The dynamics of violence and legitimacy in contemporary Mexico (2006-2018)

An interplay between the Mexican government, organized crime and society

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Content

Preface

This study has been conducted and written in order to accomplish the requirements of the Research Master's Program Latin American Studies from Leiden University. The fieldwork, in order to obtain and access all the necessary information, was conducted in Mexico, mainly Mexico City, and took place between June and October 2018. Parts of the research were challenging, because of being a female researcher and because of the current security situation in Mexico. However, the desired results were accomplished, and these complicating factors have made the fieldwork and this study all the more interesting. The timing of the fieldwork was also exciting, as the presidential elections in Mexico were held on July 1st, with as its result that, for the first time in Mexican history, a left-winged presidential candidate won. Moreover, during the finalization process of this study, the elected president Andrés Manuel López Obrador has taken office on December 1st, 2018.

The photo on the cover page of this thesis I have taken myself. The location is the Zócalo, the main plaza in the center of Mexico City, on the remembrance day of the Iguala mass kidnapping, in which 43 students of the Ayotzinapa Rural Teacher's College disappeared, to never return. Part of this study will also elaborate on this event. The photo on the last page of this document was taken the same day and on the same plaza; it was a cultural contribution to demonstrate against the violence in Mexico.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my thesis supervisor professor Soledad Valdivia, for the constructive feedback and for helping me to organize the monstrous amount of information I had in my head and put it into this thesis. Thank you Rodrigo Peña, for the endless coffees whilst discussing the central concepts of violence and legitimacy in Mexico, and for putting me in touch with the right people. *Muchísimas gracias* to my interviewees for taking the time to receive me and share their knowledge: Armando Rodríguez Luna, Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, Luis Astorga, Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo, Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, Jovani Josué Rivera Gutiérrez, Mario Pavel Díaz Román, José Luis Méndez Martínez, Francisco Gómez and Raúl Benítez. *Y gracias* Sergio Aguayo Quezada and Raúl Benítez for letting me participate in their specialized course on Political and Criminal Violence at El Colegio de México. And last

but not least, an enormous thank you to my family and (Mexican) friends, for putting up with my stress and nerves during the process and for brainstorming with me when I was struggling to concretize ideas and thoughts.

I hope this study will be perceived as an accessible source of information for those who are not necessarily familiar with the dynamics of violence and legitimacy, most specifically in Mexico, and that it will be received as a small contribution to the broad academic debate on the security situation in this country.

Carlein Kuperus

Utrecht, December 9th, 2018

Abbreviations

AFI	Federal Ministerial Police
CASEDE	Analysis of the Security with Democracy Group
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CISEN	Centre of Research and National Security
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DTO	Drug-trafficking Organization
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
INEGI	National Institute of Statistics and Geography
PAN	National Action Party
PFP	Federal Preventative Police
PFM	Federal Ministerial Police
PGR	Attorney's General Office
PJF	Federal Judicial Police
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
SEGOB	Secretariat of the Interior
SESNP	Executive Secretariat of the National System for Public Security
SIEDO/SEIDO	Under-Secretariat for Specialized Investigation on Organized Crime
SSP	Secretariat of Public Security
TCO	Transnational Criminal Organization
UEIDCS	Special Attorneyship for Crimes Against Health
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

On July 1st, 2018, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, representative and presidential candidate of the political party MORENA, won the Mexican elections with over 53% of the total amount of votes, his party winning with a majority of the votes in 31 out of 32 states (BBC-Mundo, July 4th 2018). Taking into consideration that the clientelist practice of 'buying votes' by the right-winged parties has historically been an issue in Mexican elections, this was a major victory and meant that Mexico will have a left-wing president for the first time in its history. The main points of focus during López Obrador's presidential campaign: discussing a law that grants amnesty for some of those who work for organized crime, change the focus of combatting organized crime from a battle towards its root-causes (e.g. poverty), put all the Mexican security apparatus under control of the president and name an anti-corruption public prosecutor (BBC – Mundo, June 27th 2018). Although he has arrived with an astonishing majority of the votes in comparison with the other candidates, his first year, 2019, might be very decisive for the rest of his presidency. Hopes for change are very high in Mexico, which is shown by the great increase in voters for MORENA, but if Obrador (called 'AMLO' by the majority of the Mexican people) fails to keep his promises of change, the people might shift to the other side of the political spectrum. But before making assumptions about what will happen in the upcoming years, it is important to analyze where this shift in voting behavior and these campaign objectives derive from. Why do the Mexican people want change so badly? And why are these points so important for Mexico?

As the 'failed state' debate and Transnational Organized Crime (TCO) are common within the international sphere and general policies regarding this matters are attempted to be construed, as 'failing' or 'failed' states are viewed as an international threat. This study considers it of importance to take a look at the dynamics and effects violence and legitimacy within a 'failing' or 'failed' national state, in order to apprehend a better understanding of what actually happens within, taking Mexico as the case study, since it is a country often referred to when speaking about TCO. In order to answer the previously proposed question on why security is such a big issue in Mexico, and extensive literature on the academic debate around organized crime, violence, state-building and legitimacy has been conducted; using both Mexican as well

as international academic sources, in order to not be stuck with a one-sided perspective. Also, statistics and data from the Mexican government and international bodies were used in order to illustrate the security situation. Mexican security experts, PhD students focusing on the matter of violence and/or organized crime and a journalist have been interviewed during a stay in Mexico City of a total of three months. The interviews were based on a series of open questions regarding violence, legitimacy and security in Mexico in general. The information obtained from these interviews is used as additional information to the analyzed academic literature, as all the interviewees carry knowledge and expertise regarding these concepts and have different perspectives on where the issue lies exactly. All this information will be used to answer the central question of this study: What are the characteristics of the use of violence in Mexico and what is their impact on the legitimation process of the Mexican state, in the period 2006-2018?

Chapter 1 argues the relationship between violence, (state) legitimacy and organized crime is a complex one. Due to the high numbers of homicides in the country, Mexico has been typically referred to as a 'failed state', most specifically by the United States in relation to the war on drugs and determining the 'strength' or 'weakness' of a state has dominated the academic field on state-building in the past decades. This chapter will center around theories about state-building, legitimacy, violence and organized crime, analyzing how one can speak of a 'legitimate use of violence' and in which situation(s) this monopoly of violence by the state is contested. Chapter 2 will then focus on Mexico specifically, by analyzing how the state-organized crime equilibrium changed during the past four presidential terms and how the nature of organization of the Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) has changed as well. It will elaborate on the main points in which homicide rates, according to the data from the Mexican National Institute for Statistics and Geography (INEGI) and the Secretariat of the Interior (SENSP/SEGOB) have increased most drastically, more specifically during the last two presidencies. Chapter 3 centers around the actors who are hereby contending for the monopoly on violence; drug trafficking organizations, the Mexican security apparatus (the police and military), and the Mexico government itself. It establishes that society also plays a part in this dynamic, because of a *culture of violence* and a *culture of illegality.* This chapter will analyze the characteristics of violence specifically in Mexico and how this relates to the actors contending for the monopoly of violence. Chapter 4 questions how these elevated levels of violence affect the state's

legitimacy, and therefore authority to exercise its force within the Mexican territory to establish and maintain control. It theorizes that violence and legitimacy are part of a complex interplay, a dialectic relationship, because the state is (de)legitimized as a consequence of increased levels of violence by organized crime, affecting the capacity of state building in Mexico. Lastly, the conclusion will both answer the central question and give a summary of the main points analyzed and elaborated on in the previous chapters.

As the spiral of violence in Mexico, due to many complicating factors that make the violence (rather than just the organized crime), is so hard to combat, the aim of this study is not to offer a solution, but to untangle and analyze the complexity of the dynamics of violence and dynamics of legitimacy in Mexico and how they interrelate.

Chapter 1 – *Reflections on the theories on state-building, violence and organized crime*

1.1. The state-building debate

State-building has been a widely used term to define a transition towards a modern state with a centralized government, usually according to a European model. It is used synonymously with state formation and nation-building. But in order to develop a process of 'state-building', one first needs to define the requirements for it, hence first, a definition of a state is necessary. This section will elaborate on theories about what a state entails, and how a state can be 'failing' or 'failed'.

1.1.1. Theories on 'the state'

According to Timothy Mitchell (2006), the state is an object of analysis that exists both as a material force and an ideological construct. Regarding the state, he suggests a separation between two objects of analysis: 1) the state-system, which refers to the state as a system of institutionalized practice; and 2) the state idea, which refers to the reification of this system and takes the form of a symbolic identity (Mitchell 2006: 169). The state herein does not exist without the people living in it and shaping its idea. Gramsci (2006) argues that an identification of a state and government is "a representation of the economic-corporate form, in other words of the confusion between civil society and political society". At some point, the state will be equal to government, then identified with civil society, and eventually end up in the phase wherein the state can be viewed as a night watchman, or "a coercive organization which will safeguard the development of the continually proliferating elements of regulated society, and which will therefore progressively reduce its own authoritarian and forcible interventions" (Gramsci 2006: 80). The state therefore is both an institutionalized organization with the task of protecting civil society, and a symbolic idiom, which is construed by this same civil society. Das & Poole (2004) argue that "When the relation between the state and the population that is governed is imagined as one in which the state embodies sovereignty independently of the

population, it becomes authorized to maintain certain spaces and populations as margins through its administrative practices" (Das & Poole 2004: 29). The problem with the authorization of the state to decide who will be part of the state and who is part of its margins, is the relationship between the ordering, administrative functions of the state, and the violence or the coercive element of the state as an institution (Das & Poole 2004: 6-7). According to these definitions, 'the state' has to do with authority.

The previous points are well summarized in the definition of the state by Joel Migdal (1988). He defines an ideal type of state as "an organization, composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the states leadership (executive authority), that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all the people as well as the parameters of rulemaking for other social organizations in a given territory, using force if necessary to have its way" (Migdal 1988: 19). His definition, as well as the theories presented by many others within the field of state-building, derives from the definition of a state by Max Weber. Weber famously defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory" (Weber 1978: 54).

Determining whether a state is 'strong' or 'weak' or even 'failed' has dominated the academic field on state-building in the past decades. The United States sent out a National Security text after the 9/11 attacks, putting emphasis on the risks and threats that nations face from weak institutions and corruption found in weak or fragile states. State failure hereby became a synonym for doom and terror (Kenny & Serrano 2013: 6). This adheres with Fukuyama's (2004) definition of the state and the weak or failed state debate. According to him, state-building refers to "the creation of new governmental institutions and the strengthening of existing ones" (Fukuyama 2004: 17). State failure therefore became prominent in foreign policy discourse, because it is viewed as the root of many of the world's most serious problems, such as poverty and drug trafficking, and a harbor for terrorism (Call 2008: 1493, Fukuyama 2004: 17).

Migdal argues that there is a 'duality of states', in which on the one hand the state is very capable of penetrating societies, but unable and weak in effective changes (Midgal 1988: 9). He thereafter argues that this derives from the differences among states amongst different

characteristics of 'stateness' for which the political leaders have striven. He defines four main points: (1) the importance of the aim of leaders to hold a monopoly over the principal means of coercion, eliminating non-state controlled armies and holding a tight grip over the own military; (2) situations in which state officials decide to act upon their own preferences; (3) when state leaders aim for significant differentiation and division of the complex tasks they have to exercise, and (4) that "state builders have sought these components to be explicitly coordinated, allowing a coherence of the parts of the state and shared purposes by those working in the various agencies. The distortion arising from taking the state for granted is an implicit assumption that all governing authorities are more or less equal in these four attributes. They are not" (Midgal 1988: 18-19). According to Migdal, the strength of a state depends on the social control it exercises. A strong state means a state in which the social control level is high, a weak state is a society in which the overall level of social control is low (Migdal 1988: 34-35). Fukuyama defines the essence of the state as being "*enforcement:* the ability, ultimately, to send someone with a uniform and a gun to force people to comply with the state's laws" (Fukuyama 2004: 21). He distinguishes the difference between the *scope* of state activities, "which refers to the different functions and goals taken on by governments, and the *strength* of state power, which has to do with the ability of states to plan and execute policies, and to enforce laws cleanly and transparently—what is now commonly referred to as state or institutional capacity" By differentiating between the two, according to Fukuyama, a 'degree of stateness' can be determined (Fukuyama 2004: 21-22).

Charles Tilly (1985) centralizes the coercive means of the government, and the idea of it having the sole 'monopoly on violence'. The national state, according to Tilly, is a "relatively centralized, differentiated organization whose officials more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory." (Tilly 1985: 3). The agents of states, or the state leaders, generally carry out four different activities: (1) warmaking; the elimination and neutralization of rivals outside their territory; (2) statemaking, as the elimination and neutralization of rivals inside their territories; (3) protection, the elimination and neutralization of the enemies of their clients (e.g. civil society within the margins) and; (4) extraction, which entails enquiring the means to carry out the previously mentioned three tasks (Tilly 1985: 15). Peter Manicas, in the book of Cohen & Toland *State Formation and Political Legitimacy* (1988), takes the warmaking component of

a state one step further, by arguing that "states are *machines of war,* sacrificing tremendous resources to war-making potential" (Manicas 1988: 191).

1.1.2. Theories on 'failing' or 'failed' states

The states receiving a 'weak state' or 'failed' state label are usually the postcolonial states of the Third World. Other name-tagging entails terminology such as 'rogue states', 'quasi-states', or 'shadow-states', usually called out by Western countries when referring to Third World countries supposedly threatening their security (Geertz 2004: 578-579). But what is meant by these concepts? And does state failure mean a complete collapse of the state? Or a failure to keep up with the Western hemisphere regarding for example neoliberal reforms or goals of human rights? According to Paul Kenny & Mónica Serrano (2013), a 'failed state' would mean a state in which there is a loss of the state's control "over core functions, institutions and the distribution of public goods, and so of essential legitimacy" (Kenny & Serrano 2013: 5). The debate is hereby focused on the *effectiveness* and the *legitimacy* of the state. As Kurtenbach (2011) argues: "State-building is a non-linear process in permanent motion on a continuum between fragile/weak and strong state images and practices. These rely not just on territorial control but also on financial resources as well as the establishment of a minimum of social cohesion and legitimacy" (Kurtenbach 2011: 6).

The use of the term 'failed state' has been widely criticized, due to lack of a clear definition. Charles Call (2008) points out six deficiencies of the 'failed state' debate: (1) the indicators of what a makes a state a 'failed state' are unclear; (2) too much of an emphasis is put on creating order and stability, ignoring factors such as corruption, repression and crime; (3) its focus obscures issues such as regimes and their nature, avoiding issues of democratization and representation; (4) peace-building, meaning providing resources to strengthen state institutions of possibly 'failed states', in the case of corrupt governments, may lead to the opposite effect of peace; namely fueling resentment and armed resistance and fostering abusive authority; (5) the paternalistic character of the failed state label, meaning the focus on the state having a 'good endpoint' like the 'modern' dominant Western states; and (6) ignoring the role of the West in the state failure process of many countries, due to colonialism and exploitation (Call 2008: 1494-1500). Therefore, some scholars argue that Third World nations are subordinate to relations of economic, political and cultural with the Great Powers or the

world-system as a whole. However, this also means that the state-building process of Third World nations should be viewed as different from the one in the Western world (Wendt & Barnett 1993: 329-330). So what are the alternatives?

Call (2011) refers to David Chandler, who criticizes the West's state-building agenda, arguing that their agenda represents one of a new hierarchy of power, rather than the aim to level out the global inequality levels (Call 2011: 304). Boas and Jennings (2007) argue that tagging a state as 'failed' allows powerful countries to deprive the 'failed' state of its privileges of sovereignty, legitimizing Western interventions (Boas & Jennings 2007: 475 – 485, Call 2011: 304). Call himself offers a conceptual alternative towards the 'failed state' nametag, proposing that in possible 'fragile' or 'failing' states, a capacity, security and/or legitimacy gap are experienced, rather than completely 'failing' at once (Call 2011: 303). A *capacity gap* exists where the state institutions are incapable of providing the public with the necessary minimal goods and services it needs; such as providing security, rule of law, primary education, primary healthcare etc. Capacity as a concept does not exclude others providing these goods and/or services, such as non-state or private actors, but it is important that they are regulated by the state. (Call 2011: 306). The *security gap* exists when states are not capable of providing minimal levels of security for its population against, for example, organized armed (criminal) groups. Determinants characterizing a security gap include conflict intensity, its impact across territory, gross human rights violations and coups. Insecurity can be perceived as deriving from either state forces or insurgent forces in a war-torn society (Call 2011: 307). The last gap that Call distinguishes is the *legitimacy gap,* which exists where a significant portion of the state's population (political elites and society) reject the rules regulating the exercise of power. Legitimacy hereby refers to *internal* legitimacy, not *external* legitimacy the state derives from other states. It is however, difficult to conceptualize this third type of gap, as defining legitimacy is a difficult task. For example, polling or surveys of elites and society may be useful, but untrustworthy in non-democratic regimes, in which their level of free expression can be questioned (Call 2011: 308). Although these three different types of gaps can be analyzed separately, Call also points out their interrelation. Armed actors challenging the state emerge from a security gap. However, this may have been fostered by weak institutions (capacity gap) or illegitimate rule (legitimacy gap). Also, wars (especially internal civil wars) result in a decrease of state capacity, which may erode state legitimacy (Call 2011: 311).

1.2. State-building and the legitimation process: the monopoly on violence

What the previous section points out is the relation between the state's capacity building, capacity to provide security and therefore maintain or take back its legitimacy. This section will elaborate on this interplay between the state's legitimacy and the process of how the state 'gets' its legitimacy by attempting to gain the monopoly of violence.

1.2.1. State legitimacy and the legitimation process

Gilley (2006) proposes that "political legitimacy is a major determinant of both the structure and operation of states. There is a general presumption that its absence has profound implications for the way that states behave toward citizens and others. States that lack legitimacy devote more resources to maintaining their rule and less to effective governance, which reduces support and makes them vulnerable to overthrow or collapse" (Gilley 2006: 499) So, what creates the possibility for states to exercise control and provide basic goods and services for its population within their given territory, or generally speaking, what provides the state with the possibility to exercise its basic functions, is the factor of legitimacy. As Michel Bouchard (2011) puts it: " States, to varying degrees, also rely upon the ideological and the symbolic, notably in the form of religion, popular or state-mandated, to provide the state legitimacy. Both modern and pre-modern states actively sought to control borders and regulate their populations" (Bouchard 2011: 194). So in his view, state legitimacy is provided when there is an ideological and symbolic state identity; administered by the state or the population (civil society).

Henri Claessen (1988) provides a more rule-centered approach towards legitimacy. According to him "legitimacy is the situation in which the rulers as well as the ruled share the conviction that the exisiting division of power – and as a consequence of this, the rules and regulations issued by the government – is right. Or put in another way, legitimacy is the power base for authority" (Claessen 1988: 23). From this point of view, no political (state) system can exist based on the concensus of the public only; coercion will always be a contributing and present factor. Tilly (1978) argues that there is always a certain degree of discontent amongst the population; as no society is every fully equilibrated, which further develops if the state is not capable of exercising its basic activities (Tilly 1978: 191-192). However, the greater the overlap between the government policies and the social, religious, economic and demographic

conditions the public's discontent is based on, or the better the government manages to repress its opposition, the greater the resonance and the greater the degree of legitimacy it has (Tilly 1978: 15-16, Claessen 1988: 42-43).

Claessen (1988) differentiates between legitimacy, the *condition* of being legitimate, and legitimation, which entails the *process* of making legitimate (Claessen 1988: 24-25). The actors in the process are therefore the state itself and society, or the population. Claessen refers to the competing actors for power as the *inner circle,* and the *outer circle* as being comprised of the ones who agree, accept, or comply with the situation or policy (Claessen 1988: 40), this inner circle and outer circle being interconnected and dependent on one another, demonstrating the important role of civil society in the legitimation process. Ronald Cohen puts more emphasis on the role of society by saying that "the ultimate power and authority that maintains the state is therefore outside the unequal relations of ruler and ruled". Legitimacy is the acceptance of the unequal relations of ruler and ruled, and rejection or resistance against these relations is *illegitimacy* (Cohen & Toland 1988: 79, 81-82). In other words, legitimacy portrays the 'rightfullness' of the state's actions and/or policies, and illigitimacy refers to the state's wrongdoing regarding its actions and/or policies.

Gilley (2006) explains this by presenting three constitutive sub-types of legitimacy; *views of legality, views of justification* and *acts of consent.* Rightfulness or legitimacy is hereby perceived as 'as believed by civil society' rather than 'claimed by state rulers' (Gilley 2006: 502). *Views of legality* refers to the idea that there are rules through which the state exercises power that resonate with the norms and values of the population. *Views of justification* refers to the ways in which civil society responds to the "moral reasons given by the state for the way it holds and exercises power" (Gilley 2006: 502). This is where civilian judgment and ideas come together, providing the basis of legitimacy of the state. It is what Christian Lund (2006) explains as: "When an institution authorizes, sanctions or validates certain rights, the respect or observance of these rights by people, powerful in clout or numbers, simultaneously constitutes recognition of the authority of that particular institution (Lund 2006: 675) The last sub-type is the *acts of consent,* which refers to the actions that express civil society's acceptance of the state's right to hold political authority, which may result from a previously mentioned 'legitimacy gap' (Gilley 2006: 502-503). The state is hereby not just an organization, but also the public authority

figure, which is a day-to-day process during the state is constantly searching for recognition by civil society, in a simultaneosouly continuous process of legitimation.

1.2.2. The legitimate use of coercion and a monopoly on violence

So how can one speak of a 'legitimate use of violence' or a 'legitimate use of coercion'? Going back to Max Weber's definition of a state, the state is the actor "that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Fukuyama 2004: 21). But in which situation(s) is this monopoly of violence by the state contested? According to Bailey & Taylor (2009), "organized crime always and everywhere threatens the state's monopoly of the legitimate use of violence, by illustrating the tenuousness of this monopoly, even if it does not challenge its dominance outright or aspire to replace it" (Bailey & Taylor 2009: 23). Indirectly, this also affects the health of the state, in terms of threatening individual safety and in terms of public perceptions of the effectiveness of the state, which is equally important in the process of legitimation. "The reach of the law depends in large part on the legitimacy of its origins, broad perceptions of the legitimacy of the state, and the credibility as well as effectiveness of the state's police and regulatory and judicial apparatus. The presence of organized crime threatens all of these" (Bailey & Taylor 2009: 23-24). New levels of violence exercised by non-state actors throw the state's monopoly of violence out of balance, and challenge the state's exercise of its basic activities, such as providing security over its population and providing public goods.

These above-mentioned characteristics of legitimacy lead to the following definition, that will form the basis of this study. Legitimacy is here understood as a *process of making legitimate,* in which the state has an ideological and symbolic identity, construed by its population. The actors in the *process of legitimation* are therefore the state itself and (civil) society (Claessen 1988: 24-25). The state gains authority in accordance with the population, when it has the *capacity* of providing public goods and security, and its public policies are established in compliance with the general tendency and requirements of the population. The greater the overlap in public policies and interests of civil society, the greater the authority the state receives to exercise its power, and therefore the greater the legitimacy. Also, in order to provide security, the state should be the coercive actor present within the given territory, not necessarily as the sole one, but definitely as the main actor with the monopoly of violence. In

short, a state gains its legitimacy as it is viewed as 'rightful' by its population. State legitimacy decreases when there is either a *capacity gap, security gap,* but mainly when a significant portion of the population reject the rules regulating the state's exercise of power, creating an (internal) *legitimacy gap* (Call 2011: 306 – 308).

However, as this definition emphasizes the state's involvement in societal matters, the turn of the century and the past decades have been marked by transnational reforms, such as for example neoliberalism, that have decreased the state's central role. Economic issues have become global, and interdependence between different states has increased drastically. These changes, according to Mary Kaldor (2013) "provided an environment for growing criminalization and the creation of networks of corruption, black marketeers, arms and drug traffickers etc.", leading to a decentralization of violence (Kaldor 2013: 86, 185). The presence of organized crime now threatens the reach of the law, largely depending on the legitimacy of its origins, broad perceptions of the legitimacy of the state, and the credibility and effectiveness of the state's police and regulatory and judicial apparatus (Kaldor 2013: 23-24). According to Kaldor, the complex relationship between processes of governance, legitimacy and forms of security is present in every era. Organized crime is herein the destabilizing factor, as the state's security capabilities still depend on conventional military forces, whilst the national monopoly of legitimate organized violence has eroded due to the transnationalization of the military forces, and eroded from below by the privatization of organized violence by non-state actors such as militias, drug cartels and guerrilla groups (Kaldor 2013: 188).

According to the abovementioned literature, a state can be viewed as both a construed identity and an organization, which is composed of institutions who have the authority to make rules and exercise coercion in order to maintain order within their territory, provide security for its population and ensure that it has the proper means and resources to do so. The state, according to the definition of Max Weber, is the only actor that should "(successfully) claim the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Fukuyama 2004, Migdal 1988, Weber 1978). A state 'fails' or 'is failing' when it is incapable of properly exercising these activities and a gap falls; either a capacity, security or legitimacy gap (Call 2011: 304). Legitimacy is the acceptance of the unequal relation between ruler and ruler, or the 'inner' and 'outer' circle; it hereby portrays the 'rightfulness' of the state's actions and/or policies, granted

by civil society and its perception of the state. The recognition of the state by civil society is what gives it the authority to exercise its administrative tasks and use coercion to repress the opposition to maintain order (Cohen & Toland 1988, Gilley 2006, Claessen 1988, Lund 2006). However, in the case of Latin America, the changing global atmosphere regarding the involvement of the state in economic matters has caused new actors of violence to compete for economic power. This challenges the democratic state formation process by multiplying violence rather than diminishing it; as well as it has created a 'new' type of violence; criminal and delinquent. The next section will explain the relationship between organized crime and politics, interrelating them by looking at this 'new' type of violence.

1.3. State-building and (transnational) organized crime: violence and the organized crime – politics nexus

In this section, the relationship between the state and organized crime will be explained, by using theories on violence, most specifically in Mexico and Latin America in general and theories on the definition of organized crime and its specific attributes. The interplay between both actors comes together in an hereafter explained *stage-evolutionary* or *elite-exploitative* model, in which the balance between power of the two shifts.

1.3.1. A typology of violence

According to the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO), violence is "*the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation*" (WHO World Report on Violence and Health 2002: 5). Put differently, violence is hereby defined as "relating to the health or well-being of individuals", wherein the perpetrator has the intention to use force, although the end-goal does not necessarily revolve around damage or injury (WHO World Report on Violence and Health 2002: 5). Through this definition, violence is therefore not understood as the more theological theories of, for example, Zygmunt Bauman and Norbert Elias, who considered violence inherently present in all human beings; violence as a part of human nature. Rather, violence is understood as something that can be learned (Kaldor 2013: 185, Armando Rodríguez Luna, personal communication, July 6th, 2018).

Taking this definition of the WHO, there are three elements to this violence: intentionality; the infliction of physical injury which may lead to death or psychological harm; and the pursuit of benefit of the perpetrator; violence is hereby a social relation and a form and manifestation of power (Pansters 2012: 15).

Jenny Pearce (2010), in her paper *Perverse state formation and securitized democracy in Latin America,* explores "how violence(s) embedded in Latin America's state formation process are multiplied rather than diminished through democratization, generating a securitizing logic which fundamentally distorts democratic principles" (Pearce 2010: 286). She argues that violence in Latin America has accelerated after an already very violent past, and that although the state itself is not directly responsible for all the violence, in many countries the state-formation process has facilitated the fast reproduction of violence. She calls this paradox 'perverse state formation' (Pearce 2010: 286). Referring to Koonings and Kruijt (1999) she identifies three epochs of violence in Latin America; the first the preservation of the traditional rural and oligrachic social order, the second to modernization of the state and incorporating the public masses into politics, and the last phase the difficult transition towards consolidated democracy."'New violence' in Latin America is no longer political but criminal and delinquent" (Pearce 2010: 288, Koonings & Kruijt 1999: 3). When explaining violence as a concept, she refers to the essay of Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Olina and Recife in Brazil, who wrote about three types of violence in his essay *The Spiral of Violence:* (1) *established violence,* or *structural violence,* which means constant feelings of repression, embedded in the structures of inequality and social injustice; (2) *the violence of revolt,* particularly of the young, and (3) *government repression of this revolt* as a result (Pearce: 290). Andrew Hurrell (1998) distinsghuises *political violence* (such as civil wars, terrorism, revolutionary movements), *enterpreneurial violence* (criminal organizations whose key characteristics is to use violence for profit) and *community violence* (responses to a lack of effective state power) and *every individual-level criminal violence* (Hurrell 1998: 543).

Cohen, Brown & Organksi (1981) argue that in 'new states', basically meaning all countries outside of the traditional Western powers, such as developing states in the Third World, have violence as "an integral part of the process of accumulation of power by the national state […] this power accumulation is necessary for the imposition or maintainance of order" (Cohen,

Brown & Organski 1981: 901). Their interpretation of collective violence also relates to the 'failed state' debate, in the sense that they base their hypothesis on the argument that the lower the initial level of state power is prior to its expansion, the stronger the relationship between the rate of state expansion and collective violence. This implies that new states attempting to increase their power are likely to have higher levels of *collective violence* (Cohen, Brown & Organski 1981: 905).

It is important here to make a distinction between *politically motivated violence* and violence specifically exercised by the state, or *state violence*, as *political violence* does not necessary mean 'violence exercised by someone from politics'. *Political violence*, or more specifically *politically motivated violence,* is hereby understood as "violence perpetrated in the pursuit of political goals" (Knight 1999: 105). According to Boix (2008), political actors "will engage in violence if they calculate that they have more to gain from trying to overthrow the existing order than from accepting it" (Boix 2008: 9). The calculation involves the costs of the violence, meaning whether they have the necessary means to carry out an attack, and the gains from changing the existing political order in comparison to the current status quo (Boix 2008: 15). However, this definition shows that *political actors* are understood as citizens and civilians who want to overthrow the political order. Using violence is their way of accomplishing this goal. *State violence*, however, is threat, force or repression by state agents, understanding force as violence in a more general way, without inflicting direct harm towards the person, but obliging him/her to do something he/she would otherwise not do (Torres-Rivas 1999: 289).

All these factors create a certain ambiance of insecurity amongst the population, and as a consequence, Koonings & Kruijt (1999) argue, there is a certain degree of 'democratization of violence'; as now not only specific sectors of civil society, such as the aristocracy and the military, have access to arms and equipment, but also urban and parts of the rural society (Koonings & Kruijt 1999: 15). According to Méndez (2007), a working democracy is about balancing the characteristics of 'the lion and the fox', meaning that the fragmentation of power for state legitimacy due to decentralization of the state and the capacity and authority of the state to carry on its functions for the population need to be balanced (Méndez 2007: 127). When these are balanced, "they reinforce each other and produce the virtuous circles that bring about truly 'strong' states as well as lasting democracies" (Méndez 2007: 127). It is what

Torres-Rivas (1999) refers to as that "modern society is organized in such a way as to limit the use of force and to achieve the aim of order and integration via forms of consensus, with the force of a political culture resting on a legitimating rationality". Agreement and legitimation of the state are hereby derived from society, where there is an 'absence of fear', because the state controls the main mechanisms of force (Torres-Rivas 1999: 296-297). It is important to make a distinction between violence and force: according to the Weberian model, the state is dominant in the sense that it has the claim on legitimate violence, which means force. Other actors using force for whichever end goal, are using illegitimate violence (Pansters 2012: 23). If there are other actors using force, it should be 'on the terms of the state'. As Serrano & Kenny argue: "It is the convincingly real concentration of power in its hands that has enabled states to successfully claim supremacy for their authority over other competitors" (Serrano & Kenny 2013: 218).

This study is very aware that any extensive researches could be conducted about violence as a concept itself, because of the difficulty of establishing an exact definition and the presence of a gigantic academic debate in order to do so. This study will therefore use homicide statistics in order to demonstrate violence; and discuss the several dimensions of violence within Mexico itself, determining its characteristics specifically towards the case of Mexico. However, this study is very conscious of the fact that violence in Mexico does not solely include homicides, but also *desaparecidos* ('lost' people, usually victims of kidnapping and thereafter murder; their bodies are usually never found), *feminicidios* (homicides specifically targeting women), displaced populations as a consequence of the violence, and other factors this study does not necessarily zoom in but also have to be taken into consideration when thinking about structural violence in Mexico: inequality, poverty and discrimination (Torres-Rivas 1999: 5-6). Because of its omnipresent and multi-factorial nature, violence is therefore not directly determined as being political, social, cultural entrepreneurial etc. Instead, it is interpreted as being a "social relation and a form and manifestation of power", challenging the power and legitimacy of the Mexican state, this dynamic being shaped by different 'dimensions of violence' (Pansters 2012: 15).

1.3.2. Organized crime: the actor challenging state legitimacy

The actor challenging state legitimacy is here organized crime, as a criminal organization or, more specifically, drug trafficking organization (DTO). It challenges the reach of law, the perception of the legitimacy of the state, as well as its credibility and effectiveness of its security apparatus – both regulatory and judiciary (Bailey & Taylor 2009: 23-24). There's a complex nexus between (organized) crime and politics, in which the security gap of the state increases greatly, and hereafter decreases its legitimacy (Call 2011). Here it is necessary to clearly define what is meant by organized crime, and what makes it a criminal organization or enterprise. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized crime defines it as:

"(a) "Organized criminal group" shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit" (United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2004: 5).

The main characteristics defining organized crime here are its organizational structure, its willingness to commit crimes, and its purpose of financial benefit. This definition is generally adhered to regarding international foreign policies on Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) and is therefore important to be mentioned.

Godson & Olson (1995) elaborate further on the concept, providing several characteristics that distinguish a criminal organization from regular criminal activity or from a legitimate business enterprise. First, the activities of the organization are criminal, violating laws prescribed by the legal authority that enforces them. Secondly, the criminals engaged in these particular activities are organized. They operate along an organizational structure towards a common purpose outside the law. Thirdly, their purpose is to make profit, like any other business. However, they operate outside the law with items that are generally defined as illegal, such as drugs. Fourthly, an important characteristic of criminal organizations is their willingness to use violence to protect their 'business' interests. Violence hereby is a rational 'business' tool, rather than a random act (Godson & Olson 1995: 19-21).

Howard Abadinsky (2012) adheres slightly different determinants to the concept of organized crime, namely: (1) that is has no political goals, as its main purpose is to gain protection for its illegal activities; (2) it is hierarchical and has a vertical power structure; (3) it has a limited or exclusive membership, mainly based on kinship or close-tie relations; (4) it constitutes of a unique subculture, outside of 'conventional society'; (5) it perpetuates itself; (6) it exhibits a willingness to use illegal violence, in which no ethical considerations are found; (7) it is monopolistic, as it strives for a monopoly to maximize economic gain, and lastly; (8) it is governed by explicit rules and regulations that members are expected to follow (sometimes in order to stay alive) (Abadinsky 2012: 3-5). Relating all the previously mentioned characteristics to the state's necessary monopoly of violence in order to maintain order and provide security, organized crimes' main determinants to challenge this monopoly are its willingness to use illegal violence without political goals, but with the purpose of economic gain (Abadinsky 2012: 5, Astorga 2000: 59). Organized groups impose control mechanisms on aspects of social and political life, but for their own interest, contending for the monopoly of use of force and territorial control by using violence, in order to expand their business, posing a danger towards the existence or effective exercise of the rule of law by the legal authority enforcing it (Aguirre & Herrera 2013: 222, Astorga 2000: 59).

In some cases, such as for example Mexico, organized crime is to be understood by a combination of patron-client relationships, political patronage, and endemic corruption. Bribery and corruption are part of everyday business for criminal organizations, and organized crime is depicted as a contra-society; a socially separated group with an entrepreneurial character, inherently linked to violence, and in control of certain territories (Abadinsky 2012: 174, Godson & Olson 1995: 21, Escalante-Gonzalbo 2007: 104-105).

Abadinsky, after examining the attributes of organized crime, argues that each organized criminal group approximates one out of two contrasting organizational model: the *bureaucratic/corporate* model and the *patron-client network*. The *bureaucratic/corporate* model its characteristic is a complex hierarchy with an extensive division of labor, in which labor positions are assigned based on the skill of the member, responsibilities are carried out in an impersonal manner and there are extensive written rules and regulations that are communicated from top-down (Abadinsky 2012: 9-10). A *patron-client network* organizational

model, or patron-client relationship, comes into being "when a social exchange relationship becomes unbalanced. The patron 'provides economic aid and protection against both the legal and illegal exaction of authority. The client, in turn, pays back in more intangible assets'- for example, esteem and loyalty – and may also offer political or other important support, thus making the relationship reciprocal. The patron acts as a power broker between the client and the wider society, both legitimate and illegitimate" (Abadinsky 2012: 12).

Clientelism is generally referred to as "asymmetric but mutually beneficial relationships of power and exchange, a non-universalistic quid pro quo between individuals or groups of unequal standing. It implies mediated and selective access to resources and markets from which others are normally excluded" (Roniger 2004: 353-354). This usually happens in the realm of political elections as a strategy for political mobilization. Referring to historian Richard Graham, Roniger characterizes clientelism as a principle of 'take here, give here', in which clients and patrons benefit from mutual support at different levels of political, social, and administrative articulation (Roniger 2004: 353). These patron-client networks are informal networks, which in 'weak states' may be the central deliverers of services generally managed by formal institutions, hereby substituting the formal state activities in its capacity (Call 2008: 1501). These informal networks are the place where the organized crime and politics come together in a criminal-political relationship.

According to Lupsha & Pimental (1997), there are two basic patterns to this process: the *stage-evolutionary model* and the *elite-exploitation model.* The first entails that most organized criminal groups tend to involve through three stages: (1) the predatory; (2) the parasitical and; (3) symbiotic stages. In the first, the criminal group is just a street gang or group, adhering to a specific territory. They evolve into the second stage when they develop a "corruptive interaction with the legitimate power centers […] Political corruption, which accompanies the provision of illicit goods and services, provides the essential glue that binds the legitimate sector with the underworld criminal organization" (Lupsha & Pimentel 1997: 39). The last stage, the symbiotic stage, occurs when this relationship of politics and economics evolves into one of mutual dependency, in which the political system becomes subject to the services of the criminal organization. In this model, the criminals are actively seeking niches in the law and use corruptive measures to avoid arrest (Lupsha & Pimentel 1997: 39). In the second model, the

elite-exploitative model, organized criminal enterprises are treated more as 'cash cows', exploited by political authorities, instead of being useful and necessary. Although corruption is a key factor in both models, in the stage-evolutionary model, traffickers take the initiative in order to gain protection, whereas in the elite-exploitative model, the traffickers are under pressure from the legitimate social control agents, constantly threatening them with taxes, and eventually imprisoning them when they are no longer of use to the higher-level officials. The initiation here comes from the top-down (Lupsha & Pimental 1997: 40, also mentioned in Flores Pérez 2009: 110-112). In this model, the political elite retains substantial control over the drug 'problem', as the state has relative control over organized (drug) crime, selling protection to the drug bosses. By using strategic coercion, state agencies were able to influence the violent/non-violent behavior of criminal actors, directly fostering the illicit market through corruption networks and keeping levels of violence down. Violence is contained, although corruption and impunity prevail, as the state would use disciplinary coercion to those (criminal) actors willing to transgress unofficial rules established by this relationship. (Knight 2012: 125, Kenny & Serrano 2013: 145).

Even though not all states adhere fully to one of the models, it is apparent that there is an interplay between criminal organizations and political actors. As Bailey & Taylor summarize this interplay: "There is considerable interplay between states and criminal actors, even when the state is not corrupted by, or allied with, criminal groups. Governments and criminal organizations employ evasion and corruption to co-exist in equilibrium relationships in which each continually adjusts to the other's perceived evolution. Criminal groups adjust their behavior as a function of their own goals and resources in relation to the dynamics of markets, public policies, and other criminal groups. Governments adjust their behavior as a function of electoral dynamics, the expectations of other governments, and the perceived behavior of criminal organizations" (Bailey & Taylor 2009: 8). Political corruption therefore provides the "essential glue that binds the legitimate sectors with the underworld criminal organization[s]" (Lupsha & Pimentel 1997: 39).

"In many parts of the world bribery and corruption are endemic. In these cases, organized crime is just another business group that uses bribery to go about pursuing its business" (Godson & Olson 1995: 21). Corruption is generally defined as 'the abuse of the public function in order to

obtain private and exclusive benefits' (World Bank 1997, as mentioned in Salamanca, Albarán & Beltrán 2010: 15 and used by Transparency International). Political corruption, then, "is a manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth" (Transparency International).[1]

Low-scale and sporadic corruption situations, in which a person for example offers a bribe in order to have access to a public service, are rare. Large-scale and systematic corruption, such as the criminal-political interplay happen more often, as it usually requires the intervention of high-ranked officials with strategic jobs. This is when the previously explained elite-exploitative model shows (Salamanca, Albarán & Beltrán 2010: 17-18). However, in countries such as Peru, Colombia and Mexico, state capacity and state structures have declined due to the high levels of impunity, the absence of the state in certain territories and inherent drug-related corruption of the state and military, changing the elite-exploitation model (Hurrell 1998: 542). The *control of corruption* is therefore a factor which weighs heavily in the conceptualization of the political performance or political stability, which therefore adheres to the conceptualization of the state's political and economic legitimacy by the population, even further undermining state effectiveness, stability and legitimacy, and hence resulting in violence (Gilley 2006: 51, Goldstone 2008: 291, Silva 2004: 188).

On the other hand, even when corruption is not a factor of state stability, the state might choose explicitly or implicitly to permit certain types of crime, because other alternatives to increase policy effectiveness or public support are too costly (Bailey & Taylor 2009: 10). Herein, organized crime obtains power to make demands. Although direct confrontations with the state are rare, it does make way for organized crime to contend for legitimacy and the effective monopoly of violence as well, when corruption becomes a political force for both parties (Bailey & Taylor 2009: 25, Kenny & Serrano 2013: 42). This happens for example when the drug market increases exponentially, and the price of bribes for officials increases equally, as well as the increase of market competition amongst different criminal groups. Weighing off the costs and benefits of bribery of government officials, without a security force to regulate the increased

[1] A full definition of the term "Corruption" by Transparency International can be found at: https://www.transparency.org/what-is-corruption#define (accessed on July 15th, 2018).

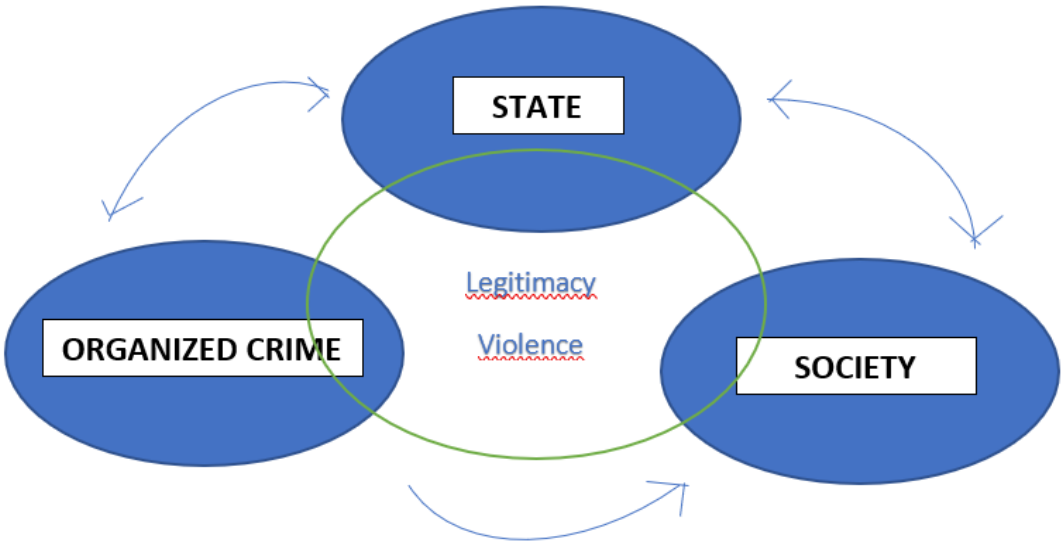
criminal market, the line between corruption and intimidation vanishes, and systematic and relatively low-violence corruption transforms into a form of *coercive corruption.* Before, corruption was a form of trustworthy insurance of delaying an arrest. Now, it was becoming another form of violence, as the threat of force from the state's representative didn't weigh up to the benefits from the illicit drug market (Kenny & Serrano 2013: 41-44, Salamanca, Albarán & Beltrán 2010: 25). As criminal entrepreneurs operate in a highly uncertain environment, their grip on the drug economy is constantly undermined, and disputes amongst each other cannot be settled in an official court, the threat of violence becomes an essential feature of illegal market regulation (Kenny & Serrano 2013: 47).

1.4. Conclusion

In the academic world, state-making/state-building/state formation are widely discussed concepts, mainly analyzed from a western point of view, generally adhered to underdeveloped countries in order to understand their nature and dynamics, and because they are viewed as the root of many of the world's problems (Call 2008: 1493, Fukuyama 2004: 17). 'The state' itself, what it entails, how it is constructed, and how it functions, is an ample academic debate as well. This study takes the definition of Joel Migdal (1988), defining the state as "an organization, composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the states leadership (executive authority) that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all the people as well as the parameters of rulemaking for other social organizations in a given territory, using force if necessary to have its way" (Migdal 1988: 19). The authority of the state in order to implement these rules derives from its legitimacy, wherein the state is the "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory", human community in this sense meaning the actor that gives the state its legitimacy: civil society (Weber 1978: 54). The factors for state legitimacy are therefore the authority to establish rules and exercise force to implement and maintain these rules in society, and the actor adhering legitimacy to the state to do so is civil society. However, the relation between society and the state, according to some academics, will always be unequal. Therefore, both discontent and the factor of state coercion will always be present in order to maintain control (Migdal 1988: 18-19, Tilly 1978: 191-192, Cohen & Toland 1988, Gilley 2006, Claessen 1988, Lund 2006). The factor that causes disbalance in this relationship is another actor that uses violence for personal gain: organized crime. Organized crimes' main

determinants that challenge the state's monopoly of violence and therefore legitimacy are its willingness to use illegal violence without political goals, but with the purpose of economic gain (Abadinsky 2012: 5, Astorga 2000: 59). More specifically in Colombia and Mexico, organized crime is depicted as a contra-society; a socially separated group with an entrepreneurial character, inherently linked to violence, which controls certain territories (Escalante-Gonzalbo 2007: 104-105). The dynamic between the state, organized crime and society can therefore be viewed as follows:

Figure 1. Dynamic between the state, society and organized crime



Source: own elaboration

The chapter has elaborated on the ample debate in state-building and the concepts of state legitimacy, violence and organized crime. It has concluded that they are all part of a complex relationship; wherein the state, organized crime and society revolve around and are connected through violence and legitimacy, which thereafter also have a certain dynamic. Rather than all of them being static entities, they interrelate and influence each other. The following section will put these concepts in context; more specifically, in the case of Mexico.

Chapter 2 –*A changing nature of the Mexican state and DTOs in relation to levels of violence*

Increasing levels of violence and changes in the structure of the DTOs in the past few decades have created a complex relationship between the Mexican state, society and organized crime, affecting the state's credibility, legitimacy and authority to exercise its rules and maintain control over the violence in the country. This chapter will elaborate on the relationship between the Mexican state and organized crime during the previous four presidential terms and how both have changed in nature and structure. It will analyze statistical data on the homicide rates in Mexico and determine the major points of increase, thereafter analyzing what events happened during these years and what the impact of these events was on the relationship between the Mexican government and drug trafficking organizations.

2.1. The state-organized crime uneasy equilibrium and the four presidential terms of 1994 – 2012

The aforementioned elite-exploitative model between the state and criminal actors will be explained through the case of Mexico. This study calls this an 'uneasy equilibrium' between the Mexican state and DTOs, which has underwent significant change throughout the past four presidential terms. This section will elaborate on the main features relating to organized crime during these presidencies and how this has affected the state-organized crime nexus.

2.1.1. Elite-exploitative model (*pax priista, pax mafiosa*)

Even when states might not be corrupted or allied with criminal groups, there is always a considerable interplay between the two. They coexist in an uneasy equilibrium, in which they continuously adjust to each other. Criminal groups develop and adjust as a consequence of market dynamics, public policies and the behavior and strategy of other criminal groups. Governments on the other hand, develop and adjust according to electoral dynamics, the relationship and expectations of other governments and the behavior of criminal organizations, as perceived by the population and other governments. According to Bailey & Taylor, most significant to this state-organized crime equilibrium are the necessities of the criminal

organizations and how they are provided. Factors like the wealth, organization, communications (e.g. tactical intelligence), and weaponry of criminal groups can create bigger or smaller bargaining spaces in the relationships with regional or even national governments (Bailey & Taylor 2009: 8-9).

This interplay between the state and organized crime in Mexico has been adhered to specifically the 70-year reign of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which came to power in 1929 and ruled until 2000, a complex and intimate relationship referred to as the *pax priista* or the *pax mafiosa* (Pansters 2012, Astorga 2015: 185). This relationship entailed clientelism, in which politicians, at a certain price, would favor clients (possibly *patrons* or local DTO bosses), enabling them to have them maintain a low profile and keep their business going. Going back to the theoretical framework, the *pax priista* shows to be an example of the *elite-exploitative model,* in which the high officials from top-down put pressure on the traffickers (Lupsha & Pimentel 1997: 40, also mentioned in Flores Pérez 2009: 110-112). Occasionally, to show power in this relationship, the government would arrest a *narco*, just to show them that they were the ones in control of this interplay. As political elites did not want to ruin this *pax priista* and the main goal of the *narcos* was to keep their business going, as long as there was no direct threat to national security, everyone could continue their own business (Knight 2012: 124-125). As a consequence, corruption and the low threshold of violence fostered the stability of Mexico's illicit market, encouraging its unconventional organization. Impunity and corruption ruled, but as long as the *narcos* would comply to the rules set by the Mexican government, violence was effectively contained (Serrano 2012: 145, Correa-Cabrera 2017: 89).

2.1.2. Four presidential terms and the changes in the state-organized crime equilibrium

The last PRI-president was Ernesto Zedillo, who ruled the country between 1994 and 2000. Zedillo had slowly started to attack drug networks, by establishing various commissions and institutions regarding the matter of organized crime (see Table 1.). During his presidency, in 1996, the Zedillo government and some major opposition forces approved an electoral reform that implied that future elections would be organized by citizens, instead of the previous organizers: government officials. It also included the reform that the Federal Electoral Institute would be transferred from the interior of the ministry to Mexico's judicial branch (Pansters 1999: 247). Wil Pansters (1999) mentions the paradoxical effects and functions of permanent

institutional reforms as "that while consolidated democratic political systems will adapt institutionally to a changing environment to improve its function (system output, efficiency), in societies where non-democratic practices pervade the system, such as Mexico, institutional reformism is primarily a mechanisms for legitimation. Thus, instead of viewing continuous amendments to the legal and institutional aspects of the political system as an indication of genuine democratization, it is also the result of the need of unwilling elites to gain (temporary) consensus and legitimacy." (Pansters 1999: 247). Arguably as another consequence of this reform, in 2000, the oppositional party, the National Action Party (PAN) won the elections, with Vicente Fox as its presidential candidate. The victory of Vicente Fox and the PAN was considered to be first democratic presidency in Mexico in a hundred years. Fox started using the military against DTOs and made some important arrests during his presidency, such as the two brothers Arellano Félix of the Tijuana Cartel (in 2002 and 2006) and Osiel Cárdenas Guillén, head of the Gulf Cartel in 2003 (Jones 2016: 78-79). Fox's administration, in 2001, eliminated the notoriously corrupt judicial police and founded the *Agencia Federal de Investigación* (AFI), reformed the security apparatus again in 2005 and created the Secretariat of Public Security (SSP). The goal of establishing these institutions and reforms was to increase the effectiveness and professionalism of criminal investigations in Mexico and root out police corruption (Pansters 2012: 13). However, this meant a greater centralization, which further fueled police corruption and violence, but also backtracked the democratic ideal of decentralization. As it pushed some high-raking police and military officials towards corruption and the criminal world, it therefore pushed the Fox administration to find other means to control the problem, including the use of authoritarian-era militarized tactics to get the problem under control, such as the use of highly specialized military personnel against police forces. As many different federal-level agencies were created in a short period of time, it lead to ambiguity about which police force were supposed to do what, be where and why (Davis 2012: 87).

Upon taking office in December 2006, the second PAN-president, Felipe Calderón, embarked on a series of high-profile military interventions in several states. His interventions and his *mano dura* (strong hand) strategy were initially popular. However, after a few years, narco-killings and homicide rates had increased drastically, leading to a polemic situation on whether this highly militarized strategy was the way-to-go for Mexico in order to combat DTOs and drug trafficking networks. In late 2008, Calderón pushed a new Public Security law through Congress.

Its aim was to establish a system of controls over all police forces, the General Attorney, penal systems and lead to the replacement of the Federal Preventative Police by the Federal Police, showing the ever-more-pronounced role of the president and the military in the management of Mexico's law enforcement system (Knight 2012: 115-116, Pansters 2012: 13, Davis 2012: 83). Calderón's administration strategy of highly militarization can also be viewed as a consequence of the intensified cooperation and financial aid by the United States through the Mérida Initiative, which will be discussed into more detail further in this chapter (Jones 2016: 76, 79). The narrative of the presidency of Calderón was that when he assumed presidency, organized drug crime in Mexico had grown into an enormous cancer; its growth had been tolerated by his predecessors and he had "no alternative but to start waging the fight of the state against organized crime" (Kenny & Serrano 2013: 198-199). So, with the financial aid of the US and the narrative of a 'cancerous' organized crime, Felipe Calderón started the infamous "war on drugs" against the Mexican DTOs. As previously mentioned, the homicide rates were peaking during this so-called war on drugs of Calderón, reaching incredibly high levels. The next section will go into further detail on the numbers and statistics.

Enrique Peña Nieto, the PRI presidential candidate, won the elections in 2012, changing the political landscape again after two PAN-presidencies and inheriting an extremely difficult situation regarding organized-crime-related violence, wherein the major DTOs had expanded their illegal activities to extortion, kidnapping for ransom etc. (Rosen & Zepada 2016: 59, Rosen & Martínez 2015: 164, Beittel 2015: 1). Upon coming into office, Peña Nieto promised to reform institutions, specifically the bodies of the police, and to change the strategy of the war against drug trafficking by focusing less on the capture of the drug lords and more on the underlaying issues such as corruption and the fragility of the institutions regarding security. Whereas Felipe Calderón had made great use of the mass media regarding security matters, Peña Nieto decided to keep a low media profile regarding the subject of drug trafficking (Rosen & Zepada 2016: 55-59). Violence supposedly decreased after the last year of Felipe Calderón's presidency and the first year of Enrique Peña Nieto. However, during the following year of his presidency, these levels increased again, due to a change in public discourse regarding the violence and several mass murder tragedies, leading to the eventual most violent year in Mexican history, 2017. The following section will elaborate on the statistics of violence – more specifically homicide and violence rates related to organized crime – in order to depicture the

points of growth and decline throughout these beforementioned presidencies (Rosen & Martínez 2015: 164).

In Table 1, an overview is given of the past four presidents, the political party they belonged to (either PRI or PAN in these cases), the specific operations related to organized crime they started, the different governmental organs and/or institutions they established in relation to the combat of DTOs, judicial reforms in the form of laws in relation to this specific cause, and a list of the (most prominent) present DTOs during the presidency. As the overview shows, former president Ernesto Zedillo started with the process of combatting organized crime by establishing an extensive amount of institutions and commissions regarding the matter. First PAN president Vicente Fox then went through with some reforms in these institutions, then Felipe Calderón continued with a few major operations against the DTOs, accelerating the use of the military in security issues. Enrique Peña Nieto, with his established laws, focused more on the adjacent matters such as 'internal security' and the victims, rather than directly mentioning the matter of crime or violence. What this table also shows is that the number of present DTOs increased significantly during these four presidencies. The next section will elaborate further on this, explaining how during these twenty years, the 'model' of the Mexican DTOs has changed.

Table 1. The operations and institutions related to organized crime during the four presidential terms between 1994 – 2018

Time period & President	Operations related to OC	Institutions related to OC	Laws related to OC	Present DTOs
1994-2000 Ernesto Zedillo (PRI)		Under-Secretariat for Specialized Investigation of Drug Trafficking (SIEDO), Federal Judicial Police (PJF) replaced by Federal Preventative Police (PFP), Special Attorneyship for Crimes Against Health (UEIDCS), National Institute for the Combat of Drug Trafficking (INCD)	Federal Law Against Organized Crime *Ley Federal Contra la Delincuencia Organizada*	Carrillo Fuentes (Juárez Cartel), Arellano Félix (Tijuana Cartel), Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel
2000-2006 Vicente Fox (PAN)	Operation Safe Mexico	Centre of Research and International Security (CISEN), PJF to Federal Ministerial Police (AFI), SIEDO to SEIDO after 2012, Secretariat of Public Security (SSP)	Law of National Security *Ley de Seguridad Nacional* Federal Law of Private Security *Ley Federal de Seguridad Privada*	Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, Los Zetas
2006-2012 Felipe Calderón (PAN)	War on drugs Operation Michoacán Mérida Initiative	Federal Ministerial Police (PFM)	General Law of the National System of Public Security *Ley General del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública*	Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, Los Zetas, Knights Templar, Jalisco New Generation
2012-2018 Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI)			General Law of Victims *Ley General de Víctimas* Law of National Security *Ley de Seguridad Interior*	Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, Los Zetas, Knights Templar, Jalisco New Generation, Cartel Pacífico Sur, Edgar Valdez Villarreal

Source: own elaboration, based on data from: Bailey (2010), Cámara de Diputados, Moloeznik (2006), Pansters (2012), PGR, Seelke & Finklea (2010), SEGOB, Serrano & Kenny (2013), SSP.

2.2. Zooming in on the levels of violence

The following section will elaborate on statistics on homicide rates and violence in Mexico during the presidencies elaborated on in the previous section. It will critically analyze the significance and relevance of these numbers and explain how a changing nature of DTOs in Mexico have played a part in these changes.

2.2.1. Statistical data on the homicide rates from 1994 – 2018

Statistical data on homicide rates and violence in Mexico should be threaded with a critical and analytical view. The main institutions in Mexico publishing these data are the Mexican Secretariat of Governance (SEGOB) together with the Executive Secretariat of the National System for Public Security (SESNP), the National Institute for Statistics and Geography (INEGI), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC – although they mainly use data from INEGI in their graphs). These numbers might be incomplete, ambiguous, in compliance with the current political debate, and especially in the case of Mexico the 'black number', the number of un-denounced delicts, one can assume that statistics are supposedly way higher than these numbers show (Escalante-Gonzalbo 2009: 17). A comparison between the different sources and numbers was studied. However, the relevance of these numbers does not go further from being a general indication of the 'levels of violence' Mexico has faced, wherein the precise numbers are not necessarily relevant towards the central question.[2]

Table 2. shows the possible great differences between the numbers, depending on which data is used. It includes the data the website of the UNODC presents, based on the data from INEGI and the statistics that can be found on the website of the Mexican government (SEGOB/SESNP),

[2] The graphs are based on the metadata from INEGI: http://www.inegi.org.mx/lib/olap/consulta/general_ver4/MDXQueryDatos.asp?proy=, its correctness checked through the document: http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/saladeprensa/boletines/2018/EstSegPub/homicidios2017_07.pdf. The metadata from SEGOB/SESNP was found through: http://secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx/incidencia-delictiva/incidencia-delictiva-fuero-comun.php. In the book of Fernando Escalante-Gonzalbo, *El homicidio en México entre 1990 y 2007,* the numbers are a little bit different when checked. This might be because he includes 'Foreign' homicide rates of Mexicans as well, aside from the homicide rates per federal entity. When the 'foreign' homicide numbers are subtracted, however, the overall homicide rates are still slightly different than the numbers from INEGI, which makes one question where these 'foreign' homicide rates derive from exactly (Escalante-Gonzalbo: 25-28). The UNODC has the same numbers as the archives of INEGI, although the data on the UNODC website only dates back to 2000 and not before that: https://dataunodc.un.org/crime/intentional-homicide-victims.

and the difference between these two.[3] Graph 1 and 2 put these numbers into graphs, to show the general tendency of the homicide rates.

Fernando Escalante-Gonzalbo (2009) criticizes the statistics of SEGOB/SESNP, in a book he wrote on *Homicide in Mexico between 1990 and 2007*, in which he is one of the first academics to critically analyze data on homicide rates. According to Escalante-Gonzalbo, because homicide is a delict of the *fuero común* (common law), which is why it is registered within the registry of the Attorney General's Office (PGR) of the different federal states, and there is no methodology to evaluate this information. These homicides can also be denounced to the public ministry, which means that in some cases the same homicide can be registered double or even three times if there is more than one denouncement, or it can be mistakenly registered as a suicide instead of homicide, or vice versa. So what SEGOB/SESNP can offer, although the data are only from 1997 on as well, are statistics regarding received denouncements, all added up, per state, with a lot or just little information on the actual victims of the crime. That is why, according to Escalante, these numbers are insufficient to study homicide in Mexico (Escalante-Gonzalbo 2009: 18-19). However, although these data might not be the exact statistics and numbers of homicide rates in Mexico, they do however give an indication on the question: 'how violent is Mexico?' (Escalante-Gonzalbo 2009: 18).

Data from SEGOB/SESNP has only been available from the year 1997 on, that is why the years 1994-1996 of the Zedillo administration cannot be shown from SEGOB/SESNP. However, INEGI does have data from the year 1994 on, to give an indication. As mentioned before, these numbers are not assumed to be exact. However, they can be used to show some general tendencies. For example, as the graphs clearly show, between 2007 and 2011 there was a big augmentation in homicide rates in Mexico, 2011 being the year with the highest rate up to that point. Thereafter, as previously mentioned, during the first years of Enrique Peña Nieto's presidency, a steady decline can be noticed. However, 2014 marks a new rise in homicide rates, all the way up to the latest year with data available, 2017, a year that not only marks an enormous increase, but also the highest homicide rate in the history of Mexico (Graphs 1 & 2).

[3] Table 2. is to be interpreted as nothing more than a general indication on how greatly the numbers on homicide rates in Mexico differ between the two institutions, demonstrating how difficult it is to work with these data.

Table 2. Difference between statistics INEGI and SEGOB/SESNP

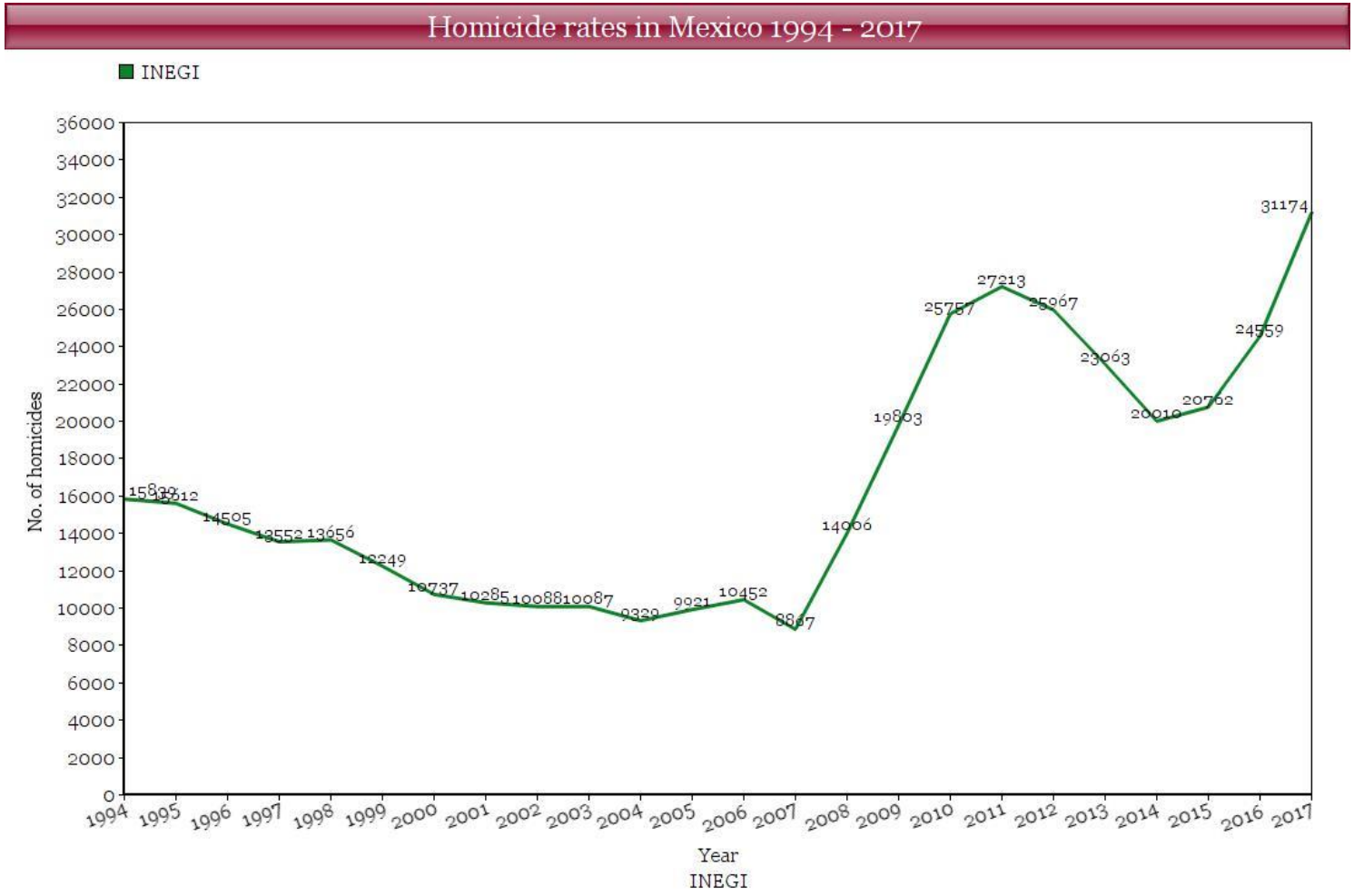
Year	Total no. of homicides		Difference
	INEGI	SEGOB/SESNP	
1994	15,839		
1995	15,612		
1996	14,505		
1997	13,552	16,866	+3314
1998	13,656	14,216	+963
1999	12,249	14,619	+2370
2000	10,737	13,849	+3112
2001	10,285	13,855	+3570
2002	10,088	13,148	+3060
2003	10,087	12,676	+2589
2004	9329	11,658	+2329
2005	9921	11,245	+1324
2006	10,452	11,806	+1354
2007	8867	10,253	+1386
2008	14,006	13,155	-851
2009	19,803	16,118	-3685
2010	25,757	20,143	-5614
2011	27,213	22,409	-4804
2012	25,967	21,459	-4508
2013	23,063	18,106	-4957
2014	20,010	15,520	-4490
2015	20,762	16,909	-3853
2016	24,559	20,547	-4012
2017	31,174	25,339	-5835

Source: own elaboration, based on data from UNODC, INEGI and SEGOB/SESNP.

Graph 1. Homicide rates in Mexico 1994-2017: INEGI & SEGOB/SESNP

Source: own elaboration, based on data from INEGI and SEGOB/SESNP.

Graph 2. Homicide rates in Mexico 1994-2017: INEGI



Source: own elaboration, based on data from INEGI.

2.2.2. Rising levels of violence and the changing nature of criminal organizations

As Table 1 shows, the number of criminal organizations with a significant presence in Mexico has evolved and they have multiplied. Not only have their numbers increased, their ways of acting as an organization underwent a transformation as well. Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera (2017), in her book *Los Zetas Inc.*, analytically studies Los Zetas, a criminal organization that established its presence with extreme and indiscriminate violence, leaving videos of decapitations on YouTube, dissolving bodies completely in acid so that nothing would be left, and resorting to other ways of income other than drug trafficking, such as extortion, kidnapping for ransom, etc. (Blog del Narco, Gatapardo 'Entrevista con una Zeta'[4], Correa-Cabrera 2017: 50-60, Williams 2010: 25). According to Correa-Cabrera, Los Zetas portrayed the perfect example of a new 'model' of drug trafficking organization. Figure 1. is extracted from one of the pages of *Los Zetas Inc*. and shows the differences between what Correa-Cabrera refers to as a 'Traditional TCO (Transnational Criminal Organization)' and Los Zetas (Correa-Cabrera 2017: 56-59).

Figure 1. The Traditional TCO model vs. the Zeta model

	Traditional TCO	*Los Zetas*
Activity	drug trafficking	diversification of criminal activities
Hierarchy	strong, vertical	horizontal, decentralized
Leadership/organization, structure	family ties, cronyism, compadre system	networks
Enforcers	guarded by amateur killers	professional armed wing
Territorial control	moves restricted to specific territorial spaces	aggressive expansionist aspirations
Violence	controlled, disciplined	indiscriminate, brutal

Source: Correa-Cabrera (2017) *Los Zetas Inc.*: 5

[4] *Blog del Narco* is a website on which an anonymous blogger shares detailed information about the most recent captures of *narcos,* narco-violence, and state announcements regarding the drug trafficking organizations and criminak violence. The website also includes gruesome videos of the narco-violence, such as the decapitation exercised by Los Zetas, as mentioned: https://elblogdelnarco.com/. The small interview of 'Entrevista con un Zeta' [literally translated: "Interview with a Zeta"] by Jon Lee Anderson can be found on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPuWmkmVOmQ. The written version, in which the Zeta member explains how the *cocina* ('kitchen') works, in which bodies are burned and dissolved in acid, can be found here: https://gatopardo.com/reportajes/entrevista-con-un-zeta/.

As mentioned before; whereas drug trafficking used to be the sole focus of the traditional model of a TCO, Los Zetas diversified their activities with e.g. extortion and kidnapping for ransom. The hierarchical structure, usually based on family ties, of the traditional model, is a more horizontal and decentralized structure in the case of Los Zetas (Correa-Cabrera 2017: 60-63). This makes it, for example, irrelevant to exercise a *kingpin strategy,* a strategy the US used in cooperation with Colombia as well. The main objective of this *kingpin strategy* is capturing the *capos* of the trafficking organizations, with the aim of decapitating and therefore dismantling the organization (Jones 2016: 80-81, Rosen & Zepada 2016: 57-58). Having a horizontal structure with multiple cells functioning independently and professionally trained wingmen for protection (in the case of Los Zetas, they were presumably trained by the US and Israeli army), this strategy could never lead to direct dismantling. With their indiscriminate violence, Los Zetas established their presence the hard way, desiring to take over more and more territory, whereas the 'older' and 'traditional' drug trafficking organizations stuck to a specific territory, which usually had been theirs for years or even decades (Correa-Cabrera 2017: 60-63). Correa-Cabrera also argues that this (para)militarization of TCOs in Mexico "was possible due to a loosening in the state-organized crime nexus in an era of democratization" which is why Mexico's TCOs cannot be viewed as traditional 'loyalist paramilitaries' of the Mexican government, but rather "have established complex relationships with the state, in some regions acting as the *patrones* (bosses) and in other regions as the clients" (Correa-Cabrera 2017: 96). This referred to paramilitarization of the DTOs "enabled them to take away the state's sole grasp on the means of violence" (Correa-Cabrera 2017: 95).[5]

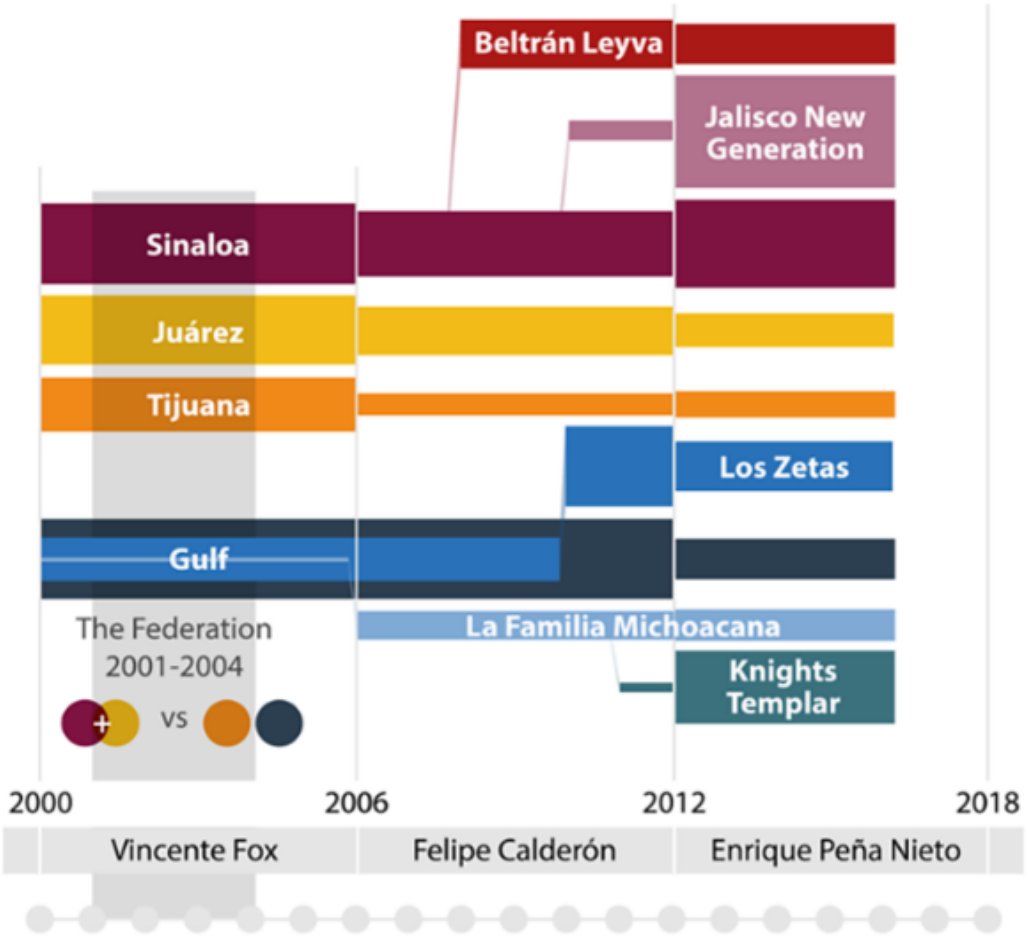
The BBC published an overview of the fragmentation of the Mexican DTOs between 2000 and 2018 (Figure 2), and a map of the general presence of the most prominent criminal organizations (Figure 3).[6] Although the BBC referred to these organizations as 'drug cartels', they are hereby solely referred to as drug trafficking organizations or DTOs, as a there is a

[5] For a more elaborate review of the history of the current and former Mexican drug trafficking organizations, revise Luis Astorga (2010): "Drug trafficking organizations and counter-drug strategies in US-Mexican context", Luis Astorga (2005): *El siglo de las drogas* and/or Nathan Jones (2016): *Mexico's Illicit Drug Networks and the State Reaction.*

[6] For a more elaborate overview of the presence of drug trafficking organizations in Mexico, revise the *Atlas de la Seguridad y la Defensa en México 2016*, published by Sergio Aguayo and Raúl Benítez (2016), pages 249-255. In 2019 a new *Atlas de la Seguridad y la Defensa en México* is supposed to be published, with an analysis of the most up-to-date statistics up to 2018.

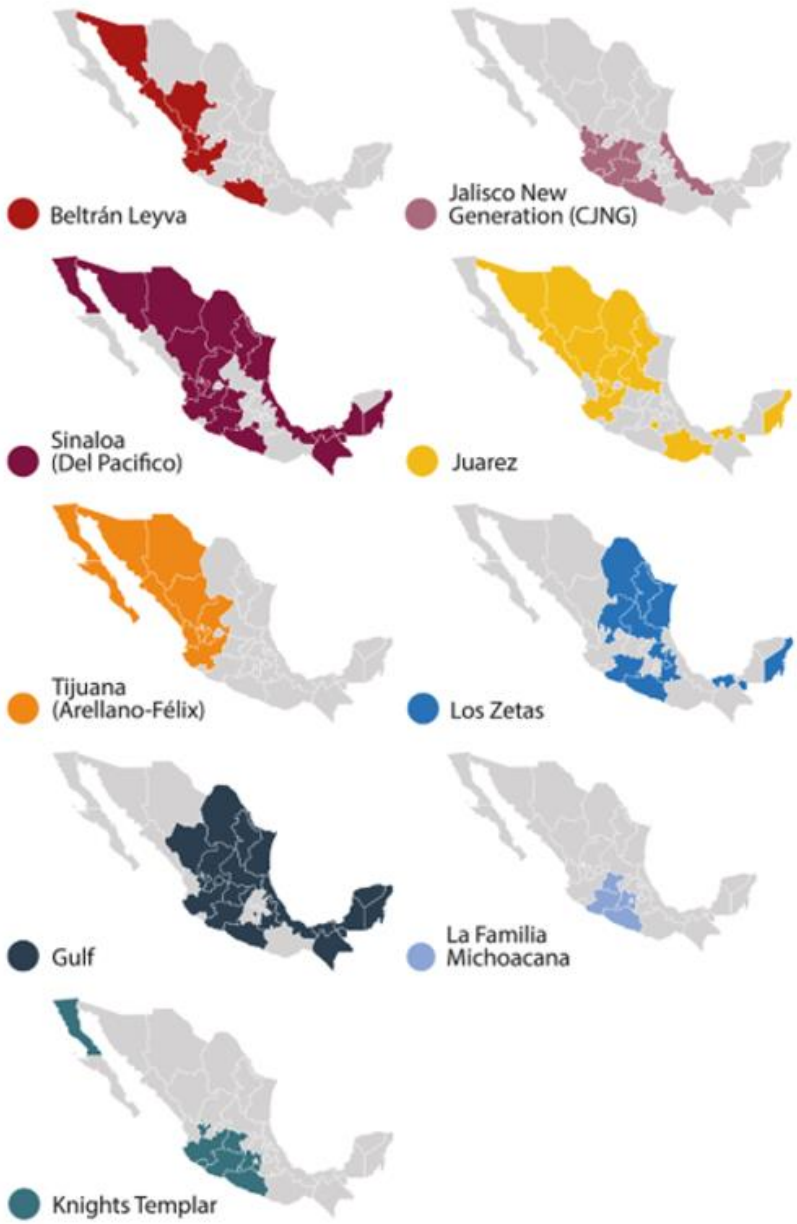
preference not to be using the word 'cartel', as it has not been defined properly (Luis Astorga, personal communication, August 21st, 2018, Correa-Cabrera 2017, Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, personal communication, June 13th, 2018). Although this section discusses the new 'forms' of drug trafficking organizations, in which the ways of income do not solely depend on drug trafficking anymore, do they still have part in the criminal activity of the drug business. Therefore, when referring to these criminal organizations, the term 'drug trafficking organization' (DTO) is used throughout this study.

Figure 2. Fragmentation major Mexican DTOs between 2000-2018



Source: BBC Monitoring – Insight (published on January 15th, 2018, 11:50 hrs.)

Figure 3. Principal areas of operation major DTOs in 2018



Source: BBC Monitoring – Insight (published on January 15th, 2018, 11:50 hrs.)

What Figure 2 portrays well is the increase in numbers of DTOs in Mexico between 2000 and 2018 as well as their size and influence. For example, one can see that the influence of the DTOS of Sinaloa, Juárez and Gulf have decreased greatly in comparison with the presidency of Vicente Fox, and that new DTOs such as the Beltrán Leyva, Jalisco New Generation (CJNG), La Familia Michoacana and Los Zetas came up during Calderón's presidency, La Familia also fragmenting into the Knights Templar as well, increasingly greatly in influence and size during

the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto. Figure 3 then displays the areas of influence of the DTOs mentioned in Figure 2, showing that due to this fragmentation, the biggest DTOs still have a big presence, but that there are now multiple territories in which more than one DTO has presence, explaining which areas might be facing serious territorial disputes and therefore high levels of violence in Mexico, which is shown by Figure 4 and Figure 5 in section 3.1.1. wherein the map of Mexico with numbers of homicides per municipality and state is displayed. It is apparent that for example in the state of Guerrero there is relation between these factors.

2.3 The years of a drastic increase in homicide rates: 2011, 2014 and 2017

As one can read from the previously shown graphs, the years 2011, 2014 and 2017 were years of a substantial change in levels of homicides, and therefore levels of violence. This section will take a closer look on these years, giving the context in which these points of increase occurred, in order to answer the question: how do these (historical) events explain the high levels of violence in Mexico?

2.3.1. The war on drugs in Mexico

The war on drugs has been mentioned before. Although the War on Drugs of the US had been going on already from 1986 on (officially), this term was officially first mentioned during the presidency of Felipe Calderón.[7] Because of his unbelievably close and questionable victory over Andrés Manuel López Obrador (with only a 0.58 percent margin), the legitimacy of president Calderón was questioned extensively. In order to gain legitimacy, Calderón became the president of the war on drugs (Kenny & Serrano 2013: 73, 205).[8] Only from his administration on, Calderón negotiated unprecedented levels of cooperation between the United States and Mexican law enforcement, in order to combat the Mexican drug networks with *la mano dura*,

[7] United States president Ronald Reagan officially declared the US War on Drugs in February 1982, in order to curtail the US drug epidemic. In 1986, the year of the annual certification process for producing and trafficking countries, Reagan declared drug trafficking a threat to national security. The War on Drugs hereby became transnational (Bagley: 189, Astorga: 80).

[8] The war on drugs of Felipe Calderón is not referred to as War on Drugs, as the US had already mentioned this concept before, also in the Mexican context, with Operation Intercept in 1969 and Operation Condor in 1977 (Astorga: 80). This is why the reason of *not* writing war on drugs with capital letters is that this war is not only adhered to the presidency of Calderón. Although it has been a characteristic feature of his [Calderón's] administration, with him using this term openly within Mexico, the combat against drug trafficking organizations and its consequences had been going on to a certain degree in previous decades, continues with the Enrique Peña Nieto administration and will probably continue for another few decades.

['the strong hand'], to combat the 'cancer' the drug trafficking organizations in Mexico had become (Kenny & Serrano: 198-199).[9] In order to do so, the Mérida Initiative was developed in 2007, a US-Mexican 'partnership' in which Mexico received $2.5 billion in US military equipment and aid for its fight against the Mexican DTOs. The Mérida Initiative was based on the previous US-Colombian 'partnership' of Plan Colombia, which from the US point of view had been a success (Jones 2016: 79, Kenny & Serrano 2013: 217, Rosen & Martínez 2015: 158). However, according to State Department cables published by WikiLeaks, the Calderón administration officials acknowledged that there was a de-emphasis of capacity building and training in the early steps of the Mérida Initiative, which ended up being problematic for its success (Jones 2016: 79). The heavy focus on military personnel and equipment show the militarization of the Mexican state during the years of Felipe Calderón, in which the state turned to violence and 'political policing', supporting the legislative enhancement of local police powers. Due to the militarization of the police, some scholars referred to Mexico being a 'police state' (Davis 2012: 83). This conclusion was also drawn based on the series of military interventions President Calderón embarked on in several states, only a few days after taking power in December 2006. Although these interventions were initially popular, after a few years the homicide statistics that were published showed a dramatic increase, failing to eliminate the what Alan Knight refers to as 'narco-power', or the power and influence the drug trafficking organizations had (Knight 2012: 115). Instead of eliminating this narco-power, it showed that "apparent government successes – killings, arrests, and extraditions – may reflect the well-known '*cucaracha* (cockroach) effect', as targeted criminals scatter and regroup" (Knight 2012: 115-116). As a response to the tough *mano dura* policy of Felipe Calderón, the rival DTOs now started to conduct a more open battle for control, confronting the state head on by assassinating state and high-raking federal officers, therefore now targeting public authorities, creating a 'theater of war' (Knight 2012: 133-134, Serrano 2012: 153).

This militarization strategy of Felipe Calderón therefore had three major consequences. Firstly, Mexican DTOs re-structured, re-organized and militarized as well, violence and war became a more public spectacle, debilitating the state's ability to provide security.[10] Secondly, it brought

[9] Consequently, as police violence was driven by the *mano dura* of Felipe Calderón, it was also referred to as a 'zero tolerance' approach and policy by local and national governments (Koonings in Pansters: 262).
[10] This is shown by the emergence of new criminal organizations, such as Los Zetas and La Familia Michoacana, which also conducted other types of criminal activities such as extorsion and kidnapping. Whereas before 2006

up complaints about human rights violations by the army and police: e.g. critique towards the military captures of *narcos* referred to being *falsos positivos*, previously used by the Álvaro Uribe government in Colombia (Fazio 2016: 84).[11] And thirdly, it caused an exponential increase of homicide rates in Mexico, with which it is unclear how one can measure whether these were assassinations of *narcos* or the population or the security apparatus itself (military and/or police).

2.3.2. The impact of the Ayotzinapa kidnapping of 43 students

During the last year of the last year of the Felipe Calderón administration (2011) and the first years of Enrique Peña Nieto's presidency (2012-2014), there was an decline in homicide rates (See Graph 1 and 2). However, after 2014, a rapid increase in homicide rates can be noticed. This section will explain the events surrounding 2014, therefore giving the context in which this increase in homicide rates occurred.

During his presidency Enrique Peña Nieto decided to, instead of putting emphasis on the combat and actual war against the drug trafficking organizations, focus on the prevention of it, regarding matters such as corruption and generating intelligence rather than direct confrontations. However, his discourse and strategy had to change in 2014, when in Iguala, Guerrero, just like in 1968, young students became victims. The students from the rural school for teachers, Normal de Ayotzinapa, disappeared, after returning from participating in a protest against the municipal government. In the following weeks, a series of mass graves was found close to Iguala, but whether these were the corpses of the missing students was never confirmed. After this disappearance, thousands of Mexican have participated in protests demanding government action (Aguayo 2015: 159-160, Rosen & Zepada 2016: 64). According to certain testimonies, it was the mayor of Iguala who ordered the detention of the group of

there were only 6 drug trafficking/violent criminal organizations, in 2007 there were 8 principal organizations, in 2010 there were 12, and in 2012 there were 16 identified drug trafficking organizations (Rosen & Martínez: 158, Williams: 25, see also Table 1. with the general overview of the augmentation of the principal drug trafficking organizations). Not only did violence between the state and the drug trafficking organizations increase, but also between the different drug trafficking organizations, battling for more territorial control (Pereyra 2012: 450).

[11] *Falsos positivos* were a way of 'military terrorism' during the Álvaro Uribe administration in Colombia, in which, as a part of a dirty war against the drug traffickers, in which civilians were executed and afterwards dressed up as guerrillas, to present them as trophies and 'dead state enemies'. This is also referred to as *resultados positivos,* or 'positive results' (Fazio: 84). In the Mexican context, these *falsos positivos* are relevant because people did not trust the statements of the police or army about capturing the drug lords and the captures were consequently highly criticized.

students to a paramilitary group associated with drug trafficking. Fact is that the federal government did not respond to the matter until after one week, because of the discovery of the mass graves and the fleeing of the mayor, who was captured a few days after (Méndez 2017: 250-251). Ayotzinapa was not the only event regarding the disappearance and/or execution of civilians. In the same year, June 2014, 22 people from Tlatlaya, including minors, supposedly associated with drug trafficking, were executed by a military operative in Iguala. After the disappearance of the 43 students of Ayotzinapa in September 2014, there were the massacres of Apatzingán in January 2015, Tanhuato (May 2015) and Nochixtlán (June 2016), in which for various motives, elements of the federal police opened fire to a number of civilians (Acosta 2016: 73).

The magnitude of the tragedy of Ayotzinapa, and the slowness of the federal government, however, was the event that provoked a national public security crisis and an international condemning, that hit the Peña Nieto government hard, showing the increasing incapacity of the Mexican state to provide adequate public security (Méndez 2017). It brought to light the inefficiency, corruptness and impunity that prevailed in the Mexican state, just like the ominous presence of organized crime in the region, the disinterest for the victims by the public institutions. It put pressure on Mexico because of globalization and the knowledge of the event within the international sphere and the increasing knowledge and awareness of the Mexican public opinion about human rights, leading to increased protests demanding justice (Aguayo 2015: 143, 159-161). Ayotzinapa demonstrated the strongly intertwined state-organized crime relation, and its impact changed the public discourse on this relation, therefore forcing the presidential discourse regarding the matter to change as well.[12]

2.3.3. The highest number of homicides in Mexican history: 2017

As the graphs with the statistics of INEGI show, 2017 marked the year with the highest homicide rates in at least 20 years, arguably the highest ever, with 31,174 homicides within the same

[12] For a more detailed evaluation of the implications and consequences of Ayotzinapa, the articles of Miguel Concha Malo: "Ayotzinapa: Preocupaciones abiertas", Magdalena Gómez: "Ayotzinapa: de la crisis humanitaria a la crisis de Estado" and Luis Hernández Navarro "Ayotzinapa: el dolor y la esperanza", all from January – February 2015 and all published by *El Cotidiano* of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Azcapotzalco are recommended.

year. This means 85 homicides per day.[13] This number indicates 3961 more homicides than the previous highest year of homicide rates, with 27,213 in 2011, after four years of Calderón's war on drugs (INEGI). Already in January 2017, Mexico registered more homicides than in January of any other previous year (Beittel 2015: 1). These statistics show the severity of the security situation in Mexico and how one can conclude that violence is spinning out of control. It also explains why security has been a major point of focus during the presidential campaign of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) and could explain why the Mexican people therefore massively voted for him, as they are fed up with the excessive amount of homicides that take place in their country.

2.4. Conclusion

After the more-than-70-years of hegemony of the PRI, PAN-candidate Vicente Fox won the Mexican presidential elections of 2000. His predecessor Ernesto Zedillo (PRI) had already started some reforms regarding security policies, and Vicente Fox continued with these reforms, hereby centralizing Mexican security apparatus, leading to a police force more prone to corruption and violence. This violence culminated when his PAN-successor Felipe Calderón took over power in 2006, and started with some major military interventions during his first weeks of presidency. Under Calderón, the policy against the DTOs militarized, with increased aid by the United States through the Mérida Initiative, which lead to the militarization of the police and the grand use of the Mexican military in operations against drug trafficking networks and organizations. Although 2006 shows a decline in homicide rates, after a few years of this war on drugs, 2011 reached a high point. As a consequence of the policies of militarization, Mexican DTOs not only began to fragment (*cucharacha*-effect due to a *kingpin strategy*) but also reshape and re-organize, and violence became a theatric spectacle also by the DTOs, who were with now with more numbers, fighting over more territorial control. According to Calderón et al (2015), there are four mechanisms through which the militarization- and *kingpin strategy* of Felipe Calderón lead to violence; 1) they might cause succession struggles within the drug trafficking organization itself; 2) inter-DTO fighting might increase due to turf wars; 3) by breaking the chains of command within a DTO might disrupt the role they play in discipling

[13] This is calculated when taking the statistics of INEGI instead of SEGOB/SESNP. Also, statistics on homicide rates are not covered throughout all Mexican history. INEGI does also show murder statistics per month, but the furthest these data/statistics go back in years is 1990. SEGOB/SESNP only started publishing statistics after 1997. It is however by far the year with the highest number in homicide rates from the last 20 years.

the local criminal cells; and 4) the DTOs might decide to attack the state, hoping the state will attribute it to a rival organization. These are the mechanisms that breed violence in Mexico and show the dialectic relations between the state and organized crime, as they influence one another through violent practices (Calderón et al. 2015: 1459-1461).

Because of the critics towards this militarization strategy, the following president, Enrique Peña Nieto, promised the Mexican public that he would focus more on underlying issues such as corruption in order to indirectly combat DTOs. However, the complexity of the relationship between Mexican politics and DTOs became apparent with the failure to respond quickly to the massacres in 2014 and 2015, specifically Ayotzinapa with its magnitude. INEGI and SEGOB/SESNP statistics and data show a big augmentation in homicide rates in the following years, reaching its peak up-to-now in 2017, with a record number of 31,174 homicides in one year. These high numbers of homicides and therefore high levels of violence in Mexico can therefore be explained through a changing relationship between DTOs and the Mexican state, because they both exposed this relationship more openly and at the same time show the complexity of this exact relationship as well; with violence as the connecting factor between the two. Question remains how the dynamics of this specific culmination of violence works and has affected and currently affects the legitimacy of the Mexican state, in order to exercise its power and authority in possible new security policy measures and scenarios. Untangling this dialectic relationship between organized crime and the Mexican state through violence and legitimacy is what the following sections will attempt to do.

Chapter 3 - *The complexities of violence in Mexico: intensification, diversification, normalization and the struggle between the state, DTOs and society*

As the previous chapter has explained, the PAN-administration of Vicente Fox reformed the Mexican security apparatus which led to a more corrupt police force. His successor Felipe Calderón took over power in 2006 and highly militarized the Mexican security strategy, by deploying extensive numbers of military personnel in order to combat DTOs. His presidency came with an unprecedented number of arrests, wherein between March 2009 and January 2011 the army, navy and federal police had either captured or killed 20 of the 37 most wanted drug lords in the country (Calderón et al 2015: 1456). What also differentiated his administration from the previous one was the drastic increase in homicide rates and thus violence, a trend which continued with his successor Enrique Peña Nieto, with homicide rates reaching it's all-time-peak in 2017 with a number of 31,174 (INEGI & SEGOB/SESNP). Violence did not only change in numbers, but also in its ways; with kidnappings and extortion as new ways of income for the DTOs, and therefore more civilian victims of the open war between organized crime and the Mexican government (Calderón et al. 2015, Mendoza 2008, Rosen & Martínez 2015, Rosen & Zepada 2016). This change in violence shows the complex interplay between the Mexican state and organized crime. This chapter will try to untangle this complex dynamic by analyzing the dynamics, actors and effects of violence in Mexico during Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto's administration. It will analyze the dimensions of violence in Mexico and elaborate on the factors contributing to the violence such as geographical location or territorial absence of the state, the international processes of modernization, globalization and neoliberalism, the not only *quantitative* but also *qualitative* change in violence and the normalization of violence within Mexican society.

3.1. The dimensions of violence in Mexico

This section will analyze the different international and national transformation processes that need to be taken into account when looking at violence in Mexico. Throughout this study, these processes are referred to as 'dimensions', as they together form the characteristics of the violence in Mexico.

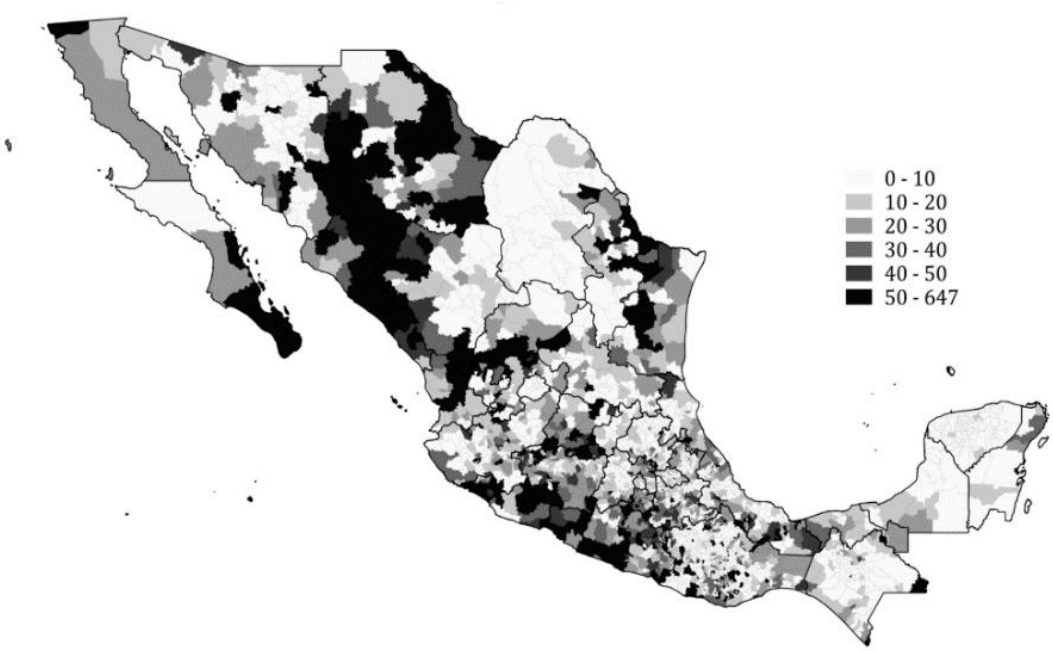
3.1.1. The factor of geography in Mexico: territorial absence of the state and the micro-dynamics of violence

As the Mexicans themselves would agree, Mexico is actually many Mexico's, in the sense that the social context is different per municipality. As a consequence, the type of violence exercised in a certain area also depends on the geographical location of the municipality in which it occurs (Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo, personal communication, August 6, 2018). According to academic scholar and professor Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo, geography is an important factor when looking at levels of violence and types of violence in Mexico. As an example, he argues about the Chihuahua-Pacific railway constructed by former dictator Porfirio Díaz, from los Mochis towards Chihuahua, which is the only connection between the coastal region and Chihuahua. There are no roads in the Sierra Madre, the mode of transport there is airplanes. These are 'strategic' places for the drug trafficking business, and will therefore be more prone to disputes over territorial control, sought after through their the use of violence to establish their presence or the corruption of municipal governors (Aguayo 2015: 155, Calderón et al 2015: 1457, Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo, personal communication, August 6th, 2018). By controlling certain deserted territories, drug lords can for example construct helipads to continue their operations, without being detected by the government, because there is no one and nothing in the area. Because instead of a 'failed state' there simply is no state, and the railway can transport anything without intervention, and these areas are thus prone to criminal activity and therefore violence (Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo, personal communication, August 6, 2018).

Carlos Resa Nestares created an overview of these homicides per 100,000 inhabitants per municipality in Mexico in 2017, as shown in Figure 4, giving an indication of the geographical location of the highest and lowest homicide rates, but also show how high the statistics in 2017

were.[14] [15] Figure 5, based on an article from BBC, includes the homicide rates per Mexican state. This way the geographical location of the places with the highest intensity of violence can be seen.

Figure 4. Homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants per municipality in Mexico in 2017



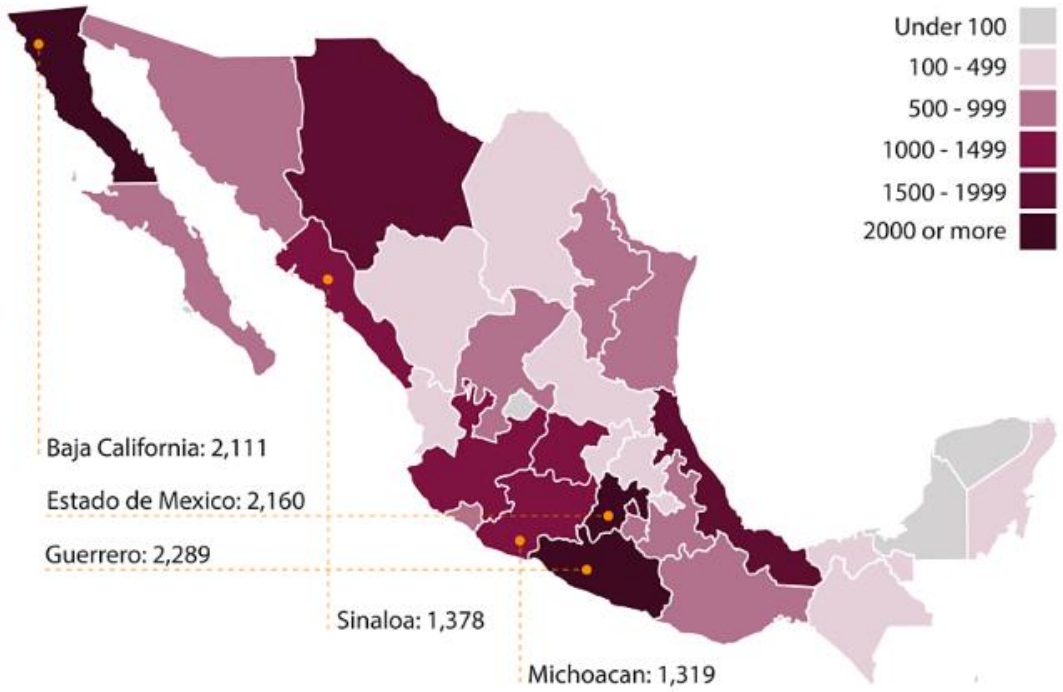
Source: Carlos Resa Nestares (data collected from INEGI):
http://www.uam.es/personal_pdi/economicas/cresa/MexMunicipalHomicideRates17.html

[14] This table also shows the geographic location of the highest homicide rates. The municipalities with the highest homicide rates in 2017 can be studied in more depth in order to write an ethnography of the place. Take for example the written work of Natalia Mendoza (2015): *Conversaciones en el desierto: Cultura y tráfico de drogas,* about the small community of Altar, in the state Sonora (which, as you can see in Table 6. has high homicide rates per municipality).

[15] Carlos Resa Nestares, on the same page of his website, displays both an overview of the 10 most quiet cities in Mexico in 2017, regarding homicide rates as well as the 20 most dangerous municipalities, the 10 most dangerous cities, and the variation of homicide rates per municipality in Mexico in comparison with the previous year: http://www.uam.es/personal_pdi/economicas/cresa/MexMunicipalHomicideRates17.html. The statistics might be useful for further studies regarding the relation of homicide rates and DTO presence in the studied area.

Figure 5. Number of homicides in Mexico in 2017 per state

Homicides up to, but not including, December



Source: BBC Monitoring – Insight (published on January 15th, 2018, 12:18 hrs.). based on data from the Federal Government of Mexico (SEGOB).

Once the control over certain municipal 'plazas' is established, violence starts once again when once of the drug lords is arrested or killed (Pereyra 2012: 442-443). This is shown by an investigation by Holland & Rios (2017) regarding the micro-dynamics of violence in relation to violence against the press in Mexico. They argue that in municipalities where the competition over local drug markets is very high and no monopolistic control is established, there is fatal violence against the press, as drug trafficking organizations find the need to control information leakage great enough to use violence as well. (Holland & Rios 2017: 18-19). Referring back to Calderón et al. (2015), the militarization and *kingpin* strategy of Calderón also caused a 'spillover' effect of violence on a local scale, as well as what they call a 'hydra' effect. The 'hydra' effect means that intra- and inter-DTO fighting between the fragmented DTOs increased as well as violence against the population that is not directly involved in drug trafficking. The 'spillover' effect means that within six to twelve months after the intervention in which the *capo* is captured, there are also increases in homicides within the general population, presumably

explained a loss of control over local criminal cells after the general leader has been removed (Calderón et al: 1481).

3.1.2. The modern and global dimension of violence

Violence in Mexican society is not necessarily a new phenomenon. It has been absorbed within Mexican culture, and has been part of Mexican history. As Claudio Lomnitz (2005) writes in his book *Death and the Idea of Mexico*, violence and the role of 'death' in Mexican culture and identity goes a long way back. He writes about the time of the colonization in the Americas by the Spanish, and how the interplay between the Indians and the Spaniards shifted from depicting each other as animals, shifting between civilization and animality. As the Spaniards and the Indians both underwent different cycles of massive dying due to the exchange of diseases already existing on the continent and the ones brought along by the Spaniards, the Spaniards first saw their invulnerability to certain diseases as a divine justice, legitimating their political order and violence and subordinating the Indians to brutes (Lomnitz 2005: 70, 80). The systematic use of violence against the Indians, or the native population, in a physical and psychological way, were omnipresent during the European conquest, destroying existing social patterns and implying a 'policy of death' in which the domination of the master over the slave was absolute (Koonings & Kruijt 1999: 5, Fazio 2016: 13). As Koonings & Kruijt argue: "In fact, violence has historically been a central feature in the evolution of Latin American societies" (Koonings & Kruijt 1999: 5).

Although once might argue that all nation-states have experienced violence as a part of their past; either being colonized or participating in the First and/or Second World War, the process in Latin America, and therefore also specifically Mexico, has been distinct. The process of modernization and the construction of the modern system of nation-states has changed the dynamics of violence. Koonings & Kruijt argue that it is incorrect to see the more recent forms of violence in relation with underdevelopment or incomplete modernity and therefore adhering it only to developing or transitory countries. According to them, a number of scholars has been paying attention to the construction of our modern world, and this process of 'modernization', in this sense not only "the transition from agricultural societies to urbanizing nation-states, typically involved forms of elimination and re-accommodation of social classes", but also "the deployment of military violence by contending policies" (Koonings & Kruijt 1999:

4). However, as organized crime has developed accordingly to modernization processes, opening new ways for drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking and terrorism, it has become "modern threat to national security". They cause corruption, hurt the national image and are the principal source of violence and insecurity for society and threaten institutions (Moloeznik 2006: 174). Several international developments have played a role in this development of organized crime.

One transnational development that has affected the relationship between the state and DTOs has been neoliberalism. Neoliberal reforms mean opening up the economy towards the rest of the world, therefore increasing the transnational character of the national economy, whilst decreasing the state's central role in the market mechanism. Organized crime benefitted from the demolition of the boundaries between Mexico and the rest of the world. This is where the usage of the word Transnational Organized Crime (TCO) emerged as a new concept and widely accepted thread towards other countries as well.

Another transnational development that has had its effect is that the neoliberal world economy has gone accompanied by globalization, fostering interdependence between economies and decreasing the role of the national state, providing an environment for growing criminalization whilst also leading to a decentralization of violence. Therefore, a monopoly of violence in the hands of the state was also decentralized (Fazio 2016: 21, Aguayo 2015: 148-149, Kaldor 2013: 86, 185). As a consequence, these new international market dynamics have caused change in the dynamics of violence on a local level in Mexico as well. Take for example Tijuana, Mexicali, Nogales, El Paso, Juárez and Nuevo Laredo. These cities came up from the year 1995 on; the population increased over 70% within 20 years, it more than duplicated. As a consequence, by far not everyone has access to drinking water or light, therefore increasing the possibility of violence and crime. Also, in certain areas, there has been a great change in mode of productivity and the vocation of the people, such as for example areas in which petroleum was discovered, where farming was replaced by car factories and oil companies. These huge changes in a specific area obviously affect social relations in the area, as some people lose big and others win big (Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo, personal communication, August 6th, 2018). As Serrano (2012) states: "In Mexico, as elsewhere, the opening of an internal market has encouraged

decentralized forms of control, fostering in turn the more violent disorganization of the marketplace" (Serrano 2012: 152).

3.1.3. The diversification of violence: a *quantitative* and *qualitative* transformation

According to academic writer and professor Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, in the last decade, two transformations in the scope of violence have taken place. On the one hand, there has been a *quantitative* transformation, which means that there has been a significant increase in homicides, and therefore a significant increase in violence. This impacts the hope and life expectancy in Mexico, and effects the 'demographic fine', because both the majority of the perpetrators and the majority of the victims are young of a productive age. Looking at the demographic fine in Mexico, it shows that not only have homicide rates increased drastically, the targets of the homicides has covered a new demographic as well. Victims now very obviously include local authority figures such as politicians, and journalists and bloggers, even victims keeping a Twitter account regarding *narcos,* narco-violence and the war on drugs in general (Correa-Cabrera 2017, Francisco Gómez, personal communication , September 13th 2018)**.** The violence against journalists and (political) authority figures continues in 2018, with the deaths of at least 7 journalists in the first seven months 2018 (*El Nuevo Diario* – July 24th 2018).[16] For example, during the electoral campaigns before the elections of July 2018, between September 8th 2017 and June 16th of 2018, according to information of consultancy agency Etellekt, 120 municipal politicians have been assassinated (CNN – June 25th 2018).[17]

On the other hand there has also been a *qualitative* transformation, which has to do with the ways these homicides are executed. In the last decade, it has not just been executions, but other than the act of execution itself, it has gone accompanied by torture and other inhumane and degrading treatment. Also, making the bodies disappear in clandestine mass graves or dissolving the bodies in acid so that nothing is left has been part of the crisis of *desaparecidos,* in which it is impossible for families to retrieve the bodies of their loved ones. So in the past

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The Organization for the Defense of Journalists, Article 19, registered that between the year 2000 and July 3rd 2018, 117 journalists have been assassinated, most probably due to their work on journalism: https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2018/07/24/asesinan-a-un-periodista-en-playa-del-carmen-segun-la-onu-habia-denunciado-vinculos-de-funcionarios-con-delincuencia-organizada/.

[17] The link to his article is as follows: https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2018/06/25/mexico-violencia-campana-120-politicos-asesinados/. The '5th Inquiry of Political Violence in Mexico' of Etellekt can be found here: http://www.etellekt.com/reporte/quinto-informe-de-violencia-politica-en-mexico.html#.

twelve to fifteen years, these two transformations in violence, the numbers of homicides and the methodology of the homicides, have taken place in Mexico. This changed dynamic is also shown by the ways in which DTOs display the corpses, in a public way, sometimes with messages attached to them, directed at other delinquent groups, specific government agents, or to generally terrorize the population (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018, Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, personal communication, June 13th, 2018). According to journalist Francisco Gómez, the level of increase of violence also has to do with the political and social changes Mexico has underwent, or in his words 'suffered', lately. Operatives have disappeared, political *caciques* [literally translated 'strongmen'] and strong political groups that used to validate the dominant criminal groups, and the social and political environment they are in are questioned. From Gómez's point of view, political parties used to be intermediaries as managers of benefits for the population and controlling organized crime at the same time, but there has been a loss of control over political and social ties, due to higher levels of violence and with higher levels of violence as a result (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018).

But violence has not solely been confined to the political sphere and institutions, nor is the open display of the violence the only one that affects social relations in Latin America. Other factors are social and economic deprivation, discrimination and kidnapping. These factors contribute to a what Torres-Rivas (1999) calls 'livelihood insecurity', "what some would call *structural violence,* but with violence and fear that are more directly related to the way political power has been used" (Torres-Rivas 1999: 5-6). The confrontation that has been going on the past 12 years, due to the militarization strategy of Felipe Calderón, has been unsuccessful. The people have lost trust in the army and marine, and they are perceived as abusive. The direct intervention of the military to DTOs has become a *spiral of violence,* with violence inflicted by both organized crime but also the response by the Mexican military, in which the armed forces have broken a lot of human rights laws (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 13th, 2018). And instead of giving society a sense of security, the strategy has proven to be counterproductive in a lot of ways, because, according to Francisco Gómez, the government did not think out their strategy properly, thinking that just military presence would decrease [criminal] activity. However, "nor the activity nor the intensity [of the conflict] has decreased.

On the contrary, the intensity of the confrontation has increased and civil society has paid the high price." (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018).

3.1.4. The normalization and atomization of violence in Mexico: a narcoculture

Drug-related violence under president Calderón increased by 300% and under president Enrique Peña Nieto, Mexico faced the year with the highest homicide rates in history in 2017 (Calderón et al: 1480-1482). Overall, during this period of their presidencies (2006 – 2018), homicide rates have been severely high, and violence has therefore become 'common'. As journalist Francisco Gómez stated during an interview:

"We have gotten accustomed and we are getting used to living like this. We are getting used to living with violence around us. And nobody says anything. They can kill ten people before other ones and we get scared and we run but the […] social solidarity against the violence and the social response have disappeared. Sadly, violence has atomized society." (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018).

This 'normalization', or as Francisco Gómez even problematizes it by referring to it as 'atomization' of violence in Mexico, is also shown by the growing *narcoculture* [narcoculture] in certain regions. This narcoculture has recycled elements that resonate with old *ranchero* culture from the northern part of Mexico, and is therefore viewed as inherent to the culture and character of the people living there (Mendoza 2008: 44, 55). The narcoculture, just like the *ranchero* culture, is a macho culture, that usually involucres *narcocorridos,* a popular and controversial musical genre. *Narco* refers to the drug-related matters in Mexico, and the term *corrido* refers to one of the oldest musical traditions in Mexico. This is currently a relevant musical genre in Mexico, wherein the subject of the war on drugs is used very often, as this is the social reality of Mexico in many regions (Dávila 2013: 157). As it is viewed as an intrinsic part of mostly northern culture, it attracts many people, most of all young people; listening and singing *narcocorridos,* falling in love with drug traffickers, and imagining themselves as being

powerful *contrabandistas,* or traffickers (Mendoza 2008: 117).[18][19] The interaction between the *ranchero* culture and *narcoculture* also depends on the legitimacy of drug trafficking and the social position of the drug traffickers, although it is often naturally stimulated because it is seen as 'easy money', and the sharing of wealth the drug traffickers exercise in their municipality (Mendoza: 183).

Not only the *narcocorridos* are a part of the *narcoculture;* there is also a cinema genre, *narco-movies,* the drug traffickers have their own *buchones* [clothing fashion], members refer to being in the drug underworld is being part of 'the movement', and some drug trafficking organizations even develop their own religion and rituals, like La Familia Michoacana, who even developed their own Bible (Kalyvas 2015: 11). That is why the Mexican drug trafficking organizations to some extent have been compared to the Italian mafia.[20]

[18] The work of Natalia Mendoza specifically speaks about the municipality in Altar, Sonora. However, this information can be used to interpret the micro-dynamics of violence and the *narcoculture* on a local/municipal level in the northern part of Mexico.

[19] A striking and fitting example of this 'breathing in the *narcoculture*', was given by García (2006) in his journalism collection and book *Historias de muerte y corrupción.* The passage goes as follows: "Vicente Acosta López was a poor boy that reeked badly. From the street, prohibited access to a toyshop that he came past, his eyes were looking at a black pistol that was displayed in the sideboard. He loved the firearm and said that he wouldn't change it for a thing, not even for the red bycicle that also got him excited. Acosta López, *El Guero,* lived in a poor and depressing colony in Pueblo Nuevo, Nogales. He fed himself with pieces of stalebread and dreamed about the black pistol on his bony hips. He was well-known and walked around with a smug look on his face, the eyes of the women following him, as everybody knew him. With 15 years he got arrested five times by the police commander for trouble making, loitering, carrying a firearm and theft. At 16 years old he was formally accused of crimes against public health. Although he was a minor, he has seen skeletons without a head and heads without a stem. Acosta López forms part of the group of minors that breathes in violence from their day of birth. They suffer from the unhinged talking of a drunk father who hits a frightened woman with a baby in her arms, in the public streets, in the store, in school, is surrounded by this groups of soldiers and their humiliating superiority in their uniform, the sinister containers, the sound of gunshots. One kills for whatever; a word too much or too little, a suspicious look, an insult directed to a mom, although she has also been abused by her own son. Below the clarity of this darkness, figures of example arise for these boys: *El Chapo,* Zambada, *La Barbie."*(Garcíá 2006: 49-50). [citation from Spanish to English through own elaboration]. This quote demonstrates how figures like local or national *narco*-bosses become figures of example towards kids from the community; as they are used to adults leading an example through violent practices.

[20] Extensive studies regarding the comparison between Mexican DTOs and the Italian mafia have been conducted. For a further revision on this literature, recommendations of relevant literature are: Mazzitelli (2016) "Mafias en México?" in the *Atlas de la Seguridad y Defensa en México 2016* and Garzón (2008) *Mafia & Co: the criminal networks in Mexico, Brazil and Colombia.*

3.2. The actors of violence in Mexico

The Mexican government, organized crime and society are the actors actively participating in the dimensions and processes of violence in Mexico. This section will elaborate on each actor, explaining in what ways they are involved, explaining the dynamic through which they interrelate.

3.2.1. The government

Violence has penetrated Mexican society entirely, because DTOs have penetrated society. However, DTOs have went further than penetrating society, by also moving into the state, in this sense referring to the police and military. Local policemen participate in the protection of certain drug trafficking organizations and society knows who participates. They might have a relative participating, because it happens on a local scale in a municipality where everyone knows each other (Guadalupe Correa-Cabera, personal communication, June 13th, 2018). So the violence does not solely entail criminal violence, but is intertwined with the violence by the forces of order, so *police violence.* As the police participates in corruption and bribery, protecting criminals, and some police offers do not, one can never know whether a policeman that you are giving information or filing a complaint pertains to a criminal group (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018). Because this police officer is also a citizen, part of society, the police participating in corruption and/or bribery and protecting DTOs is the state, organized crime and civil society all in one and the same person. The government and DTOs participate in direct confrontation, leaving the civilians between two lines of fire, but civil society also participates in these two sectors. This shows the complex dialectic between these three parts of society (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018).

3.2.2. Organized crime

Due to the militarization strategy of Felipe Calderón and partly his predecessor Vicente Fox and during the past 12 years, criminal groups have learned and adapted; by fragmentation, new ways of violence (more violent executions) and diverging from not only drug trafficking, but also other ways of criminal income by using violence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Zetas for example “are devoted to extortion, kidnapping, bribery, in short a multitude of things.” Instead of the more ‘traditional model’ of DTOs, such as the Sinaloa Cartel, who focuses

on drug trafficking and would not get into direct confrontation with the state, because they know that this will not benefit them directly, the Zetas are previous military personnel themselves, who want to establish their presence, and the way to do so is by using violence. Violence is the mode of survival of new criminal groups; they diversify their business with it, to conquer new territories or defending the existing *plazas* within their territory, which generates social fragmentation and insecurity (Pereyra 2012: 442-443).

However, what new DTOs such as the Zetas have learned from the past 18 years, in which their leaders were either detained or killed because of this direct confrontation, is that this confrontation does not benefit them. So they have taken on new ways and new strategies to operate, ascending to a superior form of operating criminally (Correa-Cabrera 2017, Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018). Non-military background criminal organizations, focusing mainly on drug trafficking, are the Beltrán Leyva brothers and Arellano Félix brothers. PhD student Mario Pavel Díaz argues that the Beltrán Leyva are a great worry, because of the levels of violence they create and the fact that they acts different from the general profile of traffickers, "they are more like business men" (Mario Pavel Díaz Román, personal communication, August 27th, 2018). Francisco Gómez argues that for the Arellano Félix brothers, because they are living along the border with the United States, which is one of the biggest drug consumers, controlling the drug trade for them is incredibly important. And this control is based on violence. (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018).

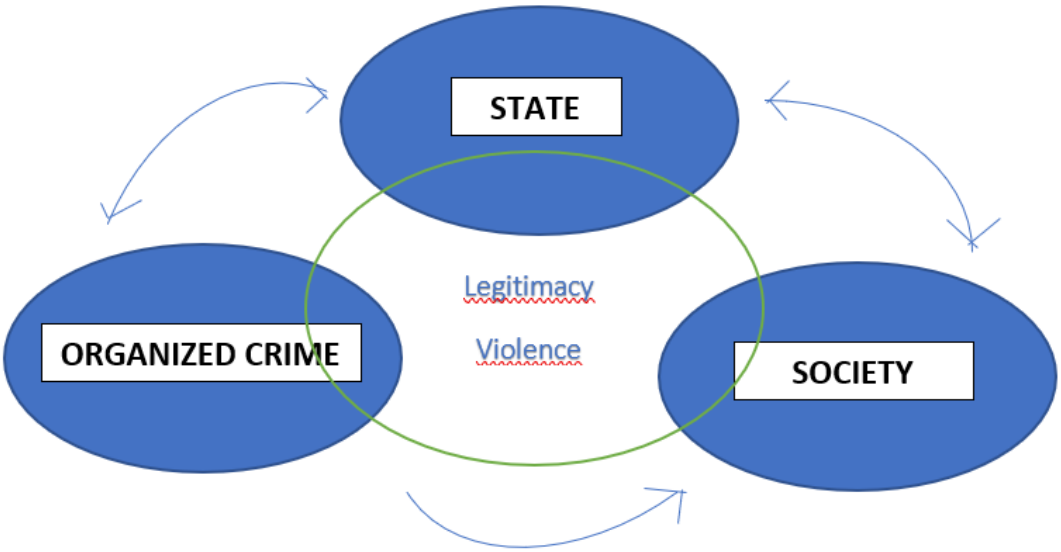
Francisco: *"I have a friend in journalism who sadly disappeared. He was from Apatzingán and once I told him 'hey, how do you know so much about this?' He responded: 'How am I not going to know this, if they across from my house, if they are my friends from primary school, if they are my neighbors, even family members'. I told him he was absolutely right. This is the stuff you learn in these places, right?"* (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018).

This quote portrays the situation in Mexico; everyone knows who is involved in crime and who is not, it is not possible to deny. However, knowing this also brings along danger, as organized crime may kidnap you and/or make you disappear because 'you know too much'.

3.2.3. Society

The dynamic between the Mexican government, organized crime and society has been displayed and elaborated on in section 1.4. of this study in the following scheme:

Figure 1. Dynamic between the state, society and organized crime



Source: own elaboration

What happens in Mexico is that with the drastically increased levels of violence, it becomes harder and harder to determine where this violence derives from exactly. The change in the organization of DTOs affected society in the way that they have become not only incidental victims, but targets of violence. As DTOs found new ways of violence; such as kidnapping and extortion, civilians are now fully part and fully victim of the violence happening in Mexico. The necessity of making money for DTOs has grown so great that they now directly confront society, instead of moving within society with the bribery and corruption of not only politicians, but also civilians. Also, as mentioned before, DTOs form part of society, it cannot be seen as a separate entity. The highly militarized criminal groups can be viewed as a confrontational army, but are difficult to detect because they move in the social scope, within society. This complicates the war on drugs not only for the Mexican military and police, but also for the drug trafficking organizations amongst themselves. Before, drug trafficking "had a really clear idea about where society was and where the violence was that they had to confront other competition groups, now this line has been erased, now they can confront each other." (Francisco Gómez, personal

communication, September 13th, 2018). Put differently, society has also become victim of the open violence between the Mexican state and the DTOs; with shootings and open confrontations between the Mexican army and/or police and DTOs, leaving not one person "who does not have a family member, a friend, an acquaintance, a colleague from work that has suffered from a loss due to the violence by drug trafficking or criminal groups." (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018).

3.3. The effect of the dimensions of violence: a *culture of violence*

The previous sections demonstrate that the character of violence in Mexico is structural, multi-causal and multi-factorial. As a consequence, professor Marcos Pablo Moloeznik argued in an interview, Mexico is now facing a *culture of violence,* or a cult of violence (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018). As an example, he mentions that when neighbors have a dispute, rather than starting a dialogue, people prefer to take up arms right away. There is no incentive to respect the law, because due to impunity there are no sanctions. He refers to this as the *culture of transgression* (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018). According to scholar and professor at UNAM Raúl Benítez, the *culture of violence* is not necessarily interwoven with drug trafficking, this is more *structural violence.* And *interpersonal violence* in Mexican society used to be just rural culture, not urban. However, DTOs have now placed the violence in the urban areas as well, especially in the northern part of Mexico (Raúl Benítez, personal communication, July 23rd, 2018). Now, there not only a lack or absence of confidence in the basic institutions of the state, there is also the issue of interpersonal confidence within the scope of civil society (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018).

Mexican journalist Francisco Gómez mentioned in an interview that 'violence has atomized society'. It has not only increased 'livelihood insecurity' and fear amongst the people living in Mexican society right now, it will also probably have psychological consequences for the generation of youths growing up now. As mentioned before, they are both the majority of the perpetrators in criminal activity and the victims of the violence, talking about the range between 18 and 35 to 40 years old (the productive age of the population). They are both either participating in criminal activity or in some way tied to the criminal world, but are also losing a lot from this sector of crime. The possible factor explaining their recruitment could be of

economic nature, but the social factor of family life and the normalization of criminality and violence should be taken into account as well. According to Gómez, it is also the attitude of the parents and other family members: “If you see your son arrive in a Porsche and your son does not have a job, you allow it, you permit it. I think this is something bad within the family. Furthermore, there are kidnappings in which the grandma to the youngest son participate. So something within all this is bad.” (Francisco Gómez, personal communication, September 13th, 2018). Due to the *culture of violence*, the Mexican population therefore has not only become the victim, but, in some cases, also the perpetrator.

3.4. Conclusion

What this chapter shows is both the complex dynamic between the state, organized crime and society, and the complexities of the characteristics of either one of them. Due to several processes and transformations in Mexico, such as territorial absence of the state in some parts of Mexico, the effect of neoliberalism on the decentralization of the Mexican state, the diversification in violent practices and the normalization of violence within Mexico society, hereby described through the several ‘dimensions of violence’, organized crime has resorted to new ways of violence to establish their presence and territory and have infiltrated both society and the state’s security apparatus, through corruption and bribery. Within society, this has caused a *culture of violence,* a lack of constitutional trust, a lack of interpersonal trust, and therefore a *culture of illegality.* These factors will be elaborated on in the next section as well, as these factors not only challenge the state’s monopoly of violence, but therefore also its legitimacy.

Chapter 4 - *The dynamics of violence and state legitimacy in Mexico: from a culture of illegality to a security, capacity and legitimacy gap*

As the previous chapter explained, the high increase in violence and therefore insecurity in Mexico, on a *quantitative* and *qualitative* level, caused by DTOs fighting over territory and power, has deeply affected the state and civil society. As a consequence, the militarization strategy and the war on drugs in Mexico continued through the administration of both Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto, with the intention of decreasing these numbers. As this has not happened, its 'level of democracy' has been called into question.

Mexican society, the Mexican government and drug trafficking organizations move in a complex dynamic, with at its center violence and legitimacy, all participating in violence and legitimation processes. Viewing the homicide statistics, the Mexican state shows to be losing its grip on the violence in Mexico. So if the Mexican state is incapable of claiming a monopoly of violence, where does it derive its legitimacy from? This chapter will analyze the dynamics and dimensions of legitimacy in Mexico specifically. The argument here is that the Mexican state suffers from a *capacity, security* and *legitimacy gap,* because it lacks, due to a complex interplay between DTOs and society, the capacity and therefore legitimacy to provide its population with basic services, such as security.

4.1. The issue of legitimacy in Mexico: a *culture of illegality*

In an interview on July 14th, 2018, professor Marcos Pablo Moloeznik pointed out that Mexico is facing a 'deficit of legality' and a 'culture of transgression'. This, according to him, means that the Mexican people are criminals by nature, because the system obliges them to be. This leads to a the argument that in Mexico there is a *culture of illegality* (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018). This *culture of illegality* goes along with a *culture of violence,* also mentioned in the previous chapter, in which the Mexican population does not respect the laws, because due to the factor of impunity, there are simply no sanctions towards *not* respecting it (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018). PhD student Jovani Josué Rivera Gutiérrez spoke about this *culture of illegality* as well, by using the

concept of *diablito* [literally translated: 'little devil'] as an example. Illegality in Mexico happens in the most subtle ways; *diablito,* according to Jovani Rivera, is a person who opens up their electricity box, put in a cable so that the wire that regulates the electricity flow, to make sure it marks off less than it is. The reason for this can be that people are not capable of paying for their electricity bill, or think that it is too high. But this tapping off electricity is illegal, since the electricity companies are federal property. And this transfer of the wires has to be done by a professional, an electrician, so there is also the part where the electricians are getting paid to do an illegal job. Everyone knows this, and everyone knows it happens, but it is part of daily life (Jovani Josué Rivera Gutiérrez, personal communication, July 20th, 2018). So the point here is that illegality is a part of the daily lives of the Mexican people and the incentive for this illegality is the idea that the state cannot provide for the people, so they have to take matters into their own hands.

Another example of this *culture of illegality* was given by professor Armando Rodríguez Luna, when talking about legitimacy and illegality in Mexico. Mexico has a long history of having an illegal market; which started out with bringing in contraband from the United States into or through the northern Mexican states. Contraband means merchandise being brought in through unofficial channels, without paying import taxes. Getting this contraband into Mexico was possible due to a direct arrangement [corruption and/or bribery] with the local government official or supervisor, the director of the delegation, etc. These informal mechanisms were pre-existent, and the state control for collecting taxes was already in dispute and non-functioning. Because the people do not believe that paying taxes will bring them any provision of public services or benefits, because state officials would just put the money into their own pockets rather than providing civil society with these services and due to impunity they were untouchable, the people would not pay taxes (Armando Rodríguez Luna, personal communication, July 6th, 2018). Nowadays, merchandise that is contraband (and therefore illegal, one might argue), is found alongside illegal merchandise such as firearms and drugs. According to Armando Rodríguez Luna "Nowadays, anything illegal you want, they sell it. Drugs of whichever kind, piracy books, movies, CD"s. It is impressive. [...] One time I went [I saw that] outside of a primary school, there was a small market-stall, in the middle of the street, where

firearms and sex toys were sold. There were pornographic movies, outside of a primary school!" (Armando Rodríguez Luna, personal communication, July 6th, 2018).[21]

Another viewpoint on the complexity of this *culture of illegality* and legitimacy is the idea that legitimacy is about paying taxes. Paying taxes in Mexico, one can argue, is more the exception than the rule; it usually derives from the middle class and differs per region in Mexico and even per delegation within Mexico City. For example, professor Armando Rodríguez Luna gave the example of three distinct delegations in Mexico City: Condesa, Doctores and Polanco. Condesa is a delegation in which a lot of foreigners live; international businesses have their offices there, and there are quite a few international embassies. It also has all the necessary services: security, important international figures, presumably everyone pays taxes, or at least puts in an effort to do so, and there is a lot of cultural offer. In Doctores, you will find stolen commerce, people dedicating themselves to theft and robbery. Polanco is the delegation in which Michelin star restaurants are found, where the bars are filled with people with a lot of money, and where during the weekends one can see 15 year old boys pull up in expensive blinded cars, fully aware of the presence of the police. So where can legitimacy be found in these delegations? In Condesa lives the middle class sector of society; they are the part of the population that legitimizes the state, because they put their trust in it by paying taxes. In Doctores and Polanco state legitimacy is lacking or absent, but for different reasons. In Polanco, the rich kids feel like the police are children of Mexican business men and politicians, and do not take the state structures [police] serious; because they feel like they 'own' them. The businessmen who own restaurants and offices here, however, do pay taxes, but avoid doing so as much as possible, because it benefits them [economically]. In Doctores, legitimacy is absent as well, because people do not have trust in the state structures, as the state does not provide services for them (Armando Rodríguez Luna, personal communication, July 6th, 2018). So on both ends of this spectrum, there is one delegation in which poverty and illegality prevail, and one delegation of

[21] INEGI published a report on Mexico informal economy with numbers based on a National Survey on Occupation and Employment. These numbers are from the fourth trimester of 2017, and published in May this year (2018). According to the report, a percentage of 56,8% of the Mexican population is working in the informal sector of the economy. This can be translated to a total number of 30,2 million people: http://www.inegi.org.mx/saladeprensa/boletines/2018/enoe_ie/enoe_ie2018_02.pdf and means that six out of ten Mexican workers do not pay taxes to the Mexican government. Consequently, this money cannot be spent on public services because it is simply not paid, or because local and national governors prefer to put in in their own pocket: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-economy-informal-idUSBRE95P09C20130626.

extreme richness in which they do not care about the state and society therefore does not legitimize it. But the part of society that is hit very hard in Mexico has been the self-made middle class, that does legitimize the state, simply because there is no other option. This class does depend on the security services provided by the government, because they do not have their private bodies of resilience, such as the bodyguards of the people in Polanco, or the criminal friends of the people in Doctores. And these two groups are precisely the ones that are permeated by organized crime. The rich provide the modes of transportation like boats and , planes, help launder money, facilitate logistics for border crossings and the poor are the sources of *sicarios* [hitmen], and permit them to have access to a group of people who do not have anything to lose, because all they know is violence, delinquency and poverty. Organized crime needs these two structures to continue their *narcomenudeo* [hereby translated as 'usual narco-business'] and within these structures has a lot of potential to develop its activities.

The line of reasoning here is that because the middle class in Mexico, the group that *does* legitimize the state and form the political and social base the state needs, decreases because of the growing [socio-economic] inequality in the country, it would be useful for the state to attempt to create an expansion of this group in society again. In order to do so, the state would therefore need control over these two other structures. When following this line of thought, the solution for the state to gain back its legitimacy would be to tackle the economic inequality in Mexico and attempt to increase their main support base: the middle class. "*This middle class is the one with access to public universities, with access, through scholarships, to private universities has access to a certain cultural offer […], this middle class that the level of education, culture, economics, that thinks about civic values of legitimacy of the state."* (Armando Rodríguez Luna, personal communication, July 6th, 2018).

This *culture of illegality* therefore stems from previously existent informal mechanisms, a lack of trust in the state by society to provide them with public services, therefore causing a *deficit of legality,* in which the dynamic between state legitimacy and this *culture of illegality* comes together (Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018, Méndez 2007).

4.2. The dimensions of legitimacy in Mexico: the *capacity, security* and *legitimacy gap*

The dynamics of legitimacy in Mexico, according to the aforementioned information, are based on a few factors:

1) Actors: the state and civil society. Non-state actors, such as organized crime, are the destablizing factor in the equation.
2) Circumstances: a *culture of illegality,* informal mechanisms, and economic and social inequality.

Once the state is challenged by armed non-state actors, who, for numerous reasons, want to claim a part of the monopoly of violence as well, the state will face a what Charles Call refers to as *security gap*. If the state has weak or fragile institutions that can not fullfill the basic state activities of providing security for its population, this would be referred to as a *capacity gap.* Or, if the state is questioned because of unfair or incomplete rule of law, with the *capacity gap* as an underlying factor or not, this may result in a *legitimacy gap* (Call 2011: 311). This section will elaborate more on these concepts, or *gaps,* and explain them through the case of contemporary Mexico.

4.2.1. The capacity gap

A *capacity gap* exists where the state institutions are incapable of providing the public with the necessary minimal goods and services it needs; such as providing security, rule of law, primary education, primary healthcare etc. Capacity as a concept does not exclude others providing these goods and/or services, such as non-state or private actors, but it is important that they are regulated by the state. (Call 2011: 306). This is what Raúl Benítez referred to as 'cultural legitimacy' that DTOs create, by providing the services and goods to the people that the government is not, due to for example corruption. However, the Mexican government seems to be able to continue with the provision of some of the basic goods society needs, such as for example education. Although the level and quality of education can be questioned, due to corruption, there is still access to education and scholarships in public schools and universities, such as El Colegio de México and UNAM for example (Raul Benitez, personal communication, July 23rd, 2018). The *capacity gap* in Mexico increases because of a *culture of illegality* within society; due to a lack of trust in the state's institutions, civil society takes matters into their own hands. This lack of trust in institutions, also because of the factor of corruption, causes the

people to for example not pay taxes anymore; which limits the state's income to provide the basic goods and services for the population. In this sense, corruption causes the state and society to go around in a vicious circle of lacking services and goods. Table 3., the Corruption Transparency Index Mexico 1995 – 2018, portrays the changes in the perception of corruption in Mexico between the years 1995 – 2018, and therefore the previously described presidential administrations. However, these data are only used as an indication of the general tendency, not as hard facts, as the methods used to 'measure' the perception of corruption can easily be called into question.

Table 3. Corruption Perceptions Index Mexico 1995 – 2018**

Year	Ranking	Score	
1995	No data	3,18	
1996	38	3,3	
1997	47	2,99	Ernesto Zedillo
1998	55	3,3	
1999	58	3,4	
2000	59	3,3	
2001	51	3,7	
2002	57	3,6	Vicente Fox
2003	64	3,6	
2004	64	3,6	
2005	65	3,5	
2006	70	3,3	
2007	72	3,5	
2008	72	3,6	
2009	89	3,3	Felipe Calderón
2010	98	3,1	
2011	100	3	
2012	105	3,4	
2013	106	3,4	
2014	103	3,5	
2015	111	3,1	Enrique Peña Nieto
2016	123	3	
2017	135	2,9	
2018	No data yet	No data yet	

*Score: 10 = perfect and corruption free

*Ranking is based on between 160 and 180 countries

Source: own elaboration, based on data retrieved from Transparency International: https://www.transparency.org/country/MEX

Looking at the general tendency, one can see that the perception on corruption in Mexico has decreased during every presidential term, dropping most drastically during the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto with 0,5 points, hitting the lowest rating as well with 2,9. Relating this to the graphs of the statistics on homicides, one can for example see that the general tendency on homicide rates during Vicente Fox his years of presidency remained relatively stable. This might therefore also explain the fact that the general tendency in the perception on corruption also remained relatively stable, whereas this changed more drastically between for example 2014 and 2015 with the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto.[22]

4.2.2. The security gap

The *security gap* exists when states are not capable of providing minimal levels of security for its population against, for example, organized armed (criminal) groups. Determinants characterizing a security gap include conflict intensity, its impact across territory, gross human rights violations and coups (Call 2011: 307). As levels of homicide and violence are spiking in Mexico, the intensity of the internal conflict, both between DTOs and between DTOs and the government, is very apparent, which it, as Kaldor would refer to, a 'low-intensity conflict' or a 'civil war' (Kaldor 2013: 1-2). Although the highest homicide rates are pretty centralized and in specific places, the news items about mass graves etc. spark fear across the entire country. This insecurity derives from both state violence and violence by DTOs. Therefore, one can establish that there is a very apparent security gap in Mexico, which seems to be worsening as levels of violence increase. Therefore, the *security gap* in Mexico consists of high levels of violence that have both increased and have become more of a public spectacle, showing the incapability of the Mexican government to provide security for the Mexican population. This is also shown by the grave human rights violations by the state's security apparatus; the military and the police, and impunity; as the judicial apparatus does not seem to function sufficiently to put these cases to trial. This is then an incentive for a *culture of illegality,* in which the Mexican population takes matters into their own hands and continues to operate outside of the Mexican state's laws.

[22] An interesting factor from these statistics, however, is the fact that between 2011 and 2012, the perception on corruption drastically increased, although homicide numbers had greatly increased. It might be interesting to take a further look at the methodology of Transparency International those years and whether this changed. However, because the purpose of this study does not revolve around explaining corruption, this is not elaborated on into further detail.

4.2.3. The legitimacy gap

The last gap that Call distinguishes is the *legitimacy gap,* which exists where a significant portion of the state's population (political elites and society) reject the rules regulating the exercise of power. Legitimacy hereby refers to *internal* legitimacy (Call 2011: 308). As shown by the examples given by Armando Rodríguez Luna, the part of society legitimizing the state is the middle-class, which is increasing in numbers to do growing economic inequality. Both the poorest and the richest part of society do not take the Mexican government seriously, whilst also being the group most prone to do business with organized crime. The concept of the *culture of illegality* in Mexico also shows that Mexican civil society, because of the *capacity gap* the Mexican government has in many aspects, and because of for example high levels of impunity, does not have faith in the government anymore. According to the Global Impunity Dimensions: Global Impunity Index 2017 (GII-2017), "Mexico is, yet again, the country in the Americas with the highest impunity index, followed by Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Honduras, and El Salvador", hereby ranking as number 66th out of 193 United Nations countries (GII-2017: 10-11). Impunity in Mexico has to do primarily with the functioning of the security system and the structure of the justice system, according to the report. A possible solution that is offered by the report regards formal contact with security forces and rather than investing more resources to increase numbers of police, a focus should be put on its effectiveness. This should improve judicial procedures as well (GII-2017: 11-12). In 2017, 43% of the detainees did not receive a judgment (GII-2017: 12). Due to this failure of the Mexican justice system, the legitimacy gap in Mexico therefore becomes even bigger.[23]

4.3. The effects of legitimacy in Mexico

The *capacity, security* and *legitimacy gap* show the different dimensions of legitimacy in Mexico. However, the interplay between the Mexican government, organized crime and society is even more complex, as one can also look at legitimacy in broader terms. This following section will potray the various considerations when approaching legitimacy in Mexico and describe what this study refers to as different *types of legitimacy* one can distinghuish.

[23] Check the full report here: https://www.udlap.mx/cesij/files/IGI-2017_eng.pdf.

4.3.1. Considerations when looking at legitimacy of the Mexican state

Legitimacy of the Mexican state depends on whether one approaches it based on judicial or societal terms. On the one hand, the president is per definition legitimate, as he is elected by the people through voting at the elections. Other political parties could contest this through a judicial process, in which the Supreme Court of Justice should decide that the elections were anti-constitutional, just like they can claim that military operations have been anti-constitutional as well. Constitutional reforms can also be proposed, by the same political parties that are represented in the Congress of the Union. But in Mexico, not through Fox's presidency, not through Calderón's presidency, nor through Enrique Peña Nieto's presidency, has done so. Also, on an international level, judicially, a democratically elected president is recognized as the legitimate authority of the country (Luis Astorga, personal communication, August 21st, 2018).

On the other hand, he is, once elected, still legitimate if he is not recognized by civil society or parts of civil society. But, if taking on this definition of legitimacy, one could also argue that other, non-state actors could become the legitimate authority if civil society recognized it to be so. Both a non-state as a state actor like could then be both an illegal but legitimate authority, although not democratically elected (Luis Astorga, personal communication, August 21st, 2018). So from a judicial perspective, the president is the imminent legitimate and legal power. His legitimacy and legality are only in dispute when accusations of fraud during the elections come up. However, judicially, it is incredibly difficult to remove and/or replace a president once he is elected (Luis Astorga, personal communication, August 21st, 2017)[24]. Professor Raúl Benítez argues that there is a great difference between the *theory of state,* which is mostly European-based theory, such as the theory of Max Weber on the monopoly of violence, and the *theory of governance,* which is more US-based. Latin American countries are supposedly a combination of the two. The 'state' in this sense, according to Benítez, means the Mexican Constitution, which by definition has legitimacy, as it is the judicial foundation of the country. Governance, or the government, hereby consists of the political parties and the president, which change constantly. The government is capable of 'having legitimacy' or 'losing legitimacy' (Raúl Benítez, personal communication, July 23rd, 2018).

[24] In his book *Qué querrían que hiciera?* (2015), Luis Astorga provides a critical analysis of the presidency of Felipe Calderón, analyzing the judicial foundation of the legitimacy of the president, the groundwork for the concept of organized crime; whilst also including the homicide numbers during Calderón's administration and analyzing the correlation between his presidency, his militarization strategy and the increase in homicide numbers.

4.3.2. The different types of legitimacy in Mexico

What happens in Mexico is that organized crime looks for the 'governance voids' that appear when the legitimacy of the president is questioned by civil society, and try to co-opt and control the sectors of the state that are functional for them in order to keep their criminal and illegal business going. This might then lead to a new social culture, wherein they provide work and therefore income for the population, generating social consensus amongst the Mexican civilians. Whilst more people get into business with them, the more support they create for themselves. Like the beforementioned case of Doctores, in this sense organized crime manages to generate a *cultural* legitimacy, therefore also a *social legitimacy.* The government may have lost legitimacy, because public services have worsened and there has been a lot of corruption, but is still providing for example education (Raúl Benítez, personal communication, July 23rd, 2018). However, this revolves about co-optation of the state, not completely occupying all the governmental structures.

Also, the national system of public security in Mexico, entailing the state police, the judicial power, its prisons etc. has been questioned by citizens of Mexico due to impunity and corruption. The question is whether institutional reformism could be the solution or not to this problem; a factor that is complicated because of the discontinuity in governance in Mexico. But, the government has not completely lost its legitimacy, as it is still capable of providing certain services, such as public education. It does hereby become a what Correa-Cabrera refers to as 'parallel state structure', but does not completely fulfil the same role as the Mexican state (Correa-Cabrera 2017: 96, Raúl Benítez, personal communication, July 23rd, 2018, Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, personal communication, July 14th, 2018).[25]

[25] One hereby refers to 'the national system' as being all the agencies and institutions that were established under the presidency of Ernesto Zedillo (1999-2000), and specifically the General Agency for Crimes Against Health and National Institute for the Combat of Drug Trafficking (see Table 1. General overview in Chapter 2, or for more information on how it functions read: https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp/acciones-y-programas/que-es-el-sistema-nacional-de-seguridad-publica).

In Mexico, there are therefore several *types of legitimacy*:

1) *Judicial legitimacy* or *state legitimacy*: which means the Mexican Constitution that states that the elected president is by definition the legitimate and legal authority in Mexico.
2) *Economic legitimacy*. Due to a *culture of illegality* and a big informal sector, organized crime provides a job market for the Mexican population, with which they obtain economic legitimacy by the population.
3) *Social/cultural legitimacy*; this is obtained by for example the establishment of a *narcoculture* and the normalization of this *narcoculture* itself, which derives from the pre-existing *ranchero* culture in more specifically the northern Mexican states. Criminals are hereby viewed as the 'social bandits' or social patrons and entrepreneurial figures, that provide society with certain services the Mexican government is incapable of providing them (Pansters 2012: 275).[26]

The second and third dimension depend on the recognition of civil society in terms of legitimacy, meaning *government legitimacy,* the first depends on the Mexican Constitution, and means *state legitimacy* (Raúl Benítez, personal communication, July 23rd, 2018). In this sense, in theory, the legitimacy of a Mexican president cannot be called into question, only in case of fraud scandals and questionable elections force (which, in the defense of this point, happens quite a lot in Mexico), as judicially the elected president is the legitimate authority in Mexico and the legal authority that can use. However, in practice, due to a *security* and *capacity* gap in Mexico, organized crime finds the opportunity to co-opt the state partly because it obtains recognition from Mexican civil society and therefore *economic* and *social/cultural* legitimacy. Hereby the Mexican *government,* not the Mexican *state,* loses its legitimacy; and in this sense the Mexican president also loses trust from the Mexican people. As a consequence, civil society might respond more strongly towards state actions, through social movements or an increased *culture of illegality,* which then increases the *capacity* and *security gap* even more. If the

[26] There is a substantial amount of academic literature on this idea of drug lords being 'social bandits' or even 'Robin Hoods'. Examples of this literature are: *Primitive rebel* by Eric Hobsbawn (1971) and *The peasant and the brigand: social banditry reconsidered* by Anton Blok (1972). A clear example of a comparison between a drug lord and a Robin Hood figure are the articles "Robin Hoofd or Villain: The Social Constructions of Pablo Escobar" by J. Bowley (2013) and "Peddling Pablo: Escobar's Cultural Renaissance" by A. Pobutsky (2013).

Mexican government does not change deep-rooted social issues such as for example socioeconomic inequality, it seems that this will continue to be a downward spiral.

4.4. Conclusion

In the past 12 years, both violence and legitimacy have changed significantly in Mexico, not only thinking about the *quantitative* type of transformation, but also the *qualitative* type. DTOs have had to re-organize themselves due to the militarization strategy of Felipe Calderón, and have adapted to the new circumstances, by using social media and public spaces to demonstrate their presence through violence. As numbers of homicides are sparking, state legitimacy has been in dispute. Judicially, the president is the legitimate power to exercise this authority over the state security apparatus like the army and military. However, by committing human rights abuses, the Mexican state will lose internationally acclaimed [external] legitimacy due to the critical look from other countries, and internal legitimacy of the people. There are two consequential factors that follow: 1) it becomes apparent that the state is incapable of fulfilling its function of providing security for the people and 2) in the case of Mexico impunity prevails, and these human rights violations are not put on trial. The militarization strategy has shown to be one of combatting violence with violence, but due to human rights violations, the authority of the state to use force has been called into question by Mexican civil society. Instead, either the Mexican people try to fill the 'governance voids' themselves, or DTOs seize the opportunity to do so. They intent to fill the *capacity gap* by living through this *culture of illegality;* by not paying taxes and coming up with creative solutions to by-pass the laws. The *security gap* is intended to be filled by becoming and/or hiring bodyguards for the upper class, and by working for or having friends within organized crime structures for the lower class. The *legitimacy gap* then becomes wide open as well, and creates the possibility for organized crime to fill this void. It is an interplay, which the common factor of violence. Organized crime challenges the state's legitimacy & authority through exercising violence (openly). The state then uses violence to combat organized crime to reduce the levels of violence, and therefore gain (back) its legitimacy. The direct intervention of the military to DTOs has therefore become a *spiral of violence,* which continues to be the current situation in Mexico.

Conclusion

This study has aimed to untangle the complexities of the dimensions and dynamics of violence and legitimacy in Mexico. It has focused on the international debate on state-building and the functioning of state legitimation processes, problematizing the factor of organized crime as being the destabilizer within this process.

Referring back to the definition of Joel Migdal (1988) of an ideal type of state as "an organization, composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the states leadership (executive authority), that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all the people as well as the parameters of rulemaking for other social organizations in a given territory, using force if necessary to have its way" (Migdal 1988: 19). The strength of a state hereby depends on the social control it exercises. A strong state means a state in which the social control level is high, a weak state is a society in which the overall level of social control is low (Migdal: 34-35). The central component here is force, which derives from the theory of Max Weber, who defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory" (Weber 1978: 54). Fukuyama (2004) interpreted this definition as the essence of the state being centered around *enforcement,* wherein the *scope* of state activities are its different functions and goals, and its *strength* has to do with the ability to execute the policies surrounding these functions and goals (Fukuyama: 21-22). According to Charles Tilly (1985), the national state is a "relatively centralized, differentiated organization whose officials more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory." (Tilly 1985: 3). The agents of states, or the state leaders, generally carry out four different activities: (1) warmaking; the elimination and neutralization of rivals outside their territory; (2) statemaking, as the elimination and neutralization of rivals inside their territories; (3) protection, the elimination and neutralization of the enemies of their clients (e.g. civil society within the margins) and; (4) extraction, which entails enquiring the means to carry out the previously mentioned three tasks (Tilly: 15).

Taking these definitions into consideration, this study has focussed on the dynamics of the monopoly of violence (or use of force) and the state's legitimacy in Mexico. As homicide rates in Mexico have risen exponentially from the year 2007 on, one of the arguments of this study is that the militarization strategy of Felipe Calderón, in which he deployed the military to combat DTOs with the help of the United States through the Mérida Initiative, has lead to a re-structuring and consequential militarization of these drug trafficking organizations. The DTOs underwent fragmentation, and used violence as a public and theatric spectacle to establish their presence. The complexity of the relationship between the DTOs and the Mexican government became even more apparent through violent massacres in 2014 and 2015, in which PRI president Enrique Peña Nieto failed to respond quickly. 2017 eventually meant an all-time-peak in homicide rates, with a record number of 31,317 within the same year.

What therefore happened in the democratization process of Mexico was that the organized crime – government nexus loosened; as the state failed to provide security and the rule of law in the progress of democratization, 'governance voids' were created, which criminal organizations were then able to occupy and serve as a 'parallel state' (Correa-Cabrera 2017: 96, Koonings 2012: 256-257, Kruijt & Koonings 1999: 12). Usually, when democratic systems are consolidated, they will institutionally adapt to changing environments. However, in Mexico, as non-democratic practices pervade, because the transition from authoritarianism to democracy left no alternative for the pre-existing political coalitions and the (il)legitimacy of the state depends on the political, cultural and social relationships of these state elites, the usual solution is institutional reformism (Pansters 1999: 247, Davis 2012: 68). This leads to a 'securitized democracy', in which a state lacks the monopoly of violence, and therefore must respond "with new forms of order, violently imposed, to win its authority" (Pearce: 289). This shows the dynamic between violence and legitimacy in countries such as Mexico: because it has to claim "its legitimacy not from a monopoly of violence but from a lack of such a monopoly" (Pearce: 289). Rather than a balance of traits of 'the lion and the fox', many more 'lions' emerged, meaning the violent actors of gangs, DTOs, corrupt police forces, privatized security agencies etc. (Pansters 2012: 5-6). As a result, the state is not capable of ensuring security for the population, as it has lost its monopoly of violence to various other actors and consequently loses its authority to exercise force as well.

The re-organization of the use of violence from both sides of this dialectic relationship had three dimensions. Firstly, as part of the process of modernization and due to international neoliberal reforms, the role of the Mexican state in the economy decreased, providing an environment for growing criminalization whilst also leading to a decentralization of violence. Therefore, a monopoly of violence in the hands of the state was also decentralized (Fazio 2016: 21, Aguayo 2015: 148-149, Kaldor 2013: 86, 185). Globalization and the interconnectedness between countries caused the international pressure on combatting organized crime, and caused a great international public response with for example the Ayotzinapa massacre, and social media became a new medium to perform violence in a theatrical way. Secondly, as DTOs fragmented due to the *kingpin strategy* of Calderón, disputes over territory that had previously been clearly divided amongst 'traditional model' DTOs increased; research showing that in areas where the market has not been monopolized by one of the DTOs, violence levels are even higher. This therefore had a 'hydra' effect; in which intra- and inter-DTO fighting increased, and a 'spillover' effect, in which violence levels amongst the general population and in other states also increased (Calderón et al 2015: 1481). And thirdly, violence did not just change *quantitatively,* but also *qualitatively,* as the DTOs resorted to new ways of violence; not just executing people, but also torturing them, dissolving their bodies, or making the bodies disappear in mass graves. Mexican society were no longer on the margins of violence, but right in the middle of the firelines of the war on drugs between the Mexican government and DTOs.

As a consequence of this re-organization of the use of violence by the Mexican government and the Mexican DTOs, the role of society within this dynamic changed as well. Due to the violent history of colonization and the pre-existing, very macho, *ranchero* culture, this study argues that violence had already been quite 'normal' throughout Mexican history. However, as the war on drugs caused a re-organization of the use of violence on both sides, violence arguebly became even more normalized, shown by the growing *narcoculture* in parts of the country; glorifying drug-related violence and the *narco*-lifestyle through *narcocorridos* and the abundant richness of local *narcos* having the young people dream about obtaining that lifestyle for themselves as well.

These high numbers of homicides show a Mexican state as being out of control. The Mexican government does not appear to be capable of providing security for its citizens. It does not have

the monopoly of violence, as it is forcably shared with the DTOs, it does not appear to be able to exercise control or even establish presence within its territories and therefore exercise what Tilly (1985) refers to as 'statemaking', and is therefore not capable of providing the Mexican population with one of its basic needs: security (Weber 1978, Fukuyama 2004, Tilly 1985). As Tilly (1978) argues that there is always a certain amount of discontent amongst the population about the functioning of the state and this further develops if the state is not capable of exercising basic activities such as providing security by being incapable of oppressing its oppossition, the DTOs, one can assume that in Mexico, due to this spiral of violence, levels of discontent amongst the Mexican population are growing (Tilly 1978: 191-192, Tilly 1985: 15-16, Claessen 1988: 42-43). This discontent leads to a rejection of the 'unequal relations between ruler and ruled', questioning the 'rightfulness' of the state's actions and policies, and therefore leads to a loss of legitimacy (Cohen & Toland 1988: 79, 81-82).

However, what this study argues, is that legitimacy in Mexico is more complex than the literature analyzed here and in Chapter 1. The dynamics of legitimacy in Mexico are based on the theory of legitimation by Claessen (1988); the Mexican state is *being legitimazed* and the Mexican population is the one *legitimizing* (Claessen 1988: 24-25, 40). DTOs are the destablising factor in this equation. As a consequence of the re-organization of violence, this study argues that Mexico faces a three *gaps:*

1) A *capacity gap;* which in the context of Mexico is a vicuous circle in which the state is incapable of providing basic goods and services to the people due to unwillingness of the ruling elites and as consequentially, people try to find ways to avoid taxes, which then decreasing the state's income for services even more. This fosters and is fostered by a *culture of illegality,* which is part of everyday practice in Mexican society.
2) A *security gap:* is has become apparent that the Mexican government is incapable of protecting the population against the DTOs. Also, because the Mexican civilian population has become part of the firelines in the war on drugs, human rights abuses by the Mexican state security apparatus have worsened the security image.
3) A *legitimacy gap:* this gap is basically the result of the equation 'adding up' the capacity and security gap. The Mexican government loses trust of the Mexican people, and therefore its legitimacy to exercise its functions and goals.

This study argues that the result of these gaps are 'governance voids', or spaces where the state does not have authority anymore, which can then either be filled by society itself, or organized crime (Correa-Cabrera: 96, Koonings 2012: 256-257, Kruijt & Koonings 1999: 12). But completely filling these 'governance voids' and therefore fully taking over the governmental structures is not the end goal here. Legitimacy in Mexico is more complex than that. This study argues that there are several *types of legitimacy* to be found in Mexico:

- *Judicial legitimacy* or *state legitimacy*: which means the Mexican Constitution that states that the elected president is by definition the legitimate and legal authority in Mexico.
- *Economic legitimacy*. Due to a *culture of illegality* and a big informal sector, organized crime provides a job market for the Mexican population, with which they obtain economic legitimacy by the population.
- *Social/cultural legitimacy*; this is obtained by for example the establishment of a *narcoculture* and the normalization of this *narcoculture* itself, which derives from the pre-existing *ranchero* culture in more specifically the northern Mexican states.

From this line of reasoning, in theory, the Mexican president is the representative of the Mexican Constitution, and his legitimate authority could therefore not be called into question once being democratically and thus legally elected. However, in practice, because the Mexican government is lacking a strong image of being the provider of security for the majority of the Mexican population, civil society takes matters into their own hands.

What the two different strategies of the two previous presidents have shown [militarization by Felipe Calderón and tackling underlying issues such as corruption by Enrique Peña Nieto] regarding national and public security and the combat against DTOs is that both of them had its flaws. The big question is whether which strategy actually might work and what the newly elected president AMLO will do. But is there an alternative? Luis Astorga (2015) argues that there are four different kinds of scenarios the future government can choose from: 1) Not do anything and let the drug trafficking impose their own laws; 2) Try to go back to a *pax mafiosa,* such as the previous *pax priista,* with which mutual sides benefit*;* 3) Unite forces and create a new state security policy, or; 4) Radically change the national drug policies and face the consequences Mexico will face by the UN and US (Astorga 2015: 185). The change in violence

has shown that the *pax mafiosa* will be highly unlikely to happen, but the ideas about amnesty of AMLO might bring organized crime and the Mexican government to a more peaceful situation. Less violence lies in the hopes of the Mexican people, as this culminating spiral of violence is spinning more and more out of control.

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Conferences and classes where knowledge for this study was obtained

Seminar on Violence and Peace: Oblivion, Truth or Justice? Attended on July 17th 2018, 12:00 hrs., at El Colegio de México, room Alfonso Reyes. Exposition by Olga Sánchez Cordero, the Secretary of Government of the new Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, coming into office from December 1st 2018 on. Commentaries during the seminar were given by human rights activist Mariclaire Acosta, professor Santiago Corcuera, professor Mónica Serrano, and activist Javier Sicilia. The full conference can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrXLwQDY_no

Classes at El Colegio de México (Colmex) by Sergio Aguayo Quezada and Raúl Benítez Manaut, in a course called “Criminal and Political Violence in the Mexican and Caribbean Basin”.

Interview list

The next page will give an overview and list of the interviewees of this study. It displays their names, a small description of their affiliations and expertise, the date and time of the interview, and where the interview took place. All of these interviews were conducted in Spanish and thereafter transcribed by Héctor Saúl. The translations of these interviews from Spanish to English, in this study used as additional information and citations, was done by the researcher herself.

Interviewee	Affiliation	Date and place	Duration
Guadalupe Correa-Cabrea	"Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera (Ph.D. in Political Science, The New School for Social Research) is Associate Professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University. Her areas of expertise are Mexico-U.S. relations, organized crime, immigration, border security, and human trafficking. […] Dr. Correa-Cabrera is currently the President of the Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) and Global Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars."[27]	13/05/2018 @ Hortus Botanicus Leiden	00:28:53
Armando Rodríguez Luna	Armando Rodríguez Luna is an investigator at CASEDE, generally about transnational organized crime, cooperation between the US and Mexico, geopolitics, intelligence, and national security of the United states. He is also a former professor at UNAM, Consultant for the UNODC and Consultant for Freedom House, and is currently working on a big project with USAID.[28]	06/07/2018 @ El Manque Condesa	00:54:47
Marcos Pablo Moloeznik	Marcos Pablo Moloeznik is a professor-investigator at the Department of Political Studies at the University of Guadalajara. He is a member of CASEDE, has been an attending professor at the University of Cologne, Free University of Berlin, in Buenos Aires and Rosario in Argentina, and in Varsovia, Poland. His main areas of investigation are public security, defense and the Mexican *fuerzas armadas.*[29]	14/07/2018 @ his house in Guadalajara	00:54:28
José Luis Méndez Martínez	José Luis Méndez Martínez is a professor-investigator at the Centre of International Studies at El Colegio de México (Colmex) and the former coordinator of the master's programme of Political Sciences. He has over 70 publications in English, Spanish and Portugese, with topics such as Mexican politics, democracy, and public policies.[30]	19/07/2018 @ his office at Colmex	00:24:33
Jovani Josué Rivera Gutiérrez	Jovani Rivera Gutiérrez has studies a bachelor's programme in International Relations at UNAM. He has worked with various security experts in Mexico,	20/07/2018 @ El Jarocho café Miguel Quevedo	00:27:19

	written about the security situation and violence in prisons for women around and in Mexico City, and is about to publish an academic work on violence in Cuahtémoc, together with Sergio Aguayo Quezada and Rodrigo Peña.[31]		
Raúl Benítez Manaut	Raul Benítez Manaut used to be the president of CASEDE, which he founded together with Sergio Aguayo Quezada. He has a PhD in Latin American Studies from UNAM, has been a visiting professor at the University of Columbia in New York, American University of Washington, at the Woodrow Wilson Centre in Washington and the University of San Jose, Costa Rica. He's an active member of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), and the Mexican Association for International Studies (AMEI) and professor for International Studies at UNAM. His areas of expertise are security in North-America and the Mexican *fuerzas armadas.*[32]	23/07/2018 @ his office at UNAM	00:42:06
Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo	Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo is a sociologist and professor at the Centre of International Studies at Colmex. He studied International Relations at Colmex, and thereafter Sociology. He has given lectures at UNAM, CIDE, FLACSO, ITAM, the University of Chicago, The Institute for Political Studies in Paris, and the University Institute Ortega y Gasset in Madrid. The emphasis of his investigations is on	06/08/2018 @ his office at Colmex	01:01:16

[27] Wilson Center "Experts: Guadalupe Correa Cabrera" https://www.wilsoncenter.org/person/guadalupe-correa-cabrera (accessed on September 10th 2018).
[28] CASEDE "Miembros: Armando Rodríguez Luna" https://www.casede.org/index.php/miembros-de-casede/cv-miembros-casede/39-armando-rodriguez-luna (accessed on September 10th 2017) and information given during the interview itself (about USAID).
[29] CASEDE "Miembros: Marcos Pablo Moloeznik" https://www.casede.org/index.php/miembros-de-casede/43-cv-miembros/435-marcos-pablo-moloeznik (accessed on September 10th 2018).
[30] José Luis Méndez Martínez "CV" https://joseluismendez.colmex.mx//images/CV/cv-largo.pdf (accessed on September 10th 2018) & José Luis Méndez "Resume" https://joseluismendez.colmex.mx/index.php/english-section (accessed on September 10th 2018).
[31] Information obtained from the interview and some other chats.
[32] UNAM/CISAN "Raúl Guillermo Benítez Manaut" http://www.cisan.unam.mx/raul.php (accessed on September 10th 2018).

	citizenship, public life, the state and democracy.[33]		
Luis Astorga	Luis Astorga is a member of the Institute for Social Investigations (IIS) of UNAM and has a PhD in Sociology from the University of Paris. His investigations focus on drug trafficking organizations, Mexican politics, crime and insecurity.[34]	21/08/2018 @ his office IIS UNAM	01:16:38
Mario Pavel Diaz Roman	Mario Pavel Díaz Román is a PhD student of Social Sciences with a specialty in Sociology at Colmex and a specialist in delinquency and violence. He has worked extensively with homicide statistics in Mexico and has written articles for (online) newspapers such as *El Dispensario.*[35]	27/08/2018 @ a classroom at Colmex	00:51:54
Francisco Gómez	Francisco Gómez studied journalism at UNAM. From a young age, he first started working at the newspaper *Unomasuno,* and it currently working on a freelance basis. He has been working on the subject of organized crime since 1983, has travelled throughout the entire country of Mexico, and therefore has over 30 years of experience in journalism.	13/09/2018 @ Tierra Garat café	00:55:59

[33] Fernando Escalante Conzalbo "Acerca de Fernando" http://www.fernandoescalante.net/acerca-de-fernando/ (accessed on September 10th 2018) & Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo "Artículos" http://www.fernandoescalante.net/category/articulos/ (accessed on September 10th 2018).

[34] CASEDE "Miembros: Luis Astorga" https://www.casede.org/index.php/miembros-de-casede/cv-miembros-casede/30-luis-astorga (accessed on September 10th 2018).

[35] El Dispensario – PPD CIDE "Claves para entender en 'NO' en Colombia" (description on bottom of the page) https://www.animalpolitico.com/blogueros-el-dispensario-dialogo-sobre-drogas/2016/10/11/algunas-claves-entender-no-al-plebiscito-la-paz-colombia/ (accessed on September 10th 2018).