precarious, balance between the civilian and military branches of the government. Nevertheless, as observed in this chapter, the military remained an influential institution in the organization of the state. This aspect is important in order to understand how counter-narcotics policies were integrated into the established authority of the army. Accordingly, the role the army took in counter-narcotics towards the

1970s followed the trail of this historic trajectory, grounded in both the geography the country and the spatial politics of the Mexican state.

Chapter 5. The Political Restructuring of the State and the Emergence of the WoD

5.1 Introduction

This chapter expands on the analysis carried out in the previous chapter on the conditions that underlie the development and implementation of the WoD. The analysis focuses on the deterioration of the political-economic foundations of the practices of control devised after the civil war. Social protests, and the first signs of the erosion of the spatial divide that structured the military policing as exclusive of the countryside, followed the exhaustion of the model of industrialization in the late 1970s. Here I discuss the impact of the economic reorganisation of the economy after the 1982 debt default, the economic restructuring carried out under the supervision of the IMF and the WB, and the simultaneous emergence of drug trafficking as a national security problem. The conceptualization of drug trafficking as a national threat, and the definitive shift towards a more intensive military influence over the state's routines of violence are framed by both the decline of the older instruments of government devised after the civil war, and the erosion of the economic arrangements shaped by the industrialization of the country.

Accordingly, it will be shown how drug-trafficking gained currency and lethality as the Mexican state's foundations eroded. Additionally, the analysis of these multi-level processes will demonstrate how transnational processes and international dynamics, (the shifting nature of drug shipping routes, the securitization of drug trafficking, and US pressures upon Mexico to adopt a tougher approach to drugs interdiction) shaped the political agenda of the Mexican state. In this regard, the preservation of the political regime interplays with transnational political and economic dynamics to inform the contemporary centrality of the WoD. Thus, this chapter contributes to the thesis' central argument by analysing how the deterioration of the instruments to govern individuals that emerged from the geopolitical dilemmas of the Mexican state, enabled its punitive reorientation, thus allowing the further classification of citizens and spaces as criminogenic.⁴⁵

The analysis proceeds in four sections that examine the deterioration of the mechanisms of control and regulation built after the Mexican revolution (1910-1920). In the first section, the economic and political conditions that contributed to the early deterioration of the post-revolutionary political arrangements are set out. Then the deterioration of the economic foundations of the political regime, the increasing social unrest, the implementation

⁴⁵ See the next chapter for a detailed analysis of this reclassification.

of counter-insurgency operations, and the intensification of counter-narcotics operations are examined. These political and economic dynamics preceded the massive economic restructuring the state underwent in the 1980s, as well as the increasing participation of the military in the repression of social movements. I examine the economic and political restructuring the country underwent after the debt crisis in 1982. Initial signs of this process are the emergence of organized social and political protests in both urban and rural locales, as well as the formation of armed movements.

The period is relevant to understand the processes and dynamics that established the conditions for the further militarization of the policing of the country and the radicalization of the repressive instruments of the state. Thus, I then analyse the emergence of drug trafficking as a national security problem, as well, as the rationalities and geopolitical dynamics that shaped its definition as a political priority for the Mexican government. Attention is granted to the recodification of Mexican citizens as neoliberal subjects and the concurrent eruption of socio-political conflicts that challenged the political and economic assumptions of the economic restructuring of the country. The political calculations that informed the radicalization of the WoD are directly linked to the parallel radicalization of social protests, economic deterioration, and the increasing economic importance narco-trafficking gained in this context. Finally, I examine the period in which NAFTA came into force. This was a decisive stage for the intensification of the WoD and the NAFTA years provide the vocabulary, political technologies, training, and rationales that enabled the enlargement and urbanization of the WoD. Overall, the main axis of the analysis is the intersection between militarization and state deterioration. The chapter ends with the first presidential term for the political opposition in the contemporary history of the country from 2006-2012. In the following chapters, the 2006-2012 period will be addressed, when the WoD takes a definitive urban-centred approach.

5.2 Deterioration and Transition

Despite of the dearth of scholarship on military policing in Mexico, the available critical work on the subject –focused on the 1940s-1960s⁴⁶-- (Davis, 2012; Davis, 2010; Gillingham, 2012a; 2012b; Knight, 2013; Rath, 2013; 2016; Padilla, 2008) agrees on two important points: 1) the de-escalation of power transference at the national level (i.e., presidential succession), succeeded and was a major institutional achievement; and 2) parallel

⁴⁶The attention on in this period is consequent with the available data, mainly archives released by the Mexican government on military affairs.

to national de-escalation, persistent and concealed subnational –local- forms of conflict, protest, violence, and political competition, remained. This was heavily concentrated in the countryside. In this context, the military, as a de facto police force, was key to preserving the political order of the country, in proportion to the state monopoly on the legitimate use of force (Rath, 2013: 163).⁴⁷ A mainstay of the political stability of the state, and central for the governing of individuals, this military-civil relationship produced an uneven geography of power and violence that was experienced as mild authoritarianism in urban centers and state terror in the countryside (Aviña, 2014).

By exploring this military-civilian relationship, this section asks: at what point can one situate the transition from this geographical divide of state violence towards its current configuration in which the urban presence of the military is the norm? The exploration of the geography of the exertion of this state violence and its transition during the twentieth century is essential for understanding the socio-spatial implications of the recent urban turn of the WoD.

Thus, in other words this question asks what socio-historic conditions modified the balance between the civilian leadership and the military, making possible the current WoD, which consists predominantly of strategic deployments of the military to patrol cities? In doing so, it explains how assessing continuity and change in any given political regime is dependent on finding a non-specified number of institutional rules, behaviors, practices (legal, juridical, economic, cultural, and so on) and geographies, that account for a stable system of exchange and retribution, as well as a collectively shared understanding of the possible outcomes of individual and collective behaviors (Pansters & Castillo, 2007).

Yet, the state configures differentially according to the specifics of local geographies and economic priorities, such that the state is better understood as a continuum of non-homogeneous modalities of coercion and discipline.

For example, the recent historiographic literature on Mexico's politics has looked at different regions and populations to note the diverse configurations of the state regarding urban/rural divides and modes of conflict according to regional differences (Davis, 1994; Aviña, 2014; Craib, 2004; Gillingham, 2012b; Higgins, 2004; Joseph & Nugent, 1994; Padilla, 2008, 2012; Rath, 2013). In some regions of Guerrero, especially the mountains, experiments in full military governance took place in the 1970s in the context of counter-

⁴⁷ These unspoken rules as Rath observes (2013: 168) functioned as an informal understanding that guaranteed institutional continuity. These rules consisted in the implicit acceptance by the civilian leadership of this state of affairs: "In exchange for national acquiesce, officers could still expect to wield political influence in the provinces, to graft, to resist central policies of rotation and retirement, and to enjoy autonomy in operational matters, provided these powers were never acknowledged in public".

insurgency operations. In general, the police took control of the public order well into the 1950s and strong men were fundamental for the political control of the state (Gillingham, 2012b). On the other hand, in some regions of Veracruz, a varied set of ‘violent entrepreneurs’ determined who lived and died between 1920 and 1950, and an effective state police was not in place until the late 1940s. In any case, the military in that state, although formally subordinated to the civilian leadership, kept broad operational autonomy (Gillingham, 2012a; 2012b).

For their part, Piccato, (2001) and Davis (2012) have examined the disciplining of urban populations, especially the urban poor, through police surveillance and different configurations of political patronage in Mexico City during the twentieth century, emphasizing the coercive elements and modes of rule according to class and spatial position within the city. Finally Higgins (2004) has analyzed the rationalities organizing the relations between the state and the indigenous populations in Chiapas.

The distinction between urban and rural violence is useful as a heuristic device though the literature shows intensities of violence were more varied. Pansters & Castillo (2007) refer to the myriad of violence historically prevalent in Mexico City; accordingly, a much more nuanced approach to the state’s effects have to consider the way in which violence is unevenly distributed according to gender, ethnic and class divides that are by no means ‘mild’. As Aviña (2014: 14) puts it: “What seemed mild authoritarianism in Mexico City appeared as a state terror in the highlands of Sonora, Guerrero, Sinaloa, and Chihuahua, where army units brutally attacked rural communities throughout the 1960s and 1970s”

For the Mexican case, the state’s control of its constituencies, either through violence or co-optation, speaks of a precarious, mobile, and historically contingent articulation between its components –the party, the president, the masses, and the army. A function of spatial differences, instigated by macro-economic preferences and patterns of industrial led-urbanization, the state’s pervasiveness and violence was differentially articulated, exerted, and experienced across different spatial scales. Between 1920-1960, there was a clear distinction between the military presence in the countryside, its more exceptional presence in larger cities, and the implementation of more subtle forms of persuasion in urban settings.

5.2.1 The 1970s: Social Protest, Counter-Insurgency and the WoD

Drawing on the previous chapter, some general considerations suggest possible lines of transition and change within this geographical distribution of violence in Mexico. They

concern the economic re-orientation of the political system and the role that the military played within the organization of the regime's political stability.

Despite regional and local differences on the governance of individuals, the overall success of the post-revolutionary government was predicated upon the industrialization of cities and the subordination of the countryside to this purpose. Through the control of food prices and the additional control of salaries to reduce production costs, the peasantry and the working class subsidized the industrialization and further urbanization of the country (Davis, 1994; Davis, 2010; Gillingham & Smith, 2014). In general terms, the legitimacy of the regime was dependent on the central government's capacity to continually distribute material rewards and avoid the constitution of a general alliance against it, co-opting, repressing, and negotiating with its constituent groups as necessary.⁴⁸ Accordingly, economic growth was indispensable to maintain this type of political agreement and was similarly dependent on patronage networks, co-optation, and violence. Unevenly distributed, the gross domestic product grew at an average rate of 6.4%, and manufacturing output 8.2% per annum during the period that was called the 'economic miracle' – roughly between 1940 and 1968 (Gillingham & Smith, 2014). Able to compensate for the unequal distribution of economic benefits through the corporate organization of society and other mechanisms (e.g., subsidies, price controls, wage agreements, and limited land distribution), the political regime proved to be a stable machinery. Coercion functioned to regulate the occasional disruptions in urban centers and was a constant in the state's routines of government in the countryside.

Capital-intensive, the model of growth underpinning the political regime started to show signs of deterioration in the 1960s, and increasing unrest appeared in urban and rural landscapes alike by the end of that decade. Rising inflation, sagging growth, and increasing public debt were coupled with government's decisions that deepened the strategy to help the national industry at expense of the workers and the countryside.⁴⁹ Failing to meet expanding job needs as Mexico's population boomed, growing urban discontent led to a series of student demonstrations from June to October of 1968.⁵⁰ In October 2nd, a public demonstration, previous to the opening of the Summer Olympics in Mexico City, was broken up by the army. About three hundred protestors were shot (Williams, 2011).

⁴⁸ The separation of the masses into three differentiated sections within the party, and especially between workers and peasants was thought to avoid the constitution of an organized front around common demands. The poor were purposefully separated fearing possible rebellions and the organization of a common party (Smith, 1996).

⁴⁹ Through a regressive fiscal reform that taxed disproportionately labour income and the freezing of the minimum price for the purchase of basic grains and the reduction of the share of agricultural credit (Smith, 1996; Halperin, 2005).

⁵⁰ The population climbed from 20 million in 1940 to 36 million in 1960 to 70 million in 1980. A million people entered the labour force every year (Smith, 1996: 82; Rochlin, 1997).

Meanwhile, in the mountains of Guerrero, two different guerrilla movements rose up in arms in the early 1970s: *Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria* (ACNR) –National Revolutionary Civic Association- and the Party of the Poor. With no success, both guerrilla groups had been exterminated by 1975, in what Aviña (2014) describes as an ‘experiment of full military governance’ in the state of Guerrero. Relevant as illustrations of the state’s authoritarian disposition, these two events occurred alongside an equally important but quiet transition regarding the size of the army. Between 1950 and the early 1970s, the army grew by 31 % and went from 55 000 members to 80 000. In addition, the military received a 15% pay rise with the construction costs for military projects and the promotion rate for generals and colonels doubling between 1969 and 1973 (Kilroy, 1990: 125). Part of an intentional program of modernization, these increments were justified as a reward for the military’s service, despite its increasing political latitude vis a vis its civilian counterparts, and the abundance of rumors of an imminent coup during this time.⁵¹ Considerably less intense than in its South American counterparts, this increment was however an important modification within the cycle of collaboration between the civilian leadership and the military, and a sign of the hard times ahead for the economic direction of the country, its political stability, and the state’s understanding of national security.⁵² For Kilroy (1990) and Camp (1992), its growing size and budget were indications of the military’s rising demands in exchange for doing the dirty work of the PRI.

With no evident displays of violence in larger cities, the military remained in the shadows of the repression of leftist dissidents undertaken during the 1970s, while simultaneously assuming a major role in the government’s counter narcotic strategy sponsored by the U.S. Over time, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics operations fused in a single technical continuum through which the military would eventually take over the coordination and provision of urban security (Kilroy, 1990; Wray, 1997). This fusion, poorly documented given the current restrictions on access to military and government records, is suggested by a handful of analysts that describe an incipient interlocking between US counter-insurgency knowledge, military equipment, and Mexican military governance (Camp, 1992; Kilroy, 1990; Wray, 1997; Enciso, 2010; Grillo, 2011; Paley, 2014). Through counter-

⁵¹ Drawing on rumors and political gossip, according to Kilroy (1990) Camp (1992), Scherer (1999), the military was absolutely dissatisfied with the civilian government, blaming it for lack of ideas, political inability and ineptitude.

⁵² In a context in which national security was equivalent to the conservation of the status quo, and the existence of the political regime, social protests were naturally seen as a threat. (Curzio, 2007). For the case of the military expenditure, in 1976 in Mexico it was 0.6%, half that of Brazil and a quarter that of Argentina (Gillingham, 2012a: 230).

narcotics operations CANADAR (1972) and CONDOR (1976), the military deployed units of about 25 000 soldiers in Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Durango, Jalisco, Michoacán and Guerrero.⁵³

Traditional conflict areas, these operations officially consisted of crop spraying, and raids across the countryside and highlands searching for drug traffickers (Kilroy, 1990; Wray, 1997).⁵⁴ Sponsored by the United States counter-narcotics program, these operations were provided with thirty-nine Bell helicopters, twenty two small aircraft (Muskeeteer and Beechcraft training planes), and one executive jet (Grillo, 2011: 50; Wray, 1997). According to Kilroy (1990: 182), the operational behavior of the Mexican military resembled U.S. military tactics in Vietnam, with selected units setting up base camps and deploying ‘(...) reconnaissance patrols on search and destroy missions.’ A CIA declassified document (CIA, 1997) notes the probable circulation of technologies and tactics between counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics operations in the context of the operation CONDOR:

The Mexican Army recently expanded its role in antinarcotics operations (...) This new effort will be mounted in southern poppy-growing areas and will supplement Operation Condor (sic), the military’s manual eradication program in the north (...) the Army also will take advantage of the eradication campaign to uncover any arms trafficking and guerrilla activities (...) Army eradication forces may devote as much effort to internal security as eradication. They do not have their own airlift support capabilities, however, and they may seek helicopters and other equipment from the Attorney General’s limited eradication resources

Although the U.S. interest in destroying drug crops defined the spaces of intervention, it is arguable that U.S. training and equipment modified the Mexican military’s behavior and objectives. Firstly, the Mexican army had already implemented counter-insurgency operations with no U.S. aid, as it was one of its functions after the revolution.⁵⁵ Secondly, the geography

⁵³ The eradication of marihuana and opium poppy, carried out through CONDOR and CANADAR operations, also shifted the local narcotraffickers towards the shipment of cocaine a few years later (Astorga,2005; Cano, 2009).

⁵⁴ According to Astorga (2005: 125) as part of Operation CONDOR 10 000 soldiers were deployed just in the state of Sinaloa. One of the first drug-related operations of pacification in the country sponsored by the US, it used paraquat, herbicide tested in Vietnam to eradicate marihuana and opium poppy crops.

⁵⁵ Before the 1970s, the Mexican-United States ‘military intercourse’ had been discreet, mediated by the Mexican historical distrust of the U.S., and the strategic rejection of the civilian leadership to the army’s acquisition of knowledge and equipment that affected the already fragile balance between them (Camp, 1992;

of the drug crops strongly coincided with an already established geography of political resistance and military pacification in Mexico. The states under surveillance, Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Durango and Guerrero, were part of a geographic corridor of instability and topographic inaccessibility (i.e., isolated from major urban centres) already well known to the military (Aviña, 2014; Hodges and Gandy, 2002; Montemayor, 2010b).⁵⁶ Lastly there is a dearth of public records on these missions (Rath, 2013).

It is important to keep this in mind, as we look at the particular ways through which the global currents of consumption and intervention informing the WoD are negotiated by the actors concerned with state security, particularly, the Mexican army. The ‘cunning agency’ (Müller, 2015) of these actors, i.e., the purposeful use of the resources granted for the foreign intervention/assistance to benefit their institutional and political agendas, is essential to form a better picture of how configurations of power and knowledge are formed in time and space, creating complex interactions and entanglements between intervening countries and ‘aid’ recipients. External intrusion, in this case U.S.’ was supplemented with the Mexican’s army receiving of technology and knowledge to help its own domestic objectives, i.e., to increase its power, operational autonomy and political leeway.

What the available evidence confirms however is the overlap between counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics equipment and operations funded by U.S. money. So, at best at this stage of Mexican military counter-drug operations, the U.S. help might have helped to widen its operational autonomy, rather than radically modify its approach to violence. It was an important change however, since by binding Mexico’s security structure to U.S. security practices, as noted in a CIA (1997) document, the participation of the military in counter-narcotic operations structured a technical and rational continuum between the anti-drug campaign and the punishment of peasants’ organizations, and social movements in old guerrilla strongholds (Montemayor, 2010a; Monsiváis, 2004; Wray, 1997).

From this time on, the intersection between the Mexican repressive apparatus, and the anti-drugs discourse, paved the way for both the reconfiguration of domestic threats into transnational security concerns, and the association of drug traffickers and the state security

Kilroy, 1990; Wray 1997). Thus, for example from 1950 to 1960 Mexico received just \$6 million in military aid, rejected in 1950 a mutual defence assistance pact, and was with Cuba in 1960, the only two countries that had no Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), an institutional instance fostered by the U.S. government to further cooperation (Kilroy, 1990: 239; Camp, 1992: 56). In addition, US military participation in drug interdiction operations stretches back to 1938 (Astorga, 2003).

⁵⁶ Rochlin (1997) points out the link between the demand for specific drugs (opium (1930s-1950s), marijuana (1960s), heroin (1970s), cocaine (1980 onwards), and the configuration of the productive structure not only of Mexico’s market, but the whole Latin American region.

apparatus.⁵⁷ Additionally, it provided a justification for the further expansion of the military, that was already looking for ways to deepen its intervention in the policy making process. It is in the 1980s though, as we shall see, when the combination between narco-trafficking, economic crisis, and political restructuring modify the terms of the implicit rules of the game between civilians and soldiers, generating clear spatial consequences.

5.3 Economic Crisis and the Transformation of the State Space (1982-2000)

5.3.1 *The Debt Default*

In 1982 Mexico entered into default on its national debt; a consequence of the mismanagement of the economy and the limits of its model of industrialization. The financial crisis catalysed a series of economic and political reforms aimed at containing fractures in the political regime model by downsizing the economic weight of the government, opening up spaces for electoral competition, and allowing the transference of power to political opponents through fairer rules regulating electoral competition. This section contributes to the central argument of the thesis by exploring the economic restructuring of the country, and through analysing the financial events that furthered the transformation of the state space, and the emergence of new forms of subjection.

The debt default was rooted in three correlated circumstances. During the 1970s it was clear that to sustain the rate of economic growth, satisfy the party's political constituencies, and manage the demographic boom, it was necessary to artificially inject capital into the economy to finance public investment and consumption. Facing a reduction in oil prices, its main source of international revenue, and unable to implement a fiscal policy to tax the wealthiest individuals, the Mexican government resorted to foreign borrowing to relieve the stress caused by the slowing down of the economy. In August 1982, following the increase to the US interest rate to curb the oil shocks, Mexico announced that would not be able to meet its obligation to service its debt worth \$80 billion, mostly dollar denominated (Camp, 2011).

The same month, the Mexican Secretary of the Treasury paid a visit to Washington DC in which he explained the terms of the crisis as follows:

(...) we told them in that day, Friday 20th of August, we had a level of reserves of about \$180 million in liquid reserves and for the following Monday we had to make payments to the financial community all over

⁵⁷ For example, it has been suggested the association between the state security agencies and drug traffickers in the counter-insurgency operations resulted in at least 1, 500 *campesinos* murdered in the mid-1970s. Carried out in the states of Guerrero, Sinaloa, and Jalisco, state's tolerance to their criminal activities was apparently granted in exchange for assisting the security forces with paramilitary operations, (Reuter & Ronfeldt, 1992; Rochlin, 1997).

the world of close to \$300 million. So the situation was very clear. We had run out of money” (as cited in Kilroy, 1990: 154).

The negotiation with the debt creditors involved a set of measures to reduce public spending, devalue the peso, and open formerly exclusive economic areas of state jurisdiction to private and international investment. In exchange for an IMF bailout actively organized by the U.S. Treasury Department and Federal Reserve, Mexico’s government slashed food subsidies, sold state-owned companies and agencies (including sugar mills, ship-yards, textile and power plants), and privatized sectors like banking and telephony (Coleman, 2005; Parenti, 2011).⁵⁸ By the end of the 1980s, only 209 public companies from 1, 115 remained in the hands of the state and the purchasing power of Mexicans was half of what it had been in 1982 (Rochlin, 1997; Parenti, 2011).

In addition, the program of economic deregulation and economic disciplining of the country was ensured by Mexico’s entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986, and the signature of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1992 (Coleman, 2005; Rochlin, 1997).⁵⁹ According to Carlos Salinas, president from 1988 to 1994, Mexico’s integration into a North American free trade zone would build the foundations for the further creation and redistribution of wealth “(...) to export goods and not people” (Salinas, 1999 as cited in Parenti, 2011: 196).

5.3.2 The Transformation of the State Space and the Economic Restructuring of the Country

One of the conditions imposed by foreign creditors to transfer capital, and create financial liquidity was to modify the legal status of land property to guarantee private investors access to land acquisition, simplify tariffs, and eliminate import/export licences. Thus, in 1992, following the trail of the economic restructuring of the country and in the context of NAFTA negotiations, article 27 of the constitution of 1917 was amended. Recast as an inefficient and backward economic unit, the elimination of the *ejido* and its conversion into

⁵⁸ Thus, in exchange for credit lines, between 1982 and 1991, the Mexican government received 13 structural and sectorial adjustment loans (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017: 2). In 2000, twenty out of thirty banks were in foreign hands (Parenti, 2011).

⁵⁹ In this regard the economic restructuring of Mexico was strategically encouraged by the U.S government legislative and executive branches to turn Mexico into an offshore assembly plant, as way to reduce the U.S labour costs, and create cost- efficient supply chains in the context of the U.S. geo-economic strategy in the early 1980s. Such strategy consisted in the promotion of offshore sites for U.S. firms seeking to compete with Japan and Europe. In this context, the negotiation of Mexico’s debt and NAFTA articulate a continuum of strategies of intervention and governance purposefully orientated to satisfy primarily U.S. policy objectives (Coleman, 2005; Narchi, 2015).

a tradable commodity were central to this transformation (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Narchi, 2015). This process is fundamental to understand the extent of state transformation during this period.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the state's absolute ownership over the territory was sanctioned through the constitutional mandate after the 1910 revolution. An essential condition for the pacification of the country, the legal possibility to distribute the national land established a subject-state relationship that guaranteed the distribution of the national wealth in exchange for obedience. The *ejido* was at the crux of both the project of economic redistribution of the economic benefits, and the political codification of the state-population nexus. In reconfiguring the territory as space of private economic exploitation, the reform of article 27 in 1992 refashioned the subject-state relation. Recasting the former communities as aggregations of individuals with rights over land, and their lands themselves as 'tradable commodities' had two effects. First, it altered both the structure and content of the instruments of government. Second it changed the understanding of citizens as members of the polity through networks of state assistance and client-patron relationships. It did so by producing the territory as a private space for resource extraction and the individuals within it as 'entrepreneurial petty producers' (Altamirano- Jiménez, 2017).

In addition to the reconceptualization of land ownership, the program of economic modernization dismantled the agencies that administered subsidies and offered assistance to small farmers. Forced to compete against the highly-subsidized U.S. agro-industry with no state support, rural bankruptcies increased six-fold in Mexico during the 1990s (Parenti, 2011: 197). The displacement of Mexican producers by U.S. agriculture imports left the country vulnerable to price fluctuations set by U.S. agribusiness and/or U.S. policy (Bacon, 2014). Also, unable to compete with the U.S. economy, the ensuing bankruptcy of Mexican producers provoked an enduring social dislocation with deep consequences for the political organization of the country (Coleman, 2005; Maldonado, 2012; Lomnitz, 2016).). For example, between 1991 and 2007, 4.9 million jobs were lost in the small-scale farming sector (Weisbrot, Lefebvre, & Sammut, 2014: 13).

Farmers who could not adapt to this process had to find a place in the growing industrial or services sectors:

When NAFTA was discussed, Carlos Salinas de Gortari himself in his presidential campaign said the rural population in Mexico was 28% of the total, but the overall countryside contribution to the GDP was only 8% and, as a consequence, things needed to be balanced. So, what did

it mean to balance them? To take campesinos out of the countryside to the city or, strictly speaking, that campesinos that always were campesinos had to do something else (Lomnitz, cited in Cano, 2017).

For the Mexican *campesinos*, it meant migrating to Northern border cities like Tijuana or Ciudad Juarez where the manufactory industry is located, or to the United States as cheap labour.

Additionally, the simplification of trade tariffs and licences allowed the expansion of assembly plants for goods imported from, and exported back, to the United States. Concentrated along the northern border, the export industry grew from the Border Industrialization Program implemented in 1965. In the 1980s, under the pressure of the IMF structural adjustment program, the manufacturing industry expanded beyond that region (Coleman, 2005). (López-Córdova, Work in Progress). Following NAFTA, U.S. companies accounted for 88.4% of all capital investments in Mexican maquiladoras. Concentrated along the northern border in cities like Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, Nogales, Matamoros, and Mexicali, they produced 2 million new jobs (Fuchs, 2017: 42).

The overreliance on external markets to foster internal growth and increase foreign exchange earnings made the Mexican economy extremely exposed to international economic downturns, and especially vulnerable to U.S. recessions. In any case, the economic situation did not improve substantively; on the contrary, between 1995 and 1996, the number of Mexicans living in extreme poverty went from 5 million to 22 million, and by 1997 purchasing power had declined 81% (Rochlin, 1997: 27). In addition, from 1994-2013, Mexico's GDP grew on average 0.9% per year, and the economy lost 2 million jobs in agriculture and forestry. By 2017, the mean Mexican daily minimum wage was 80.04 pesos (approximately US\$ 3.9) (Fuchs, 2017: 42)

The simultaneous decay of the national agriculture and industry, as well as the parallel relocation of U.S. manufacturing production to the north of Mexico, stimulated migration from the countryside to these, and other urban centres. It also produced an uneven regional economic concentration, massive urbanization, unemployment, labour informality, and income polarization (Davis, 2017). The migration from the countryside to urban centres within this period was about 6.8 million people. These processes modified definitively the hierarchy of the national urban system, positioning a group of northern border manufacturing

centres as the mainstays of national development: Tijuana; Ciudad Juárez; Mexicali; Matamoros; Nogales; and Piedras Negras.⁶⁰

5.4 Instability and Political Transition: the Rise of Narco-trafficking and the Guerrilla Threat

This section explores the rise of narcotrafficking as one among the myriad consequences of the intersection between economic reform and political transition in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It analyses the events, actors and forces that shaped this period and prepared the ground for the urban expansion of the WoD. In doing so, the section examines the modification of the system's fault lines and the punitive transition to the state mechanisms of control and regulation devised after the 1910 Civil War.

The insertion of Mexico within global currents of investment, consumption, and disciplining through the IMF program of structural adjustment directed domestic production away from industry and agriculture, aggravated old political tensions, and reformulated the policies concerned with the state's security apparatus.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the corporatist party, and its client-patron relations built to control and regulate the population's behavior, was dependent upon the distribution of economic benefits and targeted repression. The reduction of public spending diminished the resources the party had to sustain its client-patron networks. Declining real wages, higher unemployment, the expanding pool of surplus labor, deterioration of prices, end of land distribution, the erosion of subsidies, and the elimination of welfare programs that followed the structural adjustments alienated the social bases that guaranteed the PRI's uninterrupted control. The erosion of the collective and state mechanisms to mitigate the impact of the programs of economic structural adjustment, produced an upsurge of macro-political violence, state repression, collective insecurity, and social contestation. In this context, three convergent process emerged as main signs of the political transformations under way in the reorientation of state violence: the expansion of the military's role in counter-narcotic operations, the configuration of drug-trafficking as a national security threat, and a punitive turn in Mexican politics.

⁶⁰ These cities grew 5% on average within the same period (Tijuana, 5.7%; Ciudad Juárez 4%; Mexicali, 6%; Matamoros, 5%; Nogales 4.3%; Piedras Negras, 3.7%). Yet the national economy just grew an average of 1.3% a year during the same period (McBride, 2017). On the other hand, according to Garza (2010) between 1980 (66.8 million) and 1990 the total population of the country grew 14.8 million, from which 14 million correspond to the urban population. In overall terms, between 1970 and 2005, the total population of Mexico jumped from 48.2 million in 1970 to 103.3 in 2005, and the urban population went from 22.7 to 71.5 million, contributing with 90% of the total demographic growth within this period. (Cazzuffi & Pereira-López, 2016).

Institutional shifts, technological overhauls, and the broadening of its geographical scope of intervention in relation to the WoD describe the final stage of the expansion of the army's operational capacities, and its conversion into what Camp (1992) describes as a presidential SWAT force. More importantly, they point towards a broad reconfiguration of the state's practices of governance.

The next sections of the analysis discusses Mexican state violence through the lens of these circumstances, providing the necessary backdrop to understand the place of the WoD within the broader transformation of Mexico in the years following its economic and political restructuring.

5.4.1 Narco-trafficking and the Expansion of the Military

Mexico's position in global narco-trafficking has been based historically on its proximity to the United States, its role as producer of opiates and marihuana, and its function as a trans-shipment corridor for drugs such as heroin and cocaine from Europe, South America, and Asia (Corva, 2008; Rochlin, 1997). The expansion of U.S. consumption of cannabis in the 1960s fostered the expansion of marijuana crops in Mexico and the escalation of counter-drugs operations in Mexico's northern border regions.⁶¹ As observed earlier, the WoD in Mexico was until the 1970s' a part of the army's policing of historically ungoverned spaces, carried out without meaningful U.S. assistance (Camp, 1992; Wray, 1997). The termination of the French connection in 1972 positioned Mexico as leading supplier of heroin to the United States.⁶² It prompted the previously discussed implementation of U.S. sponsored operations CONDOR and CANADAR in Mexico. The eradication of marihuana and opium poppy crops that followed these operations forced drug producers to diversify their operations, turning them into intermediaries for Colombian narcotraffickers (Cano, 2009; Enciso, 2010)

The 1980s were a turning point in this trajectory. The economic restructuring of the country, the financial crisis, the escalating disorder induced by neoliberal reforms, the decentralization of the political regime, and the reconfiguration of drug-routes in the Caribbean, fuelled Mexican drug production, military participation in counter-narcotics, and the escalation of violence.

⁶¹ According to data gathered by Astorga (2005), U.S. government officials estimated that in the 1960s between 75% and 80% of the heroin and marijuana that came through the south of California came from Mexico. Accordingly, in 1969 Nixon launched Operation Interception that consisted in the inspection of vehicles at Mexico's northern border, and resulted in the reduction of U.S tourism coming to Mexico.

⁶² Rochlin (1997: 106) and Grillo, (2011: 45-48) claim that Mexico shipped 6.5 tons of heroin to United States in this decade and distributed 80% of the marijuana and opiates entering the country.

The leverage of indebtedness was used by foreign creditors, mainly the U. S. government, to negotiate Mexican cooperation with counter-narcotics operations and military involvement in exchange for expeditious financial support (Boyer, 2001; Enciso, 2010). At the same time, in need of alternative sources of revenue, the financial constraints induced by the debt default turned the drug industry into a safety valve for the Mexican economy (Grillo, 2011; Rochlin, 1997; Watt & Zepeda, 2012).⁶³ Meanwhile, the U.S. crack down on the main Colombian drug trafficking route through Florida (the ‘Caribbean route’), rendered Mexico an indispensable transit point for South American cocaine (Rochlin, 2007; Enciso, 2010). As the stakes and profits for drug trafficking were raised by U.S. interdiction policies, the logistic, operational, and strategic capacities of Mexican cartels improved, in tandem with the growing involvement of Mexican officials, both civilian and military, as accomplices (Boyer, 2001; Grillo, 2011; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). The conversion of Mexico into a drugs distribution center, placed local narcotrafficker as powerful brokers in a thriving network of corruption fueled by both, the growing U.S. consumption of cocaine and marijuana, as well as increasingly harsh interdiction operations (Lupsha, 1995).

Interpretations on the scale, extent, and specific features of the drug-traffickers’ response to the government’s counter-narcotic practices and techniques rely on poorly documented events that, as Campbell (2009) and Feiling (2009) suggest, are most of the time based on hearsay, and/or reflect the self-interest of the security agencies that disseminate them. However, the proliferation of episodes of drug related violence in urban centres between the 1980s and the 1990s, including the 1985 murder of Ernesto Camarena, a DEA agent, by the Guadalajara Cartel, indicated the more aggressive turn the drug business was taking at a time of intensifying interdiction operations and military interventions (Astorga, 2005; Boyer, 2001).

This situation, and U.S. pressure, reinforced a cycle of intervention and escalation that resulted in the Mexican presidential declaration that drug trafficking was a national security threat in the late 1980s, the full-time inclusion of the military in counter-narcotic operations, and the mounting proclivity of drug traffickers to deploy spectacular violence (Dunn, 1996; Klare & Kornbluh, 1988; Wray, 1997).⁶⁴ In 1985, 25, 000 soldiers were already engaged in

⁶³ A similar situation occurred in Bolivia, Peru and Colombia where drug trafficking intertwined with IMF structural adjustments and U.S. counter-narcotic programs. It is difficult to know the extent of the penetration of the drug money into the legitimate economy, but for Rochlin (1997; 2007) and Astorga (2005) the spread of drug crops across Mexico and the estimates of the Mexican opiates exports to the U.S. (2 tons in 1984 according to U.S. sources), account for the increasing weight of the drug industry in the legitimate economy.

⁶⁴ U.S pressure was framed by the expansion of its counter-insurgency programs in Central and South America, the militarization of its southern border, and the operations of drug interdiction in the Andean region, which enforced similar patterns of military participation in all the countries within this region. Underpinning these

counter-narcotic operations and an extensive program of military modernization, sponsored by the United States, was underway to build a multi-level structure of surveillance.

The program of modernization focused on improving the mobility of the army and its tracking capabilities. It started with the upgrading of Mexico's radar system to track aircraft suspected of illicit activities heading north and the creation of a central unit to coordinate the activities of the Attorney General, the Army, the Navy, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Communications and Transport. The unit was called CENDRO (Mexico's Drug Control Planning Centre) and aimed to develop an all-encompassing system of surveillance and control of Mexican territory (Wray, 1997).

In addition, between 1990 and 1992, the army received two Black Hawk UH-60L helicopters as well as arms and equipment from the United States worth \$400 million dollars. The participation of the Mexican armed forces in U.S. sponsored training programs also increased substantially, jumping from 35 soldiers per year trained between 1950 and 1979, to 65 per year between 1982-1988, to 131 per year during the first half of Carlos Salinas term (1988-1994) (Wray, 1997). To provide the army with tactical mobility, Mexico purchased six C-130 troop transport planes and motorized cavalry units that had previously relied on horses. The plan was to reorganize the military structure into a more "tactically-suited" and flexible organization (Wager, 1994).

On April 8th 1989, in an event interpreted as a public relations move to satisfy the United States, an army tactical unit tracked and arrested the leader of the Guadalajara Cartel, Miguel Angel Gallardo, in the city of Guadalajara as retribution for the murder of DEA agent Ernesto Camarena. Purportedly involved in the murder of Camarena, on the same day the army also arrested the chief of the judicial police in Sinaloa, the director of the municipal police of Culiacan, the state's capital, and officers of the municipal police. The army took them to the military barracks, set up check points across the city, and put the local Federal Attorney General's premises under surveillance.

Part of a series of military operations executed to project an image of a 'no-nonsense' president, and to crackdown upon the enemies of the state, the arrest of Félix Gallardo was, according to Wager (1994), made possible by the recently improved mobility of the army.⁶⁵ In this sense, in the 1990s, it is clearer how the acceleration of the WoD was connected to both the expansion of the military, and the declining legitimacy of the PRI (Sosa, 2002). In the

trends was Reagan's 1986 National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) that declared drug trafficking a national security threat (see Dunn, 1997; Klare & Kornbluh, 1988; Wray, 1997).

⁶⁵ All these operations took place in 1989 and included the arrest of the national oil workers' union leader, and the interruption of the mine workers' strike in Cananea copper mine in the state of Sonora (Camp, 1992; Wager, 1994).

1990s, for some observers, the army as a counter-narcotics force, had already become the ‘supreme authority’ in parts of states such as Oaxaca, Sinaloa, Jalisco, and Guerrero (Camp, 1992; Montemayor, 2010a; 2010b).

The capture of Gallardo and subsequent arrests were a forerunner of the intensity that Mexico’s counter- narcotics strategy would take in the years to come, and the blurring of law enforcement operations and military deployments in the WoD. Its urban implementation and the tactical changes in the army signalled the state’s overreliance on punitive techniques to impose its will, and the structural continuity between anti-guerrilla tactics and law enforcement operations, via U.S. assistance.

5.4.2. Political Pluralism and the Punitive Turn of the Mexican Politics

The decay of the PRI’s hegemony and the configuration of drug-trafficking as a national security threat were coupled by the emergence of a more politically plural and conflictive system. Mounting tensions and increasing political opposition during the 1980s gave way to independent unions, national strikes, electoral contestation, and emergent social actors competing for spaces of political representation and economic resources. An anti-PRI current of opinion emerged that yielded a process of political decentralization, whereby local elites carried out an electoral offensive to defeat the PRI and gain autonomy for states and municipalities (Loeza, 2006; Velázquez, 2011). As Loeza (2006) observes, the economic crisis fostered the expansion of the Mexican political universe. A myriad of NGOs and other private associations emerged claiming broader political rights and demanding increasing participation in the government’s decision-making processes.

The conservative PAN won a few municipal elections in the north of the country (Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Durango, Hermosillo, Zacatecas and Aguascalientes) between 1983 and 1984, and following a disputed internal election within the PRI for the presidential nomination in 1987, a group of dissenters organized the National Democratic Front (FDN) – the then Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)- with other social organizations, and leftist activists, to compete in the 1988 elections. Resorting to electoral fraud, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the PRI candidate, took office that year amid a profound legitimacy crisis (Camp, 2011; Kilroy, 1990; Velázquez, 2011). The challenging of the electoral results in 1989 led the PRI to concede its defeat in the governor’s election in Baja California Norte, the first state governor election that the PRI conceded defeat since its inception as the PNR. This was done to calm social tensions (Kilroy, 1990; Camp, 2011).

In the 1990s a succession of events shook the political and economic foundations of the country. In January 1st, 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) –a guerrilla-like group- in the southern state of Chiapas declared war against the Mexican state. Three months later, in March 23rd, Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI presidential candidate, was murdered in Tijuana.⁶⁶ A few months later, in 1995, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, president of the PRI, was murdered too. The judicial investigation unearthed a complex network of accomplices that included Raul Salinas, the brother of the outgoing president Carlos Salinas (1988-1994). In 1995, a new financial crisis erupted, and a couple of years later, two more guerrilla armies, EPR (Ejército Popular Revolucionario) -1996- , and ERPI (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente) -1997-, emerged.

Rising crime rates, mainly in Mexico City, fostered an overall sense of danger and social collapse. Davis (2006b) and Müller (2016b) explain the origin of this security crisis in Mexico City, as a product of police corruption, a lack of institutional constraints, judicial weakness, and ingrained practices of patronage that had granted the police and the military a wide operational autonomy in order to pacify the city and hold power after the revolution (1910-1920). Thus, militarization was in fact a substantial part of the rising insecurity in the city. Overwhelmed by a wave of robberies, kidnappings, extortions, rapes, and homicides, the last PRI-appointed mayor called for the militarization of the local police to purge its corrupt elements and to better control crime (Davis, 2006b). The experiment failed. Crime rates did not decrease and the police were not purified, but the failure exemplified the intersections amongst crime control, militarization, and the increasing lack of legitimacy of the PRI's regime. In this sense, the late 1990s were understood as a security crisis of 'epidemic proportions' (Escalante, 2009).

Inscribed into this dramatic sequence of conspiracies, political murders, and guerrilla warfare, the proliferation of gangland-style killings prefigured a disruption in a sense of urbanite invulnerability. The increasing feeling of general unease marking these years defined the spaces in which actions had to be taken. Very soon, events that had been once seen as indicative of the exclusively rural nature of drug-trafficking, erupted spectacularly within the urban landscape, confirming the public's suspicions of the intimate relationship between drug-trafficking and national insecurity (Astorga, 2005; Aguilar & *et.al.*, 2012). Aguilar (1998: 82) describes this atmosphere and the place the security 'epidemic' took within the political vocabulary of the overall crisis of the PRI:

⁶⁶ Narcotraffic participation in this homicide is suspected (Boyer, 200: 134,135).

If it were possible to characterize Ernesto Zedillo's government with a simple phrase, few would doubt to call it "the term of the fear of criminality". The central phenomenon of these years that fully seized media headlines, citizens' concerns and the politician attention was criminal violence in urban locations. Since 1994, the criminality rates have skyrocketed in the whole country; in 70% in places like Mexico City, Baja California or Sinaloa. One survey after another has showed that security has transformed into the main source of citizens' unease above employment, inflation, democracy, or the environment. Political parties have recorded that movement in public opinion and fear the potentially devastating electoral consequences of any accusations of inefficiency in combatting crime (My own translation, Aguilar, 1999: 82).⁶⁷

The entry into force of NAFTA in 1994 and the ongoing political crisis linked the U.S. government's growing concerns regarding the flow of undetected drugs over the border with the Mexican government's fears of instability (Rochlin, 1997). Reinforcing the cycle of perceptions and fears, the U.S. surveillance of the border worked as a catalyst to provide more U.S. equipment and training to Mexico. This would later be used in counter-insurgency operations and in urban security operations (Sosa, 2002; Wray, 1997). Improvements, including communication systems, and GPS enabled helicopters equipped with heat-seeking devices, were used to identify both the movement of rebels and drug-related criminals (Wray, 1997; Lumsdaine; 1995). At this point, military counter-insurgency, disaster relief, and counter-narcotics operations produced a continuum of territorial controls and regulations aiming to occupy, isolate, and antagonize rural communities linked to the identified guerrilla movements (López, Sierra, & Enríquez, 1999; Sosa, 2002). Accompanying this transition, by the end of the 1990s, the army was granted the authority to survey and intercept vehicles and airplanes, while active duty and former military personnel were appointed as heads in key counter-narcotic agencies (Wray, 1997; Serrano, 2012).⁶⁸

⁶⁷Ernesto Zedillo was the last appointed PRI president (1994-2000) Such as the INCD (National Institute to Combat Drugs), CENDRO (Drug Control Planning Centre), the Federal Judicial Police, the Federal Customs Service. It also included the positions of Chief of Police and heads of 18 district police stations.

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Thus, in the 1990s the military took over almost all the institutional infrastructure set up to manage and implement the WoD. From this point onwards, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotic operations became indistinguishable. It was followed by a tactical reorganization of the relationships between the civilian branches of the counter-narcotics operations and the military, along with the upgrading of military equipment. For example in the *Instituto Nacional para el Combate a las Drogas -1993-* (National Institute to Combat Drugs), General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, was arrested because of his alleged links with drug trafficking organizations. Also in *Policía Federal Preventiva* (Preventive Federal Police), 5 000 members were transferred to further its reincorporation to the army. (Boyer, 2001; Mendoza, 2016). Moreover the army was given responsibility to train the Federal Judicial Police.

A series of Mixed Operations Bases (MOB) were set up along the military perimeter established in Chiapas after the EZLN rose up in arms. There the judicial and municipal police forces were functionally subordinated to the army, and trained to implement para-military operations in the region (López, Sierra, & Enríquez, 1999; Sosa, 2002). The model was later implemented in operations of crime control regulated by the military in other parts of the country. Likewise, the tactical scope of military operations for the purposes of drug interception expanded, implementing land, aerial, and amphibious actions, including being given control of nine airports across the country. Geographically, interdiction operations expanded across the entire Baja California Peninsula, the Cortez Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and the Gulf of Mexico (Mendoza, 2016).

In addition, a series of legal changes paved the way for the expansion of the punitive powers of the state. Müller (2016a) identifies one of the central pieces of this punitive turn as the enactment of the General Law of the National Public Security System (LGSNSP). Issued in 1995, this law introduced both the concept of anti-social behaviour and the concept of public security as correlative notions for the organization and planning of the policing of the country, and central tenets of state activity. The concept of anti-social behaviour defined a broad scope of punishable behaviours since it did not specify specific acts as ‘anti-social’. The text of the law just mentioned that ‘the State will combat the causes that create the commission of crimes and anti-social behaviours and developed policies, programs, and actions to encourage cultural and civic values that instigate the respect for legality’ (Cámara de Diputados, 1995).

The proposition of the concepts of anti-social behaviour and public security according to Müller (2016a: 151-153) fostered the partition of Mexican society into two ‘antagonistic camps’ “(...) in which an inclusive idea of society has become opposed to an unspecified

other that includes all potentially antisocial actors, from petty thieves to drug traffickers”. It opened the door for further modifications in the Federal Criminal Code that introduced a very vague definition of organized crime as the association between more than three individual to commit crimes such as terrorism, arms trafficking, drug trafficking, ‘sexual tourism’, etc. This widened the state powers of detention and the penalties associated with these activities. The rule of ‘*arraigo*’ was introduced which enabled detention without legal accusation or an arrest warrant for up to 80 days for any person suspected of having participated in organized criminal activity (Müller, 2016a; 2016b).

In such a context, the ruling party was finally defeated in the presidential elections in 2000. The newly appointed president from the PAN, Vicente Fox, promised to withdraw the army from counter-narcotics operations. However, the room for Fox’s government to manoeuvre was constrained by the conditions generated by the PRI’s defeat: a national congress divided almost equally between the three major parties, PRI, PAN, and PRD, a political decentralization that granted wider autonomy to individual states, and most importantly a lack of connections with state bureaucracies and the military, which were both still controlled by the PRI (Davis, 2006b).

On the other hand, the ascendance of military prerogatives in the previous decades created patterns of institutional behaviour that fostered a siege mentality among the different branches of government. The Supreme Court, for example, issued a series of rulings authorizing the deployment of the armed forces to support public order tasks when requested by the civilian authorities (Nexos, 2011).⁶⁹ Under these conditions, including an increase in armed confrontations between drug cartels and police officers, Vicente Fox appointed a military general as Attorney General and embarked upon what was called Operation Safe Mexico. This involved sending troops to hunt the main leaders of the Cartels of Sinaloa, the Gulf, and Tijuana and patrolling of Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, and Tijuana (Astorga, 2007).⁷⁰ Morphing into a full-time kingpin hunting and urban policing unit, these changes to the military and the ensuing violence reflected an expansion in army prerogatives away from political control. Deeply embedded in the process of economic structural adjustments which reconfigured Mexican territory and the population as sources of raw materials and cheap

⁶⁹Article 129 from the constitution states that “in peacetime no military authority can exert functions beyond those strictly connected with the military discipline” (my own translation, *Constitucion Political de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, 2017).

⁷⁰ According to official statements, by 2003 480 people were killed annually in Sinaloa alone. Among the drug kingpins arrested in this period were Osiel Cárdenas from the Gulf Cartel and el Chapo from the Sinaloa Cartel (Serrano, 2012: 635).. For Serrano (2012), the unfolding violence in these years showed the connection between the intensification of counter-narcotic operations and a competition amongst drug organizations for territories that was instigated by tightened border controls.

labour, the intensification of the WoD expanded upon the crisis and reorganization of the Mexican state.

5.5 Conclusion

The modern Mexican state was born from a civil war rooted in a series of unresolved political and economic tensions around property rights, land distribution, the economic rights of subaltern classes, and inter- oligarchic conflicts stemming from the uneven modernization of the country. Territorially, the state had to face the threat of U.S. expansion, the last stage in a long succession of foreign occupations, and territorial secessions intertwined within the rhythm of domestic conflicts. Both the combined experience of popular insurrection and foreign intervention shaped the organisation of the political system that emerged from the civil war.

Organized as the institutional extension of a pact among the triumphant military chieftains, the constitutional arrangement integrated popular demands, such as the re-distribution of land, into the organization of the state. However, unable to maintain public order and committed to a project of industrialization, the army became instrumental to the state's conservation of order in what became a permanent process of pacifying rebel populations and unruly spaces. In exchange for operational autonomy and impunity, the army guaranteed the repression and punishment of political opponents as well as the surveillance of the complicated topography of the country.

A more or less stable geographical partition of state violence emerged from this arrangement: in the countryside, the army conducted law enforcement, while in the city, a 'mild' brand of authoritarianism (Aviña, 2014) took hold that was compensated with the distribution of rewards according to client-patron relations. As the underlying concept and practices of territorialisation of the state were challenged by the exhaustion of a model of industrialisation chosen to preserve its existence, the purpose, form, and orientation of the Mexican state's instruments of government were also modified. The erosion of its economic foundations and the debt default in 1982 altered the conditions that ensured, what in hindsight, was a precarious balance between the civilian leadership and the military. The ensuing economic scarcity and the financial constraints produced not only increasing contestation in sectors whose expectations were informed by the nationalistic roots of the political regime, but the ascendant importance of drug-trafficking for the generation of revenue. With the intensification of the U.S. WoD, the militarization of its southern border, and the declining legitimacy of the Mexican government, the military enlarged its mandate

within the structure of the state through the domestic implementation of counter-narcotic operations and the patrolling of urban centres.

As Davis (1994; 2010; 2012) and Rochlin, (1997) note, the economic and political reforms that ensured Mexico's payment capacity reconfiguration affected the institutional post-revolutionary institutional framework, especially the single party and the presidency, while keeping intact the old coercive networks and instruments, producing a distinctive hybrid between the pre-existing forms of authoritarian government and the economics of the free market

The central role the army took in the WoD and policing urban centres follows the modification of the spatial references that had organised the exertion of the state's power and violence in Mexico. In this regard, the WoD crept out through the cracks formed in the political order by the economic upheaval, building upon existing authoritarian practices of command and regularisation used by the state. At stake in the reorganization of the state instruments of violence is the re-configuration of the territory as a tradeable commodity and the arrangement of Mexican subjects as individual entrepreneurs. Thus, the intensification of army activity and the concomitant transformation in state practices of political control and regulation are symptoms of the erosion of the bureaucratic and client-patron relations that were integral to the post-revolutionary state form. The WoD thus draws from the inventory of political instruments, practices, and knowledges shaped by the experience of the Mexican state-making process. In the next chapter the links between its escalation/urbanization, and the modification of the spatiality of the Mexican state will become evident.

Chapter 6. The Political Geography of the WoD

Figure 1 Context Map



Source: <http://www.ezilon.com/maps/north-america/mexico-maps.html>

6.1 Introduction

Previous chapters examined the historic arrangements that organized the government of Mexico, accepted forms of interpersonal aggression, spatial distributions of violence, and the foundations of the military policing of the territory. In line with this history, this chapter focuses on the evolution of the pre-existing strategies of control and its underlying forms of subjectification, into novel forms of persecution and detention. As a case in point, the WoD not only illustrates the modification of the spatial references that organized Mexican state violence, but is at the core of the transformation of the instruments of regulation for individuals. Accordingly, in this chapter attention will be given to the ideas that authorize and organize operations that seek to capture drug kingpins, and those tasked with the patrolling of urban centers. Specially, it looks at the geographical imaginations that informed the Mexican government's depiction of the country as at the brink of social collapse.

By bringing attention to a series of intellectual, discursive, and symbolic procedures set in motion to rationalize the multiplication of check points and the doubling of the military personnel in crime control related activities, the analysis engages with the state officials' allegations of a security crisis. More specifically, the chapter examines the spatial arrangements drawn by WoD planners between those who should be protected, and those who were unworthy of protection. This distinction allowed for the implementation of practical arrangements of urban and public safety policing. In other words, by delineating forms of territorial control and classifications of individuals, the WoD planners informed modes of surveillance and tracking, detention, and the murder of identified members of targeted Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs).

Among these spatial arrangements, the partition of Mexican territory into *plazas* (turf) to explain the disputes between DTOs enabled the conceptual isolation of territorial areas and configured the populations that resided within them as potential drug traffickers. Building upon pre-existing legal, symbolic, and ideological infrastructures, as well as the absence of official guidance about how security personnel should differentiate between civilians and criminals to intervene upon these spaces, the partition of the territory into several *plazas* orientated the exertion of state violence.⁷¹

This infrastructure acts in place of clearly stated normative parameters, including judicial orders and rules of engagement. The partition of the territory into several *plazas* functions as the point of reference through which the inventory of understandings on how

⁷¹ These infrastructures are the system of social practices underlying the collective understandings and actions that regulate, organize, and authorize the production and exertion of violence. This system of social practices is a complex and interactive network that integrates a variegated set of processes and relations.

violence should work is mobilized to punish individuals thought to be criminals. In addition, local military practices, imported counter-insurgency techniques, equipment, discourses on international security, and popular culture representations converge in the organization of the infrastructures that provide further meaning to the geographical partition of the territory.

In examining the ways of thinking that made the spaces of the WoD legible for intervention, control and regulation, I explore two different aspects of the organization and circulation of power and violence in space: forms of visual inscription and the configuration of modes of subjectification (Feldman, 1997; Gregory, 1995; Rose, 2004).⁷² These ‘modes of seeing’ (Feldman, 1997: 30) articulate the ‘epistemic terrain’ whereby the behaviours of the purported drug traffickers are interpreted and understood, making possible the exertion of violence. These socially extended regimes of visualization, the epistemic terrain of violence, are ensembles of discourses and practices that establish the credibility of political actions, the distinction between friends and enemies, and the legitimate targets authorizing convenient ways to deal in practical terms with particular ‘space-problems’. It is the ‘network of signifiers and caption points’ (Taussig, 1984) that in organizing cartographic routines, give aesthetic and visual unity to the problem of crime and insecurity the WoD claims it is tackling. This network of signifiers and caption points, negotiated and reproduced in practice, is a coherent code that regiments social interactions and political understandings.

The period under analysis covers the presidential term of Felipe Calderon (2006-2012), and was chosen for three correlated reasons: firstly, the public emphasis made by the state officials, headed by the president, on the importance and centrality of these operations for the country’s survival. Secondly for the scope and amount of military resources deployed, and thirdly, because the military operations implemented in this period were followed by a radical upsurge of violence and homicides, in which the role of the state security apparatus was pivotal (Centro Prodh, 2015; Open Society Foundation, 2016).⁷³ In this regard, the period escalated practices of control that, already in motion, showed the extent of the transformation of the state’s routines of violence. Therefore, an analysis of the production of the territory as a criminogenic space is central to understanding how new objects and subjects of governance emerged modifying the very territory of government in Mexico.

To grasp how these spaces and individuals are represented, reflected, and redeployed as existential threats, a set of state policy documents, reports, statistics on homicides, and

⁷² By ways of thinking I understand the grids of intelligibility that allow individuals to act in ways that seem comprehensible for them (Rabinow, 2003).

⁷³ In the next sections the emphasis, resources invested, and the intensification of violence will be addressed extensively.

official statements published within this period are analysed. Classifications of risky territories and individuals emerge within these documents. NGO reports, and critical scholar accounts are used through the chapter to substantiate the available evidence, and expand upon examples carefully documented on the scope and extent of state violence. A series of unofficial maps about the spatial distribution of drug trafficking corridors, the so-called *plazas*, are used as examples of the pervasiveness of the state's point of view. They are supplemented by detailed explanations on its meanings and relationship with the analysis carried out in the chapter. At the beginning of this chapter a map of Mexico was presented; its function is to contextualize the references made throughout the chapter to the states in which joint operations were deployed. As will be further explained, no information on the specifics of the roads and spaces patrolled by the military are public. Thus, the map will just serve to clarify the position of the references made to locations within the country.

The chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section sums up the historic and spatial transformations that frame the WoD deployment, and the emergence of narco-trafficking as of problem of territorial control. It is followed by the examination of the immediate circumstances that underscored the election of Felipe Calderon and the doubling of military personnel in counter-narcotic operations. This will help to contextualize the relationships linking the militarization of the WoD, the fragility of the civilian leadership, and the security measures implemented. Then, in the ensuing section the strategies that rendered visible the insecurity of the country and the territorial expansion of criminality are analysed. The definition of *la plaza* and the battle over turf between multiple DTO's are explored to account for the configuration of Mexico's territory as a battlefield. Through the examination of presidential discourses and journalistic reports, the horizon of political visibility that made possible the configuration of Mexican individuals as criminals will be explained. In the ensuing sections, the conceptual operations implemented to render visible Mexico's territory as inherently criminogenic are analysed. The expansion of military activity is examined as indication of the political consequences of such processes.

In problematizing the foundations of the WoD discourse as well as its links with pre-existing discourses of insecurity (failed state) and practices of state violence, the nexus between the reconfiguration of the state space, its practices of control and regulation, and the proliferation of violence will become evident.

6.2 The Transformation of the State Space

This section sets out the historic coordinates and events that frame the radicalization of the WoD following the election of Felipe Calderón in 2006. In evidencing the proliferation of private and decentralized violence, these events illustrate the transformation of the state space discussed in the two previous chapters. Their discussion will allow the reader to grasp both the scale of the transition and the territorial challenges the Mexican state faced at the dawn of the twentieth century, and from which the WoD emerged in 2006 as a hegemonic crime control strategy.

As demonstrated in previous chapters, Mexican practices of government during the twentieth century resulted from three interlinked objectives: the conservation-stabilization of its national territory; the construction of effective mechanisms to transmit and circulate power amongst the ruling elite; and the satisfaction of macroeconomic strategies concerning the industrialization, and urbanization of the country. While this model of governance worked effectively, the distribution of rewards (land, state permits, political posts, infrastructure), the corporatist organization of society still required the use of direct violence. Sporadic in urban centers, and persistent but scattered across the countryside and the highlands, violence was a primary way to negotiate the Mexican state's command of territory and its population.⁷⁴ The army was accordingly a central instrument in the consolidation and expansion of state control over the country.

Urged by the increasing democratic competition at sub-national and national levels, the decay of the corporatist instruments of government, the politicization of insecurity through a 'tough on crime' agenda, and challenging economic conditions, the WoD was positioned as an all-encompassing solution for the increasing social disorder in Mexico (Davis, 2017; Müller, 2016a; 2016b).⁷⁵ It is in the intersection between the political-economic re-organization of the state and the increasing disorder provoked by the economic modernization through which the WoD emerged in 2006 as the predominant form of managing crime

In proposing to solve the social disorder allegedly inherited from Mexico's authoritarian past, the WoD advanced a conceptualization of risk and insecurity that framed

⁷⁴ This model of relations of power did not exclude the development and implementation of auxiliary techniques of government; see for example Craib (2004) who examines the cartographic routines of the Mexican state in the early 20th century. Along the same lines, Beezley & Maclachlan (2009) explore the educational campaigns implemented by Mexican governments.

⁷⁵ Looking at the case of Mexico City, Müller (2016b) elaborates a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which the old client-patron networks, built through the corporatist organization of the old single party, were turned into informal mechanisms of control, regulation, and protection in the context of the employment informalization that followed the economic restructuring of the country.

the national territory as a battleground and its inhabitants as potential criminals. In doing so, it authorized the intensification of the military policing of the territory and expanded the counter-narcotic operations, formerly confined to the countryside, into core urban centers. In the following sections, how this process was materialized in the presidential term of Felipe Calderon will be addressed. Specifically, the cartographic routines through which the Mexican government represented the spaces upon which state violence need to be exerted will be examined.

6.2.1 2006: Social Protest, Drug Trafficking and the Beginning of the WoD

The start of every presidential term in Mexico since 1982 has been challenged by disruptive events, from financial shocks and political instability, to multiple forms of social conflict.⁷⁶ Felipe Calderon's (2006-2012) presidential start was not an exception. Furthered by the implementation of Plan Puebla Panamá (PPP) -2001-, and galvanized by the presidential elections, a series of social tensions spawned by the spatial restructuring of the country, converged in 2006 elections.⁷⁷ Part of a scattered geography of protest in southern Mexico, and across national, regional, and local scales, these movements integrated into a heterogeneous and fragmented opposition to the neoliberal restructuring of territory (Paley, 2014; Wilson, 2014). A protest led by the leftist opposition candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador took to the streets of Mexico City for months in the aftermath of the 2006 presidential elections. López Obrador led a broad coalition of central-leftist organizations, reclaiming the historic principles of the Mexican revolutionary nationalism: the state's ownership of the territory and industrialization of the country. Challenging the legitimacy of the election, he demanded a recount that paralyzed the city and obliged Calderon to be smuggled into the Congress to be sworn in as President (Paley, 2014).

In Oaxaca –southern Mexico-, a large-scale popular uprising that brought together a myriad of local social movements in the *Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca* – Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO), demanded the removal of the state Governor Ulises Ruiz. United in its opposition to a series of labor reforms that affected the

⁷⁶ They include the 1982 debt crises, the 1988 electoral fraud, the 1994 Zapatista armed uprising and the killing of both the PRI's presidential candidate and its party's president. 2000 was exceptional since the PRI's electoral defeat was followed by a smooth transition to an opposition government.

⁷⁷ A 20 year, U.S. \$25 billion regional development project supported by the United States, and the Inter-American Development Plan. By synchronizing southern Mexico and Central America territories through the articulation of free-trade treaties, the modernization of the region's transport, energy, communications networks, and the homogenization of border regulations, it is expected to transform the region into a zone of resource extraction production, and exportation (mines, biofuel plantations, hydroelectric dams, wind power generation) (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Grandin, 2011b; Wilson, 2014).

teachers' union, this movement held a fierce defense of the rights of Oaxaca's people upon their land, and the common opposition to *Plan Puebla Panamá* (PPP). Additionally, a countrywide mobilization of supporters of the EZLN called 'The Other Campaign', challenged the legitimacy of the Mexican state by criticizing the electoral campaigns, its neoliberal agenda, and the PPP as its last embodiment (Morton, 2012; Wilson, 2014).

Meanwhile in central Mexico, the protest of a community of land-holders opposed to the construction of an airport in San Salvador Atenco, Estado de Mexico, while violently repressed, succeed in temporarily interrupting its construction. The airport, situated at the east of Mexico City, was geographically and technically, at the receiving end of the various projects of infrastructure planned within Plan Puebla Panama. Envisioned as the central hub to manage the air traffic created by the modernization of southern Mexico, its connection with transnational investment centers the airport's construction placed the protest in a broader geographical circuit of challenges to the socio-spatial reorganization of the country (Wilson, 2014).

Simultaneously, in September 6th 2006, a group of 20 armed man wearing police uniforms and ski masks entered a nightclub in Uruapan, Michoacán.⁷⁸ After shooting in the air four times according to witnesses, they threw five human heads over the dance floor, leaving a note right next to them that said: "La Familia (the Family) don't kill for a salary, don't kill women, don't kill innocents, it die who should die, know this everybody, this is divine justice" (Gómez, 2006).⁷⁹ Since it had occurred in the home state of the recently elected Mexican president Felipe Calderon, its publicness was understood as statement of principles and a political message by the drug cartel known as la Familia.⁸⁰ Having accepted that Michoacán's state government had been overwhelmed by criminality, the governor

⁷⁸ A state in Western Mexico

⁷⁹ Drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and the myriad of other private armed organizations during the years of examination resorted increasingly to forms of spectacular violence –massacres, bodies hanging from bridges, headless torsos, dismembered limbs publicly exposed- to demonstrate its power. Most of these demonstrations have been accompanied with written messages claiming responsibility, authorship, and explicitly directed to recipients that can be an opposing DTO or any given state. Concerning their translation, the main difficulty is to deal with the jargon and syntax directly linked to a variegated set of shared cultural references and strategies of communication. In this particular case, who wrote the message misspells *debe* with *deve* -"... should die"- , saying 'muere quien *deve* morir'. Irrelevant in other contexts as it does not change the meaning of the message, misspellings are distinctive external marks for the interpreters of the messages. Indicating the social origin of the authors these marks have produced, alongside other signs, a public understanding about their identities. Misspelling is acknowledged as a form of poverty-related illiteracy, so the narcotrafficker persona will be visually delimited by his/her outfit, music taste. The way he or she writes just confirms their identities despite the lack of other evidence. Drawing upon the combination of prejudices linking poverty, aesthetics and intellectual ability, the form these messages take closes off visual understanding of the 'enemy'.

⁸⁰ Notorious for its viciousness, the act was part of a long wave of violent acts in this state. In September of the previous year, the state's public security director was executed while having dinner with his wife, and alone in August 2006, 84 individuals were murdered. By the end of that year 500 executions took place in Michoacán alone (Hernández, 2006).

Lázaro Cárdenas requested federal support to solve the insecurity in the state (Mauleón, 2017).

Amid these challenges, Calderon took office in December 2006 and almost immediately launched what he called a war against organised crime by sending military and federal police troops to Michoacán the same month (Mauleón, 2017). Under the banner of “Joint Operation Michoacán”, which was to be the first of a series of militarized security operations across half of the country. Military (5,314) and federal police (1,400) were deployed to ‘... eradicate illegal crops, set up check points to delimit the trafficking of narcotic drugs in highways and secondary roads, implement raids and arrest warrants, as well as track drug selling points’ (Presidencia de la Republica, 2006. My emphasis.)⁸¹

Predicated upon the visible expansion of the military’s role in domestic security tasks, the ‘cleaning’ of Mexico and the eradication of criminals were at the crux of Calderon’s political agenda (Presidencia de la República, 2007). During his presidential term, purification and medical metaphors multiplied alongside the martial rhetoric of the Mexican president. The comparisons between drugs and diseases were followed with references to the country as a patient, and the president as a doctor about to practice a major surgery on the nation’s body: “I got to the operating room knowing the patient had a serious problem; when we opened it we realized that she has been invaded all the way through, and that we had to heal it no matter what” (Calderon as quoted in Astorga, 2015: 36). Fraught with multiple consequences, the combination of medical and military metaphors set the conditions to shape the audience’s responses and justify the heavy-handed approach to crime.

Funded by the United States through the Merida Initiative, the Mexican security strategy eventually took the form of an all-encompassing reform of the state apparatus of security and its instruments of observation and analysis, under the guidelines of the U.S. state failure agenda, and its Global Counter Insurgency (GCOIN) doctrine (Finkenbusch, 2016; Grandin, 2011; Hochmüller & Müller, 2015).⁸² A document published in 2009 called the “Model of strategic and tactical operation against the organized crime”, named the components of the plan designed to govern the problem of crime identified by state officials. Alongside the joint operations, four more courses of action were set out: 1) reforms to

⁸¹ Yet, for the local observers there was no clear evidence predicting the turn the presidential rhetoric would take and the intensity of the military deployments. As Astorga (2015), and Aguilar & Castañeda (2009) point out, the economic themes, mainly employment rates, had been the central concern of Calderon electoral agenda only a few months earlier. The references to crime and insecurity were if anything secondary.

⁸² The roots of the Merida Initiative can be traced back to the rationalities of governance implemented under the logic of the U.S. backed programs of state-building, the low intensity warfare, and what has been called Global Counterinsurgency in Latin America. It is part of a wider program of security integration that encompasses Latin America’s judicial systems, military, and policy intelligence. It aims to build a ‘supra-national counterinsurgent infrastructure’ in the context of the U.S War on Terror (Grandin, 2011; Hochmüller & Müller, 2015).

modernize the system of law enforcement and justice administration; 2) a new model of police training; 3) Platform Mexico; and 4) the program called ‘Cleaning Mexico’.⁸³

However, at the heart of the security program remained the joint operations led by the military, under two assumptions: firstly, that it was the territorial integrity of the country that was at risk; and secondly, that given the incompetence and corruption of state police forces, the army was the only institution able to deal with the widespread problem of crime (Mendoza, 2016; Open Society Foundation, 2016). Accordingly, Operation Michoacán was followed by the implementation of eight similar military and federal police operations across the country: Baja California (Tijuana), Chihuahua (Ciudad Juárez), Southern Border, Tehuantepec Isthmus, Sinaloa, Operation Northeast (Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, Coahuila), Operations Guerrero Safe, and Veracruz Safe (Moyano, 2016).⁸⁴ Thus, by the end Calderón’s term, 45 000 soldiers had been deployed annually, i.e. an increase of 133% in comparison with the former president (Mendoza, 2016; Open Society Foundation, 2016).⁸⁵

According to Morales (2012), two main strategic criteria shaped Calderón’s WoD. First, the surveillance of both the southern and northern border in accordance with U.S. guidelines and demands. Second, the surveillance of the drug-transit routes between the Gulf of Mexico and the North through central Mexico (i.e., San Luis Potosí and Aguascalientes). Calderón thus kept to the initial design of the WoD as an operation of eradication and interdiction of illegal crops in Mexico in order to eliminate the drug supply to the United States.⁸⁶

A couple of maps from the U.S. embassy in Mexico in 2012 show the deployment of federal forces through check points set up by the army (126 regional check points) and the Federal Police (32 regional check points) (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). These maps represent the total of checkpoints set up by the Mexican authorities in the context of the WoD, and which of them

⁸³ A wide-scope program of pacification, the Mexican strategy, combined the upgrading of the military and police capacities (via technical assistance, surveillance equipment, and training), with the reform of the justice administration to synchronize it with the U.S. procedures, and the involvement of the Mexican public as participant in the policing of its neighborhoods –Program Cleaning Mexico- (Grandin, 2011; Paley, 2014).

⁸⁴ Additionally, main and secondary roads were also covered through military and federal police check points. Information on the exact distribution of the military and federal police, as well, as the way in which they were rotated is not available.

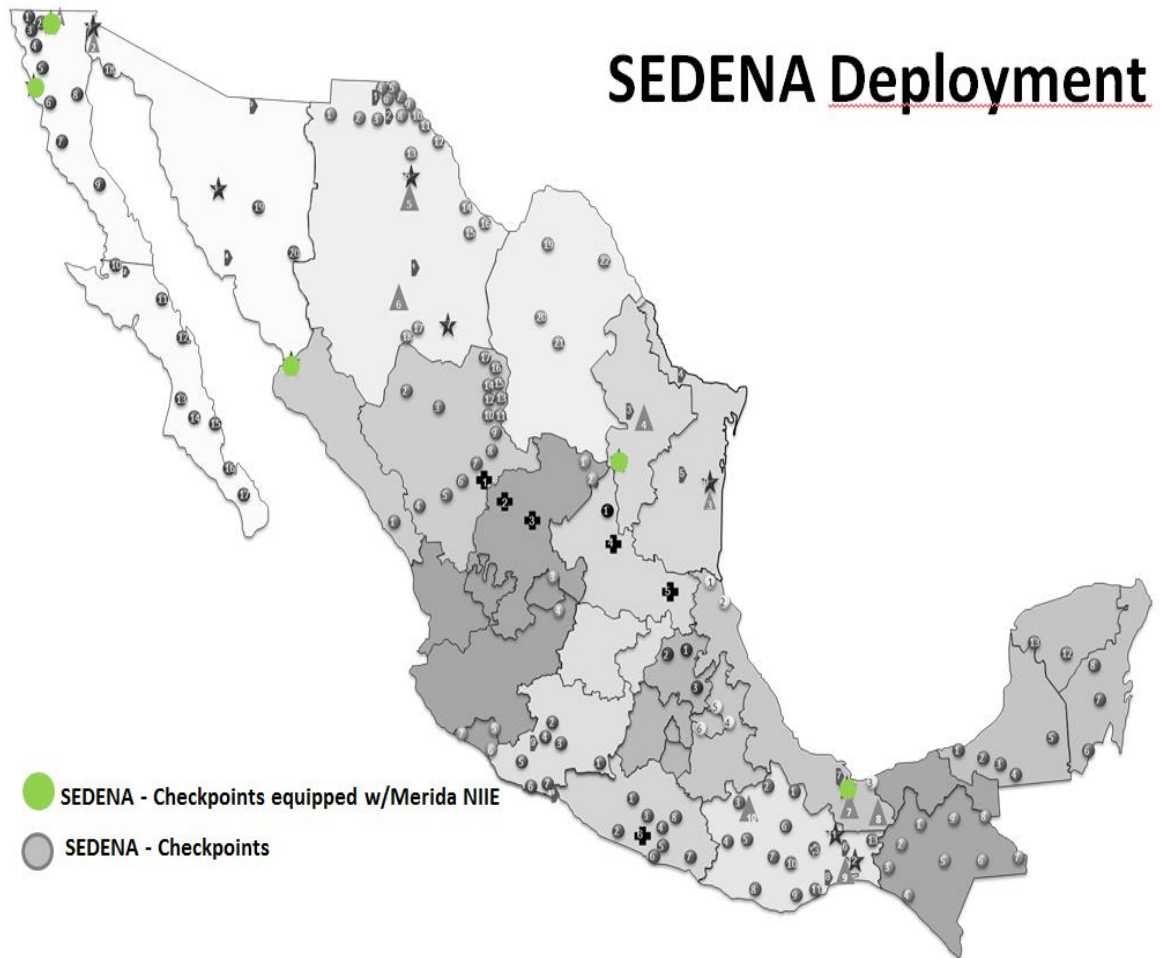
⁸⁵ The number of soldiers engaged in counter-narcotic operations jumped from 18,000 on average between 2000 and 2006, to 45,000 in 2007.

⁸⁶ This geographical distribution corresponds with the historic lines of the counter-narcotics operations already discussed (chapter 5): along the northern border and in the countryside in regions that coincided with old guerrilla strongholds. In the North it corresponded with the states of Sinaloa, Durango and Chihuahua (the former is a border state), Sonora, Baja California, and Nuevo León (these three states are properly border states). In Western Mexico, counter-narcotics operations occurred in Nayarit and Guadalajara, and in the south in the states Guerrero, Michoacán, and Oaxaca (Astorga, 2005).

are supported with U.S. surveillance equipment under the logic of the ‘U.S.-Mexico Border Cooperation’ and Merida Initiative after 2007.⁸⁷

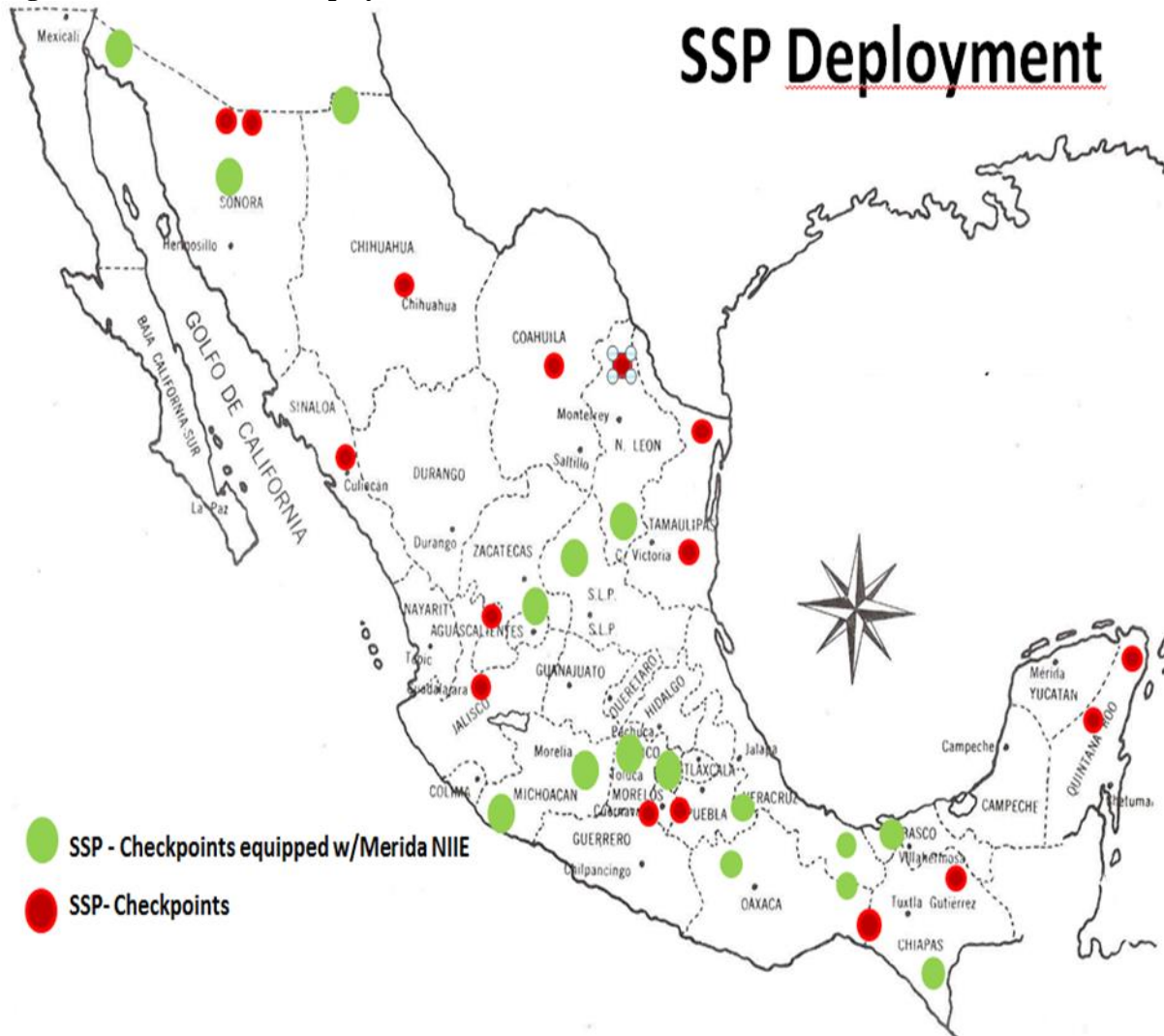
⁸⁷.As far as I know the Mexican government did not elaborate during this period a map detailing the number of federal checkpoints. The maps themselves are not example technical accuracy but they do reflect the U.S. control and management of information the Mexican public do not have. There are no official indications of the size of these checkpoints, their durations or rationales, and the document the maps were extracted from do not indicate their sources either.

Figure 2 Army deployment year 2012



Source: U.S. Embassy Mexico, 2012)

Figure 3: Federal Police deployment 2012



Source: U.S. Embassy Mexico, 2012

The role the WoD took within the political agenda of Calderon’s presidency should not come as surprise. He had to navigate a highly contested political situation with no corporatist instruments, such as the client-patron networks the PRI had used to govern, at hand. It has been argued that the WoD was instrumental for the legitimization of Felipe Calderon (González, 2009; Torre, 2013). González, for example, interprets this act as an obvious demonstration of force in a context in which the president was being challenged: “(...) [a] decisive action [that] showed in effect who was the real commander in chief” (2009: 74).

Interpreted as a gesture of ‘punitive populism’, Calderon’s strategy followed the ‘punitive turn’ that the Federal and Mexico City governments’ public security policies had taken after the economic restructuring of the country and its democratization (Davis 2006b;

Müller, 2016a; 2016b).⁸⁸ Detailed in the previous chapter, this punitive turn consisted of a series of legal and political changes instigated by the deterioration of the mechanisms of coercion and punishment implemented during PRI's hegemony and the economic restructuring of the country. In addition, the intensification of the WoD during Calderon's term built upon a set of convergent processes already explained in chapter 5: the gradual widening of the geographical scope of the counter-narcotics operations, the reduction of the civilian security agencies' role in their enforcement since the late 1970s, and the increasing participation of the army in such operations.

Placing the WoD within the longer trajectory of the modification of state instruments of coercion and control, a set of questions regarding Calderon's term should be asked. For example, what changes if any, did Calderon's WoD have upon the spatial relations of Mexican state security? What were the discourses, practices, and facts that the Mexican government drew upon to organize its point of view on the extent and urgency of the security crisis during Calderon's term? How did the elements internal to the presidential imagined geography of the WoD organize a coherent map of the risks to the country? And what were the implications of this geographical organization of insecurity for the organization of the state violence?

In answering these questions, it will be clear how at the intersection of long-standing political practices and immediate political pressures Calderon's punitive populism reflected deeper changes in the practices of control and regulation exercised by the Mexican state.⁸⁹ These modifications, detailed in the following sections, involve the redefinition of the drug trafficking threat, the configuration of Mexican territory as a battlefield, and the ensuing criminalization of the Mexican population.

6.3 Making (I)Legible Narco-trafficking: The New Geography of the WoD

6.3.1 *The Martial Rhetoric*

This section examines and problematizes the rhetorical articulation of the WoD. By doing so it provides the evidence to understand how, through conceptual shifts, such as the notion of the everywhere criminal, the WoD reclassifies the Mexican subjects into potential

⁸⁸In this regard, the Mexican WoD is in line with similar regional and global developments. For a discussion of the regional trends see Koonings & Kruijt (1999) and Goldstein & Arias (2006) who analyze the militarization of domestic security in Latin America. Müller (2016a; 2106b) on the other hand explores with more detail this 'punitive turn' using the case of Mexico City. On his part, Fassin (2013) explains the militarization of the French national police and the militarized policing of the *banlieus*. In broad terms the WoD follows the lead of global trends that emphasize the punishment of the unwanted populations.

⁸⁹ These conditions are referred to the repertoire of technical instruments, knowledges, and political practices available to rationally proceed and which the Mexican state drew upon.

criminals. By making possible both the organization of the territory into a battlefield and sanctioning the military take over the public security, these conceptual shifts enable a fundamental change in the way individuals are governed by criminalizing and making them subjects of state punishment reducing their legal and political protections. It contributes to the main argument of the thesis, by signposting the discursive elements that preceded the exertion of force, and the changing form of the mechanisms used to govern Mexico.

A month after the initial deployment in Michoacán, on January the 3rd 2007, Calderon had lunch with 250 members of the army to emphasize the importance that military counter-narcotics operations would have in his term.⁹⁰ No different to similar political gatherings previously used by the Mexican executive to publicly court the army, it is the outfit worn by the president that deserves a detailed analysis to better understand one of the initial changes this period introduced. A national newspaper narrated the episode in the following terms:

Wearing a green army jacket and cap, the president Felipe Calderón began the year paying homage to military and police personnel that he said have stopped the advance of delinquency in the first stage of the security operations and whom he ordered not to falter in doing so (...) Unlike his predecessor, Vicente Fox, who wore military clothing just in extraordinary cases, as in 2001, when he supervised the reconstruction after the hurricane Isidore, the president wore this clothing in a military ceremony in which traditionally other presidents attended wearing civilian clothes (...) Flanked by the Secretary by the National Defence Secretary, Guillermo Galván, and the Secretary of the Navy, Mariano Saynez, Calderón pointed out that he was going to 'pay them tribute'. 'Today I come as a supreme commander to acknowledge your work, to urge you go ahead firmly, with dedication, and to tell you we are with you' (Herrera & Martinez, 2007) (My translation).

⁹⁰ It included both the National Defence Secretary and the Navy Secretary. The Mexican Armed Forces are comprised of two independent units: the army and the navy. The army consists of the Mexican Air Force, the Military Police and the Presidential Guard. The Navy is made up of the Naval Infantry Force and the Naval Aviation. Controlled by two separate government departments, the National Defense Secretariat and the Naval Secretariat, they were divided as a condition set on the organization of armed forces following the 1910 Revolution to keep them under control (Camp, 1992).

A photo (photo 1), taken during the lunch, graphically summarizes both the visual morphing of the president into a soldier, the relevance of the actors involved in the operation, and the importance of the moment. The picture portrays the president as he walks towards the lunch. At his right side, he is flanked by the state governor who wears a white shirt and at the left it is the National Defence Secretary wearing a green uniform. Behind them, dressed in white, the Secretary of the Navy, and in a distant third row is the Secretary of Interior (a grey-haired man wearing a blue jacket). The Secretary of Public Security, Genaro García Luna, who was at the time in charge of the civilian apparatus of policing (i.e., the federal police and prison system), is absent in the picture.

Photo 1: Felipe Calderón and the National Security Cabinet



Source: AP Photo/Guillermo Arias <http://uk.businessinsider.com/mexican-military-role-in-fighting-drug-war-and-cartels-2017-2>

A clear instance of Calderon publicizing his stance on crime, the presidential outfit evidenced a shift in the scope of the WoD, the centrality of the army in the anti-crime programs, and the reversion of the presidential role to its historic origin as a military chieftain. Voluntarily stepping down from its civilian position, the supreme commander outfit announced the public marginalization of the civilian components of domestic security and the primacy of the martial conduction of the country. A visual indication of arrangement and distribution of the military within the public space, no

Mexican president had dressed in military attire since 1951 (Robles, 2012). Essential for the organization of power and the stability of the state, its role as a basic instrument of control corresponded with its confinement to the shadows of the countryside and the sporadic repression of urban protests.

With the case of Mexico, it is important to emphasize that the active presence of the military in the background of Mexican politics during the twentieth century was compensated with a strategic silence and its formal relegation from the spotlight. Calderon's insistent martial rhetoric was indeed a jump forward considering the dominant communicational arrangements that had situated the military in the shadows of the national political language.⁹¹ In previous presidential terms, even considering the increasing radicalization of the drug trafficking rhetoric and its inclusion as a national threat, the strategy was always phrased as a struggle or a fight against drugs, but not a war (Norzagaray, 2010).

In hindsight, the visual and verbal emphasis on the war metaphor has an important analytical value when considering the devastation –further examined- that this period brought with it. The normalization of the military presence on the streets, already under the way, through these visual gestures may not have directly favoured the proliferation of violence, but it at least fostered a collective state of mind through the public image of the president. A visual precursor of the years to come and the proliferation of verbal analogies between the security of the country and a state of war, the renewed visibility the presidential gestures granted to the military was followed by the organization of an *ad hoc* interpretation of the security crisis and a program of government that remained unchanged for the rest of the period.

6.3.2 *The Everywhere Criminal: The Country as a Battlefield and the Urbanization of the WoD*

Alongside the martial rhetoric, another change occurred at the level of state representations of narco-trafficking. In its purposeful intent to refute any link between protest and the hardening of the state responses to disorder, the Mexican government argued that the extent and intensification of the state's armed forces deployment, was in direct proportion to the territorial scale, organizational complexity, aggressiveness, and sociopathic behavior

⁹¹ A couple of more times the Mexican president insisted on wearing a military uniform; throughout his term on multiple occasions references were made to the situation of the country as war. A detailed account of the presidential interventions using the comparison between a war and the state strategy can be found in (Nexos, 2011).

fostered by evolutions in the organization and tactics of drug cartels. Embedded in networks of state corruption and complicity, the Mexican government pointed out that drug cartels had evolved from preexisting contraband networks that were borne from the restrictions imposed by state protectionist economic policies in the previous century (García, 2011).⁹²

Using a combination of geographical insights, martial rhetoric, economic logic, and history, President Calderon himself elaborated in an interview with the *New York Times* (2011) on the DTO's geographical scope and purposes. His account specifies the fields of necessary state intervention and pins down the lines of conflict opened up by drug trafficking organizations:

Part of the problem Mexico has is that in the old political culture it was always thought, or it was assumed, that you can deal with criminals. That was a huge mistake and we are now paying the price for it. What was the reason for it? In the old political culture, the old political regime we defeated, corruption and complicity were the great lubricant of the status quo. A criminal could tell an authority, a mayor for instance, 'you don't mess with me and I won't mess with you and everybody was happy; also, here is the money for your political campaign'. 15 years ago, if that criminal only smuggled drugs to the United States, the one thing he needed to do was to bribe an American authority... and his intention in Mexico was essentially to remain unseen... that's why that 'deal' between authorities and criminals worked, or didn't escalate into violence. The problem is when criminals in Mexico started to sell drugs in Mexico not only

⁹² Genaro García Luna, the author of this reference, was Secretary of Public Security during this period. Davis (2017) and Snyder & Durand-Martínez (2009) hold a similar point of view, observing that the DTO's need to be seen through the lens of the pre-existing networks of contraband organized within states-sponsored protection rackets. In the context of the economic restructuring of the country such networks reoriented their purpose, widened their scope of action, and morphed into alternative sources of allegiance and organization to the state. Drug, human, and weapons trafficking organizations associated and merged, forging transnational circuits of commercial exchange and power that challenged Mexican state sovereignty. Accordingly, the combined effect of the liberalization of the economy, and the technological adaptation of the criminal organizations to the Information Age, modified their organization, strategies, aims, and territorial scope. There are differences between the critical approach of Davis (2017), who examines the relation between these networks of private violence and emergent spatialities as alternatives to the state. Snyder & Durand (2009) remain within the formal critique informed by the insights of the state failure thesis and its understanding of the state as a more or less homogenous entity, whose success should be measured against the formal expansions of its institutions. The same thesis has been elaborated in other accounts that explain the nature of the drug-trafficking organizations, the extent of their association with state actors such as the police and the army, and their impact on Mexico's public security (Astorga, 2003; Duran-Martínez, 2009; Lupsha, 1991; Rios, 2012; Serrano, 2012; O'Day, 2001; Watt & Zepeda, 2012).

smuggling drugs to the United States, which is narco-trafficking plus small-scale drug dealing. In terms of the nature of the business, narco-trafficking is a business that implies volume, transport and logistics. Small-scale drug dealing is a business that implies details, retail [in English in the original source], that implies much more people, less volume, individual doses. And why is this a big difference? Because small-scale drug-dealing in Mexico forced the criminal groups to take over territory when it was not important before. Previously they controlled a mayor in Nogales or Agua Prieta... or anywhere and they just passed by, without being detected, towards the border. But now if they also want to sell drugs in (Ciudad) Juárez they have to fight with their rivals in Juárez and that implies terrible, painful, outrageous carnage that makes criminal groups battle over a Plaza [market], which wasn't under dispute before. It is almost a progression, it's almost an analytical geometry issue. That is, in analytical geometry a point is different than a line which is a sequence of points and that is different from a surface that is myriad points in two dimensions and that's it. So, here it is not the same to control a point in the border as it is to control a route to smuggle drugs than it is to control a whole surface. By controlling a surface, the criminal groups clash one against the other and that triggers a brutal [ferocious] violence" (The New York Times, 2011) (My translation).⁹³

Posited as both a problem of deep-seated political corruption and predatory criminality, the security problem Mexico faced, according to the government, concerned the strategic diversification of narco-trafficking, its territorial expansion by controlling *plazas*, and the concomitant regimentation of the domestic consumption of drugs. As Calderon put it, the risk was threefold: by taking over 'surfaces' instead of just 'points', and 'lines', narco-trafficking was eroding the state's control of territory, diminishing national morale, and threatening to fracture the national community by instigating a drug-consumption crisis.⁹⁴

⁹³ The original interview was made in Spanish, so I drew on this version and later translated it.

⁹⁴ The Model of Strategic and Tactic Operation against Organized Criminality (Modelo de Operación Estratégica y Táctica Frente a la Delincuencia Organizada), a policy document issued in 2009 by the federal government explains the extent of this diversification "it seeks to control the totality of the illegal activities, smuggling, piracy, seedy clubs, car theft, kidnappings, human trafficking, and illegal arms trafficking" (Gobierno Federal, 2009).

The security situation and the challenge to the state's control over territory that Calderon described had three main aspects: 1) a growing number of territorial disputes among cartels, 2) the mounting lethality of their violence, and 3) increasing domestic consumption that made Mexico itself into a lucrative drug market. Within this renewed view on the WoD, the concern was no longer the cultivation of certain plants and the transport of illicit substances through Mexican territory, but rather the expansion of the drug business into an all-encompassing criminal enterprise that threatened the country's existence (Gobierno Federal, 2009; Poiré, 2011). This stance implied a significant and remarkable change in the government's official position in contrast with previous years.

Calderon's government emphasis on growing territorial disputes among cartels, the increasing lethality of their violence, and the link traced between them, and growing domestic consumption, presented claims that Mexico was in the middle of a territorial occupation that had, according to the distribution of the state forces, occupied half of its territory. Using the increasing visibility of homicides and gruesome displays of violence as self-explanatory evidence, the territorial expansion and urbanization of drug trafficking were consecrated as official truths. As state officials proceeded under the assumption that the violence they were dealing with had become 'post-political' and radically departed from its previous standards, it made military displays a logical response (Vulliamy 2011).

The idea of the 'everywhere' criminal is problematic in three supplementary senses: 1) homicides were not increasing; 2) drug consumption was not increasing; 3) and links have been found between military activities and growing homicide rates in regions where soldiers were deployed in counter-narcotics operations during this period.

In terms of homicide, rates had been decreasing consistently until 2007. As it has been demonstrated by recent scholarship on crime and violence in Mexico (Escalante, 2009, 2011; Piccato, 2013, Espinosa & Rubin, 2015), this followed a longer-standing trend where crime and homicide rates had been decreasing steadily in the country over the last half of the twentieth century. According to Shrink & Wallman (2015), between 1990s and 2007, the national homicide rate had fallen reaching a total of 8, 861, i.e., 8.1 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. Escalante (2012) and Piccato (2013) observe too that in contrast to the public perception, violence had decreased since 1992 alongside a shift in the spatial distribution and the social profile of the victims.

Escalante (2009) notes, for example, that before 1992 the overwhelming majority of the homicides occurred in the countryside and in southern Mexico. During the period 1995-2007, homicides decreased nationally, but were concentrated in three different regions: the cities of the northern border, the western basin of the Balsas River (Western Michoacán), and the

Sierra Madre Occidental (the intersection between the states of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua). Poor and rural, these two former zones had been traditional places of social unrest and drug production. Escalante (2009) suggests then that it is possible to think that the modification of the legal regime of land ownership in 1992 and the ensuing movement of *campesinos* to the north could have caused the decline of violence in the Mexican countryside. The massive movement of individuals heading north had caused the reduction of conflict by depleting the sources of conflict. In line with this reasoning it is also possible to think that the relocation of a portion of these individuals in the industrialized northern border increased pressure over the inadequate infrastructure in these cities, producing the conditions for the further upsurge of urban violence.⁹⁵

For Pansters (2012) the tangential urbanization of the homicide rate, and its prominent visibility in the northern border cities, played an important role in the widespread perception of narco-trafficking as an urgent threat that should be solved immediately.⁹⁶ In this regard, for him, the WoD concerns social hierarchies (ethnic and class mainly) and geographies organizing the visibility of these homicides. In other words, when the countryside was the location of the bulk of the murders in Mexico, the problem remained under the radar.⁹⁷ Yet, when they moved to northern cities, with their proximity to the United States, where circuits of production, wealth, and information agglutinate, they drew more public attention.

Thus, although the government's emphasis on the intensification of violence, and the alleged territorial expansion of the DTOs overlapped with the relocation of homicides into urban centres, in absolute terms the country was much less violent in 2007 than government estimates claimed. The battle over turf, i.e. the war-like conflict between drug cartels for

⁹⁵Escalante avoids any conclusion in this regard, and there is a lack of studies on this issue of the Mexican case. Lombard (2016) offers evidence that in specific urban locations in Xalapa (Veracruz, southern Mexico) and Queretaro (central Mexico), urban insecurity, land tenure, and violent conflict correlate. Pressed by similar macro-scale factors as the cities of the north: increasing urbanization, demographic growth, changing patterns of land tenure, and a housing policy nationally enforced, 'housing is built on speculation by private-sector homebuilders and purchased with mortgages' (Lombard, 2016: 11), while violence has increased in these cities simultaneously. Yet more studies are needed to advance solid conclusions.

⁹⁶ Additionally, the way in which through different media platforms (television shows and films mainly) the Mexican northern border has been framed as a lawless place needs consideration. The years in which the full militarization of the border increasingly gained purchase, the claims upon the border violence spill over gained traction among the public, in tandem with two more ideas: the proliferation of urban insurgencies in Mexico and Central America and the idea of Mexico as a failed state. Bunker & Sullivan (2010) and Mainwaring (2005; 2007) explain some of the main claims of this school of thought: namely, the evolution of drug cartels (third phase cartels) into para-military armies, in the context of a potential state failure. For a critical perspective on the content and implications of the arguments on the urban warfare, and its counter-insurgency orientation, Graham, (2010), Gregory, (2011) Hönke & Müller, (2012); and Morton (2012) provide relevant insights and commentaries.

⁹⁷ Visibility is thus a cultural category dependent on perceptions, and sensibilities historically situated and geographically contingent.

territory, if existent, was circumscribed to a few regions that, on the one hand, had been traditionally more violent than the rest of the country.

On the other hand, drug consumption, the other idea argued by Calderon in his interview with the NYT (The New York Times, 2001), did jump from 4.1 % to 7.2 % of the national population between 2002 and 2011, with a sharp increase in the central-south region of the country (6.2 %) (Villatoro, 2012). Yet, as Aguilar & Castañeda (2009) observe, the National Addictions Survey in 2008 found that there were 465 000 individuals addicted to drugs, while in 2002 it was 307 000. It was an increase of less than 6 % that represented 0.4% of the national population in that year (110 million). In comparison, with Germany (2.1 %) and in the United States (3 %), the Mexican problem was proportionally minor; and its reference as one of the pillars of the security strategy was, in this light, disproportionate and exaggerated.⁹⁸

In sharp contrast, links have been founded between military operations implemented within this period and the rising levels of violence and homicides in the municipalities and states where they took place (Escalante; 2011; Merino, 2011; Espinosa & Rubin, 2015). For Merino (2011), Chihuahua, a state where protracted military operations occurred between 2008 and 2010, the average homicide rate increased 10 points above the national homicide rate following the presence of military personnel. For their part, Espinosa & Rubin (2015) found that across the 18 regions affected by military operations, the average homicide rate increased by 11 homicides per 100, 000 inhabitants. Thus, between 2007 and 2011, the national average rate jumped from 8.1 to 23.7 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Lajous, Vadillo, & Olvera, 2017). So, it is after increases in police and federal personnel deployed in anti-crime tasks that these figures changed their declining trajectory, with homicides increasing abruptly.

The federal government estimations are also problematic in a fourth sense and it regards crime statistics and their role in the definition of problem-spaces that the WoD was purportedly addressing. Ingrained police corruption, the lack of proper and consistent methodologies, the overlapping of federal and state jurisdictions for the definition of what counts as a crime, who is responsible for criminal investigations and prosecutions, citizens' mistrust, and intentional manipulation of the figures have factored into the organization of

⁹⁸ Much more discussion is needed to determine if an increase of this type is enough indication of a public health and security crisis. Germany seems to have restrained from declaring a war on drugs so far for example.

inconsistent, confusing, and highly politicized figures in Mexico (Cánovas, 2012; Molzahn, Ríos, & Shirk, 2012; Pansters & Castillo, 2007; Piccato, 2013).⁹⁹

Despite the recent public interest in the rationale for increasing homicide rates and the attention to the instruments that could hold the state accountable on this subject, there is still a significant gap between the collection of reliable figures, the actual reporting of crimes, and their further investigation. In this regard, the amount of crimes that go unreported are estimated to be as high as 92.8% (National Institute of Geography and Statistics –INEGI). From the number of crimes effectively reported about 20 % are investigated and there are prosecutions in only 2%, i.e., just about one or two out of every 1000 crimes results in a jail sentence (Open Society Foundation, 2016: 34). The gap between investigation and prosecution is evident in the case of homicides; for example, federal prosecutors executed indictments in only 16 % of homicide investigations, and there were convictions in only one of every ten homicides between 2007 and 2012 (Canóvas, 2012; Open Society Foundation, 2016).

Enshrined in dense institutional and discursive networks, the data on crime in Mexico remains an object of manipulation, opaque to independent scrutiny, and subject to competing interpretations. Its opacity though needs to be factored in to understand the way in which the spaces of state intervention as well as the meaning, and responsibility of the violence are defined. Instrumental for the clarification and classification of targets as well as the eventual allocation of judicial responsibilities, the inadequacy of the regular channels to produce judicial truths, compounded by deep-seated police/judicial inefficiency and corruption, has been replaced by the manufacturing of *ad hoc* categories to make sense of crime intensity. Government and independent reports have, for instance, resorted for over a decade to using the notion of drug-related homicide to discern patterns of causality. The argument is that although Mexican law does not categorize ‘drug violence’ and ‘drug-related homicide’ as offenses, the lack of appropriate categories and proper police and judicial work make it necessary to rely on external signs that indicate the source of the violence:

“Certainly, like many other ill-defined social phenomena, most people recognize drug related violence when they see it. Mass-casualty shoot-outs in the public square, bodies hanging from bridges, decapitated

⁹⁹ Integral to the modern state inventory of techniques of internal colonization, statistics are highly politicized instruments of government, so the problem is not new, nor exclusive of Mexico. Metrics in this regard are not neutral instruments, nor straightforward reflections of the reality. For a full and informed discussion on statistics and other survey instruments see Craib (2004); Hannah (2000); Rose (2004); Scott, (1998).

heads placed in front of public buildings, mass grave sites, and birthday party massacres are among the worst examples of such violence” (Ríos & Shirk, 2011: 4).

This proposition is contestable in two senses. Firstly, it prolongs the authoritarian state practices of (il)legibility into purportedly academic independent accounts. By reinforcing the criminalization of any subject or *modus-operandi* that matches the ‘tell-tale signs’ of so-called drug violence, these categories and analysis avoid discussion about the ambiguity of the ‘tell-tale signs’. The recurrence of the type of homicides described under the ‘drug violence’ term speaks of the spatial dispersion of specific violent practices and techniques (e.g. the public exposition of tortured and mutilated bodies, or the use of fire arms) that have been automatically associated with drug trafficking organizations. But we still do not know who the victims are, who killed them, and most importantly, why they have been murdered.¹⁰⁰

In tandem with the lack of judicial effectiveness, the correlation between tell-tale signs and criminal identity prolongs the categories of analysis being shaped by the state’s own classificatory practices and provides a clear-cut partition between authorities and criminals. Their gaps and pitfalls grant state agents leeway to prolong uncertainty and achieve control by standardizing the origin of the violence.

Thus, the idea of the ‘everywhere criminal’, the correlative territorial deployment of the federal government security forces, and the new higher profile of WoD operations marked a before and after in the practices of state control. Before 2006, the Mexican definition of drug trafficking as a national threat had reluctantly understanding it as an economic activity able to corrupt the state security forces, but orientated to produce and export illegal goods to the United States (Astorga, 2005; Toro 2005). This definition coincided with the U.S. claim that Mexican drug traffickers had increased their share in the amount of drugs exported to its country and their control over regional narco-trafficking networks. Initially producers of reduced amounts of marihuana and poppy and smuggling sub-contractors for Colombian organizations (Astorga 2000; Toro 1995), Mexican drug traffickers ascended finally by the

¹⁰⁰ Chinchilla & Payan (2015: 8-12) in a cross-sectional study on public health and violence, have found patterns regarding the gender and age of the victims of homicide in four states of Mexico (Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas) between 2005 and 2013. Whereas during this period 40,763 murders were registered in these states, 89.6 % of the victim were male and 9.7 female. 70.1 % were individuals between the ages of 15 and 39. In addition, 20 to 24 year olds account for 23.3 % of the victims. It seems clear that being male and young increases the possibility to engage in violent situations and being killed. Yet the context of the homicides, the identity of the perpetrators or their victims, the rationale of the act, and its objectives have been excluded from scrutiny. Thus, much more socio-economic data is needed to make significant claims on what this data means.

2000s as the hegemonic agents in the (American) continental drug network according to official American sources (O’Neil 2009; USDS 2011).¹⁰¹

This understanding of the threat drew upon a spatial understanding of narco-trafficking as rural activity, circumscribed to some states of the south (Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca), the highlands (Sinaloa, Durango, some parts of Nayarit, and Chihuahua), and the northern border as the obligatory route to the United States (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública, 2010). Seen exclusively as a problem of drug trafficking, and primarily a U.S. one, it gave repressive leeway to the Mexican state, without fully compromising the fragile balance between the military and civilian leadership.

President Calderon’s martial rhetoric granted the military space that it did not have previously in public affairs. The rhetorical excesses and the doubling of the numbers of soldiers deployed made the criminal visible as an urban threat and created the impression that the military was the only state agency able to deal with it, normalizing the expansion of the army to engage in tasks beyond those authorized by the Mexican constitution in the governance of Mexican cities. Thus, as Morales notices (2012), the supervision of both borders (southern and northern), the surveillance of the product zones, and the transshipment routes remained central in the organization of the military deployment. In addition to the urban emphasis, the strategy also produced a meaningful change in the internal organization of the WoD and its further deployment. In the following section, the organization of the vocabulary of the WoD is examined in relation to three ideas at the heart of the official argument about the territorial expansion of drug cartels: the *Pax Narca*, the battle over turf, and *la plaza*.

6.4 The Map of the Conflict: The *Pax Narca* (*Mafiosa*)

As was already mentioned, the Mexican WoD has three key narratives: the *Pax Narca*, the battle over turf, and *la plaza* that speak of its sense of urgency, the need of exceptional measures and their normalization, and how its spatial scope is organized. More importantly they signpost the extent of the shift in the state practices and mechanisms of control following the urban expansion of the WoD. This section examines these notions to elucidate the way in which the state’s exertion of force has been modified by the radicalization of its counter-narcotics strategy.

¹⁰¹The account goes on observing the increasing share of cocaine arriving to US from Colombia via Mexico, from around 50% in the 1990s to over 90% in the 2000s, the long-standing role of the country as marihuana and opium supplier. According to US sources in the 1990s that Mexico consolidated its position as supplier of heroin, with a six-fold increasing of opium production between 2003 and 2008. By 2009 after Afghanistan and Burma, Mexico ranked as the third world’s larger producer of opium poppy (O’Neil 2009; USDS 2011).

Thus, in support of the argument that narco-trafficking was a threat to Mexican state control of its territory, the Mexican government disseminated a twofold narrative regarding the origins and dynamic of the violence. Supported by academic accounts, the first section of this narrative is the idea of the *Pax Narca* (Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Hernandez, 2013). Described as a founding pact between cartels and authorities (The PRI), the *Pax Narca* purportedly elicited rules of behavior, performance, and negotiation that were broken up by the transition to democracy, and the federal operations of 2007 (Calderon, 2011; Rios, 2012; Villalobos, 2012).¹⁰² The intensification in the violence that followed the exhaustion of the PRI's hegemony was presented as evidence of the existence of such a pact, and the decentralization and erosion of the single party political regime posited as its direct causes (Rios, 2012; Snyder & Angelica Duran-Martinez, 2009). A long-standing proposition with great purchase, the thesis of the *Pax Narca* draws upon a single assumption: the pyramidal and all powerful nature of the PRI's political regime made impossible any form of autonomy external to its organization. Such was the strength and leeway of the Mexican state after the Revolution, it was considered impossible to conceive that its effective control of territory and power might vary.

Astorga (2007: 31) sums up this stance saying that narco-trafficking "(...) developed protected from different political and police spheres, part of a power structure but subordinated to them, whose main agents were excluded from political power" (my translation). This 'radiography' of Mexican political power has two problems: its lack of evidence; and the transposition of the urban experience of the state during the twentieth century, into an all-compassing imagery that assumes its control was similarly powerful everywhere. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the institutional articulation of state instruments of control and regulation demanded a high degree of regional and local flexibility. A set of violent actors, other than the state, participated in the exercise of state control. Some, like the army, were able to organize violence with relative autonomy and probably also profited from the exertion of disparate illegal activities.¹⁰³

The Mexican state was by no means a monolithic organization, nor as centralized as it has been portrayed by some branches of Mexican politics scholarship. Being sceptical does

¹⁰² This pact purportedly emerged in parallel to the pact between military chieftains that originated the PRI's government and known in the literature as *Pax PRIista*. The *Pax PRIista* designates the one-party system led by the PRI, a combination of highly centralized top-down political arrangements, mild authoritarianism, and outbursts of localized violence (Gillingham & Smith, 2014; Hodges & Gandy, 2002).

¹⁰³ The evidence is scant but for example Coyle (2001) in his ethnography of the violence in small communities in Nayarit, (western Mexico), refers to the deals between the military and region's local bosses to control drug trafficking and other business such as logging in the 1980s and 1990s. Gillingham (2012b) and Rath (2013) offer archival evidence on the links between gunmen, local bosses and the military in states like Puebla and Veracruz in the decades of the 1940s and 1960s.

not mean denying the links between state officials at the highest echelons of the state and narco-trafficking, but suggests that the exchanges between both fields, as well as the lines that separated them, were in all probability less clear than what the thesis of the *Pax Narca* proposes. Enciso (2013) demonstrates that the Pax has important loopholes, such as 1976, a year in which a confrontation between drug traffickers in Sinaloa resulted in 543 homicides, at a rate of 217.4 homicides per 100, 000 inhabitants.¹⁰⁴ In other words, the evidence that upholds the thesis of the agreement between Narcos and the state is unconvincing and needs to be re-considered in light of the findings of the critical historiography of the Mexican state (Gillingham, 2012a;2012b; Gillingham & Smith, Introduction, 2014; Knight, 2012; 2013; Pansters W. G., 2012; Rath, 2103; 2016). Accordingly, a more nuanced and rigorous approach to the links between the state and criminality, attentive to the regional and local arrangements of power during the twenty century, remains to be done.

In any case, the thesis of the *Pax Narca* allowed for connections to be made between the political geography of the PRI's centralized authoritarianism with a proliferation of regionally situated drug dealerships, explaining the outbreaks of violence as manifestations of an unnoticed process of internal colonization fueled by the corruption of the old regime. Here the Mexican presidency avoided the more delicate explanation of the complex histories and socio-political foundations that framed the violence on a case by case basis.

6.4.1 *The Battle Over la Plaza*

The second thesis of this narrative is the idea of the battle over turf, and links the defeat of the PRI in 2000 with the fracture of the Pax Narca. By making a connection between law enforcement, the homicide upsurge, and former PRI's leniency, the WoD was posited simultaneously as both an operation of pacification and moral standing. In short, the main assumption of this proposition is that the dispute for routes among cartels originated "at an undetermined time" (Ríos, 2012: 1) leading to a bloody battle over turf. Accordingly, violence increased when the state-sponsored protection racket fostered by the PRI's political dominance, was broken down by the state's intervention in 2007 (Snyder & Duran-Martinez, 2009).

The battle over turf purportedly stretches back to an ancient dispute between *el Chapo* –Sinaloa's Cartel leader- and el Cartel de Tijuana for trafficking routes and markets that ended up engulfing every cartel, and the country itself, in a national battle. However, the

¹⁰⁴ Figures close to the 224 homicides per 100, 000 inhabitants in Ciudad Juárez in 2010 in the context of the period under analysis (Enciso, 2013).

inception of this conflict was the partition of Mexican territory into multiple *plazas* after the detention of Miguel Angel Félix Gallardo in 1989. From prison, according to this narrative, he ordered the division of the country into a set of dealerships. Here, as the legend has it, the modern organization of the Mexican narco-trafficking began (Grillo, 2011; Reveles, 2010; Vulliamy, 2011).

Journalists who have built their reputation telling this history have essentially drawn upon rumours and obscure references impossible to test independently. The illegality intrinsic to this field operates as an excuse observing the impossibility to do so otherwise, i.e. the impossibility to go door by door asking who killed who or who did what. But this is at least a problematic condition that needs to be factored into the analysis of the constitution of the knowledge that organizes the public's perceptions of crime and authorizes state violence. In tandem with the Mexican state's poor 'cognitive capacities' (Gillingham, 2012b), i.e. the state's ability to collect, classify, and process information to map and govern a polity- these 'alternative' accounts on the origins of violence have allowed for the articulation of a 'common sense of the facts of reality' (Piccato, 2013). Underscored by the slowness of judicial procedures, their overwhelming lack of indictments, and overall effectivity, the media coverage functions as an alternative mechanism of legibility that paradoxically has been used by the state itself to prolong uncertainty. Be as it may, the WoD was thus conceptualized as a moral and political crusade in response to a criminality that threatened the existence of the state and which had resulted from the entanglement of political corruption and organized crime.

The Mexican government's stance replicated some of the tropes of the state-failure and the 'transnational war on crime' discourses (Hönke & Müller, 2012; Killebrew & Bernal, 2010; Morton, 2012). Namely, it repeated claims about the connection between transnational terrorism and organized crime, the evolution of drug cartels into criminal insurgencies, and the chronic institutional weakness of the states within the region (Hochmüller & Müller, 2015; Morton, 2012). In line with the U.S. government's redefinition of its homeland security as 'multi-domain space' (U.S. Department of Defense, 2007), and the classification of the Mexican drug cartels as 'key homeland security challenges' (Cordero, 2013), these discourses favored forms of security governance and securocratic knowledge that favored the insitigation of forms of military governance as first-in-line policies.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵The 'multi-domain space' implies a multi-scalar arrangement of subordinated geographies with assorted functions for the defense of the defense of the U.S. territory, within which Mexico is considered as a 'forward region' with a supporting role to 'engage adversaries across geographical boundaries' (U.S. Department of Defense, 2007: 18) . In parallel, as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton stated that the United States had to deal with 'an increasing threat from a well-organised network[ed], drug-trafficking threat that is, in some cases,

Thus, by framing the Mexican drug cartels as warlike organizations that were an existential threat to Mexico, the government not only resorted to a standard practice among states in instigating fear to foster public consensus (Pain & Smith, 2008). It also purposefully linked the domestic security agenda with a set of transnational security concerns and technologies that had gained political and strategic currency in Latin America after September 11th 2001. In doing so, the proliferation of violence in Mexico was relocated into a ‘wider military-security nexus’ (Gregory, 2001), mapping Mexican drug traffickers onto absolute lines of enmity globally. This wider military-security nexus concerned not only the U.S. war on terror, but a prior dynamic regarding both the reconfiguration of American policing along its southern border in the 1990s, and the militarization of its strategies of drug interdiction in the context of the onset of NAFTA in 1994 (Dunn, 1996; 2009).¹⁰⁶

Therefore both of these themes, the battle over *la plaza* and the Pax Narca, emerged at the intersection between this ‘globalized securocratic knowledge production’ and the dynamics pertaining to the Mexican state-making process, particularly in the wake of the defeat of the PRI in 2000. Evidence of a conceptual dependency on these discourses, and the entanglement of the Mexican WoD with these transnational dynamics reflected the integration and subordination of the Mexican state’s cognitive abilities into a broader network of security agencies controlled by the United States (Finkenbusch, 2016; Moyano 2016).¹⁰⁷

6.4.2 *La Plaza*

The idea of *la plaza* is fundamental to this representation of insecurity and its spatialization in Mexico. The thesis of an endemic battle over turf relied on the assumption that Mexican territory had been configured as a series of contiguous and homogenous dealerships for economic exploitation, i.e., “transportation routes and territories controlled by specific cartels in collusion with police, military, and government officials (...)” (Campbell, 2009: 23). Crafted through secret pacts between drug kingpins and authorities, this division of the national territory into these dealerships, or *plazas* as they are named in Spanish, had purportedly guaranteed a more or less orderly narcotics trade (Rios, 2012; Snyder & Angelica Duran-Martinez, 2009). A summarized version of this narrative is told by Shirk & Astorga (2010:9) in the following terms:

morphing into or making common cause with, what we would consider an insurgency, in Mexico and in Central America” (quoted in Gregory, 2011)

¹⁰⁶For a detail discussion of the rationalities involved in the U.S. governance see (De Leon, 2015; Dunn, 1996; Klare, 1988).

¹⁰⁷ A discussion of the transnational governing logics that have shaped the WoD can be found in (Coleman, 2005; Grandin, 2011; Priest, 2013; Rochlin, 1997; 2007).

Eradication and interdiction efforts targeting the Mexican drug trade began more than fifty years ago, but for most of that period few serious efforts to dismantle major DTOs were made. Indeed, well into the 1980s, many current top cartel operatives—virtually all of them with roots in Sinaloa—operated largely undisturbed within a loosely knit alliance that controlled different commissions, or *plazas*, for smuggling drugs into the United States and benefitted from a highly permissive environment. Mexico’s centralized, single-party political system enabled DTOs to create a system-wide network of corruption that ensured distribution rights, market access, and even official government protection for drug traffickers in exchange for lucrative bribes

Mirroring the idea of the Mexican state as a homogenous, territorially coherent, and politically undisputed entity, the highly hierarchized system of *plazas* was supposedly monitored by the state security agencies. Taken at face value, the disorder, as Calderon made clear, was to be viewed as evidence of the disruption of the old political complicities and the renewed ambitions of armed actors that had grown at expense of the state (Astorga, 2005; Reveles, 2010; Vulliamy, 2011).

La plaza (the square), the term in Spanish that came to designate this spatial arrangement is at the core of the state’s geographical understanding of Mexico security crisis and the physical configuration of the narco-trafficking threat. A basic tenet of the state’s security discourse, *la plaza* in its original meaning designates the public space at the heart of any town. In the Mexican case specifically, *la plaza* amalgamates colonial urban planning and pre-Columbian ceremonial uses into a single architectural formation in which religious, political, and economic power meet (Low, 2011). Through its police and military uses, *la plaza* reveals an alternative cartography of criminal spatialities that have interrupted the normal state of legality and the authorized modes of doing things. As Calderon (2010) claimed:

And what it needs to be done now that they have assumed they are a distinctive authority (...) because they collect taxes, they issue their laws, have their security forces... that are by the way part of what

defines the state... This challenge to the state has to be fought with all the state force. (My translation)

Therefore, the strategic use of *la plaza* represents both the position a given drug cartel holds in regards to the territory it controls and the series of economic arrangements that inform the existence of this territory. Since what is claimed to be at stake in this conflict is control over domestic criminal markets, any city or town, rural or urban, can become a *plaza*. In tandem with the idea of this battle over turf, *la plaza* configures a platform of observation that allows the visualization of the country in terms of a protracted conflict between criminal organizations that make it institutionally vulnerable to the DTO's corrupting power, and thus, at the brink of collapse. To map *la plaza* onto Mexico's territory, stabilize its meaning, and prove its existence, two supplementary methods were articulated by the authorities and scholars. Previously examined above, one concerned the narrative of the inherent connections between the PRI's regime and the DTOs. Through the idea of the Pax Narca, the historical background of the partition of territory was provided (Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Hernandez, 2013; Vulliamy, 2011).

As far as the actual distribution of *plazas* during Calderon's presidential term, the government articulated a confusing narrative in which territories, violent disputes, and narco-trafficking overlapped, but authorities did not provide any official document or graphic depiction of what *las plazas* looked like or how they were distributed. In this regard, drawing on the private communications between the U.S. State Department facilities in Mexico and Washington, DC made public by Wikileaks (2010), Torre (2013) claims that the Mexican government and its intelligence apparatus themselves built upon the drug trafficking cartographies elaborated by Stratfor, the U.S. geopolitical intelligence think tank. In this context, different media outlets and private consultancies undertook the task to map the government's geography of narco-trafficking with interesting results.

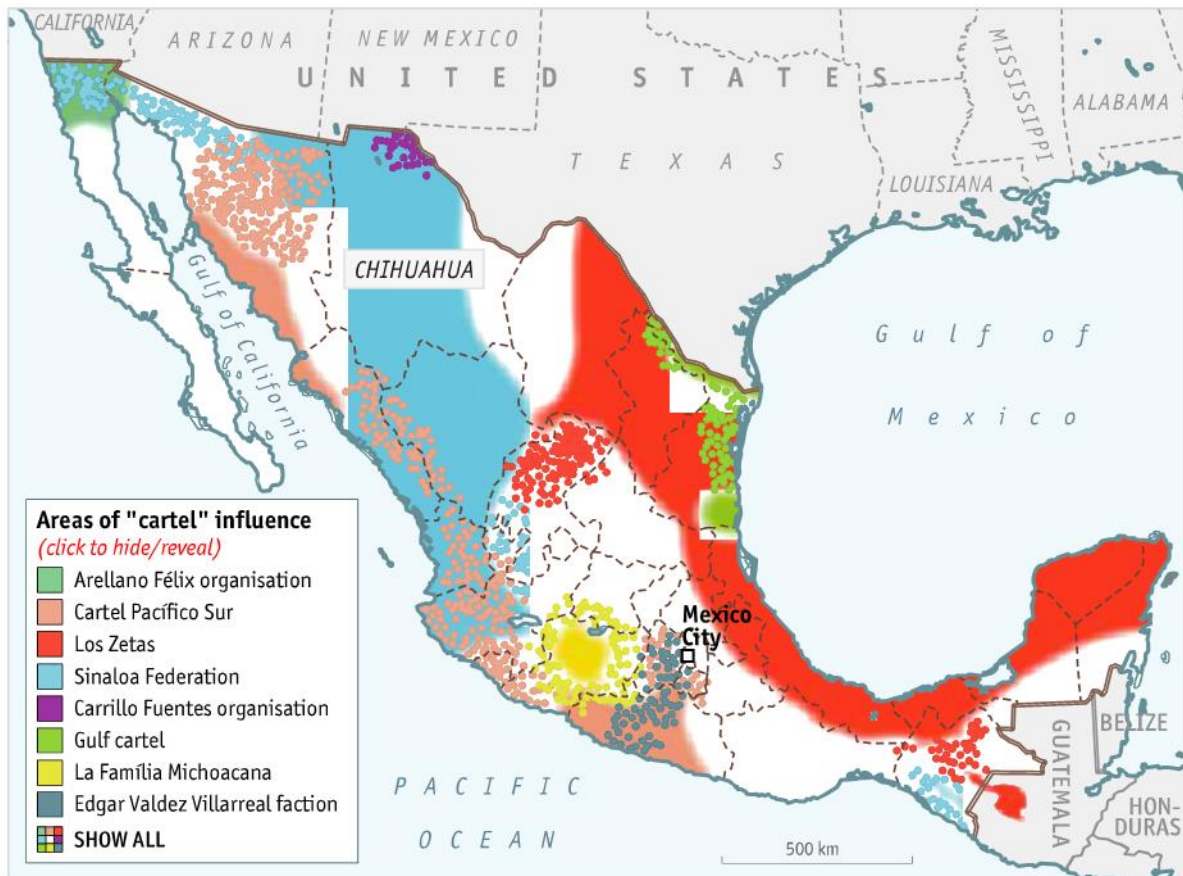
For example, with information provided by the Mexican government and other non-specified sources, The Economist (2011) produced a couple of maps that revealed how eight cartels had spread over the country with delimited, but flexible zones of 'influence' and the routes drugs followed in their way to the United States (fig.4 and fig. 5). In the East coast, Los Zetas dominated a seamless section of the map from north to south, only interrupted in the north by the Gulf Cartel. The Sinaloa Federation controlled some portions of the west coast but its influence was contested by factions of the *Cartel*

del Pacífico Sur, which on the other hand, according to the map, held a ‘beef’ with the *Cartel of Tijuana*. *La Familia Michoacana*, for its part, exercised unchallenged control of Michoacán, and had a small presence in Jalisco, Guerrero, and Guanajuato.

Setting aside the problem of the poor condition of the state instruments to collect criminal information, and the reliability of information provided by Mexican security agencies with a well-known involvement in drug-related activities (O’Day, 2001), these maps give a material consistency to the territorial organization of drug crime. From the point of view of both maps, Mexico’s territory has been almost completely taken over by drug cartels and they give authenticity to the government’s claims regarding the threat of state failure through a loss of territorial control. The distribution of colors, the irregular shapes of the cartels’ domains, and the arrows that suggest myriad drug trafficking routes and uncountable movements, creating the firm impression of impending disorder. More importantly, they produce the idea of the accuracy and legibility embedded in the synoptic effect of the discourses of *la plaza* and the battle over turf.¹⁰⁸

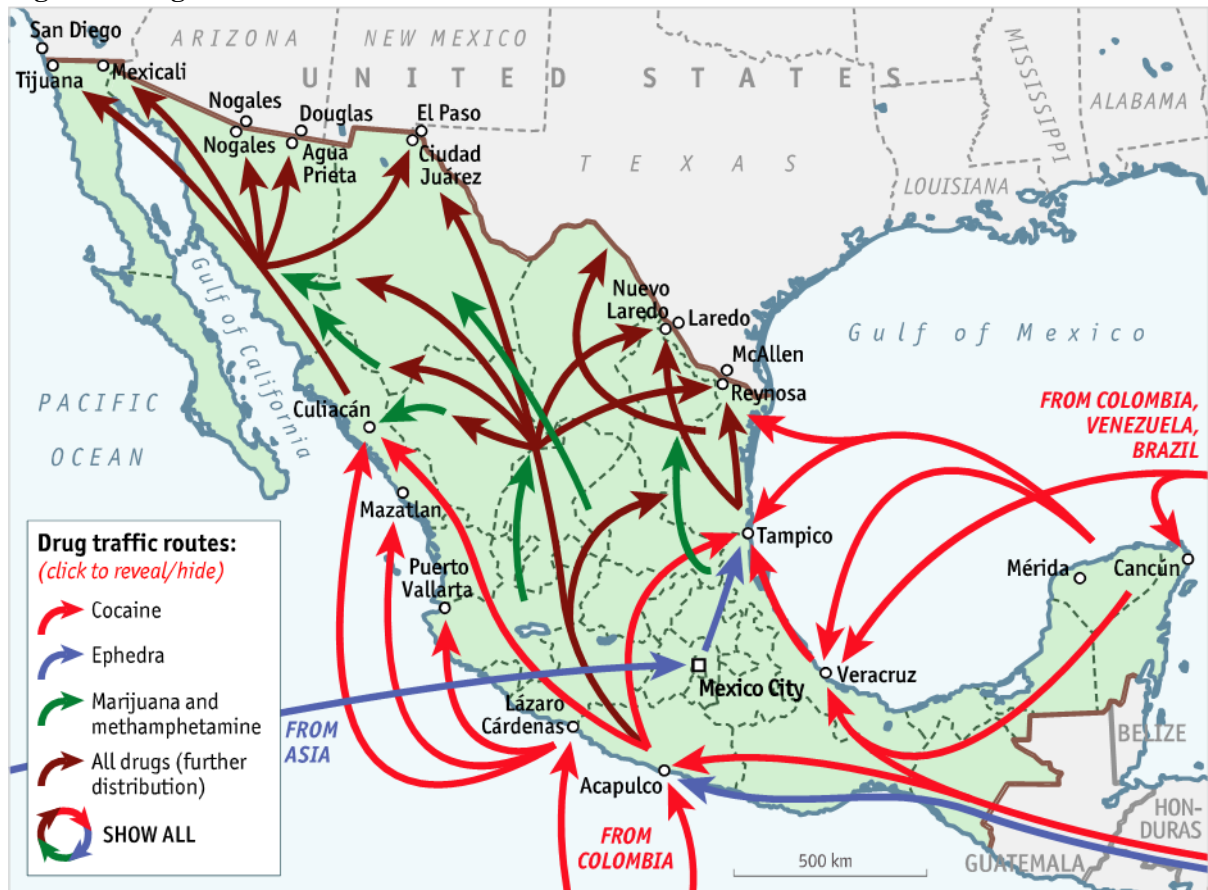
¹⁰⁸ By synoptic effect I understand the purposeful production of an aggregate and selective view of an aspect of reality that aims to differentiate it to make it amenable for knowledge, intervention, and management. In this case, this synoptic effect expands through the strategic silence of the state officials and the activity of the multiple pundits, media outlets, political analysts, consultants and scholars that integrate the different nodes of single network of meaning around how the map of the Mexican violence is structured. The irony is that in depicting the state grammar, these representations have reinforced the point of view of the government and its organizing assumptions. Examples of other maps can be found in Reporte Índigo, 2012; Rhoda & Burton, 2010 Storybench, 2016. The result is always the same: colorful graphics, arrows and well-defined zones of narco-trafficking influence that convey accuracy but that do not clarify its sources or dynamics.

Figure 4 Areas of Cartel Influence



Source: http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/02/drugs_mexico

Figure 5 Drug traffic routes



Source: http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/02/drugs_mexico

6.4.3 La Plaza as Hierarchy of Bodies

The other method used to materialise the threat posed by the drug industry consisted in the use of homicide rates as proxy for the presence of DTOs and the extent of their territorial control. Initially crafted by some media outlets -Reforma and Milenio newspapers (see, Justice in Mexico, 2014), then reproduced by scholars (Molzahn, Rios, & Shirk, 2012; Rios & Shirk, 2010; Rios; 2012), this method was finally resumed by the Mexican government in 2012 (Presidencia de la República , 2012). This proxy method intended to fill the gap open by the shortcomings of the cognitive capacities of the state to monitor and analyze the causes of the proliferation homicides.¹⁰⁹ In addressing drug trafficking violence by correlating homicides with organized crime, murders were classified against a set of visual evidence, and the external conditions of their execution informing a confusing notion of drug-related violence.

¹⁰⁹ The database of the Mexican Presidency uses the same terminology and was released in 2012 under the assumption that the proliferation of murders followed a unified rationality: the battle over turf among the cartels instigated by the government reaction to its territorial expansion. Logically, it was assumed that the bulk of the victims were criminals (Presidencia de la República, 2012).

It was argued that typical features of drug-related homicides were the use of ‘high calibre fire arms’, signs of torture in the bodies, and/or if corpses are found within vehicles or ‘wrapped with blankets’(Molzahn, Rios, & Shirk, 2012). Accordingly, any bodies found in this condition could be claimed as ‘homicides allegedly linked to organized crime’ (homicidios por presunta rivalidad delincuencia) (Presidencia de la República, 2012). In claiming that narcotraffickers kill in patterns discernible from any other armed actor, this measure of the magnitude of the violence assisted the ontological divides the state had set between itself, criminals, and the social contexts in which they are embedded. It did so by ignoring the circulation of methodologies of how to kill, the resemblance between the techniques implemented by DTOs and counterinsurgency techniques previously adopted by the Mexican military (Campbell, 2010), and the fact that, as it has been broadly documented, some alleged narcotraffickers were also former police personnel (Astorga, 2005).¹¹⁰

Clearly, this procedure did not involve any complex technical operation to map homicide rates onto the territorial surface of the country.¹¹¹ In using the homicides as self-explanatory evidence and correlating their gruesome details –‘telltale signs’- with some spatial references, the authorities articulated a pervasive mode of explanation in which visual markers match with specific spaces to signal the presence of the DTOs. The Trans-Border of the University of San Diego (Ríos & Shirk, 2011: 4), makes evident the practical effects of the correlation between external signs and the origin of the violence in the following paragraph, previously quoted above, but worth to read it again

Certainly, like many other ill-defined social phenomena, most people recognize drug related violence when they see it. Mass-casualty shoot-outs in the public square, bodies hanging from bridges, decapitated heads placed in front of public buildings, mass grave sites, and birthday party massacres are among the worst examples of such

¹¹⁰ It is the case of the DTO called *Los Zetas* (The Z’s). Its organizers were members from an army’s special unit called GAFES, trained by the U.S. and Guatemalan army in counterinsurgency techniques. Deserting the army in the late 1990s, *Los Zetas* became one of the bloodiest DTO’s, known specifically for the assimilation of military tactics to its performances (Campbell L. J., 2010; Vulliamy, 2011). On the other hand, Astorga (2005) refers to the case Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo. The equivalent to Pablo Escoba in Mexico during the 1980s, he worked at some point of his life as part of the Attorney General Office’s the police of investigation. Gallardo was also a bodyguard of the governor of the state of Sinaloa Leopoldo Sánchez Celís.

¹¹¹ Official policy documents, as the National Program of Public Security 2008-2012 (Programa Nacional de Seguridad Pública), list the number of ‘facts probably criminal’ that occurred between 1997 and 2007 -16 725 550-, and distinguishes between homicides, robberies, frauds, and other crime, but do not specify regional, state or municipal distributions. More concerning is the fact that the basis of the official assessment is a category called ‘facts probably criminal’, which speaks of the level of uncertainty and discretion the government relied upon to visualize the extent of the criminal problem it was purportedly addressing.

violence (Rios & Shirk, 2010: 4).

The natural conclusion of this reasoning is manifested in the work of Ríos (2012: 2) who holds, with no more evidence than the unambiguous ‘telltale signs’ of drug-related violence, that during this period “most homicides took the form of targeted executions”. Thus, by linking spatial position, violent performance, and homicides, the drug-related violence category made any region, city, or neighborhood, a potential embodiment of *la plaza*.

In addition, at the intersection between this type of scholarly interpretation and the state practices of classification, the state judicial procedures were replaced by the alleged authenticity of drug-related violence as a proxy of judicial investigations and indictments. Thus, for example, after the massacre of 15 teenagers who were at a party in 2010 in Ciudad Juárez, the Mexican president claimed immediately the murdered individuals were gang members and responsible for their own death.

The declaration produced public outrage and Calderon had to apologise for his declaration as details of the murdered teens emerged that demonstrated there was not any link between them and any criminal-related activity (López, 2017). However, this way of coding dead bodies became standard practice between journalists, the public, and state officials who in less contested situations have stuck to the same rationale: ‘if it seems like a drug-related murder it should be a drug related murder’, for as Juan a federal police officer, one of my interviewees, put it, ‘these cunts [drug traffickers] kill this way’.

In doing so, an informal hierarchy of bodies emerged supplementing the categorization of the spaces in which homicides occurred. Those that matched the tell-tale signs were deemed *ex-post facto* unworthy of any form legal protection or criminal investigation. When investigations happen, they have been hopelessly biased towards the criminalization of the victim (Muñoz, 2015; Wright, 2013; Open Society Foundation, 2016). The result was the creation of a favorable environment for generalized criminal impunity. Moreover, this coding of dead bodies situates Mexican citizens in a position of overwhelming vulnerability in relation to both state officials and privately armed groups. As it will be analyzed in the next subsection, without clear spatial and temporal limits, the organization of this all-encompassing geography of insecurity contributed to an increase in the number of abuses in which state officials were implicated, as well as the number of citizens murdered in purported drug related events (Miroff & Booth, 2012; Woody, 2017).¹¹²

¹¹²In this presidential term alone the army deployment in antinarcotic tasks jumped from 20,000 to 67,706 soldiers. From them 17,422 soldiers were dedicated to eradication tasks; 21,554 to interdiction tasks; and 28,730 were directly engaged in patrolling, and special operations. In this regard, the Mexican soldier works uninterruptedly nine months every year with no holidays or time to visit their families during this period,

6.4.4 *The Indiscriminate Use of Force*

In this context, aggravated by growing judicial ineffectiveness and criminal impunity, police and military personnel involvement in extrajudicial killings, torture, and other abuses has been widely documented (Anaya, 2014; International, 2014; Open Society Foundation, 2015; Open Society Foundation, 2016). Between 2006 and 2017, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) received 10 667 complaints against the army, all considered severe (*de alto impacto*). 187 were for enforced or unintentional disappearance; 11 for extrajudicial killing; 89 for torture; and 5 000 for arbitrary detention. Between 2008 and 2012, the CNDH received 7, 601 complaints, 71.2 % of the total (Román, 2017; Open Society Foundation, 2016). The Attorney General has received 4000 complaints of torture since 2006 but only 15 resulted in convictions.

Fatality rates increased with a high disproportion between fatalities and casualties as well as between civilian and military deaths. For example, it has been estimated that the elite marine forces kill 30 people for every person they injure, and that the army kills 8 for every one it wounds (Ahmed & Schmitt, 2016). About 3000 people were killed by the military between 2007 and 2012 according to the official figures. In contrast between 2007 and 2012, 158 soldiers died. To put it into context, the International Committee of the Red Cross, found that about four people are injured for each person killed in different forms of combat since 1970, which, given the numbers above, suggests that the military has been conducting extrajudicial killings (Ahmed & Schmitt, 2016). While it does not mean the army or the state security forces killed each of the individuals murdered, the questions of ‘who is being killed, who is doing the killing and why are people being killed?’ (Bowden & Molloy, 2010) remain to be answered. The documented participation of the military in extrajudicial killings and abuses (International Amnesty, 2014; Open Society Foundation, 2015; 2016), and the official insistence that 90 % of the murdered during the period 2006-2012 are connected to drug organizations, without providing legal evidence, speaks of a serious gap that needs to be addressed to understand the functioning of the WoD, and the role of the coercive arms of the state in the proliferation of violence.

Lajous, Romero & Calzada (2017), after examining 3 327 violent incidents in which the Mexican military were involved between 2006 and 2011, found that 74.5% of them were not preceded by prior investigation, planning, or legal sanction (i.e., a court order). It was the presence of military deployments, underpinned by the presidential authorization to use the

followed by a three-month holiday. The lowest monthly salary in this period was equivalent to £325; the highest £7,498 (Miroff & Booth, 2012; Ordorica, 2011; Woody, 2017).

lethal force, that triggered these violent incidents.¹¹³ With no official directive to guide and limit the use of the state force issued during this period and the concurrent representation (and acceptance) of the country as a battlefield, the situation facilitated the abusive conduct of the state coercive apparatus (Open Society Foundation, 2016). Thus, in accordance to the Presidential definition of the enemy in the ‘Directive For the Integral Combat to Narcotrafficking, 2007-2012’¹¹⁴ three broad objectives were set: “1) destroying the economic foundations of the narcotraffickers, by disrupting the harvesting of drugs; 2) inhibiting the use of Mexican national territory for drug trafficking and the distribution of psychotropics, precursors and essential chemicals; and 3) contributing to the dismantling of the structures of organized delinquency” (quoted in Carrasco, 2014).

Advocating for the operational autonomy of regional commanders “(...) under the principle of harrassing, capturing, and neutralizing the enemy” (as quoted in Carrasco, 2012), the directive turned every possible space in the country into a scenario of potential narcotics activity. Airports, depots, hangars, courier companies, train stations, seaports, the northern and southern borders, and the purported land routes to transport drugs (Pacific, Gulf, Centre, and Transversal), and the zones of cultivation (Sonora, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Durango, Nayarit, Jalisco, Michoacán, Guerrero y Oaxaca) were all classified as spaces of interception, patrolling, and raiding. Mexico City, Morelos, Hidalgo, and Estado de Mexico, and all states located in Central Mexico, were classified as spaces for the ‘capture of targets’.

As in the official policy documents, presidential references, and journalistic reports, no reference is made in this Directive regarding the temporal limits or the territorial circumscriptions in which the operations should be executed. There is also no reference made to the specific identity of the ‘targets’. Judging from the results of the WoD (e.g., the soaring homicide rate and the state preference for the use of lethal force), this configurational system produced results consistent with the representations of the territory as a battlefield and the classification of Mexican subjects as criminals.

Yet at the bottom of this effect lies an inescapable ambiguity: when I asked the security personnel I interviewed how they could tell the difference between a *narco* and a ‘normal’ citizen the conclusion was always the same: it is impossible. Initially some of them referred some gestures: ‘look, they have this arrogant attitude, you know, when you see them you

¹¹³ It should not be surprising considering the history of the military policing in Mexico and the nature of the military. In this regard, as Rath (2013: 126) aptly puts it, when conducting policing operations the Mexican military have behaved according to its history and institutional nature: “(...) in a military style of violently countering a threat rather than accumulating evidence for a legal trial”.

¹¹⁴ A document elaborated by the Mexican Army to organize its performance during this period that was leaked and commented on by a handful of journalists

know they *are*'. Another interviewee, Juan, noticed the texture of their hands as an indication of their identity, because once he had to shake hands with one of *them*: 'I felt his hands... you know, those were the fucking hands of a murderer'.

After asking my interviewees for further clarification, the result was always the same. If they had found these people in different circumstances, say for example, in the shops around the corner of their homes, my interviewees admitted that they could not tell the difference between their neighbors and a drug kingpin. In one of the few criticisms of the WoD publicly aired by a member of the military, General Jorge Lugo (quoted in Medellín, 2016 –my translation-), puts it as follows,

“(...) knowing by hearsay the name of the drug kingpins does not imply knowing the enemy... if we do not know the enemy we therefore do not know who we are going to fight, [then] how is it possible to set objectives and strategic lines to reach them?...On this basis, there does not exist any certitude in the actions taken, everything becomes an undefined and uncontrolled risk. All is uncertainty. It leads us to havoc, and there cannot be alternative plans (...)”

This uncertainty, in tandem with the amplification of the power of the army, the purposeful manipulation of the drug traffickers' identities, and the representation of the country's geography as a battlefield, expanded the power of the state over the lives of ordinary citizens and modified the geographic limits of state violence. The consequences of this expansion will be discussed in chapter 8 through the analysis of the implementation of Operation Tijuana between 2007 and 2010.

6.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I argued that the contemporary organization and exertion of political violence in Mexico became dependent on the production of a structured narrative on the geographical origins, limits, and rationales of narco-trafficking. Consistent with the history of the Mexican state, this process built on preexisting state repressive apparatus – legal technologies, military knowledge, equipment, and territorial distributions.

Felipe Calderon's presidential term furthered this process and innovated in two senses: by intensifying military and federal police deployments in Mexican territory and amplifying

the notion of narco-trafficking as an existential threat. Underpinned by international securocratic knowledge, technologies, and practices (e.g., the military management of the border; the framing of criminality as a form of insurgency; and the representation of the state as failed political organization), the novelty of this period is twofold. Firstly, it is the articulation of a consistent language to explain the geographical expansion of the coercive arms of the state. Building upon the failed state discourse, and the local mythology of the transition to democracy, *la plaza* and the battle over turf became the central pieces of the Mexican WoD and the exertion of state violence. In combination with the lack of judicial oversight and the minimal possibilities of securing convictions within the legal system, the WoD offered a limited course of action: territorial interventions that invariably resorted to the use of lethal force.

Secondly, by doing so, the WoD opened a new avenue to negotiate the state's management of insecurity and implement its violence. By claiming that narco-trafficking has evolved into a complex form of criminality that aims to control the national territory on a scale that threatened the state's existence, Mexican authorities turned the country into a criminogenic space and made every individual into a potential criminal. Therefore, the originality of Calderon's WoD lies between the excess of his martial rhetoric, and the purposeful expansion of the territory of danger by conceptualizing national space as a collection of criminogenic locations.

This framing of the problem made it possible for the escalation of the military's role as a constabulary force. The radicalization the WoD also manifested a shift on the state's catalogue of repressive tactics, the expansion of the geographical parameters of their implementation, and a widening scope for their objects of regulation and control. In other words, seen through the lens of the erosion of the state's traditional instruments of political control, the synchronicity between the intensification of the state's routines of violence and the multiplication of the points of social resistance are indications of a broader transformation in the territory of government.

By redrawing the boundaries between those included within the political order and those deemed unworthy of the state's protections, the scope of the state violence and the spheres of political dominance widened. Accordingly, the reorganization of the national territory as a criminogenic space, expanded both the coercive powers of the state and the geographic limits of the military policing by reconfiguring the Mexican subject as a potential criminal. Two analytical operations were examined as part of the process of recodification of territory: the purposeful instrumentalization of the corpses of the battle over turf as spatial markers and the construction of the battle over turf as the master narrative on the origins of

the violence. Part of a broader conceptual operation to describe the limits of *la plaza* and the territories under dispute, the reclassification of the murdered as criminals speaks to the political geography of the WoD and its definition of public safety as a spatially and temporally unlimited enterprise. By claiming the bodies of murdered people are evidence of criminal control over territory, death has been re-coded by the state to legitimize its interventions and make any type of ‘collateral’ damage acceptable. In doing so, the ontological policing the WoD proposes has produced a novel relationship amongst Mexican bodies and the territory they inhabit. Making individuals visible through their relationship with crime has engineered the territory as a place amenable for military intervention, authorizing its occupation.

In the following chapters, the implementation and everyday consequences of the spatial reconfiguration of the state violence will be analyzed looking specifically at the northern border and the city of Tijuana. Firstly, the territorial structure of this city through the lens of its history and residents’ narratives will be analyzed to identify the internal divides, forms exclusion, and classifying logics organizing Tijuana’s urban space. Then, in the penultimate and final chapters, the implications of state intervention will be analyzed by examining the period prior to the implementation of military operations in Tijuana. Thus, by building on interviews with federal police personnel, the implementation of the operation and its impact on the policing of the city will be assessed. It will reveal the extent of the entanglement between the governmental control of space, its representation, and the reconfiguration of the urban space, as well as its impact upon the lives of individual citizens.

Chapter 7. Tijuana ‘la Bella’ (The Beauty)

(...) Tijuana is a small fortress. Coming by plane from Mexico City takes 3.45 hours and U.S. \$300. By bus it takes about 48 hours to get from Mexico City. After deciding to go by plane, you will be subject to security controls in Tijuana in addition to those of your departure airport, which seems beyond what is normally done with similar flights within Mexico. Although it is a domestic flight, the screening procedures include: (1) producing identification documents at the gates of the airport to prove your Mexican identity, or demonstrating you are legally in the country. (2) Immediately after picking up your luggage, it is necessary to go through a last check point run by military personnel to get –again– your luggage screened by an X-Ray machine. The first thing you spot from the airport is the size and physical presence of the border and the wall that makes it visible. By car, things are not that different. The only way out/in towards the east, beyond the city is the road called la Rumorosa, named after the mountain that flanks it. After the mountain, the Mediterranean-like landscape of Tijuana is replaced by the desert that runs alongside the road. A military check point is set up on the motorway and regulates the flow of vehicles that come from the east. Towards the north is the wall that extends into the ocean, and towards the south, is the rest of the peninsula of Baja California, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortes. You could run but you wouldn’t get any further.

Fieldwork notes, May 2015

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters three interrelated claims were made concerning the organization of the state’s space, the territorial reconfiguration of its instruments of coercion and the WoD. First, the WoD is an essential component of the organization of the military policing of the country and supplements the broader repertoire of repressive discourses and practices of the Mexican government. Initially limited to the countryside, it regarded the management of unruly rural spaces and populations. Second, at the intersection of the economic restructuring of the country in the 1980s and the erosion of the post-revolutionary state mechanisms of control and regulation, the WoD widened its scope of application in tandem with the overall enlargement of the state’s repressive instruments. Finally, the expansion of the WoD built upon the articulation of territory as a battlefield and the

recodification of the country's subjects as potential criminals via the notion of *la plaza*. The reconfiguration of both the Mexican territory and its inhabitants as criminogenic entities has reinforced the enlargement of the state's repressive powers and the distribution of its coercive apparatus across the country in an unchecked fashion. In so doing the WoD has reshaped the geography of the country according to concomitant definitions of danger, insecurity and criminality.

From the themes already examined two questions remain to be answered. First how has the reorganization of the political geography of insecurity carried out by the WoD been grafted inside the spaces of daily life? And, how has the regimentation of the country's space informed the behaviors of Mexican citizens? To answer these questions, the analysis shifts towards the examination of the Mexican northern border, looking specifically at the city of Tijuana. Situated at the most western point of the Mexican-US border in the Mexican state of Baja California (see Fig. 6 and 7), this city illustrates the effects, conditions, and development of various forms of state violence undertaken under the WoD. In this border space, the territorial organization of the country as an offshore location for the U.S. production and the extension of border controls into Mexico converge with the expansion of the state's spheres of domination.

In Tijuana, the imagination of the national space as a battleground has combined with the local social organization, producing an amalgamation of fear, deception, and violence whose basic condition is the representation of its citizens as suspects and the configuration of the city's space as threatening and dangerous. Correspondingly, spatial maneuvers, perceptions, understandings, discourses of insecurity, stigmatized places and individuals have been codified and instructed within this densely-regimented space.

This chapter examines the interplay between Tijuana's urban space, the organization of its identity and the amalgamation of logics governing Tijuana. By doing so, it seeks to bridge the analysis of the WoD at a national level with its local implementation. It will analyze the dynamic entanglement between the movements of its residents, the city's identity, and the political regimentation of urban space.

Therefore, this chapter asks three intertwined questions. First, what political and economic process have shaped the organization and functioning of the city? Second, how have these processes been spatially grafted onto the city, that is, what is its impact upon the geography of Tijuana? And third, how have these spatial inscriptions translated into socio-economic distributions of bodies that regulate the city space?

Thus, this chapter claims that the spatial organization of the city has produced understandings on the origins of insecurity and informal divides through which Tijuana has

been internally segmented into safety, risky, and transitional zones. These urban divides interact and inform the multiple understandings of insecurity and classification of the subjects that move across it. Under analysis are firstly the socio-political processes that have shaped the organization and functioning of the city. Secondly how have these processes been mapped onto the city impacting the geographical organization of Tijuana? Thirdly how have these spatial inscriptions translated into socio-economic distributions of bodies that regulate the city space.

Tijuana's historical organization as a supplier/manufacturer of low-cost goods has shaped its uses and representation as a liminal space, zone of transition, and lawless location. The residents' understandings and strategies to navigate the intricate and highly regimented topography of the city, overlap with the imagination of the city scape as disputed territory among drug-trafficking groups, and the very real proliferation of violence (Millán, 2013). These economic and political processes have been mapped onto the urban form, organizing the city's layout, enabling forms of mobility, and defining the management of its residents and spaces by classifying them as alternatively safe or risky according to their position and movements respectively.

Accordingly, the city has been informally separated in two distinctive sections: the east, poorer, and unsafe, and the west, the area that encompasses the border gates, the business district, the city centre, and the wealthiest neighbourhoods. In addition to these separations instigated by the nature and speed of demographic, migratory and urban and industrial dynamics, the city is traversed by the regulations induced by the U.S. border management. It articulates a conflictive geography of controls and regulations upon the different populations that occupy the space of the city: formal residents, migrants in transit to the United States, Mexican deportees from the United States, and Mexican migrants seeking jobs in Tijuana. In shaping the symbolic and material references upon which the city is articulated, these separations and controls have enabled the classification of its residents, subjecting them to forms of control and regulation contingent on their positions within the urban space.

The chapter is organized chronologically addressing the processes that have shaped the history of the city, from its foundation as touristic hub, its transformation into a manufacturing centre in the 1970s, and its organization as a drug transshipment location in the 1980s. Beyond the apparent chaos, coherent formations are discernible within the city, reflecting the inscription of the different rationalities governing the urban space and producing a sense of orientation and identity.

Proceeding in three sections, this chapter explains the urban organization of the city. The first section addresses the position of the city within the national geography. Then the analysis jumps back to the birth of the city and its long-standing influence over the city's layout and the identification of its residents. It links the explanation of the position of the city within the imaginary geography of drug trafficking with its narrative and spatial expressions. There, U.S. border management is examined as a relevant condition for the understanding of the contemporary form of the city and the current classification of its population. The wall that separates both countries, links both the reputation of the city, its relations with the U.S., and the contemporary securitization of the border.

In the second section, the investigation moves to the industrial organization of the city in the late 1960s, the ensuing demographic growth and the emergence of an urban divide between the west and the east of the city. This divide, more imaginary than real, has produced a narrative that separates the safest spaces of the city from the riskiest, distributing responsibilities and blaming residents for the evils that have taken over the city. The last section of the chapter details how the classification and adjustment of Tijuana's inhabitants is performed and operationalized as they interact with other regulations informing the order of the city.

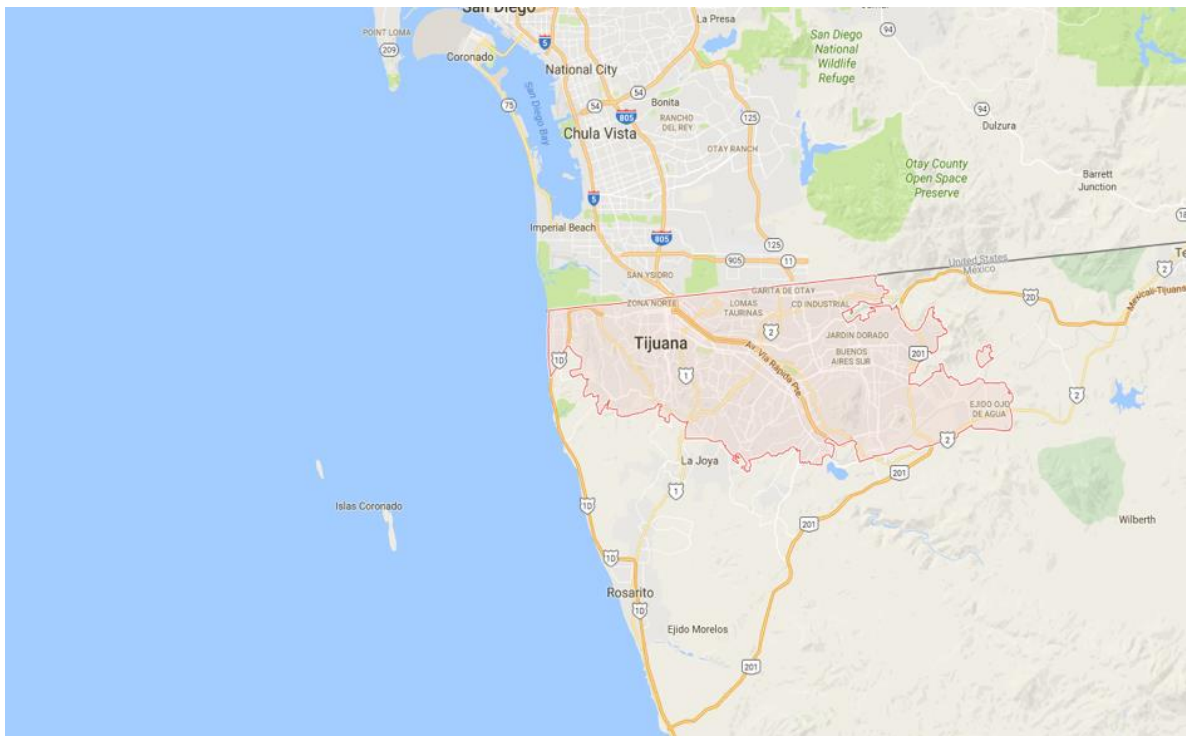
Building upon this analysis, the following chapter will explore the interplay between the operations of the WoD, the surveillance of Tijuana's residents, and the imagined geographies of the urban space against the background of the militarization of policing.

Figure 6 Map of Baja California



Source: <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=BAJA+CALIFORNIA+MAP&oq=BAJA+CALIFORNIA+MAP&qs=chrome..69i57j0l5.4222j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

Figure 7: Map of Tijuana



Source: <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Tijuana,+Baja+California,+Mexico/@32.4966818,117.0878888,11z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x80d9390226587bd3:0x14724bafa4e62456!8m2!3d32.5149469!4d-117.0382471>

7.2 Tijuana: The City of Vice

In the very north of the city is the ‘Zona Norte’ (North Zone), the oldest part of the city. Strategically situated at the gates of the Mexico-U.S. border, it surprises the visitor with a combined offer of alcohol, prescription drugs sold over the counter, prostitutes, and table dances. This is Tijuana’s most famous side. Here the merchants are bilingual and the US dollar is the official currency.

Fieldwork notes, June 2015

This section explains the links between the history of Tijuana and its position within the imagination of the northern border. In doing so, it situates the analysis of the intricate geography of the city and its policing in the context of the WoD, along the lines of its historical origins as a commercial post and provider of the otherwise illegal services in the United States in the early twentieth century. It is this historic origin that determines the codification of its geography and the way its pacification is later addressed under the WoD.

Synonymous with alcohol, sex, drugs and more recently uncontrolled crime, Tijuana is an obligatory stopping point for all sort of commodities and human beings in their route to the United States (Merino, Zarkin, & Fierro, 2015; Palu, 2013; Valle-Jones, 2011). Given its geographical position on the Pacific Rim and its proximity to the Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach, all types of commodities coming from Asia and South America move across Tijuana. Its geographical location enables shippers to deliver products to ‘almost anywhere in the U.S. within 1 to 5 days’ (Tijuana Economic Development Corporation, 2016). Additionally, it is an important manufacturing centre that is well connected with a transnational network of production and distribution of commodities, especially televisions (Fuentes & Fuentes, 2004; Fuentes & Peña, 2010; Hernández, Mungaray, & Ocegueda, 2006).

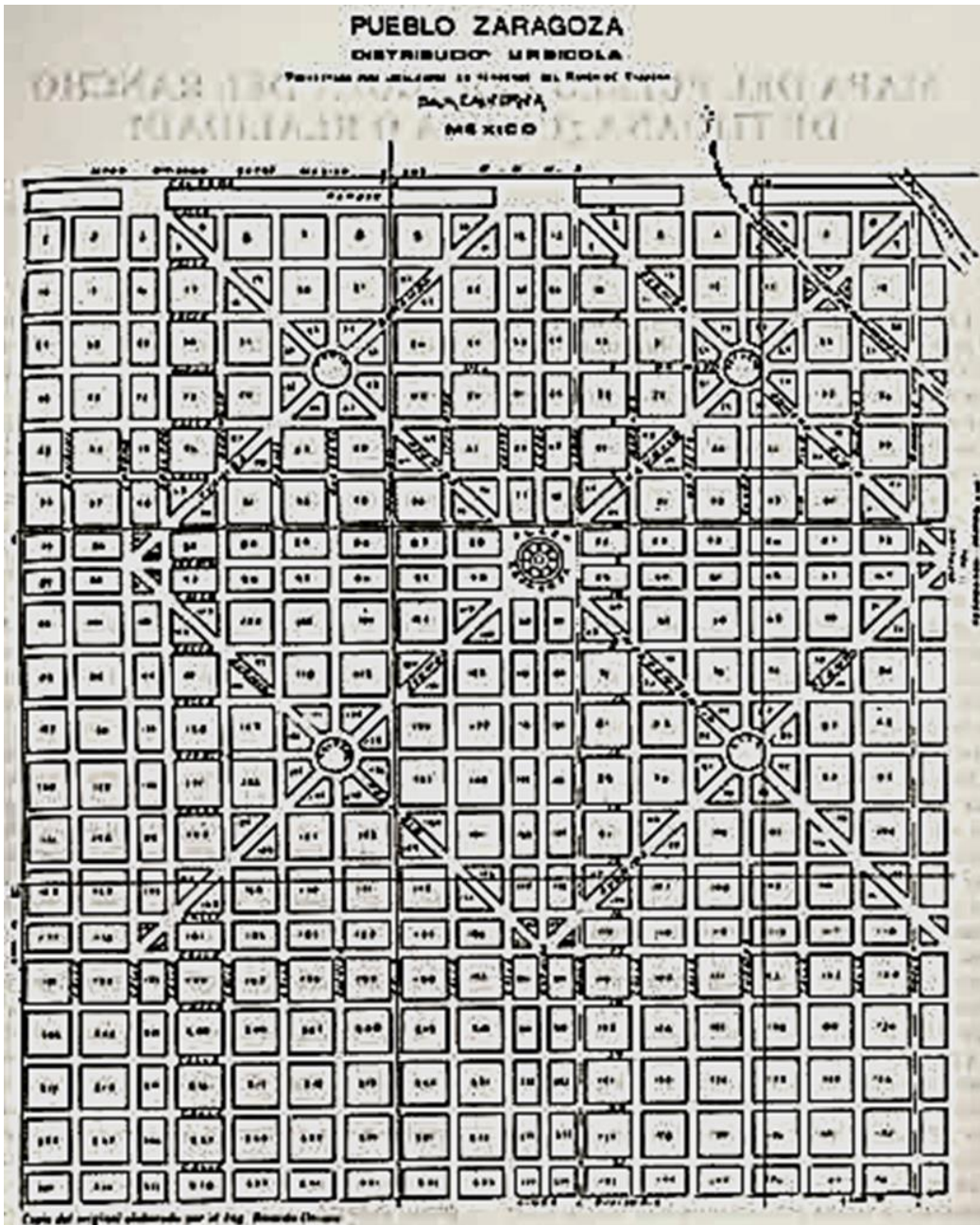
The founding of the city (1889) followed the organization of the Mexican northern border which was established after the Mexican-American war in 1847 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) and the Gadsden Purchase (1853). Geographically isolated from the rest of Mexico by a mountain pass called *La Rumorosa*, a symbolic and physical limit, the city tied its fortune, form, and purpose to the United States (Corona, 2017). Originally envisioned as a Pueblo de Zaragoza, an ordered set of perpendicular avenues and streets traversed by clearly defined diagonals, the design of Tijuana intended to break away from

both the model of the old Latin American city¹¹⁵, and the American-like layout of the neighbouring cities of Mexicali (Baja California Norte), and Nogales (Sonora)¹¹⁶. Inspired by the rationalist expectations of the ruling dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, the planning of Pueblo de Zaragoza intended to create an urban space of strictly controlled movements and transactions to facilitate spiritual progress and economic order (Corona, 2017) (Fig.9). Financially dependent, due to its isolation from Central Mexico, on the economic flows coming from the limited commercial exchanges with the United States, the original project of Pueblo de Zaragoza was never realized, and Tijuana remained an underdeveloped community of 242 individuals in 1910 (Zenteno, 1995). U.S. expansion to the southwest and the consolidation of San Diego as a regional economic pole boosted the commerce between the two areas, increasing the economic value of the land and encouraging its demographic growth.

¹¹⁵ Organized around a central square from which the order of the city was projected towards the periphery of the urban space by concentrating the ceremonial, commercial, and political at its centre (Low, 2011).

¹¹⁶ These cities followed a grid plan, i.e, rectilinear and intersecting streets running at right angles forming a grid (The Guardian , 2016).

Figure 9: Pueblo de Zaragoza



Source: <http://www.tijuana.gob.mx/ciudad/images/historia/zaragoza01.jpg>

Things changed in the second decade of the twentieth century. California's 1911 prohibition of horse racing and saloons made Tijuana an early offshore provider of services for U.S. needs, while attracting investors and generating tax revenue. Cockfighting, bullfighting, and gambling were authorized, and both a casino, and race track, were built (Serrano, 2014; Zenteno, 1995).¹¹⁷ The ensuing national alcohol prohibition (Volstead Law - 1919) triggered a more powerful wave of US investment in Tijuana. As a result, casinos,

¹¹⁷ Named Agua Caliente.

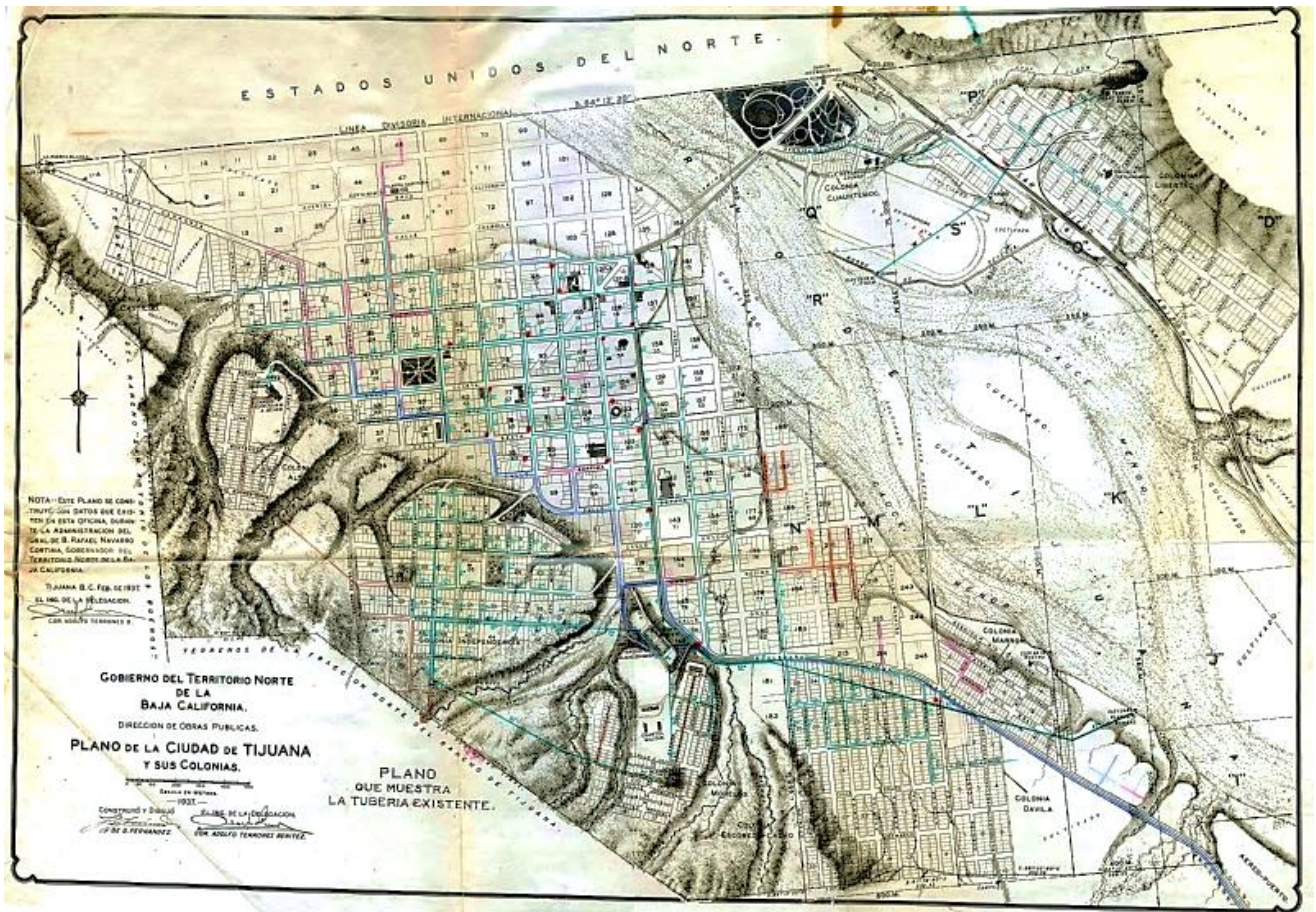
saloons, brothels, and liquor stores proliferated within the city with two correlated effects. Firstly, the *ad hoc* configuration of the city's layout and identity as a provider of forbidden goods and a place of ambiguous morality, a world "... as ugly, ay, as Sin, -And almost as delightful" (Ruiz, 1998: 42). The city's *raison d'être* was to stage a diversified display of pleasures that required modifications of the city's form itself. Enríquez (2007: 61) describes the constitution of a specific architectural configuration in the northern border from which Tijuana is a prime example:

[Mexican border cities] were organized as...commercial and entertainment strip[s] similar to the North American city, i.e., the entertainment and commercial corridor founded the urban fabric. The border city was not created following the Hispanic colonial model around the main square with the church and the government building around it; these emblematic buildings are rather placed in ancillary way. The commercial corridor organizes the urban space influencing the location of both the residential and industrial spaces (see fig. 9) (my translation)

In lieu of the original urban design, the city grew to satisfy the demands of American tourists. Commissioned by the city's municipality, an ex-employee of Hartford, Connecticut, the real estate agency that developed the port of Ensenada (a coastal city, next to Tijuana), laid out the city's plan. To take advantage of the expansion of San Diego's naval base, and the U.S. alcohol prohibition, the downtown was set adjacent to the border line, situating bar, cabarets, and restaurants in *Avenida Revolución*. In addition, when the U.S. authorities began closing the border gates at 9 P.M., hotels sprang up within the same area. Meanwhile, the residential neighbourhoods were clustered towards the west, around the *Parque* (park) Teniente Guerrero, between the third and fourth streets (Ruiz, 1998: 39). So, it was both the economic expansion of San Diego, and the sprawling tourist industry that determined the location and land-use plan of the original city. In figure 9, a map from 1937, the original layout of the downtown is observable. Figure 10, a very recent aerial view, shows that original layout still features alongside the more recent aspects of Tijuana. A series of perpendicular and symmetric streets numbered from 1 to 11, traversed by three avenues (Constitución, Revolución, and Madero) are still placed right next to the border line, in the north of both maps, were the initial core of the city was situated (Zúñiga, 2014). The intended effect of this arrangement is immediate and visible after almost 100 years: if coming from the

U.S. side, especially by foot, the city meets the visitor with offers that range from cheap medical services (dentistry among the most advertised), to bars and table dancing clubs.

Figure 9: Map of Tijuana (1937)



Source: Zúñiga (2014)

Figure 10: Aerial view of Tijuana



Source: Downtown Tijuana Art District, <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/from-the-center-of-the-margin-contemporary-art-galleries-in-downtown-tijuana>

Producing economic revenue, prostitution, gambling, and alcohol were tolerated in Tijuana as they were confined to the old city centre, and attracted American consumers to the city (e.g., college students, tourists, and U.S. armed forces members on leave). In addition to the modification of the city's urban design and functionality, its tourist orientation also shaped the identification of the city as a dangerous place. A distinctive narrative plot claiming the inextricable relationship between Tijuana and the condition of original sin, the 'black legend', emerged in the United States (Berumen, 2003; Katsulis, 2008). For example, an early statement of the American Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals of the Methodist Church in the early 1920s states:

Everything goes at Tia Juana. There are scores of gambling devices, long drinking bars, dance halls, hop joints, cribs for prostitutes, cock fights, dog fights, bullfights... The town is a mecca of prostitutes, booze sellers, gamblers and other American vermin. (Quoted in Félix Berumen 2003: 178).

This ordering of Tijuana's downtown has had long-lasting symbolic and political-economic consequences for the city. The design of the central streets to reduce the ambiguity and direct the visitor to the nature and purpose of the city has produced a dominant understanding of the city among foreigners, residents and the Mexican public. In photos 2 and 3, different aspects

of the *Avenida Revolución* (Revolution Avenue) and its offer of hotel rooms and drug stores illustrate this cityscape. Described as a festive and exotic town, the city has been imposed as a unified experience of transgressive pleasures, or as Vulliamy puts it (2011: 25), a place where people can "... buy souvenirs, drink Margaritas by the jug (at an age younger than the USA permits), get teeth fixed cheaply, invest in a spare pair of spectacles and latterly, buy Viagra or Prozac and other medications by a fraction of the price back home".

A visual representation of the actual configuration of this zone can be observed in fig 11. In this map of tourist attractions, it is apparent the importance this section of the city (in purple) has for the actual representation of the city and its strategy of commercial positioning. Currently known as la Zona Norte, the symbolic marginality of the city centre, and the relation already described between space and tourism ('the sketchy city for vice, or pharmaceuticals, on demand' (Caroll, 2014), have catalysed the proliferation of an *ad hoc* urban infrastructure around this area. The location of additional services such as banking and financial products, medical practices, food sales, and malls in the nearest areas has produced a space of prosperity and commerce with strict but informal codes of entrance and circulation. Enforced to keep the 'the black legend' of Tijuana within acceptable levels of riskiness, these codes have expanded into the rest of the city. Within them, dollars have priority over Mexican pesos and their users, at least in the context of the recent waves of insecurity, must conform to visual standard of non-riskiness (addressed in the following sections). Its own residents have taken up the city's representation as a place of transgression to explain the city's identity and symbolic value:

Marina: 'I was about to get married and the idea was to come to Tijuana immediately. 40 years ago, what everybody knew was that Tijuana was a city of prostitutes, alcohol, and drugs. My mom is from Hermosillo and when she heard our plan was to come here she ranted for hours. Obviously, she opposed. I don't blame her. To be honest, the city was horrible. We lived at the periphery of the city, near to the airport. There wasn't anything else built but the city centre and all the cantinas (saloons). It was a party-loving city, a strange place, and a place made for the gringos.... Today it's essentially the same thing but different, you know what I mean? The tolerance zone in the city centre still works for the few Americans that don't fear coming to Tijuana, you can get drugs anywhere you want; medicines you'd never get without prescriptions in the States (throughout the dialogue she used the word States in English to mean Estados Unidos –United States-),

and even a few gringos come here running away from their police’
(my translation)

Marina’s view of the city’s nature draws a fundamental distinction on the way the city is lived and understood, and explains the pervasive influx of its past in its current form and use. It is the illegality or non-conformity of certain goods and behaviours to U.S. standards that makes the city attractive, functional and valid. At its heart, the city remains an outlier of the United States.

**Photo 2: Avenida Revolución (Revolution Avenue) in the city centre of Tijuana.
Author’s photo, 2015**



Photo 3: Drugstore (Farmacia) in Avenida Revolución. Author's photo, 2015



The advertisement is written in English making clear the target of this service.

Figure 11: Touristic map of Tijuana



Source: http://www.playasmexico.com.mx/movil/articulo_playas.php?id_article=3587

7.2.1 Illicit Flows and Border Management: Drug Trafficking and Migration

The conflation between the metaphorical and material constitution of the city identifies and defines its value, possible uses, and logistics. In this section the thesis examines the U.S. management of its southern border and how the proliferation of ‘illicit flows’ intersect with the metaphorical and infrastructural organisation of the city is analysed by defining its uses and spatial divides. The U.S. policing of the border and the constant flow of ‘illegal’ bodies/substances shape the socio-spatial structure and the everyday organization of Tijuana, as well as its policing under the WoD.

Thus contemporarily, the representation of the Tijuana as lawless, disordered, and ugly, has been prolonged and reinforced by its configurations as a drugs transshipment location and migrant transit point.¹¹⁸ But unlike the factories and leisure spaces, the movement of migrants and drugs do not evoke massive sympathy, or at least the same moral ambivalence that the provision of alcohol and prostitutes does. The increasing intensity of both US law enforcement regulations, especially regarding border controls, and the Mexican WoD have continued to influence the residents’ imagination of the city as an unruly space, and stigmatized people in transit as they are considered the carriers of vices and new dangers, hardening the controls over the mobility within the urban space. In so doing, internal migration, narco-trafficking, and rising crime rates have been linked by the city’s inhabitants, shaping understandings about the city’s identity.

A brief statement of the president of Tijuana’s Council of Economic Development, a private institution which strives towards ‘planning and executing long term projects to rise the economic and social development of Tijuana’ (Consejo de Desarrollo de Tijuana, 2017), exemplifies this nexus:

The atmosphere of insecurity that the city lives through is in part created by individuals from other states of the country that come to cause problems... There’s a local problem we can’t deny, but what we have as insecurity problem comes from outside, it comes from the states of Sinaloa, Michoacán, from other areas (Frontera.info, 2015)
(My translation).

¹¹⁸ Built on the same conditions that enabled the consolidation of Tijuana as a provider of services and manufacturing hub, -its proximity to California, logistic advantages, pro-business environment-, the relevant literature has observed (Andreas, 2003; Bender, 2012; Dunn, 1996; 2009; Sadler, 2000), how smuggling routes emerged in parallel to the consolidation of the of the border between Mexico and the United States after the 1847 Mexican-American War. For example, opium traffic stretches back at least 100 years (Sandler, 2000).

Another example is found in an article titled ‘Kidnappers come from the south’ published by a local media outlet. It reports, based on statements from the state prosecutor Rommel Moreno between 2007-2013, that an inextricable link between migrants and crime explains the insecurity in the city. In the article, he refers specifically to a wave of kidnappings:

He explains [the prosecutor] that the group had started with street peddling (narcomenudeo). ‘There were a few from Nayarit, another from Chiapas, two of them had been living in the city for very little time... in so many cases the arrested are outsiders and that is creating some issues (...) I’m talking about groups of Sinaloa... marginal and emergent groups, that get in touch with one another, that have some features, and are working in street peddling, and that eventually try to be kidnappers (...) They are groups between 10 and 15 individuals, growing constantly, and recruiting deportees and ex-inmates deported [from the United States] (ZETA, 2013) (my translation)

The source of this relation is twofold, and regards both the history of Tijuana as a city of vice and its relation to U.S. border enforcement. This representation is central to the U.S. geopolitical imagination of the border as an anarchic space full of “(...) homosexuals, heroin traffickers, prostitutes, and pimps (Astorga, 2003: 74) (My translation). These populations defined its characterisation as a dangerous place during large part of the 20th century. The U.S. conversion of drug trafficking into a national security threat in the 1980s radically changed the emphasis on the role of the border as a source of risks for this country. The suggestion that the ‘unguarded’ southern border was the origin of U.S. crime problems ‘Latinized’ the origin of the insecurity and fostered the militarization of the border’s governance (Burgois 2003; Müller, 2015).¹¹⁹ In tandem with the simultaneous elevation of drug trafficking as a national security threat in Mexico, Tijuana became a central spot within the geographical imagination of Mexican narco-trafficking inside the country and abroad.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ On the militarization of the U.S northern border and the governing logics intervening in its management see (Andreas, 2003; Grandin, 2006; Dunn, 1996; 2009; Klare, 1988; Wray, 1997).

¹²⁰ An example of these foreign, although predominantly U.S.-based, imaginations is the movie *Traffic* (Soderbergh, 2000) that portrays Tijuana as one of the central places in Mexican drug trafficking. Depicted as a dusty, cramped and dirty space, the visual emphasis of the film’s photography on the grimy nature of the space by using a yellow tint, resembling a desert-like place, creates a sense of contrast with the blue and gray tones used to represent the U.S spaces, much more stylized and ‘restrained’ although ominous at the same time. Accordingly, as a symbol of the savagery of the drug trafficking, Tijuana becomes the manifest expression of the danger of Mexico, an unruly desert whose main expression is the streets of Tijuana. Another example is the T.V.

The current configuration of Tijuana as a drug-transit location and a distinctive *plaza* has been reinforced by different accounts, mainly journalistic, within the modification of the transnational cocaine supply chains in Latin America in the 1980s. Accordingly, the disruption of the Caribbean route in the late 1980s transformed Mexico into a trans-shipment corridor for Colombian cocaine. The increasing flow of drugs empowered Mexican drug dealers making them inescapable brokers for the transportation of drugs into the United States and its lucrative markets (Astorga, 2005; Boyer, 2001; Millán, 2013; Morton A. D., 2012; Reveles, 2010; Vulliamy, 2011).

The crackdowns started by the Mexican authorities during the same period fragmented what these accounts refer as a business run centrally by Félix Gallardo. It brought about the division of Mexican territory into separate *plazas* commanded by three different organizations: the cartels of Tijuana, Juárez and *el Golfo* (the Gulf) (Grillo, 2011). Portrayed as the event at the origin of contemporary drug-related violence in the country, this disaggregation of the drug market was followed by the Gulf's cartel's 'invasion' of Tijuana, considered in turn as the catalyst for the local version of the drug war (Guerrero, 2009; Ramírez, 2009). While the evidence regarding the feud between these criminal organizations is mostly anecdotal, the reputation of Tijuana as a central node in the drug trade consolidated in parallel with the rising violence in the city and its increasing importance within the migratory routes to get to the United States, linking drug-trafficking and immigration. In this regard, the homicide rate in Tijuana and other border cities (Tecate, Mexicali, San Luis Río Colorado, Nogales, Agua Prieta, Ciudad Juárez, Piedras Negras, Acuña, Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa y Matamoros) increased steadily from the 1990s onwards. In Tijuana, the homicide rate jumped in 1994 from 5 to 25 homicides per 100 000 people and has not substantially changed since then (Escalante, 2009).

The urban form and material characteristics of the border line – a barbed wired fence 'very easy to jump', as one of my informants remembers it being 40 years ago after crossing it-, and the proximity of San Ysidro, a small district of San Diego, just next to Tijuana, made the city a circuit within the migratory and drug flows traversing Mexico. As a transit point for immigrants, half of the undocumented individuals that intended to get to the United States in the 1980s did it through Tijuana before 1994 Operation Gatekeeper (González, 2009: 96),

series *Weeds* (2007) that revolves around a mid-life and middle class widow who sells marijuana to her neighbors in a gated community in California. In the fourth season, this show has in Tijuana one of its thematic motives. Although Tijuana is not showed directly, a tunnel that connects the store the main character works in with the Mexican northern border city is used as a cover for the drug business she is participating in. Within the story plot, the tunnel is used as self-explanatory resource to explain the nature of Tijuana and Mexico. The tunnel is used to smuggle drugs and women into the U.S. suburbs. In exchange, weapons are smuggled to Tijuana that becomes thus the stereotypical narco-trafficking location.

which made the border “(...) an omnipresent and fixed line” (Mendoza, 2008:40 –my translation-). After this hardening of the border and concomitant operations to ‘deter’ the transit of migrants through urban zones by deploying U.S. border patrol agents inside Mexico, a wall was constructed and border-crossing traffic was redirected towards the desert. These actions decreased migratory flows through this border crossing and Tijuana became a port of return for Mexicans and other foreign nationalities deported from the United States. In 2005, 479, 368 individuals were deported back to Mexico. Since 2010, Tijuana has received 40% of all the U.S. deportations, an average 7, 500 a month and of the 100, 000 deportees that are removed from the U.S. through Tijuana, 26% remain in the city (Baverstock, 2016). In addition to this, in the previous year the number of Haitian and Africans applying for humanitarian visas in Mexico has substantially increased. For example, in Tijuana between January and August, 7, 000 Haitian and 7, 366 African migrants were stuck in the city as U.S. border authorities suspended the issuance of humanitarian permits (Lagner, 2017). Photo 4 shows the fortified wall that runs along the border between Tijuana and San Ysidro.¹²¹ It is clear the spatial contiguity and urban characteristics of the border, a relevant condition to consider when trying to understand the everyday effects of the wall infrastructure upon Tijuana’s life, shapes the relationship between the city and the United States.

Following the pace of the militarization of border management in the early 1980s (Dunn, 1996; 2009), and again after September 11th 2001, the regulation of human and commodities flows between the U.S. and Mexico has aimed to differentially regulate their access to specific spaces (Llamas-Rodríguez, 2016). Through ‘targeting and risk segmentation’ (Wilson, 2015), that is, the sorting of populations and different materials through complex targeting software (video cameras, motion sensors, temperature probes, etc.), and more efficient checkpoints, the border is expected to work as “a system of securing and facilitating international flows, whether of people, commercial goods, or even capital” (Wilson, 2015).

The proximity of the border infrastructure, and its integration into Tijuana’s landscape, has imposed a system of informal classification and hierarchy that merged with the previous understandings of the city, affecting the smallest details of everyday life by

¹²¹ The physical characteristics of the border infrastructure in Tijuana are summarized by the National Geographic in the following paragraph: “(...) the border is marked with double and even triple fencing. The first fence (...) is about 3 meters (10 feet) tall, and made of thick metal plates. The second fence, behind the first one, reaches 4.5 meters (15 feet). The top is angled inward, with barbed wire at the top. In some areas, there is a smaller chain-link fence behind the second one. In between the fences is “no-man’s land,” an area that the U.S. Border Patrol monitors with bright lights, armoured trucks, and cameras.” (National Geographic, 2013).

extending the bureaucratic, police, and technological regulations governing the city.¹²²

Organized as a system of ‘sovereign recognition’ (Yeh, 2017), border enforcement has been articulated as a variation of low intensity warfare, making its transgressors comparable with insurgents (De León, 2015; Dunn, 1996; 2009). As the visa holder is identified as an economically reliable and law abiding citizen on both sides of the border, those considered unfit to be granted a visa, face penalties within a variable range of severity. At one extreme it encompasses the possibility of death, being detained, or facing deportation when trying to cross the border, at the hands of American or Mexican officials.¹²³ At the other extreme, non-visa holders are re-classified by their position in the city’s socio-economic system, becoming subjects of informal but constant scrutiny over their persona. This informal system has multiple variations, emphases, and combinations as the different social positions within the city enable myriad relations with the border, producing ‘a twisting rhizomatic web’ (Slack, 2015: 35).

For example, Rodrigo was banned from re-entering after being detained for drunk driving in the United States. At the time, he lived and studied legally in Arizona. Without any significant inconvenience, he left the United States by himself (no detention or eviction), and came back to Tijuana. Disqualified from re-entering the U.S. he is constantly mocked by his relatives and friends, who are still allowed to enter anytime they want. Although relatively harmless, a mild form of disciplining operates that aims to have residents conform to a standard of good behaviour set in the United States. Not being allowed to cross to the *other side* (as the United States is called) is a form of minor exclusion from social activities important for his social group and class.

Next to him Carmen, a wife of a deportee, exemplifies another possibility enabled by this system. She left the United States by herself to join her husband in Tijuana, who had been removed from the country a couple of years previously. Everything she had, her kids, her house and her job, were left behind. In Tijuana, she currently lives in a working-class area and works as a cook in a small restaurant in the vicinity of the airport, earning the minimum wage. Poor and having lived illegally in the U.S., her economic and legal status has fully disqualified her from getting a visa. In the eyes of her boss, she is one more of those who came from outside the city, not because they wanted to, but because they could not avoid such

¹²² The issuing of visas, the lengthy waiting periods in the long queues at the gates, the inability to legally cross the border, the material infrastructure of the border –the wall, the electronic devices to supervise it-, and the patrolling are the visible indicators of this system. For more details of these regulations see Dunn (1996; 2009); De León (2015); Yeh (2017).

¹²³ De León (2015) expands upon the multiple violences -symbolic, emotional, physical-, that are unleashed upon the bodies and identities of the migrants when trying to cross the border. Evidence of the Mexican migratory officials’ behaviors can be found in González (2009).

destiny. Not having a visa confirms her unreliability for, as her boss -who thinks she could be stealing food from the restaurant-states, ‘(...) you know, these people –meaning the undocumented migrants- are *cabrona*’.¹²⁴ Working as an additional form of social differentiation, the visa status evaluates the social position of the residents, and supplements the preconceptions on the deleterious mobilities of those who do not hold one.

The conversion of Tijuana into a manufacturing centre, in the second half of the 20th century of the twentieth century –addressed in the next section - builds on the already established foundations of the city as capitalist post designed to outsource services and cut costs. It complicates its urban organization, demographic composition, and representational stance.

Photo 4: Panoramic view of the border between Mexico and the United States in the west side of Tijuana, Author’s photo, 2015



In the right side of the picture two different walls separate the United States from the Mexico; between them U.S. border patrols overlook the space

¹²⁴ Cabron is a derogatory term that can be translated alternatively as bastard, dick, stubborn and opinionated. A flexible way to insult can be used also to cheer up. In this case Carmen’s boss was indeed suggesting Carmen was cheating.

7.3 Tijuana: Manufacturing Centre, Cheap Labour, and the City of the Perennial Prosperity

Alongside Tijuana's tourist infrastructure, economic flows, and reputation as a city of vice, a supplementary form of spatial organization and identification emerged. By examining the industrial and demographic composition of the city, this section explains how its transformation into a manufacturing hub produced a distinctive urban regime that has had pervasive effects over its social configuration, policing and ensuing pacification under the WoD.

Therefore paralleling the city's vicescape, its reputation as a place of economic opportunities for everyone has slowly gained currency. For example, to attract foreign investors, it was argued that:

In addition to lowering logistics and transportation costs due to market proximity, Tijuana offers a modern industrial infrastructure and strong supplier base that help companies to reduce their operations costs from 20% to 40% vs U.S. (Tijuana Economic Development Corporation, 2016).

In attracting a continuing supply of labour, one of my informants –Roberto- argued that,

Tijuana has something for everyone if you want to work. Here you can make it if you are persistent enough. Money comes and goes, here everyone has change, it isn't like in Mexico City where any time you go to the shops they have problems with big bills. But it's just because money circulates and is everywhere. It is here, and there (pointing out towards a money exchange locale) (My translation).

Yet by the time, I carried out fieldwork in the city, the residents' confidence in Tijuana's economic success was been haunted by a feeling of the city's failure. The hardening of the U.S. border controls after 2001, the 2008 financial crisis, and a prolonged wave of insecurity were noted by everyone I talked with as the sources of the city's malaise. Indicators of the crisis were the shortage of 'American' visitors, the longer queue times to cross the border, and the relatively high unemployment rate (7.2% in 2014 and 5.7% in 2015))

(Cervantes, 2014)(Uniradio informa, 2015). Previous to this time, Tijuana had had an unemployment rate as low as 0.9 %, the lowest in the whole country, and between 1994 and 2004 on average, it was 3.5% (CESOP, 2005).

Despite the combination of distrust and sorrow about Tijuana's economic situation, my informants were optimistic about the future of the city. By resorting to the history of the city as a strong pole of economic development, materially different from the neighbouring border cities, 'the prettiest of them all' (in comparison to Mexicali, Ciudad Juárez or Reynosa), and more prosperous than the rest of the country, they claimed it was possible to solve the current problems of the city. Lately, its transformation into a manufacturing centre reinforced this conviction by visibly increasing the prosperity of the city. In doing so, the urban layout and its demographic composition were modified simultaneously, strengthening the disciplinary conduits of its spatial order.

The transformation of Tijuana into an industrial hub occurred in line with the end of the U.S. programs of rural employment (known as the *bracero* program)¹²⁵, the ending of prohibition, the successive implementation of federal programs of tax exceptions, and liberalization of trade known as 'free perimeters', to counterbalance the negative effects of these changes upon the border cities. Designed to allow the supply of goods needed by the border populations, as well as to permit the import and export of products, Tijuana began a process of steady economic transformation and sustained growth in the mid-1960s (Fuentes & Peña, 2010). Additionally, taking advantage of the geographical proximity of the Mexican northern border region to the U.S. market and programs of industrial relocation (see Andreas 2003), Mexico's federal government implemented a series of administrative and tax regulations in the mid-1960s called the Program of Border Industrialization (Fuentes & Fuentes, 2004).

Both the program of industrialization and the simplified tax regime were expected to reduce administrative regulations and attract foreign investment, converting the city into a manufacturing centre. This transformation can be considered successful if the impact of the manufacturing industry is measured in terms of its long-term effects on the national employment rate and the proportion of factories located in Tijuana, alongside other border cities. For example, in 1970, there were 120 plants employing 290, 327 people. By 2000, there were 3, 590 plants employing 1.3 million people. Between 1978 and 1993 the employment rate in the manufacturing industry experienced growth 14 % above the national

¹²⁵ Sponsored by the US and Mexican governments during the Second World War, it was a temporary contract labour program to recruit Mexican workers to labour in US farms and railroads during the World War II. It attracted around 5 million Mexicans into the United States as labourers (Zenteno, 1995: 113).

average (Sánchez, 2014: 74). In 2010, Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez accounted for 29% of the plants in Mexico and 33% of the national employment (Fuentes & Peña, 2010: 11-12).

The concentration of industrial infrastructure, fiscal exceptions, and logistic advantages, fostered the conditions for the demographic and territorial growth of Tijuana. The city had grown steadily since 1930 (8, 384 inhabitants) and in 1960 it had 165,190 permanent residents (Zenteno, 1995: 113). In the 1990s with the consolidation of manufacturing in the context of NAFTA and economic restructuring of the country, the city experienced territorial growth and high levels of inward migration which shaped its contemporary urban structure.

As such, between the 1990s and 2005, the city's population grew on average 4%, more than the 1.85% national average (Zavala, 2009). More than 60% of Tijuana's residents were from other states during the same period. According to the Baja California state's government, two migratory streams structure the population of the city: individuals from Sinaloa and Sonora, northern states, and those from southern states such as Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Michoacán, Estado de México, Durango, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Distrito Federal, Nuevo León y Jalisco. Currently 43.6% of the population of Baja California is not native to the state and are mainly from Sinaloa, Jalisco, Sonora, Michoacán y el Distrito Federal (Gobierno de Baja California, 2016). Tellingly, the city itself accounts for 49.5% (1, 642 000) of the total population of Baja California (3, 315 766) (Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística , 2015). Baja California grew itself by a factor of fifty between 1930 and 2015, from 48, 327 inhabitants to 3,314, 766 (Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, 2015).

During the same period, Tijuana's territory expanded considerably; in 1984, for example, Tijuana covered 10,300 square hectares. By 2005, it was 25,000 square hectares with 1,410,700 inhabitants. Growing 2.25 hectares a day, the city more than doubled its built area in twenty years and by 2005 its metropolitan zone (which includes the neighboring cities of Playas de Rosarito and Tecate) became the sixth largest urban agglomeration in Mexico (Acosta, 2009: 447). Figure 12 illustrates the territorial expansion of the city, showing its direction and size. The darkest zones are the most recently urbanized spaces, found especially in the south and the east. While the overall population of the country grew 30% between 1990 and 2007, the population of the border cities as whole, instigated by the economic transformation of the country, grew between 70 and 100% (Escalante, 2009).

In overall terms, the historic growth of the city has been publicly perceived and lived as a demonstration of its powerful economic foundations, and most importantly, of its capacity to produce wealth. Roberto –already quoted-, a business owner, has lived in Tijuana since 1979. A beneficiary of the city's growth, he has experienced first-hand the city's urban and demographic boom,

We are 10 in my family. We came from Guadalajara to Tijuana in 1979. It was a different city, less people but growing faster every day. I got a job in the airport and from then on things improved. Tijuana is a generous city and it has been always like this. Anyone who wants can thrive here if they do work hard. Recently, it is much more difficult, but then again, you just need to keep on the move, doing your things, and you're going to get the benefits soon. (My translation).

While a common understanding of middle-class residents, the hard-working ethos and representation of Tijuana as a place of economic opportunities also has a widespread purchase beyond class-related boundaries. Juan, for example, came to Tijuana from Puebla in central Mexico 25 years previously to work in one of the factories that sprouted across the city during those years. He lives in the east of the city now,

Here I got a job I would not otherwise gotten in Puebla, then I met my wife and now we have two kids. Life is difficult sometimes but it is like this everywhere. The difference here was that it was easier to get a job than where I'm from. I have a house here and I think with a bit of luck I will get a car soon. I'm not sure when the things are going to improve but working hard I know I will have what I need, and soon the situation is going to recover. The advantage of Tijuana is that we are right next to the United States, so when things get better there, everything will be back to normal. (My translation).

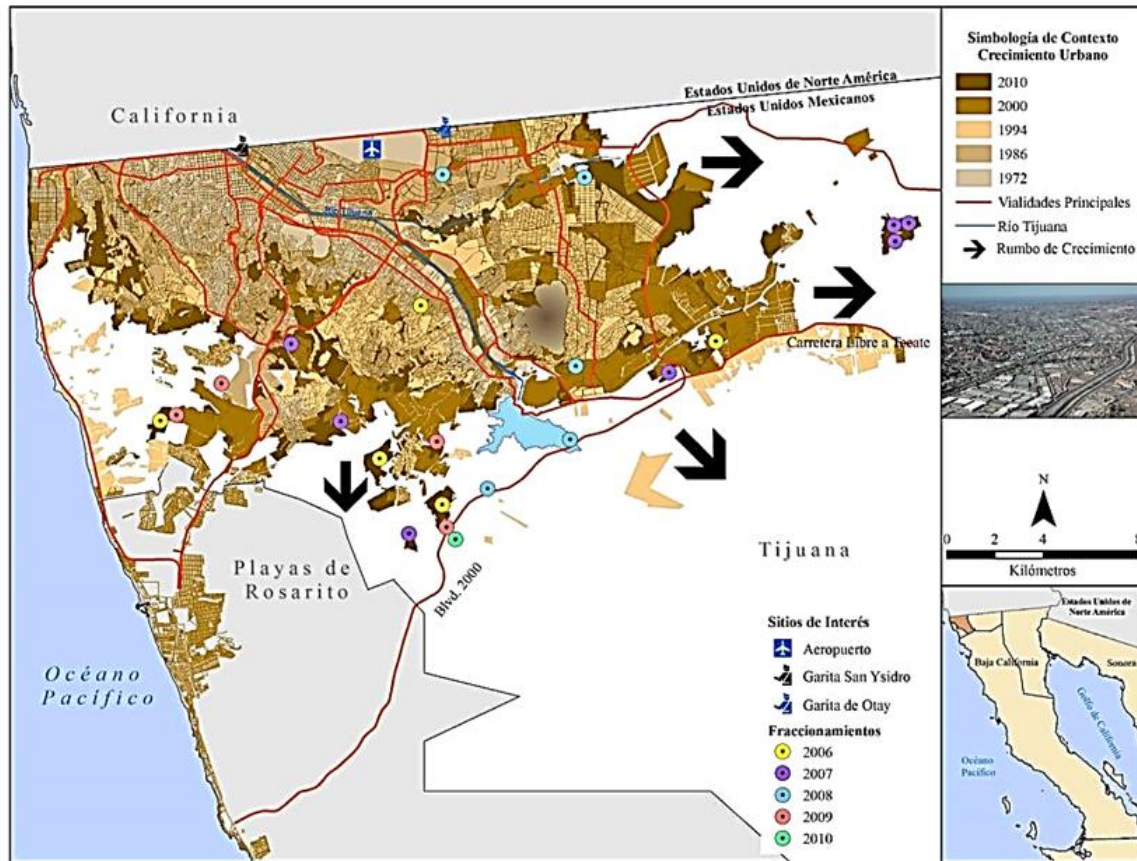
Yet Tijuana's prosperity is far more elusive than their residents might have one believe. In terms of the labour conditions within the city, these are far from good, for example 30% of workers in Tijuana make one hundred dollars a month. In factories, they experience precarious working conditions, no health care, intimidation, easy replacement, and little prospect of upward mobility (Katsulis, 2008; Coubès & Silva, 2009). This precariousness is an essential comparative advantage for the manufacturing industry in Tijuana, as it has helped to reduce the Mexican manufacturing costs in relation to China by 4%:

(...) Mexico's manufacturing industry has boosted its productivity based on its free-trade agreements platform, strong work ethic, organized industrial clusters and pro-business environment with relatively no conflicts... U.S. Federal minimum wage is US \$10 per hour. Mexico's minimum wage a standardized MX \$70.10 (approximately US \$4.50) per day throughout the country. Tijuana's industry hourly wage for direct labour ranges from U.S.2.86 to \$4.60 based on the experience level required.) This represents between 36% and 56% of savings vs some states in the U.S. (Tijuana Economic Development Corporation, 2016)"

In overall terms, the city's reputation as a place of unlimited prosperity in deep contrast with the actual structure of the salaries works as an effective mechanism of regulation and conformity. On one hand, it has disseminated the idea between newcomers and old residents that working hard is the key to any success. On the other, it has hidden the connections between low salaries and the city's economic success, reducing the possibility of generalized protests. As I overheard in a conversation in a restaurant, the lesson is evident "Only the lazy doesn't succeed in Tijuana. If you really try Tijuana is going to reward you". More importantly, it has made imperceptible the connections between the purported success of the city, its spatial segmentation, the organization of social hierarchies, and the concomitant articulation of distinctive ways of policing the urban space according to the position people have in relation with such hierarchy.

In the following section I address the configuration of the spatial divides of the city in relation to its economic structure to explore the articulation of the informal hierarchies through which the city is ordered and regulated.

Figure 12: Map of the urbanization of Tijuana between 1972 and 2010



Source: (Mungaray, 2012)

7.3.1 The Manufacturing City and the Urban Form

In socio-spatial terms the economic development of Tijuana has configured a distinctive urban stratum with specific forms of settlement and distinctive landscapes, as well as specific challenges for its administration. The demographic and urban expansion of the city has coalesced with a process of unequal land distribution, speculation, deficient urban planning, uneven infrastructure, poor services, and ineffective administration. In this regard, the municipal administration has favoured the allocation of the city’s flat lands to industrial estates, ‘punishing’ the migrants and incoming residents who, unable to participate in the land market, have been obliged to occupy risk-prone zones such as slopes, hills, creeks, and low-water crossings (Sanchez 2014; Zavala, 2009).¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Tijuana is situated in a geographical area where earthquakes, flood, storms with heavy winds, and heavy swell are constant, so these settlements are especially vulnerable to these phenomena (Zavala, 2009).

As Enriquez (2007: 163) observes, this is an urbanization pattern well-established in all Mexican border cities. It has divided up the city according to connections with the transnational flows of money and goods:

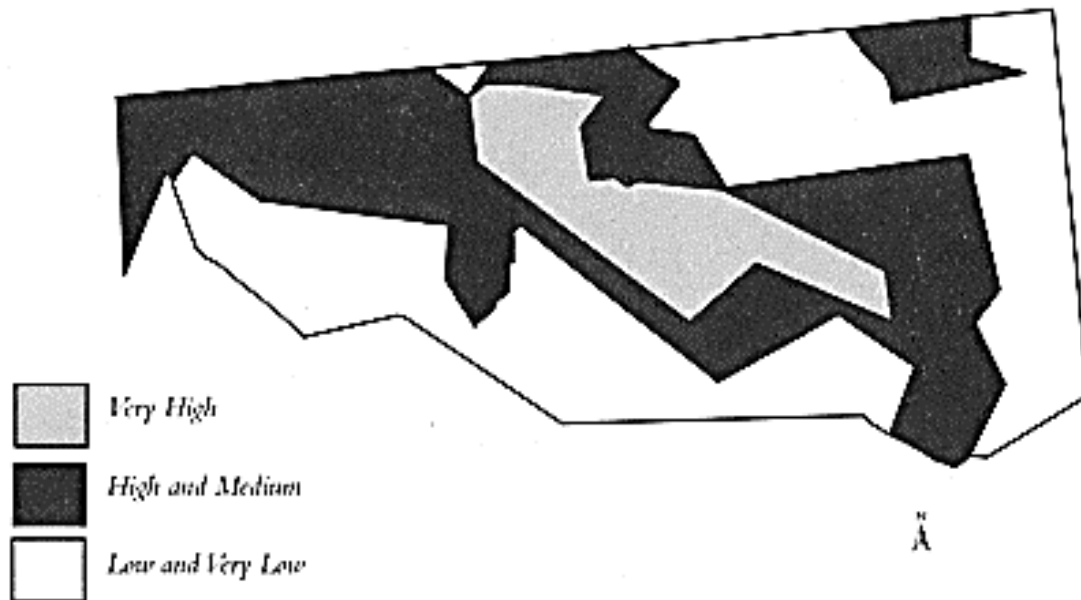
(...) the services and manufacturing industry contribute to the formation of middle and high income social sections with higher levels of professional training and freedom of movement unlike what is possible for the bulk of the working population who is only able to set conditions to survive or migrate to the United States... the urban landscape is thus divided into highly competitive sections that concentrate international and financial resources and excluded sections marginalized from the development of the rest of the city... Both the services and manufacturing orientation of the city promote the appearance of a population that establishes itself in the best places of the border cities... segregating themselves from the rest of the city..." (My translation).

Any municipal attempt to manage the development of the city's urbanization has had to deal with transnational processes (e.g. relocation of production and distribution networks for commodities as well as migration), that are beyond its control (Fuentes & Peña, 2010). In 1984, for example, there was already a 100 % difference with the expected population estimated in the Regulatory Plan of 1964 (Sánchez, 2013).

As products of the material organization of the city, two sections are discernible and referred to regularly in the urban narratives of its residents, and consequently, in their use of public space. In the old city centre towards the Pacific Ocean, or what is referred to as the west of the city, the services infrastructure is concentrated alongside parts of the city that are considered in need of preservation to keep both its tourist appeal and security for its wealthier residents (Hernández, Mungaray, & Ocegueda, 2006; Alegria, 2010). The second section of the city expands towards the east of Tijuana, and is the effect of a combined set of conditions: the industrialization of the city, the attraction for migrants from the south of Mexico, and the disordered urban expansion resulting from the intersection of the massive influx of newcomers and the transformation of the place into a manufacturing centre (Alegría, 1995; 2010; Hernández, Mungaray, & Ocegueda, 2006; Enriquez, 2007; Mungaray, 2012). This reflects in turn the distribution of residential, service, and industrial infrastructure (Alegría, 1995; Alegría, 2010; Hernández, *et.al*, 2006; Enriquez, 2007). Thus, for example, high

income residents are mostly located around the old city centre and the main border crossing point. Low income residents are in turn dispersed across the city and in the peripheriel zones, while middle income residents occupy the spaces adjacent to the high income residents(Alegria, 2010), see fig. 13.

Figure 13: Tijuana Population Distribution by Income Groups



Source: (Hernández, Mungaray, & Ocegueda, 2006)

Likewise, the business and services sector concentrates around the old city center and the main border crossing point (Alegria 1994, 1995, 2010; Hernández *et.al.*, 2006). In contrast, the manufacturing industry, as showed in the fig. 14, is dispersed throughout Tijuana. However, it is more densely located in the east of Tijuana (darker zones) for two reasons according to Alegria (2010: 297): ‘the easy access to the border crossing point, and the strategy of spatially following the workers’ (my own translation).

Figure 14: Concentration of employment in manufacturing industry in 2003



The darkest zones concentrate a higher rate of jobs. *Source: Alegria (2010)*

Yet, the urban divide between west and east is not entirely clear cut. A tour across the city shows how industrial parks, luxury residential spaces, and deprived neighborhoods collide without interruption. Destitution and conspicuous richness occupy adjacent spaces in a context of uncontrolled demographic growth and intense competition for urban land (Enriquez, 2007; Alegria, 2010). Photo 5, a picture I took during my fieldwork, shows how residential spaces, factories, and vacant lots overlap, giving the impression of an ingrained disorder. The combined effect of the massive influx of newcomers, and the inability of the municipal authorities to anticipate the extent of the influx (Enriquez, 2007; Sánchez, 2014) has thus created a climate of urban unpredictability, reinforcing residents' perception of a city divided, but in real terms, with no clear dividing lines between its have and have nots.

Photo5: A view of Tijuana, Author's photo, 2013



The expansion of the city towards the east has reinforced the spatial articulation of the social hierarchies originally set by the logic of the city of vice, by producing an additional layer in the mythical landscape of Tijuana. The immoral but ordered landscape of the original tourist showcase has been supplemented with the accumulation of plants, new settlements, vacant lots, and shanty towns in an ever-growing periphery (Enriquez, 2007). In so doing, the city has been simultaneously recast as a city of opportunities for hard-working people and a disordered space.

A factor impinging decisively on the popular imagination of the city as dangerous, this division has created a common substrate for the collective experiences of its citizens and the demarcation of relatively stable zones of insecurity. Arturo, who has lived in Tijuana since 1983 when he emigrated from Mexico City at 22 years old, summarizes what seems a dominant impression among the city's residents regardless of their age or social class. The conversation occurred when I asked him for the directions to get to *ejido Maclovio Rojas* in the east of the city:

A. I don't understand what's going on. One day you wake up, and you know, there's a new neighborhood. The neighborhood you're asking me about is towards Tecate, but don't have a clear idea how to get there.

H. If I ask your neighbor do you think he would know it? I need some directions to get there

A. Mmm, I don't think so. He doesn't have a car, and you need one to get to there. It is 'The New Tijuana'. It wasn't there 15 years ago. It is around the motorway to Tecate, and it was before just an empty space. Only Lord knows how it grew or where it grew out from. Also there's nothing there to see there, what do you need from there? It is a bit a dangerous man...

H. I need to meet some of my interviewees there. Where is the Old Tijuana by the way?

A. Essentially the city center where Revolution Avenue and The Zona Rio are towards the airport, and from there towards the coast (My translation).

Arturo's response is inaccurate regarding the age of what he calls 'New Tijuana'. According to residents in this neighbourhood (*el Maclovio* hereinafter), they moved there at least 25 years ago. This divergence is meaningful as it explains the gap between the different experiences of the city, the visibility of the economic transformations it has undergone, and its effect upon a narrative focused on the disorder of the urban space.

His confusion about the location of a neighborhood I was asking for, raised questions about the size, physical limits, and structure of the city, all linked to its territorial expansion (Zavala, 2009). In this regard, his response speaks about an informal delimitation that, using the city center as basic geographical reference, recreates the separation between the east and west, with an additional component: a sense of chaotic integration, social abandonment, and danger that makes the separation understandable.

In a fortuitous encounter with a police officer, I found that he reiterated the same geographical pattern Arturo described:

P. Look this place where you are taking pictures is not safe but it is not because of the place itself but because there are plenty of tourists and people circulating. They come here to shop in the mall, they are

walking and it attracts malandros.¹²⁷ The zone is problematic, but in general you can feel secure as we are here patrolling.¹²⁸

H. And what about Tijuana in general?

P. That's a different story, there are trouble spots everywhere, you know, in every neighborhood there are crazy people.

H. But are there zones you identify as more dangerous than others?

P. I can think about the newest parts of Tijuana: towards el Cerro del Colorado, el Mariano Matamoros, La Presa, there you can find places really dangerous. The other side, Playas de Tijuana (Tijuana's Beaches) for example, or over there, where you see those buildings, or la Zona Rio (The River Zone), aren't much safer but it's not like in the places I just told you (My translation).

Invoked simultaneously by residents and authorities alike this is the configuration of an imaginary space that connects the urban representations of the residents and the material infrastructure of the city with an artificial separation between safer and risky zones. Within these representations, Tijuana's actual geography has been divided in two parts without clear physical boundaries, but with distinctive landscapes. One, the oldest, near to the border, affluent and visually prosperous, is where established residents live and work. The second is situated in the east, where the newcomers, people from the South, the poor, the illiterate, and potentially criminal, live. Both the police officer and Arturo refer the east of the city, where *el Maclovio*, *el Mariano Matamoros*, *la Presa*, etc., are situated as a problematic.

The increasing urban disorganization and the constant arrival of newcomers has reinforced the role these representations have upon perceptions of risk and insecurity. It has made migrants and new residents the object of a systematic, but intermittent observation that considers their position, behaviour, and movement the origin of the violence in the city under the WoD. The following observation of Baja California's former attorney general Rommel Moreno makes this connection clear:

¹²⁷ *Malandro* is a term to characterize any person involved in criminal activities. Used initially to signify the relationship between individuals and drug-organized crime, such that any person involved in this activity becomes a malandro, the term has expanded its scope to encompass any form of involvement in criminal activities. In this case, the cop means robbers.

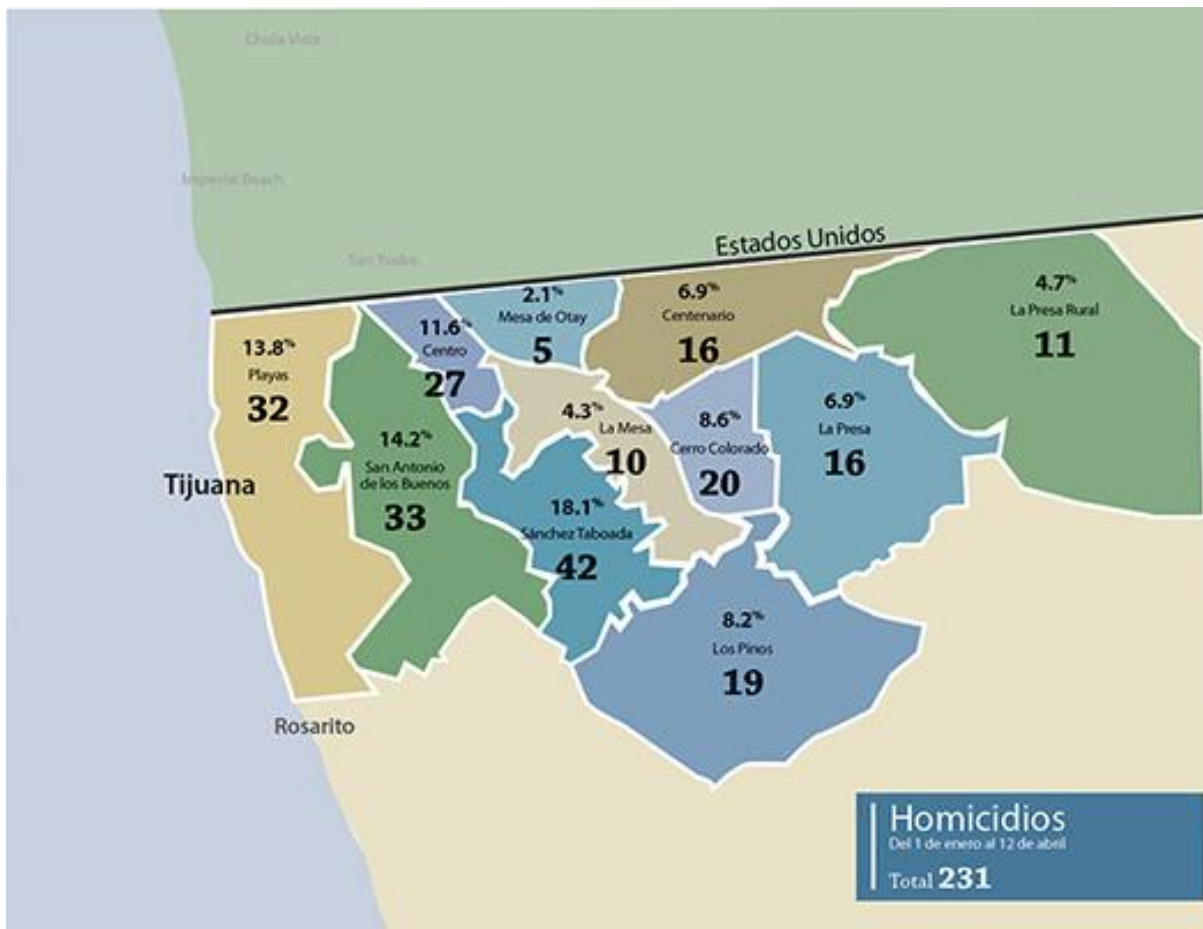
¹²⁸ The officer asked me to produce my identification while I was taking pictures in a place considered a 'trouble spot' as he himself told me.

‘Baja California is an immigrant state’, added the attorney general.

‘We’re seeing people coming from all over the country, Mexican-American deportees; we have a large group of young people and not just from the east side of the city, where the lack of prospects have made it easy to join criminal groups. It’s easy for criminals to hire these young people for low wages as drug dealers or hitmen, to kill for money. (For the young people) this becomes a way of life. We’ve noticed a pattern in the arrests we make: many out of work, from the east side, or new to the city (Cited in Millán, 2013: 307).

In the terms of Baja California’s attorney general, drug-related violence has particular socio-spatial features that match the urban expansion of Tijuana with the intensification of drug-related criminality. In this regard, it seems of little importance that the city’s expansion is by no means even, or that poverty is spread across the city making the differentiation between the east and west sides on this basis factually untenable. In this regard, a map distributed (Fig.15) by a local outlet in mid 2016 to track the spatial distribution of the most recent wave of murders, shows that in the case of homicides, the east of the city was not necessarily the most insecure section of Tijuana. Tellingly, the borough of Playas in the coast had the highest percentage, 13.8% of homicides (32 homicides) between January and April, while la Presa in the east had 4.7% (11 homicides) (ZETA, 2016).

Figure 15: 'The map of the death'. Map of homicides distribution January-April 2016



Source: ZETA (2016)

In any case, this re-imagination of the city space follows the urban trail but reinterprets it, confirming the separation between the two sections of the city: one pretty (*bella*) and old, and the other, chaotic, ugly, and risky. In so doing, the city has been configured as an ambiguous place that is simultaneously dangerous/unruly and full of economic opportunities, producing confusion and distrust. To this extent, the relation between the east side, understood as the physical origin of violence, and the narrative of the city of sin articulate the economic and political processes that organize how the city is understood and lived. As Arturo emphasizes,

It was different before in Tijuana. You knew your neighbors and you could trust them, the doors were always open, the city was thriving. You could go to ‘the other side’ (*el otro lado*) and go shopping there. All the things you see today, all these people wandering around the city, the deportees, the homeless, the insecurity, the violence (...) they weren’t there before. Everything is about the new people coming from the south,

you don't know who they are or the real reasons why they are coming to Tijuana. Tijuana is full of hard-working people, the city is generous, it has given me all I have but now I don't really know it, where it starts or ends, nor who is coming and what intentions they have (...) (My translation).

In addition to the restrictions set to optimize the flow of people that use the city centre, examined in the next section, this reduction of the geographical complexity of Tijuana to a west/east divide has radicalized the separations that classify the city's space and orientate the individuals' behaviours. Placing the individuals' social relevance and riskiness degree as function of the distance they keep from the oldest/richest parts of the city, this divide reinforces the idea that insecurity is a function of both the movements that objects and persons make within the city and their geographical origin.

7.4 The Order of the City: Disciplining Deviance

This section focuses upon how the myriad bodies and mobilities that traverse the city are regimented at the intersection between the spatial structure of the city and the regulations that traverse it. Thus, the interaction between the different logics organizing the socio-spatial structure of the city takes many forms and has different consequences depending on the position individuals have within Tijuana. By foregrounding how Mexicans deported from the US are regulated and controlled, this analysis exemplifies how the socio-spatial order of Tijuana is embodied in specific rules by providing evidence of its inner functioning. The regulation of migrants' movements overlaps with the pacification of Tijuana, and illustrates how individuals are governed by criminalizing its movements and positions. By negotiating the resulting stigmas and practices from this process, the pacification of Tijuana reinforces the assumptions that shape the city's layout.

The accumulation of economic constraints, tensions produced by the disorganized urban development, and the radicalization of the U.S. border management, including the massive deportation of Mexican citizens, make visible the operation of this structure in the treatment of the immigrant population. Although not the most extreme case, Juan's story illustrates how specific forms of movement within the city are disqualified and alternatively validated through the local police's practices. Magnified by the enforcement of the U.S. border and the different forms of inequality Tijuana has thrived on, the vulnerability of

migrants speaks to the socio-spatial order of the city, and the way it governs the “displaced, the enemy, and the unwanted” (Weizman, 2011: 15).

Juan is a Mexican deportee who seems much older than he really is. He has visible tattoos in his chest and forearms and his accent has a different intonation to that of the city’s inhabitants. He lived half of his life in Los Angeles after leaving Michoacán following the murder of his brother. If he goes back to his homeland, he says, he will be murdered too.¹²⁹ One day whilst driving in a motorway he was stopped at a random police checkpoint after producing his ID, arrested, and then incarcerated. The police found he had a pending 10-year-old traffic violation. After being handed to immigration officials he was removed from the country. At the moment of our talk in May 2015 he had been wandering for 9 months along the Mexico-U.S. border from Tijuana to Tamaulipas (in the northeast) intending to cross again and meet with his family. With no relatives or job, he had been living on handouts from various Catholic charities based in the city, whether food or shelter. The conversation we had revolved around the many times he had been stopped, harassed, and beaten in Tijuana by the municipal police and the informal, but enforced, prohibition on migrants and deportees to visit the city center.

As the economic condition of the city has set reliable and desirable behavioural standards, Juan’s inability to traverse the invisible limits on circulation within this space speaks of the rules that shape the conduct of residents:

Cops are just fucking twats, but if you resist them they threaten you saying they will send you to jail. They have knives in the truck and tell you that they are going to say you had one with you. It is 9 years in jail... The judge asked me why they –the cops- had detained me. I said I wasn’t doing anything but just walking when the cops stopped me telling me I was in a ‘conflictive’ zone. I asked him (the judge) what he wanted me to do. He replied asking me what I was doing here (Tijuana) that I should go back to where I come from (...) (My translation)

According to his own calculations, by the time I met Juan he has been in Tijuana more or less for 6 of the 9 months since he was deported and had been arrested 3 times. Once, for example, while he was smoking outside of a Catholic charity that serves food for migrants the

¹²⁹ Michoacán is one of the Mexican states with the highest migratory density, at least 12.6% of the Mexican migrants residing in the United States in 2006 came from there (Massey, Rugh, & Pren, 2010).

police detained him, and took his money. When I asked him where the conflictive zone refereed by the police was located, he pointed out towards the city's downtown, but could not articulate its precise limits.

As a Mexican deportee, there are three overlapping stigmas and risks in the eyes of the Tijuanaenses that converge on Juan's body, making his position within the urban landscape problematic. Firstly, his presence in Tijuana is the confirmation of what is considered as an uncontroversial fact. Forcibly removed from the United States, he is suspected of having committed a legal wrongdoing in that country, making him a potential criminal here. Armando Rascón, Deputy Technical Director of Tijuana's police, explains it as follows:

A lot of these people belonged to gangs in the U.S. Jails in the U.S. are overcrowded. So what do you do? You take all the Mexicans, and deport them back to Mexico. The problem is, they don't tell us if they are ex-convicts. So we take them in as deportees (Vice, 2013)

Without providing any evidence substantiating his claim, Victor Clark local human rights activist confirms this link outlining the relationship between deportees and organized crime as follows:

"... they are becoming cheap labour for organized crime. They have the ideal characteristics. They speak English, they can handle weapons, they have contacts in the U.S., and they are desperate for work. And no one will hire them here. (Vice, 2013)

Secondly, Juan is homeless and guilty of not getting a proper job. Rascón (Vice, 2013) explains this by seeing it as an attitudinal problem:

Some say: "I was deported. I've been here for six months". In six months, you should have looked for a job. You should be productive or you should have gone to the authorities and said "I don't want to end up there, help me out".

A municipal police officer put it more bluntly:

‘They are here and should be able to get something productive to do, this city has lots of things to do. If they do it otherwise is because they’re not interested. They better get a job or go home’ (My translation)

His third flaw is that Juan is not from Tijuana. Consequently, the general attitude is that his presence should be banned or restricted as much as possible as it challenges the basic assumptions that organize the city: it is a place for amusement that is upheld by hard-working people.¹³⁰

At play in the identification of migrants are a series of visual markers that make them discernible from the rest of the population. According to the different descriptions provided by the people I talked with, migrants walk in groups, wear caps, use backpacks, but most importantly, they just look like migrants. The circularity of the visual description and the confidence people seem to have in its reliability contrasts with the excessive inaccuracy of its content. I tried myself to identify them by just following those indications. I walked on many occasions with my own backpack, no cap, and the only time I was stopped by the police I was questioned about why I was taking pictures. The unmentioned but essential ingredient of the identification of migrants, mainly men, is their ethnicity. In Mexico, as stated in the analysis on Mexican politics, race conflates with social class; skin colour is in this case an indication of social belonging. Darker skins are thus associated with working classes and poverty, whilst whiteness is an element of social distinction and membership in the upper classes. There was no mention of the ethnicity of the migrants or social class but, at first glance, if something could distinguish them from the local populations it is their ethnicity, then their accent. The minutiae of their detentions and the police procedures to identify them were inaccessible to me, but the references of my informants suggest the connection between these two elements (ethnicity and class) as visual indicators for migrants.

To enforce the prohibition on the use of the public spaces designated as problematic, three articles of the City’s ordinance (Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, 2009: 12-13) on ‘police and government’, provide the legal basis for the discretionary action of the police. Under the title of “Offences against public peace”, articles 72, 73 and 83, define a broad set of misbehaviours that target the poor including labour informality and homelessness:

¹³⁰ In the background, the recent stigmatization of migrants and homeless corresponds with a recent real estate boom and the incipient gentrification of the city center, both justified as part of a process of urban renewal to attract foreign investors, mainly San Diego real estate companies, to resituate the city economically, and take advantage of its proximity to the United States and its low costs (Zabludovsky, 2016). Thus, in the two years previous to 2016 the Municipal government issued 1, 700 building permits (SanDiegoRed.com, 2016) that have benefited from Tijuana’s low costs where for example a structural engineer fee is \$2000 against \$15000 it is in San Diego (Srikrishnan, 2015).

Article 72. - Sleeping in streets, avenues, roads, parks, green areas, and other public places.

Article 73. - Begging in public areas, and requesting gifts of any type

Article 83. - Cleaning, selling goods, and providing services, repairing vehicles on the streets, as well as the exertion of any profession, or activity that cause a nuisance to men or women and the deterioration of the urban image (My translation).

For the municipal government (Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, 2011), the relation between insecurity, homelessness, and deportation is crystal clear:

67 percent of the crimes that are recorded in the Central District take place in la colonia (neighbourhood) Federal, Zona Río, Zona Norte, and Downtown (primer cuadro de la ciudad) and are generated by the homeless, junkies, and deportees that live in the River (My translation).

A study carried out by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF, 2013: 11-13) has accounted for the effects of this approach, observing a unilateral pattern of police harassment and illegal detentions. After interviewing around 1000 deportees/homeless who used to live in the canal zone of the River of Tijuana¹³¹, the COLEF researchers found that least 93.5% of all the interviewees had been detained by the police: 34% were detained for not having identification; 33.2% for wandering around the city; and 15.2% for their clothing. An explicit reminder of the city's purpose and function, both the practices of the police and the limits imposed upon the mobility of deportees/homeless demonstrate the entanglement of the governing logics underpinning the city's spatial configuration.

Juan's mobility is restricted simultaneously by its legal relation with the U.S. border management, his class condition, the explicit aim to keep the city 'clean', and the regimentation of the urban space for tourism. The intersection of these four forms of segmentation sets the basic boundaries for acceptable behaviours in the city space. Juan's

¹³¹ Known as el Bordo, this place runs parallel to the border and was occupied for a few years by individuals deported from the United States until at some point between March and May of 2015 they were totally removed from this place and sent to rehab centres under the assumption that the place was a source of insecurity. This information was obtained from different informants working closely with immigrants in two different Christian charities of the city, La Casa del Migrante (The House of the Immigrant) and the YMCA.

ambiguous position in relation to these segmentations has made him problematic and subject to police harassment.

A central point of orientation for the positions of residents, police power, and the cityscape, the export focus of Tijuana validates the movements of its residents by its ability to provide labour and investment to sustain its position as transnational provider of services. Residents are evaluated according to their potential economic contribution to the spatial order of the city. Thus, the development of Tijuana's capitalism has been mapped onto its urban layout through representations of the city as a transgressive and dangerous space. In this regard, the popular imagination of Tijuana's urban landscape, as inherently dangerous has articulated forms of reading the city and traversing its spaces. Through this map, the city shapes both individual agency and public sensibilities about what is normal and desirable. This links the commercial status and city's identity with the obligation to work, profit, and move for the purposes of work. As an effective mode of surveillance and disciplining of the resident's bodies, this template offers a way to visualize and police the forms of non-permissible disorder

The deported/migrant, dumped into the city by the US, is at the limit of this political economy. Uprooted, with no contacts, and suspected to be a criminal, the deportee has entered the demonology of Tijuana's urban fears: roaming around, with no job, they threaten the foundations of the city by scaring tourists and investors, making evident the city's urban decay, and belying its purported perennial prosperity. The way deportees are treated reveals the limits of the disciplinary ordering of Tijuana, the role its reputation as a place of transgression, and its expanding effects to manage the contemporary organization of the city as officials work to circumscribe the movement of those returned from the United States.

7.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I argued that Tijuana's physical organization, i.e., its built environment, has created patterns of accessibility and exclusion, formal rules and regulations, and informal codes and signs that have enabled forms of identification of both the city's spaces and residents, as well as limits to the way people can act and move within the city. To unpack the socio-political and geographical articulations that locally mediate the exertion of power and the regulation of individuals, I examined how Tijuana's urban space was formed. I also explored the ways through which individuals' identities are differentiated and negotiated in socio-spatial terms.

Shaped by larger geopolitical and economic realities –the U.S. border, the industrial/commercial organization of the city, and the state’s policing- the socio-political geographies that traverse the urban space were revealed. Furthermore, it was shown how these geographies organize understandings and forms of insecurity for residents as well as forms of classification, separation, and policing that target specific populations.

Growing as an U.S. goods and services provider, two correlated and overlapped spatial orders coexist in Tijuana: one orientated to provide leisure (including cheap medical services to the U.S. citizens), and the other to supply low-cost manufacturing services. The division of the city into two, the east and the west, followed from this economic organization of the urban space. Although on the ground it is very difficult to distinguish between these two geographies since informality, poverty, and the manufacturing industry are spread all over the city, the east/west divide remains the most reliable point of orientation for city residents’ understandings of insecurity and disorder. In this regard, one’s spatial position within the urban layout determines and validates the value of residents. Additionally, the U.S.-Mexico border itself, as a police apparatus, has expanded the physical, symbolic, and legal distinctions mapped onto the urban layout by reinforcing residents’ behaviours and fears.

Accordingly, the city has produced two dominant social categories: the migrant/homeless/criminal and the hardworking man. Segmented according to ethnicity, social class, geographic origin (e.g., the country’s south/north divide) and the place of residence within Tijuana –east/west-, these identifications have been inscribed into the imagined geography of the city as a place of transgression and economic opportunities. The representation of Tijuana as transgressive and as a place of extraordinary productivity has shaped symbolic separations, perceptions, fears and uses of the city, modulating the forms of exclusion, self-regulation, and social control embedded in its urban design.

This intricate and densely regimented urban geography has produced strategies of fear management, unsuccessful town planning, and correlative forms of insecurity. As a case in point, the place immigrants have within this constellation of power relations and governing logics exemplifies how they interact authorizing, modulating, and forbidding types of circulation by marking people as potentially dangerous. The separation of high risk subjects is at the core of Tijuana’s success as a place of playful (rather than disruptive) transgression, cheap labour, and manufacturing.

The division of the city between recognizable and discernible sections has spatialized the stigmatization upon the incoming population of deportees and poor migrants from the south of Mexico. It has created the false impression that it is the ever-growing periphery of

the city that is the central locus of the insecurity and identified a specific type of individuals as the source. Building on the assumptions of the hard-working city's ideology, police strategies to manage this population have been authorized. In conjunction, the material organisation of the city fosters the targeting of the urban poor by distinguishing between criminogenic zones and acceptable spaces. By dividing populations by race, class, point of origin, and place of residency, authorities have created the impression among the public that criminality and insecurity have to do with something that others do, or bring with them from afar to particular neighbourhoods.

The focus on the relationship between migration, poverty and drug-trafficking, for example, has strengthened the connections amongst specific populations, behaviours, places, and forms of violence. In that way, while immigrants are overtly punished for using the public space, average middle class citizens remain afraid of them, their neighbours, and the city itself. This will be shown in the following chapter that focuses on the experience of increasing violence in Tijuana following the implementation of the WoD in the city. It will be demonstrated how these dominant representations of the city shaped the understandings of the security forces stationed in Tijuana, and the way ordinary residents negotiated through them the occupation of their city.

Chapter 8. The WoD in Tijuana: The Political Geography of the Occupation

8.1 Introduction

During the mid-2000s, extraordinary acts of violence broke out in Tijuana. Daylight shootings, gangland-style executions, bodies hanging from bridges, murdered police officers, and hundreds of abductions disrupted the city's normalcy. The official and academic records note the steady growth of crime rates since the 1990s, reaching their peak between 2008 and 2010, when 1822 individuals were murdered in the city (Noticiasya.com, 2016).¹³² In 2007, after the public announcement of Operation Baja California/Tijuana, more than 3000 soldiers and federal police personnel were stationed in the city "(...) to recover for Mexicans the right to live in peace and tranquility in their communities" (Eduardo Medina in Astorga, 2015).

As the most recent stage of the Mexican WoD, this chapter analyses the implementation of Operation Tijuana during the years 2007-2010, a period that corresponds with the urbanization of the military policing of the country. It examines the increasing violence in Tijuana from the mid-2000s onwards. It does so by building upon the oral accounts of both security personnel stationed in Tijuana and residents of the city. In this context, the oral stories of the violence that preyed upon the city emphasize the tactics individuals carried out to navigate urban unease, the increasing uncertainty, and the configuration of an everyday order in a rhythm imposed by the violence of criminals and state forces alike.

Used as indicators of broader forms of social interaction and organization (Knowles, 2000), these oral stories speak about the everyday entanglements between the Mexican government's script of the violence, the experience of its infliction, and the formation of a geographical imagination through which state violence was performed and reproduced. Within this imagination, "(...) the topographical, the tactical, and ideological" (Feldman, 1991: 36) merged making possible the violent exchanges that concerned the activity of the federal security personnel, and the further strategies enacted to maneuver within the city.

Accordingly, this chapter explores the implementation of the WoD in Tijuana focusing on the re-territorialization of its urban space, and the materialization of political subjects along the lines codified by such process. Additionally, it looks at the maneuvers employed by security forces and residents alike as way to map the lines of force traversing the everyday

¹³² The numbers in this case are disputed as local, state and federal records do not match, and independent accounts differ from one another. I have taken the official records as my reference. This is also the period when Operation Tijuana, the local version of Calderon's WoD, was implemented.

implementation of the WoD, and its spatial consequences. Attention is given to the articulation and functioning of the violence that preceded the deployment of the federal security forces to understand the organization of subjects. This is done in order to better understand the place-specific disposition towards the militarization of public security.

Two sets of conflicts run through, and link, the stories told by the residents and occupying forces of Tijuana. The first one concerns the expansion of crime and confusion over distinguishing criminals from authorities. It is the period preceding the military occupation of the city and correlates with the conformation of an expansive sense of fear and deep vulnerability across urban divides. The occupation of the city and the militarization of the public security is the second conflict. Within it individuals remain vulnerable but the description of its fragility and precariousness was re-codified along the lines of a battle over *la plaza*, a product of rival cartels invading the city.

Accordingly, two distinctive but interconnected groups of oral stories are analyzed. The first group are the residents of Tijuana. The second group contains stories of the security personnel stationed in Tijuana and the norther border during the implementation of the operations the WoD made possible. The inequality between both is obvious. The occupying forces for example can, and indeed did, resort to a set of coercive strategies to maneuver within the city. They deceived, abused, extorted, tortured, and occasionally killed with impunity. Their utilization of violence deepened the difference between them and the subjects ostensibly under their protection. Police were aware of this difference and used it to their advantages. Residents were mostly powerless against the intimidating and coercive practices of the federal forces, even if complaints were later filed, or collective forms of organization ensued to demand security and government action. Some of them abandoned the city, others confined themselves to their homes, many others prayed not to be the next in line, and kept doing what they always did: trying to live their lives. The aim is to grasp the precariousness that organizes both sets of stories, a vulnerability widely shared by both police and residents. Such vulnerability has to do with their mutual inscription in a situation that none of them seem to understand and that they navigated unsuccessfully with the means at their disposal. It does not mean excusing police abuse nor does it imply an ignorance of the difference in power between the residents of Tijuana and federal police officers. Instead it is an attempt to resituate their behaviors and understandings within a context in which both seem to be disadvantaged in different ways

The second group of accounts comes mostly from the rank and file of the federal police. These stories provide partial insight into the federal intervention in Tijuana as they cannot account for the differences between institutional cultures, inter-agency rivalries, legal

mandates, and training between the different security forces. Yet it is a reliable entry point to the inner functioning of the WoD and its transposition into the understandings and activities of a group of security actors inescapably immersed in the ideological and political context within which they develop their activities. Inscribed within broadest networks of meaning, their stories reflect the instrumentation of the WoD and the complicated and contradictory transit between representation and action. This analysis thereby provides one of the first inventories on the modalities of intervention of the Mexican federal security forces in the context of the urbanization of the WoD.

The stories transcribed here are fragmentary, inconsistent, and sometimes illogical interpretations of a period that is neither fully understood nor even complete. Minor edits were made to make them readable, yet I have deliberately kept them as they were told to me to remain loyal to their form. A reflection of the pervading confusion and ambivalence of the facts that are discussed, this inconsistency expresses accurately the local struggles to reduce the dissonances caused by the state of uncertainty the city has experienced. When necessary, foot notes or additional commentaries have been added to show the contradictions between individual accounts and ‘reality’, especially regarding dates, numbers, or ‘exaggerated’ assumptions. Of course, the value and content of ‘the real’ becomes a debatable issue. As the interaction between personal recollections, and collective understandings determined effective ways to deal with everyday life, such interplay brought on real and practical consequences, in some cases potentially deadly, for the users of the city. For that reason, the ‘reality’ or ‘truthfulness’ of the claims made by informants is not as relevant for the analysis, as the fact that their experiences and ways of saying them account for the organization of an ensemble of recollections, fears, and anxieties. This is an ensemble that has informed the occupation and use of the city, as well as its further reconfiguration and understanding as a space of deadly violence.

It is important to note that the full documentation of the practical details of Operation Tijuana and the preceding violence remains to be done. The dearth of official reports on the rationale and number of the incursions, check points, patrolling operations, and individuals arrested is a major obstacle to the analysis. Yet drawing on a combination of local testimonies, and triangulating them with NGOs’ reports, academic references, and journalistic reports, it was possible to reconstruct essential aspects of the operation ignored by mainstream accounts (Shirk, 2014). The local newspapers and academic works support the residents’ accounts providing relevant information about the exact dates of events referred, the murder rates, and the federal and municipal concerns about insecurity. In doing so, aspects central to the state’s intervention and obscured by the spectacle of the intervention

were gleaned, such as the everyday configuration of the operation, the perceptions of rank and file police officers, and the reterritorialization of the city's space.

The chapter has been structured around three themes traversing the urban experience of the WoD and reflected in the oral stories of my informants: firstly, the proliferation of violence and the inability to distinguish between criminals and authorities prior to Operation Tijuana. Nationally, it is the period (2000-2006) in which the militarization of the country's policing reached a new level with the appointment of a general as the Attorney General. Secondly, the federal deployment, and the restoration of the city's order, and thirdly the fragility of both the peace imposed by Plan Tijuana, and the distinction between state and crime. Around these themes, four subthemes gravitate: the acceptable uses of the public space; how the residents of the city should behave; the need for militarized law enforcement; and the identification of criminals and disposable individuals. These themes provide an explanation of the causes of the violence and reasons authorizing the exertion of state violence to regain control of the city. Interviewed in the context of a new cycle of violence in 2015, my informants –an amalgamation of working and middle class residents of Tijuana as well as police personnel- conveyed a vivid sense of the chaos and disorder that loomed over the city, the precarious calm, and the limits of militarized policing.

The analysis proceeds in three sections. In the first section, the mainstream interpretation of the violence that preceded the army deployment, and the residents' perspective on this violence is provided. It focuses on the constitution of the city as place in which everyone became a potential victim. Later it resituates this violence within the context of the federal operations to hunt the leaders of the Tijuana Cartel in the first half of the 2000s. The point of view of the residents dominates the initial section and explains the configuration of the urban space as a continuum of violence. Linked to the violation of household spaces, it produced the generalized impression among the population of a universal vulnerability. In speaking of this period through their recollections, Tijuana's residents narrate the experience of an unfathomable violence that threatened everyone, and erased the distinctions that had previously structured the organization of the city. The different separations of the urban space described in the previous chapter disappeared under the weight of this boundless violence. During this period, the city became reduced to a dangerous place, and its residents emerged as potential victims. In the second section, the testimonies of a federal police officers reveal the inner workings and dynamics of the links between imaginations of the border and *la plaza*, through the implementation of Operation Tijuana. In doing so, the re-territorialisation of the

city emerges from the deployment of the federal security force, and the emergent subject positions. In the third section of the chapter the results of the intervention are examined through the lens of the recent increases in homicides, and the organization of an understanding on the order of the city, and the spatial distribution of risks that is undifferentiated. Thus, by the end of this chapter, it will become clear how Operation Tijuana was dependent on the control and re-territorialisation of the urban space with lasting consequences for the city.

8.2 “A Blood Bath in Tijuana”

It's 6 pm and we are having some food right next to the border. It's me and Juan, my personal and unintentional guide. We are again talking about the years when Tijuana became, in his own words, a cemetery, noting that it was any case much worse in Ciudad Juárez. I can't remember why but Juan stopped talking to reflect on something. He remembered a joke -that was the reason for the small pause-; one he heard from someone else: 'They used to say –Juan's explains- that God created Tijuana on a day he was pissed off. That seems like a good explanation for this mess.' He didn't laugh afterwards though. ¹³³

Fieldwork notes (My translation)

This section provides an account of the conditions that preceded the increasing crime levels in the 2000s in Tijuana, and the discourses that explained it. It situates the reader in the decades before the city was engulfed by the confrontation between criminal organizations, emphasizing how such a transition has been officially explained by transposing the categories of the everywhere criminal and the battle over la plaza into the city's context. It also clarifies the magnitude and scale of the changes the city underwent following the military deployment of 2007 to pacify it.

According to the official figures on crime rates in Mexico in the late 1990s, the Northern border region became a violent territory, containing 40% of all the crimes of the country (Escalante, 2009; Romero, 2012: 14).¹³⁴ In Tijuana specifically after 1994, the homicide rate jumped from 5 homicides to 24 homicides per 100 000 inhabitants, and by the

¹³³ A similar reference to this 'adage' but phrased slightly differently can be found in Almazán (2013)

¹³⁴ It has been argued that the interplay between mass migration, national economic restructuring, disordered growth, and narco-trafficking turned this region into a problematic and unruly space (Alegria, 2010; Berumen, 2003; Escalante, 2009).

end of that decade the crime rate was of 35.87 crimes per 100 000 inhabitants (Escalante, 2009; Romero, 2012).¹³⁵ Additionally, between 1993 and 2012 according to the local *Asociación Esperanza contra la Desaparición Forzada y la Impunidad –AEDFI-* (Association Hope against Forced Disappearance and Impunity), 1 200 individuals were *levantados*¹³⁶ or abducted (Almazán, 2013).¹³⁷

At the peak of this cycle of rising criminality between 2008 and 2010, 1882 individuals were murdered, and according to the AEDFI estimations 500-600 individuals had disappeared (Noticias Ya, 2016; Valdez, 2012). Within this period, which coincides with the deployment of the Mexican army and the federal police in the city, other crimes also increased. Violent robberies, for example, were 8, 920 in 2007, 11, 833 in 2008, 13, 722 in 2009, and 11, 806 in 2010. By the same token, bank robberies jumped from 13 in 2007, to 113 in 2009, decreasing in 2010 to 79 (Valle-Jones, 2011). A journalistic report described the state of the city in 2008 in following terms:

The birthplace of one of Mexico's most infamous drug cartels looks more and more like its graveyard. Gunmen and associates of the Arellano Felix cartel, rulers of the city's criminal underworld for two decades, are being massacred by the score. Their mangled bodies turn up in garbage-strewn lots, a dozen at a time. Killers cut out their tongues, slice off heads, and leave behind taunting messages. Two barrels of industrial acid left on a sidewalk last week are believed to contain liquefied human remains (Marosi, 2008)

As the official script goes, the increasing crime rates, especially in the 2000s were

¹³⁵ The homicide national average is of little more than 6 homicides per 100 000 inhabitants (Vilalta, Castillo, & Torres, 2016). See chapter 6 for the discussion on the national crime rates that puts Tijuana's situation in perspective.

¹³⁶ *Levantado* is a central term in the slang of the contemporary violence in Mexico. It is the noun form of *levantar* whose closest term in English would be pick up -. Being *levantado* designates the act of taking someone against her/his will. It resembles a kidnap but the difference is that no ransom is requested and most of the times it involves the permanent disappearance of the individual. El Paso Intelligence Unit, a subsidiary unit of the DEA, defines it as it follows: "abduction. Term used to describe kidnapping. Most of the time, the person kidnapped or the "*levantado*" is never seen alive again." (El Paso Intelligence Unit, 2011). The official figures around individuals counted as disappeared in the country are inaccurate and do not separate between forced and intentional disappearing. The differences between the various states and federal jurisdictions regarding the definition of this crimes complicates the account. As the testimonies and evidences collected by NGOs and journalistic reports multiply (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Open Society Foundation, 2015;2016; Valdez, 2012), it speaks of the proliferation and privatization of a tactic used by Latin American dictatorships during the Cold War. The difference is that the victims are not self-confessed or previously designated political enemies: "those selected are snitchers, traitors, rivals, cops or soldiers; but also, workers, carpenters, journalists, doctors, merchants, youngsters, lasses in bloom..." (Valdez, 2012: 15).

¹³⁷ The police records register only 370 disappearances during the same period (Almazán, 2013: 144).

consequence of a twofold process: firstly, an armed conflict involving the local drug-trafficking organization, the Cartel of Tijuana, in a protracted battle with the rival Cartel of Sinaloa for the control of the city and the country (Astorga, 2015; Shirk, 2014; Vulliamy, 2011). Secondly, the elimination of Tijuana's cartel leadership, targeted by federal operations carried out in the previous presidential term (2000-2006). Since 2002, through a series of policing operations, the representatives of the organization were hunted by army's special units. Ramón Arellano Félix, was killed in Mazatlán, Sinaloa in February 2002, which was followed by the arrest of his brother, Benjamin Arellano in the same year, and the arrest in 2006 of the youngest brother, Javier Arellano aka 'El Tigrillo' (Alonso, 2013). In the subsequent months, the first request for federal intervention was made by local NGOs and businesses, as there was an upsurge of abductions in the city. Ignored by the then president Vicente Fox and the governor Eugenio Elorduy, it was not until the next year when soldiers and the federal police were stationed in the city (Proceso, 2007).

The simultaneous attacks of the federal government and the Sinaloa cartel's 'invasion' to wrest control of the city from Tijuana's cartel culminated in a prolonged battle over the streets of the city for illegal resources and the control of their circulation. The order of the events is summarized by a local researcher, Alonso (2013: 131), in the following terms:¹³⁸

2008 began with a series of executions and 'unauthorized' levantones that 'heated up' la plaza...the liutenants of the most violent cells were indisciplined (...) 'El Ingeniero' -the Engineer-, a premature leader, without any real experience had tried to control la plaza with punitive actions that were finally circumvented. It precipitated the division of the cartel into two factions on the morning of the April 26th 2008. That night the events known as the shooting of el Cañaveral, in the streets adjacent to the Insurgentes Boulevard, specifically in the Misión de Santa Inés and Paseo Guaycura streets, where two heavily armed commands faced each other. One of them sided with the 'Engineer' and the rest of the old guard, such as the '7-7', 'El Gordo' -the fatty-Villarreal or the 'Cholo'. The other sided with 'El Teo', 'la Perra' -'the Bitch'- and 'el Muletas' -the crutches. 15 individuals died. The following months and years were a murderous fight for the control

¹³⁸ Less detailed accounts of the divide and further fall of Tijuana's cartel can be found in Grillo, 2011; Reveles, 2010;

over the territory or *la plaza* between the groups of ‘El Teo’ or ‘Tres Letras’ -three letters’- and ‘El Ingeniero’, and the state security forces as a third party. It resulted in 2, 500 deaths in three years (My translation).

Broadly speaking this is the core of the mainstream understanding of the rationale and functioning of the violence that engulfed Tijuana in the years that followed the detention of the main leaders of the *Arellanos*’ Cartel. The references to the identities of the criminals, underlying motivations, and aims draw upon the WoD’s basic thesis, namely: violence stems from disputes over the control of *la plaza*, cartel infighting, and the everywhere criminal. In its core, it was a confirmation of the assumptions of the everywhere criminal logic: the problem in Mexico, if any, concerns the fact that “(...) the organized crime has overflowed” the state (Soberanes as quoted in Astorga, 2015: 24).

More importantly, the visualization of the social space as a battleground validated the identifications of its inhabitants as potential criminals/enemies, and the dead as evidence of both the expansion of crime and the effectivity of the WoD. As a former government’s adviser claimed: “(...) but the reality is that who has more casualties, arrests, and moral deterioration among its ranks, is who is losing the war, and in the case of Mexico it is the narcotraffickers” (Villalobos, 2010).¹³⁹ Yet as it was already evident for the residents of the city, and it would become so soon for the police stationed there, this programmatic outline was much more fragile, less consistent, and much more frightening at the ground level.

8.3 Disorder and Chaos: The Fracture of the Order of the City

Seen through the light of Tijuana’s residents’ understandings of drug trafficking violence, this section analyses how the official script of the WoD (the battle over *la plaza* and the everywhere criminal) is reinterpreted and rearranged according to the chaotic conditions of the city. It problematizes both the understanding of the WoD as an operation of pacification, and the understanding of the city’s space as a battleground structured around a clear-cut divide between enemies and friends. The section does so by emphasizing firstly the unstructured nature of the violence that traverses Tijuana, and secondly the dislocation of the limits between the public and private that characterize the city in the years previous to Calderon’s drug war.

¹³⁹ Joaquín Villalobos is a former Salvadorean guerrilla fighter and by 2010 he was security adviser in Felipe Calderon’s government. His political position and job meant he clearly favored a belligerent approach to the WoD.

From the point of view of the residents it is difficult to tell how and when everything started. The residents' interpretations of the events that caused the insecurity of the city, initially replicate the causal sequence set by the federal government's explanation of the reasons underlying the WoD. Firstly, the interruption of a non-written pact between cartels, conducive itself to inter-cartel violence and productive of forms of predation upon the regular residents of the city.

Up to that point their central themes on the origin and functioning of the criminal violence that took over the city after 2000 are almost a symmetric calque of the government doctrine's obsessions. Employing a conceptual sequence like that used by the Federal WoD's discourse, Tijuana's inhabitants describe the origins of the violence (the breakdown of the *Pax Narca*), the preceding arrangements between authorities and drug kingpins, the geography of the criminal-state nexus, and the strategic dynamics of the criminal order. *La plaza*, and the notion that the cartels are fighting one another provide a reliable plot and stable points of reference to identify the sources of insecurity. It has important cognitive functions, the main of which is the organization of an authoritative point of view where contradictions simply fade out.

Yet, at the intersection of the multiple personal tragedies and local episodes of violence, the residents' interpretations depart from the state's script on the drug war. Under the weight of evidence and the daily count of misfortunes, the clear-cut separation between law enforcers and criminals collapses in these accounts. As the daily evidence indicated, such distinctions do not hold up.

According to their testimonies, the proliferation of crime and the multiplication of abductions configured an unlimited power over their lives, in which the activity of the state police agents was constantly registered. It coincided with the transgression of private spaces, and specifically, the violation of their homes in one way or another. Such is the fundamental feature of the period preceding the federal occupation of Tijuana: the physical and symbolic dissolution of the lines that contained the violence occurring in the street, and the participation of the law enforcement agencies in such processes. Thus, the confusion between law and criminality, and the constitution of a boundless space for the exertion of unlimited violence encapsulate how the period was perceived, symbolized, and lived.

As Gil remembered it, something previously unnoticed broke the normal logic of the city and then, evidence of the public order's decay surfaced everywhere, expanding even upon the intimacy of his own home,

In those years, a travel agent's son was kidnapped. The kidnappers cut

off two of his fingers to pressure his parents to pay the ransom. Many people were kidnapped. Right there, in that neighborhood in front of the house shotguns could be heard every day. We bought a car and had to sell it so as not to attract attention, because people thought immediately you had money. In those years, maybe 2005 or 2006, I spent some time in a rehab center. I met some guys there who would kill anyone you want for US \$300. They said they had killed more than 25 dudes. One month later I left the rehab center and one of the guys I met there found me, I don't really know how. He offered me protection. He asked me about my kids...My balls went up to my throat. Everything got pretty fucked up around that time. It happened to me and happened everywhere. That was the point when Tijuana became a single fence behind which we tried to protect ourselves. It didn't work that well though. Fieldwork notes. (My translation)

Both the proximity of the insecurity and the physical breaching of the domestic space were the distinctive conditions of the period preceding the federal intervention in the city. Insecurity and violence, as Gil describes it, morphed from being something that happened to others to something that inadvertently was at the door of his and everyone's house. As said earlier there is no definitive evidence or clear accounts on the extent of the extortion activities, the increase in kidnappings, or their subsequent effects upon the city's inhabitants. Competing accounts claim alternatively subtle and radical upsurges, which illustrates ongoing political struggles about how this period should be defined. Enough evidence suggests that the state and federal attorney offices' agents were involved in narco-trafficking and other illegal businesses (see Aponte, 2008; Millán, 2013). In any case, the demonstrated proliferation of crime suggests the growing violation of public and private spaces alike, and the exposure of residents' bodies to the power of these criminals to an unprecedented extent for the city.

8.3.1 *The Violation of the Household*

Rebeca's testimony on the *levanton* and suspected murder of her older son, details the invasive nature of this process, and the parallel confusion between organized crime and state activity. The form her narrative takes reflects not only the depth of her personal tragedy, but also the baffling constitution of the moment, and the challenge to situate it within the broader trajectory of the various cartel turf wars:

To me everything started in 2005 with the wave of kidnaps that took place here in Tijuana... no one knew what the hell was going on over here. In this regard, it was what affected me ... they took my 27 year old son. They didn't demand any money from me, they just took him. He was with a friend...According to this friend they had gone, to a restaurant called 'El 4 Milpas' or something like that., that is at the entrance of Tecate. They stopped there to buy a soda, who knows. Then, a truck with the PGR initials stopped and took my son. My son's friend told me this by phone, but we never met. He told me his phone's battery was almost flat. I began bothering people related to this 'friend' and there my struggle began. They turned off their cell phones. Then I got the famous phone call. They told me not do anything, that they were going to tell me what they wanted and who they wanted. They never mentioned anything about the money. His exact words were 'don't file the report, just wait, we're going to call you'. I recognized the voice of the person I talked with by phone. I asked him directly 'What do you know about my son?' This man didn't deny he was the person I had talked with. He just said 'Wait, I'm trying myself to solve this, I'm just punishing him for something he said. Don't file the report ma'am, I'm trying to mediate'.

Unfortunately, you think you live in a world of dreams where you think nothing is going to happen to you, that you're ok, that no one is going to hurt you because you don't mess with nobody, but still it happens to you and ties your hands. There's nothing left to do. This person began to tell me about houses with metal fences, he gave me names of characters I hadn't heard of before. I used to hear about los (the) Arellano, but didn't know anything about the delinquents he was talking about; el muletas, la perra, etc. and I was surprised... I didn't understand anything.

I couldn't wait and went to file the report. A lady took the report and just next to her, on the other side, there was a man. When I said my son's name this man mentioned the date (when her son was kidnapped). This guy didn't know me. I hadn't mentioned names,

dates, or anything. Can you imagine what I felt when this man said it? I asked him ‘How do you know it if I haven’t said anything?’. The guy went into another room and their immediate superior came over, I explained him what had just happened. I went to look for the guy in the room but he wasn’t there. The lady taking the report said she didn’t know who was behind her, I mean, the person who was taking the report didn’t know who was behind her. How come? I mean, that’s bullshit. If you work somewhere you know all the other people working there (...)

(...) In previous years kidnaps happened to people that had money or among them {the kidnappers} (...) they had a code. We in Baja California knew what the mafia was, they had a code, but suddenly they started to come after anyone. Unfortunately, that presidential term (Calderon’s) they came after the young... it was a difficult time for the young... and now as you see, everything is similar to the way it started back in 2007; people decapitated, disappeared, because the people that were jailed in the military’s crackdown and the cleaning of the police are now free (My translation).

Exposing the minutiae of the angst and anxiety that circulated through Tijuana during the worst years of the violence, Rebeca’s story and the intense disorganization of her speech draw attention to the disruption of the city that followed the intrusion of the violence into her home. Yet unlike Gil, for Rebeca the expansion of the city’s insecurity is more radical as it implied the abduction of her son, who never returned, and lacked the economic logic of a ransom demand. Prolonged and furthered through her son’s captors’ phone calls, this insecurity signalled the development of forms of self-regulation and control related to the confusion over what was law enforcement and crime. The blurry constitution of dates, places, names and identities in Rebeca’s narrative reflects both a suspicion of the involvement of state agents in the insecurity crisis and the impossibility of knowing who was reliable in her own situation. I myself was included within that plot of generalized suspicion and uncertainty, and was not considered any more reliable than anyone else.

8.3.2 *The State/Criminal Nexus*

In parallel to the desecration of the privacy of the home, the suspected involvement of

state agents in the origin of the crisis is central to organization, distribution, and understanding of the violence. The disruption of the taken for granted codes presumed by Rebeca to govern the city, replicates a basic trope across the explanation made by others of the various disasters that traverse the city. The main concern here was a broad sense of insecurity provoked by the state itself. The breakdown of codes related to the previously invisible activities of organized crime and the suspected complicity of state officials catalyzed a total reinterpretation of the city's urban organization and its risks. A middle-aged woman who was born in Sinaloa, when asked the same questions as Rebeca, elaborates on these themes,

H. What happened in Tijuana?

You're not going to understand it ever. We ask the same question and there's no answer, because it is difficult to understand that the police who are there to help and protect you don't do it. When I went to file a report immediately a police's pickup was put in front of my house to intimidate me. Who do you ask for help if they are the ones who are doing all of this? I speak from experience because one of the judiciales (the ministerial federal police) in charge of my son's case was taken to Mexico City because he had decapitated his partner and a few civilians... and they are the ones supposedly who are looking after us? At some point if you were at some place and a police patrol got there, it was better to leave and avoid the possibility of a shooting. The peace of the city faded away, there wasn't any way to discern who was who.

H. were there specific places in Tijuana where it was more visible?

It happened everywhere, but it was always much more focused in specific zones. The most affected zone was the east one though, the most dangerous. It was a zone that was built through invasions with people from outside. Just migrants. So towards the east zone it grew impressively, from el Mariano (Matamoros) towards the east (...) and then, it was everywhere. Those aren't wealthy neighborhoods, as is the one we live in, just lower middle class and it was there where the

narcotics retailers (narcomenudista) concentrated. In my neighborhood, there were narcotics retailers (narcomenudista) and they did terrible things, then they were caught and you didn't know they were living right next to you. Find a person that doesn't know a narcotics retailer now (...) (My translation).

The intensity of the violence and the blurring distinction between criminals and law enforcement shifted the barriers that allowed individuals to keep some control over their surroundings. It increased the sense of vulnerability and distrust, and made everyone suspicious of criminal involvement. In this way, it was similar to the state's notion of the everywhere criminal.

There is, however, a remarkable difference between the account provided by the state and the residents' narrative of the same processes. Contrary to state's position that responsibility for unease fell squarely upon organized crime, in Tijuana the state's security representatives were prominent agents in the propagation of fear. The case of Aiko Enríquez, whose brother was kidnapped shows the magnitude of the relationship between crime and state. Although a ransom was paid, her brother was murdered anyway. The Enríquez family was well known in the city for their charitable work, and their subsequent departure due to ongoing concerns over their security had a broad public impact:

When the threat was imminent I called the army, they asked me countless questions, they even heard the shots. I made the person that took the phone call promise me that they would send someone immediately, but no one came. I called the municipal police, but they came only when I told them there was a corpse outside of the house. A few hours later left Tijuana, each of us with just with a bag, leaving our jobs, friends, our stuff, we had to leave everything we had behind us. What remains of my family and me, we'll live as refugees... fearing being found. And I ask you, kidnappers: why?! I love Mexico and Tijuana, it is the place I were born, is my country, but I can't live here anymore. Goodbye Tijuana (Enríquez, 2008) (My translation)

This is an excerpt of a letter written by Aiko published in a local newspaper in 2008. Here specifically she is talking about the moments that followed the attack on her house after she reported her brother's abduction. No one came to help them. She also suspected the

security forces' complicity with the kidnappers. Aiko's case was referred more than once by interviewees and other residents I talked with as a sign that the city had reached a nadir. While I was being driven to the city centre, Roberto remembered it and what seemed to him to be the most daunting feature of the episode: Aiko and her family being escorted by the police to the border in order to leave the country. This was perceived as a recognition that everything was '(...) fucked up, because you know everything is fucked up when the police instead of investigating or protecting you, take you to the border to escape. That was when I knew that we were fucked' (fieldwork notes) (My translation).

8.3.3 *El Pozolero (The Stew Maker)*

Yet nothing describes better the extent of the violence and the dislocation that both public and private spaces underwent than the existence of a place in the outskirts of the city where the bodies of hundreds of the abducted were dissolved and buried. Situated in the *ejido Maclovio* Rojas on the east side of the city and surrounded by ramshackle houses, it is a square of ground enclosed by walls with no visible signs that allow the visitor to guess its old purpose. It was discovered in 2009 after the arrest of Santiago Meza aka '*el Pozolero*' or stew-maker, a nick-name reflecting his work dissolving bodies and the Pozole, a traditional stew made of pork and corn grains. He initially worked for Tijuana's Cartel and then defected to the Sinaloa's Cartel. (Mauleón, 2009).

Founded 25 years ago according to its residents, *el Maclovio* did not had any status within the various representations of the city until these events. Sandra, who instructed me on how to get there and warned me about its dangers, admitted she had not heard about it until '*el Pozolero*' became a public figure. Before it, it was as though it did not exist.

A product of the chaotic expansion of the city, surrounded by manufacturing factories, low budget housing, and informal settlements *el Maclovio*, as it is known by the locals, is part of what some call the new Tijuana. A shanty town, ninety minutes away from the central part of the city, its marginality is accentuated by the lack of public services, and its segregation from the core of the city. Warned that *el Maclovio* was a dangerous place, I met Rafael there, next to the spot where it is suspected that more than two hundred bodies were dissolved and then buried after being abducted and murdered.¹⁴⁰ The place, surrounded by more precarious houses, is at the top a hill where there are not sidewalks or pavement; when it rains, it turns into a swamp. My purpose was to talk about the experience of living right next to it. When I

¹⁴⁰ There are not so far conclusive figures on the number of bodies dissolved.

asked him about it, his answer was brief but illustrative:

R. How could we know that something like it was happening right there?

H. But you never saw or heard anything?

R. No

H. And the police?

R. When the police turn up over here they come many hours after they have been called; they come to extort or receive money but nothing else (My translation).

Then he nodded and mentioned that in front of the place we were talking, right next to where that people had been dissolved, there was a cockpit where armed people who were not from *el Maclovio* met on Sundays. Luxury cars would arrive and cockfights took place. ‘We are here by ourselves, and the police are not going to come to helps us’.

He did not deny answering more questions about the themes, but it was obvious that the topic was sensitive, and a relationship can be traced between the cockpit, the impunity of those running it, and the possibility of being dissolved with no one noticing it. Whatever it was, he did not specify what that relationship could be and asking him more about it was not going to be productive. But there lies the importance of Daniel’s silence and its relationship with the violence under analysis. According to different accounts on the *Pozolero*, one of its distinctive features was its smell, “(...) the inimitable, sickly sweet, putrid smell of death and decomposition, of human remains... stronger when it gets hot” (Vulliamy, 2011: 31).¹⁴¹ I would not say Daniel lied to me. What seems much more appropriate, is that his silence was a strategic choice in the face of risk. The transformation of the space into a cockpit, an illegal site run by unknown persons, was a reminder of the precarious position of *el Maclovio* and its residents, in relation to the rest of the city, the law, and the spatial pervasiveness of crime. Remaining silent was a much more sensible manoeuvre given the proximity of ongoing uncertainty, than risking his own life to report something that has been deliberately ignored by the police. In any case, *el Maclovio* remains proof that the violence that terrified the city in

¹⁴¹ One of my informants who happened to be there when the federal police arrived but who did not live in *el Maclovio* mentioned it too.

the mid-2000s spread across the city and was not class specific, with both rich and poor being victimized.

It is impossible to verify the extent of the state/crime nexus Tijuana's citizens refer to as one the main features of the period. However, it is consistent with the evidence gathered by independent researches in other locations in Mexico that demonstrates the connections between the state apparatus and criminality (Aguayo, 2015; Payan & Correa-Cabrera, 2014; Sociedad de Estudiantes de El Colegio de México, 2016). And as mentioned earlier, in Tijuana links between state and federal attorney offices' officers were reported (Aponte, 2008; Millán, 2013). Be as it may, by commission or omission, connections between the state and organized crime situated the breaching of residents' homes in a broader context that concerned the development of a power to kill that, born from the state, exposed the residents' bodies to forms of incalculable violence and confusion.¹⁴²

The evidence collected on Tijuana suggests the extent of the problem and its political meaning. The last barrier between the disorder of the city and the unprotected body of its residents, intrusions into the homes of Tijuana's citizens signaled a major transformation of the organization of the structure of the city, and the rule of the state. As Weizman (2007: 210) holds, the walls of the house materialize the rule of the law, and found the separation between public and private that makes possible the political order, the law itself, and the city. The depredation of Tijuana's residents' homes by violent entrepreneurs, whether agents of the state or criminal actors, was evidence of the deterioration of the political order founded on the reciprocity between the sovereign and its subjects, and the reconfiguration of the state monopoly of violence.¹⁴³ This reconfiguration has been interpreted in Mexico as a manifestation of both the state's deterioration (Correa-Cabrera, Keck, & Nava, 2015) and the concomitant emergence of 'alternative communities of non-state social allegiance' (Davis, 2017; Morton, 2012).

Leaving unexamined the place-specific and contradictory sequence of small events that conformed the disorder of the Mexican cities, these analyses have lost sight of how state authorities themselves were implicated. In the case of Tijuana, the evidence points towards the reorientation of the aims of the state rather than the erosion of its structure of control and regulation. In this regard, the collusion, or direct participation, of both the state and municipal

¹⁴² General Sergio Aponte made public a letter to Baja California's state attorney in which he detailed the number and names of key state's agents prosecuted and indicted in organized crime activities, such as kidnap. The letter can be read in English in Millán (2013).

¹⁴³ Understood as a form of protection and reciprocity between the sovereign and its subjects.

police in the security crisis of Tijuana, is in line with Mbembé & Meintjes's (2003) characterization of an emergent governmentality in which the disciplinary, the biopolitical, and the necropolitical have converged. There, the representatives of the state do not aim to inscribe the bodies of the citizens within disciplinary apparatuses, but into an order which maximizes the extraction of surplus life. It is well beyond the aim of this chapter to determine the exact governmental form of the period preceding the implementation of Operation Tijuana, and much more research is needed on the state/crime nexus on a case by case basis. With the evidence at hand, what seems to have happened in Tijuana was the degradation of social space through the actions of state agents and criminals whose connections are not clearly discernible.

As the testimonies of the residents make clear, the formation of spaces of violence that transgressed the boundaries of domestic spaces had important consequences for the use of public space, relations amongst citizens, the identification of risky populations, and the security of the household. Divorced from the clear-cut distinctions elaborated by the state's propaganda, the expansion of collective suspicion instigated different strategies by individuals to cope with the disorder and restore some control over their lives. Those with enough financial resources left, moving to other cities in the same state, or sending their children to live in the United States. There are no definitive figures on this type of movement; however in 2010, the police of El Paso, Texas estimated that at least 30, 000 Mexicans had legally moved there because of the violence in Ciudad Juárez (McKinley, 2010). In Tijuana, it is estimated that at least 8% of the population left the city as the situation became unbearable (Millán, 2013). Those that stayed developed survival strategies in line with the increasingly dangerous city and the transformation of its essential units, the neighborhood and the household, into threatening places. Carlos Velázquez who lives in northern Mexico describes it as follows:

“Living here became the worst of the plagues. I distrusted everyone and everyone distrusted me. I thought about buying a gun. Didn't walk around in the night nor visited bars or saloons. Didn't see my friends. My contact with the outside world was social media. I only went out to work and take my daughter to her ballet lessons...”

(Velázquez, 2013: 20) (My translation).

The inventory of the different strategies to circumvent the increasingly dangerous city stemmed from the same source: an expansive sense of collective and individual vulnerability.

Hiding, avoiding public spaces, or leaving were variations of the same and intense feeling: fear of being murdered or kidnapped as the city, and ultimately the house, ceased to protect and insulate the community from violence. Perhaps the best example of the strategies Tijuana's inhabitants undertook during this period was the organization in 2008 of a group of women named "Grandmothers in action". In January of that year they bought 9 000 candles that were given out at malls and market places with the indication that they should be lit at 7pm each day so that people could pray. Later, in November 28th, 2008, a mass was held in the municipal auditorium where 3000 people turned up. Subsequent calls failed and the 'Grandmothers in action' slowly faded out. These events have diverse readings but I am interested in the connection this call traces between the security crisis and a proposed solution that should build upon the safe-keeping of the soul. It seems a desperate action that conceded that everything exterior to the soul was irretrievably lost; thus, in seeking shelter available against the crisis, some Tijuanaenses retreated to their soul as a last refuge.¹⁴⁴ If the only thing left to do was to pray, that moment symbolized the reformulation of the collective life of Tijuana in purely individualistic terms, indicating the perceived hopelessness in the face of Tijuana's crisis and the order of violence that governed it.

Within this order every previous spatial hierarchy and categorization was dissolved and replaced by the complete homogenization of the social space: within it everyone became suspicious, guilty, and potentially a victim at the same time. A fear of dying (horrifically) shaped daily calculations on how to live and what to do regardless of social class or spatial location. A public campaign conducted by local entrepreneurs that installed 30 billboards across the city to request an intervention by the army in 2006 (Shirk, Wood, & Olson, 2014), voiced a collective concern about the insecurity and the psychological atmosphere that pervaded the city. The intervention of the federal government did not occur until a year later. However, at this point, the population of Tijuana was already prepared to accept the military occupation of public space.

8.4 Operation Tijuana

This section discusses the organization, planning and initial deployment of Operation Tijuana situating it within the wider trajectory of counter-insurgency operations implemented

¹⁴⁴ Small fractions of Tijuana residents later organized and met to collectively demand the authorities search for their relatives, such as the Association United for the disappeared people from Baja California, or the business community who requested the intervention of the army in the city in 2006.

in Mexico following the already analyzed economic restructuring of the country. It precedes the analysis of the ways in which the federal police's imagination of the city is traversed by the criminogenic representation of Tijuana, and the conformation of a boundless battlefield fostered by the WoD's re-territorialization of the country's space. Thus, the characteristics and type of policing implemented by the WoD is made explicit.

In January 2nd, 2007 Operation Tijuana was launched and 3, 296 federal security agents including members of the army, navy, federal police and attorney general's office were stationed in the city.¹⁴⁵ As discussed in chapter 4 and 5, the deployment of military personnel for the pacification of unruly populations and places in Mexico has a long history. The urbanization of domestic military incursions began with the aggressive campaigns to hunt down kingpins implemented from the early 1990s, building upon previous counter-narcotic operations in the countryside beginning in the 1970s. Operation Tijuana followed the tracking, killing, and capture of the Arellano Félix Brothers between 2002 and 2008, in an attempt to destroy their cartel.¹⁴⁶ A part of the second stage of this two-pronged strategy –i.e., eliminating the cartels' leadership and pacifying conflict spots-, Operation Tijuana consisted of three main tactics: 1) the implementation of 'mixed security arrangements', to prevent and combat crimes; 2) "incursions" in "areas with greater crime rates and places with probable links with drug and human trafficking"; 3) and the purification of the local police (Mexico's Government Security Cabinet, 2007). The purpose was twofold: eliminate the criminals and recover public spaces:

(...) today we start Operation Tijuana where the crime rates have increased exponentially. It aims to recover the public spaces for the community, the public, and finish the impunity of delinquents that puts at risk Tijuana's families' tranquility (Mexico's Government Security Cabinet, 2007) (My translation).

The subsequent operations implemented during Calderon's term followed this design closely, resorting to both a combined deployment of civilian and military forces as well as the purification of local police.

¹⁴⁵ 2, 620 of whom were army personnel (Mexico's Government Security Cabinet, 2007).

¹⁴⁶ Supervised by the U.S. DEA (Kraul, 2010) between 2008 and 2012 through the U.S. government's 'Kingpin Strategy' 94 individuals, 23 of whom were considered 'high value targets', were killed or apprehended (Grayson, 2013). In March 2009, the Mexican government published a list of 37 names and offered rewards of up to \$2.5 million dls. (Krauze, 2015).

8.4.1 *The Mixed Security Arrangements*

The concept of ‘mixed security arrangements’ is central to the form Operation Tijuana took on the ground. A euphemism, it describes the coordination of forces and territorial functions every segment of the security personnel stationed in the city should play within the operation in light of the legal, political, logistical, and material obstacles blocking an overt deployment of the military. Although the army had in the past actively participated in the policing of the country, its presence had been purposefully kept under the radar to bypass the legal restrictions and political implications of its explicit employment (see this discussion in chapter 5 and 6). Thus, ‘mixed security arrangements’ emerged as a practical solution in the context of the erosion of presidential power and the multiple subnational challenges that arose from its deterioration (e.g. the Zapatista army, the drug cartels, multi-party political system). Implemented to bypass the legal limitations imposed over policing by the military and public outcry over creeping militarization, mixed security arrangements were first employed in Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Chiapas during the 1990s.

Through these mixed arrangements, the state and federal judicial police, as well as municipal forces were placed under the jurisdiction military and its chain of command. In addition, paramilitary units trained by the army were used to harass local populations while state officials could avoid being held accountable for these actions (Rochlin, 2007; Sosa, 2002; Rivas, Sierra, & Enríquez, 1999). Conversely, as military abuses multiplied and complaints proliferated, the arrangement also worked to conceal the direct involvement of the army in these abuses (Amnesty International, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1996).

A similar rationale was followed in Tijuana. Gen. Sergio Aponte, the commander in charge of the operation, organized a ‘unified command’ to oversee the functioning of the intervention and separate the tasks implemented on the ground.¹⁴⁷ Subordinated to the army, the civilian federal security personnel were in charge of capturing and transporting suspects to the army’s headquarters, where they were interrogated and tortured presumably by military personnel (Vivanco, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2011).¹⁴⁸ Jorge, a member of the federal police who was stationed in Tijuana several times between 2007 and 2008, explains the

¹⁴⁷ For this moment, the Mexican Supreme Court had already ruled (1996) that the army was constitutionally allowed to help the civilian authorities to restore internal order (see Nexos, 2011).

¹⁴⁸ Between 2009 and 2010 100 cases of systematic use of torture involving the army were found in Tijuana. All of them follow the same pattern: firstly, they were detained by the police, then interrogated and tortured by the military (Vivanco, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2011).

hierarchy of the intervention and its legal reasoning,

They (the army) pull the strings for all this. In Tijuana they say ‘send 5000’ (federal police officials). The army indicates where the police should go. They have the intel and know exactly what’s going on. But unfortunately, or fortunately, the army doesn’t have the authority to do what we do. They are in charge of national sovereignty but they don’t have the power to set up a check points and pull you over (My translation).

The lack of official documentation on the number of military personnel allocated for patrolling, as well as the number of daily raids, patrolling units, nocturnal and diurnal missions complicates the analysis of the operational distinctions between the different security actors. Yet some elements disclosed more recently give glimpses of the structure of the procedures. For example, one order from 2014 mandated the rank and file of the army to conduct operations nocturnally to avoid “(...) interfering in the civilian population activities”. Moreover, it specified that

“(...) actions to reduce violence should be planned and executed in the dark hours, directed at specific targets (...)” and “(...) the troops should operate mainly at night and reduce activities during the day to take down (*abatir*) delinquents in dark hours, since the largest number of crimes occur at that time” (Open Society Foundation, 2016: 69).

Upon its release, this catalysed a heated debate in Mexico. Some argued that the preference for night-time missions was not tactical but rather suggested a preference by the army to conceal its direct involvement in civilian policing tasks (Aviña, 2014; Gillingham, 2012b; Montemayor, 2010a; Rath, 2013). By making the civilian security forces the visible face of the intervention, the public’s attention has been diverted towards the civilian security agencies. This has provided a high degree of tactical flexibility to the army while bypassing legal scrutiny over the role of the military in detaining civilians in time of peace.¹⁴⁹ The debate that followed the disclosure of the order indicates an intensification in the criticism to the army’s performance and participation in the WoD. Yet at the beginning of the urban operations in Tijuana, this distribution and separation of functions kept the focus on civilian

¹⁴⁹ In this regard see chapter 6 for the discussion on the military’s lethality rates as indication of such flexibility.

policing units.

The bulk of recollections from my interviewees focuses on two different sequences of events: the period prior to the Operation's beginning, and the upsetting presence of the federal police, judicial and municipal police. Yet the allusions to the military involvement are few in comparison, and less passionate; some of my informants even refer its presence as a blessing. The scant commentaries on its activities create the impression of its absence, as though it had not been there. It contrasts with the reports on military abuses in other locations. For example, in Ciudad Juárez residents have referred to widespread abuses and military participation is constantly alluded to in NGO reports and individual testimonies (Bowden & Molloy, 2010; Gilbert, 2017; Turati, 2012; Open Society Foundation, 2015; Wright, 2011). Mexico's National Commission of Human Rights (NCHR) reports that between 2007 and 2012 it issued 6 recommendations for events that occurred in Baja California involving the federal security corps: four for the army, one for the Attorney General's Office and one for the Federal Police. In Chihuahua, where Ciudad Juárez is located), the NCHR issued 29 recommendations, 26 of them just for the army, during the same period. I interviewed a couple of Ciudad Juárez residents in the context of my research, who articulated a clear sense of dissatisfaction in relation to the army's presence in the city. The opinion was that "(...) things got only worse when they [the soldiers] got to the city" (fieldwork notes, my translation).

But it remains difficult to pinpoint exactly why the military in Tijuana avoided the public exposure it experienced in other parts of the country or how the army managed the operation. It is possible to assume that the novelty of the operation, its size, the distribution of the national and local political forces within the state (federal, state, and municipal authorities belonged to the same political party PAN), and the intensity of the criminal conflict affected the emphasis on the use of force. It is clear from the news, official reports, and my informants that different civilian security agencies were in charge of public displays of force, the bulk of the patrolling, and arrests. In this context, Julian Leyzaola, an ex- lieutenant colonel appointed as director of the municipal police in 2008, gained notoriety by exploiting the role of ruthless law enforcer. Called the 'Aztec Dirty Harry' or the Mexican General Patton (Millán, 2013: 352), his appointment and activities were clearly linked to his former military affiliation and the police forces' subordination to the army's command of the public security infrastructure. According to Jorge Ramos, the mayor of Tijuana during this period, "those arrested with weapons or drugs were turned over to Leyzaola personally and he delivered them to the military. They were never heard from again" (quoted in Molloy (2013).

This kind of policing activity forms the core of my interviewees recollections, summarized by Eloisa's observation that "Leyzaola was a son of a bitch but he made good things for the city" (fieldwork notes. my translation). Abuses by the military remained under the public's radar. At least indirectly, the operational design of the intervention succeeded in granting the army control over the operation. In 2015, while doing fieldwork in Tijuana, a local newspaper published an online poll asking its readers if they wanted the military to patrol the city again (Frontera.info, 2015). The results were not published but the poll speaks of the ambivalent perception of the activities of the military and the view held by some that a military presence was necessary to restore public order.

8.5 The Geography of Occupation: Visualizing the Space of the City

This section argues that the military occupation of Tijuana and its operationalization is underpinned by a series of understandings and representations of its urban form and criminogenic nature that have territorialized it as unsafe space. It parallels the organization of the WoD as a boundless and protracted battle against criminals competing for a piece of national territory. It is the visualization of the city as a dangerous place that sanctions the exertion of force and allows its reterritorialization as a *plaza* to be pacified by the state's security forces.

Publicly announced on January 2nd by Felipe Calderon, the federal forces arrived in Tijuana the following day. This provided an opportunity for those associated with cartels to evade arrest by leaving the city. Eight days later, more than 3 000 police and soldiers stationed in the city had only arrested eight individuals and seized eight vehicles. In fact, these arrests were in Mexicali -the state capital about two hours away from Tijuana- (Heras & Martínez, 2007). Initially, the only news about the Operation focused on the disruptions caused by an influx of federal forces, such as traffic jams caused by check points or the patrolling of the city (Heras & Martínez, 2007; Proceso, 2007). Considering the crime rates in the city, the operation was not even successful in its explicit aim to reduce them. In fact, as stated earlier, crime rates increased during this time (Valle-Jones, 2011; Vivanco, 2010). A scant reference made by one of my informants, Lucia a middle-class resident, clarifies the extent of these 'nuisances' and their impact on public perceptions of the insecurity of the city:

No difference was noticed with their presence. You saw them patrolling and felt your freedom reduced where check points occurred. You weren't free any more. When the police arrived, in this place we are talking now was guarded by federal troops. All around here was

full of the army's and the police's vehicles. You could hear shootings every day and everywhere so nothing really changed (My translation).

With the deployment of the federal forces in the city, operations then followed a well-known script. Kyle's (2015: 41) account describes what happens when federal forces set up in a city,

When state and federal police and military forces relieve municipal police there follows a familiar pattern. First, the outside forces arrive in a municipal cabecera (sic) where they create an immediate logistics crisis. They are generally housed in hotels, municipal auditoriums, or anywhere adequate space can be found. Their vehicles and equipment are positioned as close to their lodgings as possible, at a nearby airport, soccer field, or other suitable location. Everything about the deployment is conspicuously temporary. While deployed, the forces will generally maintain roadblocks on major highways and checkpoints in urban neighbourhoods. In some cases, they run patrols on secondary roads (...) but these do not occur with sufficient frequency to have discernible effect. Wherever they go, they travel in large, heavily armed convoys.

The deployment of the federal forces in Tijuana was shaped by the discourse that the upturn in violence reflected a battle over turf by competing cartels. Accordingly, both the narrative of the northern border region as a dangerous territory, and the conceptual space of *la plaza* were blended to produce a configurational system that sought to police Tijuana by divorcing it from its historical, geographical and topographic specificity (Feldman; 1991).¹⁵⁰ In doing, so, Tijuana became a template for future operations.

The oral stories of a group of federal cops stationed in Tijuana and other locations along the northern border during this period, provide important details about the specifics of the deployment and the geographical imagination orientating their behaviour. Linked to the government's idea of the partition of the territory into *plazas*, the basic feature of this imagination is the revisualization of the northern border as singular surface, identical in each of its points. Accordingly, every local specificity was blended and subsumed within a

¹⁵⁰ I.e. as a mode through which history and space are explained enabling forms of normative and practical intervention, separation and classification.

categorical order whose main attribute is the assimilation of every northern border city into a continuum of threatening locations without distinct identities. When describing their tasks, motivations, and purposes, security forces erased local geographies to produce a generic space they must supervise and clean.

Yet the production of a generic policing space was not a-priori. It was an empirical finding produced through the daily patrolling of these cities: the specific locations were not themselves important as every single border city was “cut from the same cloth” (in Spanish one police officer said *cortadas con la misma tijera*). According to the federal police officers I interviewed, these cities were very similar, even sharing “(...) streets and neighbourhoods’ names’ (my translation). Danger was thus reproduced through the perception of the police that similar urban patterns shaped each border city in the North. From their perspective, and that of their companions in the police, all the cities they had been deployed to belonged to the same class: ‘the ugly as fuck northern border cities’. The northern border itself was a subset of a geographically more distant model: Mexico City. In this regard, urban danger was seen as an attribute of a specific urban configuration that follows the model of the country’s capital, regarding both its urban layout, demographic size, and forms of insecurity. Within this model outlined in the federal police officers’ interviews, the Northern border embodied an extreme manifestation. This led those I interviewed to recast places and subjects as unruly, and eliminate any form of dissonance to their work.

In different conversations Ruben, stationed in Tijuana during different periods of his policing career explained the links between urban space, violence and the northern border:

All the borders are the same, Tijuana, Chihuahua all are the same shit. From their psychology and form to their crime levels. All are Machiavellian cities. There the narco has control of everything. It is the same people, same way of talking, same places and delinquents. Being in Chihuahua is like being in Tijuana. When you go to Nuevo Laredo (Tamaulipas), the most dangerous neighbourhood is La Morelos, like in Mexico City... so you can find the same shitty neighbourhoods here and there.¹⁵¹ The borders (he means the border cities) are the same. These states are the most dangerous, Tijuana,

¹⁵¹ In Mexico City there is indeed a well-known and dangerous neighbourhood called “Morelos”, a place central to the organization of the national imaginaries on crime and violence. The interview took place in Mexico City.

Torreón, Chihuahua and Tamaulipas.¹⁵² In these states the problem is never going to end due to the money involved; every possible illegal activity linked to the border is there: human trafficking, drugs, etc.

They are never going to be in peace. When there's peace, maybe there won't be daily shootings anymore and just one cartel will reign, but if they start to fight again everything will turn bad again (My translation).

As discussed in the chapter 6, its implementation was built on a series of inaccurate assumptions about the nature, distribution and characteristics of organized crime in the country. The conceptual work of the police in Tijuana clearly filled those gaps by assuming that there was an absolute identity for all cities along the northern border. Thus, the homogenization of the northern border and the dissolution of the geographical specificities of Tijuana speak to a more general lack of planning, police knowledge of the city, and training. This was confirmed by Ruben with his observation that:

The federal police were assembled six months before Calderon declared the war and los narcos said 'ok come here and let's see how it goes. And then the chaos began. They knew [the drug traffickers] that the police weren't prepared, that the police were literally bricklayers, cannon fodder. And they [the police] for sure didn't know anything about weapons, discipline or organization; but if you send 100 bastards against ten, of course we win! The federal police is like a copy of the army, let's say in its mid to upper levels, but in its lower echelons anybody can join. The government surely thought 'I don't give a fuck, to me it's the same whomever may fall, one or twenty, they're bricklayers or bakers anyway'. We aren't well equipped, you have to buy your own weapon, radios, and night vision goggles if you want something that works. You have your service weapon but they are old and it is necessary to have a good gear because 'there' in the border is pretty fucked up (My translation).

Similar to previous references to the geography of the city, the relation of facts concerning the recruitment of the rank and file of the federal police distort dates and events;

¹⁵² Tijuana and Torreón are cities and just the first one is situated in the northern border. The latter are states.

for example, the federal police were originally organized in 1997. Yet the statement reveals the distance that federal police officers felt between those who were making decisions and the boots on the ground, mirroring the distance presented between themselves and the disorder they were tasked with policing.

The simplification of the topographical and geographical traits of Tijuana compensated for the lack of training, equipment, doctrinal guidelines, and previous knowledge of the locations to be policed by providing federal agents with the impression that they *knew* the spaces they would be tasked with policing. The confusion and disorganization said to characterize central command were mitigated by a self-confidence that agents possessed the ability to discern real threats, i.e. how dangerous cities and their residents appeared, spoke and behaved. This imposed particular identities on border cities and those who lived within them. Mexico City, itself an unfamiliar place for most federal officers who were born and raised in southern and rural-like locations, became a reference point for understanding border cities like Tijuana. Yet, Tijuana's size, demographic dynamics, and topographic features are quite different from those of Mexico City. Yet, prior urban policing experiences became structures used to impose an artificial and alien order upon Tijuana. Thus, the pre-established geography of the WoD reproduced particular kinds of territorial classifications,

H. How did you zone the city?

Ruben. It was dependent on the severity of the problem. We arrived and made a quick survey on the state of the neighbourhoods to rule out those which [did not] deserve attention. In certain neighbourhoods you picked up to 20 bodies, so then you focused on the dodgiest and most dangerous zones. We went where the drug-related murders had taken place. We weren't interested in the preliminary enquires already carried out by the local police. It wasn't my job to see if there were preliminary enquiries on car theft; that was the state judicial police's business. We were to do drug-related crime intelligence work. There wasn't intelligence work before we arrived but when we came we started to prioritize it (My translation).

The construction of zones described by Ruben replaced Tijuana's complex, dense, and chaotic geography with a flat surface peppered with drug-trafficking spots and deadly

locations. Identified through on-the-ground intelligence gathered from impromptu patrolling of the city and supported by the perception that Tijuana was one of the ‘ugly as fuck northern border cities’, drug and murder hot-zones functioned as empirical confirmations of both the city’s dangerous status and the series of representations underpinning this status. This relieved federal police like Ruben from engaging with the complex history of Tijuana and its local illegal arrangements. This homogenization of northern border cities achieved through the reproduction of the Mexican WoD discourse served as a ‘noise cancelling’ mechanism, eliminating doubt and dissonance that can be caused by an initial lack of geographically specific knowledge. It reassured the federal forces by providing a consistent framework to guide their actions. Conceptualising the city as a dangerous place authorized a series of abusive behaviours under the excuse of being essential for effective policing. In turn, these understandings also functioned as cartographic practices, helped to produce clear boundaries between the federal forces and those individuals under their supervision. The end result of this division was to reinforce the status of the population as dangerous. For residents, this transferred the uncertainty produced by criminal violence onto the federal policing of the city, creating new vulnerabilities because all residents were perceived by the policing apparatus as potential criminals.

8.5.1 *Cleaning the City: Purifying the Police*

Contempt for the city and its residents felt by police introduced a third element defining the federal intervention in the city: the idea that Tijuana and its municipal police needed to be purified to diminish levels of violence. The desire for purification was essential for the implementation of the mixed security arrangements that were dependent on the subordination of the civilian forces to the military apparatus. The purification of the municipal police was held as a central component of the strategy, by arguing it was collusion between the local police and organized crime that fostered drug trafficking (Rios, 2012; Kyle, 2015).

In January 5th, three days after Operation Tijuana began, 2 200 members of the municipal police were disarmed with their guns sent to the II Military Region in Mexicali for ballistic testing. The purpose was to determine if police weapons, and police themselves, could be linked to previously committed crimes. In 2008 500 municipal police were replaced by federal police agents and army troops. Alongside this, the federal police also took over the patrolling of the city. As a part of the same strategy, Julián Leyzaola a lieutenant colonel on leave from the army, who once described himself as someone who “can be as good as they want, and as bad as is needed” was appointed as director of the municipal police (González,

2012). The efforts to purify the municipal police did not rely on any sophisticated assessment of its shortcomings or definitive proof of its involvement in criminal activities. Rather the efforts became possible by separating municipal police from federal police through public stigmatization and deprecation. As a result, municipal police were temporarily relieved from their duties and provisionally arrested without being formally charged. Some were even tortured by military personnel (Gómez, 2009). After the investigations were carried out, 600 municipal police officers were fired, a quarter of the whole force, because the local government had ‘lost faith in the officers’. Of these 600, 48 were arrested for alleged ties to organized crime (Millán, 2013: 353). It should be noticed that ‘losing faith’ is not a criminal offence within the Mexican criminal code and alleged ties do not amount to a demonstration of a criminal offense.

Chris Kyle (2015) observed that in the context of increasing violence and ferocious competition for illegal resources that characterize the drug trafficking business, the local cop is the weakest link within the policing command structure. Underpaid, poorly trained, and under-armed, Mexican municipal police have been, as general rule, overmatched by organized crime. Preceded by the ideological impetus that showcased the WoD as an operation of political purification at the national level, the decontamination of municipal police forces sanctioned the deployment of federal forces by publicly questioning the legitimacy of the local legal order. Supplemented with heavy-handed measures, spectacular exhibitions of force, and grandiose anti-crime rhetoric, this strategy successfully placed the federal security apparatus as the forefront of the WoD. In the case of Tijuana, the purge of municipal police between 2007 and 2010 was correlated with an increase in crime rates. This is perhaps the strongest evidence that the municipal police, or their absence, had little bearing on criminal activity in the city (Kyle, 2015)

A major consequence of Tijuana’s conceptual positioning as a dangerous place without remedy was the production of its residents as inherently suspicious:

H. So, what does cleaning Tijuana imply?

Pedro. It means cleaning everything, from top to bottom. From the guy that is selling in the corner to those fellas who are selling it to this guy. This guy is going to take us to them if we get him talking. We were cleaning Tijuana for three years. All the police were sell-outs. They didn’t let us work, so that’s why we needed to get rid of them...

It is as they say (he means the municipal police officers) ‘we live here, what do we do? Our family is here, if we disagree they abduct (*levantan*) our children and kill us. They don’t care [the narcotraffickers]; at least if you join them they give you some money, that’s cheaper for us’. So that’s why when we go out to patrol, a municipal [cop] is always behind us. We had to stop and we’re like ‘what the hell, why are you following me, your zone is over there, we are already three zones away from yours’. So, the main obstacle were the municipal police. When we are going to clean, we take all we’ve got and begin purifying the municipal police.

So, when we could finally catch someone, we jailed them for two or three months. To get them talking on who was selling it we told them ‘look, we don’t give a fuck about you, every day 50 corpses appear on the streets, so 51 wouldn’t make any big difference, wouldn’t it? Just in this way it was possible to clean (...) (My translation).

The vilification of the local order provided additional ideological fuel for operation Tijuana. Purification was thus simultaneously a reenactment of the moral order of the WoD at a local level and a form of visualizing the space of city as completely compromised by the drug trafficking business. It was also in line with federal government intentions to provide new powers to detain suspects, including a judicial reform to grant the special prosecutor with extraordinary authority. Presented in 2007 to the Mexican Congress, the Presidency proposed to give constitutional status to precautionary detention, as well as to authorize the Office of the Public Prosecutor to carry out searches, arrests, and telephone tapings without judicial warrant (Astorga, 2015; Avilés, 2007).

In taking the moral and political assumptions underpinning the WoD and then applying them for the purposes of locating sources of threat within specific spaces to the point where threats and spaces became undifferentiated, police purges contributed to the reterritorialization of urban spaces as crime-prone formations. By arguing that Tijuana was irrevocably contaminated with corruption, federal agencies excused themselves from needing to follow due process in the city. The characterization of Tijuana as congenitally prone to criminal activity enabled claims for extraordinary uses of power to be accepted as legitimate by the Mexican public, even as this exposed city residents to gross abuses at the hands of the police. As Victor Clark, a local human rights activist, put it “the heavy-handed strategy of the

federals came with a cost, and that cost is that it did not make distinction between criminals and non-criminals” (fieldwork notes). Some of my informants and human rights officials believe the abusive behaviour of the security forces was part of a concerted strategy between the authorities and the business community (Molloy, 2013). Concerned by the reputation of the city amongst foreign visitors, mainly from the United States, and the intensification of abductions, they believe the business community was willing to overlook police abuses in the re-establishment of an order.

8.5.2 *Cleaning the City: Fishing in Tijuana*

As described earlier, the federal intervention in Tijuana was shaped by a set of representations of its residents based on a broader geographical understanding of northern border cities that drew upon the government’s anti-crime rhetoric, and characterisation of the border as an unruly space. With the urban space of Tijuana being perceived as ungoverned, one consequence, discussed above, was the imposition of generic zones onto the city in order to impose a spatial order that would aid policing efforts. In tandem with zoning, the second consequence was a desire to purify, or clean, both the police and urban spaces, through forms of threat identification that then shaped practices of patrolling. This type of policing, according to Roberto, was called ‘fishing’. As the name implies, fishing was shaped by the self-representation of the police officers as implementers of a mandate that permitted them to seek out criminal activity, and catch criminals via counter-insurgency style operations that were condoned but not officially authorized. In this context, Juan offers important insights on the configuration of this *ad hoc* ‘system’ of patrolling, its structuring ideas and practices, as well as its consequences,

J. When we got into the police many of us did so with the idea of becoming a sort of Rambo, especially if like many of us there, you were a baker before. What we wanted was to get into it and bang! Beating up some asses! That’s what we wanted, so the guys began to work by themselves, no instructions, no guidance, just doing what they thought was correct. Our jurisdiction authorized us to do so, so among us no one questioned if we could do things, we just did them. We didn’t have the problem of the municipal police. If they (the municipal police) try to do something, they (the drug traffickers) are going to identify them and retaliate against their families. We didn’t give a fuck, we weren’t from those places so what we did was to stir

up the hornets' nest and fuck them.

People complained about us, but we were 3000 bastards and we were going to feed them, if you want to put it that way. Being there, we got into bars and there you go, 100 dudes having drinks. No, we didn't have just one beer, there were 100 of us drinking in this place and you should keep this in mind. So the economic benefits for the population were important too, they were huge. It created jobs, hotels were full (...)

Initially when getting to a new place like Tijuana everybody distrusts us and I don't blame them, but we should do our job anyway. When patrolling the city, we are in no less than five vehicles, and we never stop at the traffic lights. At some point, randomly, we stop in any avenue or main road and set up a check point. The aim is catching someone doing something wrong.

H: does it work?

J: Not always, but it also helps to let them know we are now in the city and the criminals need to be careful and restrained.... To make the check points work we needed to move every 30 minutes. If you [caught a] fish...that is alright, if you didn't [catch a] fish, cool we moved to a different point. We stopped at some random point, no warnings, then stopped the traffic and made a line. We counted 20 cars from where we were, and we started to check them. You might find something, a weapon, a stolen vehicle, if any [weapons] we took it and got going

Me: And how do you know who is who? I mean, who is a criminal?

J: You can't tell, I mean anyone can be one... Anyone, we go around the city looking for holes or breaches. There is where the malandros are for sure. We get into the sewer and take these fellas out. Are you in Tijuana? These guys are in la linea [he means the canalization of river Tijuana] (...) we interrogated them asking them who were selling drugs. We offered them money to get the names of the dealers.

Sometimes we flew off the handle especially with la boliviana.

H: What is la boliviana?

J: We...put a towel over their faces, and then pour water over it. It asphyxiates them, so if they don't talk, it is because they don't really know anything (My translation).

Behaving as an occupying force, the practical imposition of a prior geographical knowledge by the federal police to understand Tijuana combined its alienation from the community and feelings of mutual distrust to make patrols into potential opportunities for rampant abuse. In representing themselves as external saviours and super-soldiers, 'Rambos' who would find criminals wherever they might hide, federal agents like Juan seek to legitimize their tactics whether these be random check points, or random torture. While the practice of 'fishing' suggests the inefficient and disorganized nature of the operation, it also reveals a more functional purpose: these patrols helped to further demarcate the city, increasing its amenability to command and control by federal forces.

The imposition of the spatial order of the federal government onto the city was achieved by adjusting and inscribing the bodies of citizens (through their abuse) into the circuit of representations that made Operation Tijuana possible. As Das (2007: 169) has observed, police practices, especially petty acts of abuse, articulate the forms through which the state is inscribed into the very functioning of the everyday by evocating its presence, even if these acts deny the law that has engenders them. Mistreating the residents of Tijuana functions as a confirmation of the subordinated position they occupy in relation to the police, as well as the status of the city as conflictive and threatening. Moreover, it affirms the power of the police in a context of permanent uncertainty. Thus Tijuana was made governable in the eyes of federal officials through the official design of the operation, on-the-ground improvisations orchestrated by teams like Juan's, and the imposition of a prior geographical knowledge about how border cities were organized.

However, fishing was not always a risk-free operation. Federal police still lacked appropriate gear and could encounter the unexpected in a wider environment of ceaseless uncertainty. Their vulnerability both reduced the federal police's ability to navigate and shape the urban space of Tijuana and increased the tendency to act abusively:

J. I always provided my team with radio equipment, because as I

mentioned, we needed to be well equipped. I told my team if we don't look after each other no one else is going to do it. If a Black Hawk was to be sent from here (Mexico City) to there (Tijuana), it is not going get there in 60 minutes. We had good radios but we bought them. All of us were equal. If the driver is shot we are pretty much fucked because at least three at the top of the truck will die instantly. The driver and the commander are these fellas' (the criminals) main targets. We don't have a way to protect ourselves anyway, just with our bulletproof vest, but there's no other way. It's like an adrenaline rush when you got to one of these states; you feel it immediately, the atmosphere, the neighbourhoods. It is like 'shit this is going to be bad!'

H. How did you feel it? How did you notice it was dangerous?

J. It's like when you get to a neighbourhood and see a group of dudes standing there, in a corner and get this bad vibe. In a neighbourhood like the Aztecs', everyone is tattooed and when we came in, the first thing you think is these guys are fucking crazy. Our way to prevent [getting hurt] was to avoid having the trucks get separated and hit the road, if someone had a hunch and said, 'I'm having this bad feeling', we said fuck it, let's get the fuck out of here and went away. It was always like this, because there were occasions in which someone said, 'I'm feeling something is fucked up' and three [police] die. So, we didn't go in, took another direction and later, during the night we came back with more of us, 9 to 10 trucks. In the mornings, we chose randomly a neighbourhood and analysed it. Later after dinner, like after 5 PM, we organized ourselves and distributed the streets among the different teams, 'you take this, and you that'. Then we 'hit' every-single-thing that stuck its nose out; everything. We chipped in to buy night [vision] goggles because although the police had them they didn't give us shit, so we had to get them by ourselves. So, we 'hit' everything trying to remain as close as possible to one another to *respond quickly to* anything suspicious. As these guys try to block you [in], and the streets are full of falcons listening to music, we always

were alert (My translation).¹⁵³

Juan's description of his experience patrolling Tijuana replicates the themes already articulated by other officials, such as prolonged confusion, uncertainty, and the excessive use of force as constant feature of their job. His reference to the Aztecs' neighbourhood is interesting as the area is actually situated in Ciudad Juarez, but he in his account relocates it to Tijuana. This once again illustrates the imposition of a prior geographical knowledge produced through the WoD onto Tijuana: that every northern city was essentially a part of a single surface, a geographical continuum of violence, disorder, and drugs with no meaningful differences.

Within this geographical imagination, Juan's usage of the Spanish verb 'pegar' –hit-, exemplifies the correlation between uncertainty, abuse, and the institutional structure within which police practices are inscribed. Hit, as Juan uses it, signifies a wide range of actions, from detaining, arresting, or investigating anything that seems suspicious, to extorting, torturing, or shooting. These actions were carried out interchangeably as he himself suggested, because there was wide scope to do whatever was deemed necessary to secure a given place from criminal influence.

Individuals and places could, and should, be 'hit' because they could not be dealt otherwise given the ambivalence of the terrain and the uncertainty it produced. In turn as ongoing uncertainty produced anxiety in federal police units, erratic policing became a deliberate strategy to reduce the potential risks brought on by a lack of specific knowledge about the areas they were asked to patrol. Thus, while Operation Tijuana successfully partitioned the city into zones that made policing possible, it also reiterated the ambiguity and insecurity of the city in two intertwined ways. Firstly, through the discrepancies between representations and actual spaces and individuals, and then through the constant abuses that confirmed, every time they were committed, that these were criminogenic in nature.

Federal patrolling prolonged the subordinated status of residents and made them vulnerable to violence in two ways. The first was through the imposition of a criminal ordering of the city and the second was through the federal occupation. As a result, the collective impression of the time is of unfathomable abandonment, pessimism, and fear:

A. Such was the extent of the conflict that we didn't trust the police.

¹⁵³ Falcon is the name given to lookouts and street level informants who work for the drug cartels and warn them about intruders.

In my case one day they wanted me to pull over, all the police were wearing masks being afraid of someone recognizing them but the weight of the insecurity was upon us. I was two blocks away from a police precinct, sped up, got out of the car and got into the precinct because I didn't know them, I didn't identify them and they didn't explain why you were pulled over. You simply passed in front of them and they arrested you for no reason. It was hard. I got out of my car running and got into the precinct and they ran behind me. They said to the judge that I had run away. The judge asked them to identify themselves but they didn't do it.

H. Were they federal police officers?

A. Man, you couldn't know. In a patrol car, it could be federal cops, municipal police, or soldiers. You didn't know whom to turn to for help (My translation).

This episode describes in full the effects of the interaction between civilians and state agents in Tijuana. Afraid of the violence he knows he could suffer, Alfonso ran away to escape the prospect of arrest and interrogation, which in the context of Tijuana was likely to lead to great harm, if not death. In the context of Operation Tijuana and the years preceding it, he learnt that such outcomes were possible as they had happened hundreds of times before. Although he was innocent, he behaved as though he was guilty by running away. Now every time Alfonso sees a police officer, he stays away and tries to remain under the radar. Afraid of attracting any attention, Alfonso's story personifies the need of the average Tijuana citizen to go unnoticed to avoid being harmed. Criminalized and victimized, residents do not protest and prefer to stay at home. Given the circumstances, this seems like a reasonable thing to do.

8.6 The Restoration of the Order of the City...The Return of Violence

In Tijuana 231 people have been violently (sic) murdered in the first 103 days of 2016... The most dangerous zones of the city are the boroughs (delegaciones) Sánchez Taboada, San Antonio de los Buenos, Playas and, Zona Centro. The municipal police have only captured a small percentage of suspects, and the Attorney General's Office does not prosecute the chiefs of the criminal cells [who are the] instigators of the homicides. The second generation of the Arellano's

family gets around the city trying to rearm the group that the Arellano brothers commanded... The Youngest of the Arellanos order the killings of the Sinaloa's Cartel members and their own group's members when they consider them disposable or traitors. The same practice is exerted on those who in Baja California move drugs on behalf of the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación, allied with the Arellano's Cartel. They have even recruited members of Sinaloa's Cartel to the point that they are killing each other for territorial control. Such is the situation and the federal, state, and municipal authorities have just arrested some direct perpetrators of the murders, while the leaders have kept tolerating, ordering, or allowing murders (ZETA, 2016) (My translation).

From 2007 to 2010 Tijuana experienced a fierce battle over the control of the city between the remaining of the Arellano Félix's Cartel, that had split at that point, and the Sinaloa Cartel, that aimed to take over la plaza. The dispute ended in 2011 when Sinaloa's Cartel took over the city through Alfonso García Arzata aka 'El Aquiles', who kept the control over the criminal activities in the city by controlling the activities of smallest criminal gangs. Even if it sounds harsh, one of the conditions that kept the criminal rate down in Tijuana was the Sinaloa Cartel, which was interested in the pacification of the city to keep away the city's authorities from its activities. Its monopoly got broken when a Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación's cell allied with the remaining of the Arellano Felix' Cartel to challenge Sinaloa's control. In other words, the increasing homicide rate in Tijuana is a product from the dispute between the two main criminal organizations of the country (Sánchez, 2017) (My translation)

In this section, the analysis of the pacification of Tijuana and the geographical imaginations underpinning it, concludes with a discussion of the territorialization of the city under the guidelines of the WoD. In observing its lasting consequences for the re-configuration of the city's space and the way it is used, I claim that the WoD has fundamentally changed the way individuals and places perform and are identified. In

changing the way the city and its residents are visualized and understood, the WoD produced lasting changes for how Tijuana’s residents are governed by making them potential criminal subjects.

The federal intervention to control Tijuana concluded discreetly and with no official notice. A symbolic indication of the end of the operation was the resignation of Julian Leyzaola as director of Tijuana’s police, who, a few months later, became director of Ciudad Juárez municipal police (Alvarado, 2015). Characterized by the government’s officials as a model to be imitated in other locations, the crime rate in the city fell by 70% (Noticieros Televisa, 2011; Vivanco, 2010). The success was temporary though. By 2013 the homicide rate returned to the levels preceding the occupation of the city (see table 1), and in 2017, 845 homicides were recorded from January to July, the same number as in 2008, one of the worst years in the history of Tijuana. Moreover, as discussed earlier the main feature of the operation was the abuse of the city’s residents. Different NGOs have found ‘credible allegations’ of the participation of the security forces in arbitrary detentions and torture to obtain false confessions in at least 100 cases (Alvarado, 2015; Vivanco, 2010).¹⁵⁴

2006:	2007:	2008:	2009:	2010:	2011:	2012:	2013:	2014:	2015:	2016:	2017
314	337	844	557	688	418	332	492	462	612	726	(Jan-Jul-) 845

Table 1 Number of homicides in Tijuana 2006-2015 Source: Noticias.Ya, (2016); Sánchez, (2017)

Two theses have been forwarded to explain the temporary success of the operation. The first one, promoted by the federal government, states that the concerted efforts of law enforcement agencies, i.e., the collaboration between the municipal police, state security forces, and federal commanders precipitated the fall (Dibble, 2010; Shirk, 2014). The second, disputes the validity of the former and argues that the fall stemmed from a negotiation among drug traffickers themselves to institute a durable peace, reduce the most visible aspects of the violence, and reestablish order in the city. Within this thesis, the impact of the authorities is perceived to be entirely dependent on the will of the drug traffickers. Widely shared amongst the general population, it gained similar traction among pundits and media commentators (Sánchez, 2017; Shirk, 2014; ZETA, 2016). Ulises, who has lived in Tijuana since 1985 and works for a Human Rights NGO, explains:

¹⁵⁴ During Felipe Calderon’s term the Army alone got 7, 299 human rights related complaints (Mendoza A. , 2016).

People of Tijuana wanted the army to intervene. As crime rose and insecurity increased, people demanded strong measures to deal with it. That is why someone like Leyzaola was welcomed. Here [Tijuana] we needed to recover security. At the root of the violence, from murders to kidnaps, it was the traditional cartel of Tijuana against the Cartel of Sinaloa; we had 1,200 dead in a year, high impact murders, with 6 hour long shootings as happened in la Cupula, or in some other cases up to 9 hours. From it came Operation Tijuana and the army patrolling with the navy and the Federal Police. Eventually when things settled down, la plaza was divided between both cartels. From the 5 y 10 towards the east, Sinaloa's cartel controls everything, and from the 5 y 10 in this direction -towards the west, [where the interview took place] - Tijuana's cartel has kept control so far. Now it seems that a new cartel, they say it is the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (Cartel Jalisco New Generation) that is agitating for control of la plaza now, so the murders have to do with this (My translation).

Ulises' reflection on the recent history of Tijuana, describes the basic spatial components of the transparent logic violence followed in Tijuana. Told in the context of a renewed collective fear over the proliferation of violence, and a return to the years preceding the federal occupation, his story has two functions. Firstly, it clarifies to a non-resident the reasons for the current outbreak of violence. Secondly, it describes the partition of the urban space that followed its occupation by criminal and federal forces. A stable divide that replicates the already examined imagined segmentation of Tijuana's territory, this is one of the more durable effects of the WoD upon the socio-political representation of the spatial organization of Tijuana.

Accordingly, Ulises's recollections spell out the hidden order behind the restoration and recovery of Tijuana.¹⁵⁵ Even for Juan, one of the police that I interviewed, who had no personal connections in the city, the existence of this order was obvious. To confirm this assumption, after one of our non-recorded talks, Juan gave me a book, 'El Cártel Incómodo' (The Inconvenient Cartel) from José Reveles, that he had "found very useful" to understand

¹⁵⁵ It is considered hidden as it has not been overtly recognized by the government officials, and consequently remains as one of those truths that speak of what is really occurring within the city and the country, explaining the 'real' functioning of the facts and refuting the official knowledge.

what was going on. An account of pacts between cartel chieftains and authorities at the national level, the book is a collection of clichés, anecdotal evidence, and rumors that provides a narrative on the underlying and unspeakable reasons for the WoD. The book, as a gift, makes a good point regarding the credibility of pacts between criminals and authorities and their role in the recodification of the order of Tijuana. A genuine gesture, with the book Juan seemed to tell me that no matter how much he could tell me of his own experiences, the truth was not in his own words, but in the discourse articulated in the book. Thus, if there was a fundamental explanation for the mess on the ground, a basic and primordial logic governing the chaos and violence, it was pacts amongst cartels and with the authorities.

In explaining the dislocation of the order as a by-product of the inter-cartel battles over *la plaza* and its rehabilitation as an effect of a new pact amongst the battling cartels, such an interpretation reproduces the ideological mainstays of the state's discourse on the WoD. Namely, it reproduces the formulation of the collective disorder as a product of an original transgression performed by the drug cartels, and that posits that the passage out of this disorder can only be a pact that concerns both authorities and criminals. Even though the idea of a pact challenges the moral basis of the WoD as a purification ritual to rescue the legal (and moral) order of the country, the reconstitution of the order of the city derives its existence from a reading of the state as a key stakeholder in this achievement. Thus, in contrast with the initial disorganization and confusion the residents referred to as fundamental feature of the period, Ulises's point of view expresses the renewed collectively-held confidence on the possibility to make sense of the events. More importantly, it has a tangible and visible spatial manifestation: the separation of the city into two discernible sections (or *plazas*). The effects this separation has in the representation of the city, already examined in the previous chapter, are central to understanding the classification of its residents, the codification of the downtown as a protected space, and authorized behaviors within the urban space (i.e. displays of disciplined labor with no room for beggars, deportees or excessive exhibitions of violence). This division, a demonstration of the power of the pact, stabilized both the geographic origin (Sinaloa), and current residency of the potential sources of criminal disorder (i.e., the east of Tijuana). In the context of its enunciation, i.e. 2015, it also explained the recent outbreak of violence as crack in the pact effected by a rival cartel.

In this regard, the WoD has had paradoxical results: on the one hand, as the federal government's modes of legibility were imposed over the city and violence decreased after 2010, the symbolic order of the city was restored and state control of the city was affirmed. Ulises' story exemplifies this. On the other hand, the inscription of the logic of the everyday criminal into the space of the city, the idea of a pact between cartels, and the broad suspicion

about collaboration between state agents and drug cartels reaffirmed the lack of confidence among the population in the security apparatus. It has made the pacification of the city into a never-ending endeavor. While successfully imposing the idea of a battle over turf which allowed the circulation of the state's forces, the state failed to present itself as a credible impediment to criminality. In addition, it has inscribed a permanent and pervasive sense of vulnerability, fear, and distrust among the residents of Tijuana that has alienated them from the outsiders, their neighbors, and the city itself:

Rosaura. They destroyed the city, just like what happened in Ciudad Juárez; people came here and found jobs, but not anymore. Now you should be careful with the people that come from outside. When you go to Mexicali people tell you 'c'mon, let's have a beer', here in Tijuana it was like that. Now if you're a stranger what you say is 'I'm not going to invite you to my house, you're a stranger', or what do you do? We'd rather stay out of this because you don't know who that person is, we're traumatized. Now we ask all the questions: who are you? What do you do for a living? We had the chance to leave for the United States but why should we leave and suffer in a different country, running away from these people? But it's not anymore from the criminals but the authorities themselves who are supposedly those who should look after you. Now you should you got to watch out for them (My translation).

It has also had a series of immediate and tangible repercussions. As the local newspaper ZETA (2016), Sánchez (2017) and Rosaura suggest, the sense of insecurity has not decreased amongst the population. In overall terms, the distrust of state forces and their ineffectiveness has led to a proliferation of homicides and in response, practices of individual self-confinement with fatal consequences for the public life of the city. Finally, it has fueled a cycle of state violence enabled by a lack of civilian checks upon the state's armed forces, and ongoing political demands for firmer and stronger state interventions to solve ongoing insecurity challenges. As mentioned earlier, a Tijuana newspaper in 2015 (Frontera.info, 2015) published a poll asking its readers if they wanted the army to patrol the city again (see Fig. 16). Even if the results were not published, this indicates a widely-shared disposition among the public towards the acceptance of greater restrictions on their personnel freedoms to get a minimal and, as previously demonstrated, very brief sense of order and security. Thus,

broadly speaking Operation Tijuana encapsulates key tensions and contradictions traversing the Mexican WoD and its implementation in urban and rural locations alike across the country.

Figure 16: Local Poll



Source: Frontera.info, 2015

8.7 Conclusions

In Tijuana the deployment of the federal security agencies were preceded by the expansion of violence against the population during the first half of the 2000s. Government officials explained that the increase in violence in Tijuana was a direct consequence of the war between two different cartels. An invasion from the Sinaloa cartel resulted in a war with the local cartel, *El Cartel de Tijuana*, for control of *la plaza*. In drawing upon the testimonies of residents and federal police personnel I argued in this chapter that in contrast with official and academic claims that the identity of the perpetrators of violence was clear, for residents, these identities were uncertain. Thus, the conflict for the control of *la plaza* did not have clear divisions between those engaged in the drug trade who were the target of violence and residents who became collateral damage as state officials claimed. Moreover, the violence

erased existing spatial distinctions between parts of the city. People were murdered in the east and in the west, during the night, and in broad daylight indiscriminately. These crimes targeted not only the periphery but the central city, and victimization did not depend on race or social class. Everyone, rich, poor, white and non-white were victimized. The dearth of individuals indicted for these crimes only increased speculation on the underlying reasons for the violence. In retrospect, the visual indications of the spreading violence had one unifying quality: public displays of the dead. As real as they were, these homicides could not however confirm the existence of a centralized rationality organizing the violence. This led to residents becoming fearful of everyone.

The violence started in the streets and avenues as daylight shootings, executions, and the exhibition of mutilated corpses. This was followed by a wave of abductions and extortions that transposed the violence from public spaces to the household and private businesses. In this context, the distinctions drawn by the state script and the urban history of Tijuana, which divided the city amongst criminogenic, safe, and leisure spaces collapsed under the growing disorder. I argued that the collapse of the security of the household and the growing indistinction between the crimes of the cartels and the state refigured Tijuana as a borderless public space which amplified the vulnerability its residents. I proposed this power could be read as part of a reconfiguration of some elements of the policing apparatus into predatory formations. In this moment, as one of my informants suggested, Tijuana stopped existing as it was previously known and became the terrain for a conflict between authorities that behaved like criminals and criminals that acted like the state. A reflection of the insecurity crisis, I detailed the general disruption to everyday life and the breakdown of the local social order. Such was the extent of the disruption that a single phrase captures the period: 'Tijuana was a disaster'. Within this (dis)order, Tijuana's inhabitants reorganized their readings of the urban risks and insecurities that alternatively challenged or conformed with the moral distinctions set by the government's logic of the everywhere criminal. Positioned in a state of permanent vulnerability, people opted to confine themselves, avoid public spaces, or leave the area. Fear began to regulate the day-to-day conduct of Tijuana's residents. In this context, the interpretation of the rationale for criminal violence expressed a generalized confusion about who was responsible for the violence as its proliferation made untenable the distinction between organized crime and the state. Thus the move to militarize policing was greeted with support.

The security forces' intervention in Tijuana relied on the representation, of both the space of the city, and its residents as dangerous along the lines defined by the logic of the everywhere criminal and the national battle over *la plaza*. Building upon representations that the northern border has in the imagined geographies of drug trafficking, including its main cities, the federal police officers mapped onto Tijuana a series of pre-existing understandings (based on other locations) that allowed them to manoeuvre within it. Accordingly, the narrative of the everywhere enemy and the purification of city's space allowed for state abuses and indiscriminate use of force. In this regard, Operation Tijuana re-categorized the space of the city through both, the imaginary geographies of the law enforcers and their actual distribution throughout the city.

Federal police patrolling constructed the city as a place of risk. Shorn of its geographical specificity, Tijuana was displayed as an unruly space and a site for the exertion and distribution of force. In so doing it produced the spaces of violence and law that made possible the patrolling of the city and the abuse upon its residents. Consequently, the grafting of the federal geography of insecurity into the spaces of everyday life in Tijuana reinforced the pre-existing vulnerability of its inhabitants by identifying them as potential criminals. It led to the intimidation of residents by federal security agents working in officially condoned and unofficially condoned capacities. However, it was by no means an unequivocally effective intervention, even on its own terms. Its inherent arbitrariness in practice combined with the poor state of the police's own training and equipment to increase the uncertainty that police faced. This led to uneven, if not unsystematic, policing methods. Thus, the violence that they intended to govern over was constituted by, and constitutive of, the federal occupation of the city.

Despite the reduction of the crime rates at end of the formal intervention, the WoD decisively affected the residents' understanding of the geographical distribution of risks within the city, as well as the identification of threatening populations. Alongside it, the WoD in the city allowed the Mexican government to extend its authority in an unchecked fashion, legitimizing its way to see and police the city. In this regard, key narrative tropes about the city are shared by all the users of Tijuana's space, such as the uncertainty on the identity of the criminals, the existence of the battle over turf, and the threatening nature of urban space. Both security forces and residents acknowledge that the state's script does not hold up, but in following it, they constructed a shared space of representation informed by the confusing lines it traced over the space of the city to make visible its enemies. The consequences as observed earlier were dissimilar. The police and the military solved the ambiguity by increasing the violence of their operations, while, the residents developed different strategies to cope: they

moved away, hid, joked, or more recently as examined in the previous chapter, scapegoated transient populations arriving in Tijuana.

Correspondingly, the most durable effect the federal intervention had upon the organization of Tijuana was the re-territorialization of the urban layout along the lines drawn by the logics of the WoD. Notwithstanding its empirical inconsistencies, the battle for *la plaza* has remained embedded across social classes, urban divides, and institutional affiliations as the central matrix to explain what happened, what is currently going on, and what could happen in the near future. An effective conduit through which the city is predominantly understood, *la plaza* reorganized the conceptualization of the urban antagonisms, the everyday strategies implemented to navigate the urban space, and the geographic coordinates of insecurity. A powerful instrument to read, manipulate, and structure the space of the city, its transposition onto Tijuana has had a broad set of consequences for its urban configuration and its inhabitants' behaviors. The main one has been the expansion and perpetuation of distrust amongst its inhabitants and the formation of urban space as a domain in which one must be wary. In doing so, the pre-existing disciplinary political geography of the city, after the federal forces left the city, was reinforced, authorizing simultaneously forms of disciplining and sovereign control connected with the preservation of this order from contamination. As seen in the previous chapter, at the center of the post-Operation Tijuana's forms of regulation and control are the deportees, but also the well-established residents of the citizens who fear that violence will engulf the city again.

9. Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

At the intersections of government, power, and space this thesis has explored how the Mexican WoD has produced spaces and identities around criminal categorizations through which the exertion of potential kinetic force has been made possible. Foucault's concept of governmentality has been utilised throughout, opening routes to problematize the dividing practices and authoritative discourses of the WoD. By exploring the relation between the division of space and the exertion of power, I have shown that in representing the geography of the country as a battlefield, the WoD has shaped the organization and identification of spaces of insecurity. As an illustrative case study, the urban specificities of the northern border city of Tijuana have been explored to highlight both the significance of space in the organization of the WoD and the complexity of the relationships tying together identity, violence, and behaviour. Perceptions and practices of federal police personnel and Tijuana's residents grounded the investigation of the implementation of the WoD, demonstrating the configuration of a system of urban understandings through which individuals' have been made governable. The empirical evidence that upholds the core arguments of the research were generated from Foucauldian discourse analysis and ethnographically informed fieldwork. The ethnographic methods included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations.

This study resulted in three strands of content that derive from the set of questions posed at the beginning of the research. Accordingly, I asked how the WoD in Mexico had been productive of spaces within which subjects are formed and regulated. Correlative to this main research question I asked:

- Ai: What are the historic conditions that enabled the emergence of the WoD as a program of pacification of unruly territories and populations?
- Aii: What are the ethical imperatives, identity assumptions, and spatial imaginaries that inform the WOD?
- Aiii: How has the reorganization of the political geography of insecurity effected by the WoD displayed, deployed, and grafted inside the spaces of daily life, marking, separating, and demarcating specific spaces and individuals as insecure?
- Aiv: How does the WoD's regimentation of urban spaces and subjects shape the behaviour of Mexican citizens?

The strands that emerged from these question include: first, the relationship between the historic organisation of the state power in Mexico, the military policing of the territory, and the governing of individuals (Ai, Aii). Second, the relationship between the geographical imaginations that underpin the WoD, the spatial politics of the Mexican state, and the configuration of the country's space into a battlefield (Aii). Finally, the last strand resulted from the examination of the urban space of Tijuana and the implementation of the WoD in this city carried out in chapters 7 and 8 (Aiii, Aiv). This last strand emphasizes how the articulation of the materiality of the urban space, state violence, and the proliferation of crime produced a dangerous environment which fractured the security of the household for ordinary citizens, and deepened their vulnerability to both state and criminal violence. In this final chapter, I provide concluding comments and summarize the core arguments made around these three key points. In the first section I summarise the thesis, underscoring how the research questions have been answered. In the following section I establish directions for future research.

9.2 Summary of Key findings

9.2.1 *The historic conditions of possibility of the Mexican WoD*

Theoretically this thesis is situated at the intersection of the analysis of governmentalities and the governing of spaces. In chapter 2, I introduced Foucault's concept of governmentality and discussed how it converges with the examination of power, space, and subjection. I outlined that the exertion of power is contingent on the regulation of the intimate spaces within which individuals exist. Moreover, I demonstrated that violence can be conceptualized as an action upon the action of others, making individuals governable through the regulation of their freedom. To explore the connections between these concepts and propositions I asked one main research question. This question was broken down in four auxiliary questions that indicated analytical and thematic routes to delve into the WoD. The first question (Ai) concerns the exploration of the historic conditions that made possible the WoD as a form of policing and pacification of unruly territories in Mexico.

To answer this question, I drew upon a critical literature on the Mexican state-building process. In chapter 4, I argued that the WoD problematizes the spatial organisation of state power, the military policing of the territory, and the governing of individuals. To understand this problematization, I analysed the history of practices of violence pertaining to the organization of Mexican state power in the 20th century.

Following a focus on the production of the national space, and highlighting the distinctive nature of the state-population nexus in Mexico, I claimed that at the crux of state power during the 20th century is a relationship between the state and the population mediated by networks of state assistance and client-patron relationships. Structured around the conceptualization of the Mexican population as ‘subjects in need of the government’s help’ (Altamirano-Jimenez, 2017: 30) and territory as collective property, these elements combined and amalgamated long-standing conflicts and challenges. Pertaining to the collective attempts to maintain a durable state, these challenges reflected questions integral to the birth of the country as a politically independent unit by managing the contested nature of the national territory. They also formalized compromises between previous political conflicts and contemporary problematics, resulting, for example with the organisation of a single political party.

In overall terms, I claimed that specific geopolitical dilemmas in Mexico imposed a form of political development focused on the stability of the state’s position in relation to its subjects, and the means to protect its territorial integrity. This order produced a regularized exchange of loyalty, obedience, and submission between authorities and the people, sanctioning a very stable political regime by Latin American standards. In parallel, a spatial order of violence structured around geographically discontinuous lines of urban and rural separations and reinforced by ethnic and class hierarchies emerged. Practices of state repression, (i.e. the calculation, intensity, and targets of the state violence) were contingent upon the spatial distribution of its recipients. It meant that the further an individual or community were from the dominant urban centres and the highest strata of the socio-political hierarchy, the more pervasive and incisive the forms of direct violence experienced. The Mexican military, alongside other actors such as local bosses or gunmen, were fundamental for the preservation and supervision of the system’s fault lines. This particular spatial order of violence engendered specific forms of intervention and military dominance in the countryside, granting the Mexican army extraordinary political leeway vis-à-vis the civilian leadership.

In chapter 5 I then considered the way in which these spatial arrangements deteriorated in parallel to the intensification of counter-narcotic operations in the second-half of the 20th century. I argued that in being implemented along the economic and geographical fault lines of the spatial order of Mexico, counter-narcotics operations established a technical and operational continuum with broader counter-insurgency operations. Nurtured by U.S. funding, early counter-narcotics practices expanded upon existing forms of military governance and classifications of unruly territories and populations. Instruments of peasant

repression, the deterioration of rural livelihoods, the urbanization of the country, and the decisive transformation of the social, political, and economic structures of Mexico modified the initial role and importance that these operations had within the political organization of violence. Building on the intensification of the political regime's contradictions, and the role the army had traditionally played in strengthening state control over territory and the management of an inequitable process of capitalist development, the WoD gained political and geographic traction. Decisive to this transformation was the economic reconfiguration of the national space as a tradable commodity through an intensive process of privatization, the deterioration of the industrialization-led urbanization model of development adopted in the first half of that century, and the erosion of the client-patron instruments of control and regulation.

Following the tensions, fractures, and conflicts that underwrote the organization of state power in Mexico, the WoD made its way into the 21st century in conjunction with a punitive turn in Mexican politics (Müller, 2016a). Moreover, the WoD took over the policing of entire regions. Entangled with the historic organization of the modern Mexican state, it crept out from the cracks opened by both the economic reconfiguration of the 20th century's state-population nexus and the existing practices of military governance

9.2.2 The Urbanization of the WoD and the Expansion of the State's Spheres of Dominance

The second key point, laid out by question Aii, concerned the examination of the ethical imperatives, identity assumptions, and spatial imaginaries that underpin the urbanization of the WoD. Drawing on evidence (e.g., official documents, media coverage, and NGO reports) from the presidential term of Felipe Calderon (2006-2012), the answer is that by drawing upon three interrelated notions of spatial embeddedness: the everywhere criminal, the battle over turf, and *la plaza*, the Mexican state recast the space of the country into a battlefield and its populations into criminals.

Structured through broad conceptual operations to separate, classify, and divide the national space, these notions denote a distinctive system of spatial inscriptions and visualizations. As a configurational system (Feldman, 2001), I argued that this apparatus of visualization allowed the unchecked and temporally unlimited deployment of the state's coercive forces over half of its territory. Supervised by the Mexican military and funded by the United States, the increase in the number of soldiers and federal police personnel policing the country was, in tactical terms, in line with the historical trajectory of the state's repressive

practices and the geographical expansion of the counter-narcotics operations since the 1970s. Yet there is a meaningful breakthrough in the WoD during this period. Framed as a national battle, the boundless battleground that underpins the imagination of the state's space under the WoD has altered the state-population nexus by reframing it as a disciplining and punitive relationship. Consequently, in refiguring the Mexican population as potential criminal subjects and expanding the state's spheres of dominance, the WoD illustrates both the technical re-orientation of state routines of violence and a reconfiguration in the zones of distinction between order and disorder.

Therefore the reclassification of Mexican residents speaks to how the WoD has made individuals governable through the recodification of the social space and the geographical re-imagination of the country as a criminogenic location. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 explained the series of ethical and political vocabularies, representations, and imperatives that underwrite the WoD. In addition, they analysed the way in which the WoD is entangled with a broader transformation in the territory of government in Mexico. Such a transformation involves the amplification of the state's punitive powers and the widening of the lines of separation through which members of society are deemed worthy of the protections the state purportedly grants. This reorganization of the political geography of insecurity effected by the WoD has substantially altered the spaces of everyday life, shaping the organization of strategic urban centres and modifying individuals' behaviours.

9.2.3 The Political Geography of the Occupation

Following the exploration of the state's geography of insecurity, I addressed a set of related questions (Aiii) regarding how the state's rearrangement of the spheres of dominance has been grafted into the spaces of daily life. This was followed by exploring how individuals' behaviours have been shaped by the WoD (Aiv). To answer these questions I drew primarily on data from semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and ethnographic observations carried out in the northern border city of Tijuana. Representative of the militarized approach to policing urban centres under the WoD, in Tijuana global currents of production and consumption interact with the movement of individuals and commodities from all over the world in search of American markets. The organization and classification of the multiple flows that traverse the city's space have produced a densely regulated and highly contested arena. There the capitalist morality of productivity converged with the aggressive policing of its public spaces, the classification of its residents according to border regulations, and its configuration as a provider of illicit pleasures (sex, alcohol, and over the counter

drugs) for American tourists. In chapter 7 I demonstrated the link between the structure of Tijuana's urban space and the identities of its residents. This examination grounded answers to the questions on alterations to the microphysics of the spaces of Tijuana and the modification of its inhabitants' behaviours.

By the time the city was occupied by the army and the federal police in 2007, a sharp increase in crime and violence had already degraded the normality of Tijuana's daily life. In chapter 8 I argued that the intensification of drug related and police violence in the years previous to the implementation of Operation Tijuana reterritorialized the space of the city, redrawing the limits between the public and the private. These limits are central for the spatial articulation of a system of reciprocity between sovereign and subjects that guarantees the protection of individual lives. Embodied by the walls that separate the household from the public space (Weizman, 2007: 210), it is the sovereign's respect for these physical separations which enables the order of the law. The organization of the city as a space constituted by free individuals is contingent on this spatial articulation of the law as a reciprocal relationship between subjects and authorities embodied by the walls of the house. In the years that preceded the pacification of the city, the physical and symbolic transgression of the walls of the household by criminals and authorities alike imposed an order of undifferentiated violence and intense vulnerability that produced the city as a space of death and insecurity.

Drawing upon oral stories from military and federal police, I claimed that this order of insecurity was also negotiated by the federal security forces that occupied the city in 2007 who codified the city along the central propositions of the WoD's geographical imagination. The everywhere criminal, the battle over turf, and *la plaza* provided a map through which the space of the city was navigated and acted upon. As discussed in sections three and four of chapter 8, this map allowed for the categorization of the city space and its residents as risky subjects, authorizing the exertion of force by state actors. Yet as demonstrated in section 4, this map proved unreliable and inconsistent, increasing uncertainty and prolonging abusive and aggressive police behaviours. In so doing, this process of reconfiguring the city spatially intensified the vulnerability of Tijuana's inhabitants. Conversely, according to the official figures discussed in the first section of this chapter, at least indirectly, the police presence did not reduce crime but increased it.

In tandem, the oral stories of residents and police personnel provided an alternative narrative on the implementation of the WoD by observing the continuum between the form criminality takes in the city and the actions of state forces. In this regard, I asserted that the WoD in the city of Tijuana revealed the complex entanglement between power, space, and violence that constituted forms unlimited intervention upon the lives of Mexican citizens.

Making them governable out of fear and compulsion, the exposure of Tijuana's residents to the power of the state makes evident the importance the WoD has had in the unchecked expansion of state violence. The inhabitants' withdrawal from public spaces and the collective renunciation of any form of political opposition are indicative of the extent of this process, at least during the period under study.

Finally, I argued that one of the lasting effects of the pacification of the city in this context has been the consolidation of a public's understanding of the city as a *plaza* whose ownerships is claimed by two drug cartels. Despite contrary evidence that demonstrates (discussed in chapter 6) that the clear-cut distinction between criminals and authorities, and cartels, is untenable, the separation of the city into two separate sections has gained traction in Tijuana amongst the population and local authorities. In consolidating the understanding of the city as a dangerous space, it has restored the cognitive consistency of the urban space making it reliable for its users. It has also produced an identifiable space (the east) and a population (new immigrants and deportees) as potential disruptors of the already fragile urban order. By channelling the city's fears and anxieties through these populations and spaces, different regulations of the city's space have been enacted, perpetuating the influence of the WoD upon the socio-spatial organization of the city and the reduction of its residents to potential suspects.

9.3 Contribution and Significance of the Research

The concepts of government, power, and space have been probed and developed throughout the analysis of the WoD. In doing so, the thesis has reinforced the understanding that the material and discursive command of space is central to the organization and exertion of power, adding to a literature that explores the intersection between power and space, and the way in which individuals are governed through control of the intimate spaces of existence (Feldman, 1991; Garmany, 2014; Legg, 2007; Weizman, 2007). By building on this body of work that explores the spatial organization of power, this thesis provides an alternative and critical understanding of the Mexican WoD, which does not correspond with predominant narratives of the process. Accordingly, in exploring the way in which state actors isolate and divide drug trafficking from its larger socio-political context, I have demonstrated the importance of the rationalities and practices of government that inform the WoD's spatialization.

Additionally, I demonstrated that the spatializations of the WoD indicate shifts in the organization of power in Mexico. It means that the representation of DTO's as territorial

entities in opposition to the state is both an ideological device, and an effect of the logics that organize relations amongst the state, territory and citizens. Linked with the broader transformation of the state's territorialisation, the geographies of violence produced to enable the state intervention under the WoD, emerge from deep changes regarding the definition of objects and spaces of governance. In doing so, this thesis tackles a gap in the literature on the Mexican WoD regarding the interplay between spatiality and power. It does so firstly by connecting the history of the organization of power in Mexico with the WoD, and then by demonstrating the concrete modification of Tijuana's socio-spatial relations following the pacification of the city in 2007. Thus, this thesis departs from claiming a causal relation between the state's representations of drug trafficking and the deployment of the military operations (Bunker, & Sullivan, 2010; Rios, 2012). Therefore it adds to an emerging body of work that has explored the WoD's spatial implications (Boyce, Banister & Slack, 2015; Campbell, 2009; McDonald, 2005; Mendoza, 2008; Morton, 2012; Wright, 2011; 2013)

Overall, in examining the links between the rationalization of the state violence and its exertion in the context of the Mexican WoD, the empirical chapters of this thesis help the field to understand how governmental rationalities discipline urban populations in non-European contexts. It thus offers a unique lens to theorize the intersection between geographical imagination and state aggression, signalling the relevance it has to understand how violence operates producing spaces, shaping individuals' behaviours, and modifying the form in which power operates.

9.4 New Research Directions

My research has shown how the WoD has been productive of spaces within which individuals are governed. This analysis foregrounds the urban and considers the power relations that traverse the implementation of the WoD by highlighting the role everyday spaces have in its structure and organization. Moreover, the investigation accounts for the ways in which ordinary citizens have modified their behaviours in accordance with the provisions set by the WoD. Here I reflect on three potential avenues for developing future research on the WoD in Mexico.

It is important to acknowledge that in this research I have used one specific case of study. It allowed me to explore and detail the implementation of the WoD in a single city on the Mexican northern border. Moreover this place-specific approach highlighted the impact of the urban structure of Tijuana, its demographic composition, and topographical configuration had in the organization of a distinctive understanding of insecurity, risk, and violence. To

expand the understanding of the ways in which violence and geographical imaginations intermingle, similar studies need to be carried out in other cities in which the WoD has been implemented. The intense variation in circumstances and contexts promises will enable comparative assessments of the differentiated impact particular urban contexts have on the implementation of practices of state pacification. It would connect with a growing interest in studies interested in the urbanization of conflict and violence (Garmany, 2009; 2014; Graham, 2010; Rodgers, 2006). In this regard, three geographical locations could be of interest for a study of this type. Firstly, along the northern border there are two other cities that have experienced similar conditions to Tijuana but have been granted less academic attention: Nuevo Laredo in the state of Tamaulipas and Nogales in Sonora. These cities share a similar geographical position in relation to border and like Tijuana are hubs for migrants and manufacturing centres. A study of this type would compare Tijuana's features with cities that are also shaped by similar socio-political forces, providing information about the differentiated impact high crime rates and projects of policing and pacification have in northern border cities. It would allow for more substantial claims to be made about the relations linking the WoD, the exertion of violence, and the northern border in Mexican geographical imaginations.

A third city Tijuana could be compared with is situated along the southern border with Guatemala. Tapachula, in the state of Chiapas, offers an opportunity to problematize the findings of this research by comparing them with a space heavily policed in a completely different urban, socio-political, and cultural context. With a high proportion of indigenous peoples, a massive influx of Central American migrants, a highly porous border, and high deprivation rates in relation to northern border cities, Tapachula is a good case to observe how state policing of borders under the WoD is implemented in a different context.

Along the same lines, a comparative study with Central American projects of urban policing might prove useful to understand how in the same region, projects of pacification are carried out. It would provide important knowledge on the ethical, political, and identity assumptions in counter-narcotics actions in different states that are also funded by the U.S. These could include the Merida Initiative (Finkenbusch, 2016) state-building propositions, and money distributed to underwrite a Central American (including Mexico) approach to crime and border security. Thus, a study carried out in the Department of San Marcos on the Guatemalan border with Mexico could examine the policing of the city and the myriad transnational connections traversing the surveillance and disciplining of its security-scape (Zilberg, 2011). Zilberg (2011) has addressed the formation of a transnational network of knowledge and practices of detention funded by the U.S. in Central America. But research

comparing urban policing in these spatial settings could prove useful as they would uncover how the heterogeneous and uneven geographies of power, violence, and death play out in the organization of a transnational space of control and regulation in the Americas.

A second avenue that needs to be considered concerns analysing the role resistance has in the implementation and outlining of the WoD. Although the thesis engaged with the ways in which federal police personnel and ordinary individuals negotiated the assumptions and practices of the WoD, it placed special emphasis on the disruptive effects of violence during the period of analysis. This limited the attention given to the ways in which people intentionally resisted such processes. Resistance, understood as acts that violate naturalized meanings, practices, norms, and power orders (Campbell & Heyman, 2007), accounts for the situated and contingent nature of governmental processes, the messy and fragmentary consistency of their implementation, and the multiple fissures that make them fragile and transient endeavours (Rose, O'Malley, Valverde, 2006). In my research, resistance to the WoD was surpassed in testimonials by the weight crime and state violence had upon residents' lives. It was an effect of the actual emphasis the participants made of this inescapable fact of their existences. Yet, an important path to be explored would be to focus on the multiple ways in which individuals frustrate "(...) the normal play of a given power relation" (Campbell & Heyman, 2007: 4). This would respond to a call from scholars such as Osborne, Rose, and Valverde (2006: 99) to problematize and unsettle the image of a government "(...) as a juggernaut that is somehow willing itself into existence". Analysing resistance would provide a more encompassing understanding of the heterogeneous and uneven terrain upon which projects of violent disciplining are implemented. Consequently, important questions to ask are how do ordinary citizens consciously challenge the regulations of time and space fostered by the WoD? And through which practices have residents of heavily policed space redirected, or modified the original aims set by the policing of the spaces of the city?

Finally, to further understand the role resistance has in the articulation of the city's space in a case like Tijuana, it would be useful to integrate the lives of the residents at the fringes of the city into the examination. Tangentially examined in this research through the stories of the migrants that wander around the streets of Tijuana, or those living in *el Maclovio*, a more thorough understanding is needed of the ways in which those living in the physical and imaginary periphery of the social life of the city have experienced the WoD. This would involve an ethnographic investigation situated in the peripheries of the city that examines the practices, negotiations, and strategies of survival of those inhabiting these

spaces. Methodologically challenging, it would expand upon the areas already explored providing a more complete picture of the experience of being disciplined in Tijuana.

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