THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE:

the case of a lynching in Mexico

by

MELANY V. CRUZ LEIVA

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Political Science and International Studies
School of Government
College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham
September 2019

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

In Memory of Raúl Leiva

December 2018

and

Miriam Donoso

February 2012

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT **III**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT **IV**

INTRODUCTION **1**
AN APPROACH TO POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS EXPERIENCE 3
A CASE FOR EMOTIONS IN POLITICAL THINKING 7
THESIS STRUCTURE 11

CHAPTER ONE
REVISING *LYNCHING*: TOWARD A CONCEPTUALISATION **16**
THE ORIGINS OF LYNCHING: PUBLIC EXECUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES 18
LATIN AMERICA: CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS OF LYNCHING 28
WHAT IT MEANS TO LYNCH IN MEXICO: A CONCEPTUALISATION 38
CONCLUSION 49

CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY: LYNCHING IN *SAN JUAN IXTAYOPAN* – A RESEARCH SITE **51**
RESEARCHING EMOTIONS 53
INTERPRETATIVE RESEARCH AND SINGLE CASE STUDY 60
THE STORY OF THE LYNCHING IN SAN JUAN IXTAYOPAN, TLÁHUAC, MEXICO 66
CONCLUSION: METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS 80

CHAPTER THREE
THE 'STICKY' FEELING OF FEAR: MORAL PANICS AND SCAPEGOATING IN LYNCHING **83**
MORAL PANICS IN COHEN'S ACCOUNT 85
MORAL PANICS AND LYNCHING IN MEXICO 89
UNRAVELLING THE 'MORAL PANICS': FEAR AND THE SCAPEGOATING MECHANISM 104
CONCLUSION: RIPPLES OF VIOLENCE 116

CHAPTER FOUR
AN ANGERED *CROWD:* POLITICISING LYNCHING **118**
LYNCHING AS SPECTACULAR OF VIOLENCE 122
LYNCHING AS THE ANGRY CROWD 133
THE PROBLEM WITH SPECTACULAR ANGER 148
CONCLUSION 150

CHAPTER FIVE
IN THE NAME OF *JUSTICE*: ANGER AND RETRIBUTION **153**
VIOLENCE AND JUSTICE: A DIALECTICAL APPROACH 156
FEELINGS OF RETRIBUTION: ANOTHER FORM OF ANGER 160

LYNCHING AND THE QUESTION OF POPULAR JUSTICE 167
FRONTIER JUSTICE AND THE END OF ANGER 172
CONCLUSION 185

CHAPTER SIX
***VITAL* AND *DIVINE* VIOLENCE: LYNCHING AGAINST THE STATE? 187**
THEORIES OF REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE 189
LYNCHING AS THE VIOLENCE OF 'PURE MEANS' 196
LYNCHING AGAINST THE STATE 207
CONCLUSION 217

CONCLUSION 220
RECAPITULATION 220
THE RE-SURFACING OF LYNCHING 222
EMOTIONS AMID POLITICS AND VIOLENCE 225

REFERENCES 227

APPENDIX ONE
NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE LIST **240**

APPENDIX TWO
INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE **247**

Abstract

This thesis analyses lynching in Mexico by seeking to answer two main questions: (i) Can lynching be interpreted as a form of political violence and, if so, (ii) What is its political meaning? I claim that the political dimensions of lynching as experience are underplayed due to an inadequate appreciation of the affective dimensions of violence. The way I address this omission in the literature is through a case study examination of lynching which demonstrates the importance of relating emotions to politics and violence. The lynching, which serves as my case, took place in *San Juan Ixtayopan* in Mexico City where, in 2004, two police officers were killed and one left with life changing injuries after the community decided that they were kidnapping children. This event is not isolated, as lynching has become an increasingly common phenomenon in the midst of the neoliberal transformation of Latin America. Nevertheless, predominant interpretations of lynching still examine the act reductively as simple criminality and wrongful societal behaviour. I scrutinise this by, first, addressing political violence through the key dimensions that I maintain characterise lynching: (i) the spectacle; (ii) the communal sense of (in)justice; (iii) confrontation with the state's monopoly of violence. Second, I explore the notion of lynching as political violence by placing at the centre of my interpretation the role that the politics of emotions – particularly fear and anger – play in the interpretation of violence. In this sense, this thesis contributes to conceptual debates surrounding the affective dimension of political violence and to a deeper understanding of the under-examined empirical phenomena of lynching in Mexico.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I must thank my supervisor, Dr. Laura Jenkins, for her academic and non-academic support along the way. She has not only influenced my thoughts and theoretical development, but she has always been a generous person to provide advice and guidance when the path became difficult. Thanks to Laura for teaching me to think with emotions. I also thank Professor Christopher Finlay for his insightful comments from the beginning of this project. His expertise and thought provoking questions have been invaluable for the development of my ideas.

This research would not have been possible without the funding provided by La *Comision Nacional de Investigacion y Tecnologia* (CONICYT) in Chile that awarded me with a full doctoral scholarship in 2015. To the Society of Latin American Studies (SLAS) that funded part of the fieldwork conducted in Mexico, and to the support staff at the *Archivo General de la Nacion* in Mexico City who helped me to navigate the archives for four months, allowing me to collect the secondary data for this thesis. I also thank all the participants in Mexico that kindly contributed with interviews.

I owe gratitude to Tricia Thomas whose care and commitment has made our PhD life easier. To UCU committee members, with whom I shared the upside downs of the University and showed to me the importance of unions and collective strength. To the PhD community of the Department of Government and Society (10th Floor) for their camaraderie, support, intellectual challenge, laughs and (too) many drinks.

I am grateful to Chris Featherstone with who I have spent most of my PhD's days in the tiny office we call *the red room*. Dr. Timea Notcha, Frida Estrella, Dr. Samara Guimarães, Kate Schenck, Dr. Maren Rohe, Dr. Shardia Briscoe-Palmer, Dr. Cherry Miller and Dr. Milly Morris, for have been a daily inspiration of women enlightening academia. To Dr. John Evemy and Mann Virdee, the housemates that made me feel I was not too far from home and to Dr. Mattias Hjort, Conor McKenna, Joe Ward and Bradley Ward for their friendship. A special mention to Elio Di Muccio and Dr. Sam Warner that have not only been excellent friends but best comrades. To Dr. Eva Fringi, for becoming a sister in this foreign land.

To all the friends in Chile that have kept their love despite my terrible communication, and the friends in Mexico City, Bricio, Lisha and Ale, who adopted me as part of *la banda*, showing and teaching me about their beautiful country while I was doing my fieldwork.

Mum, Dad and Sister. I should thank you for supporting me in this adventure that was to move to the U.K six years ago. You have forever encouraged me to be myself, to take risks and to pursue an academic career. Mum, you taught me how to stand up for others, and myself, to complain when it is necessary and to see that we live in a world that needs to be changed. I am thankful that your non-traditional teachings have persisted in me. To my late granddad, Raúl, who gave me books – which he struggled to read – that stimulated this path in life. To Miriam for having been a mother every day of my life.

Finally, to Darcy Luke. You have been my comrade, my best friend and my love that with patience and caring (and lots of cooking and cleaning at home) helped me to finish this thesis. I am endlessly thankful for what you have done and I know together we will *take heaven by storm.*

INTRODUCTION

"In *Tatahuicapan*, the neighbours contemplate – almost with indolence – the scene: why the bonfire matter? If they are not criminals but *pueblo justiciero* [justice people] and, obviously, their action seems essentially virtuous to fill the vacuum of justice in the area. In *Tatahuicapan,* the lynching is described as the 'spiritual' transformation of the community, suddenly powerful; suddenly back to the origins of barbarism, which the videotape certifies" (Monsiváis, 2002: 13). These words expressed by Carlos Monsiváis, one of the most recognised Mexican writers and journalists, sums up some of the common ground across the topics contained within this thesis: the brutality of violence, feelings of injustice, dichotomies of civility and incivility, and the spectacle. All these elements are present in the interpretation of lynching offered within, where lynching is the main object of study whilst, at the same time, an illustration for the main theoretical contribution this thesis seeks to make.

I interpret lynching as a form of extreme violence that possesses a communicative political role in the marginalised societies where it is experienced. Its affective dimension, which I research through an interpretative narrative framework, draws the relevance of lynching and how through the collective emotions of fear, anger and will for retribution, a community permit itself to express their grievances in the context of neoliberalism. In order to provide an affective interpretation of

lynching, this thesis will put at the front of the analysis of how emotions can work as collective reactions that lead to violence. The encounter between lynching and politics is framed by the historical suffering of marginalised people who are in the midst of what Etienne Balibar (2016) calls ultraobjective and ultrasubjective cruelty. In other words, those communities that are caught between a "kind of cruelty [that] calls for treating masses of human beings as things or useless remnants" and cruelty that requires "individuals or groups be represented as incarnations of evil" (2016: 52). I look into this group of people not only because lynching occurs in materially deprived communities, but also because the violence of 'marginalised' and 'outcasted communities' is normally described as apolitical or with little or non-political relevance. Thus, reading lynching in a similar light to Balibar's words, this thesis will (i) interpret lynching as a form of political violence and (ii) will contribute to an *affective* perspective on political violence that permits actions and experiences that otherwise would have been dismissed as barbaric or uncivilised, to be understood as eminently political. It is important to clarify that this thesis does not aim to defend or justify lynching as political violence but to reveal and understand the politics involve in lynching.

Towards this, the case study will function as both the object of research and the interpretative illustration through which to make the theoretical contribution. The story of a lynching constitutes the micro-narrative inserted and explained through the macro-narratives in which occurs, both contextual and theoretical. Following primary research conducted in Mexico City, I use the case of a lynching that occurred on the 23rd November 2004 in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, a peripheral zone of Mexico City, to organise the empirical and theoretical-affective analysis of this thesis, from the micro to the macro.

Before diving into the case study, which I detail in Chapter Two, I want to outline two key dimensions of this research. Firstly, conceptualisations of political violence in political theory are vast, thus, I will specify in here what is the approach taken as an influence for the interpretation of lynching is. Secondly, I will broadly draw on the importance of emotions in political thinking in

order to linkage the two main theoretical threads of this research, which are emotions and political violence. Finally, I present a thesis structure where I summarise the arguments developed throughout the research.

An approach to political violence as experience

Lynching in Mexico is a phenomenon that has not attracted much academic discussion in politics and in political theory. Coined after the horrific events that took place in the Southern states of the U.S. in the nineteenth century, the term 'lynching' encompasses a practice that has grown in Latin America and in many places in the Global South (e.g. India and South Africa) in the last thirty years, becoming a source of interest for social scientists. As I will explore in this thesis, the conceptualisation of lynching is a complex and contested, though in an attempt to introduce a workable definition for this thesis, I define lynching as a collective violent act enacted by a community or group of individuals towards someone considered an offender against local social values and the rules of the community (Huggins, 1991). Lynching is carried out as a form of public punishment and normally involves brutal violence and torture of the victims. In general, lynching in Latin America is a kind of violence that is enacted outside the state's authority meaning that it is commonly typified as a crime. As such, most social scientists concerned with lynching in the continent have come from the field of criminology and sociology, and accept overall the 'criminal' understanding of lynching (see: Huggins, 1991; Briceño-Leon, 2002; Nivette, 2016). As consequence of this, there is little discussion regarding the possibilities of considering lynching as a form of *political* violence, particularly because traditional theories of violence have often been framed as those actions from-or-against the state's authority (see Fraser and Hutchings, 2019). Insofar as lynchings resist easy categorization as either from or against the state (even in cases where victims happen to occupy roles in the structures of the state), they fall somewhere beyond the reach of this equation.

Therefore, lynching in Latin America has been largely defined as a type of crime that responds to cultural and economic conditions. Most scholars have described the phenomenon as a consequence of poverty, inequality and corruption in the juridical system that has considerably advanced in the continent with the implementation of neoliberal policies since the 1980s-90s. Although this thesis agrees broadly with this outlook, it also raises questions as to the limitations inherent in framing lynching as solely a crime and not as a form of political violence. Thus, one of the questions that this thesis aims to address is whether *lynching could be considered political violence in the first place*. For this, it is necessary to introduce what I mean by political violence, considering that there exists a vast realm of theoretical debate concerning it.

My position on political violence derives mainly from continental European political philosophy. Therefore, many of the theories utilised in this thesis will come from, or be related to, this realm of debate. However, I know that in order to propose an interpretation of lynching, I first need to introduce where I stand in the theory of political violence, considering its long tradition. In this sense, I am going to approach violence in this thesis from what is suggested by Vittorio Bufacchi and Jools Gilson (2016), in their paper 'The Ripples of Violence'. Although I do not aim to expand this conceptualisation of violence, I consider this approach to be the one informing my thinking about violence. In this approach, Bufacchi and Gilson argue for a conceptualisation of violence as an 'experience' and not just an 'act'. By considering the experience of violence, the authors are contributing to the idea of violence that is not merely temporally determined, instead claiming that even though an act of violence has a 'determinate' time, the experience of violence is lived in temporally indeterminate ways (Bufacchi & Gilson, 2016: 28). Thus, aspects of violence, such as the intentionality of the act and the use of 'force' inflicted on the victim do not exhaust what is contained within the notion of violence (2016: 33).

Similarly, the philosopher Michael Staudigl (2013) proposes a phenomenological understanding of violence, in which experience is seen from the dialectic relationship between the 'sense' and 'loss

of sense' of the world. The "subject's engagement in and with the world, but, first and foremost, a relation that unfolds in between the one and the other" (2013: 44). Thus, violence is the experience manifested when we give sense to the world we live in, or we lose a sense of that world. This position permits an expansion of conceptions of political violence beyond the narrow physical act in itself, allowing us to see violence as something that does not end when a particular act of violence finishes. Simply analysing an act of violence in its narrow form can sometimes blur its political significance in society. As with lynching, the act of brutal violence emerges through the ripples of other past violence that, at the same time, creates new ripples of violence into the future. In sum, when an act of violence appears, the subjects that experience such violence do not merely live it as a determinate act but continue to live it through time, through an indeterminate future. This stance in the theory of violence takes us closer to a perspective from which lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence. It helps us to see lynching as both violent and political by drawing our attention to the experience of violence taken a greater whole. A narrower understanding of violence is more apt to occlude features of the violent experience important for appreciating its politics.

Therefore, I will approach the violence of lynching as an experience, which both gives and destroys people's sense of their world. This means that not only is the body destroyed in the lynching (by the force of torture and killing), but so too is the sense of which a community experiences the world they live in, allowing the appearance of new forms through which their world can make sense to them. In Staudigl's words:

> Only when one recognises that violence [relational phenomenon] as an exemplary phenomenon of 'negative sociality' is not only (though always) destructive in character, but also and always the performer of poietic or socio-technological functions, whose subjective powers of sense-bestowal and, more importantly, powers of social formation cannot be ignored (2013: 45).

In this sense, what do I mean by 'political'? I will not seek to understand the 'political' elements of violence in its traditional sense as 'violence directed towards political ends'. On the contrary, because the violence of lynching is not instrumentalist, no ends can be sought in this action. It is particularly difficult to discern any visible or verbalised aims within such acts of violence. Nevertheless, as this thesis will demonstrate, lynching is political because it exists as an affective communicative action. Although the message is not pre-defined (see Chapter Four), nor typically communicated, its violence allows to surface and reveal the ways in which 'politics' affects people's lives. Specifically, this refers to the feelings of 'injustice' (see Chapter Five) and the perceptions of a 'fragmented state' (see Chapter Six). Although this can also be interpreted as violence by 'political means', I approach violence, as stated above, as experience. Therefore, the political here will be explained as something that also exists through the experiences of those enacting the violence of lynching.

Thus, I will not ignore the *unseen* fragments of lynching or what has become invisible behind its brutality. I will look further at what Monsiváis called 'the origins of barbarism', and pay attention to the details of what he informs earlier, the *sense of a pueblo justiciero* and *the spiritual transformation* of a community; a notion closely related to what a number of thinkers on violence are proposing.

Agreeing with Bufacchi and Gilson, I will not approach to political violence in a manner which serves to "perpetuate a narrow understanding of violence, grounded on the dubious distinction between (masculine) active and intentional perpetrators and wholly passive (feminine) victims and survivors" (2016: 32). This unhelpful division does not allow us to see violence as an experience that has ripple effects in and through time. As Bufacchi and Gilson expose "what starts as an act of violence, with a precise starting point and an endpoint, evolves into an experience, with much broader an unclear boundaries" (2016: 32). Political violence does not end when the law comes to bear, nor when injuries heal; violence can continue to be present in non-physical forms. It "means that violations and the experience of violence are mediated by the body and its symbolic-

semantic shaping regardless of their origin, physical or not" (Staudigl, 2013: 52). An example of this can be drawn from the continuity of violence in the aftermath of a lynching. Once the physical action has stopped, the community involved creates a collective memory of such violence, giving it meaning and, thus, transforming it into an experience, which is something I explore further in this thesis. On this premise, I refuse traditional dichotomies between perpetrators/victims/survivors, as categories in which people can fit it, as well I contest the dichotomy between body and mind in the concept of violence used in this research. This led me to emotions as the second central theme, and how vital is to look the affective dimension of politics.

A case for emotions in political thinking

In this thesis, I incorporate into the definition of violence-as-experience, the role of emotion as a crucial aspect of the social and political human experience of violence. I draw from Raia Prokhovnik's notion of emotion (1999) in order to break with the idea that political violence can only be studied from a rationalist point of view. Similarly to what Bufacchi, Gilson and Staudigl expose, Prokhovnik argues that "experience is a key and integrative fulcrum in this [intellectual] process, occurring as the point where inner and outer, internal and external, meet" (1999: 50).

From this point of view, she examines how reason and emotion are not opposing dichotomies in the development of human experience, and neither should we treat them as such when we theorise them. Prokhovnik writes, "historically the dominant strand of at least western philosophy has considered that reason and emotion are mutually exclusive, and that theorizing proceeds by the former and is impeded by the latter" (Prokhovnik, 1999: 51). I consider that this division is also embedded in the understanding of political violence by ignoring the implication of emotions in the interpretation of the act and experience of violence. By examining emotions as part of political

violence, we can overcome the dichotomy of the rational vs. barbarism, and civil vs. uncivil divide, as reason and emotion, are internally related.

Prokhovnik argues by way of Damasio that "emotions are profoundly implicated in the use of reason (…) It is to say that 'certain aspects of the process of emotion and feeling are indispensable for rationality'" (Damasio cited in Prokhovnik, 1999: 52). By this, she does not claim that emotions hijack processes of judgement and decision-making that occur in our minds, but those emotions are cognitive processes that take part in, as Staudigl also posits, the way we engage in and observe the world: "Because emotions involve cognition, located in the mind, as well as (secondarily) bodily affects", Prokhovnik writes, "the strict separation and opposition between mind and body, on which the reason/emotion dichotomy rested breaks down" (Prokhovnik, 1999: 54). This process of thinking is the one I am applying in this thesis in order to theorise lynching as political violence.

Theories of political violence largely tend to be related to reason. Here, reason contains different dimensions; first, violence as reason has been characterised as a universal abstract category and principle, within which many of the conceptualisations of violence fit (see: Bufacchi, 2005; Coady, 2009; Salmi, 2009). Second, violence has also been seen as instrumental rationality in which justification of violence takes place through arguments concerning the aims and means of political violence (Audi, 2009; Frazer and Hutchings, 2019). Third, political violence has been related to notions of reason in terms of normative conceptions of violence, based on, for example, the importance of monopolising violence in order to achieve and exercise freedom and order, but also, as Prokhovnik writes, to "distinguish humans from beasts (so is contrasted with instinct)" (1999: 60). In this sense, I claim that there is a reason-focused approach to political violence that, drawing from Prokhovnik, "contain[s] an implicit or explicit rejection of emotion, where emotion stands for unruly passions, affect and sense experience, lack of objective and dispassionate impartiality and lack of control, foresight and predictability" (1999: 61).

Theoretical concerns in political violence are embedded in these dichotomies between civil vs. uncivil; rational vs. irrational violence, in which emotions have no central place. However, in this thesis, I am putting emotions *at the heart* of violence and *at the heart* of politics. I achieve this by positing emotions as a *movement* (Prokhovnik, 1999: 66), as an essential part of the ways we interact with the world. I do this mainly by interrelating political violence with the work of Sara Ahmed on emotions, who approaches to the affective dimension of the political through an understanding of emotions as the 'sticky' element that shapes our social relations (Ahmed, 2004). Inspired by her work, I draw many of the interpretations of lynching from this theory, complementing with other thinkers on the theory of emotions, such as Martha Nussbaum and Robert C. Solomon.

Agreeing with Prokhovnik's epistemology, emotions are a crucial dimension through which we perceive and interact with the world. Thus, emotions are neither universal nor individual (belonging exclusively to the body) but the "rationality of emotions is their appropriateness and fitness to a given context (…) In this way, the rationality of emotion depends as much upon a social value and judgment as upon an evaluation of a particular person's emotional state or action" (1999: 72). Arguing explicitly from de Sousa, "emotions tell us things about the real world" (de Sousa cited in Prokhovnik, 1999: 73). Emotion "is the capacity to feel (by which is not meant sense experience) a variety of more or less powerful value-laden cognitive responses, understood as rational responses to experience in the form of other feelings, actions, events or ideas" (Prokhovnik, 1999: 73).

In agreement with Michael Freeden, who I will explain in detail in Chapter Two, emotions are intrinsically part our political thinking and our decision-making process, as well part of the ways we judge and interpret what is happening in our world. By integrating these elements into the analysis, and as part of my understanding of the political in this thesis, it is possible to understand acts of violence, such as lynching, not merely as apolitical or anti-political (criminal) action, but as part of the political aspect of a group of individuals (a 'crowd', as I explain Chapter Four) that experience violence as an emotional process, wherein "each of its dimensions (the behavioural,

social context, agency) plays a part". As Prokhovnik writes, "when emotion is recognised as occurring as an integrated process, it cannot any longer be regarded as either an uncontrolled response or a cold colourless appraisal" (1999: 97), which is largely how lynching has been hitherto described. In contrast, an affective interpretation of lynching allows us to see it as part of the continuous process of violence – as ripples – and not subsumed to the dichotomies of reason and emotion.

In this sense, this thesis aims to contribute to two main areas of discussion. First, I seek to provide an explanation and analysis of lynching in Mexico through a case study that permits in-depth identification of those narratives that define the phenomenon. This will contribute to a more profound knowledge of lynching as a whole, illuminating potential further research into the topic. Second, this thesis aims to expand our understanding of political violence beyond the duality of state and non-state uses of force by proposing an affective interpretation of violence outside this typical framework. Here, I incorporate the contribution of the politics of emotions in order to explain why lynching can be read as a form of political violence.

This thesis critically engages with a series of pre-assumed dichotomies existent in the theory of political violence, as well in popular understandings of lynching; namely, reason/emotions; justice/injustice; and civility/uncivility. These dualities belong to the same set of discussions, which define political violence as a form of rational action that is enacted either by state actors or against them and therefore aims to define our sense of justice by proposing a notion of civility that is normally encapsulated within a system of rules. Thus, as explained above, I posit my interpretation of 'the political' as one that surpasses these dualities. Agreeing broadly with the feminist premise that 'the personal is political', I state that the politics at play within the violence of lynching, despite common characterisations, is not congealed in a personal – or inter-personal – form of violence, but instead that the violence of lynching is not distinct from politics, they are imbricated with one another. The act of lynching, therefore, is situated on a broader political

spectrum in which politics have been silenced by denying those who enact lynching (marginalised communities) entrance to the political sphere. Therefore, the politics of emotions represents a relevant discussion that allows us to politicise what is seen as simply the interpersonal violence of lynching. Thus, I aim to intersect two realms of theoretical discussion; that is – political violence and emotions – in order to contribute to a visible gap in the literature and thus contribute to a fuller interpretation of lynching.

This thesis posits the following two main research questions: *can lynching be interpreted as a form of political violence? And if so, then, what is its political meaning?* I claim that the political dimensions of lynching as experience are underplayed due to inadequate appreciation of the affective dimensions of violence. Thus, I will be dissecting these questions through six chapters, each dealing with the intersection of violence and emotion. The first two chapters underpin the theoretical and methodological discussion upon which this thesis is based. The four remaining chapters address lynching through two primary political emotions – fear and anger – intersecting these emotions with key elements of the phenomenon of lynching and the conceptualisation of political violence. I conclude the thesis arguing that lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence when emotions are brought forward as occupying a central position within our terms of analysis.

Thesis structure

In Chapter One, *'Revising lynching: toward a conceptualisation'*, I present a set of different discussions about the concept of lynching, from its origins in the United States of America to contemporary definitions of Latin American and Mexican thinkers. These sections seek to be a descriptive interpretation of dominant literature and existent conceptualisations of lynching across time and disciplines. I establish that lynching has been broadly defined in four main categories that can be found, to different degrees in all contexts: (i) the 'crisis of authority and legitimacy'; (ii) the

'spectacle'; (iii) the 'failed state' and the (iv) 'agentive or empowerment moment'. I conclude this chapter by summarising my own conceptualisation of lynching for the case of Mexico, which is developed through dialogue with the existing literature, adding the importance of looking at lynching in its affective dimension.

Chapter Two, *'Methodology: Lynching in San Juan Ixtayopan, a research site'*, states the methodological decisions made for this research. This study is interpretative research, meaning I use empirical evidence to draw discussion on conceptual and theoretical elements that could better explain the phenomenon of lynching. First, this chapter establishes the importance of studying emotions as part of a theoretical approach to the phenomenon of violence more broadly and the uses of narratives of emotions as a methodological approach more specifically. Second, I justify the use of single case study as an appropriate design in order to 'dig down' into the phenomenon of lynching, and as a tool for expanding narrativity as central to theoretical analysis. I also explain how the data for this research was collected through fieldwork conducted in Mexico City, where I gathered archival material from newspapers and the police report of the case, as well as conducted interviews with journalists who witnessed the event and academics who have explored the case. I end this chapter by outlining the story of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* as it occurred in a small town outside Mexico City on the 23rd of November of 2004, where two police officers were killed and one left with life-changing injuries after the community assumed they were involved in the kidnapping of local children. The story will be told chronologically – prior to, during and after the event – as well through the emotions that I analyse within the thesis: fear, anger and vengeance.

The third chapter of this thesis, *'The 'sticky' feeling of fear: moral panics and scapegoating in lynching'*, explores the initial stages of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* that was sparked by rumours of child kidnappers working within the local area, and how these rumours resulted in the unleashing of the collective fury of a community. I ask in this chapter one main question, can fear lead to violent actions like lynching? To answer this I address Stanley Cohen's 'Moral Panics' theory to

link the role of the media in the perception of lynching. Later, I argue that the events in *San Juan Ixtayopan* cannot be reduced to 'anxieties' around moral panics, but that the violence emerged because of the historical growth of emotions of fear. I establish this argument with the help of René Girard's theory of mimetic violence and the scapegoating mechanism, along with Sara Ahmed's notion of 'sticky' feelings in order to explain fear as an eminently political emotion.

In Chapter Four, *'An angered crowd: politicising lynching'*, I examine the role of the spectacle in lynching by asking (i) does spectacular violence help the community to communicate their grievances? And (ii) What is the relationship between spectacular and visible violence and the emotion of anger? Arguing by way of the contributions of Yves Winter and Michel Foucault, I state that lynching is a form of spectacular violence that uses brutality and pain to interpellate (to disrupt), as part of a communicative process, a particular message to an audience, both inside and outside the community. When looking at the case study, the spectacle allows us to understand how the lynching sought to communicate the grievances of a community that had suffered the severe consequences of neoliberal policies. Thus, the spectacle of violence enables the interpellation of the state's authority aiming to cut the normal functioning of society. However, I claim that when this occurs amid the angered crowd, the communication is broken and the crowd becomes muted, losing its power for political interpellation. For this, I introduce the notion of anger proposed by Martha C. Nussbaum and Peter Lyman, alongside a discussion of the 'crowd' based on George Rude's theory in order to explain the limitations of an angered crowd in the political realm.

Following the emotion of anger, in Chapter Five, I expand on the notions of vengeance or the retributive aspect of anger. In *'In the name of justice: a will for retribution'*, I dissect one of the most common notions to characterise lynching, which is the idea of 'taking justice into one their own hands' by exploring two main questions (i) what happens to the narrative of justice when the state loses its authority in the eye of the community? And (ii) can lynching enact justice for a community? I respond these questions by addressing the will for retribution through the

philosophical contribution of Robert C. Solomon. I argue that Slavoj Žižek's conception of violence and Vittorio Bufacchi's analysis of justice helps us to interpret the will for retribution in lynching as a phenomenon amid the dialectical relationship existent between structural and subjective violence. When the state and its juridical system contribute to and produce forms of structural violence (e.g. insecurity, poverty) this creates grievances which come to be expressed through anger and are later manifest in forms of subjective violence (i.e. lynching). This dialectical relationship, as I demonstrate, works through the expansion of the *frontier of justice*, in which emotions of retribution redraw the sense of (in)justice of the community, redefining as well, the forms of punishment.

Finally, Chapter Six, *'Vital and divine violence: is lynching against the state?'* I explore the relation between the state and lynching, asking (i) is the state responsible for the actions of lynching? And (ii) is lynching a challenge to the state's authority? I argue through these questions by considering the theory of revolutionary violence in Georges Sorel and Walter Benjamin. Here, I propose an affective reading of both theories, thinking through emotions in general as the element that permits the community to give sense to what they have been suffering at the hands of what I call in this chapter, the 'fragmented state'. I consider that the 'necessity' and 'vitality' of the violence of lynching represents a challenge to fundamental aspects of the state and its institutions. The violence of lynching permits society to visualise the cruelty through which the state operates, and therefore fundamentally transforms *the spirit* of a community. Even though lynching is not revolutionary violence – as traditionally understood – it possesses a transformative character that I aim to uncover in this chapter.

I conclude the thesis by re-addressing the two main questions posed at the beginning of this research: *can lynching be interpreted as a form of political violence? And if so, then, what is its political meaning?* I do this by presenting what I consider to be the two main contributions of this research: (i) Lynching is a form of political violence. The case of lynching can provide a helpful illustration of

types of violence that remain unseen and underdeveloped in the discussion of political violence simply because they do not have a direct relation to the state and to what is consider obviously 'political'. (ii) The importance of interpreting and reading emotions in political violence as part of expanding the dichotomies between reason and emotions as opposite and irreconcilable elements

CHAPTER ONE
Revising *lynching*: toward a conceptualisation

Introduction

From a western point of view, lynching is a phenomenon confined to history books. The brutality of public execution outside the law carried out by communities is something that societies from the Global North do not want to revive or revise. However, lynching occupies hundreds of front pages in sensationalist media in the Global South, from India to South Africa to all over Latin America, showing that this practice has not been relegated entirely to the past. In this sense, lynching has also come to the attention of social scientists and politicians, who are concerned with how to conceptualise this phenomenon, why it is relevant for contemporary society and how it is distinctive from past forms of so-called lynching. Therefore, in this chapter, I aim to put that discussion into perspective in order to conceptualise the notion of lynching in the case of Mexico. For this, I review the different academic perspectives on lynching, which come mainly from the fields of sociology, anthropology, criminology and history. There is no discussion on lynching in the field of political science and political theory, which is something I will explore further in this thesis. Though this should present us with a variety of possible conceptualisations, it is surprising that there is not a single – and clear – conceptualisation of lynching.

Thus, I will conclude with a precise definition of the phenomenon that will be used in this thesis and allow for an accurate and consistent understanding of lynching in the context of Mexico. That definition is drawn from the work of Daniel M. Goldstein, Angelina Snodgrass Godoy and Antonio Fuentes Díaz, all scholars who have done empirical work on lynching in Latin America.

The conceptualisation I will continue to use throughout this thesis is focused on communal lynching, which is defined as those actions that occurred within communities that have strong bonds and connections. I contribute to an affective definition of lynching by addressing, in addition to the notions of 'crisis of authority' and 'crisis of legitimacy', the 'crisis of emotional foundations' which triggers the different arguments I will expand in this research.

In order to achieve the above, I begin by defining the roots of the word 'lynching'. In so doing, I will explore in the first section the lynching in the United States as the starting point of the definition, even though the practice of public execution had taken place in some form way before the concept was coined in the United States. In this first section, I will cover the different ways of conceptualising the phenomenon in the United States, particularly those of 'popular justice' and 'frontier justice', which were used to explain practices of public execution. This section will act as a historical and conceptual point of reference in order to understand lynching in Latin America as a response to a 'crisis of legitimacy' and a form of 'spectacle of violence', highlighting the differences and similarities between both contexts which will be explained during the course of the chapter.

The second section of this chapter will explore a variety of interpretations and conceptualisations of contemporary lynching in Latin America. The use of the concept is relatively new in this context, presenting some challenges for this thesis in terms of capturing a *proper* definition. However, this section will provide an important overview of the practice in itself: (i) how it is carried out – the ritual –; (ii) who gets involved – the actors; and more importantly; (iii) how it can be differentiated from other violent practices on the continent, such as those practised by 'justice makers' and 'paramilitary groups'. This section will examine the literature on lynching in different countries of Latin America, such as Guatemala, Bolivia, Venezuela and Brazil. It is important to underline that the context of each country is relevant for studies that concern case studies and data collection, however, for the purpose of this thesis, the focus in this chapter will be mainly conceptual and theoretical. For this, I will be discussing in two separate subsections 'Lynching as a consequence

of the failed state and neoliberalism' and 'lynching as an agency moment'. These two subsections focus on how current neoliberal policies and the inefficiency of the state have facilitated actions such as lynching due to the increase of insecurity and poverty. This idea has led some thinkers to believe that lynching can be seen as a moment of agency, in which communities feel empowered to act against the material conditions imposed by the failed state.

Finally, this chapter will address the phenomenon of lynching in Mexico. As I mentioned above for the case of Latin America, in Mexico there is very little published literature that explores lynching as a practice of public execution. However, the contribution of a handful of scholars has helped to shed light on how the phenomenon manifests in the country. Thus, this section will also expose the relevance of conceptualising lynching in specific relation to Mexico, particularly pointing out its relationship to national politics and the notion of the political. These issues will be discussed in two subsections 'Crisis of authority v/s the indigenous-cultural perspective' and 'lynching amid other violence(s)', which are employed as the common interpretative frameworks. These two narratives in literature explain how lynching is symptomatic of a crisis of the state's authority due to the current issue with generalised violence, such as drug cartels, in Mexico. Finally, as mentioned above, I will propose an affective conceptualisation of lynching for the case of Mexico study of the phenomenon throughout the thesis.

The origins of lynching: Public executions in the United States

In 1905, American historian, James E. Cutler dubbed lynching 'American's national crime', describing it as "the practice whereby mobs capture individuals suspected of crime, or take them from the officers of the law, and execute them without any process at law, or break open jails and hang convicted criminals, with impunity" (cited in Dray, 2002: 17). His position suggested that lynching was exclusively an action in countries with a low degree of 'civilization', despite the fact that one could find similar cases in European countries, considered at the time as the centre of the Enlightenment. This definition invites the revision of a series of elements that still exist in the

conceptualisation of lynching and continues to define it in the light of specific elements that occurred in the United States between the period of the 1890s and the 1930s, and which were primarily used against African Americans[1].

American historians have debated the origin of the word 'lynching' quite widely. Gibson explains that the word was originally derived from the actions of one historical character, Charles Lynch, an American politician who fought against Loyalists during the War of Independence in the United States and who was suspected to have held informal trials outside the juridical system in which the killing of the accused was often the outcome (Gibson, 1979). Drawing from his surname, the *Lynch law* and consequently 'lynching' became commonplace terms to illustrate some of the above forms of punishment outside the system of law.

Lynching in the United States represents one of the most brutal forms of *racialised*[2] violence in the country. Placed between the end of slavery and the establishment of Jim Crow laws (Thurston, 2011; Waldrep, 2006; Dray, 2002), lynching is the transitionary stage of cruel punishment and execution of black Americans. The brutality of the lynchings, aimed particularly at black men characterised the phenomenon of white supremacy and colonisation that the United States continues to struggle with. However, in addition to the persecution of African Americans, other important elements explain and characterise lynching in this context.

I consider that two debates stand out in the understanding of lynching in the United States. First, literature that examines lynching as a consequence of a 'crisis of legitimacy' in a situation of deep political transformations; and second, literature that views lynching as a 'spectacle', and considers the role of mobs, as well the role of media and photography, as key elements that reproduced and expanded the violence across the United States at the time.

[1] Researchers suggest that a fair amount of whites, Mexican, Catholics and immigrants from different backgrounds were also lynched during this period (Huggins, 1991; Dray 2002; Wood, 2009; Thurston, 2011)

[2] Lynching in the United States was an action that mainly targeted the Black population. Thus, lynching is linked as a constituted part of structural racism in the country.

Lynching as the 'crisis of legitimacy'

Considerable debates have taken place within American history in order to comprehend the reasons for the cruelty through which crowds killed hundreds of people in the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Hanging from trees, bridges and in the middle of public squares, predominantly black men were submitted to torture and persecution by large groups of white people who would crowd together to participate, observe and photograph the actions. Analyses show that both structural racism and particular historical and social conditions contributed to the practice of lynching.

One of the best-known thinkers and voices of the time, who fought against racism and lynching was Ida B. Wells. In 1895, she claimed that with the beginning of the black emancipation and the ending of slavery, white people started to lose societal power and control over blacks. The consequence of this was an amplification of the violence against blacks through hunting and lynching. Wells writes,

> During the slave regime, the Southern white man owned the Negro body and soul. It was to his interest to dwarf the soul and preserve the body (…) but, with freedom, a new system of intimidation came into vogue; the Negro was not only whipped and scourged; he was killed (cited in Waldrep, 2006: 4).

This idea illustrates how lynching was seen as a 'resource' or 'mechanism' for the continuation and reproduction of White domination over African Americans. However, it also illustrates another aspect of lynching: that it is a system of domination which is actioned outside of the traditional juridical system and that its development legitimises one group of the society over another by extra-juridical means. In other words, when the formal law of slavery changed in favour of black Americans, giving them their freedom, the system of domination created a new law, a *lynch law*, that allowed them to continue that domination but now through public executions.

Elbert Cutler argued that the body of law in the United States did not have a long tradition of support among the general population, in comparison to Europe. On the contrary, "in the midst

of new conditions, with no strong government to enforce it with an impartial and an iron hand, along with the growth of the democratic spirit, a new *esprit des lois*, as Montesquieu would call it, has been developed" (cited in Waldrep, 2006: 12). Cutler shows that the context of lynching was defined by the inefficiency and uncertainty of courts and the whole system of law. This a recurrent theme that continues to characterise lynching, namely, the illegitimacy of a system of law that failed to provide justice to the population. 'Mob rule', as lynching has been termed, operates because there is a vacuum within the system of justice which enables people to take the law into their own hands. Undoubtedly, in the United States context, the law was taken into white hands because of resistance to the freedom of black Americans, demonstrating that lynching worked on two levels: (i) due to the perceived illegitimacy of the system of justice and (ii) the overall situation of white supremacy.

The historian Robert W. Thurston analyses lynching through the notion of a 'crisis of legitimacy' that Southern states were suffering after the Civil War. Confederate states, in particular, lived through an extended process of violence during and after the war. As identified by Ida B. Wells, this had a large impact on the lives of Southern people, after the fall of the system of slavery. Thurston argues that "emancipation and the death of the Confederacy disrupted these emotional foundations and concurrently wiped out a great portion of southern wealth, held in the form of slaves" (2011: 73). Therefore, a new social and political legitimacy was put in place, developing strong contradictions between white rule and the integration of African Americans into a 'free society' driven by the new demands of developing capitalism that substantially changed white people's lives (Thurston, 2001: 75). Thurston claims that the process of reconfiguration of the political, economic and social situation produced a large-scale sense of anxiety among white males. He writes of "the linkage between the white race and politics that characterized the South, the dangers of interracial sex sounded so often by white leaders, and the felt need to react quickly to crime, especially in small communities" (2011: 76). The particularities of these transformations

influenced the feelings of these groups and pushed the community towards forms of crowd violence such as lynching.

This situation was particularly complex within the household system. White Southerners were used to having a family structure in which they were "in charge of their wives, children and slaves" (2011: 77). "The right to hold property in human form was an integral part of white family relations, or more precisely of its foundational myth" (2011: 77), for which the changes after 1865 brought deep inner transformation in the ways that social relations were established, conflicting with predominant notions of masculinity, race and family which lay at the core of Southern life. Similarly, Wood argues that lynching in the United States tended to happen in places which were confronted with problems of criminality and "anxieties about moral decay" (2009: 7), for which lynching was seen as a 'fair' form of retribution, i.e. to recover white supremacy and moral order. Although contexts differ, I examine feelings of fear and retribution among communities in Mexico in Chapter Three and Five respectively, focusing on the social anxieties surrounding the action of lynching.

In this sense, establishing legitimacy in a 'new society' was not an easy transitional process, and uncertainty was largely seen as the new path of politics. According to Thurston, in the attempt to expel blacks from the political life, white southern elites were also marginalising working-class whites from the public affairs, intensifying the tensions (and growing negative feelings) between both groups that were already convoluted since the end of slavery. The 'crisis of legitimacy' of the political, juridical, economic and social context is a relevant point for the overall conceptualisation of a contemporary understanding of lynching. When looking at lynching in Latin America, the 'crisis of authority' and 'economic crisis' normally appears a primary contextual element contributing to the phenomenon. As such, these ideas about legitimacy are important parallels and reference points for the case of lynching in Mexico.

In addition to the *perceived* 'crisis of legitimacy' in Southern states, the historian Philip Dray (2002) explains that fear and mistrust were expressed by communities when, during the period of

Reconstruction after the Civil War, itinerant periodical courts would circulate around towns to enact justice for any crimes committed. In this sense, the lack of presence of the state's authority made the enforcement of what Dray and others have called 'popular justice' acceptable, which was seen as a form of community in its own right (Dray, 2002). As mentioned above, this was related to a broader class issue, in which isolation from the juridical system was not only physical but also financial. White communities lacked financial resources to gain access to the system of justice (Huggins, 1991: 15), for which 'popular justice' was a "frontier solution for such inadequacies of community social organisation" (Huggins, 1991: 15).

As well as a juridical retribution, the social conditions which led to lynchings often pertained in what has been called situations of 'frontier justice' (Dray, 2002), in which "settlers living hundreds of miles beyond the limits of cities and towns, threatened by native tribes, horse thieves, cattle rustlers, and swindlers, felt themselves sufficiently vulnerable to take matters into their own hands" (2002: 19). The geographical boundaries between cities and states created a sentiment of isolation from the central state and its institutions, helping to create and express extra-legal violence. As such, it can be seen that recognising the role of feelings and emotions are relevant for understanding lynching in a historical context.

Ultimately, historical accounts of lynching are useful in identifying a phenomenon which shows the two faces of a long process of political transformation in the United States. On the one hand, the continuation of white supremacy through the transition from slavery to Jim Crow, in which lynching becomes the central expression of white repression over the black population. On the other, the issue of political and social unification after the Civil War, which increased the illegitimacy of state power in southern states, and resisted the new formation of economic and political power based on more advanced capitalism. Both interpretations are significant to the comprehension of the eruptions of crowd violence between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Lynching and the spectacle of violence

The second set of accounts useful for understanding lynching in the United States come from the historian Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: witnessing racial violence in America* (2009). Even though the conceptualisation of lynching as spectacle had been developed before Wood's contribution, her book clearly specifies the necessary elements for a conceptualisation of lynching in the United States but also provides material for a further interpretation of lynching in Latin America.

Wood argues that through the cultural power of the spectacle, lynching was ritualised, becoming a performance which served to legitimise public punishment in the eyes of the community. She writes, "By rooting their violence within these traditional practices, mobs made the torture and mutilation of black men appear to be a legitimate, even customary, response to crime and social disorder" (Wood, 2009: 11). This distancing from racism to 'legitimate retribution' was only possible because of the spectacle that the violence projected. Lynching was practised as a form of a public courtroom. People, in some cases, would decide in public meetings if certain men should be brought to trial and to public execution, and whether they would let the victim decide their method of execution (Wood, 2009; Garland, 2005). Until the beginning of the twentieth century, "executions were still public affairs, drawing crowds of hundreds, if not thousands, of spectators" (Wood, 2009: 23) to watch and participate in an organised form of punishment. This relates to what was explained above, that is the slow and uneven consolidation of a system of justice across the country, in addition to a sense of 'crisis of legitimacy', which served to make lynching a *more* legitimate form of punishment, and justice.

Sociologist David Garland agrees that a central moment of the spectacle of lynching was settled with the killing of Henry Smith[3], inaugurating a new type of spectacular crowd violence that was repeated numerous times throughout Southern states (Garland, 2005). This new form of the

[3] Henry Smith was an African American lynched by a mob in 1893 in Paris, Texas. He was accused of murdering the three-year old daughter of an officer in the town, and his lynching occurred after a group of over 5,000 people captured him fleeing Paris.

spectacle was not necessarily centred in the brutality of the lynching, but in how it was circulated, or as I said in the introduction, how those witnessing the violence experienced it as a social relation. After the lynching of Smith, photographs and postcards were sold amongst people who witnessed the execution, creating a new platform for exhibition and reproduction of the violence. Burdett, who recorded the scene, described the moment as pure horror: "Oh the horror of horrors! Just to hear that poor human being scream and groan, who had gathered from all parts of the country about to see it" (cited in Goldsby, 2006: 14). In this sense, the practice of lynching would be developed as a repetitive sequence, in which

> A black suspect would be named following reports that a respectable white person had been raped or murdered. Lurid accounts of the crime would circulate (…) a posse of victims' relatives and townspeople would chase down the suspect or, if he or she was already in custody, the crowd would seize the suspect from the law officers. If the chase took some time, or if the lynching 'committee' was holding 'the wretch' in secret, local newspapers (and later radio stations) would announce that lynching was imminent, stating the likely time and place (Garland, 2005: 804).

The role of repetition of the actions depicts lynching as a type of performance, one that would take place in a town squares, a field close to the victim's house, at the crime scene, or by the railways. Normally a platform or a scaffold would be built for the occasion in order to make the victim's body visible to the crowd. The importance of displaying the torture and killing was an essential characteristic of the performance of lynching, which would be communicated far and wide by reporters of newspapers and via radio stations (Garland, 2005; Waldrep, 2002).

Even though lynching has been considered a 'private' form of punishment in one sense (Garland 2005: 817), it was largely public and spectacular in another sense. Garland discusses how these 'violent rituals' were political acts, "staged as moments in an ongoing struggle more like acts of war than acts of worship" (Garland, 2005: 807) that represented the conflict within the white

community and between them and the 'black offenders'. The relationship between the political and spectacular dimensions of lynching is something that I build on in this thesis in Chapter Four by addressing the contributions made by Michel Foucault and Yves Winter.

Nonetheless, Garland and Wood's contribution to the understanding of lynching as a spectacle is relevant for an overall understanding of lynching in any context. Both scholars add to the concept of lynching, not as defined by the fact that it often occurred outside the official system of law, or that it was a response to the illegitimacy of state justice, but that it was also an inherently *spectacular*[4] form of punishment. Lynching involves both ritual and repetition itself through certain patterns and features, which are further compounded through their reproduction by different means, such as postcards, photos and newspapers – as in the United States – or social media, videos and television as with contemporary examples of lynching. In this regard, Wood agrees with the previous literature, that lynching was in large part a form of contestation to traditional justice. However, this was the case not only in the sense of 'retribution' but also in the sense of the 'witnesses' of the spectacle. In the case of the United States, Wood argues that white communities expressed social frustration towards state interference with their "right to witness punitive justice and to participate in the retribution of a crime" (2009: 24). This largely proved to be a form of resistance against the modernisation of the state and the juridical system, in which crowds, as witnesses could no longer participate.

Lynching became a 'form of entertainment' for majority-white groups that gathered to observe a performance of violence, which was at the same time considered an act of justice. Lynching was seen as an action that would 'kill two birds with one stone', which included the participation of people in the process of punishment as well creating a commodifiable form of the lynching through the circulation of photos, postcards and souvenirs (parts of ropes, pieces of victim's clothes, etc). These objects were sold to the crowd witnessing the lynching and to people across

[4] Notion of the spectacle of violence as a theoretical discussion can be found in Foucault's 'Discipline and Punish', which I will expand in detail in Chapter Five.

the United States as a way to promote the action to other places in the country (Wood, 2009; Garland, 2005; Waldrep, 2002). The commodification of violence is also part of the context of Latin America, as I will explore in Chapter Three and Five. Although not through the selling of postcards, commodification of lynching in Latin America occurred, for example, through television's ratings and broadcasting live events.

The lynching in the United States came to an end when anti-lynching legislation was passed in 1935. Thinkers and activists as Ida B. Wells and organisations like NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People] and certain liberal white communities contributed to ending lynching in the country, by making the action illegal, pushing for anti-lynching legislation. Wood shows that this process started with the monopolisation and control over punishment by centralising it and regulating the participation of crowds in the process. The state transformed the process of public execution into a less ritualistic form of punishment, limiting witnesses to experts, such as doctors, guards, journalists, ministers, victim's relatives, "with all executions within a state occurring in one central location, usually the state penitentiary; a move that was contested by those who opposed state centralization of power" (Wood, 2009: 28). The changing in the rituals also modified the spectacular form of punishment, especially when they were taken away from the public eye.

In summary, the historical case of lynching in the United States possesses many of the elements that characterise lynching today. This literature sets important ground in understanding lynching in Latin America, for which the concepts of 'popular justice', 'crisis of legitimacy' and the 'spectacle of violence' will be recurrent analytical themes. However, there are also distinctive structural and contextual elements in the United States case, for instance, racial segregation and state autonomy. These elements are not present in the Latin American and Mexican cases, as any particular racial tendencies in the practice of lynching are not evident, and state autonomy and regional empowerment are not something reflected in the territorial administration of Mexico.

Latin America: contemporary accounts of lynching

Through the slow disappearance of lynching in the United States with the consolidation of the modern state, the phenomenon has become seen as a somewhat dated – *barbaric* – practice in the western social and political context. However, these types of events have been revived in Latin America in the late 1980s, with significant increases in occurrence through the 1990s and 2000s[5]. The reports of lynchings on the continent are inconsistent and there are no official records that can establish a clear timeline. Therefore, academics have predominantly reported lynchings before the 1980s, as for example, the lynching of a group of students in Canoa, Mexico in 1968. Nevertheless, the expansion and more systematic identification of lynchings in Latin America have commenced in the past 20-30 years.

In addition to the lack of official and unofficial statistical documenting of lynching, there has been an inconsistency in the conceptualisation of the phenomenon, as well as of other phenomena similar to lynching that are categorised as 'extra-legal violence'. The sociologist, Martha F. Huggins (1991) provides an interesting characterization of the different types of violence that can be found on the continent. Though these categories can still be contested, they provide an important starting point for the conceptualisation of lynching in Latin America. She distinguishes four types of extra-legal violence. First, *lynching* "involves citizen's actions against another citizen presumed to have committed a crime or violated some social norm" (1991: 4). These actions are normally spontaneous and happen quickly, without much community organisation. The second form involves the actions of *justice makers*, who are specific individuals who commit murder to protect

[5] Particularly, the increase in reports has been sustained in different places in Latin America. According to MINUGUA (Misión de Naciones Unidas para la verificación para Los Acuerdos de Paz, for its acronym in Spanish), 580 cases of public lynching were documented between the years 1996-2003 in Guatemala, with a total of 1229 victims (Fuentes Díaz, 2004: 9). Similarly, research about Mexico has documented 996 cases of lynching, between the years of 1984 and 2013 (Fuentes Díaz, 218: 400), where others have recognised more than 366 between 1988 and 2014 (Guillén, Avila, 2014). In the case of Venezuela, 164 cases were reported between 2000 and 2001 (Snodgrass, 2004: 622). Even though these studies provide relevant information about lynching, there are no official statistics from state institutions that make more standardised reports accessible, which demonstrates that this phenomenon has been largely reduced to common criminality, thus ignoring the profound social and political aspects. This depiction of lynching as criminality varies from the sophisticated and detailed historical accounts of lynching in the United States.

certain communities, who may also be paid for the job and thus stand in-between civilians and former militaries. This can both work for and against the state. The third category is *citizen attacks on authority* that represent those actions in which regular people "redressed deficiencies in their justice systems" (1991: 4). This phenomenon involves occupying public space in a violent way in order to proclaim discomfort with local authorities, police corruption and other grievances. Finally, *death squads or paramilitary groups* are considered organised forms of assassination and organised crime, which is in many cases related to state authorities and is the result of previous guerrilla movements in the continent.

In this section, I address two of Huggins' categories in order to explain lynching in Latin America, namely *lynching* and *citizen attacks on authority*. First, in the subsection 'Lynching as a consequence of the failed state and neoliberalism', I explore the relationship between lynching and the notion of the 'failed state' through the literature developed by scholars in Latin America. These studies express that a deep linkage exists between the neoliberal state's inefficiency, the privatization of security and the increase of poverty and inequality on the continent, which has facilitated in the actions of lynching. Scholars define neoliberalism as the privatization of public services (e.g. water, education, health, and security), deregulation of state's control over the economy and the increase of free market and trade, which mainly liberalised the exportation of raw materials from the Global South to the Global North. Some of the discussions presented in this subsection will be further analysed in Chapter Five and Six, where I address the relationship between lynching and justice and lynching and the fragmented state, respectively.

Second, in the subsection 'Lynching as an agency moment', I will present the approaches that see lynching as a form of collective violence as a form of response to the 'crisis of authority' and the 'crisis of legitimacy'. Here I present a set of literature that concerns itself with how lynching provides a voice to those marginalised from society, which found in violence a form of communication, which is an important influence in the analysis I carry out throughout this thesis.

Lynching as a consequence of the failed state and neoliberalism

The most accepted and common interpretation of lynching in Latin America defines it as either a symptom or a consequence of a *failed* or *absent* state (Huggins, 1991; Sousa Martins, 1991; Goldstein, 2004). This position has occurred because most of the academic research is related to, (i) case studies examined through ethnographic and sociological methods; and (ii) empirical quantitative recollection of cases, mainly coming from sociology and criminology, that involve correlations between lynching and insecurity, lynching and criminality, and other factors. These studies have conceptualised lynching as a symptom and as a consequence of a 'crisis of authority' and a 'crisis of legitimacy' in the states of Latin America. These arguments focus on the lack of access to the juridical process, the disbelief and ineffectiveness of police and courts, as well as feelings of insecurity and inequality (Benavides, Fischer Ferreira, in Huggins, 1991: 41), academic researches have focused on the context of why these events happen. As Castillo Claudett points out "lynching is seen as an extreme 'social reaction'" (200:218), normally provoked by the increase of criminality and the absence of the state.

Due to the implementation of neoliberal policies since the 1980s, scholars such as Jose Sousa Martins and Amy Nivette have argued that lynching contributes to a "broken link in the chain of social relations and respect" (Sousa Martins in Huggins, 1991: 25) leading to the repetition of extra-legal violence. This form of vigilantism ('self-help') "is more likely to occur in 'stateless locations' where the law is unavailable" (Nivette, 2016: 144). These arguments are placed in the context of an increase of feelings of insecurity and social instability across the continent. Carlos Mendoza's study of lynching in Guatemala and Mexico argues through the notion of an 'incomplete' state, which has debilitated state institutions and damaged the legitimacy of state authority. For Mendoza, this 'fragmented' or 'absent' state has roots in historical processes that stem from the colonisation period (2008: 50) resulting in the continued failure of the contemporary state. Mendoza claims that there is a high correlation between non-existent (or failed) formal state institutions and the increase in violent forms of conflict resolution, such as lynching. This

correlative approach to lynching might prove useful when the phenomenon needs to be quantified, however, it says little about the factors that move individuals to use violence because of the malfunction of the state.

A more compelling approach that I will engage with throughout this thesis is that of the anthropologist Daniel M. Goldstein, who developed a more substantial and convincing analysis of the failed state for the case in Bolivia. Although his research provides more nuance, he also addresses the importance of conceptualising lynching as a consequence of the socio-political context in the country. In particular, Goldstein explores the notion of lynching as a means to gain justice in communities, pointing to the fact that "*barrio* [neighbourhood] leaders and residents explain their actions in terms that suggest that if they were to have any hope in seeing justice done, their only choice would be to take the law into their own hands" (2004: 180). As mentioned in the above section, Goldstein also contextualises Bolivian lynching[6] through the rise of neoliberalism in the country from the 1990s, which has proceeded hand-in-hand with the privatization of justice. In this sense, Goldstein contends that lynching cannot

> be seen simply as 'mob violence', the spasmodic reflex of enraged sociopaths bent on retribution. Lynchings are also a spectacle, intended to catch the eye of an inattentive state and to perform for it visually and unmistakably the consequences of its own inaction (2004: 182).

This also explains why some communities aim to stop traditional forms of justice from interfering in *their* 'popular' process of justice. For example, it is common to see the lynching of persons who represent the authority of the state apparatus, such as police officers and local authorities. Indeed, this is true of the case study that I will analyse in this thesis.

Goldstein argues that "from the perspective of state law, a police officer intervening to stop an illegal lynching is acting in accordance with his assigned duties, but for a *barrio* resident the same

[6] Goldstein produced an anthropological study into the city of Cochabamba in Bolivia. He explored uses of the public sphere and the spectacle within the city, comparing situations of lynching in the town – a spectacle of violence – to the national festivity of 'Fiesta de San Miguel, which expresses the spectacle of cultural uses of space.

action is perceived as a violation of the moral precepts of the community, a defence of the thieves against the people" (2004: 195). Attempting to enforce the law, the police are perceived as opposed to the people (Goldstein, 2004). Lynching is thus presented as a rational, strategic action taken by certain communities in order to respond to a context which pushes them into the margins of society and its welfare, a process which tends to further reproduce inequalities, poverty and private forms of security. This approach is interesting because it provides us with a set of tools to unravel lynching in the case of Mexico, particularly the opposition between civil society and state's apparatus (e.g. police), as well the seeming rational action that characterises lynching.

Another similar approach in the literature is developed by Andrés Guerrero who argues that lynching in Ecuador occurs as a means of negotiation with the state. He claims, "lynching becomes a gesture of communal sovereignty that pushes the political to a collective exercise of symbolic power. The lynching interpellated the state and the national society as a whole: they open a fissure in society" (2000: 484). In this sense, Guerrero conceptualises lynching as a "political developer" (2000: 474) that interrogates both national and local political situations. Guerrero focuses on the part that indigenous communities in Ecuador play in the processes of lynching, disputing the reasons that place indigenous persons as *typical* perpetrators of these kinds of action. For Guerrero and the Argentinian sociologist Carlos Vilas, this relates to the historical problem of the marginalisation of indigenous communities since the times of colonisation. Both claim that the establishment of the Republic achieved poor integration of indigenous persons into the juridical and political system, whilst eliminating all their own forms of social organisation (Guerrero, 2000: 485; Vilas, 2006: 121). Therefore, lynching can be seen as a result of historical forms of domination over indigenous people, which have been exacerbated in the context of neoliberalism, with the expansion of inequalities through austerity, poor distribution of wealth and privatization of the public sector (Guerrero, 2000: 486). In Guerrero's words, "neoliberal policies violate the principles of the legitimacy of the political system; the state *kills* arbitrarily, 'letting the indigenous die" (Guerrero, 2000: 488).

Vilas accords with this position arguing how neoliberal policies create a strong socioeconomic vulnerability which leads to certain impoverished communities to take violent retributive actions (2006: 128). In Vilas' words: "the state does not arrive, arrives late or arrives badly" (2006: 128), which characterises the 'absence' of the state in certain poor, often indigenous, communities leading to increases in the incidence of lynchings. For Vilas, in particular, this absence of the state is not only institutional but also political. The incapacity of the state to implement political forms of conflict resolution has further pushed communities to create their own; meaning for Vilas that lynching has some political connotation, although he does not specifically politicise the violence in itself.

Following this line of argument, De Sousa Martins also views lynching as a consequence of a failed state. He defines lynching in Brazil as 'secondary violence', which operates as a reaction or response to other types of violence which occur in the country, such as criminal activity and structural violence. In this sense, lynchers are those who morally judge certain crimes as illegitimate in their communities (1991: 27), provoking their intention to enact justice outside the state. Based on this, lynching challenges the whole system of legitimacy, law and conceptualisation of crime and punishment, suggesting that participants (lynchers) and society do not recognise "the political nature of this political act" (De Sousa Martins in Huggins, 1991: 31), thus rendering it a simple crime. As introduced above, Nivette argues for an understanding of vigilantism as a result of statelessness. She explains that this form of institutional ineffectiveness and illegitimacy rely on the type of formal institutions that "cannot provide security" (2016: 144). As Mendoza does, Nivette explains the absence of the state when "individuals and group deny its legitimacy" (Nivette, 2016: 145), which can emerge in a situation of injustice and in the context of distrust of institutions for any number of reasons (e.g. corruption). In other words, "when individuals cannot access formal, legal methods of dispute resolution, crime control and punishment, they will favour alternative means to achieve these goals" (2016: 146).

However, Nivette also clarifies that inefficient institutions (e.g. those that fails to punish criminality) are not synonymous with illegitimacy. Therefore, "states can lose legitimacy when institutions fail to distribute law in a legal, fair, and equal manner. Likewise, a state can be effective at controlling crime but still lack legitimacy among its populace" (2016: 146). In her study, she pays particular attention to lethal vigilantism, concluding that these cases are more likely when there are indicators of institutional illegitimacy, rather than simply institutional ineffectiveness. For instance, "police misconduct and a lack of trust in formal institutions to solve community conflicts lead citizens to reject the state's monopoly of physical force and seek out alternative sources of conflict resolution" (2016: 166).

An approach in which lynching is seen as a consequence of a failed state is valuable for the analysis I will carry out in this thesis since it is underpinned by an understanding of the different contexts in which lynching takes place, situating the similar conditions of Latin American states in terms of inequality, poverty and insecurity. I agree that contexts need to be examined carefully in any analysis of lynching. However, the problem with this perspective is that lynching is viewed *solely* as a result of a particular economic, social and political context, implying that if those contexts are changed, the phenomenon would disappear. This appears dubiously reductive. As an interpretation of lynching, it does not problematize why – if groups are, feeling disenfranchised from the state – they resort to such brutal forms of violence to express their disapproval. The literature does little or nothing to expand on what those feelings of disenfranchisement are composed of, or how they perceive that the state is failing them. In addition, this approach does not explain what lynching can do to the functioning of the state, in terms of its legitimacy and efficiency. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the notion of 'failed state' will be invoked cautiously and used only as a contingent element that may be relevant to the interpretation of lynching. However, Goldstein's analysis of neoliberalism will be considered further, since it provides more nuances which could help to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in the contemporary context.

Lynching as an agency moment

A second common approach in the limited literature about lynching in Latin America is the one explained by Angelica Snodgrass Godoy and Daniel M. Goldstein who take an 'insider' or communicative perspective towards lynching. Both authors analyse lynching from an anthropological and sociological point of view, leading to an understanding of the phenomenon that in Snodgrass Godoy's words represent the "agentive moment" (2004: 623). This approach is useful for this thesis since it provides nuanced ideas regarding the perspective of the actors that are part of the event of lynchings, such as state authorities (system of law), community lynchers, and victims. All these parts have something to say, and as Goldstein expresses, through lynching "the politically marginalised find an avenue for the communication of grievances against the inadequacies of the state's official legal order" (2003: 23).

Both Snodgrass and Goldstein focus on the narratives of community members, providing their *voice* as evidence for demonstrating lynching as a communicative action that aims towards autonomy and recuperation of lost agency of collectives. Snodgrass particularly emphasises the case of Guatemala, arguing that "by enacting these highly ritualized, unequivocally public displays of 'justice', communities seek not only to punish and deter criminal activity but, perhaps more importantly, to assert themselves collectively as agents rather than victims" (Snodgrass Godoy, 2004: 623). Thus, lynching is not a spontaneous expression of fury and a reaction to a certain action or behaviour of the victim. Instead, they are measured attempts to reaffirm community values: "In this sense, lynchings may constitute a form of generative violence (…) by overlaying violence with ritual, communities affirm that these – unlike the savage acts of criminals – are acts of meaningful, legitimate violence" (2004: 636). In this sense, instead of thinking about lynching as a strategy (a means toward an aim), the violence is seen as a *realisation* of power – 'I hold the power to act' – legitimating a collective action.

This is an important claim since by thinking about lynching as a moment of agency, Snodgrass is highlighting, implicitly, that the phenomenon is unequivocally political. Not just criminal and not just circumstantial, it is, in fact, deeply political. Clearly, Snodgrass does not argue that lynching has straightforward and specific political aims – such as with other violent struggles (e.g. guerrilla insurgencies) – but that the action is political *in itself*, showing what she calls the 'dark side' of democracy (2004: 623). Saying this, she is disputing the one-sided notion of democracy as a simply a type of political system, in which right and wrong are clearly determined. On the contrary, democracy is a contested space, especially when certain communities aim to express their local autonomy against traditional democratic institutions. In other words, "lynching reveals a conflict not only between community members and criminals but also between communities and the state – a conflict over whose authority prevails in matters of life of death" (2004: 637).

Snodgrass insists that a way to illustrate this is the legitimisation of participation of a member of the community in the lynching, in order to avoid persecution from police and justice. Namely, members will protect other members of the community that participated in the lynching, or people will be encouraged to observe and be part of the lynching, so as to make it more difficult for the juridical system to individualise the crime. In addition, many times lynchings are "accompanied by public protests against the authorities" (2004: 638), or even riots outside jails to prevent lynching participants from being arrested, showing solidarity between people. For Snodgrass, these events express local autonomy, but also express resistance to the state's apparatus, which ultimately aims to "repair splintered solidarities" (2006:118) that have been broken, particular in Guatemala's post-war neoliberal context. Furthermore, she claims that through these actions, communities legitimise their participation "on the bases of unanimity and popular support" (2004: 638), especially when crowds are large and impossible to persecute by the state. Hence, "some lynchings may be construed as acts of local 'democracy' in the sense of actions taken in the representation of 'the will of the people'" (2004, 639), or in other words, these are "angry attempts to reconstitute and empower the excluded" (2006: 103).

However, despite the appeal of Snodgrass' interpretation for this research, she fails to adequately argue why these expressions of 'local democracy' and 'local autonomy' involve the use of lethal violence. Again, it is difficult to identify in the literature why, when either the state or the 'sense of collectiveness' in society is failing, people decide to use violence as a tool for expressing grievances. She simply expresses that the brutal violence of lynching is seen by the communities as "the last resort" (2006:119):

> it is easier to kill criminals (…) than to negotiate complex notion of justice, because the latter requires sustained trust and collaboration – and because, given these communities' inability to influence the state decisions on criminal justice and the evident weakness (in some settings) of their own indigenous justice systems, such attempts seem destined to fail (2006: 123)

This explanation, though empirically and ethnographically thought-provoking, does not expand on the use of brutal and lethal violence, especially if the violence here aims to be used as a tool to enhance the local communitarian relationship, and therefore, to resist state power. The avenue that Snodgrass opens is thinking of lynching as a form of violent resistance, violence that resist against the state, which is something I question in detail in Chapter Six.

Daniel M. Goldstein touches on similar realms of analysis for lynching in Bolivia. However, instead of focusing on the notions of local power and resistance, he sees the moment of agency embodied in lynching as a *communicative process*. He suggests that "Taking the law 'into one's own hands' is a communicative act for those rendered voiceless by the state" (2003: 25), in a context where violence is also foundational of the state-nation. In this sense, Goldstein argues that lynching is a "pragmatic inclusion" (2003: 25), in which the insistence of individuals to enter the system of justice and the proclamation of the people to reject the state, contradict themselves constantly in the practice of lynching. This is an important analytical point since indeed the violence of lynching is ambiguous and cannot be reduced to a single causality explanation, as I have mentioned before in this chapter.

This dialectical understanding of lynching relates to the second point of Goldstein's analysis. He analyses lynching as a means to gather attention, visual attention, to enrich the communicative act. In other words, lynching as a "visually arresting and attention-getting display by which the invisible and ignored make demands on a state" (2004: 3). In this sense, for Goldstein, the phenomenon, even in the United States, is a spectacle, which "create[s] meaning, often critiques, or suggests alternative readings of social reality" (2004: 16). This is a clear conceptualisation of what lynching is and does to the community, adding the idea that a spectacle is not just a public performance of meaning but it also operates to "enable groups of people to establish themselves as a public" (2004: 19). Relating this to Snodgrass' argument, the performance of lynching is a visualisation of "communities in crisis" that evoke "strong passions" (2006: 126) in order to challenge the circumstances that they have been violently forced to.

Goldstein and Snodgrass provide interesting elements for the conceptualisation of lynching in integrating the position of the communities that are involved in these actions with the meanings that these actions produce, such as 'local empowerment' or 'communicative action'. However, both thinkers do not develop a connection between the use of violence with empowerment or resistance, neither to the notion of violence as a communication process, which weakens their position in terms of seeing lynching as a political action. In other words, what these authors lack is a conception of violence as such, in order to explain lynching. Nevertheless, these positions will be a significant influence on the argument of this thesis, which attempts a deeper exploration of the connection between those 'strong passions' – as Snodgrass' expresses it – to the uses of violence, and how this connection can be interpreted as a political act.

What it means to lynch in Mexico: a conceptualisation

Lynching in Mexico has a few emblematic milestones. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the lynching of a group of students in 1968 in the little town of San Miguel Canoa, is

considered the *first* lynching in the country. In the midst of the 1968 Mexican student movement, a group of students of the University of Puebla decided to climb the mountain Malitzin in Canoa, however, the expedition ended with the students lynched by the community[7]. Reports and analysis indicated that this was a lynching *with* political reasons since the local priest and local conservative politicians encouraged the members of the communities to act against the students, who were seen – at that period – as a dangerous left-wing element of society.

However, after 1968 there is little registration of lynching in the country. Most of the events began to appear from the mid-90s, marking a new phenomenon in the national sphere. During this period, some analyses – mainly from within the discipline of sociology – have emerged attempting to understand what lynching means, and why it occurs. The most recognised researchers in the field are Carlos Vilas, Raúl Rodríguez Guillén and Fuentes Díaz. Recently, the study of Leandro Gamallo has impacted the analysis of lynching in Mexico, however, there exist only a few authors who have dedicated pages to this analysis.

Not far from the analysis made for the case of Latin America more generally, lynching in Mexico has also been conceptualised as a 'crisis of authority' and as a form of 'resistance' against the state. However, some particularities have been written about this case that is important to discuss, before presenting a more comprehensive conceptualisation of lynching for the purposes of the thesis.

On the one hand, this section will begin by examining the less orthodox approach put forward initially during the 1990s by Carlos Vilas. He presented the idea of lynching as *'usos y costrumbres'*, which broadly refers to a culturally specific, traditional indigenous notion of lynching. In other words, Vilas links lynching to something particular to indigenous people, a notion which has been largely challenged by all the other authors, but especially Rodríguez Guillén, who explores lynching from the notion of 'crisis of authority'. On the other hand, I will present Gamallo and Fuentes

[7] The unpublished thesis of Leticia Sarmiento, *'Analisis del linchamiento en Mexico: contribucion a la teoria del castigo*" [found at UNAM thesis website] expands in detail about the case of San Miguel Canoa. She explains that the tension built among the members of the community, mostly indigenous people that do not speak Spanish, in terms of who supported the local priest and who did not. The local religious authority had a negative opinion of the ongoing student movement of the time, which might have influenced the community to feel similarly.

Díaz work on lynching in Mexico. Both authors agree on the necessity of looking at lynching as a form of social relation that is embedded – or *trapped* – in other forms of violence that characterise Mexico, such as kidnappings, disappearances of people, state repression, drug cartels, etc. This approach provides what I call a *subjective-structural* understanding of lynching, which aims to posit the phenomenon in a broader set of factors. Finally, I conclude with a conceptualisation of lynching appropriate to this thesis, which has been built out of some of the elements examined throughout this chapter. I will particularly focus on the work of Snodgrass Godoy and Goldstein. However, I find an important influence from the elements provided by Gamallo and Fuentes Díaz – in the case of Mexico – and others. This conceptualisation is fundamental for the overall understanding of lynching, which aims to frame it distinctively from other concepts, such as vigilantism and *justicieros* (justice makers).

Crisis of authority vs. the indigenous-cultural perspective

Carlos Vilas was one of the first researchers to engage seriously with the phenomenon of lynching in Mexico. Even though some minor academic registrations of cases of lynching occurred during the 1990s, it was Vilas' paper 'By their own hands: Mass lynching in contemporary Mexico' (2001), which first put the phenomenon into proper academic discussion. Vilas' main approach to lynching was based on the idea of 'plural societies', which denotes the diverse multi-ethnic and multi-cultural background that signifies contemporary Mexico. He argues that public lynching represents the struggle between local communities and the state, though not – as presented above for the case of Latin America – because of the inefficiency of the state, but as the culturalist outcome of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic plurality. Vilas argues that the state is incapable of understanding local norms or traditional and cultural boundaries of local communities, thus contributing to the emergence of lynching as a different form of legitimising violence (2001:136) by indigenous groups. In other words, it is the combination of elements of public insecurity and cultural pluralism that produce forms of extra-legal violence, which are perpetrated by the poorest

communities within society who seek to re-appropriate punitive violence from the state (Vilas, 2005). The state coexists and articulates a dominant form of justice over and against a subaltern indigenous normative frame that expresses and legitimates alternative forms of justice and punishment in a situation of conflicts with institutional forms of punishment (Vilas, 2005: 21). These conflicting views of punishment and justice thus give rise to space wherein lynching emerges.

This position is controversial in the sense that it essentializes indigenous groups, attributing to them a certain 'special' type of justice that is different from non-indigenous forms. Essentializing the 'indigenous behaviour' does not recognise that these groups have been colonised and integrated into society by force. Rather than indigenous groups creating a 'different justice', these communities are contesting the justice that was imposed upon them. Indeed, most of the current researchers on Mexican lynching refute Vilas' position due to this problematic discussion of indigenous people. For instance, Snodgrass argues that the phenomenon of lynching is not confined to the dichotomy between 'tradition' and 'modernity' as Vilas implies. On the contrary, she claims that "while lynchings indisputably occur among populations largely excluded from the benefits of development and modernization, the communities in which lynchings occur are fully inserted in the globalized political economy of late modernity" (2004: 630).

The most traditional opposition to Vilas' position, however, relies upon the notion of 'crisis of authority'. Rodríguez Guillén is one of the main researchers involved in quantifying and qualifying the phenomenon of lynching in Mexico, examining the diversity and different characterisations of it. His main theoretical approach does not step far from other Latin American positions, as he argues that lynching occurs due to a 'crisis of authority' and as an expression 'moral indignation' (2005: 58). In particular, he draws on the current political and social situation of the country, in which there are high levels of corruption in public institutions, especially the police (2002: 19), and how this has led to actions such as lynching. In his words, "the search for peace in violent times

seems to be the character of our days" (2002: 20). In this sense, Rodríguez Guillén argues that the collective violence of lynching is reactive and restitutive violence since it operates as a reaction to the aforementioned social and political context, while at the same time aims to return an authority that is lacking (2005: 59).

Rodríguez Guillén disagrees with Vilas' narrow account, arguing that the only form of punishment that can be considered as *usos y costumbres* is when a community shares similar values (2005: 57). This is not a common feature of lynching in Mexico as in most cases lynching happens to people who are considered 'outsiders' of the community and frequently occur in situations where nobody knows one another. For this reason, Rodríguez Guillén argues that the only explanation of lynching is the context and social position in which those individuals are situated. He expands his analysis of 'crisis of authority' through certain social sentiments of grievance, anger and malaise, which are first experienced individually and then collectively (2002: 21; 2005: 58) by communities prone to practice lynching. These sentiments give the way to uncertainty and then violence, which is normally led by a sentiment of revenge (2002: 22). In Rodríguez Guillén's words: "the accumulation of rage and the lack of punishment of criminals [by the institutions] have a cause-effect relationship" (2005: 58). Therefore, lynching occurs in order to point out that limits were broken, that the moral codes that link the society and authority have been fractured.

Similar to what occurs in situations of revolt, lynching constitutes a collective action that is directed by 'spontaneity' and 'anonymity' and is highly violent. These represent a passionate character of 'doing justice by one's own hands', against any principle of legality and order. For Rodríguez Guillén, this collective violence does not respond to any rationality, but rather to the intensity of the grievance suffered by the people, which can be enhanced by conditions of injustice, abuses, the arrogance of authorities, poverty, among another no less significant conditions (2010: 76). This interpretation of lynching is framed as an extreme form of revenge and satisfaction of rage (2010: 78) that the community expressed through violence.

When these feelings are released, life goes back to normal, forming a sort of catharsis. Rodríguez Guillén argues that a regular functioning of local daily life follows lynching, though leaving an imprint in the collective memory of the idea that justice was made, that abuses were stopped, that collective action was needed for finding a *voice* (2010: 78). This is an interesting point since Rodríguez Guillén establishes an affective understanding of lynching through the emotions of anger and frustration, which I point towards the view that I develop through the course of the thesis. However, he does not argue these feelings 'matter', dismissing them as irrational elements that are not central to the phenomenon. On the contrary, a key contention of this thesis is that a more serious and comprehensive understanding of the role of emotions will help to provide a better conception of the context in which lynching occurs. This is a gap that I intend to fill in this thesis.

Lynching amid other violence(s)

Leandro Gamallo is one of the more recent researchers to conceptualise lynching in Mexico. Different from Vilas and Rodríguez Guillén, Gamallo analyses lynching through Charles Tilly's notion of collective violence, mainly focusing on the comprehension of the relationship between the social malaise, as explained by Rodríguez Guillén before, and violence (2015: 186). In this sense, he defines violence as a possibility (contingency) that takes part in the continuous form of negotiation inherent in social relations. This approach does not neglect that violence can appear as a consequence of structural processes, however, it centres on the social relations that originate the violence, examining the mechanisms and actors that play an important role in its development (Gamallo, 2015).

For Gamallo, lynching is entrenched in previous social relations and common identities. These can be shaped by territorial conditions – *where you are from* – or by social and cultural values, – *what we share*. This process produces the division into the 'us' – lynchers – and 'they' – the criminals/victims (2015: 196). Gamallo explains that lynchings which display higher grades of organisation and

ritualization, such as exhibiting the body in the public sphere or accompanied by the ringing of the church's bells of the town, represent a respected script in which the community is attempting to communicate something, such as stopping crime, securing the locality or contesting the state (2015: 200). However, more important than the immediate causes, it is necessary to pay attention to those previous social relations which constitute the malaise. Based on this idea, Gamallo argues that lynching starts with a 'triggering event', a particular action which is perceived as an 'attack' against the community, thus serving to provoke a violent reaction. When previous social relations exist to be 'defended', actions such as lynching operate as defensive mechanisms.

Nonetheless, Gamallo concurs with Rodríguez Guillén that lynching arises in the context of sentiments fear and uncertainty. He argues that lynching is connected to structural and symbolic violence, defining it as a reactive or defensively violent act. He also highlights that the case of Mexico is particularly interesting since the country is situated within a broader context of acute violence. Gamallo argues that Mexico is considered one of the ten most dangerous countries in the world (Gamallo, 2012) in which drugs cartels, the forced disappearance of people, and state repression are commonplace. Furthermore, the impact of such violence tends to be focused on women, immigrants and journalists, which is particularly worrying. This context of violence seems to have deteriorated in the context of neoliberalism. According to Binford and Churchill, "the post-1994 increase of lynching objectifies these fears and apprehensions on the body of the victims, generation a transitory sense of collective relief" (2009: 309).

Fuentes Díaz has developed a compelling approach for the understanding of lynching in Mexico. Influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, he states that the action of lynching signifies the non-internalisation of state-discipline (2009:3), producing the re-appropriation of violence (2009:6). The above process has a historical formation. For Fuentes Díaz, lynching is not an isolated contingent event but is the product of a historical practice of violence in Mexican society. Drawing from the 'foundational violence' of the Mexican state, the author argues that the non-internalisation of state power comes from the historical violence reproduced from the colonisation

period. Especially in rural areas, there has been a lack of consolidation of a 'single' civil society (2006a: 19; 2005: 19) that would give the opportunity to traditional forms of mediation between individuals and the state.

In Fuentes Díaz's words, lynching can be seen as *contra-biopolitics* (2009: 7), in the sense that the lack of a traditional form of civil society has not permitted certain groups of the population to embody the norms of the state and its system of justice, leading them to develop responses of violence such as lynching. This issue has been exacerbated in the context of neoliberal policies. According to the author, the successive economic crises and readjustment policies have introduced modifications to people's life projects, which has made them question certainties and security (2005: 11). This scenario of social fragmentation brought with it urban poverty, transnational migration, child labour and criminality, which is normally expressed in the phrase '*Mexico roto'* [broken Mexico] (2006a: 73).

Fuentes Díaz introduces the important relationship between lynching and subalternity. In other words, the violence of the poor against the poor (2006b: 416), which is something I will explore further in Chapter Six. This relationship is significant because it draws attention to the intentions that lead people from these poorest backgrounds to attack or attempt to attack members of their own social class. For Fuentes Díaz, this is framed through the response against symbolic violence (2006b: 417), normally created through certain collective social fears – such as the kidnapping of children – and the construction of myths and rumours around those fears (2006b: 421). In other words, this violence occurs because these groups are inserted into other types of violence that are less tangible in their daily life but are equally harmful. In sum, Fuentes Díaz and Gamallo understand lynching as a complex network of social relations. For Fuentes Díaz in particular, these relations are built by macro-historical structures of violence (2006a: 94) that impact upon the local and communitarian fabric, which has been exacerbated by the contemporary neoliberal context of inequality, injustice and impunity.

A concept of lynching for the case of Mexico

After revising the literature on lynching from the United States to Latin America, I aim to provide a clearer conceptualisation of lynching for the Mexican case. I consider that narrowing down a conceptualisation of lynching for the purpose of this thesis allow us to identify the main elements that characterise the action as a political phenomenon, and not only as criminality and social behaviour. In addition, I have taken a particular definition of lynching here that is built from the work of Goldstein, Snodgrass and Fuentes Díaz. These three thinkers provide the most compelling ideas for a political conceptualisation of lynching, which relate lynching to (i) state's authority and monopolisation of violence; (ii) lynching as cognitive action, thus, an action that carries meaning and agency from its actors, and (iii) lynching as contestation, as a form of communication with other political actors in society. I will expand these ideas throughout this thesis by revising these authors' interpretations alongside discussions of political theory in the mentioned subjects. It is important to clarify that none of these thinkers is directly involved in debates on political violence. Nonetheless, their empirical and conceptual research on Mexico and Latin America provide important nuances for the understanding of lynching.

First, I would like to differentiate lynching from vigilantism. As I exposed above, both concepts are used interchangeably with most scholars failing to provide a clear distinction between them. However, I find that certain elements need to be separated in order to elucidate what I mean by lynching when I am discussing the phenomenon. Nevertheless, I do recognise that this separation is mainly conceptual and that both phenomena tend to overlap in practice.

Vigilantism relates to an organised – or to some degree organised – a form of corporal punishment committed by private persons or organisations (Nivette, 2016: 143). Coming from the Spanish word, *vigilantes*, it literally means to watch over, to guard or to patrol something or someone. Therefore, when we look at the actions of self-defence groups or famously known frontier vigilantes in the United States, we are normally looking at vigilantism. I disagree with certain authors that classify all sort of corporal punishment outside the law as vigilantism, categorising it

also as spontaneous. This is the first distinction I will make between these concepts. Vigilantism needs a level of organisation, consensus decision-making from a group of individuals who aim to watch out and to guard a community or another group of people. Here, it is possible to imagine cartels groups who use vigilantism to protect their interests. I agree with Fuentes Díaz, that in groups of *defensa comunitaria* [communal defence], there is consolidation in time and organisation of self-defence groups[8] (2018: 407), which is rational decision-making in practice.

In contrast, lynching does not necessarily require organisation. In fact, I agree with the distinction made by Maria-Victoria Benavides who defines 'anonymous' and 'communal' lynching as a mainly spontaneous action that does not need a pre-fixed decision by the people who take part in the lynching (1991: 34). This does not mean that is an irrational decision, but it does flow in between a conscious, as well unconscious, decision to act violently. In other words, one of the main differences between vigilantism and lynching is that the former has a clear strategy and purpose, while the latter does not necessarily require one. Although, as I will show further, there are often purposes which lie beneath the action.

Another distinction relates to the level of punishment. On the one hand, lynching tends to be framed purely as a punishment-motivated action, while, on the other hand, vigilantism or self-defence groups tend to play a defensive role in communities. Vigilantes organise in order to avoid physical punishment or lynching, even when it is not always successful. However, what does connect both concepts is obviously violence. Vigilantism and lynching can overlap because both have the potential of using – brutal – violence to show their discontent. This is potentially what leads scholars to use the concepts interchangeably, though, in most cases, they are referring to different phenomena.

[8] According to Fuentes Díaz (2018), it is the type of insecurity and the social composition of the community that distinguishes the groups of communitarian self-defence in Mexico. In particular, vigilantes emerge because of the decentralization of state authority and the lack of power of local authorities in the context of neoliberalism. One of the very well known groups of self-defence in Mexico is in Michoacán that arose in 2013. For more development about this subject, see Fuentes Díaz 2014 and 2017.

Therefore, my conceptualisation of lynching for the Mexican case relates to different elements. Firstly, it is possible to call an event 'lynching' when we confront collective action, potentially by a crowd of people, who act violently toward an individual(s) producing, sometimes, the death of the victim. The act of lynching, as I mentioned above, can be 'anonymous', in which the participants of the lynching do not know each other, or can be 'communitarian', where the lynchers are familiar to each other and belong to the same community. In both cases, lynching seems to occur in a situation of robbery, rape (especially towards children) and police corruption or abuse (Rodríguez Guillén, 2005: 62). I will purposely focus on the latter – communitarian – form of lynching because it provides more points of discussion. However, 'anonymous' lynching can also be interpreted in the same set of arguments.

Communitarian lynching is highly ritualistic and spectacular. In Castillo Claudett's words, "despite its apparent turbulent behaviour, lynching has a certain sequence, related to certain symbols (…) they possess a communication system" (2000: 222). In agreement with Rodríguez Guillén, certain organised actions can be found in lynching, such as (i) the ringing of the bell of the community church; (ii) the expropriation of prison inmates to subsequently lynch them, (iii) making summary judgments, previous to the lynching, (iv) the negotiation of lynchers with authorities, also prior to the lynching, among others (2010: 81). All these sorts of organised action are not pre-determined, which means they still arise with levels of spontaneity.

Moreover, lynching is a *private-public* action, which is considered illegal in Mexico, as well in all contexts in which it can be found. This is an important feature because it opens up the discussion of what can be understood as private or public social action. On the one hand, lynching is public, since is enacted in the public space and involves congregation of people. However, many scholars consider it a private action, since it works against the punitive public system monopolised by the state. Here I do not wish to fix the conceptualisation of lynching toward one particular position, whether private or public since I will discuss these elements further during this thesis.

Nevertheless, the illegality element is relevant, since it reveals that lynching works in opposition to the state, displaying one of the main features of the phenomenon.

Finally, I will bring a new dimension to understanding this phenomenon, arguing that lynching is an *affective action*. Even though scholars tend to recognise emotions – perhaps implicitly rather than explicitly some of the time – as part of lynching, such as 'context of anxieties'; 'anger of the crowd' or 'strong passions', they do not work through this lens, rendering the affective dimension of lynching a secondary – and sometimes insignificant – aspect of the action. Nevertheless, lynching does involve intense and significant feelings of vengefulness, frustration, anger and fear, though, insofar as these are key components, writers are less likely to see it as properly 'political phenomenon', and hence, as a form of 'political violence'.

This affective dimension will be examined in my thesis. I argue that the 'crisis of authority' and the 'crisis of legitimacy' are based on a 'crisis of emotional foundations', creating violence from the poor against the poor, which is another essential element of lynching. In this sense, I agree to some extent with Mendoza who argues that "the people crowded to face the state and assert their right to peace and tranquillity. The lynching, then, becomes a 'ritual of citizen frustration', that is not simply emotional but has a political character" (2008: 46). A more purposive, rational, calculating form of agency, leaving lynching as an anti-political or just apolitical action, more generally – marks political violence – and political phenomena. However, I argue that the irreducibly emotional dimensions of lynching do not exclude them from the category of political violence. I will continue to explore throughout this thesis how those two dimensions necessarily interlink in a comprehensive and deep understanding of the phenomenon.

Conclusion

During this chapter, I examined the different approaches to the phenomenon of lynching, drawing specific attention to the origins of the concept in the United States, and to the specific elements that characterised lynching in Latin America and Mexico. The extant literature suggests that there

is an unspoken and under-examined element in the violence of lynching, namely the *affective* and political dimension(s). Even though feelings and sentiments are expressed as characteristics of lynching, they do not play an important role in attendant academic discussions. Similarly, although lynching is seen to have a political dimension in some accounts such as Snodgrass and Fuentes Díaz, these elements are largely absent from the literature. Therefore, in the following chapter, I will argue in detail the importance of studying and researching emotions for the understanding of lynching, as well for the discussions on political violence.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology: Lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* – a research site

Introduction

On the 24th of November 2004, in the peripheral area of Mexico City, in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, two police officers lost their lives and a third was left with life-changing injuries, after a large section of the community committed one of the most notable lynchings in the country's recent history. For over a year media reports followed the case closely, publishing articles, interviews and editorials in ord

er to make sense of what was perceived as a nonsensical and brutal act of violence. Presenting the case study on this event is one of the aims of this chapter that will serve as an illustration for the theoretical analysis and contribution that I will make throughout the thesis. In addition, this chapter will also outline the methodological approach decided as appropriate for this research.

I will begin this chapter with two sections on methodology and then provide a simple narration of the story of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan, Tláhuac*. This thesis seeks to make a theoretical contribution to our understanding of political violence and lynching. However, it uses a case study to (i) illustrate various narratives that can be helpful to analyse lynching as political violence; and (ii) identify different emotional trails that help us to understand what is being communicated in lynching and to recognise its political dimensions. Overall, I hope to provide a deeper and richer interpretation of the politics involved in lynching.

As such, in the first section, I will discuss the extant research into emotions. For this, I explain different conceptualisations of emotions that are mainly developed in the fields of psychology, sociology and philosophy. The purpose of this section is to present the complexity inherent in the studying emotions from a methodological point of view, though arguing nevertheless its importance for the purpose of this thesis. Second, I will relate the study of emotions with narrative methodology, exposing how both realms are connected, providing justification for the analysis of this thesis. I do this by using a narrative structure of emotions framework to narrate the case study toward the end of the chapter.

In the second section, I expand on the use of narrativity as a methodological tool and the importance of *emplotment* for the analysis of a single case study. The narrative methodology is appropriate for this thesis because the contribution that I seek to make is interpretative. My argument as it stands is lynching should not be conceived as a barbaric, irrational or uncivilised crime, but it should be interpreted as a form of political violence. Additionally, I want to demonstrate that value of using affective and experiential approaches to analyse political violence. Thus, narrativity plays an important role in order to identify which are the narrative structures that can be found in social and political events. Further to this discussion of methodology, I will provide details of the process of data collection that I conducted between April and June of 2016 in Mexico City. This was connected to the analysis of a single case study which helped to develop and illustrate the theoretical argument I make in the thesis. I spent time collecting archived documents from newspapers that published the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* between November 2004 and December 2005. In addition, I will expand on the interviews that I conducted with Mexican academics and journalists who researched the case during the period within which the events occurred.

Finally, in the third section, I will narrate the story of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. I am applying the method of narrativity here in order to make the case more comprehensible. I present three different emplotments that reflect on the main emotions I will explore throughout this thesis.

These three stages of the story are: (i) the preconditions for the lynching – what unleashed the fury and the panic of the community; (ii) the action itself, or how the three police officers were lynched; and (iii) the aftermaths of the lynching; its political and social consequences.

Concluding this chapter, I will highlight some of the limitations presented when researching lynching. Firstly, as I mentioned in Chapter One, there are no official records of lynching in Mexico, which has made the process of research significantly more difficult for academics within the country. Secondly, relying on newspapers as the main source of empirical material is problematic for which I will present some of the justification for this decision. I want to clarify that the purpose of these sources is to allow this case to be illustrative of a theoretical contribution to the field of political violence in political theory. Thus, newspaper articles do not define and determine the truth about this event. I concede that lynching still remains ambiguous as a research topic, but argue that it still offers interesting social and emotional material worth analysing.

Researching emotions

What are emotions?

As I mentioned in the introduction, disciplines such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies and literature – in particular feminism and gender studies – have paid the most attention to the notion of emotions in society. Different accounts have been developed since the 1970s, with recent accounts focussing on the role of emotions in the research process (see: Widdowfield, 2000; Brannan, 2003; Holland, 2007; Given, 2008). Researchers across these disciplines have argued this particularly through the self-reflexivity of methods, which consider the influence of participants and researchers' emotions and feelings in the investigative process. In other words, emotions are researched "whether a researcher sets out to study emotions directly, explores ideas about emotion or both and subsequently shapes the type of methods used" (Savage, 2003: 28).

As Johnson points out, "emotions play a role in all dimensions of life and influence how we make sense of the world (…) including throughout the research process" (2009: 28). This means, that in the process of collecting data, contacting participants, and analysing the information (Johnson, 2009; Savage, 2003; Kleinman and Copp, 1993), emotions should be considered a fundamental aspect of the research process, especially when topics are difficult to address and draw strong reactions – such as, horror, disgust, revulsion. For example, lynching is a difficult subject of research as it creates a series of emotional reactions of disgust and horror when you are exposed to photography, videos and detailed testimonies of the events. This means that emotions *affect* the research process, sometimes preventing scholars to engage with certain subjects. Thus, emotions are not entirely absent from the scholarly analysis, and they are not absent from this research process either. However, due to the purpose of this chapter and thesis, I will not focus on the self-reflective dimension of 'researching emotions', but I am going to justify the necessity of emotions as a conceptual element for an understanding of lynching as political violence.

In this section, I present some accounts of the philosophical discussion on emotions (affects) and feelings in order to understand the uses of narrativity as an analytical interpretative method. I want to begin by agreeing with Michael Freeden (2013), who emphasizes the importance of emotions in the process of political thinking. He argues that emotions act as decontesting 'agents'. This means that emotions are "irruptive motivational states" (2013: 89) that communicate through political thinking. Emotions held in an individual may shape the production and consumption of political concepts and language (Freeden, 2013), cutting through cultural constraints (2013: 86). In other words, emotions "both cognitive and unintentional, add a layer that curbs the flexibility of the [political] discourse in question" (2013: 87). They are thus able to set non-conceptual and logical limits. In this sense, political thinking is not emotionless (2013: 87). It is therefore important to look at how emotions feed into the political realm or in which ways emotions are transmitted and constitute a part of the political sphere.

In this context, the first question to ask is what do I mean by emotions? I start introducing this concept by establishing that I will not make a distinction between the emotions and affects as two different notions, despite contested debate on this distinction. Even though influential philosophers in the field of emotions, such as Brian Massumi (1995), have distinguished both concepts by level of consciousness and experience, I tend to agree with thinkers like Sara Ahmed (2004), who argue that this distinction of affects as pre-personal and non-intentional, and emotions as personal and intentional, presumes a division of human experiences. In other words, separating the concepts of affect and emotions make the human experience as something that is 'experienced' in different realms, such as body sensations, emotions and thoughts (2004: 203), when actually the human experience is *lived* as a whole. In simple terms, emotions respond to physiological elements, e.g. how our body changes when we are scared or angry, and to psychological elements, which can be interpreted as thoughts, ideas and memories. Both, the social and political realm in which they are embedded get influences by emotions, as well they affect and change the way we interact with the social and political realm. Thus, I will equate emotions and affects within one sociological and philosophical debate, in which two main accounts stand out, namely (i) emotions as experiences; and (ii) emotions as cognition.

On the one hand, Goldie defines emotion as "typically complex, episodic, dynamic, and structured" (2002: 13). Firstly, they are episodic and dynamic because they are not fixed in specific elements, they come and go and interact with each other and with other aspects of people' life. However, at the same time emotions are structured because, as I will explain further, they are part of a narrative, shaped by "sequences of actions and events, thoughts and feelings" (2002: 14). In this sense, for Goldie emotions involve episodes of emotional experience, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, body changes and disposition (2002: 13). In this understanding of emotions, Goldie argues that these are based on intentionality. He argues that emotions "are directed towards an object" (Goldie, 2002: 15).

Under this definition, Goldie writes that "bringing in feeling in the right place, as an ineliminable part of the intentionality of emotional experience, as directed toward the world from a point of view, not merely as an afterthought" (Goldie, 2002: 15). In other words, emotions work towards an object "in which one's thoughts and feelings are typically directed" towards an object in the world (Goldie, 2002: 18). Goldie claims that *feeling toward* is "thinking of with feeling so that your emotional feelings are directed towards the object of your thought" (2002: 20). However, *feeling towards* does not always involve beliefs and desires. An emotion can be intelligible through inappropriate or disproportionate beliefs in which the feelings are grounded (2002: 24). For Goldie, emotional experience and an 'action out of' an emotion are intelligible as they involve the thoughts and belief that are grounded in an experience that could be "irrational if it is based on irrationally formed beliefs" (2002: 49). Similarly, in Ticineto and Halley's book *The Affective Turn*, they argue, "affects refer generally to bodily capacities to affect and be affected or the argumentation or diminution of a body's capacity to act, to engage, and to connect" (2007: 2). Therefore, the affective level of human interactions is related to vitality, to be *alive* as experiences of individuals.

On the other hand, probably one of the most significant thinkers who treat emotions as cognition is Martha Nussbaum. She argues that emotions are taught by society through paradigm stories (Kleres 2010: 185, Nussbaum 1988). This means, "emotions are not compact, simple entities: they unfold in time" (cited in Keen, 2011: 4). In 'Narrative Emotions: Beckett's Genealogy of Love', Nussbaum explains that emotions are social constructs, we learn how to feel in a way that is similar to how we learn our beliefs (1988: 226). Nussbaum is thinking here about written narrative, such as novels, which have cognitive content, "intimately related to beliefs or judgments about the world" (1988: 231), which makes the belief the 'ground' of the emotion. Nussbaum claims a cognitive understanding of emotions, in which they "can be modified by a modification of belief" and can be evaluated in the same way as beliefs, identifying rational and irrational emotions, as well as helpful or noxious ones (1988: 232). Here, she is not talking about any belief, but those

that we value, things to which we give importance. The importance of these beliefs come from the social element of emotions. As she claims, emotions are public, they are at the centre of what societies aim to pursue, through art, speeches, etc. This notion of public emotions is something that can also be found in the historical account of Rachel Hewitt's *A Revolution of Feeling*. In her interview on BBC Radio 4, Hewitt explains how the combination of language and cultural elements define what emotions are at the core of a society, or what emotions acquire more social relevance. She, for example, uses the word 'embarrassment', and how it can be expressed in several forms in the English language (e.g. discomfort, awkwardness, uneasiness, etc.) which reflect the way British society relates to that sentiment of ethical respect towards certain behaviours.

This historical and philosophical debate is also present within the field of sociology. In Barbalet's account, he criticises constructivist views of emotions, arguing that there are not 'feeling rules' in particular cultures. In other words, cultural frameworks do not construct a different type of emotion, but "that the socially significant emotions are likely to be subjected to modification through a social actor's" actions (1998: 23). Similar to Nussbaum, emotions towards an event can change and transform between societies, time and space, since "emotional experience is continuous [as] emotional changes occur as a result of a number of processes, many of which result from the structural dynamics of emotions rather than the directing force of culture" (1998: 23). All these debates reveal some of the elements I will continue to analyse throughout this thesis, showing that the role of emotions, as a social and complex aspect of human life, is relevant (and sometimes fundamental) for the understanding of violence and politics. By engaging with this literature during this thesis, and as I explained in the introduction, emotions can be a form of political thinking, expanding the dualities of reason and emotion, which is something that is essential in all the literature of affects. However, in this next subsection, I want to link up the notion of emotions with an interpretative framework of narratives.

Emotional Narratives

Part of Goldie's definition of emotions involves the notion of narrative. He argues that "our lives have a narrative structure – roughly speaking, they comprise an unfolding, structured sequence of actions, events, thoughts, and feelings" (Goldie, 2002: 7). Thus, the only way to make sense of emotional experience is through the larger narrative (2002: 36), which he calls 'narrative structures'. Even though Goldie and Nussbaum discuss different realms of emotions, they both agree on the fundamental notion of connecting emotions to narratives. In particular, Nussbaum claims that emotions are "demarcated, related to one another, and connected with other aspects of life [and] will vary greatly among societies" (1988: 235). Similarly, Jochen Kleres argues "human experience has a crucial narrative dimension" (2010: 184), which leads us to think about the *emotional narrative*. In this sense, one of the methodological decision I make in this thesis is to take the narrative structure of emotions to narrate the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*.

For scholars, this narrative structure is an emotional experience, in which feelings, bodily changes and expressions constitute different episodes of a narrative. This theoretical premise also applies to particular events within our lives, as personal and collective "stories are made up of a series of discrete narrative segments" (Kleres, 2010: 183). In this sense, the point of narrative analysis is to single out parts of an event and identify why these segments are significant for the story and in relation to each other (Kleres, 2010: 184). Evidently, the narrative analysis applies more commonly to literature and narrative studies, in which, for example, novels and fictional stories can be broken apart into pieces to establish understanding. Nevertheless, I claim that social and political events can also be read through this narrative structure, particularly through emotional trails.

Emotional segments of an event or story involve "the micro-story of the present situation, but this story is embedded in, and gains (emotional) significance through, larger narrative contexts" (Kleres, 2010: 186). In this sense, thinking about (any) social event or story, we can find out how micro-elements from that event can be situated and understood through large narrative contexts. For instance, lynching cannot be solely understood as an isolated social event, but within the

totality of its context. This form of interpretative framework puts emotions to the front of the analysis, particularly, the role they play in the different segments of the story.

In this sense, and agreeing with Kleres' interpretation of Theodore R. Sarbin, emotions appear as narrative *emplotments*, in which focusing on a specific situation – involvement, settings, actions, etc. – gives a better understanding of the emotional narrative (Kleres, 2010: 188). Therefore, narratives are emotionally structured; they emerge from those scenarios, segments, events that constitute the narrative (Kleres, 2010: 188). In this sense, if the narrative is showing – expressing – rage and anger, we need to look the scene which forms that emotion, we need to examine who is acting, how and towards whom (Kleres, 2010: 189).

In terms of the analytical process, Kleres proposes three levels in which emotions can be constituted as narrative: the lexical level, the syntactical level and the level of prosody. The first one relates to how a word can distinguish emotions, which represents a descriptive emotional state – similarly, to what we saw in Hewitt's account above. In simple terms, language allows us to categorise emotions, such as fear, anger, happiness, which provide us with information about emotional attitudes towards someone or something. In this sense, emotions "predicate events or situational circumstances that imply emotional experience" (Kleres, 2010: 194). The second level refers to sentences, which relate to, for example, metaphors, repetition of phrases, and intensification of questions. Finally, for Kleres, prosody refers to spoken text, which gives us connotations of emotions, gives us a *voice* and an emphasis on specific intonations, revealing the emotional experience. Kleres particularly focuses on the use of interviews, indicating that even though narratives do not provide actual information of the event, or what happened, they do show us a structure of narrative text that is expressive and represents the subjective experiences of events (Kleres, 2010: 196). I will return to the lexical and syntactical level of emotional narratives in Chapters Three, Four and Five, where I will specifically focus on the narrative emotions of fear, anger and vengeance. While in Chapter Six, I will focus on the combination of those emotions, as the structure that constituted them all.

Interpretative research and single case study

It is now pertinent to turn to the choice of an interpretative framework that uses a single case study to illustrate and generate theory. So far, the methodological tools we have available to us to work with include a conception of emotions as constitutive of narratives. Thus, drawing from the contributions made by interpretivist historians and sociologists who have advocated for the use of narrative in the understanding of historical, social and political events I will justify the use of single-case study for this research.

I have decided to take this analytical path in order to explore the phenomenon of lynching within all its complexity. As explained in Chapter One, lynching, particularly in Mexico, tends to be treated as a phenomenon with a single narrow explanation. This has limited the possibility of connecting often-neglected aspects of the event such as the development of emotional trails, details of the ritual and particular reactions from witnesses and authorities, which are elements I will explore deeper in this thesis. This is one reason why it is useful to spend time on a single case. Whereas testing a hypothesis concerning common factors held to occur as constants between essentially similar cases requires the comparison of two or more suitable examples, digging into a single case such as that *San Juan Ixtayopan* deeply and taking time to tease out its complexities and ambiguities, permits a fuller examination of the variety of dimensions that lynching possesses in terms of narrative structure.

Different approaches have been developed to define the use of narrative as a method of interpretation for historical events (see: Berkhofer, 2008, chap.2). The sociologist Margaret R. Somers proposes an idea of narrativity as a form of positing the relationship between what she calls '*master and non-master narratives*' for the interpretation of a phenomenon. In other words, and similar to Kleres, Goldie and Nussbaum on narrative emotions, she claims that narratives are "constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by what [she] calls causal emplotment" (1992: 601). This kind of interpretative framework using narrativity

aims to connect parts to "a constructed configuration or a social network" (Somers, 1992: 601). Similarly, the historian Robert F. Berkhofer argues that the nature of emplotment is the interaction between those meanings, plots and narratives that intersect through the experience of human life, and the representations and understandings that they create (Berkhofer, 2008: 118). In other words, "emplotment transforms or configures a multiplicity of events, characters, and conditions into a narrative, and narrativity constitutes its form of understanding chiefly through emplotment broadly conceived" (Berkhofer, 2008: 118). Although close to genealogy, I consider emplotments as the building up of interpretative narrativity, not as a function of tracing the lineage of a concept as lynching, but as a mechanism to identify how micro aspects of the phenomenon are linked to macro narratives in the social and historical sense.

In the theory explored by Berkhofer, narrativity is applied to historical events. So, how can we read lynching through emplotment? As mentioned in Chapter One, the phenomenon of lynching has been largely interpreted as a consequence of other social issues, such as the idea of a 'failed state', a 'crisis of legitimacy', etc., which makes lynching – in many cases – look like an anomaly, a symptom of an *ill* society. Narratives about lynching in Latin America and Mexico, are dominated by the 'perception of insecurity', 'lack of justice', 'failure state', among others (Guillén, 2014; Huggins, 1991; Vilas, 2005; Vilas 2001). Although these narratives are convincing in principle, they have not had a clear relationship or connection with the uses of violence, e.g. why high perceptions of insecurity among people can lead to the use of brutal violence?

An interpretative framework using narrativity brings to the surface the social role of emotions, will allow us to comprehend the complexities that explain lynching. Hence, the process of connecting parts as a means to turn isolated events into what Somers (1992) calls 'episodes' or what Berkhofer (2008) denominates 'subplots' and 'themes', which are not necessarily assembled in chronological order. In this sense, through emplotment, it is possible to examine how and under what conditions an event such as lynching intersects with other plots and stories, which can help one to interpret the phenomenon itself. The role of narrativity does not provide a single reading of the event, but

as mentioned before, helps to reveal the narratives of emotions which help to tell the story of lynching, providing the "turning points, crisis, resolutions and other well-recognised narrative devices" (Berkhofer, 2008: 118) that exist in the reconstruction of the event and its significance within social relations. In Somers words, "to make something understandable in the context of what has happened is to give it historicity and relationality" (Somers, 1992: 602) to an event. I particularly echo Paul Ricoeur's account of emplotment,

> It is a mediation between individual events or incidents and a story taken as a whole. In this respect, we may say equivalently that it draws a meaningful story from a diversity of events or incident (…) or that it transforms the events or incidents into a story (…) A story, too, must be more than just an enumeration of events in serial order; it must organise them into an intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the 'thought' [point or theme] of this story. In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession (cited in Berkhofer, 2008: 119).

As I will explain in the next section, I use narrative emplotments to tell a storyline of the events of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. However, these emplotments are embedded in emotions structures, which are not solely attached to the event in itself but are connected, following Somer's account, to other experiences, memories and thoughts that represent the historical and political context in which the lynching is situated. These elements are shared and told, with different degrees of similarities and differences, by the sources I have used in this research: newspapers, journalists and academics who have followed the case. Reconstructing the emplotments of the lynching is an interpretative exercise to posit a single event of violence in, what Robert Darton calls, the "high roads of intellectual history" (1894: 11), especially because these events are commonly overlooked and described as the "unmapped territory of (…) *Histoire des mentalites*" (Darton, 1984:11). When thinking of political violence, we normally look at the phenomenon of war, guerrilla conflict,

terrorism, etc. They are the recognised meta-narratives of political violence, and from which most the literature and discussion have been focused on. Thus, I aim to look at the interpretation of the micro-narrative of lynching in order to discover if those elements that constitute the politics of violence can too be found in the plots of the lynching of *San Juan Ixtayopan*. This, of course, will also be attached to the context of Mexico and Latin America, positioning the event into another meta-historical narrative.

Having established how I will examine the narratives within my single case study, what kind of case study will be used in this thesis? Methodologically speaking, Robert K. Yin (2003) defines a case study in general as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (2003: 13). This type of definition has also been used by recognised anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz (1973), who called for a form of 'thick description' in the interpretation of cultures. Similarly, John Gerrings argues that a single case study is an "intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (2004: 342). In this sense, a single case study can give us a snapshot, or vertical slice, of an event that can go towards explaining broader phenomena, similar to what I have argued for in the use of narrativity and emplotments. Thus, I am delving into rich, detailed data in the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* in order to draw out how lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence, rather than seeking to make generalizable claims about lynching per se.

Although this thesis uses empirical material, I seek to use this in order to make theoretical rather than empirical contributions. In relation to theory-building, Eckstein argues that "case studies may be used not merely for the interpretative application of general ideas to particular cases (i.e., after theory has been established) or, heuristically, for helping the inquirer to arrive at notions of problems to solve or solutions worth pursuing, but may also be used as powerful means of determining whether solutions are valid" (1975: 135). This is what Eckstein calls Heuristic Case Studies, in which a case is "serving to find out" (1975: 143) important general problems in a set of

theories, and possibly positing solutions to it. In this sense, it is presumed from this perspective that theories neither come from abstraction nor pure empirical data, but from the theorist's capacity to place both processes together, through the illustration of a case study.

For the purpose of this thesis, I use a single case study of lynching in *San Juan of Ixtayopan* to dig down deep into the phenomenon. Here, I comprehend the context in which it occurred, as well as provide explanations of the limits that the theory of political violence has when it comes to explaining events like this. Delving into the phenomenon of lynching is an attempt to discover unfamiliar views of violence, identifying through different emotional trails, such as fear and panic (Chapter Three); anger and vengeance (Chapters Four and Five) and those dimensions of particularly *political* violence that are present (or not) in the lynching, such as the spectacle, state legitimacy, punishment and justice.

In addition, the case had an important impact locally and nationally at the time. It affected popular imaginations of violence, publicised the use of violence through live television (being the first live-streamed lynching in Mexico) and put lynching at the centre of the political and social discussion. Although lynching does not communicate directly what its political means and aims are, as is more common in other forms of political violence – it does reveal, through the details of its emplotment, what the violence of lynching does to politics, and what *the political* does to the use of lynching. For this, and as I mentioned above, this section aimed to justify narrativity as an interpretative framework of the stories of mentalities (and emotions), as a tool to justify the use of a single case study.

In summary, I aim to narrate the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* as an interpretative framework, that will bring forward the key emotions and social and political elements that characterised the phenomenon. In this sense, the case serves as an example for the overall theoretical analysis of lynching as a potential form of political violence, as the case helps to illustrate the phenomenon as well as aid in understanding the main contributions that this thesis aims to provide.

Sources and collection of material

The story of the lynching of *San Juan Ixtayopan* will be told through three main sets of material that were collected during fieldwork conducted in Mexico City during the summer of 2017. First, I have used several sources to narrate the case study, drawn from the media archives and collected from the National Mexican Archives [*Archivo General de la Nacion*] of three newspapers from Mexico City: *La Prensa*, *El Grafico Universal* and *Reforma*. The first two newspapers are well recognised for being 'sensationalist' media, or what is better known in Mexico as *Prensa Roja*, which are newspapers with a high focus on covering criminality. However, *Reforma*[9] is a historic and traditional newspaper, with a conservative tendency. These are newspapers which have daily national circulation, and extensively covered the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. I examined all issues of these papers from November 24th 2004 until December 31th 2005, which included more than 300 articles and editorials related to the case.

Second, I have used the juridical and police report on the case. These documents were obtained through the 'transparency system' recently implemented in Mexico that allows public individuals to access criminal cases or any other public record. This report was published to the public in 2009 and it contains over 1,000 pages. The documentation consists of a detailed legal description of the case, indicating details from the arresting process, the defence of those arrested and the legal consequences encountered by members of the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* for the death of two of the police officers subjected to the lynching. It is important to mention here that for juridical definition, 'lynching' is not considered a legal concept, and therefore, in the documents, the events are framed as 'double qualified homicide' [*doble homicidio calificado*].

Finally, the third source of information was obtained through six interviews. I undertook three one-hour interviews with journalists present during the events of *San Juan Ixtayopan* who reported the case extensively. In addition, I carried out three one-hour interviews with academic experts on

[9] Please refer to the appendix for the full list of data sources.

lynching in Mexico and this case in particular. I want to specify that the interviews were made with the intention to contrast and triangulate with the information found in the other two sources[10]. Media sources were organised by date and newspaper, creating a database of each piece published between 2004 and 2005. I enlisted over 300 newspapers articles, I read them and wrote the key elements of each of them that could help to analyse the case. I did not use all the articles in this thesis, as many of them were note-like in form and/or repetitive. I classified the articles in four categories: (i) those that told the event in detail (descriptive pieces); (ii) those that used interviews with locals; (iii) those that reflected the words of authorities; (iv) editorial pieces that interpreted the case. This categorisation helped me to find narratives for each chapter. In the case of the police report, I read it and codified it through similar categories: (i) narration of the event with specific details of the aftermath legal process; (ii) testimonies of locals that were arrested; (iii) testimonies of the police involved. Finally, due to the limited number of interviews, I organised their testimonies as examples of narrative emotions, especially by the journalists that covered the event.

The story of the lynching in San Juan Ixtayopan, Tláhuac, Mexico

Thus far, I have established the methodology, framework, tools and data sources used within the rest of this thesis, in this next section I am to provide a very basic and factual account of my single case study. I retell the story of what happened on the day that three policemen were lynched in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. As I explained in the previous chapter, within dominant narratives, lynching remains a story of criminality, or even more commonly, as a phenomenon of incivility. When looking at cases of lynching as an overall event, e.g. increasing number of cases, geographical locations, distribution, etc., we are missing particular elements of the contexts, actions and consequences that are part of lynching as political and violent action. I tell the story of the lynching

[10] The Ethical Committee of the University of Birmingham approved these interviews in 2016, before going on fieldwork in Mexico City in April of 2017.

in *San Juan Ixtayopan* in *Tláhuac*, Mexico City to provide an illustration that allows me to draw out particular elements in the four later chapters of this thesis in order to build the argument that lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence.

Following the methodological elements explained in the above sections, I narrate the lynching through the different emplotments that shaped the event, highlighting the emotions that relate to these plots. For this, I narrate the case through three sections, (i) the pre-conditions of the lynching; (ii) the development of the violent action and (iii) the aftermath of the lynching. Even though this seems to be a quite linear narration of the case, the actual story development is embedded in more complex plots, with back and forth stories that connect with the overall event. This section presents in detail the case study that will guide the thesis. I will constantly refer back to the elements presented in this section throughout the following chapters in order to develop the different analytical points articulated through this project.

Gathering and panicking around rumours

On the 24th November of 2004, three men sitting in a car outside the local school, 'Popol Vuh', attracted the attention of some of the local people and were identified as strangers by members of the community in the peripheral delegation of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, *Tláhuac*, located to the south of Mexico City. *San Juan Ixtayopan* is located to the south of the Delegation or Municipality of *Tláhuac*, one of the sixteen that constitute Mexico City. In other words, *San Juan Ixtayopan* is one of the seven *colonias* or neighbourhoods part of the municipality of *Tláhuac* which is located to the southeast of the district of Mexico City. *Tláhuac* is a mainly urbanised area that in 2004 comprised 320,000 people and is divided into local people and outsiders from other *colonias* that made it to *Tláhuac* in the mid-twenty century. According to Leticia Sarmiento, in 2004 73.9% of the population were marginalised from social security and health centres. Most of the population lived in irregular housing (shanty houses), with lack of access to water and plumbing (Sarmiento, no date: 17). The area of *San Juan Ixtayopan* had 35,000 people by 2008. It has a highly religious

traditional background and is an area famous for its religious festivities, although like the rest of the municipality it also struggles with high levels of poverty. *San Juan Ixtayopan* has access only to two main roads, through the north and the west side, with the rest of the streets, qualified as local use only. This limited access to the neighbourhood would become an important aspect of the aftermath of the lynching.

In this context and according to the earliest media report on the case, "at 18:00 of the 24th November 2004, the three agents were found taking pictures and videos [of the area], mainly by mothers collecting their kids from school" (Reforma0101). In addition, neighbours' testimonies indicated that these men had photographs of and information about several children from the local school inside their vehicle, something that was never proven but became a key rumour serving to unleash the following events (Reforma0101).

These three men were actually undercover police officers from the Federal Police, who had been assigned to work in the area. Although no clear information exists about the focus of their assignment, the three police officers were confronted by locals when their presence became suspicious in the eyes of the general public. According to the police report released in 2009, the detention of the police officers by members of the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* occurred in two different moments. Firstly, Víctor Mireles Barrera and Cristóbal Bonilla were detained in their car by a group of women; and then Edgar Moreno Nolasco was stopped by a group of neighbours outside a local shop nearby the car (Police Report, 2009: 112).

According to the media reports (ElGrafico0206; Reforma0201), the men had been seen walking around the place for a couple of weeks, creating suspicion among the neighbours. When, two weeks before the lynching, members of the community reported the presence of three unknown men in the area to the municipal police, the police failed to provide any concrete answer about the situation, which became another aggravating factor in the events that unfolded.

In terms of the police structure, Mexico has a particular division and structure. Law enforcement is divided into three sections: federal, state and municipal. Federal police are those under the

Minister of Home Affairs and are divided into two agencies; a uniformed force, 'Policia Federal' and an investigative force, 'Policia Ministerial Federal'. In the case of the police officers subject to the lynching, they were part of the 'Policia Federal' (PF) - previously known as 'Policia Federal Preventiva (PFP)', and belonged particularly to the intelligence division, hence their undercover work in the area. State police are also divided into similar roles, though they are in charge of each of the 31 states in Mexico. Finally, the municipal police are a preventive force that some municipalities provide to deal with minor disturbances and local traffic infractions. In Mexico City, the capital of the country, the Secretariat of Public Security of Mexico City (SSP) is the uniformed agency in charge of the security of the centre of the city, with a preventative role. The Mexico City police are under the authority of the *Jefe de Gobierno de la Ciudad de México*, which is the democratically elected executive power of the city.

In this context, and continuing with the preconditions of the lynching, on the 25th November 2004, the newspaper *Reforma* reported that fifteen days before the lynching "the head of the school gave notice to the *Tláhuac* municipality about a vehicle parked in front of the school that was making parents feel uncomfortable and insecure" (Reforma0201). A few days after the notice, a mother asked the occupants of the vehicle to identify themselves. When the men told her that they were policemen, she asked them to verify the information by calling a superior. According to the aforementioned report, the call did not succeed and the woman could not confirm the information she had asked for, thus further compounding a level of suspicion amongst the community (Reforma0201).

Successively, testimonies from neighbours contained within the 2009 police report indicated that just before the violence started, there were around thirty people – mainly women and children – surrounding the policemen in their car, accusing them of "kidnapping some children" and "spying on the kids of the school". One testimony in particular states that many of the people around the school were passing rumours to other parents and locals, saying: "they have caught the kidnappers, let's go and get them" (Police Report, 2009: 152).

In addition, other testimonies confirmed that there were around fifteen people holding two of the police officers, who had had their hands tied. In this escalation of violence, within ten minutes, the local security alarms were raised, alerting more people to the scene, which eventually meant that more than seventy people had gathered around the men so as to observe the situation (Reforma1404). As the hour passed, the crowd rose to more than two hundred people who came to witness the first attempts of physical violence and torture against the three police officers (Police Report, 2009: 231).

Here, I want to pause to look into more detail at some of the elements collected up to this point of the story. The situation of kidnapping children [*robachicos*] is something I will expand in depth in chapter three. However, I want to explain that this panic and fear around missing children was not something unfounded from the people of *San Juan Ixtayopan*. Despite the fact there are no official reports (e.g. state reports, NGO, International organisations) that confirm the extent and scale of the issue of child kidnapping, media reports at the time of the lynching, as well as neighbours' testimonies, affirmed that in weeks previous to the events two children had disappeared from the area, leading to the emergence of an understandable collective fear of kidnapping amongst parents. In fact, according to Antonio Fuentes Díaz (2006), the presumption of '*robachicos*' is a common reason cited in cases of lynching in Mexico. He claims that this presumed infringement is considered one of the main violations of social norms that have origins in pre-Hispanic beliefs that children were kidnapped for the construction of roads and that they were later buried under monuments (2006: 93).

The presumption of child kidnapping is mentioned by all sources - police reports, media and journalists - as the primary trigger for the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. Nevertheless, as one of the journalists interviewed indicates, in the beginning, the situation was seen as another typical case of *detencion ciudadana* (civil detention) which normally does not reach the front-pages of newspapers. Civil detentions are normally considered petty crimes in Mexico and it is commonly characterised as when a group of people call the police on someone for committing a crime or

infraction. In this process, the person is retained for a short period of time by the community until taken by the police, and it often happens in contexts of, for instance, drunk and disorderly behaviour, fights, domestic violence and other similar crimes. Civil detentions do not make the news because they tend not to result in brutal violence and people involved often attempt to stop a violation by addressing the traditional bodies of law enforcement (e.g. the police). For example, the journalist interviewed was not expecting something which seemed commonplace and petty to become a piece of national front-page news. However, in the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, the story of so-called civil detention developed into something dramatically different.

"We were in the writing office with the radio on, when we started hearing that they were accusing a taxi driver of kidnapping a kid", the journalist explains. "I began to put my ear to the situation around five o'clock in the afternoon when a radio journalist got to the place and started to report that a taxi driver was being accused of kidnapping some children. It was not clean information, so we said, 'this will disappear quickly', we do not cover daily crimes, so we didn't think it was relevant at that point" (Journalist02).

As in all cases of lynching, it is nearly impossible to clearly identify who started the violence, and in this case, who led with the accusations against the police officers. It is clear though that it was a group of women - mainly mothers picking up their children from school – who first gathered together and began a confrontation with the men. Both the police report and media have identified one specific woman as 'responsible' for instigating the lynching, named by the media as 'La Gorda'. Media reports covered in several testimonies of neighbours regarding this woman. One of them said, "a robust woman was the one who rang the church's bell. This person and her husband are drug dealers in the town" (Reforma0702); "she began to scream that they [the policemen] were going to kidnap children" (Reforma0217), tells another witness. Thus, it is implied in these reports that the woman in question intended at this stage to lynch the police officers, who were apparently investigating drug trafficking in the area. Nevertheless, none of these testimonies has been corroborated by official bodies. In fact, it is reported that on December 15th, 2004, 'La Gorda'

was detained in her house where videos of the lynching were found (Reforma2102), which led to a prosecution process which ended without sentence, due to lack of evidence.

In this sense, the gathering around the police officers was generated through rumours and the people were filled with panic. So far, we see that the story of this lynching has some compelling components: the moment of accusation and the lack of trust in the police and authorities to intervene in cases of kidnapping; the alerting (calling) of the community; the fear of the crowd; and the disbelief of the people that these three men were members of the Federal Police. Whilst these moments are not enough to explain the subsequent events, they help us to understand that lynching is composed of more than just impulsive and anonymous force.

Rage against the police

As mentioned above, media and police reports suggested that it was women who began the accusations against the police officers. These women insisted on asking why the men kept wandering around the neighbourhood and what their intentions were with respect to the children. The people seemed unconvinced and frankly unable to believe that these men were police officers, provoking what I have identified as the second plot of the lynching, namely the expressions of rage.

Following the testimonies collected in the police report, the people gathering outside the local school indicated that while the men were forced out the car, people broke the windows and took their belongings. The crowd surrounded the men, blocking the street on both sides to stop the access, something that was easy to do due to limited ingress (Sarmiento, no date: 28). At this point, the policemen were taken to a lamppost where they were tied up, "so the people could see them more clearly" (Police Report, 2009: 237). As the crowd began to grow and local radio stations arrived, via radio the municipal police were alerted of a possible attempt of lynching, to which two municipal police officers responded by arriving at the scene.

The municipal officers attempted to maintain a short negotiation with the crowd, saying that they would take the suspected kidnappers directly to the Ministerio Publico [Attorney General], the main juridical body where criminalities are processed. However, the community wanted to negotiate solely with the political local authority, the *Jefa Delegacional*, the highest democratically elected administrative and political authority of a municipality in Mexico City, who did not arrive at the scene until later in the evening and who were unable to communicate with the people at that point. According to testimonies contained in the police report, the two municipal police officers attempting to negotiate were told by the crowd that they needed the presence of the "Attorney General's office, the media and the Officer of the Delegation" (Police Report, 2009: 125), as well as the *Jefa Delegacional*, in order for the crowd to consider releasing the men.

After thirty minutes of waiting for these authorities to arrive, the crowd grew increasingly enraged, forcing the situation to spiral out of the control of local authorities. This is when the three men were taken by the crowd from the school to the central square of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, a public space near the local church. It was early in the evening and reporters from local and national newspapers, radio and television had by then arrived, interviewing some of the people participating in the detention.

The police report indicates that one of the journalists was in contact with the Sub-Inspector of the Federal Police[11], and their discussion was reported as follows: "I am a TV Azteca reporter, I will communicate you with one of the neighbours…" – "I am the Sub Inspector of the Federal Police, the people you are holding are police officers and I demand you to let them go". A member of the crowd answered: "Come here, I will wait for you" "Come here (…) and you will also die". The Sub Inspector insisted that the crowd let the police officers go, but the response was that they would not negotiate with anyone else and that they would kill the officers (Police Report, 2009: 119).

[11] The Sub-Inspector is a mid-rank position in the Mexican Federal Police. Their role is administrative, but it has no decision making as their position above (Inspector) has the power to supervise police officers.

Once the police officers were taken to the central square, women, men and children started to beat them. According to an interview with one of the journalists present, more than two hundred people participated in the first hours of the process of detaining and torturing the men. By the early evening, there were more than two thousand witnesses to the lynching, who sat on trees and on roofs (Journalist02). Around 19:55, journalists from the national television network, TV Azteca, gained direct access to the police officers - now visibly hurt - and one of them was interviewed and said (again) that they were police agents asking for help. Nevertheless, the crowd decided to kill the men. There is no clear information of exactly how many people participated in the actual torture and killing, but testimonies argue that between a dozen and twenty people inflicted the main injuries, including cutting some street light cables and using them to electrocute the officers (Police Report, 2009: 130). However, it is also reported that hundreds of people kicked, punched, spat at and insulted the men in the course of the lynching. The men asked repeatedly for help, explaining that they were working on *narcomundeo* (petty trafficking of drugs) in the area (Police Report, 2009: 204), but at that point, the crowd did not believe them and maintained that they deserved brutal treatment.

As mentioned above, in the first phase of the lynching, when the policemen were captured by a crowd outside of the school and taken to the central square, the physical violence was mainly carried out by women. Typically, participation in lynchings is normally by men. However, in cases where children are supposedly involved, women tend to take part also, as in this case (Reforma0306; Journalist01). Recordings from radio broadcasters present at the scene, clearly document that women were shouting 'where are the kids?', 'where did you take them?', 'kill the *robachicos*' (children kidnappers) (Journalist02). However, later on, when the police officers were lined up next to each other in the central square, the torture was mainly committed by men (Journalist02).

The report from the police (2009) describes that young men perpetuated the most brutal physical force. At this point, a few hours since they were taken, the police officers were covered in blood,

had their hands and feet tied together and were pleading for their lives. Police officers repeatedly told the crowd that they were part of the Federal Police force and they were not kidnapping children. Several reports from the media and the police (Reforma0606; LaPrensa0214) indicated that they even showed their police badges and provided the telephone numbers of their supervisors who could confirm their information. However, this did not stop the people's rage. On the contrary, when they were not able to confirm the information with the authorities, the crowd continued instigating the killing.

There was no local authority present and able to stop the lynching. This is due to complex geographic and territorial factors which inhibited access to the three policemen, and because of a lack of communication between different authorities which hindered the rescue of these men. In particular, when the *Jefa Delegacional* was interviewed by the *Ministerio Publico* during the investigation into the lynching, she said that neighbours and local police told her about the situation, but at that time, the policemen were already in deplorable physical condition and the crowd had become too empowered for her to do anything about it (Journalist02).

According to the police report (2009), at 20:00 in the evening, she arrived at the scene and for about fifteen minutes she attempted to defuse the situation and avoid the lynching. However, the crowd responded with increased upset due to her presence, with them shouting at her that "We are fed up of you, because you never listen to our demands or when we report [crimes]" (Police Report, 2009: 115). This encounter demonstrates aptly how the community was infuriated by the general lack of response and action by local and national authorities regarding their perceived communal insecurity. Most of the reports (LaPrensa0308; ElGrafico0706) make clear that the *Jefa Delegacional* was in part responsible for the lynching in that she appeared too late despite being the main local authority in *Tláhuac*. Although, as we will see in examining the aftermath of the lynching, it was the Federal Government – in charge of the Federal Police – who would be blamed as the main agency responsible for the lynching of the policemen (ElGrafico0706).

Media reports (Reforma0801; Reforma0315) also indicate that the *Jefa Delegacional* was able to talk with one of the captured policemen and that she attempted to provide hope to the officer. It was reported that one of the policemen persistently asked her: "please do not leave me, they are going to kill me" (Police Report, 2009: 126). However, in those same accounts, it is indicated that at that point the policemen were severely injured, and even though they were begging for their freedom, no such action was taken by local authorities. It is important to notice that the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* lasted around six hours, enough time for members of the communities and the local authorities to intervene and stop the situation. Nevertheless, the lynching occurred with fatal consequences for two of the three police officers. This led to a description of the members of the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* as "a criminal mass of people that acted on explosive emotions, unconscious, unorganised and contradictory passions, which lead their actions by instinct, making them highly vulnerable" (Police Report, 2009: 97). This interpretation meant that it was impossible to identify an individual responsible for the actions, as there was not "any specific individual as the instigator and/or intellectual author" (Police Report, 2009:97) of the crime.

As mentioned above, during the day several journalists from newspapers, radio and television arrived at *San Juan Ixtayopan* in order to cover the lynching. Firstly, only radio stations were there to cover something that was considered 'another typical lynching' or 'civil detention'. According to my interviews (Journalist01, Journalist02) early in the afternoon reporters notified that neighbours detained three kidnappers, which did not create many surprises among the big media networks. However, when later in the evening, it was confirmed that those 'kidnappers' were members of the Federal Police, national television went to cover the event live.

The *Tláhuac's* event was the first-ever televised lynching in Mexico. Coinciding with the time of evening central news, television stations decided to show live the initial events and the torture of the policemen, even permitting themselves - as I specified before - to interview them while they were covered in blood and clearly desperate to be rescued (Police Report, 2009: 149).

The impact created by the media was another effect that marks this lynching out as one of the most significant in recent Mexican history, providing large coverage and analysis through different means. Even though *San Juan Ixtayopan* was the first experience of a live broadcast of a lynching, these practices have become more common with the spread of social networks and the use of personal videos and photos. These days it is possible to know of more lynchings in Mexico through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, rendering the violence more of a spectacle as a consequence.

In this context, the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan* marks a turning point in the development of lynching in Mexico. Especially because two of the three police officers were brutally killed by the crowd, setting a horrific precedent for these types of actions. After several hours of physical violence, two of the police officers - Víctor Mireles Barrera and Cristóbal Bonilla - were doused in petrol by the crowd and set on fire. People's testimonies and one in particular made by a journalist of La Reforma indicates that both bodies burned rapidly becoming a sort of macabre bonfire, which ended after a few minutes, leaving both bodies unidentifiable. In the interview I conducted, one journalist describes how the bonfire of bodies produced a grotesque smell, covering the whole town. "I saw someone start to spray something, I did not know what it was at the time, but it was gasoline, and they lit them up. I did not know what to do, neither as a journalist nor as a person, or like anything, because nobody can be prepared to see people burning in front of their eyes" (Journalist02). "I was petrified" she continued, "the smell of the burnt flesh of a person does not smell like anything else, it is a smell will never forget" (Journalist02).

However, this did not stop the crowd, who took Edgar Moreno Nolasco, the remaining police officer and only survivor, to another part of the town identified as the kiosks. He was put on a platform – like a scaffold – where people were able to see him. The crowd continued to shout 'kill him', 'tell us where the kids are', 'make him speak' (Police Report, 2009: 28). Media reports (LaPrensa0207; ElGrafico0207) indicated that there was no remorse nor any attempt to stop the murder of this man, but quite the opposite. The killing of the two other police officers was a clear

sign that the intention of the community was to continue with their aim, to punish these 'fake' policemen for kidnapping children. As it was reported in Reforma on the 23rd December 2004 – a month later – "they didn't only want to burn them alive, but they also wanted to dismember them, as revealed by agents of the Juridical Police, who rescued the only survived policeman" (Reforma2803). Nevertheless, the intentions of the crowd were not carried out in this case. After several hours of collective violence, the Federal Police intervened late at night, raiding the town with more than six hundred officials who broke through the crowd with tear gas and guns in order to rescue the last policeman. Reports say that the only survivor was almost unconscious when the Federal Police took him and dragged him off the platform and away from the crowd, to an ambulance that was waiting outside the town. The crowd dispersed, with people running in all directions. No injuries, detentions or clashes with the police happened at this point. However, the situation changed the next morning.

The rage against the police officers represents the second plot that characterises the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. This anger was manifested through three main narratives that I will continue to expand throughout this thesis. First, the collective feeling of empowerment, which is the capacity of members of the community to take action into their own hands. Second, the mistrust in local and national authorities as the justification for these actions, and third, the spectacle and the public reaction to such event.

The aftermath of lynching and the continuity of anger

The aftermath of the lynching was marked by a series of events that affected the community of *Tláhuac*. First, the day after the lynching, police raided the community looking for those responsible. This lead to a legally complicated matter. Second, people started suffering from discrimination, as well as feeling shame and remorse about the events. According to the interviewed journalists, most of the members of the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* felt remorse, which was expressed with a mass in the local church on behalf of the murdered police officers,

but also through posters with prayers of consolation and reflection about what the community had done (Jouralist01; Journalist02). Media reported that the day after, children from the community were discriminated at school by calling them names, such as 'barbaric', 'murders', etc. and community members, in general, were stigmatised for the act committed (Reforma0216). The community members expressed regret and compassion for the people who died and for their families. This attitude created a backlash in the media, which tended to categorise *San Juan Ixtayopan* as a barbaric place.

Reports on the 27th November 2004 informed that "the streets of *San Juan Ixtayopan* look quiet, but people are reluctant to speak with strangers, feeling nervous and scared about the detentions. Most of the nearby shops are closed and the police walk around with heavy weapons" (Reforma0408). The report stated that more than 200 people had gathered peaceably in the days after the lynching to build a commission of 14 people to organise communication with authorities and the media in order to clear their image and to have a following of the people detained (Reforma0408). Under this committee, people organised to observe Mass, and Reforma reported that "dressing in white colours, neighbours went to a memorial mass in order to pray for the dead policemen and for the recovering of the survivor who is the hospital" (Reforma0805). The invitation was made through posters that were put up around the public square, where it suggested that people come dressed in white as a symbol of peace (Reforma0805).

In the days after the lynching, the town of *San Juan Ixtayopan* was not only infamous for the lynching itself but also for a large police raid that happened there which saw around thirty people arrested, including children. A media report from the 26th November 2004 indicated that the Attorney General presumed that a minor was responsible for setting the two policemen on fire (Reforma0306). Reports indicate that police used severe brutality in making the arrests, 'hunting' people down over rumours and miscommunications, resulting in thirty-three detained people who were presumed to be involved in the lynching (Reforma0314). However, families claimed that they were arrested only for witnessing the events, which in itself was not a crime. "Of course we are

upset of how things developed, we know that among the detained people there are some responsible ones, but it is also evident that others are not; the only thing we want is a serious investigation and not revenge" – said one of the neighbours (Reforma0314; Reforma1401). This led to a lengthy legal procedure that lasted over ten years, without any sentences being drawn. However, several testimonies reported that people were obliged to testify without lawyers, and in the case of minors, they were forced to give evidence without the presence of their families (Police Report, 2009: 9), creating a feeling of anger and frustration among people.

All these events reveal the details and complexities that the phenomenon of lynching contains. Beyond the numbers and statistics – as it is normally displayed – lynching is a tangled phenomenon. To understand it, it is necessary to analyse it through the various political and social elements embedded in the event and that culminated in such brutal emotions and violence. The next four chapters are organised around these themes. First, the moral panics that inhabit collective imaginaries (Chapter Three); second, the momentaneous and spectacular control of the public space through the use of force (Chapter Four); third, the yearning of those with deep grievances for justice (Chapter Five), and, finally, the matter of a delegitimized state's authority (Chapter Six).

Conclusion: Methodological limitations

To conclude this chapter I will present some of the limitations that this research encounters. I consider two main constraints: (i) the complex nature of studying lynching; (ii) the issue of relying on secondary sources, such as newspapers. Firstly, as I have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, researching lynching is not an easy task. As the academics interviewed all agreed, one of the main barriers that come up when studying these cases is the lack of official information from police reports, state bodies, etc. In contrast with other forms of violence in Mexico, such as drug-related violence and gangs, there is no record of lynchings in the country. Instead, the only information available is media accounts and statistical quantification by the scholars mentioned in chapter one, such as Rodríguez Guillén, Vilas and Gamallo. Consequently, lynching is chiefly

captured in two types of research. One that aims to quantify the events by systematically examining the cases that appear in newspapers and media. This approach risks leaving out those that do not reach media attention. In addition, this type of research poses the problem of mixing or confusing cases of lynching with other forms of violence. For example, we might be looking at vigilante groups in Michoacán (Mexico) that have carried out forms of local punishment, but that has a different context to lynching as it is not a spontaneous event. This means that lynching as violence remains in the periphery of society and scholarly knowledge, meaning it is difficult to conceptualise and analyse as a single phenomenon.

The second type of research, that relates to this thesis, is the use of case study or ethnography. In the case of ethnography, only Godoy's study on lynching in Guatemala (2004) has been published. However, unfortunately, this also has limitations. The most obvious one is the difficulty of accessing communities that have carried out lynching at some point in their history. This is particularly difficult because marginalised communities do not normally wish for external visitors to dig into obscure moments of violence like this. If we look at the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, the collective feeling of shame and remorse around the community following the events demonstrates how difficult it would be for a researcher to ask community members to open up honestly in order to look back at such events. In addition, conducting research of this type, possesses high risk for the researcher, especially when there is not a pre-established relationship with the community.

Nevertheless, lynching to be an interesting phenomenon in contexts of social and political disenfranchisement, in which more diverse methods can be applied in order to obtain deeper insights. This would be especially viable if access to official documentation and more organised and rigorous access to archive material was possible in places like Mexico, where lynching is a recurrent phenomenon. As can be seen in this chapter, I depend on newspapers as the main source of information. Even though these reports are contrasted with other primary sources like interviews, newspapers, as a secondary source of data is still larger in number and access. That being said, any qualitative research relying on secondary sources is thereby limited, both in the type

of information, it can draw on and its dependability. I am aware of this methodological limitation, as I am using newspapers reports mainly as referential support to tell the story of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. Therefore, to address this limitation I use newspaper media to highlight important interviews with members of the community or to explain how certain plots in the story developed in terms of the public gaze. In this sense, throughout this thesis I will specify when there is a specific interpretation of the media, contrasting their position with conceptual and theoretical analysis in order to keep the secondary sources in contestation.

Finally, and in relation to the previous point, there is a subjective limitation to this research. Lynching is a horrible and not defensible action, but that does not mean it is barbaric, irrational or apolitical. For this reason, strategically, I have tried to minimise the gore and graphical element of the event, as I think it gets in the way of interpreting the phenomenon. In addition, I consider that leaving such graphic information out of the reader's access is ethically important, the limitations of not being able to fully express the violent images that I was exposed in the research process seems to limit the communication of understanding of the phenomenon. Having said this, I do not think these limitations are sufficient to defeat the purpose of the research, considering that the aim of this research is to contribute theoretically to an analysis of lynching and to a revision of the concept of political violence. Therefore, in the following chapters, I discuss and explore the different dimensions in which the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* is posited, by addressing a variety of discussions in of political violence through the realm of emotions that were experienced during this event.

CHAPTER THREE
The 'sticky' feeling of fear: moral panics and scapegoating in lynching

"Contemplation of the horror and even familiarity and complacency in their treatment constitute, contrarily, one of the most striking features of the Mexican character. The bloody Christs of the village's churches, the macabre humour of certain headlines of the newspapers, the 'wakes' (...) are habits, inherited from Indians and Spaniards. Our cult of death is a cult of life"

Octavio Paz -Labyrinth of Solitude

Introduction

Kess and Dirk Koonings edited the book *Societies of fear* (1999) in order to characterise the relationship between civil wars, state terror and violence in Latin America. In the book, they explore different episodes of violence throughout history and countries, aiming to provide sense to a continent marked by violence. Nevertheless, the book fails to successfully explain what fear represents in this scenario and how it can be understood in the combination of these events. In all cases, fear seems to be a recurrent feeling used to explain, symbolise and understand the current condition of insecurity in Latin American society.

The Chilean thinker, Norbert Lechner (1988) wrote that the condition of fear around the continent has been developed in three forms: fear of others; fear of exclusion, and the fear of *nonsense,* which translates better as fear of uncertainty. The fears experienced by Mexicans, in particular, are as diverse as fears in any other country: fear of violence, fear of poverty, fear of the future. However, there is little literature that explains the relationship between fear and political violence. For instance, can fear lead to violent actions like lynching? If so, how? These are some of the questions

I want to address in this chapter. Lechner's model of contemporary fears is compelling, for example, when seeking to explain democracy and civil society, though is less convincing for an understanding of violence. Therefore, in this chapter, I present an anthropological philosophical and sociological narrative regarding the relationship between the feelings of fear and the uses of violence by analysing the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. For this, I will look closely at narratives at the lexical and syntactical level (Kleres, 2010) based on what I explained in Chapter Two. These are: (i) the role of media and the production of moral panics, and (ii) the emotional turn of fear and the emergent condition of 'crisis'.

Through these two dimensions of analysis, I will start the chapter by engaging with the literature around moral panics developed by Stanley Cohen in his book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (2002). This section will explain the role that the media played in the creation of 'moral panics' around the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, particularly through producing a notion of 'crisis of authority' that was instilled before and after the events. I referred to the crisis of authority in Chapter One where I explain that lynching is a consequence of the lack of perceived authority that the state has in contemporary Mexico, due to the introduction of neoliberal policies. This analysis inspires a second question: namely, can a moral panic, as 'crisis of authority', lead to violence? I will argue that the sole role of the media as being responsible for these 'panics' cannot explain the actions that happened in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. I want to specify here that 'panic', in the Cohenian sense, is presented as a 'reactive', 'exaggerated' and 'disproportionate' feeling, produced, projected and reproduced rapidly out to society by media outlets. I consider this a limitation of the theory since it hides the political and societal elements that actually produce that panic and fear, which, as I will expand on further throughout the chapter, are emotional narratives.

In the second section of this chapter, I will engage with the contribution made by René Girard (2003) and Sara Ahmed (2004) in order to present an analysis of the relationship between the 'sticky' emotion of fear and the uses of violence. For this, first I will introduce Girard's notion of

mimetic desire and the scapegoating mechanism, which explains the necessity of a 'scapegoat' - or 'folk devil' in Cohen's terms - for the resolution of a crisis. This anthropological position explains how violence operates a resolutive moment wherein individuals desire others' desires (mimesis) producing a crisis. Nevertheless, Girard's position does not present in detail how those desires (which I interpret as *feelings*) are related and passed on between individuals. I suggest that Ahmed's (2003) account of affective economies allows us to understand Girard's model in a clearer way. She argues that emotions play a fundamental role in the *bond* persons build as a society, or as she expresses, they 'stick' and 'move' in the relations persons create with each other. This argument has compelling similarities with Girard's idea of mimetic desire, though Ahmed presents a more convincing discussion of affects that allows me to reveal some of the complex elements that connect violence to fear.

The chapter concludes by posting that, even though the idea of moral panic sheds some light on the phenomenon of lynching, it does not really take us deeper than a surface-level understanding. Examination of the many-sided characteristics of lynching indicates that there is more to the operation of violence within the phenomenon. To be fully satisfied, the analysis must help us to appreciate this in a nuanced, multi-faceted way. In order to provide an explanation of these neglected inner dimensions of lynching, it is crucial to give more detailed attention to a wider array of emotions that operate in collective reactions and then to understand how certain emotions can lead to violence.

Moral Panics in Cohen's account

The theory of 'Moral Panics' originates in Stanley Cohen's book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics,* a text that prompted considerable discussion of the conceptualisation and application of moral panics in the field of sociology, as well as within political science and criminology. The book, published in the 1970s, prominently expanded understanding of certain cultural and social aspects of British

society at the time. For the purpose of this chapter, my focus will chiefly be on the theoretical conceptualisation developed by Cohen, and the insight provided by other scholars who have contributed to the development of this concept.

Cohen introduces the theory by arguing, "societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic" (Cohen, 2002: 1). With the opening line, Cohen begins to redraw the understandings of deviant characters in societies and the stereotypes which certain individuals or groups are constructed as through normative and cultural perceptions. In other words, the appearance of moral panics starts with "a condition, episode, person or group of persons [that] emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (2002: 1). These threatening conditions, episodes, people or groups are presented by mass media as stereotypes of the deviance in society, becoming a 'folk devil'. Cohen argues that moral boundaries are normally developed and transmitted by those in privileged positions within society, such as political and economic elites, religious groups, etc., as well as the rest of the community. However, when a group or individuals break sanctified 'morality', communities tend to panic and fear the destruction of important normative boundaries, even when it is not empirically clear that such destruction is probable. For example, a common type of moral panic is the exaggerated image created around the impact of immigrants in a country such as the U.K. Media, instead of focusing on the problems that create unemployment, they use the scapegoat of immigrants as a form to shift the attention to an easy target, especially when those immigrants can be negative racialised.

When 'folk devils' arise through moral panics, the public discussion – mediated by the mass media – revolves around mechanisms of coping with those 'folk devils' and creating the possibility of restoring dominant values in society. Those dubbed as 'folk devils' constitute a diverse grouping, ranging from rock and metal music groups (Cohen, 2002), to teenage mothers, immigrants, paedophiles and homosexuals. In this sense, the phenomenon of 'outsider' or 'stranger' is important in understanding the emergence of 'folk devils' in the context of moral panics. What is

feared, as often said, is the unknown, but more importantly, and this is something I will expand upon later in the chapter, what is feared is the *other* made *object*. In the theory of moral panics, and similar to Goldie (2002) conceptual approach to emotions, the fear – or panic – resides in the object that is represented, not necessarily in the individual which feels it. We transfer our fear (e.g. job insecurity) to an object of fear (e.g. the foreign or who 'looks like a foreign' that takes our jobs away). Thus, the fear is no longer something that stays with the individual and is lived solely by the individual, but it is located on the other, and object, that has been made the source of the individual fear.

Cohen also expounds the importance of context in the development of moral panics. He describes how the conditions in which moral panics emerge are various, appearing and disappearing throughout different periods, in which the moral panic can either become submerged, can deteriorate or even become more acute (Cohen, 2002: 1). In this sense, the context of moral panics is relevant but not determinant for the existence of the phenomenon. In Cohen's definition, the "object of panic could be new (never seen before) or can be product of folklore and collective memory (historical or cultural), which might lead to non-consequential actions or to profound changes in legal and social policies, or even in the way the society conceives itself" (2002: 1).

Based upon this primary definition, further clarification in the conceptualisation of moral panics has emerged throughout new editions of Cohen's book. Presenting his first approximations to a definition of the concept, in the introduction to the third edition, Cohen specifies that "calling something moral panic does not imply that this is something that does not exist or never happened at all and that reaction is based on fantasy, hysteria, delusion and illusion or being duped by the powerful" (2002: viii). In contrast to some interpretations of Cohen's original work, he expresses validation for the public anxieties that feed into moral panics. However, he maintains that "the attribution to a moral panic label means that the 'thing's' extent and significance have been exaggerated (a) in itself (…) or (b) compared with other, more serious problem" (2002:

viii). Nevertheless, in the third edition, Cohen speaks to those he influenced over the years, adding further nuance to his conception of moral panic. He pays particular attention to five elements that clarify the original definition: (i) concern, instead of fear about a potential threat; (ii) hostility expressed in moral indignation towards 'folk devils' that embody the threat; (iii) consensus among elites, the media and the community that the threat exists and needs to be taken seriously; (iv) disproportionality and (v) volatility (Cohen, 2002; Garland, 2008). The two final elements have sparked more discussion of Cohen's account of 'moral panics', particularly because these address the *morality* of the panic. In this sense, he elucidates that for moral panics to exist there needs to be disproportionality regarding the event itself. He argues, that "the very usage of the term moral panic […] implies that societal reaction is disproportionate to the actual seriousness of the event. The reaction is always more severe than the condition" (2002: xxviii). This is valid even when the threat is real and serious for the community.

Moreover, moral panics are, much of the time, related to questions of symbolism, emotion and representation (2002: xxix) of the values and moral conditions of a society, things which cannot be measured universally. The relevant point is to understand how subjects judge and identify actions and events as threats, and how these become moral panics, within their particular societal contexts. This discussion relates to the element of volatility examined in the second edition. Cohen claims that "a panic, by definition, is self-limiting, temporary and spasmodic, a splutter of rage which burns itself out" (2002: xxx). These panics become public when mass media, politicians and certain groups decide to manage information and express indignation aloud. "Panic [then] is rather a mode of presentation in which daily events are regularly brought to the public's attention" (xxxi). However, as Garland discusses, this does not necessarily mean that a moral panic disappears. In fact, "moral panics often seem ephemeral but over time their cumulative effect can be to create social divisions and redistribute social status as well as building infrastructures of regulation and control that persist long after the initial episode has run its course" (2008: 16). Likewise, Garland argues, "moral panics also vary in terms of proximate causation and patterns of development"

(2008:13). This means that through a series of variables, such as context, the balance of forces, interactions between actors, etc., the emergence of a moral panic can mean that the deviance can be stopped, intensified or transformed (Garland, 2008: 14).

Thus, the theory of moral panics appears as a critical response to theories of social control and to the reproduction of conservative values, primarily in western societies. It is not a coincidence that the theory of moral panics has had an important influence in British and U.S. literature, especially regarding topics such as youth criminality. However, the concept in itself is controversial and has been interpreted differently over the years, producing a vast amount of research. For the purpose of this chapter, the use of the concept of moral panics is in relation to the interpretation of the accounts from Mexican media about lynching, examining not only how media produce and reproduce certain panics, but also how lynching in itself became the object of moral panic in the first place.

Moral Panics and Lynching in Mexico

Moral panics produced by Mexican media

Having explained the basis of Cohen's account, I examine whether it has useful analytical purchase for examining lynching in Mexico. At the surface level, it seems obvious to assume that an event like lynching occurs under extreme feelings of anxiety, fear and *panic*. These emotional responses are normally perceived by the bodily language of shouting and, as I expand later, by physically protecting the children who were 'exposed' to kidnappers. These feelings, as mentioned in the previous chapter, are collectively expressed by the community, regardless of its individual capacity. Because of its social condition, these feelings have been used by the media, as well by politicians and institutions, to create a situation of crisis, which as I argue, become lynching in a form of moral panic.

Here, I develop two narratives of lynching. First, I will examine the role of mass media in order to understand how lynching helps to produce and reproduce 'folk devils' and thus, is immersed in the broader influence of media on people's imagination, producing and reproducing folk devils and thus moral panics. This, of course, is the most Cohenian approach to lynching, because the media has had a significant influence on society, generating pervasive and resilient fears and threats in people's minds. Next, I will examine how the aftermath of the lynching has a significant impact on the media's approach to the formation of folk devils – or imminent threats – that creates an interesting circular dynamic of interpretation and representation of the phenomenon of lynching. In other words, in this cyclical relationship, the media feeds the fears of people, *which then leads* to violent actions that later become a fearful element used as material by the media to feed further social fears. Whilst media representations of lynching, and the processes that generate them, always, involve simplifications of a complex phenomenon, it is still important to apprehend the construction of popular narratives of lynching, in order to demonstrate this circular process of the reproduction of fear and panic.

As such, I will scrutinise both moments in the creation of moral panics using the exemplary case study in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. This is done with reference to the notion of 'crisis of authority', as this emerges as a constant element in the narratives and explanations of lynching. This idea of crisis will be analysed in two ways. Firstly, drawing on how the media portrays an unstable and failing state authority, through the narrative of 'crisis of authority regarding missing people', and how this becomes one of the *reasons* given by members of the community for taking violent actions. Secondly, the action of lynching leads to a series of narratives in the media that classify the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* as 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised'. The community was deeply demonised by public opinion, feeding into the same notion of 'crisis of authority', but from the angle of a lack of civilised morality amongst the members of the community.

The crisis of authority: a story of missing children

As explained in Chapter Two, the starting point of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* was the rumour of missing children. Three police officers outside the local school became subject to the suspicions of mothers and local residents when they were caught wandering around the local school. The suspicions and fear about the kidnapping of children are therefore considered the preconditions of the events that took place in November of 2004. Despite the phenomenon of the disappearance of people being relevant to today's Mexican society and politics, in 2004 the rising incidence of missing people was not at the forefront of newspapers. However, it could be said that the fear was starting to grow during the late 1990s due in large part to the Mexican media, which paid specific attention to children. Moreover, the issue of 'missing children' was not confined to a particular period but represents a universal collective fear that can be tracked down throughout history. In fact, the theory of moral panics can also be applied to this particular fear.

According to Hay's article on James Bulger and moral panics, the kidnapping of children appeals to one of the deepest fears in society, which is largely overblown in people's imagination. Therefore, when the media use this ingrained fear, through a specific case, the creation of moral panic becomes incredibly likely. The abduction, torture, and murder of two-year-old James Bulger by two ten-year-old boys (the youngest convicted murderers in UK history) was an enormous media affair which prompted a national public outcry regarding the threat posed by young offenders, amplified considerably through the mainstream press during the 1990s. In this account of moral panic, Hay argues the explanation of the status of the phenomenon is:

> The same excesses of spectacularization, sensitization (both public and police) deviance amplification, symbolic (if not 'deterrent') sentencing, moral authoritarianism, the mobilization of a control culture, the return of vigilante groups to the streets and the discursive construction and exclusion of the

> deviant – the 'expurgation of the other'. All apparently coexist in a complex mutual symbiosis (Hay, 1995: 198)

All these elements are significant in understanding the reaction of society toward serious crimes such as kidnapping. However, what is most significant for the purpose of the argument I am making is how the community perceived the events in general, and how this influence changed the dynamic and relationship toward the crime and those considered as criminals. Therefore, if we look at the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, we can find many of the elements presented by Hay, though with some important differences.

In the case described by Hay, the folk devils were young males, who as a group have a long history of criminalisation in the U.K, with terms like 'delinquency' and 'deviancy' often used to describe this subgroup. In the case of Mexico, it is more difficult to identify an individual or group that plays the role of folk devils in the media. Because of historical conditions, those commonly identified as responsible for the kidnapping of missing children in Mexico is the figure of the *foreigner*. In fact, looking back to media reports, the topic of 'missing people' in general, and 'missing children' in particular, was increasing in prominence between 1994 and 2001 – the years before the events in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. Clearly, this does not lend itself to a cause-effect analysis, but it does illuminate the systematic concern of the media with the issue.

The causes of missing people in Mexico were slightly different in the late 1990s compared to today. Looking at media coverage in the period mentioned above, it can be seen that in 1994 the number of unresolved missing persons stood at 548. At this point, it was reported, "for example, if there were 300 complaints in January, 70 per cent of those missing people were lost and appeared later, with relatives or in a different delegation [region/city]. The rest are teenagers who leave their homes because of family problems or adults who have some kind of mental illness and cannot be self-sufficient" (Reforma 02 April 1994). However, the tone of the media reporting changed by the end of 1994 and in the coming years, when the crisis of EZNL (Zapatista National Liberation

Army) and EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army) exploded onto the political scene. The media started to count missing people from both the guerrilla movements and state agents. As one of the reports informed: "The fading of the armed peace has not claimed victims yet, but it already has produced a good amount of missing people" (Reforma 25 December 1994). This led to news reports concerning a 'crisis of authority' that characterised the state's poor political response to missing people. In an interview with Morris Tidball Binz, responsible for the International Amnesty in the Americas Region at the time, he stated:

> there is a large number of disappeared - from 1970 to date, more than 400 cases of this type have been detected in relation to political reasons -, as well as abuses against street children and kidnapping. In Mexico, the government's commitment to not use torture [in processes of detention] has not been respected. Besides that, there is no known case of any official that has been arrested for having applied it (Reforma6601).

The issue of missing people became a constant theme in Mexican media. The reality of the disappearance of people due to different motives is probably worse than any media coverage has been able to show. However, the narrative that the media was trying to impose in the years between 1994-2003 was the 'crisis of authority' in which the state had no way of effectively combating the disappearance of people, the rise of guerrilla movements and, later on, the growth of organised crime.

In the case of missing children, the story is familiar. Numerous reports of kidnapping and disappearance of children by muggers fed the news cycle for years (and continue to do so) providing material for many different urban myths to emerge. For example, in 2000, a report explained that

> The most common theft is of new-borns, who are separated from their parents to be sold to sterile families. It also occurs in order to subject children to satanic

> rites, which is something that in Mexico is not commented on because of taboo; it is a subject that even the authorities themselves do not touch. However, our country ranks first in Latin America for stolen children who are used in satanic rites and ranks thirteenth worldwide for these same ends (Reforma6901).

Visibly, there was no empirical basis for the latter statement. Despite the number of missing children being high and problematic, the narrative that the media aimed to communicate was sensationalist and inaccurate.

In large part, and drawing on Hay, the "media selectivity tends to result in 'stories'- mediated narratives – which portray minority populations (who might thereby be constructed as 'other') in a negative light" (Hay, 1995: 204). In this sense, media reporting on missing people and children does not simply aim to inform people of the complex realities of the situation but to build a narrative of a permanent state crisis through specifically selected stories. This selectivity and sensationalism thus achieve a portrayal of a situation wherein the crisis is out of control. For example, in February 2000, an extended news article reported how easy it was to buy children illegally in Mexico. The story followed the journey of a Canadian journalist who contacted a smuggler to set up the 'adoption' of a child, who was put up for sale by her mother. "The little girl did not realize that her mother was going to sell her. The minor was born on December 17, 1997, in *Nochistlán, Zacatecas*. She is registered as the daughter of a single mother. "She has all her papers, baptism, and birth certificate' said her mother Guadalupe, 42 years old. '[…] I would like her to have what I couldn't'" (Reforma, 17 February 2000). The report repeatedly asserted how easy it was to facilitate the buying of children in Mexico, especially from working-class families and organised criminal gangs. The 'buyers' are often ordinary families from developed countries like the U.S. and Canada. The article emphasised how a child goes missing every day, and that from forty thousand people missing, one third are children (Reforma, 17 February 2000). Reports like

this are constantly found in the media, with a high proliferation between 1997 and 2000, in which missing children are reported as being put up for illegal adoption (Reforma, 10 Mayo 2001), organ trafficking and prostitution (Reforma, 01 May 2000; 17 Agosto, 1999).

In this context, when revisiting the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, it is important to consider the existence of the collective fear of kidnapping and disappearance of children that was being cultivated by the media. The origin of this collective fear in *San Juan Ixtayopan* began with the rumour of the disappearance of children, with the community pointing out the three police officers as kidnappers responsible for the situation. Here, the police officer/kidnappers materialise as 'folk devils' in Cohen's terms. The fact that the three police officers were not recognised as members of the community was evidence enough for some people to react suspiciously and to believe that they could be kidnappers. In other words, when people's imagination is filled with the fear of missing children, an image that has been slowly but consistently reproduced by media, the conditions for a lynching become palpable. As Hay writes, "the face of the unknown 'other' becomes the signification of danger, menace and the threat of violence" (1995: 205). The panic around missing people – especially children – and the *culpability* of the unknown for this crime is lived through individuals or groups of individuals, who, as Hay explains, are constantly decoding the material provided by media in conjunction with material and ideological conditions. The image of the deviant 'other' to be expurgated (…) becomes framed within the collective consciousness, and the mobilization of a control culture becomes perceived as not only legitimate but necessary as perceptions of threat, risk and crisis are mobilised and generalised" (Hay, 1995: 205).

The collective fear around missing children does not stand alone in the narratives of moral panics. The terrifying events of a child going missing, taken by an 'other', was being systematically represented in the media as a problem of the crisis of authority in Mexico generally. It was argued that because the juridical system in Mexico was dysfunctional and corrupted there would be more children taken away from their families. This runs parallel again with Hay's analysis, because the

media represented the crisis as not only one caused by the state and its lack of authority, but also as one that could only be solved by the parents of children, thus perpetuating feelings of isolation and suspicion. This individualisation of the problem to the parents or to the communities due to absence of a state authority that can protect them, I will consider being a trigger in the uses of violence, such as lynching. Taking violence into their own hands is something I explore further in Chapter Five, but it is these ripples of violence, as I mentioned in the Introduction, that helps to the development and reproduction of physical violence.

The crisis of authority: a story of barbarism and fuenteovejuna

As I mentioned above, the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* triggered two forms of moral panics. First, the media built a narrative concerning the 'crisis of authority' around the situation of missing people, which led to the collectivisation of fears concerning outsiders as kidnappers. Second, the act of lynching also produced fears in society, expanding the notion of 'crisis' to another realm. In this section, through the example of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, I examine the narrative created by the media, which was a spiral of moral reactions toward the role of violence, and violent actions by civilians are examined. This section will pay particular attention to the reactions produced by media editorials in the immediate aftermath of the lynching in order to examine the creation of a second moral panic.

The 'crisis of authority' in the aftermath of lynching is presented as a *return* to uncivilised society. Classifying lynching as the most barbaric of practices, the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* faced demonization that not only affected them in the days after the events but created long-term stigmatization of its members. Two specific elements in the media were reproduced as moral panics after the events: (i) "the tale of *fuenteovejuna*", which presents a comparison with the famous Spanish tale where a community kills a Commander; (ii) that "barbarism is inherent in certain (poor and indigenous) communities" (LaPrensa2902). Both conditions contribute to an understanding of the crisis of authority.

For these two elements to become 'moral panics' it is important to note that social reactions to these factors are disproportioned from reality. Most of such claims found in media reports are made under a momentous fear toward the possibility of disorder in society. The normative position of these panics is based on the threat of disarray, which is what lynching mainly represents. I want to clarify here that, even though the idea of barbarism and uncivility are disproportionate interpretations of lynching, the feeling of fear is proportionate to the actually existing material conditions in which, in this case, the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* lived. This is something I will come back to in the next section. However, what is important at this stage is the distinction between 'panic' and 'fear' as two distinct experiences in the context of lynching.

One of the recurrent arguments in the media, relating to lynching in Mexico is the one that appeals to the notion of *Fuenteovejuna*. The idea is based on the famous Spanish play by Lope de Vega, which describes the killing of a ruthless Commander by a crowd of the villagers of *Fuenteovejuna*. A fictitious place in which the crowd takes over the rule of authority by enforcing popular vengeance, something that is seen as uncivilised barbarism, but more importantly, something that is a collective responsibility, an action without a face. This is expressed in one of the most famous sentences of the play. When the judge investigating the killing of the Commander, asks *Which one is the guilty villager?* The entire town responds: *'It was Fuenteovejuna, sir'*. (Lope de Vega, 2010, Act III: 91), illustrating the role of crowd violence. As one of the editorials reported in the aftermath of *San Juan Ixtayopan*:

> Clearly, the tale of Fuenteovejuna serves as a mechanism by the media to create a panic scenario of disorder, in which it is incredibly important for the reaffirming and reassurance of the necessity of state authority – that is currently in crisis. For example, one of the reports expresses: "lynchings are not new, but the impunity that has prevailed in the multiple cases which have occurred in the last four years in different communities is forcing us to review the matter. We must rid ourselves

> of the ghost of '*fuenteovejuna*', where anonymity and irrationality are conferred to the masses. The authorities, when they are there, abandon the investigations and leave the matter as part of the Mexico *bronco* [primitive] (Reforma0308).

The tale of Fuenteovejuna, in particular, appears and disappears cyclically in Mexican history, making lynching a triggering event for this interpretation. As we saw in the previous section, the notion of 'crisis of authority' is present as a continuous phenomenon that exists before and after the events. This editorial – published in the context of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* summarises this continuity, as a narrative to describe the 'crisis':

> For years, the rule of law has been deteriorating and spaces of violence have widened (…) In Tepito [an impoverished area in Mexico City], the police enter on occasions to carry out operations, but there, the mafia of contraband prevail. In Chiapas, the EZLN controls an enormous extension of territory without the inhabitants being able to appeal or feel protected by the local and federal state apparatus. There are three negative syndromes that affect the political class that explains, largely, what is happening today. The first of which is the syndrome of 1968. The confusion of the application of the law with repression is a real stupidity, to use force to impose order is not the same as to use repression. The essence of the state is precisely to hold the monopoly of legitimate physical violence. The second syndrome is the idea of revolutionary violence, this is particularly virulent in the left currents. The violation of the law and the use of tactics and violent methods are only legitimate when there is a just cause. The third syndrome is the syndrome of Lopez [here refers to Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador, former Head of Government of Mexico City and current President of Mexico], who said that it is valid that people reveal themselves against a bad authority, justifying a lynching that happened two years ago (Reforma0405).

This explanation condenses the narratives that the media reproduced after the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, expanding the fear of chaos and disorder that seems to characterise Mexican society. This is portrayed as a negative quality, which is constantly impeding the country's economic and political development. How the media informed and related lynchings in order to communicate a specific idea of Mexican society is the relevant point here.

The notion of 'barbaric society' resurfaces with the events of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. One of the reports indicated: "lynchings are a barbarian expression of the injustice (…), because, in the end, the mob [*turba*] lashes out against helpless beings, without trial, without evidence or any guarantees" (Reforma0705). This is not a new interpretation of the phenomenon and some thinkers have engaged in the relationship between indigenous communities and the use of ritual crowd violence. However, the connotation of 'barbarism' that this section wants to evoke relates it with the normative and negative conception that is built around everything that is 'native' and 'violent' as a threat to *modernity*. For example, the cartoon below [Image 1] published by the newspaper *Reforma* shows the members of the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* as 'men of the caverns' using a stick to torture the police officers (who seem to be already burned in the image). This represents a community as 'less evolved', as 'from the past', and 'against progress', all typical elements of the characterisation of marginalised people in Mexico.

In the image, the police (PFP) are represented as a snail, to caricature their incapacity to respond quickly to the situation, especially because in the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan* it took them more than six hours for police to get to the scene due to bureaucracy and lack of communication between different institutional bodies. This is also a very common representation of state institutions in Mexico, as dysfunctional and ineffective. Finally, the media represents itself as an opportunistic vulture, which symbolises its intentions to gain audience out the death of these police officers [see image 1].



Image 1: "The role of everyone" (Reforma)

The evocation of an idea of modernity as expressed in such caricatures and throughout the media is not new. It is a common trope in Mexican literature to present the paradoxical duality between barbarism-indigenism and modernity-civilization. In the book 'Labyrinth of Solitude' (1999), Octavio Paz explains eloquently how Mexico has been constantly battling this paradox since the colonisation period. The native world and the new world are separated in history, in which one was open to European modernity and the other was secluded to what Paz called, the "all personal expression", to refer to religion. In this sense, he claims, "the nineteenth century will be the century of rupture, and at the same time, the attempt to create new ties with another tradition, if more distant, no less universal than the one offered us by the Catholic Church: as it is European rationalism" (Paz, 1999: 127). Therefore, Paz argues that Mexico is constantly confronting itself

with that rupture, in its attempt at *becoming* modern, of being close to and similar with the principles of European liberalism and thus denying what is considered native.

This discussion is largely present in decolonial theory. Thinkers such as Anibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo and Dussel (2011) have expressed this dichotomy in Latin American history, imaginary and knowledge. I do not aim to dwell any further on this point, but it is worth mentioning that what is seen in the above image clearly represents what Mignolo analyses as the coloniality of seeing and knowing. The colonial image of barbarism opposing modernization is daily reproduced by media in contemporary Mexico, reproducing old narratives that are extended to the post-colonial society. Therefore, lynching in Mexico represents a 'turn to the past' that is perceived as 'barbaric' and 'underdeveloped'. Although indigenous communities never practised lynching and it is not a traditional practice in Mexican history, it is still related to that 'irrationality' that is connected to indigenism and even religion. This is the reverse of what Hay explains as moral panics in relation to youth crime in the U.K., wherein the past has been viewed as embodying a better form of society and morality.

Nevertheless, lynching can still be interpreted, in Hay's words, as a "mediation and mobilisation of moral panic" (1995:199). However, rather than representing the negative aspect of the "dynamism and flux of modernity" that characterises the phenomenon of youth criminality in Hay's analysis, here it represents the chaotic image of a lawless past to which society may return. This narrative thus serves to underpin a particular conception of modernity predicated upon the western liberal model: that is, one of a linear and progressive movement toward enlightened (non-barbaric) forms of society.

Looking back to the case study, there were very real and acutely felt, consequences of these narratives. The community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* lived through a long process of stigmatization in the aftermath of the events, in which they were accused of being 'criminal masses' and 'irrational

crowds', which is something I will expand in detail in Chapter Four. As one of the news articles reported:

> the destructive mass does not seem to be a sum of individuals, but their very denial. It is a kind of mental contagion that spreads with speed until the mass is turned into a predatory animal. The mass engulfs the individuals and turns them into 'something else'. It makes man descend several steps on the scale of civilization. It is a murderer without murderers. Hidden in the horde, they presume (...) that were all or none. '*Fuenteovejuna*', the collective is transformed into a faceless murderer (Reforma0209).

Primarily, the community was thus portrayed as 'irrational', showing that the use of force by non-state authorities was considered irrational and unjustifiable. Despite some level of 'understanding' toward the sentiment of rage expressed by the members of the community, the central narrative revolved around their incapacity to behave in a civilised manner. The stigmatization of the community was so acute that, at times, quite nonsensical comparisons were drawn towards other forms of 'barbarity'. For example, another caricature in the Reforma newspaper shows Osama Bin Laden reading the news and being surprised by the violence used by the community of San Juan of Ixtayopan [Image 2], in order to illustrate – and caricatured – that this community is even worse than the action of terrorists, showing how media contributed to increment the panics around the event.



Image 2: "Mexico is really hard-core" (Reforma)

Drawing on Hay, I argue that these representations of the media about *San Juan Ixtayopan*, "act as a mirror within which collective fears and anxieties are reflected and simultaneously as a screen upon which they are focused" (Hay, 1995: 200). This mirror effect, between collective fears and material conditions, those that the media produce and reproduce, become even more extreme when it is recorded on video because then the spectacle of the event can be spread among a wider audience from different communities and societies. Hay discusses this when he explains the case of James Bulger in the U.K., where real CCTV footage was added to media reports, meaning that the videos transmitted on television helped feed the moral panic (Hay, 1995: 201).

In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, television channels aired the lynching live. Journalists from all of the main TV stations gathered in the small town to broadcast the atrocious actions. There is more

to say about this point in Chapter Four when I explain the relationship between rage, spectacle and violence. However, at this point, it is important to remark that the live broadcast of the lynching created the optimum conditions for the expansion of the public fear of 'barbarism' and a return to an 'uncivilised' society. This particular act by the media allowed the rest of the society to morally distance themselves from the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, to place themselves as being better, more civilised, different, which made the lynchers seem less human and *from the past*; in short, folk devils.

In the previous section, I have shown that lynching as a moral panic represents a circular dynamic. On the one hand, the preconditions of lynching seem to be related to threatening narratives exposed by the media that feed the imagination and stir up sentiments of fear and rage in communities. On the other hand, the actions of lynching also produce the same effects through collective narratives. An important factor throughout this relationship is the notion of 'crisis of authority' that underlines the moral panics mobilised by the media. Drawing from Cohen (2002: xxix), when thinking about lynching, moral panics operate as symbolism, engaging emotions that are related to historical conflicts which exist beyond the particularities of any one event.

Unravelling the 'moral panics': fear and the scapegoating mechanism

One of the problems that the theory of moral panics presents is the over-emphasis on the media perspective and its influence on society. Walby and Spencer argue that "the conception of 'panic' that is integral to the moral panic literature has been highly productive for discussing the intensity of public responses to contentious events" (2011: 104). Oddly, 'panic' as a collective emotion is highly neglected in the theory. As Walby and Spencer write, "emotions are best conceptualised as neither cause nor effect, but rather immanent to a set of embodied symbolic interactions *in situ*" (2011: 104). Placing emotions as a central question concerning moral panic becomes important for the understanding of lynching, particularly if we are trying to understand the uses of violence. The

literature on moral panics has paid little attention to how emotions are shaped and experienced at a collective level, and has failed to ask, "How do emotions contribute to action (e.g., violence) as well as a sense of community?" (Walby and Spencer, 2011: 104). This is particularly obvious in the case of lynching because violence and its brutality become the central aspect of the phenomenon, which requires a deeper interpretation. The limitation of the moral panic literature is that it sees panics as a volatile emotion, as something that "rise and fall (…) without demonstrating how volatility translates into some transcendent action by the subject or by a group of subjects" (Walby and Spencer, 2001: 105). The emotion of 'panic' does not only evoke fear and anxiety – the two main feelings that scholars of moral panics normally discuss – but other feelings that also play a role in these dynamics.

Therefore, the question that arises from the lynching of *San Juan Ixtayopan*: how do moral panics spread to the point of acute violence? Additionally, how do these feelings become moral panics? To answer these important questions, the first part of this section will address the theories of Sara Ahmed and René Girard, who have contributed different useful theories that help towards an improved interpretation of lynching in this regard. Furthermore, as was presented in the previous sections, for the existence of moral panics there is a need for the existence of folk devils. In the theory of moral panics, these subjects are normally manipulated and many times (re)created by the media in situations of crisis, which to a large extent is accurate. However, as it can be identified in Girard's theory, folk devils are multifaceted dynamics of society, which are related to historical, cultural and political elements. Therefore, understanding the circulation of certain emotions linked to historical and cultural elements of the management of crisis through scapegoating, lynching can be explained beyond the moral panic, which is in fact only the mirror image reproduced by the media of an immensely complex event.

Violence and Scapegoating in Girard

René Girard has been widely celebrated among theorists of religion and cultural studies, especially for his contribution to an anthropological philosophy. Based on the studies of literature and religious texts, Girard developed the theory of mimetic desire as an explanation of the 'origins' of violent conflicts in society. He explains that individuals function through imitation, desiring what others have or are, and mediating their relations with the wider world, through the desires of others. In simple words, Girard's theory can be understood in a triangular relationship between subject – model – object: "We have three elements: A only desires B because C (…) has directed his attention toward it" (Kirwan, 2004: 17).

This relational aspect of mimetic desire in Girard's theory helps explain his second most important contribution, which is the notion of scapegoating or the scapegoating mechanism. He argues that mimetic desire produces forms of competition and conflict between individuals for the possession of the desired *objects*. This conflict occurs in moments of crisis when tensions have risen for individuals to resort to violence. In other words, when groups of individuals are competing for the same desire, this produces a crisis, creating a rivalry that inevitably leads to violence. In Girard's words: "The scapegoat is only effective when human relations have broken down in a crisis, but he gives the impression of affecting external causes as well, such as plagues, droughts, and other objective calamities" (Girard, 1989: 43). The scapegoat appears as a mechanism to halt violence and rivalry. In order to constrain the collective violence of everyone against everyone, societies have developed mechanisms for identifying a single victim to blame for the crisis so to re-establish order in society. For Girard, there exists a substitution mechanism wherein the collective violence is transferred onto the figure of the scapegoat because this is the *only* possible way to maintain a harmonious society.

The scapegoat thus plays a double role. It is responsible for the crisis – disorder – within the community, but it also bears the responsibility for bringing order back to it. The death of the

scapegoat is seen as rehabilitative or saving power. In the process of identifying a scapegoat, Girard argues that the ritual of sacrifice is fundamental to the understanding of violence in our societies. A series of events leads to the process of sacrifice, namely, the trigger which unleashes the crisis (e.g. a natural disaster, political corruption, etc.) and the existence of a system of persecution through which people blame a *truly* innocent victim rendering them the scapegoat. Girard writes:

> At the very height of the crisis, violence becomes simultaneously the instrument, the object and the all-inclusive subject of desire. This is why social coexistence would be impossible if no surrogate victim existed if violence persisted beyond a certain threshold and failed to be transmuted into culture. It is only at this point that the vicious circle of reciprocal violence, wholly destructive in nature, is replaced by the vicious circle of ritual violence, creative and protective in nature (Girard, 2013: 163).

The persecution mechanism operates through what Girard calls four stereotypes: (i) the acts of violence are real, (ii) the crisis is considered factual, (iii) the victims are chosen not for the crimes committed but for the victim's signs that they bear, for everything that suggests their guilty relationship with the crisis, and (iv) the import of the operation is to lay the responsibility for the crisis on the victims and to exert an influence on it by destroying these victims or at least by banishing them from the community they 'polluted' (Girard, 1989: 24).

Victims and crimes are selected through different mythological criteria, which are highly sensitive for societies. Therefore, parricide, incest, the killing of a community member, etc., are seen for Girard as universal crimes that tend to provoke the frenzy of a crowd. In this sense, "the victim is a person who comes from elsewhere, as a well-known stranger. He is invited to a feast which ends with his lynching. Why? He has done something he should not have done; his behaviour is perceived as fatal, one of his gestures was misinterpreted" (Girard, 1989: 32). Clearly, the scapegoat will not resolve the crisis but is effective in making the community believe that order is being restored. For this, the victim has to be seriously considered responsible for the crisis, for which

Girard argues that myths are a fundamental aspect of this mechanism. In this sense, myths are those stories that connect people, with deep values and beliefs, stories that build certain stereotypes of the *enemies* of the community, which will end up becoming scapegoats. In the same way, sacrifice only works if everybody believes that it is a form designed to stop the overall violence of the community, to halt the crisis and restore order. In this sense, "sacrifice is not simply violence; it is violence that is limited for the sake of achieving or maintaining order" (Williams, 2000: 70). Therefore, sacrifice as opposed to vengeance, which for Girard is an interminable and repetitive process of violence against everyone, a process that is constantly threatening to involve the whole social body (Williams, 2000: 84). On the contrary, "the sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from its own violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself. The elements of dissension scattered throughout the community are drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated, at least temporarily, by its sacrifice" (Williams, 2000: 77). In sum, Girard's theory is rich in interpretation and analysis. However, for the aim of this chapter, Girard's conception of mimetic desire and violence are particularly useful for understanding lynching as well as enabling a deeper analysis of moral panics and its violent aspects.

Mimesis and the 'sticky' emotion of fear

Girard's theory of mimesis or mimetic desire addresses what he terms as a 'historical human condition'. Girard argues that humans relate to each through imitation, one that is not simply explained by imitation of language or signs, but by the imitations of desires. He suggests that we want what others want through a mediator (model). This means that we do not necessarily desire a specific object, but we desire what that mediator does. Girard thus attempts to explain through the theory of mimetic desire the relational phenomenon that keeps humans t*ogether*. However, and this is the central aspect of Girard's theory, those forms of imitation can also push humans apart, creating tension and conflicts between them. Here, he introduces the idea of rivalry, which arises

when "the subject desires the object because of the rival desires it" (2013: 164). Therefore, when more than one subject desires the same object(s), this increases the tension and potentiality of conflict and violence which exist in our societies. In other words, when "two desires converge on the same object they are bound to clash. Thus, mimesis coupled with desire leads automatically to the conflict" (2013: 164).

Girard and others use mimetic desire to explain the violent outcomes of religious conflicts, or as Girard, himself expressed: "mimetic desire is simply a term more comprehensive than violence for religious pollution" (2013: 167). Influenced by a Hobbesian interpretation of the human nature that 'a man is a wolf to a man', Girard introduces the notion of the scapegoating mechanism as the 'violent solution' to the violent chaos. However, before entering that realm of the theory, it is important to look carefully at a certain aspect of the mimetic desire theory.

When Girard talks about desire as a relational phenomenon he does not expand on what desire actually means or represents. He explains this relational aspect of desire by arguing that desire is not within or outside the subject, meaning it is neither a purely psychological characteristic nor simply a cultural-social variable. Girard presents desire as if it was something that allows persons to connect to each other, to establish those human relations, which allow persons to live in contradictory yet necessary relations. However, Girard does not explain desire as an *emotion*, nor even because of certain emotions. The weakness of Girard's approach is thus the lack of discussion concerning the role of emotions. However, it seems important to address that in the process of mimetic desire, emotions play a substantial part. When we *imitate* others, especially in processes wherein a conflict arises, persons are motivated by feelings that allow them to relate to the object, as well to the mediator. In other words, Girard's triangular explanation of mimetic desire (A only desires B because of C) should be expanded by a comprehension of how emotions play a role in the relationship between humans. For this, Sara Ahmed has introduced the useful concept of *affective economy* (2003).

Without directly addressing Girard, Ahmed presents a similar approach to the understanding of strong – typically considered negative – emotions, such as *fear* and *hate*. Both affections are normally related to phenomena of conflicts and violence, not as a cause, but as a surface element of the phenomenon, like a carrying substance for violent actions that do not necessarily determine it. For this reason, and despite that she does not approach the phenomenon of violence directly, her theoretical approach is significant for this analysis. Thus, Ahmed – similarly to Girard's mimesis theory – argues that emotions "are not simply 'within' or 'without' but that they create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds" (2004: 117). In other words, emotions are not a private/individual/internal matter, they live in and out of our collective bodies and they interact with the worlds we live in. In this sense, emotions allow us to 'stick' together or to push apart. They play, as mimetic desire, a relational role in our societies. Similarly, Girard argues that desires are not "floating free and attaching [themselves] to the first model that comes along" (2013: 167), but are channelled through rituals and activities that prevent "multiple desires from converging on the same object" (2013: 167).

Ahmed argues for an understanding of the rippling of emotions, in which "they move sideways (through 'sticky' associations between signs, figures, and objects) as well as backwards – hence 'what sticks' is also bound up with the 'absent presence' of historicity" (2004: 120). This rippling effect is fundamental in Girard's conceptualisation of mimetic desire, which lacks the moving dynamic of emotions, or the circulation between subject – model and – object. In the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, for example, fear is an emotion that flows and 'sticks' in people's imagination because of the historicity that the fear of losing your child represents collectively. Therefore, fear circulates within the community towards an object of fear belonging neither to the community nor, in this case, to the police officer, but to the relationship established between them.

For emotions to become affective (to affect our actions), they need to circulate between objects and signs. The more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to

'contain' affect (2004: 121). Ahmed mirrors her ideas to the notion of 'commodity fetishism', describing feelings as they appear in objects or as objects as having a life of their own, "only by the concealment of how they are shaped by history (…) as well as circulation of exchange" (2004: 121). Therefore, in the case of hate, this becomes affective because we can no longer allocate it in a body, object or figure (2004: 124). For Ahmed, a slightly different phenomenon occurs with fear. She argues that this emotion is normally explained by its fixation on an object. Fear is normally characterised as *having* an object (2003a: 387); we feel fear and threatened by something that is identifiable. As the historian Joanna Bourke points out "the word 'fear is used to refer to an immediate, objective threat while anxiety refers to an anticipated, subjective threat" (cited in Ahmed, 2003: 126). This distinction relates well with the notion of 'moral panics', as anxiety can become fear when provided a notion of an enemy or any other similarly constructed negative image. Nevertheless, for Ahmed, fear is a passing emotion that is not quite present but can be unfolded into the future (2003: 387). Here, we get closer to the notion of wrongly used 'panic'. For the theory of moral panic, the media exaggerates the emotions of anxiety and fear in order to present an event or individual beyond its actual social impact. Panic, therefore, is a simplification of actual fear, which lies underneath the immediate reaction of panic expressed through media. Fear, agreeing with Ahmed, is about a feared object that is not quite present (2003: 387), while with anxiety that object may not be present at all.

Therefore, we can say that fear as a passing emotion comes from outside and moves inwards (Ahmed, 2003: 388). In this sense, fear is not in the object itself, but fear comes from "past histories that stick to the present" allowing fear to be attached to the object. As in the case of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan,* the disappearance of children is a collective historical fear for communities in Mexico, a fear that is projected onto individuals who might cause such disappearances. Individuals, in this case, conform to a typical subject of suspicions, such as an outsider or foreigner. The sticky feeling of fear (of losing your child) stays attached to an image of a male stranger taking children away from their parents. It is a cyclical trail of emotions that are passed on collectively.

At this point, Ahmed and Girard distance themselves in the notion of movement or spread of emotions (Ahmed) and desire (Girard). On the one hand, Girard argues that in the mimetic condition of humans, violence is viewed as "'something eminently communicable', 'a sort of infection' that requires 'ritual precautions' or the purging of the supposed causes of division through the offering of a victim" (Astel, 2004: 119). Through this notion of contagion or the infection of imitation, the scapegoating mechanism becomes justified. However, Ahmed is opposed to an understanding of emotions as contagious.

In the introduction of the book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004a), Ahmed distinguishes herself from Silvan S. Tomkins' work of contagious emotions. She argues that a 'model of emotional contagion' has been used to illustrate how emotions are not simply located in the individual – as in psychological arguments – but are situated between bodies. In this model, Ahmed argues,

> it is the emotion itself that passes: I feel sad because you feel sad; I am ashamed because of your shame, and so on. In suggesting that emotions pass in this way, the model of 'emotional contagion' risks transforming emotions into a property, as something that one has, and can then pass on, as if what passes on is the same thing (Ahmed, 2004: 10).

This idea also opposes the notion of Cohen's moral panics as being contagious. Collective anxieties and fears – sometimes expressed through moral panics – they are not *caught* as diseases, they do not appear and then disappear from people's imaginations and bodies, but they 'stick' in them and operate between bodies, through social relations. However, despite this difference in the theories, both thinkers provide an interesting account for the understanding for what we call 'spontaneous expressions of violence', such as lynching, as well as a more profound critique to the limitations that the theory of moral panics presents. Using Girard, lynching can be analysed as a form of explosive violence that works through imitation, in which individuals act in a crowd as a mediation of others acting violently. The event of lynching is informed by the mechanism explained by Girard, in which violence serves as a dual mechanism that cannot be reduced to bad or good

violence. He explains that "sacrifice [which is the ritual of violence] is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric" (Girard, 2013: 9). In purely Girardian terms, lynching is the ritual through which a scapegoat is selected in order to resolve the crisis of violence lived outside and within the community. However, Girard's theory raises questions about how that imitation occurs, how the scapegoat is designated and what moves communities to act violently. For these questions, Ahmed's theory seems to deliver richer elements.

The scapegoat (or folk devils) and back to moral panics

The definition of moral panics implies social fear and anxiety toward an individual or a group of individuals that represent a threat to the *status quo* of society. We have also learnt through this chapter that the theory of moral panics is limited for understanding the fears and anxieties that precipitate and follow the lynching since it tends to pay more attention to media perception, rather than the elements underneath that constitute the construction of those fears. Particularly, in the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan,* the moral panics around the notion of 'crisis of authority' cannot fully explain the turn to violence. It is, therefore, necessary to criticise some aspects of the theory of moral panics, especially the limited role that the explanation accords to emotions, particularly fear and anxiety. In this sense, and following Ahmed's theory of emotions, it is important to specify that the experiences of feeling anxiety and fear when confronted with a case of 'moral panic', or more precisely when looking again at the sentiments around the 'crisis of authority', is not simply a 'reaction' toward an object of threat – as moral panic theory would argue. Agreeing with Ahmed, "fear does not simply come from within and then move outwards towards objects and others" (2004: 63). On the contrary, "fear does something" (2004: 64), establishing distance and proximities with the object in question, moving across signs and between bodies (2004: 64). In this sense, fear has an important temporal dimension, as that unpleasant lived experience that expands into the future. "So the object that we fear is not simply before us, or in

front of us, but impresses upon us in the present, as an anticipated pain in the future" (Ahmed, 2004: 65).

Anxiety, on the other hand, "tends to stick to objects, even when the object passes by" (Ahmed, 2004: 66). Therefore, anxiety, different from fear, becomes an approach to an object, instead of being produced by an object, as in the case of fear (2004: 66). In simple terms, in relation to the case study, the moral panics around the 'crisis of authority' do not come alone as a media production but represent a series of multiple intersecting histories that demonstrate the 'stickiness' of those emotions between bodies and objects. The anxiety in Mexican society around the problematic of 'crisis of authority' represents a historical moment that is being passed through, producing different objects of fear, e.g. 'kidnapping of children', 'barbaric society'. However, this argument alone is not enough to explain how lynching develops into violence. For this, Girard's theory of the scapegoating appears as a compelling approach in understanding this phenomenon, specifically how it works in relation to Cohen's notion of 'folk devils'.

The notion of 'folk devils' is fundamental to the analysis of 'the crisis' or a 'situation of crisis' that leads to violence. Agreeing with Cohen on the reasons for moral panics, the crisis is not necessarily a fantasy or an illusion (2002: viii). When the crisis is real – and is experienced as a reality by a community – certain 'folk devils' are identified as responsible. For this to become a moral panic there needs to be a level of 'disproportionality', which is the 'exaggeration' or 'overstatement' of the responsibility of the 'folk devil' for the crisis. For example, looking to the case study, even though the 'crisis of authority' in Mexico is real, those identified, as folk devils' – police officers, outsiders, and kidnappers – are not responsible for the overall crisis, despite becoming the target related to it Folk devils are mainly selected because they are strangers to the community and its values. Similarly, Girard argues that the 'monsters', express the "extraordinary strangeness of the world" (2013: 180), which "end by resembling one another" (2013: 180), a dynamic which can be found everywhere (2013: 182). Explaining by reference to the play *The Bacchae*, he argues that "as

we have seen, from the opening of the play animal, human, and divine are caught up in a frenetic interchange; beasts are mistaken for men or gods, gods and men mistaken for beasts" (Girard, 2013: 182).

However, who are these so-called monsters, or folk devils? Girard's anthropological explanations provide a fruitful point of departure for analysis. For him, the *enemies* are the scapegoat, these can be anyone that represents an outsider, or someone that broke a social norm. It is the selected victim in the community that will allow them to resolve the crisis. In Girard's theory, the scapegoat plays a double role of creating and resolving the crisis of violence, through the process of sacrificial substitution, which is "the polarization of violence on a single victim who substitutes for all the others" (Girard, 2013: 181). Girard proposes that the sacrifice – or ritual – "serves to protect the entire community from its own violence" (Girard, 2013: 8) because what is ingrained in communities is the immanent state of chaotic violence. Therefore, an exterior or marginal victim is selected, which due to its status as foreigner or enemy cannot share bonds with the rest of the community (Girard, 2013: 13). As he writes, "the relationship between the potential victim and the actual victim cannot be defined in terms of innocence or guilt" (Girard, 2013: 4), but respecting to the relationship built with the community. This is possible, only because there are pre-established sentiments of fear around the community, a fear has stuck through stories, imaginations, experiences that create the necessity of resolving a crisis of violence, such as the kidnapping of children, through a more *organise* or ritualised violence, such as lynching.

This anthropological interpretation of 'folk devils' allows one to link the phenomenon of moral panics to the uses of violence, because against what Cohen expresses (2002: xxx), moral panics – the affective of fear and anxiety – are not temporally determinate, are not volatile. On the contrary, agreeing with Garland, moral panics are a cumulative effect (2008:16) of the long-term crisis in a community. Moreover, "moral panic targets are not randomly selected: they are cultural scapegoats whose deviant conduct appals onlookers so powerful precisely because it relates to personal fears

and unconscious wishes" (Garland, 2008: 15). This 'scapegoating effect' sometimes, as in the case of lynching, erupts into violence for, as Girard explains it, it is the only form to end with the crisis, or to at least to feel that the violence can be controlled, and therefore to make sense of those affections, such as fear and anxiety, that keep the community together through time.

Conclusion: ripples of violence

In this chapter, I discussed the intertwining narratives of the emotion of fear and the uses of violence, drawing from the theory of moral panics. Even though it is compelling to analyse lynching as a form of social anxiety produced by the media, it is difficult to think that a moral panic was alone capable of unleashing such a level of violence, one that involved torture and killing. In this sense, in-hand with the theories of Girard and Ahmed, I explained that violence produces ripples that go beyond the 'act of violence' in itself, by explaining how fear as a sticky emotion, operates in-between the subjects acting that 24th November in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. The 'crisis of authority' is not a momentary scenario, nor purely an invented media narrative. The crisis of authority is an indeterminate but permanent element in Mexican society that is lived through, as I exposed in the introduction, experiences of violence. Returning to Octavio Paz: "the contemplation of the horror and even familiarity and complacency in their treatment constitutes (…) one of the most striking features of Mexican character" (1999: 26). This element of 'contemplation of the horror' refers to the collective experiences of historical violence that have created a constant crisis of authority. Therefore, thinking about lynching only as a moral panic – despite it having characteristics of such panic – does not do justice to the relational elements that exist around the phenomenon and explains, why a violent act, determined in time and by force, can be also explained as a product of collective lived experiences.

This resonates in Paz's analysis when he speaks of "all our discomfort, the contradictory violence of our reactions, the outbursts of our intimacy and the abrupt explosions of our history, which

were the first rupture and denial of the petrified forms that oppress us" (1999: 209). Violence is indeed related to that 'making sense' of the world that is lived in and it does influence forms of self-perception. In the case of Mexico, the embedding of the notion of 'crisis of authority' through episodes of instability and brutality, from waves of violent acts, structural and symbolic violence, and through cycles of representation through media narratives about lynching. These ripples of violence are not only expressed by fear. This emotion is one of the few that I will continue to relate to the uses of violence throughout this thesis. However, I want to establish that fear and anxiety were the beginning of a series of unleashed emotions that resulted in the violence in *San Juan Ixtayopan*.

CHAPTER FOUR

An angered *crowd:* politicising lynching

"When you don't take it when you can't take any more of it, what happens? The moment of not taking it is so often understood as losing it. When a snap is registered as the origin of violence, the one who snaps is deemed violent (...) And then: violence is assumed to originate with her (...) we need to show how her snap is not the starting point (...) Snap [is] *a moment with a history"*

Sara Ahmed – Living a feminist Life

Introduction

The Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes wrote extensively about the identity of Mexico and Latin America in relation to Spain. He saw a dialectical relationship with the country that colonised the continent, arguing that *half of* what Mexico is comes from Spain: "Spain embraced us all; is, in some ways, our common place [*lugar común*]" (Fuentes, 2016: 15). One of the elements inscribed in the Mexican heart is the Mediterranean tradition of bullfighting. Fuentes argues that this tradition extends to the Greek mythology of the Minotaur, which was itself a fusion between man and bull, through which the activity of bullfighting took force in Mediterranean culture, and therefore, through Spanish expansion into Mexico.

Fuentes creates a homage to bullfighting in order to illustrate the conflictual relationship between nature and man. He aggrandized the action of bullfighting as a heroic feat to explain the "endless contest between nature and human will" (Fuentes, 2016: 2), a separation that is set beyond the polis and the *civitas*, and places itself as "pure natural fatality" (Fuentes, 2016: 2). For Fuentes, what happens in the bullring is an expression of the human nature that aims to dominate but is absorbed by its object. That is why, in the bullring, a personification of the Minotaur occurs, a blending of

man and bull. A bullring is a place for the people [*el pueblo*], for the working-class to gather in a ritual weekly event. Mirroring church services, bullfighting is a communal ritual use of the space: "The bull runs off to meet his human antagonist, the killer [el matador] in his suit of lights" (Fuentes, 2016: 22).

I begin with Fuentes as an analogy for some of the elements I will put forward in this chapter. The crowd in lynching, like the crowd of the bullring, encourages individuals to carry on with violence, to extend the suffering of man. The bull is the policeman who is lynched because he was seen to be both "threatened [and] threatening" the crowd (Fuentes: 2016 22). The lynching creates a spectacle – the personification of "the ritual death of a sacred animal" (Fuentes, 2016: 21). The violence of the lynching clearly resembles bullfighting. The gathering, the crowd and the use of the public space, is focused on one particular action, the killing of the bull; that is, the killing of the man. Here both the animal and the man are interchangeable, are treated with similar violence; slow and painful violence. The bull and the lynched man are hunted in a ritual of indiscriminate violence, in which certain individuals – lynchers and *matadores* – are enforcing physical brutality. The violence is part of the performance. In both scenarios, the killing plays a theatrical role that is not only shaped by the actors but also by the audience (the crowd).

Drawing on Fuentes's narrative of bullfighting, this chapter presents two questions in particular about lynching: (i) Does spectacular violence help lynching to communicate communal grievances? (ii) What is the relationship between spectacular and visible violence and the emotion of anger? The answer to these questions will become clear by exploring the notions of the spectacle in theories of political violence, as well as the eruption of *anger* as the central emotion of this action. In order to build this argument, the chapter proceeds in four stages based on the observation that my case study (and lynching in general) is a spectacular performance of violence enacted in public, witnessed and spurred by both the audience outside and within the community.

Firstly, I take narratives from the work of Yves Winter (2018) and Michel Foucault (1977) as starting points for a discussion concerning the spectacle. I find Winter's analysis of the role of spectacular violence in Machiavelli's political writing, especially in relation to the execution of Ramiro d'Orco, particularly relevant to the discussion of lynching since he presents an *expressive* notion of the spectacle of violence. By acknowledging emotions as a constituent dimension of the spectacle, Winter reorients our understanding of political violence as a particularly expressive phenomenon which aims to communicate to and *affect* an audience. Similarly, I will use Foucault to reflect on the importance of *witnessing* violence (punishment) for the process of political interpellation. Contrary to many academic uses of the term interpellation, I instead refer to its etymological origins, *interpellatus*, to the capacity to interrupt and to disturb someone in the normal channels communication process (discourse, debate, speech, etc.). The interpellation that spectacular violence represents is political because, as I stated in the introduction lynching is seen as an affective communicative action, that has the capacity to break the normal and traditional channels used to communicate political and social grievances, such as political discourses, speech and debates. I expand fully on the role of interpellation in the section entitled 'The double-bind of the spectacle of violence'.

Second, I will examine how the spectacle in lynching plays a double role, which I call here a *double bind*. On the one hand, lynching interpellates an audience from outside the community through the broadcasting of the lynching, whilst at the same time, it interpellates an audience from within the community by bringing into being their grievance. I will particularly focus on the latter to explain how spectacular violence aims to interpellate grievances by disrupting the normal communication between the community and the state (and society) in an attempt to politicise those grievances when actually the performance of violence ends up limiting that political capacity. Following the analogy of the bullring, the issue with the spectacle is that it predominates beyond all the other elements existent in the ring (the lynching), resulting in the depoliticizing of process of interpellation.

Third, I focus on a discussion of the *crowd*, mainly by way of the contribution of historian George Rudé. Rudé historical approach to the notion of the crowd as an eminently political category – in opposition to physiological approaches – which is relevant for the understanding of lynching as a specifically political action. However, I will also claim that Rudé fails to explain why the action of the crowd is political (beyond its strategic aspect). Therefore, I introduce the theory of anger developed by Martha Nussbaum, who distinguishes between *eudaimonistic* and *narcissistic* anger, wherein the former represents the anger of 'paying back' or 'looking to react against wrongdoers', which is the type of anger I am looking at in lynching, as opposed to self-interested anger that is represented by the category of narcissistic anger. Scholars tend to agree that anger is one of the most significant political emotions since it aims to express and contest situations of injustice. This is particularly appropriate when looking at the case study, in which injustice at the hands of state institutions alongside social insecurity is a recurrent element in narratives put forth by the people in the community to explain the lynching. In this context, I will approach Lyman's notion of the 'domestication of anger' and the relation of this process to the issue of the spectacle in political violence.

Finally, I conclude that even though lynching can be seen as a form of political violence by drawing attention to its interpellative affective dimension, it is nonetheless often not interpreted in this way by authorities, media and the rest of society. The crowd is left out of what is considered by society at large as the legitimate arenas of politics – *the crowd is mute*. Lynching shows that politics does not always emerge in institutionalised spaces (e.g. political parties, parliament, social movements), though this does not mean, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, that those marginalised from the political realm can enter such space by the use of spectacular violence. I will attempt to re-politicise lynching by other means in the following Chapter, but for now, I focus on the difficulties that lynching, as political violence, contains to express its politics.

Lynching as spectacular violence

A discussion of the spectacle

The notion of the 'spectacle' has been traditionally discussed in the disciplines of cultural studies and social theory, influenced mainly by the work of Guy Debord's book *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). In the realm of political violence, there is also discussion regarding the role of the spectacle in terrorism and war[12]. Nevertheless, in this section, I want to focus on the notion of the 'spectacle' in the realm of political theory, so as to explore what is *political* in the spectacle and how politics uses the spectacle in actions of violence. I will argue that lynching is, in essence, spectacular, though I will question what 'spectacular' entails in such a context. This will be done by way of the primary question; what is the role or purpose that the spectacle plays in the phenomenon of lynching?

I expanded in Chapter Three on the role of the media and how they interpreted the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, and I will come back to this in the next section by addressing how television exploited the case and showed it live. However, before that part of the discussion, it is important to discuss the role of spectacle from the view of political theory by looking at two major contributions made by Machiavelli, as he is interpreted in Yves Winter's recent work, and Michel Foucault. I believe that both authors provide an *affective* understanding of the spectacle of political violence, one that resonates with my interpretation of lynching.

In *Machiavelli and the Orders of Violence*, Winter dedicates an entire chapter to the notion of the spectacle. Starting with the argument that "acts of political violence are often designed to be witnessed" (Winter, 2018: 34), Winter examines Machiavelli's notion of *spettaculo,* or in other words how spectacular violence plays a role in the political realm of the (trans)formation of the state. Winter argues that "staged violence elicits a range of affective responses from audiences, including fear, shock, and horror but also pleasure" (Winter, 2018, p. 34). The theatrical function of violence

[12] See for example, Livingston, Steven (2019) The terrorism Spectacle, Routledge; Giroux, Henry A. (2007) Beyond the spectacle of terrorism: rethinking politics in the society of the image, Situation: Project of radical imagination.

serves as a mechanism of political change, which is represented in the figure of Cesare Borgia in *The Prince*. Looking at Borgia in Machiavelli's work, Winter argues the importance of the spectacle for state-making and the role of The Prince. In particular, he draws upon the episode of Ramiro d'Orco's execution – one of the most detailed sequences of violence in *The Prince* – as a crucial event to understand the different elements of the role of *spettaculo* as a mechanism of political change. The execution of Ramiro d'Orco occurred because his power over the Romagna was greater than what Duke Borgia wanted and expected to project onto the people. In order to maintain his image and avoid the hatred of the Romagna's community, Borgia ordered a public execution that caused "the people to be at once satisfied and dismayed" (Machiavelli, Book VII, 1515: 32). By exhibiting his body "left on the piazza at Cesena with the block and a bloody knife at his side" (Machiavelli, Book VII, 1515: 32), Winter interprets this scene as the use of theatrical violence in order "to gain the trust of the people" (Winter, 2018: 36).

Being in politics means, in a sense, to play a role, to manipulate the audience and "to engage in the 'engineering of imagination'" (Winter, 2018, p. 46). This is why the execution of Ramiro, and the exhibition of his dead body in the piazza of Cesena in the Romagna, signifies a staged political action, which was visually choreographed to fulfil a political purpose. This is partly related to what was explored in Chapter Three, with the case of *Fuenteovejuna*, a public punishment in which the main purpose was to stage a political narrative against, in this case, the King's authority.

According to Winter, Machiavelli uses Ramiro's execution as a pedagogical tool to demonstrate the importance of public executions for the politics of the sixteenth century in Florence. Executions were not only the form used to carry punishment by an authority, but also to demonstrate the capacity that authority had to impose its political mandate onto the rest of society. For this, executions "were increasingly taking place inside rather than outside city walls to maximize their visibility" (2018: 50), which permitted to highlight the symbolic dimension through the "political semantic of signs, symbols, gestures, and images" (2018: 50) that constitutes the spectacle of punishment.

Ramiro's execution is interpreted by Machiavelli as a "cathartic and remedial" (Winter, 2018: 51) reaction intended to restore or reorder violence[13], with Ramiro playing the role of scapegoat, a substitute. Likewise, the public staging of the execution elicits a series of feelings – as mentioned above – in which satisfaction and pleasure are experienced by the audience of Romagna. In other words, "the killing is a public act of reconciliation with the elites that were harmed by the governor" (Winter, 2018: 52), therefore, the execution is seen as an action for the people.

In this sense, Winter introduces an important and distinctive element that challenges traditional interpretations of the conversion of violence into legal authority, particularly the 'Weberian' approach. On Winter's reading, Machiavelli gives us a decisive notion of the spectacle of political violence, which is a spectacular ritual designed to communicate a specific "political context of corruption and elite domination" (Winter, 2018, p.57). It is not purely sacrificial, as in Girard's view, in the sense of a "universal social need to discharge negative emotions" (Winter, 2018, p. 57). But, by looking at the case of lynching, there are found elements of this form of political violence as experience, when it aims to make visible forms of grievances lived by the community. As I will claim further, the spectacle of violence in these terms aims to communicate, through a process of interpellation (of disruption), their grievances of the community, which are ingrained in the political and social context of, in this case Mexico, but more generally in the constitution of the state authority itself.

Winter's contribution to the reading of Machiavelli is not without recognition of Michel Foucault's work on the spectacle of violence in the context of punishment. I consider that Foucault's theory of the spectacle shares similarities with Machiavelli's notion of the political, which is something I want to develop here, as well as addressing Foucault's overall contribution to understanding the role of the spectacle in the juridical-political system. In the book *Discipline and Punish* (1977) he describes nineteenth-century public exhibition of torture and punishment, as it "was thought to

[13] This is something I explored in depth in Chapter Three, through the theory of René Girard and the scapegoating mechanism.

equal, if not to exceed, in savagery the crime itself, to accustom the spectators to a ferocity from which one wished to divert them, to show them the frequency of crime, to make the executioner resemble a criminal, judges murderers, to reserve roles at the last moment" (Foucault, 1977: 9).

This description encapsulates a series of elements that later in the book he defines as the 'spectacle of the scaffold'. For Foucault, torture and punishment were manifestations of state-power designed to be *dispositive,* existing as mechanisms and structures designed to maintain power. Foucault argues, seemingly against affective theory, that: "torture is a technique; it is not an extreme expression of lawless rage" (Foucault, 1977: 33).

In this sense, the techniques of public execution are aimed at openly enjoining the guilty man to accept his condemnation and accept the truth of the crime committed. His body and its torture were used as evidence of the crime in itself; it would tell the truth of what occurred. In Foucault's words, "his body, displayed, exhibited in procession tortured, served as the public support of a procedure that had hitherto remained in shade" (Foucault, 1977: 43). Therefore, the function of public executions was to reveal an expected truth, but more importantly to reveal that the juridical was *searching* for that truth. "A successful public execution justified justice" Foucault argues as a means to explain the *necessity* of torture (Foucault, 1977: 44).

The role of the public is certainly fundamental for the spectacle: "Every death agony expresses a certain truth: but, when it takes place on the scaffold, it does so with more intensity, in that it is hastened by pain; with more rigour because it occurs exactly at the juncture between the judgment of men and the judgment of God" (Foucault, 1977: 46). The pain, thrust into the public eye, is what makes violence a spectacle, because the expression of physical and psychological pain is what allows the execution to become an act of justice, as the accused thusly suffers equally to the suffering inflicted by them in the crime. "Men will remember [as] public exhibition" (Foucault, 1977: 34), will remember because of the power of punishment in the public realm, which imprints in people's mind the role of justice and its enactment.

Foucault, like Machiavelli, argues that the political role of public execution is to manifest a ritual by which power is expressed. This is because the crime committed by the condemned is not only an attack on the specific victim but against the sovereign, "it attacks him personally since the law represents the will of the sovereign; it attacks him physically since the force of the law is the force of the prince" (Foucault, 1977: 47)

Finally, witnessing the execution also possesses a purpose in Foucault's analysis. "People were summoned as spectators" (1977: 58) in order to observe and feel part of the process of execution, because "not only must people know, they must see with their own eyes. Because they must be afraid; but also because they must be witnesses the guarantors, of the punishment, and because they must to a certain extent take part in it" (Foucault, 1977: 58).

Even though both thinkers are relating the spectacle of violence to state-power, I want to reverse the argument and ask what the spectacle does when violence is enacted by those who do not monopolise power as does the state. I draw from Winter and Foucault's analysis to build an argument that explains how the spectacle of lynching, as part of a communicative process of grievances, is an affective interpellation aimed towards the state and society. This can be examined in the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* through two main dimensions that I will call in the next section the issue of the double-bind. By this, I mean that lynching as spectacle possesses two irreconcilable interpretative narratives that have affected the ways in which the literature of lynching, as well as the sources collected in this research, engage with the phenomenon. Thus, (i) the spectacle of lynching provokes a social and political reaction that allows the community to communicate their grievances (through interpellation/disturbance) while at the same time (ii) the spectacle triggers *shock* that can halt the politicisation of those grievances and the communicative process as a whole.

The double-bind of the spectacle of violence

Following the premises of Winter and Foucault's understandings of spectacle, I want to argue that lynching represents a form of spectacular political violence, though its spectacular dimensions work through a double-bind, as conflicting interpretative narratives of the same phenomenon. As mentioned above this double-bind interpretation emerges due to the fact that lynching, as form of political violence, works as an action that interpellates the political realm by communicating social and economic grievances, while, at the same time, the spectacle of its violence, acts to temper the politicisation of such grievances. I describe here interpellation as a 'snap' moment excited within a communication process. In the political realm, communication normally refers to discourse, debates, speeches, etc., which tend to be unequal in degrees of participation. I claim that within that communication process*, interpellatus* aims to interrupt and disrupt the normal circle of the communicative process. I do not reduce interpellation to verbal communication, as it exists also as the non-verbal and, more importantly, the expressive dimension of that process – what we feel when we communicate. Because it is an interruption to the regular political discourse or speech, a 'snappy' (re)action using Sara Ahmed's words (2017), permits the inequality of the communicative process to be interrupted, allowing new political messages to emerge, to bring into being. I consider the political interpellation of lynching an essential aspect of the spectacle, but due to the abrasiveness of the act of lynching, it does not always succeed in enabling those new messages to be born into the political.

Based on this point, I argue that lynching's affective reaction works to both the audience outside the community and the community itself. I state alongside this chapter that what the spectacle does is to allow the collective mobilisation or circulation of anger (as well other emotions) through different levels of interpellation or disruptions, which I divide here according to the type of audience that is receiving such messages. As posited in detail in Chapter Three, this follows Ahmed's notion of 'sticky' feelings, and the circulation of emotions. She explains:

> [in the encounter] What passes is not spoken; it is not a transparent form of communication. The sense that something is wrong is communicated, not through words, or even sounds that voiced, but through the body of another (...) the bodies that come together, that almost touch and co-mingle, slide away from each other, becoming relieved in their apartness (Ahmed, 2004c: 32).

Without returning in full to Ahmed's theory, I want to link the affective notion of the spectacle as something that circulates, that can communicate through – in the case of lynching – the brutality of the violence. More precisely, the spectacle of violence in lynching is the interpellation made by a community that belongs to an unequal process of communication with the state and the rest of society. This interruption made by the lynching produces a form of message that, as Ahmed exposes is not through words. According to the Police Report (2009) of the lynching one of the bodies was found with the "following lesions: oedema with ecchymosis on the skull and face, being more severe in both eyes, second and third-degree burns on the inner part of the thighs, oedema on the genitals, dermo-epidermal abrasions of different sizes and shapes throughout the body" (2009: 21). As in the description of the execution of Ramiro d'Orco in Machiavelli's account, the brutality described is the interpellation that attempts to communicate its purpose to an audience.

The affective reaction to the spectacle of lynching circulates differently from audience to audience. Those outside the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* experienced the lynching mainly through media and television (see Chapter Three). As mentioned before, the frenzy surrounding the lynching reached peak levels when journalists from local radio stations and newspapers arrived early on the scene, reporting the situation and trying to make sense of what was going on. Later in the afternoon, TV stations made themselves present in the town, broadcasting live the lynching of the three police officers. The victims were tied up, covered in blood and barely conscious while the cameras filmed close-ups of their faces and interviews with them (Police Report, 2019: 147-149). Records from those broadcasts reveal the following interactions between camera operators and the community, which are still available online:

Male voice: cameras!

Female voice: let the cameras to come in, so they can see. Take care of your children, if you want to see justice.

Many voices: Let them in!

Male voice [pointing out the bodies]: this is for them to think twice before coming to steal children

Male voice: throw more gas on them [to the police officers] (Police Report, 2009: 148)

Television broadcasters aim *to move* people into certain ways so as to provoke a social and political reaction from the audience outside the community, whilst the enjoining to film the victims and the community themselves consciously produces this form of spectacle. Clearly, the extent of emotional response to the broadcasting of the lynching is immeasurable, but it is possible to interpret that fear, anger and embarrassment were among the common feelings that the media wanted to portray.

This form of provocation has to do, in part, with what Winter indicates as the spectacle of political violence. Even though he is referring to direct violence from the state, from his analysis it can be interpreted that media as an institution is designed to engage with people's imagination regarding the society they live in. There is something politically purposeful in the actions taken by broadcasters the day of the lynching when addressing their audience. On the one hand, we can say that they are 'selling a product' where violence is attractive for the audience. On the other hand, and following Winter's interpretation, the broadcasters were aiming to communicate a specific political message, in a particular political context, attempting to create a form of societal crisis concerning the state of law and order and the failures of a sector of the political elite (ElGrafico0203; ElGrafico1301; LaPresna0605).

Because the violence occurs outside the state's monopolization of violence, this type of spectacle works in a reverse form to what proposed by Foucault. Broadcasting the *San Juan Ixtayopan*'s lynching live produced a sense of an 'undisciplined public', as the people from the community *'were taking justice in their own hands'*, without state-control in which torture was not used as technique, but as a part of an "extreme expression of lawless rage" (Foucault, 1977: 33). In this case, and even

though the spectacle is communicating 'something' about senseless and irrational actions, the message is contained within the depoliticisation of the community's grievances, which is something I will expand further in this chapter.

The other side of the spectacle of violence interpellates the audience within the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan*. On the other hand, the audience within the members of the community were disrupting or interpelling the communication process by attempting to communicate their grievances through violence. Firstly, it is important to explore the circulation of emotions experienced amongst the people acting and witnessing the lynching in 'real-time'. Agreeing with Goldstein (2004) in the case of Bolivia, where he argues that lynching attempts to 'catch the eye' of society by a neglected community which, through the performance of brutal violence, demonstrates the consequences of state inaction (2004: 182). Continuing along this line, for Goldstein, lynchings are spectacular because they are "expressive moments in the lives of people historically silenced", for whom avenues of traditional political communication have been closed, limiting their ability to express their demands to authority or to communicate their conditions to an audience who might be able to offer them official redress (Goldstein, 2004: 182).

Thinking through Foucault's theory, Goldstein sees the spectacle as a venue for communication. He does not enter the terrain of the 'political' in order to offer a notion of lynching as a political phenomenon, nevertheless, he claims the importance of understanding lynching as "spectacular vehicle for the communication of demands and an instrument to attract the attention of an audience that has otherwise ignored them" (Goldstein, 2004: 214). In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, the intended audience within members of the community was the state. Following Foucault's ideas, and as a reversal of the role of spectacular violence, in this case, the community had put the authorities in the scaffold. The community *needs* to punish – or perform their punishment – as a public exhibition, and thus, involving brutal torture in order to justify their grievances and to justify that this is a sort of justice, which is something I will explore in-depth in Chapter Five. Looking into the details of the case, and drawing from Foucault's notion of the spectacle, during the

lynching and while the police officers were tied up and about to be burned alive, people around them kept asking them to accept their guilt, to agree that they had kidnapped children (Police Report, 2009: 115). This attempt to force a confession is similar to Foucault's analysis of the aim of public torture, as a mechanism to seek the truth and a confession which will perform justice. In this case, public torture is not used as a tool to validate the state's power, but as interpellation towards the state as the one depriving the community of their security. The physical force into confession is the 'snappy' action that interpellation represents, as the shout out to the authorities that the 'kidnappers' were there, that they have them, that they managed to do what the state could not.

This notion of spectacular interpellation has been used to explain other phenomena of violence. Researchers on cartel violence in Mexico have argued of the symbolic importance of public displays of torture and violence in order to challenge state sovereignty. Through the concept of 'corpse messaging', Lantz argues that cartel violence aims to express their battle against the state. "When traditional authoritative bodies develop a reputation of corruptibility, other groups have the chance to fill the vacuum of control, and it appears the cartels have seized upon this opportunity" (Lantz, 2016: 256). In this case, and because cartel violence is strategically purposeful, public displays of corpses aim to play a "propagandistic role in the narco world" (2016: 262) in which "tortured victims left lying on street corners signal the ultimate expression of biopolitical sovereignty: having the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (Lantz, 2016: 256). Despite the obvious differences between cartel violence and lynching, they are common in that both aim for visibility. The violence gains meaning when seen and circulated on a mass and mediatized scale (Lantz, 2016: 265). In this sense, both Goldstein and Lantz explain these extra-state acts of violence as a form of spectacle because they aim to communicate – to pass information, grievances and complaints – without using speech and dialogue as channels, but tortured bodies as messages. I call this a political interpellation because it bursts, snaps and disturbs

what is considered common political communication. Adding the visibility of violence, which is spectacular *per se*, reveals the non-verbal dimension of interpellation.

When thinking about the concept of violence in general, and political violence in particular, we normally focus on the visibility of that violence – "the fetishization of the visible" (Winter, 2012: 196). Whether it is the tortured body on a public street, or the missiles falling in a televised war, what counts as violence is the visibility of its damage. I want to contest this principle, by agreeing with Winter's interpretation of Machiavelli, as well with a more general understanding of spectacular violence, by addressing the affective dimension of this process, as to how the visibility of violence *affects* others through different means. The affective role of lynching symbolically challenges the state, which is something I will explain fully in Chapter Six. However, what the spectacle has is an affective impact on the community, meaning that the spectacle permits certain emotions – especially anger – to mobilise those witnessing the action.

I consider this affective dimension as not only triggered by the performance of violence, e.g. the gathering among neighbours, challenging police officers, clashing with local authorities, moving the tortured bodies to a 'better-staged' scenario, observing the torture, encouraging the torture, burning the bodies, etc., but also of how the combination of these elements is performing. By this, I refer to the capacity that the visual aspect of violence (performance) has in allowing emotions to lead the way and through which the community is capable of interpellating an audience (performativity) in which certain identities are brought into being. In the case of the lynching, those identities are connected to the marginalisation of the community from the political realm and how this created historical grievances such as the ones explained in this thesis. These elements explain how lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence, in which the political do not serve as an instrument for aims and means, but as a channel for communication.

Winter argues that Machiavelli's notion of spectacle in public execution had this affective dimension because it produced "pleasure and satisfaction" (2018: 52) in the audience, as a form of "remedial force with therapeutic effects" (2018: 58), which is similar to what was experienced in

San Juan Ixtayopan during the day of the lynching. This catharsis is only possible because anger is the dominant emotion circulating amongst the people, since "unlike fear, which tends to individualise, hatred produces the possibility of unifying a multitude" (Winter, 2018: 62). In this sense, I argue that anger is a political emotion because it enables communities to understand their grievances in a collective form; it communicates to others in the community that those feelings that were so 'personal' are not so anymore, that *their* anger is collective, and that anger can mobilise them.

Thus, the double-bind interpretation of the spectacle of violence has been addressed in the way that the lynching plays a twofold role in the communication of communal grievances. On the one hand, it manages to interpellate the state, society and the community itself by disrupting the public realm with the spectacular violence, while, on the other hand, such a snappy interruption limits the full communication of those complaints. Nevertheless, I argue that the spectacular violence of lynching is affective in the sense that it permits the circulation of emotions both outside – through media – and inside the community. This affective dimension is something I will expand on further as I look at how anger, in particular, represents the emotion that creates this double-bind interpretation since it allows the community to disrupt the political but also keeps them marginalised from the political realm. In particular, I explore this deeper when we are confronted by an *angered crowd*, which, as I will expand in the next section, is what characterises lynching.

Lynching as the angry crowd

A discussion of the crowd and anger

I have explored the double-bind dimension of the spectacular violence in lynching as emergent from how the act addresses the audience from outside and inside the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan*. However, I have not discussed in depth *who* the audience is, *how* it is characterised and *why* it is relevant for the spectacle of violence. I have explained in Chapter One the material

conditions that describe the community in this case and how, in general, lynching is practised by working-class and marginalised communities in Mexico. Therefore, I want to consider the *collective* aspect of lynching. If we look closely, lynching shares some clear characteristics with more commonly acknowledged forms of collective social behaviour, such as riots, strikes and social movements. Nevertheless, my interest in this chapter is not to establish such a straightforward similarity, nor to engage deeply with the literature of 'social movements' or 'riots', but to conceptualise the relevance of *the crowd*, as a constitutive element in an explanation of collective rage and spectacular violence.

This is significant because the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* was characterised as a crowd or, more pejoratively, a 'mob, in many of the media reports on the incident. A commentary piece entitled: "Mexicans react to the *scream* in *Tláhuac*", contained the following: "the murderer was not a psychopathic individual, nor an antisocial madman, but a mob of people blinded by anger. That choleric mass was formed by our fellow citizens, by residents of our city" (Reforma2501). This reference is relevant as it touches upon several salient features of lynching: (i) the mob of people; (ii) the anger; (iii) the othering. In other words, the masses, gathering and shouting, expressing their *passions* as a distinctly collective process is a significant feature that identifies these types of events. Here I focus on the idea of the crowd because, different from the other concepts, it has a clearly depoliticised connotation. The crowd misbehave, the crowd does not have a (political) purpose, the crowd appears and disappears without a trace. The crowd, therefore, is conceptualised in a similar way to lynching which, as I explained in Chapter Three, is characterised as uncivilised (without purpose), spontaneous, barbaric and non-political. For this, I will take some steps away from the discussion of violence and spectacle to present the contested notions of the crowd as they exist in the literature, particularly from a historical and sociological point of view[14]. I will

[14] Many of these discussions are drawn from social psychology, which looks into the different behaviours of individuals and groups. It main contribution comes from the French psychologist Gustave Le Bon's and his book 'The Crowd: a study of the popular mind' (1895), which will come to light during this discussion since his contribution has largely influenced the debate about this idea.

particularly focus on the contribution made by George Rudé, who in 1964 put together a series of essays arguing for a 'History of the Crowd'.

Passionately arguing against the hyper-physiological position taken by Gustave Le Bon, Rudé aimed to understand the broader phenomena of collective actions, such as strikes, riots, rebellions, insurrections and revolutions which all occurred in France in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (1964: 4) by rewriting the concept of the crowd. His approach was to reinvigorate the historical role of the crowd 'from below', thus, from the perspective of the individuals who shaped the crowd, those from the 'underclass'. In Horton's interpretation of Rudé, "if the 'crowd' is defined as collective assembly in the streets or some other public space", it can be distinguished from privatised activities and thus "shed further light on the origins, meaning and function of territorial and community identity from the level of street and neighbourhood to that of the nation, thereby contributing to an understanding of social order as well as social protest" (1978: 221). In this sense, Rudé directly opposed Le Bon's conception of the crowd as something animalistic and irrational. In fact, Rudé indicates that a crowd should not be compared to 'mobs' or 'rabbles' (1964: 7, 8) because these are normally related to impulsive and passive reactions influenced by external agents. In other words, a 'mob' is seen as some group of individuals without agency, which is open to control through manipulation by demagogues or outsiders. This rather conservative perception of the crowd, Rudé continues, links the collective exclusively with actions such as "loot, lucre, free drinks, bloodlust or merely the need to satisfy some lurking criminal instinct" (Rudé, 1964: 8). This both simplifies the complexity of the crowd and debases it, reducing its capacity for motivation to the crudest forms of desire.

Le Bon's controversial position sees crowds as an "atavistic" and contagious phenomenon (Drury & Stott, 2011: 278). This tendency perceives crowds through the opposition between rational/emotional behaviours and civilised/uncivilised behaviour. As Drury and Stott discuss, Le Bon's theory presents the crowd as "a creature of instinct and emotion rather than thought and

reason", thus, "the crowd was also stupid" (2011: 278). Even though this position has not persisted in sociological theories of crowds, Drury and Stott indicate that later interpretations move into the other analytic extreme, in which the crowd is seen as a strategy or tactical behaviour, as purely 'cognitive' (2011: 280). Here I do not aim to focus on this debate, as it strays into the realm of social psychology. Nevertheless, Le Bon's model does allow us to understand the colloquial rationale around the idea of the crowd, such as in the case of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. For instance, newspaper headlines declared the crowd of lynchers as a "Deadly Mob" (Reforma0602), serving to characterise the "Explosivity" of the crowd as a means to refer to a storm of fury that identified "*Tláhuac*, as a capital region, located between tradition and modernity, between the certainties of community life and the distrust of institutional action" (Reforma0506).

Rudé criticises Le Bon's conception of the crowd as reductionist, which tends to compare it with animality and destructive behaviours (Rudé, 1964: 198). This conservative view, according to Rudé, aimed to characterise the working class as criminals (1964: 198), building a narrow conception of their role during important political events such as the French Revolution, in which they have been identified as "sober householders and citizens, admittedly of humble station and often temporarily unemployed" as well as "vagrants, thieves, prostitutes" (1964: 201). This variety of misconceptions of the lower-class and its propensity to act as a crowd is something that Rudé was concerned about, claiming that the subjectivity of their actions is essential to understand their role in history.

In opposition to these conservative views, Rudé argues for an understanding of the crowd in which their actions are seen through the lens of daily necessities. The crowd, he says, "may riot because it is hungry or fears to be so because it has some deep social grievance because it seeks an immediate reform or the millennium, or because it wants to destroy an enemy (...)" (1964: 217). The crowd is not based on animalistic, reactionary behaviours. On the contrary, the crowd acts according to the circumstances within which the people constituting the crowd were placed; they act, react and relate to the economic and political conditions which they have to deal with on a

daily basis. For Rudé, the crowd need not have a straightforward political determination - as a social movement would have - nor a sophisticated and clear *political idea* (as with political parties) in order to have some form of political content. In this sense, the crowd poses what Rudé called a 'traditional 'levelling' instinct" (1964: 224), in which notions of social justice and challenges to authority exist amongst the people[15].

Nevertheless, according to Horton, Rudé's analysis mainly explains the role of protests and riots, "at expense of other forms of crowd organization and behaviour, particularly those stressing social order and integration" (1978: 225). For Horton, crowd activities which, for example, would gather around patriotic or religious motives would not be properly considered a 'crowd' in Rudé's terms, unless these groups became involved in "violent and spectacular disturbances", which has the consequence of ignoring their "public ritual and ceremonial" (1978: 226) dimensions. From this perspective, I would include here other public and ceremonial rituals that aim to maintain a conservative 'social order', such as lynchings in the Southern U.S. between the 1890s and the 1920s. I examined some of these debates in detail in Chapter One, though it is interesting to note here that in agreement with Horton, the crowd need not always be *transformational*. Sometimes they act as a conservative mechanism, maintaining the status quo as was the case of extra-juridical violence in the U.S.

[15] More recent conceptions of the crowd have emerged with the debate around the 'multitude' developed mainly by Negri and Hardt (2000) (2004). Based on this William Mazzarella (2010) has presented an interesting contrast between the similarities and differences between the concepts of 'multitude' and 'crowd'. In this sense, he claims that contemporary theorists tend to speak more about multitudes than crowds because crowds "are dark matter that pulls on the liberal subject from its past, whereas multitudes occupy the emergent horizon o the postliberal politics" (2010: 697). Along these lines, Mazarella argues that crowds seem to be something remote, existing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and which in the middle of the twentieth century came to an end and were replaced by 'mass society'. Therefore, contemporary acknowledgement of the crowd appears as a form of aestheticization evocative of older politics (2010: 700), as well as antiquated behaviours. According to Mazzarella, "in the old days, crowds threatened power from outside; the crowd was the rabble that had to be kept from the gates" (2010: 701), thus, crowds were - *are* - politically incorrect, they evoke regression, immoderation and savage behaviour. Mazzarella also suggests that crowd theory falls into ambiguities when the crowds work through mimesis and contagion. This ambiguity places the notion of the crowd as something difficult to grasp and categorise. Nevertheless, it still remains a relevant concept for today's understanding of collective action, especially in contexts where those groups are perceived as politically incorrect and out of order.

To summarise, theories of the crowd give us an approximation to the phenomenon of lynching, better allowing us to comprehend the collective behaviour of violence. Clearly, crowd theory does not resolve the issue of violence in itself, but it does give us the opportunity to suggest that collective action does not always have to be limited to irrationality and barbarism (Rudé), and it does not have to be aiming exclusively at radical transformation (Horton). Nevertheless, I argue that what is lacking in the discussion is the affective dimension of the crowd. Both Rudé and Horton fail to explain what it is that unifies the crowd beyond its *political aim*. It seems to me that the crowd does not necessarily act consciously or strategically but can instead operate as an expression of emotions which are themselves political. Therefore, as Ahmed argues, feelings and the notion of the collective are closely related. In her words "feelings make 'the collective' appear as *if* it were a body" (2004c: 27) since what we feel for others makes us a collective. This relational account of emotions is fundamental for an understanding of collective behaviour and actions, though before expanding on this I want to revisit Ahmed's notion of emotions in general, in order to frame this discussion.

Ahmed claims that emotions are always intended towards an object and thus, they represent the intimate relationship between selves, objects and others (2004c: 28). This relationship is not built from 'within' or 'without' the individuals' emotions, but "we can see that emotionality - as responsiveness to and openness towards the world of others - involves an interweaving of the personal with the social" (2004c: 28). Emotions move in and out of the individual, out to the social and vice-versa. When thinking about crowd theories, this is relevant. In particular, one of the elements lacking in Rudé's account of the crowd is that within the collective, persons are acting individually yet in relation to others. Thus, we become part of the crowd when our emotions circulate through the interactions between our bodies.

Having said this, I want to present a discussion of the concept of anger from a predominantly philosophical point of view. In principle, this discussion is merely conceptual since I want to

introduce the importance of anger for politics, as well for the understanding of an angry crowd in the case of lynching. Nevertheless, towards the end of this chapter, I will posit some conceptual and normative claims about anger and violence, in order to establish its *moral* connotation. To this end, it is particularly important to start with Martha Nussbaum's discussion and conceptualisation of anger, due to her significant contribution to the theory of emotions.

Nussbaum presents anger as a useful and necessary emotion for the protection of dignity and self-respect, for combatting injustice (2016: 6), and she argues that it is important to take anger towards wrongdoers and wrongdoing seriously (2016: 6). She does this carefully and without presenting anger as a *positive* emotion, though she defines it as having "cognitive/intentional content, including appraisal or evaluation of several distinct types" (2015: 42). In this context, Nussbaum claims that the only way of dealing with anger is by introducing forgiveness as a counter-emotion, which is "typically defined in terms of moderation of anger" (2016: 15). Here, I will not follow Nussbaum's contribution to 'forgiveness' but instead focus on the conceptual elements of anger. I will dissect anger in two respects: one as an emotion of pointing out (shouting out) wrongdoing and injustice (the focus of this chapter); and second, as the retributive element of anger (which will be explored in Chapter Five).

Drawing on Aristotle, Nussbaum presents anger as an emotion that typically refers "to a person or people and to an act" (2016: 17). This might be confused, she argues, with anger as a 'reactive emotion' "which track[s] the relation of another's will to us" (2015: 41). In other words, we get angry *at* someone, and the focus of our anger *is acted* towards that someone, who is identified as the wrongdoer. As we saw in the case of the lynching, this process involves pain and pleasure at the same time, or as Machiavelli expressed 'satisfaction and dismay' (Machiavelli, Book VII, 1515). Thus, the anger in lynching can be interpreted as "the pain […] supposed to be produced by the injury, and the desire for retaliation [in response] to the injury" (Nussbaum, 2015: 42). Nussbaum's theory of emotions, as I explained in Chapter Two, is cognitive, which involves the capacity of

emotions to interfere in our decision-making, as well in the rationale given to such emotions. In the case of anger, this requires causal thinking of what is right and wrong, which dictates the action of anger. In other words, the justification of our anger toward someone or something comes about through the cognitive process of thoughts, beliefs and emotions that guide us to act upon with anger.

I consider these theories to be important for the understanding of lynching as an act of an angered crowd. In particular, Nussbaum's contribution to the notion of anger is precisely what explains typical narratives of lynching in media, as 'rage', 'fury', 'barbarism', etc. In addition, as I will introduce in the next section, I take Pete Lyman's paper 'The Domestication of Anger: The Use and Abuse of Anger in Politics' (2004), to complement the complexities of anger in the realm of politics. Thus, typical narratives about anger imply that what led the community – the crowd or mob – was a sort of passionate force, almost uncontrollable. This is something I unmask in the next section by asking why the people in *San Juan Ixtayopan* were so angered? Perhaps it sounds a simple question, but I explore anger as the motor for spectacular violence and its double-bind.

Why was the crowd in San Juan Ixtayopan angered?

Let's look first at the shouting out of wrongdoing and injustice that happened amongst the crowd in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. The shouting, the insults, the body-against-body energetic movement that united the people that day led media and witnesses to describe the scene as an angry crowd: "In the face of the fury of the mob, the extreme degree of cruelty could not be channelled in any other way" (ElGrafico0305). As I explained in Chapter Three, the origins of the lynching were steeped in fear too; following rumours, people were concerned about children being kidnapped, resulting in ongoing anxiety and sentiments of insecurity. I also explored how these feelings were not merely *moral panics* produced by media but 'sticky' emotions of fear circulating through the community as a consequence of historical and social experiences. Similarly, in some ways, I will claim in this chapter that in concert with fear, anger was also spreading among the members of *San Juan*

Ixtayopan. A form of anger that was very much politicised and relevant for an understanding of lynching as political violence.

One of the debates in crowd theory explained above is that crowds behave in relation to external forces (Le Bon and social psychology approach) or by socially material - internal - forces (Rudé and historical approach). This distinction, even though it gives room for emotions, does not allow for a clear understanding of the role of emotions in the collective and in the crowd. Therefore, following Ahmed's thoughts on circulating emotions, I argue that anger was the predominant emotion during the action of lynching, an anger that circulated among the people in *San Juan Ixtayopan* as interwoven with the grievances suffered, their frustrations and mistrust, and the need for action, which in Nussbaum's terms is a typical manifestation of the emotion of anger.

Another illustration emerges if we look again at the case of bullfighting or the local festivity. What unites such events with lynching are that there is a clear collective circulation of emotions; they do not come from 'within' the individuals participating, nor from a 'without' force manipulating their feelings – as Le Bon would suggest about the crowd – but from *recognition* of one another by those involved. Excitement and pleasure, as other exemplary emotions, are felt in the bullring when the bull is being hunted by the matador, as well when the crowd in *San Juan Ixtayopan* cheered for the victims to be burned alive. In Goldstein's words, lynching and festivity – like bullfighting – "reveal the deep tensions and antagonism underlying the ordinarily placid facade of daily life" (2004: 4). In *San Juan Ixtayopan*, this was obvious for those who witnessed the lynching. One of the journalists interviewed also described the scene as a 'festivity' [*fiesta de pueblo*].

> There were many people on the roofs, in the trees, the street was very narrow, not very big and there were the two bodies of the police; they had already stopped burning. Smoke still rose from the bodies though. They were totally blackened, their clothes burnt with the faces still visible. And people saw them in total calm like it was a little party, like when you gather to celebrate some Saint

> or something like that, a celebration on the street. There were people talking, the bodies were like this in the middle [making a circle with their hands], a circle of people looking around, seeing the bodies burning (Journalist01).

This account of the scene suggests several elements to the lynching, one of them being the importance of the collective and the emotions circulating there at the time. Ahmed argues that emotions operate through what she calls "the contact zone of impressions", which "involve how bodies are 'impressed upon' by objects and others" (2004c: 30). In simple words, others cause an emotional response in us not by simple perception, but as "a form of 'contact' between myself and others, which are shaped by longer histories of contact" (2004c: 31). By looking at anger as the particular emotion involved in the lynching of the three police officers, it is necessary to understand it as an emotion which circulates through the contact between individuals and with other emotions as a relational force.

In case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, the notion that the community's anger justified wrongdoing is reflected in this testimony collected by the newspaper *El Grafico Universal*, where a neighbour expressed: "While our children are involved, we will always respond according to the circumstances. Yes, what we did is justified, because we were afraid that they [the police officers] were the kidnappers" (ElGrafico0207). Thus, it is important to see that the lynching carried out by furious anger was not irrational and unconscious behaviour, as it did have meaning for the members of the community. This is relevant in terms of the politics of emotions because, as we saw in Nussbaum, anger is an emotion that seeks to *justify* certain actions (i.e. I was angry with you because you lied to me, thusly, I stopped talking at you). In this case, we can see that justification is an imperative of a broader aim (i.e. to protect the children), thus, anger is a feeling that communicates such a grievance through the act of violence[16].

[16] A normative discussion on the justification of violence could be helpfully addressed here. However, due to the fact that this thesis does not adopt a normative approach, I will not expand on the vast literature concering just/unjust uses of violence. For further references look: Hutching, K; Frazer, E. (2019) *Can Political Violence ever be justified?*: Wiley.

If we look at this in Nussbaum's terms, the anger present in the lynching represents a *eudaimonistic* form of anger. She distinguishes between eudaimonistic anger – toward a collective 'wellbeing' – and narcissistic – self-interested and individual – anger (2016: 25). This distinction is important because it not only gives us a moral distinction in terms of the role of anger but also speaks to what I interpret as the political purpose of anger. The principal purpose of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* was the establishment of the wellbeing of a marginalised community, particularly through defending those more vulnerable within the community.

As Goldstein puts it, "violence emerges as the socially subordinate and politically and economically powerless attempt to communicate – to themselves as well as to those powerholders whom they regard as having failed them – their grievances, their anger, and their political potential" (2004: 182). Therefore, the identification of the police officers as 'wrongdoers' reflects how anger 'sticks' to one subject (the kidnappers/the police) as an interpellation signalling a major societal issue, in this case, marginalisation and disenfranchisement. I will expand on this further in Chapter Five, but here I want to highlight that the identification of 'wrongdoers' in this case is relevant, because even though the accused were not guilty of a crime, what mattered for the community was to locate culpability and to act upon their anger.

It was found in the reports that the police officers targeted by the community persistently protested that they were police officers, not kidnappers. One of the witness testimonies claimed: "I was next to one of the men, now I know his name as Victor. He took my left hand and told me to help him because they were innocent and they were working for the PFP and did not know anything about the missing kids, and they did not know why or what they were accused of" (Police Report, 2009: 113). It is impossible to know if the people really believed them or not, but what is significant is that either way the community was looking at an object (subject) to interpellate their anger outside and inside the community. Even more, the fact that the victims were police officers could have aggravated the community's anger to get 'payback' against the authorities. This is particularly

convincing considering that in the overall picture, kidnapping had been something largely overlooked by the police themselves (Reforma0201).

In this sense, and narrowing down the discussion on the angered crowd, I agree with Peter Lyman, who claims that "the anger of the powerless is an essential voice in politics" (2004: 133). Similarly, Mary Holmes argues that "anger matters politically because it both motivates and continues to fuel activity and conflict" (2004b: 123). From this position, anger is seen as a form of political communication and not only as a physiological phenomenon. Both argue for the productive factor of anger, with Holmes claiming that it is important to see "anger as productive of relations with others rather than as a reaction to an enemy 'other'" (2004b: 130). This is an essential contribution to the notion of the crowd in Rudé's terms. As mentioned before, Rudé failed to explain how political aims were expressed by the crowd, though when this notion of anger is introduced as a *voice* (i.e. interpellation), the political meaning of the crowd becomes clear. In other words, when the crowd is angry, it is acting to politically interpellate towards another, to snap to another and to break the normality in which we relate to one another, which is part of what I have conceptualised as political violence in this thesis. This is particularly resounding in the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*. A community characterised for its poverty and isolation from development (see Chapter Two), anger toward injustice can become a powerful tool to communicate frustrations. One of the journalists I interviewed explained that "the initial anger among people grew, grew and grew because they did not feel cared for, they did not feel heard at any time" (Journalist02), in relation to previous reports from the community to the police about strangers in their neighbourhood. The journalist also added: "the initial anger was incorrect [based on rumours] but genuine" (Journalist02). Here it is necessary to highlight that whilst anger is widely considered to be a legitimate emotion, allowing such anger to manifest as violence is just as widely condemned. The journalist seems to draw this distinction here regarding the anger of the community in *San Juan*

Ixtayopan, as their anger is seen as legitimate but as something that should not have been expressed through violence.

Lyman argues for an explanation of how anger is silenced in contemporary liberal societies through the taming of the anger of the powerless which produces a depoliticization of these feelings in society. In other words, in the context of neoliberalism, if we feel angry the emotion is individualised to the point where it is not permitted to be liberated from the individual – your anger can be 'genuine' (as the journalist mentioned) but it must be kept individualised and only expressed carefully, if at all. This contention of anger as remaining in the individual serves to render anger apolitical, as existing outside of the legitimate political realm[17].

This relates to what I mentioned at the beginning of this section when quoting one of the newspapers which reported on the lynching. It says that "that choleric mass was formed by our fellow citizens, by residents of our city" (Reforma2501), in a way to indicate that even though the anger was collective, a collectiveness that is represented in 'us', it is one that is also othered through "blindness" of anger, which represents the irrationality of the citizen as opposed to the good resident, who is someone that can see, can talk, can express themselves in peace. In this context, Lyman argues that we normally face a 'domestication of anger' "in the form of force, authority, moral indignation, care and technique" (2004: 134), in which politics serves to "sublimate anger into its socially useful forms (...) by altering the conscious meaning of a feeling to serve the needs of social order rather than the needs of the individual" (2004: 136). For this, Lyman argues that anger is normally diminished or misunderstood in society because "it is often used to blame the

[17] A critique of this point is expressed by Ort (2004) regarding the relationship between power, anger and elites, indicating that "the appearance of anger-free, emotion-free power that is the problem here" (2004: 237). On the contrary, power needs to be mobilised and maintained, which is normally is done through the use of emotions. Therefore, depoliticised anger is equally problematic for an understanding of elites and social movements (the powerless).

victim by ignoring the social relationship - perhaps the injustice - that caused an angry response" (2004: 134)[18].

This is especially significant in the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. The backlash produced by the media in terms of denying the agency of the community through the domestication of their anger. This is normally manifested through the rationalisation of a needed system of rule, even when this does not work for people. For example, this report expresses:

> The facts demonstrate the existence and the development of a culture of illegality and violence. But they did nothing and even seemed to justify these events on the basis of some 'uses and customs', unalterable out of necessity. Curiously, ignored is the fundamental principle of the rule of law: the exercise of public force to apply the law, when it becomes necessary, is consubstantial with the law. If not, there is no law. The Constitution clearly establishes the right of association, of manifestation, of a strike and many other freedoms. The law, on the other hand, only restricts the conditions in which they are exercised. There are times when the violence and abuse that is observed in the public manifestations of these rights detracts completely from their legitimacy (Reforma0804)

In this sense, violence emerges from the anger under discussion. In Lyman's terms, the domestication of anger through force has more to do with the domestication of anger through legal violence. The anger that purposely aims to challenge state-force is tamed in order to produce a one-directional use of violence that maintains the status quo. In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, this form of domestication seriously backfired. When the *Policia Federal Preventiva* (the federal police,

[18] This idea is in line with traditional conceptualisations of monopolisation of violence in Weber and the control of the state of nature in Hobbes. This is particularly relevant since there is a predominant approach to the concept of violence as an instrument for controlling non-state manifestations of violence. According to Frazer and Hutchings (2019), this type of what they call the 'simple conceptualisation of violence', "is taken more or less for granted as the physical assault on and damage to another person (...)" as a "straightforwardly instrumental; the violence is independent of the meaning of the action" (2019: 52).

PFP) managed to break through the crowd and save the only police officer left alive, it was already too late. The PFP suffered a huge backlash for its incapacity to act early on and save all three police officers. This also affected several federal and national politicians, who were condemned for not providing resources and instructions to PFP to act accordingly.

The *Subsecretario de Seguridad Publica* claimed that "the lynching was atypical, since negotiation usually take up to 11 hours, and in this case, in less than three hours two agents were already dead. If we had decided to enter it would have been a brutal confrontation with the population, the risks of repression would have been of a much greater dimension than we are now regretting" (Reforma2801). This statement tones down the repressive response from the authorities, which conflicts with other testimonies from community members who described brutal repression in the midst of the police breaking up the crowd: "They denounced that during the detention operation (...) many human rights violations were committed. They revealed that the authorities made the arrests at random" (Reforma0310). This is not surprising or unexpected, especially considering that two of the victims were members of the police force. What is significant, however, is that police action (force) was mobilised as a means of retribution for the violence, as well as a means of silencing the anger of the community.

The media was awash with accounts expressing these notions. However, in order to summarise the relevance of my point, I argue that a mob of people (the crowd) is a more terrible type of murderer than one that could be individualised and pathologized (e.g. a madman, a psychopath) and thus make reason of. When violence is carried out by the 'mob', what this implies is that it is 'we' (the citizens) or part of 'us' (some citizens) who are ultimately responsible for that violence. In this sense, what I argue in this section is the importance of a re-politicised notion of the angered crowd through understanding that anger – as a political emotion – interpellates an audience that (maybe) for the first time is looking at this community.

The problem with spectacular anger

I have explained throughout this chapter that lynching represents a form of spectacular political violence in the form of an angered crowd. Hence, I have argued that through the spectacle and anger, *San Juan Ixtayopan* interpellated an audience from inside and outside the community. This interpellation is political because it seeks to communicate grievances and injustices suffered by the people, as well to show through violence their capacity for action. As Yves Winter writes violence should be recognized "as an injury that is not immediately attributable to an acting subject, but is 'built into the structure' and manifests itself as inequality of power, resources, and life opportunities" (2012: 195). As Winter suggests, that the notion of 'structural violence' gives us the opportunity to theorise different ways of accessing power, and I will say here access to the political realm - through different forms of violence. Fetishizing the visibility of violence prevents analysis of such formations of violence. In other words, we get lost in the visible, in the spectacle – what is possible to see and feel – instead of looking into the invisibility of that violence – its formation and emotions – which congeal in the visible structure. The visibility of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* shocks us (the audience outside the community) because of its spectacular brutality, but also because it affects those involved in the lynching. This affective dimension of the lynching produced anger, as well as relief and shame because what allows the violence of lynching to be unleashed from the individuals is the sense of sharing with others the emotions otherwise held exclusively inside the individual.

Nevertheless, the issue with the visible or the spectacle is that at the same time that it shows, and interpellates through interrupting the traditional communication channels, it also silences the structural political issues that exist behind the scene. What is available to us is the spectacle (staged violence), which pushes into the background what the violence really means. Agreeing with Lyman, silencing speech concerning injustice and exploitation are forms of controlling the emotion of anger in society. He argues: "silence suggests acceptance of the injuries of domination, by denying

the existence of an injury, or by lowering expectation of equal treatment, or by a loss of the willingness or even ability to speak" (2004: 138). In other words, the violence that is spectacular, and thus very loud, is at the same time silencing of injustices.

This is particularly relevant because anger is seen as an emotion that is not allowed into political speech, as this supposedly breaks social peace and social dialogue (2004: 139)[19], especially when we are looking at an angered crowd, which, as I have shown, is constantly depoliticised from its actions. Nussbaum agrees with the position, asserting "the space for subversion and dissent should remain as large as is consistent with civic order and stability, and that space will be a major topic throughout" (2013, 7). In this sense, for Nussbaum, certain public emotions – such as love, compassion and forgiveness – are at the centre of civility, whilst other emotions, such as shame and envy, are not necessary for the public space[20]. Similar to bullfighting in Fuentes, there is a separation between the *polis*, the *civitas* and the bestiality – nature – of violence. There is a separation between emotions that produce 'rational' communication against those emotions, like anger, that creates incivility, non-communication, which I have called in this chapter interpellation.

Therefore, by considering these elements, the spectacle creates the conditions of distancing the crowd from its political meaning, making it appear as pre- or apolitical. In Arendtian terms, *the crowd becomes mute*[21]. It does not matter how fussy or noisy the crowd can be, it does not matter what it attempts to communicate; the crowd – even when it is not domesticated – cannot speak and cannot be political. For example, the Head of the Attorney General of the Federal District (Mexico City) argued at the time that at the basis of the lynching is the atmosphere of widespread social violence (e.g. violent television programmes). I strictly reject that it has been generated by

[19] This 'domestication of anger' resounds in some parts of Arendt's conceptualisation of violence. Though Arendt did not refer directly to anger, she defines violence from her conceptualisation of power and the political. She sees the 'political realm' as 'power in concert' and 'power to create' (Arendt, 1970: 40-44), and these are enacted through political deliberation and argumentation with the consent of the people. In this context, violence is harmful to the political realm, as it breaks the promise of covenant that characterises *the polis*. For Arendt, violence is pre-political, e.g. for groups to liberate themselves from an illegitimate authority, and thus it is the antithesis of power.

[20] Nussbaum claims for the necessity of learning and cultivating those sentiments which lead to a more equal and just society, as "all decent societies need to guard against division and hierarchy by cultivating appropriate sentiments of sympathy and love" (Nussbaum, 2013: 3).

[21] Arendt neatly summarises this argument in 'The Human Condition' where she wrote that "sheer violence is mute" (1958: 26).

insecurity and crime indices (LaPrensa0601). In other words, the spectacle of lynching does what Winter indicates as the production of political effects through passions (affects) (2018: 64), but those effects do not necessarily help the crowd to successfully communicate their grievances.

Therefore, I argue that lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence because through the circulation of (mainly, but not only) anger, the crowd is able to communicate and experience what otherwise would only be held inside their individual subjectivities. Political violence here, and against Nussbaum, in its affective dimension is an interpellation of the traditional political realm, which, as Winter explains, "leaves behind traces destined for an audience" (2018: 195), which is formed both outside and inside the community. Connecting both, a theory of emotions and a theory of political violence, I consider it important to emphasise, and returning to what I discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, that "acts of political violence are intended to be perceived, experienced, remembered, and narrated" (Winter, 2018: 195), and this is only possible when emotions affect others by circulation amongst people.

In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, I have explained that anger was the dominant emotion during the lynching, which in itself represents a form of political emotion. Because of how spectacular the anger of the crowd was, I claim that the lynching is a form of political violence that communicates underlying structural violence, such as injustice and insecurity. Because of this, and agreeing with Winter, violence cannot be understood as "an abstract constitutive dimension of politics but has social and historical determinations" (2018: 197). In summary, I claim that anger understood collectively and relationally allows us to view lynching as an inter-subjective expression of violence. Anger, therefore, generates an intersubjectivity through its circulation, by the interaction of those members of the community in *San Juan Ixtayopan*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I went through the difficulties involved in politicising. Exposing the dimensions of why a phenomenon is a form of spectacular violence, I examined how the spectacle creates a

double-bind narrative around lynching, interpelling the audience outside and inside the community of San Juan Ixtayopan in different ways. By defining the importance of interpellation, I attempted to conceptualise how spectacular violence functions as a disruption of common forms of political communication (discourse, speech, etc.). This disturbance is political because at its core it aims to communicate, in a non-verbal form, what the community was suffering.

Nevertheless, as part of the difficulties of this process, I claim that because lynching is seen and visualised as an angered crowd, but more importantly, as an angered crowd, the interpellation is not considered political. As I presented before: *"In the face of the fury of a mob, the extreme degree of cruelty could not be channelled in any other way"* (ElGrafico0305). Even though anger can be a form of political communication, there was a need for the people of *San Juan Ixtayopan* to have a productive form of speech, in Arendtian terms, in order to express their discontent. This has been expressed by the narratives of 'seeking justice' and of being tired of not being considered. Therefore, though I claim the lynching as a form of political violence because it breaks into the realm of the political, it still leaves the crowd out of politics, since gaining a voice is not the same as communicating politically. This is due to two different but related issues. Firstly, speaking (or shouting in this case) does not always allow you to enter the political sphere, which is already colonised by particular traditional forms civil interactions between the state and society (e.g. institutions, social movements, etc, debates, discourse). This is something I will expand on in Chapter Five when I explain the tension between lynching and justice, by addressing the expressiveness of popular justice and the emotions of retribution. I will attempt to argue that the crowd remains depoliticised because it fails to speak through the channels of institutionalised justice. Secondly, the action of lynching as breaking the space of the political *momentarily* fails to develop a collective sense of the political in which those in action feel that anger can be (re)placed by forgiveness or some other powerful transformation. In other words, and agreeing with Nussbaum, anger is important because it unleashes grievances, but it does not lead to transformation or in the case of lynching, to a challenging of the state. Therefore, I aim to explain these further elements in Chapter Six, by

addressing the relationship between transformative (revolutionary) violence and the role of emotions, which like anger also interpellates, but also attempts to produce meaningful political change.

CHAPTER FIVE
In the name of *justice*: anger and retribution

"The human murder by poverty in Latin America is secret; every year, without making a sound, three Hiroshima bombs explode over communities that have become accustomed to suffering from clenched teeth. This systematic violence is not apparent but is real and constantly increasing"

Eduardo Galeano – Open Veins of Latin America

Introduction

Taking justice into their own hands is a common description of the type of violence that lynching represents. Breaking this narrative down provides us with an important interpretation of the meanings of violence embedded in lynching, as well as the narratives of justice that emerge from the anger in the contexts of marginalised communities. However complex the concepts of violence and justice are, in this chapter I argue lynching as an expression of the will for retribution – defined through the emotion of anger – that occurs amid the dialectical relationship between structural and subjective violence. I claim that the very nature of structural violence is its imperceptibility. Though it is hard to see, it can easily be *felt* by individuals and communities, producing sentiments of grievance and injustice. Drawing from discussions on violence as 'experience' and not purely as an 'act' (Bufacchi, Gilson, 2016; Staudigl 2013) presented in the Introduction, I expand such literature here in order to show that these sentiments of injustice are materialised in the subjective violence of lynching, which paradoxically reinforces and reproduces forms of structural violence, in a dialectical way. I consider this dimension an important part of the notion of the political, also explained in the introduction. The political in the violence of lynching attempts to *affect* the politics

of structural violence, perceived through injustices. Thus, I ask in this chapter, (i) what happens to the narrative of justice when the state loses its authority in the eyes of the community? (ii) Can lynching *momentarily* enact justice for a community and defy structural violence?

I respond to these questions based on what I examined in Chapter One as the 'agency' moment of lynching in current conditions of neoliberalism. I claim that when sentiments of insecurity are reflected on how the state does not adequately echo the values and sense of justice of the community – the same values and justice that structural violence violates – it releases anger as a will for retribution, which become central for an understanding of lynching as political violence. Based on Slavoj Žižek and Johan Galtung's conceptualisations of violence, I will introduce this chapter by examining the theoretical relation between subjective and structural violence. Arguing from the point of view of perceivable and non-perceivable forms of violence, which I draw as the distinction between violence that is seen as physical force, and the violence that is felt within the individuals, are part of the ways in which violence is experienced, creating waves that are manifested through emotions such as anger. I claim that the interaction between these two forms of violence is dialectical, as one only exists because of the other. In addition, I claim that these concepts intersect with the notions of justice and injustice, what Vittorio Bufacchi (2007) denominated as 'two faces of the same coin'. By introducing this linkage between concepts, I will set the theoretical dimensions for the colloquial understanding of lynching as 'taking justice into their own hands' which implies this intersection.

Second, I expand on the emotion of anger to complement what was developed in Chapter Four, where I focused on anger as an emotion that acts upon an object (wrongdoer) – 'shouting out' – that is communicated powerfully in the spectacle but often fails to receive wider support. In this chapter, I will use Robert C. Solomon's philosophical approach to explain that anger can also be an emotion of the will for retribution. By this, I mean that anger represents the main emotion operative within processes of punishment and vengeance, in which anger is felt like as a means of

seeking 'payback' from someone or for something that has done us wrong, which is an essential dimension of lynching. In addition, this section will briefly introduce the theory of expressive punishment, which discusses the role of emotions in the process of penance and justice in order to present a notion of what 'taking justice' really means for lynching.

Third, this chapter will explore in full the expression 'taking justice into their own hands' by addressing Angelina Snodgrass' contribution to the understanding of lynching. As examined in the literature review of Chapter One, her approach aims to provide an idea of lynching as 'popular justice' as well as indicating that such actions represent an 'agentive moment' of 'taking [paying] back' wrongdoings suffered under the conditions of crisis under neoliberalism. I will agree to some extent with Snodgrass that the material conditions of precariousness created by current neoliberal policies have conditioned the emergence of phenomenon such as lynching, but I will expand this narrative in the final section by connecting all the concepts examined in the course of the chapter, bringing them to bear on the notion of 'popular justice'.

The last section will also claim that expressivist theories of punishment fail to understand the emotion of anger at the centre of the will of retribution, in a context where the state has inadequately reflected the values and sense of justice of the community. Thus, anger is the emotion that permits structural violence to become perceivable through subjective violence. As such, we have to learn to detect and read this anger. From this, I propose the notion of 'frontier justice' to indicate the interconnections between emotions, structural violence and subjective violence. When communities feel that their grievances have not been considered by the state and society, the sense of justice (popular justice) expands through the will of retribution, justifying the use of subjective violence. This creates a full circle where structural violence arises due to the subjective violence of lynching; this dialectical relationship is expressed by the expansion of frontier justice. I contribute to this discussion as an attempt to politicise the harm done by structural violence and to re-politicise the uses of subjective violence in the above explained dialectical relationship. The chapter

concludes with the aftermath of the lynching, which I call the temporary ending of anger. Through this, I introduce the emotions of shame and guilt as an attempt by the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* to take responsibility for their actions. However, as I will show, this attempt only lasts a moment before things slide back to anger and to lynching. This reminds us that the dialectic between structural and subjective violence continues.

Violence and Justice: a dialectical approach

I concluded Chapter Four by exposing the importance of understanding anger as a political emotion for the concept of violence. In this chapter, I want to expand on this argument, by addressing how retribution and violence concatenate in the phenomenon of lynching. The first link I will explain concerns the intimate connection between violence and justice, or more specifically, violence and injustice. By no means will I be able to fully address the complexity and diversity of the literature surrounding these two concepts, but I will claim the importance of relating both phenomena as expressed by Bufacchi as "two sides of the same coin" (2007: 5).

Philosophical analysis of violence is broadly divided between two conceptual approaches. In this sense, we can find in the literature several accounts that have justified the use of violence as a political tool against injustice, as well as traditions which instead promote justice as a means to avoid violence (see Frazer, Hutchings, 2017; Finlay, 2007). The debate is extensive, however, I will focus on the discussion of violence that explains the origins of social injustice, by addressing the opposition between structural and subjective violence. For this, I aim to explore a conceptual relationship between these two notions in the context of lynching as 'popular justice'.

In *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, Slavoj Žižek establishes a distinction between, one the one hand, what he calls 'objective' or 'systemic' violence and, on the other, 'subjective' violence. This distinction aims to express Žižek's intention of bringing forward systemic violence as the materialised force which impels others to enact violence themselves – e.g. by pushing them into

criminality. On the other hand, subjective violence is "performed by a clearly identifiable agent" (Žižek, 2008: 1) and is thus the most visible form of violence. In Žižek's terms, subjective violence is performed by actors who are marked and classified by a system of law, e.g. 'terrorists', 'lynchers' and 'criminals'. Žižek claims that subjective violence is socially distracting from the "need to perceive the contours of the background [violence] which generates such outbursts" (Žižek, 2008: 1). This does not simply mean that systematic violence produces subjective violence in a unidirectional way, nor that subjective violence can be justified for that reason alone, but that both are ultimately related in the production of harm in society, and how this is manifested and experienced by individuals.

Systematic violence, on the other hand, is described as "the more subtle forms of coercion that sustain relations of domination and exploitation" (Žižek, 2008: 9) in the contemporary capitalist world. It is "the 'automatic' creation of excluded and dispensable individuals, from the homeless to the unemployed" (Žižek, 2008: 14), which are affected by the unseen dimension of this violence. Therefore, they are both related by the interaction in which structural violence pushes subjective violence into existence and visibility, that furthers the expansion of that system violence. In other words, systemic violence is what Galtung called in his essay, 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research' (1969), structural violence; the unperceived, underground violence that operates through the structures of society (institutions, social reproduction, economic system, etc.) having a greater impact on people's lives.

In this sense, and following Galtung's original differentiation, while personal (subjective) violence is perceived through physical manifestation, structural violence remains imperceptible and may not have a direct physical manifestation: "Personal violence represents change and dynamism – not only ripples on waves but waves on otherwise tranquil waters. Structural violence is silent, it does not show – it is essentially static, it is the tranquil waters" (Galtung, 2009: 86). This relation between both forms of violence has produced extensive debate in political theory and philosophy,

especially concerning ethical discussions regarding the justification of political violence. Nevertheless, what interests us about these conceptualisations is the inter-related issues of justice and emotion that operate between the dimensions of personal and structural violence. In particular, if we start to think about lynching as a form of subjective violence which claims to be an act of 'popular justice' against structural violence and social injustice, the entanglement of these issues becomes increasingly relevant.

By looking at the case study, I consider one editorial review that addressed the 'violence in Mexico' in 2004, the year of the lynching. This report indicates the relation between violence and justice that I am exploring in this chapter:

> This year was dominated by violence in its various facets. From the unstoppable number of kidnappings, executions between drug gangs, the deaths of women of Juarez, riots in high-security prisons, to the bloody barbarity of *Tláhuac* [*San Juan Ixtayopan*]. The excesses of violence, which have not been restrained by the federal, state and municipal authorities generated one of the most shocking manifestations in the history of modern Mexico. On June 27th, one of the mass concentrations took place at the streets demanding more security, the end of impunity and that crime cease to be part of everyday life (LaPrensa2704).

I argue that the dialectics between structural and subjective violence exist because collective (political) emotions are at the centre of the seeking for social justice. This is part of why lynching can be interpreted as political violence. Retribution is an active emotion in the link between these two types of violence, which is something I will explore further during this chapter. As an illustration, the (in)famous prologue to Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* by Jean-Paul Sartre provides some interesting thoughts with which to begin the discussion by way of illustrating some of the tensions between justice and violence, and between objective and subjective violence:

> At first, the only violence they understand is the colonist's, and then their own, reflecting back at us like our reflection bouncing back at us from a mirror. Don't be mistaken; it is through this mad rage, this bile and venom, their constant desire to kill us, and the permanent contraction of powerful muscles, afraid to relax, that they become men. It is through the colonist, who wants to turn them into beasts of burden, and against him. Still blind and abstract, hatred is their only asset (Sartre in Fanon, 2004: lii).

As Bhabha suggests, in this prologue Sartre sees violence as "the fiery, first breath of human freedom" (Bhabha, xxxvi). Violence allows politics, of those marginalised, to emerge through the rage of physical force. However, this rage is not just any fury. Sartre is talking about one specific form of anger that comes from seeking retribution or enacting punishment against the colonists, by seeking freedom by way of the death of the colonists. In other words, through violence the condemned of the earth may find social and political justice and, more importantly, they can find human freedom. This illustration links with the notion of vengeance that I will explore in-depth later, but I introduce it here as the "core commitment to action and the extreme animus of its motivation" (Solomon, 1990: 257). The relevance of this illustration is the sentiment of rage and vengeance which animates violence and the pursuit of justice, as in the case of lynching. Although Sartre's account has significant limitations, I begin with this point so as to exemplify the existent relationship between these elements, as well to introduce the underlying element of this rage; that is, the dialectics between subjective and structural violence.

From a normative philosophical perspective, Vittorio Bufacchi addresses some of these matters in the book *Violence and Social Justice* (2007). He claims that the relationship between justice and violence can be justified both from the 'identity argument' and the 'consequentialist argument'. The former indicates that "violence is good if, through an act of violence, the perpetrator is able to re-establish his or her own identity as a person of equal moral value, deserving the respect of

others" (Bufacchi, 2007: 169), which relates more directly to Sartre's account as well with the Fanonian tradition on violence. The latter argues that "violence is justified when it is a necessary evil, an indispensable means towards preventing an even greater evil and/or promoting a greater good" (Bufacchi, 2007: 173), which broadly relates to the tradition of the ethics of war. I interpret that both arguments place violence at the intersection of *some sort* of injustice, whether it is an injustice produced by the domination of race, class and gender or injustice as a result of political and powerful interests. Violence appears because there is an injustice that needs to be fought. However, I will explore whether the narratives around 'injustice' that arose amid the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* are the result of structural violence lived in the community, as well if the violence of lynching allows the reproduction of those forms of injustice. For this, I will consider that anger is a central emotion of retribution (punishment) in lynching because as I have explained throughout this thesis, this emotion underlines the dialectic of subjective and structural violence.

Feelings of retribution: another form of anger

Emotions for justice

I have discussed the emotion of anger as a political feeling that involves 'shouting out'; to attempt to communicate through the spectacle. In addition, I argued how anger appears as – essentially – a collective emotion, which in large part makes it firmly political. However, there are other dimensions of anger and its deep connection with feelings of retribution and vengeance. Colloquially, these elements are confused and often used interchangeably, especially when we are witnessing a situation of revenge or 'payback'. Opposing the principle of 'justice', anger as vengeance is largely seen as a negative and destructive emotion in social relations, and such is a feeling that we should avoid in our social life.

However, as I explained in the previous chapter, feeling anger can be important and valuable when seeking justice and retribution in situations of clear unfairness. Agreeing with Robert C. Solomon,

"anger is also sometimes righteous, meaning not just that the other person deserved it but that it may be good for one's soul to get angry" (Solomon, 2008: 14). In this sense, anger as retribution and as a political emotion signifies a

> continuous structure of one's life, always in the background but easily brought to the centre of one's attention (…). Therefore, anger as a relational emotion that is part of a structure, includes one's thinking and behaviour, what one pay attention to, what one remembers, what one imagines, even what one dreams, the metaphors one uses, and the way one engages in the neighbourhood (Solomon, 2008: 17).

I consider Solomon's points relevant, especially because anger (as retribution) is not a momentary state (e.g. explosive, short-lasting, extreme) but is a "complex process that proceeds through time" (Solomon, 2008: 16), which is not so much 'inside' someone's mind (trapped in the individual body) but is 'out' in the social and 'within' the inter-subjectivities between individuals. "Anger, and most of our emotions, usually arise with and in reaction to other people" (Solomon, 2008: 22). By saying this, I argue that retribution and the seeking for justice represents a form of collective anger that is allocated in the interactions we have with one another, through a historical process of discontent and frustration. In these cases, anger is taken as vengeance. In fact, retribution, vengeance and justice are synonyms that carry different social meaning, mainly because they symbolise different types of feeling, or where those feelings situate us in relation to others.

Vengeance, in contemporary secular societies, is perceived as a negative emotion because it is not expressed through the appropriate channels of justice (e.g. institutions and systems of justice), whilst retribution stands in the middle of both as something that can be achieved within and without traditional forms of institutional justice. However, I want to claim that vengeance and retribution exist within the same emotional realm. Agreeing with Solomon, "to seek vengeance for a grievous wrong, to revenge oneself against evil: that seems to lie at the very foundation of our

sense of justice, indeed, at the heart of our sense of ourselves, our dignity and our sense of right and wrong" (Solomon, 1990: 40). In this sense, vengeance and retribution are sentiments of "putting the world back in balance" (Solomon, 1990: 41). This is where our sense of justice comes from, because "our sense of justice is cultivated from these 'negative' emotions" (Solomon, 1990: 243). "Justice begins and moves our indignation and outrage at injustice" (1990: 43), which is not only concerned with ourselves but with those we care about, and in principle with those people that shape our entire world. For this reason, the anger of retribution is one that can be rightful and harmful at the same time. Anger *affects* society in relation to the contextual conditions within which a society is situated.

Solomon argues for a notion of justice that begins with the experiences of people, which originate from our place in the world as the context and experienced circumstances. In this sense, "justice is first of all our emotional response to a world that does not always meet up with our expectations and demands" (Solomon, 1999: 244). Seeing justice as a form of passion that can be cultivated by those experiences in the world within which we live provides an expressive notion of how we perceive injustices. In other words, "it is, first of all, a way of participating in the world, a way of being with other people, a set of feelings of affection and affiliation that link us – not [just] through 'reason' – with other people" (Solomon, 1990: 32). Here, I continue drawing on from notions of emotion that are not necessarily decoupled from reason, meaning that anger does not necessarily cloud our reasoning or ability to decide what is just and unjust. Particularly when injustices are experienced and suffered by marginalised communities, anger is a *reasonable* response to such conditions. In this sense, placing anger at the heart of justice is an important starting point in order to analyse and understand the violence – particularly the dialectic between structural and subjective violence – that was experienced in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. The community's sense of commitment to justice provoked a narrative of lynching as a form of legitimate punishment. However, as I will explain in the next section, clearly not the type of punishment that is proportional or expressed through traditional channels, but one that is performed emotionally as I argued in Chapter Four.

Expressive punishment

The philosophical literature on expressive punishment largely considers the case of what is expressed through the punishment of the criminal by the state, though there are some ideas which are useful to borrow for an account of lynching that seeks to explore the connection between violence, (in)justice and retribution. From the point of view of state formation, punishment exists as the process through which individuals receive a 'hard treatment' for actions that are against the law, and that are perceived to be against the social norms of a particular community. Expressive theories of punishment have argued that "punishment serves the purpose of expressing indignation" (Königs, 2013: 1029) and condemnation for wrongdoings committed by individuals.

Particularly, Joel Feinberg argues that the expressive function of punishment is "the expression of attitudes of resentment and indignation, and of the judgment of disapproval and reprobation" (1965: 400), in which punishment plays a symbolic role. Expressive punishment is seen as a form of emotional retribution lived by victims and those around them. For Feinberg, the expressiveness of punishment implies that "in civilised and democratic countries" (1965: 402) retribution expresses "the community's strong disapproval of what the criminal did" (1965: 402). Therefore, the amount of punishment justified varies with the degree of disapproval that the community expresses. In other words, more serious crimes would receive more disapproval justifying harder punishment.

In a similar sense, but more focused on the emotional and attitudinal aspect of punishment, Christopher Bennett's book *The Apology Ritual* (2012) begins with the notion of "decent society", as one that is "organised in line with certain values" (Bennett, 2012: 76), which extend to institutions, norms and future generations. Bennett argues that "citizens have responsibilities" (2012: 76), essentially meaning that they are to respect and respond to societal values accordingly. Obviously, for citizens to take responsibilities, it is implied that there is a need for a state form which will "take a stand on certain values" (Bennett, 2012: 77), creating institutions which censure

those *other* values which are considered wrong. Thus, "the symbolism of condemnation will have to connect state condemnation of crime in some way with the way in which we react to wrongdoing in everyday life" (Bennett, 2012: 77). This is compelling because the expressiveness of punishment is treated not only as a symbolic expression of emotions but as a responsibility of political authority – the state – to channel and understand those emotions.

Bennett argues that reactive attitudes, such as sentiments of resentment, indignation, remorse, blame and guilt (Bennett, 2002: 147) are those that we hold towards others as a response to their conduct of wrongdoing. However, "participation in the reactive attitudes betrays commitment to retribution, to the thought that it is non-contingently a good thing that those who have done wrong should undergo certain forms of suffering" (Bennett, 2002: 147). Therefore, he looks into different forms of retributive suffering, such as alienation of the wrongdoer from their community and repentance or remorse, which permit the wrongdoer to feel that "guilt is a kind of self-alienation" (Bennett, 2002: 153) Both varieties of retribution are, for Bennett, the starting point for the individual to begin to identify their wrongdoing and *suffer* the consequences of their actions.

Bennett establishes that the purpose of the system of punishment is to express condemnation through an apparatus that is concerned to acknowledge such emotional denunciation (2011: 147). In other words, the state should own the right to punish, because punishment is the appropriate expression of our indignation (Königs, 2013: 1031). Retributive punishment is the emotional reaction to moral offences, marshalled and controlled in and through the state apparatus. In this sense, and following above discussion on structural and subjective violence, I argue that when the state's juridical system does not adequately interpret communities' emotions for retribution, by congealing those emotions into forms of structural violence (e.g. insecurity, inequality), the system of justice frustrates the demands of the citizenry, unleashing the needs for punishment beyond the state's monopoly over violence.

As an illustration from the case study, we could consider the demand for security. Insecurity includes exposure to and risk of subjective violence. However, at the same time, the fact of being left exposed to this personal violence is, based on what is exposed by Galtung, a form of structural violence that mainly marginalised communities are submitted to. By looking at insecurity as a form of structural violence, I am claiming that when the state fails to provide social protection as a result of structural inequalities, insecurity is reproduced as a form of interpersonal violence. For example, a community such as *San Juan Ixtayopan* claims to confront the constant risk of the kidnapping of their children primarily because they live in a deprived area of Mexico City. Furthermore, the state has not provided means to prevent actions such as kidnapping from taking place within these communities (e.g. more police presence, better access to welfare services, equally in front of the juridical system, elimination of poverty, etc.). This insecurity is a product of structural issues that result in new insecurities emergent from the subjective uses of violence, such as lynching. This is expressed commonly by emotions of uncertainty, anxiety, fear and anger which commonly become solidified in frustrations that do not allow the citizens, the community, to speak out. When the levels of insecurity arise, people turn towards taking justice into their own hands.

Differing from what is developed by Feinberg and Bennett, Antony Duff argues that punishment is a form of *communication*. He claims that against the 'expressive' purpose of punishment, communication involves a "reciprocal and rational engagement" (Duff, 2003: 79). In this sense, expressive punishment requires one subject who expresses – e.g. condemnation, indignation, etc. – whilst communicative punishment "requires someone to or with whom we try to communicate" (Duff, 2003: 79); there is a commitment and a response, appealing to "the other's reason and understanding […]. Communication thus addresses the other as a rational agent, whereas expression need not" (Duff, 2003: 79). This is problematic for a series of reasons, some that have been examined in Chapter Four. When thinking about the role of communication in punishment, it is important to consider that the 'other' will not necessarily engage in understanding of your reasons, either because of the different places or contexts in which the actors are, or because of

pre-imposed barriers damage the communication process, what that I have called 'interpellation' in this thesis. As Bill Wringe (2016) writes, the intent of punishment is to communicate something to an offender, to a community or to both. If the offender is not part of the community and is considered foreign or strangers, the communication of such punishment might not work especially when the offender has not understood the collective values that the community holds.

In this sense, Wringe argues for an understanding of punishment as *denunciatory* in which "the purpose of the harsh treatment that punishment involves is for a society to communicate to its members that certain norms are in force and that transgressions against them are viewed seriously" (2016: 24). In agreement with Wringe, "expressivists often suppose that the state has a duty to communicate certain messages about certain kinds of wrongdoing either to the individuals who have acted wrongly (as on Duff's view) or to society as a whole" (2012: 865). However, this does not necessarily entail imposing 'hard treatment' on the offender.

The approaches to expressive punishment present an understanding of retribution in which the community – normally conceptualised as the state and civil society – expresses and communicates the condemnation of a crime in order to regulate values and moral standards (Bennett, 2011: 290) of a group or individual. Several elements have been considered to analyse punishment in society, including emotional reactions of individuals and collectives; the necessity of an audience to whom is expressed or communicated with; a 'hard treatment' and suffering, which varies in different cases; and, finally, the context of a political authority which channels responses and thus organises the penal system. In other words, "the state's role is simply to express censure [...] Hence the process of making amends is one that the offender can engage in purely ritualistically, without appropriate motivations" (Bennett, 2012: 77).

However, if communities typically look to the state to exact retribution in response to their emotional condemnation of a crime, the question that needs to be addressed is what happens with the expression of punishment when the state loses – even momentarily – ownership of it? It is

problematic to take for granted the rightfulness of the state's intervention and that people act rationally toward state authority. This position implies that criminal law is an actual representation of the community's perspective of what is permissible (Bennett, 2011: 291). As I demonstrate through the examination of lynching, it will be seen that the state does not necessarily represent the community's view of permissibility. Moreover, this is so much so that people often resort to acting violently toward the state and its functionaries (e.g. police officers) as the very expression of condemnation and justice. This is particularly pressing when communities are subjected to continuing forms of structural violence (poverty, discrimination, political disaffection), as defined by Galtung and Žižek. This is acute in cases of lynching, where it is mainly impoverished communities who tend to use this type of violence to express a will for retribution.

In short, justice and punishment are often conceptualised as functions of the state as an apparatus of control over peoples' lives. This does not diminish the innate expressiveness of persons, who often have conflicting views of what is right and wrong. Therefore, at the frontier of state authority, there can be found a fundamental redrawing of the lines of what is and is not permissible by persons and communities who have a profound sense of alienation from the state. This relates to what I explained in Chapter One concerning popular justice: the notion of the expression of retribution allows us to posit emotions at the core of the dialectic between, in Žižek's terms, subjective and structural violence, which is something I contribute to in this chapter.

Lynching and the question of popular justice

I have explained throughout this thesis that broadly speaking, lynching is considered a 'crime', not simply because of its brutality, but because it stands as an action against and outside the state's system of law. Particularly, in contemporary literature relating to Latin America, lynching "involves citizen's actions against another citizen presumed to have committed a crime or violated some social norm" (Huggins, 1991: 4), with these actions further defined as spontaneous and

disorganised (see Chapter One). The phenomenon involves the taking of public space – as I expanded on Chapter Four – in a violent form so that citizens can express their discomfort with local authorities, police corruption, and other faults of the state. To this end, one of the most accepted narratives to explain lynching in Latin America is the notion of the 'failed state', which I interpret as the tension between structural violence (such as poverty and insecurity) and the emergence of subjective violence (commonly called 'criminality'). Especially in the context of neoliberal policies, the state is seen as incapable of providing security and stability in such diverse and complex societies, consequently prompting the emergence of 'extra-legal violence'. Angelina Snodgrass, for instance, comments that "lynchings are not only about crime [but] today's lynchings occurred in the context of widespread fear of crime and a pervasive sense that the authorities' response to crime has been unsatisfactory" (Snodgrass, 2004: 628). In other words, lynching appears in communities in crisis, a crisis that is "more than the crime" (Snodgrass, 2006: 19). I have already outlined in Chapter Three that the crisis in *San Juan Ixtayopan* was largely connected with historical ramifications of fear produced by the disappearance of people in the country, indicating how collective experiences of fear are directly related to acts of violence. This crisis, as I put it, relates as well with the sense of crisis that Snodgrass discusses when writing about lynching in Guatemala.

These issues of insecurity have been linked to the neoliberal reconfiguration of the global capitalist system. With the implementation of neoliberal policies across the continent since the 1970-80s, many countries have seen increasing inequality, marginalisation and privatisation of public services. These transformations have mainly affected poorest countries with violent histories, such as Guatemala, Bolivia and Mexico; places where incidents of lynching have been increasing ever since. Mexican historian, Lorenzo Meyer, describes this period, and since the 2000s with the election of Vicente Fox as president of Mexico, as the moment in which the political elite completely interlaced with the administration of global capital (2017: 89). As Meyer's analysis suggests, the state degraded to a semi-powerful entity, which has become a real problem for even those who

emerged as 'winners' of the process. Therefore, "the oligarchic tendency to the concentration of benefits and privileges will end with what remains of the legitimacy of a political order where formal justice and substantive justice are absent" (Meyer, 2017: 92).

As Daniel M. Goldstein describes in the case of Bolivia, lynching is justified by local leaders as an attempt at practising justice in the context of *abandonment* by the state (Goldstein, 2004: 180). In explaining this notion of the 'failed state' in greater depth, Goldstein contextualises Bolivian lynching[22] through the rise of neoliberalism in the country, which has proceeded in line with the privatization of justice, restricting communal access to traditional forms of justice, rendering it yet another service to be purchased rather than a right equally accessible to all the population. This aspect of the phenomenon is something that I will further explore in Chapter Six when I look closer at the situation of the 'failed' or 'fragmented' state. Nevertheless, this context is relevant here to understand popular justice in relation to the expression of anger as retribution for the understanding of violence, particularly subjective violence as previously defined.

In order to do this, I draw from aspects of Angelina Snodgrass' analysis in the book *Popular Injustice* (2006), where she refers to the phenomenon of lynching in Guatemala as a form of (in)justice. As described in Chapter One, Snodgrass explains lynching as indicative of an 'agentive moment' (Snodgrass, 2004: 623), in which powerless communities restate their autonomy and agency through violence as a response to forms of violence generated by state armies, economic inequality, criminal bandits, etc. This is particularly interesting when thinking about the conceptualisation of violence explained at the beginning of this chapter. Lynching seen as an agentive moment explains that violence occurs because, as Bufacchi said, *there is* unavoidable evil and a justified rage, showing tension between the two levels of violence. The relationship between subjective and structural

[22] Goldstein did an anthropological study in the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia. He explored the uses of the public sphere and the spectacle of the city, comparing situations of lynching and the national festivity of 'Fiesta de San Miguel', which express the spectacle of cultural uses of the space.

violence is interwoven by the emotions of anger experienced by marginalised communities under conditions of injustice.

Snodgrass argues that lynching is not simply a spontaneous expression of fury or a reaction to certain actions or behaviours – raping, smuggling, etc. – but instead is a rational measure taken to reaffirm a communities' values: "In this sense, lynchings may constitute a form of generative violence […] by overlaying violence with ritual, communities affirm that these – unlike the savage acts of criminals – are acts of meaningful, legitimate violence" (Snodgrass, 2004: 636). As such, lynching comes close to characterising a recuperative moment within the confines of neoliberal transformation; that is, the expression of agency and autonomy against the seemingly inexorable forces of privatisation and globalisation. Thus, lynching is an intense localisation of emotion against these depoliticising dynamics.

When looking at the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, this analysis is not absent from the newspapers at the time. Only two days after the event, a report in *Reforma* headlined 'The vicious circle', served to highlight how neoliberal politics affected and conditioned these violent reactions:

> The basis of citizen disenchantment with quality of public security is, first of all, that of the material base. In effect, the absence of economic sustenance capable of transforming positively the standards of life has evaporated the optimism in the change of regime [the election of Vicente Fox in 2000]. The evil behaviour of our economy is affecting the political environment and the possibilities of democratic consolidation (Reforma0207).

This approach is something often repeated by academics such as Goldstein and Snodgrass. As Snodgrass suggests, "what lynching tells us [is that] without trust in institutions – whether the formal institutions of state law or alternatives, community-based networks of trust and tradition – the lofty aims of justice are bartered down to their bare repressive backbone" (2006: 168). Thus, neoliberalism not only brings mistrust and disdain, but also a repressive attitude toward crime,

which distorts the ways in which justice is perceived by communities. This tension is most acute in societies and communities that have been "pushed toward the poles, then, law – and particularly criminal law – becomes a central staging ground for struggles to define citizenship, justice and order" (Snodgrass, 2004: 11). This is clear, from the information collected from newspapers and police testimonies. The people of *San Juan Ixtayopan,* for example, often expressed a sense of affirming the community's emotions by punishing the so-called offenders, satisfying a sense that "something had to be done" (Snodgrass, 2006: 115) in defence of the people.

Thus, these disappointments have been expressed in the disintegration of the relationship between poorest communities and the local and national authorities, which had led to the emergence of non-traditional forms of punishment, being perceived by communities and their leaders as necessary acts of recuperative agency in and against the privatising, globalising and depoliticising dynamics of neoliberal restructuring. Although Snodgrass tends – at times – to refuse the use of popular justice to refer to lynching, she clearly states that the justice sought by the community through "angry attempts to reconstitute community and empower the excluded through violence" (2004) aims to express, articulate and interpellate the system of law.

Now, the notion of *popular* justice may represent an awkward expression in characterising such unconventional punishment due, in the main, to the tendency of mainstream (and expressivist) theories to view justice as legitimate only in and through the state. Nonetheless, I will focus on lynching as punishment outside of the state, which symbolically signifies *popular justice*. In other words, "when they begin to find a voice, people who see themselves as disadvantaged often do so either by speaking back in the language of the law or by disrupting its means and ends" (Comaroff cited in Snodgrass, 2006: 103). Lynching represents a form of punishment because as it was explained above, it combines a feeling of condemnation that is expressed through 'hard treatment' – particularly physical punishment – and is directed to a public audience. The chapter will expand

on these elements in the next section, however, for now, it is important to highlight that the actors who perpetrate lynching *experience* the act as a genuine form of justice.

Frontier justice and the end of anger

Anger at the heart of justice

One interpretation of lynching as retribution would be the traditional account of an 'eye for an eye', in which justice is applied proportionally to the crime committed, normally in a brutal fashion. In many ways, and especially because of its violent characteristics, lynching could be interpreted as embodying this form of brutal retribution in which, as in the case study, the police officers, accused of kidnapping children, were killed. However, I argue that such an approach provides a limited view of retribution that does not fully explain how communities end up using violence to punish wrongdoers as such an account overlooks the anger, rather than intentionality, at the heart of retribution. For this, it may be useful to draw upon to Michel Foucault's book 'On the punitive society' (2015).

Foucault discusses how the universality of the law and the individuality of punishment have been historically co-constitutive, developing different systems of discipline. He specifically defines four models: (i) the model of slavery, (ii) The model of talion, (iii) the model of punishment and (iv) the model of infamy. I will discuss (ii) and (iv) here. Of particular importance for this discussion is the model of infamy. Foucault defines this model as 'the judgment [that is] nothing other than the totality of the individual judgments of the citizens" (Foucault, 2015: 68). This model presupposes the ending of juridical power, passing over to what is commonly known as *popular justice*. Popular justice is characterised as a collective system of justice and punishment that negatively "recognises in the juridical system a state apparatus, representative of public authority, and [an] instrument of class power" (Foucault, 1988: 6). In this sense, Foucault is seeking to argue that the masses do not rely on an "abstract universal idea of justice" (Foucault, 1988: 8), but on

their experiences in order to perceive their enemies and decide how to punish them. Foucault provides an idealistic notion of this model, imagining a society in which working-class consciousness would be able to break with a traditional model of punishment. Even though history has demonstrated the opposite in most places in the world, this model gives us an interesting entrance to a notion of justice that appears from the emotional and experiential realm of relations between individuals, and as a collective.

In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, one finds continued references to the talion model. For example, the former Secretary of Public Security (and criminal lawyer) indicated at the time: "nobody can do justice from his own hand, and it is a return to the law of talion, to an eye for an eye. It is a regression to the system of imparting justice, but on the other hand, it also shows distrust and the boredom of the population in the face of criminal acts" (Reforma0217). I argue that this statement illustrates in part the common misunderstanding between seeking justice and the institutions of justice. In agreement with expressivists, the punishment experienced in the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* was neither a euphoric an 'eye for an eye' nor an expression of 'the end of the traditional juridical system', but something in-between, which is part of what I have called 'crisis of emotional foundation'. It represented a form of justice that was born from the emotion of anger through the experiences of communities in crisis who sought to find retribution. Thus, the particular emotions of anger and vengeance created the necessity of punishment and the *aim* for *justice*. The communication of these emotions was not channelled through a traditional system of penalty but through direct practices of punishment and hard treatment. I have explored before in this thesis the hard treatment imparted to the three police officers, who went through long and significant suffering. However, I want to continue to explore here what the expression of retribution is trying to communicate and to whom.

Expressivists have indicated that condemnation is a fundamental aspect of punishment, in which the audience is understood to have two parts: first, the offender, who is exposed to the expressive

message of punishment in order to make them redeem themselves of their actions; and second the rest of the community or society which is looking to feel compensated. Duff (2003), for instance, advocates for communication rather than simply expression, looking to establish a rational model of reparation between offenders and victims. Of course, when expressivists think about audience, they are thinking through traditional or paradigmatic means in which communication occurs, such as courts, the penal system, etc. In *San Juan Ixtayopan*, there is also an audience to the expression of retribution, though a non-traditional one. As shown throughout this thesis, the lynching occurred due to a sentiment of distrust and fear in relation to the state, even in periods when the state was trying to draw larger parts of the population into its institutions of justice. In this sense, and even though traditional and official forms of justice pertain in Mexico, lynching appears as an alternative for certain communities who are in need of expression, condemnation and emotional retribution. This is quite an astonishing situation for the juridical system, which seemed paralyzed in relation to the actions committed.

This paralysis did not only appear in the lack of rapid intervention from the police and state authorities in the lynching and the consequent failure to rescue the police officers. It also provoked a fearful reaction from authorities who clearly attempted to redeem themselves from any direct responsibility by indicating how a general 'mistrust' in the institutions produced the lynching. For example, the President of the Supreme Court of the Federal District in Mexico claimed days later after the lynching that "it is very evident that people do not have trust in the institutions of administration and justice, but that is not the responsibility of each [institutional] organ" (LaPrensa0705). Similarly, this newspaper's report indicates, "if there was a sense of legality, lynching would never have happened", showing that "the police forces were not preparing to face the excessive brutality lived on that day" (LaPrensa0803).

Returning to the central theories of the chapter, justice is not only a set of institutions or a system but is at its core an expression of condemnation. It is a means of conveying the collective anger

expressed in response to the injustices experienced within the community, which also constitute a form of violence. As Bufacchi argues by reference to Rawls: "Unjust social arrangements are themselves a kind of extortion, even violence, and consent to them does not bind" (Rawls in Bufacchi, 128). This does not mean that seeking justice through the expression of anger *has always had* to end up in violence, but when it does, it reflects the dialectical relationship between the different forms of violence that connect societies and communities. Conventionally, it is the state which prescribes the limits of permissibility in terms of what is right and wrong for its citizens, monopolizing the use of violence, but when the state causes or contributes to a sense of injustice among communities, subjective violence erupts because the need for justice does not disappear on account of the state's failures. Thus, when the eruption of lynching emerges it also creates a sense of injustice that is congealed in the narratives of incivility and barbarism explained in Chapter Three, which are mainly reproduced by the state's agents and institutions that are responsible for the sense of injustice in the first place.

What lynching demonstrates as a case is that condemnation associated with wrongdoing is not the sole preserve of the state and that even in contexts where state institutions of justice exist, non-paradigmatic forms of condemnation and punishment emerge. In fact, they appear precisely in relation to the faltering presence of state institutions and thus are directed against a real or perceived lack. It is not that these institutions do not exist, but that their existence does not adequately account for the needs of communities which they are supposed to serve. The notion that punitive intervention into the life of the offender is a function of state justice and punishment is thusly frustrated by the direct intervention of the community into the life of the offender, often with the aim of terminating the life of those accused. This is a reason why lynching in Mexico tends to happen in excluded communities, marginalised from development shaped by neoliberal policies. This lack of expectation and mistrust in the system of justice have facilitated the rise of lynching in the past decades, producing shared acceptance among communities that such acts are the only possible way to find security for themselves. In other words, the perceptions of injustice,

as well as the clear demonstration of it, express the dialectical relationship between structural and subjective violence, producing phenomena such as lynching, which is perceived and enacted as a form of punishment. Structural violence has become visible and manifested itself through the emotions that express themselves as interpersonal violence.

Taking Feinberg's conceptualisation, punishment – especially here – does not only express disapproval but "is also a symbolic way of getting back at the criminal, of expressing a kind of vindictive resentment" (Feinberg, 1965: 403). Therefore, when state legitimacy and authority falter, the anger of retribution can no longer be channelled through the figure of the state, meaning that they manifest instead in direct popular forms of punishment, expressing to the so-called criminal their supposed wrongdoing. A compelling illustration of this phenomenon is when figures of state authority have themselves been lynched, as is the case in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. On the one hand, as in the case study, the police officers were retained even when they insisted to the community that they were police officers, and it is difficult to know if that information motivated people to continue with the lynching or not. But what is significant is that regardless of the police self-defence, the community in *San Juan Ixtayopan* continued to demonstrate vindictive retribution.

On the other hand, and as is demonstrated in Goldstein's research on Bolivia's lynching, it may be argued that "from the perspective of state law, a police officer intervening to stop an illegal lynching is acting in accordance with his assigned duties' but from the community perspective, the action 'is perceived' as a violation of the moral precepts of the community" (2004: 20). The absence of satisfactory punitive justice by the state becomes, for the communities who feel it, an injustice which must be expressed to the state through the direct targeting of state personnel for punishment. The expression of condemnation and the feelings of retribution do not disappear when the state fails; on the contrary, those elements are shaped and taken by other forms and by other agents, who then, in many instances, direct retribution towards the state itself.

The lynchers express their fury without consulting a major traditional court of how they should deal with the emotions of wanting to inflict suffering on other persons. Clearly here, hard treatment and suffering are not expressed in a traditional form, as for example incarceration, but manifested through direct physical punishment. Somewhat mimetic to historical forms of punishment in Europe, and perhaps a mimetic action of the overall notion of punishment by the state, lynching amplifies all those tensions that exist about the ownership of the expression of punishment, as well conceptions and narratives concerning justice. In this sense, lynching is at its core an emotional reaction to wrongdoing, to moral offences against the community and its values. The message that these communities express is a demand to the state to provide better security, along with a direct message to the offender – and those who might commit a crime – that the community, if not the state, is organised and prepared to respond (and to punish). These messages are direct in symbolic terms in the act of lynching, expressing the need of isolated communities to be included in functioning systems of justice from which they have been excluded.

Expanding frontier justice

Throughout this chapter, I have drawn attention to retribution as an emotion that is amid the dialectic between structural and subjective violence. The structural violence that is limited access to the material conditions for security and integration, to public goods, creates mistrust in the system, which trigger forms of subjective violence, such as lynching. When the violence is physically exposed in the public realm, demonstrating the lack of control that the state has and expressing severe incivility, the structural violence is also reproduced by deepening the level of insecurity among communities.

In the context of neoliberalism, communities have suffered the erosion of the welfare state, accelerating the conditions for criminal, social and personal violence at all levels of society. Without these forms of structural violence, subjective violence would not be materialised in forms such as lynching. As Goldstein explains for the case of Bolivia, lynching can be interpreted as a "form of

political expression for people without access to formal legal venues, a critique of the democratic state and its claim to a rule of law" (2004: 23). Therefore, those marginalised in society adopt the action of lynching as "an avenue for the communication of grievances against inadequacies of the state's official legal order, while at the same time deploying the rhetoric of justice and law to police their communities ties against crime" (Goldstein, 2003: 23). In other terms, and using Wringe's notion of expressive punishment, the will for retribution is a denunciatory process that seeks to interpellate, to interrupt the order of things and making demands to the state (and its institutions) by the action of *popular* punishment.

However, I have attempted to 'read' and 'politicise' this anger by illustrating the link between retribution and violence and (in)justice. I want to claim that lynching is a compelling phenomenon of violence because it expands what I call the *frontier of justice*. Through the interaction between structural injustices and the use of personal (subjective) violence, lynching reveals how the violence used is clearly political. As explored in Chapter One, the concept of frontier justice has been used to describe an alternative form of justice to that of the state. Largely discussed in the U.S. context, frontier justice implies territorial isolation and the lack of social and political integration with the central state authority and juridical system[23]. In that context, and serving the idea of defying foreigners and outsiders, frontier justice aims to protect territory and its social values against a background of strong community bonds and the non-existence of a central state. Despite its cultural and mythological element, this notion of frontier justice provides an interesting lens for understanding lynching as a form of expression and interpellation of justice. In this sense, frontier justice works as a metaphor through which it is possible to illuminate the experiences of punishment and justice in communities disengaged from the state's authority.

[23] As explained in Chapter One, the geographical boundaries between cities and states created a sentiment of remoteness from the central state and its institutions, helping to create expressions of extra-legal violence.

Looking at frontier justice through the notion of expressive punishment, we can draw some of the limitations of the expressivist theory. In Duff's book 'Punishment, Communication and Community' (2003), he gives a relevant framework of the liberal political community as the preferable context for communicative punishment. He defines the structure of this community through autonomy, freedom, privacy and pluralism, in which "the role of criminal law in such a polity as defining or creating a range of 'public' wrongs that concern the whole community" (Duff, 2003: 75). Duff also acknowledges that liberal political communities are not perfect spaces of inclusion, and different forms of exclusion are experienced, such as political, material and linguistic (Duff, 2003: 76). These elements provided in Duff's account reveal the limitations of expressive and communicative punishment. The notion of liberal political communities, where the political authority is in charge of organising punishment, is a contested space in contemporary terms which gives little scope for analysis of those societies that are not part of western-European and U.S. contexts. This is clearly the case with Mexico, which is itself in a more hybrid and complex political community. Mexico does not fulfil the principles of the liberal political community explained by Duff, but it does not deny them entirely, making lynching a clear example of how punishment can adopt different forms of expressive function. I consider that expressivists contribute to putting emotions at the centre of the process of punishment and justice, though, I expand their approach by denying certain universalisms derived from western-based cases.

It is in cases where the state's authority is suffering dramatic changes that the right of punishment is materially and symbolically transferred to communities, expanding what I referred to as the frontiers of justice. In a traditional legal system, the inner space of a frontier, sanctioned institutions determine when it is acceptable to express condemnation. This is the system of justice, as conventionally understood. However, when standing outside of this 'inner space' – the space contained by the frontier – then the state no longer draws these lines and expressiveness begins to reformulate itself in terms of a communal sense of right and wrong in the realm of norms of

the community itself, defining who are the victims and who are the criminals. When looking at *San Juan Ixtayopan*'s lynching, what is being examined are ways in which punishment reveals itself in political communities outside the liberal-western model. The state does not possess the total monopolisation of violence and it does not contain in itself the collective community in which citizens agree to pass the responsibility for penalty to the state. It is for this reason that I do not see lynching as *sporadic* moments of (barbaric) rage but as the possibility that communities can take momentary control over the will of retribution.

Nevertheless, the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan* proves that the state can also become an audience *and* the one committing the wrongdoing. Clear evidence can be found to support this argument in communities which have committed lynching to present a strong narrative of differentiating themselves from the 'others', the criminals, as well as between themselves and state entities. Agreeing with Snodgrass, "lynchings reveal a conflict not only between community members and criminals but also between communities and the state – a conflict over whose authority prevails in matters of life and death" (2004: 637). Here it is important to resume what Leandro Gamallo (2015) argues with respect to the difference between *victims* and *offenders*. The blurred line between these two concepts in the actions of lynching clearly fits the definition of frontier justice. Lynchers cannot simply be defined as criminals, and those who are being lynched cannot be fully identified as victims[24]. Communities engrained in strong social relations do not see themselves as criminals; despite the fact that it is they who have committed an act of violence. Instead, they see their *victims* as criminals. This particularity of lynching blurs the traditional social understanding of criminality; when the state's authority fades, the boundaries of justice and criminality become less clear. This thinking was reflected in media reports at the time when political parties, politicians and authorities debated who was ultimately responsible for the lynching. Political opposition claimed, "The government lost the ability to maintain the governance required by the country in the climate of

[24] By this I am referring to communities' perception and interpretation of those lynched.

violence that is lived" and members of the government argued, "more speeches and programs will not make the citizens believe in our authorities and institutions" (LaPrensa3903).

On the one hand, traditional justice would argue that both parties (if there were real kidnappers) are to be considered criminals, as both have broken the law in some respect. Similarly, theories of violence would also make those distinctions, in which "the notion of the victim (of violence) in order to understand the idea of being a victim (of injustice), therefore understanding why violence is bad makes us aware of why injustice is bad" (Bufacchi, 2007: 138). However, the community committing the lynching do not establish the same boundaries between victims and offenders. On the contrary, through their local and collective judgment, they see themselves as victims and the police officers as the 'other' who enacted the wrongdoing. This is when frontier justice emerges and becomes a central element in the action of lynching. Without this differentiation made by the community, and without the community convincing themselves that they are enacting the law, lynching would not so readily occur. Therefore, in the frontier, we see inversions of the norm – the channels of state institutions break down and the expressions of punishment become redirected.

This process also establishes the frontier between traditional justice and *popular justice*, which denies the validity of the former to be capable of punishment or of fulfilling the expectations of the community. In this sense, frontier justice permits the legitimation of the use of violence outside the boundary of the state's monopoly. However, this does not mean a re-appropriation of that force by communities, but only the sentiment of anger among themselves that the temporary use of violence would achieve the retributive justice that they feel is necessary. Agreeing with Solomon, "this is not to say that having the right feelings alone make one a just person, but feelings lead not only to action but to thought, and any emotion worthy of the name demands both expression in action and articulation" (Solomon, 1990: 38)

Expressions of punishment result in the re-drawing of boundaries of expressive punishment, meaning that when the state is absent, the boundaries of what is permissible are shaped in dramatic ways by communities themselves. This results in forms of punishment and justice that are not mediated through the institutions that commonly channel feelings of anger and vengeance, and therefore allows for the emergence of the violence of lynching. In this sense, I agree with Solomon's notion of vengeance as a rational process: "vengeance is the desire to harm for a reason" (Solomon, 1990: 275), which reveals that there is no real disconnection between reason and emotions as both operate at the same time when acting upon a situation, including situations of violence. In lynching, reason and emotions are in the anger expressed in an attempt "to get back to a prior order which has itself been violently disrupted" (Solomon, 1990: 274), as goes the dialectic of structural and subjective violence.

The momentary end of anger

I will finish this chapter by addressing some of the issues concerning the aftermath of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. In this case, it is particularly relevant to look at the phenomenon of shame and guilt as the emotions that emerged after the anger was contained. It was widely commented in the newspapers how people reacted the day after the lynching, showing remorse and distancing themselves from what had happened. The day after the event, the community gathered for a Mass conducted by the local priest, where people displayed signs of remorse and rejection of violence (Reforma0805). This predominantly religious event extended to the creation of a commission for reconciliation, in which neighbours would look at ways to recover the image of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, as well as to avoid repetition of such violence. Even though the commission did not succeed, the sentiments of remorse and guilt continued over the years.

It was reported that on the anniversary of the events, another Mass was held by the church. *El Gráfico Universal* informed, "[a]fter praying before the crosses where the two PFP agents died after being beaten and burned alive a year ago, some residents of the community carried out a silent

procession that advanced through the same streets in which the mob dragged Edgar Moreno, the only survivor". The local priest insisted on pointing out that "San Juan is an exemplary community that during the last year has been the victim of a stigma" (ElGrafico1401).

This refers to the struggle lived by the members of the community who faced not only constant media attacks but also the harassment of police raids from the day after the lynching. Looking for those responsible, the police arrested several people – of whom only 29 were prosecuted – who claimed to be innocent. This led to collective feelings of fear and to a deepening of emotions of mistrust and resentment. This is significant as it demonstrates when extreme violence, such as lynching, is manifested in the community, the explosive expression of anger does not linger for long, especially when anger has been shown through physical violence. The brutality of the images of the two police officers burnt bodies, and the aggressive entrance of PFP into the town to recover the third and only surviving officer generated a series of emotional reactions in the community.

I want to consider two of those emotional reactions as particularly relevant, namely shame and guilt. Solomon argues that "shame, guilt, and embarrassment (…) are all emotions of self-criticism, in fact, one might say, of self-reproach or even self-abasement" (Solomon, 2008: 90). These emotions are very close to justice because guilt is a condition expressed when you have been found responsible for wrongdoing. This sense of guilt – normally imposed by a system of justice – could be accompanied by a sense of shame (and remorsefulness), which demonstrates the idea that punishment and justice have been served. In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, this is reflected in religious manifestations as the one described above. It is particularly relevant that this form of self-criticism comes packaged by local religious authorities. As the Cardinal of Mexico, Noberto Rivera Carrera pointed out a year after the lynching: "you cannot be a Christian and a killer at the same time", indicating that this shame and guilt are part of the "failure in the evangelization" of the community (LaPrensa0602). Therefore, by promoting these narratives, as well as by containing

emotions within a religious framework, it is difficult to see if there is any clear form of self-criticism.

In this sense, I agree with Solomon who indicates that shame and guilt are morally weighted emotions, which operate in the social, and I will say the political realm. Solomon considers these emotions social because "they both have to do with our place in the social order. One difference between them has to do with the nature of that social other" (2008: 95). On the one hand, guilt is a straightforward social emotion, that represents the violation of authority and rules (2008: 97), and on the other hand, shame involves the sense of seriously failing those around you, violating their norms, falling short of their expectations, letting them down (Solomon, 2008: 95). In this sense, I argue that the transition from anger to these emotions concerns two processes of reorganising authority at the local level.

Firstly, guilt was controlled through the religious authority that spoke of the "decomposition of the social fabric" (LaPrensa0602) as a cause of the lynching, alongside the disconnection and thus the necessity of reconnection, with Christianity. This form of guilt was politicized and aimed to ignore the grievances and the anger experienced by the community, therefore, representing the domestication of anger. However, shame appears as a genuine collective feeling among the community in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. Shame was not tamed. When feeling shame, we can see a temporary fading of anger – and the associated need for retribution – largely due to the stigma imposed on the community in the aftermath of the lynching. They were ashamed, as well as scared of the consequences that they could have suffered. As reported in the newspaper *El Grafico*, members of the community interviewed stated: "We are victims of harassment from the media and the police" (ElGrafico0901). "Residents who dare to leave their home or who have not fled the town want psychological help for children and youth who, they say, suffer serious consequences from the lynching. Villagers suffered from widespread fear, mainly because of the 'unjust' arrests committed by the PFP" (ElGrafico0901). Therefore, shame appears as a reaction

to the backlash suffered, different from the tamed guilt manifested mainly through the local religious authority.

This distinction is important because lynching does not vanish from the community in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, which shows that the tensions between the structural and subjective violence 'stick' in the collective emotion of retribution experienced by the people. As an illustration of this, two months later another lynching occurred in the town. According to newspaper reports, Juan Carlos Yanez was allegedly surprised burglarising a house when the owners "gave the alarm to their neighbours", who in less than five minutes started to arrive and angrily began to hit him and tied him to a light post (LaPrensa4802; ElGrafico1001). This time only 50 people congregated in an attempt to burn the man alive before the police intervened and saved him. As indicated in *La Prensa*, "*Tláhuac* residents claim to be tired of so much violence and that the local and federal police do nothing to fight crime in the Federal District [Mexico City]" (LaPrensa4802). Two months later, it seems that the violence of lynching came full circle amid the intensely political discussion about justice reform and the authorities' responsibilities, showing again how structural and subjective violence work dialectically.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have dissected the common narrative of lynching, 'taking justice into their own hands' by exploring the phenomenon as the communal experience of violence amid the dialectic relationship between structural and subjective violence. I have discussed notions of the experience of violence, through to how harm is produced by both structural and subjective violence, and how harm in the form of injustices is expressed through anger. By looking at the notion of justice as an affective phenomenon, suggesting that when communities begin to define in their own terms who is right and wrong and establish forms of justification on this basis, the logic of justice is subverted through the frontier. Within the state, there are fixed boundaries, which determine when it is

permissible to express condemnation. It is in the frontier that these boundaries are blurred, becoming a function of the expressive desire for condemnation itself. In this process, sentiments of retribution (in particular, anger) are fundamental for the understanding of this frontier, because it provides a framework in which these narratives emerge.

CHAPTER SIX
Vital and *divine* violence: lynching against the state?

"He patiently waits for the colonist to let his guard down and then jumps on him. The muscles of the colonized are always tensed. It is not that he is anxious or terrorized, but he is always ready to change his role as a game for that of hunter"
Frantz Fanon – The Wretched of the Earth

Introduction

Throughout this thesis, I have emphasized that lynching tends to occur as an expression of violence *for* and *by* impoverished communities. Most registered cases of lynching occur at the level of interpersonal violence, e.g. against rapists, robbers, kidnappers, producing the commonly held idea that lynching is another form of criminality. Some cases, as with *San Juan Ixtayopan*, the violence is directed towards functionaries of state power, e.g. police officers and local authorities, though, in these cases, lynching is still considered a crime because the 'object' of the killing did not express ends that justify the actions. This dimension of lynching opens the question of the relationship between lynching and the state, beyond its categorisation of crime. Thus, two questions emerge in this chapter: (i) is the state responsible for the actions of lynching? (ii) is lynching a challenge to state's authority?

These questions are not new in the discussion of political violence, especially in relation to the violence between the state and non-state groups (see Frazer, Hutchings, 2019). However, there is no such discussion when considering the phenomenon of lynching. Given that broad theoretical

debates exist in this field, I want to focus on the conceptions of revolutionary violence, particularly when it comes to the challenges that lynching poses to the functioning and authority of the Mexican state. Some of the literature on lynching examined in Chapter One characterise it as a form of 'disorganised' and 'anonymous' violence. I consider that these features arise in the literature because there is a lack of theoretical and conceptual understanding of *non-instrumental* forms of political violence that can low explanation of the political character contained within lynching in relation to the state.

Without going so far as to say that lynching is in itself a revolutionary act, I will argue that some of the elements presented in the literature of revolutionary political violence can be drawn on for an interpretation of the phenomenon. In particular, this chapter will discuss Georges Sorel's book *Reflection on Violence* (1999) and Walter Benjamin's famous essay 'Critique of Violence' (2009), which together suggest a subversive account of the relationship between non-instrumental violence and the state. As Agamben suggests, "they both recognized the necessity of breaking the vicious circle of means and ends in order to discover a form of violence that would, by its nature, be irreducible to any other" (2009:107). Although I will not focus on a specific emotion – as I have done it in previous chapters – I will suggest an affective narrative of both theories in the first section of the chapter 'Theories of revolutionary violence', indicating how political emotions (fear, anger, anxiety, and frustration) manifest in contexts of violence as the *will to act for transformation.*

In order to make progress with the argument that lynching can be interpreted as transformative violence, the chapter will develop two main points. First, in the section 'Lynching as pure means', lynching will be discussed as an expression of non-instrumental violence through Sorel's notion of violence as necessity and Benjamin's conception of divine violence. From this, I will argue that lynching is a form of violence that goes beyond the relationship between the means and ends, and attempts to escape the cycle of law. This is possible because the violence manifest lynching embodies the political emotions that mobilise action, emotions that in themselves do not possess

an instrumental purpose. Second, my main contribution in this chapter will be in the section 'Lynching against the state' where I demonstrate the ambivalent character of lynching. This ambivalence is particularly important in the context of the neoliberal state, where anti-state narratives emerge strongly, provoking and challenging social and political transformations. Throughout this chapter, I connect the theoretical discussion of revolutionary violence with the contributions made by the Mexican political scientist Rhina Roux, who presents the narrative of the 'Mexican Prince' as an explanation for the 'fragmented' Mexican state. In addition, I return to the ideas of Antonio Fuentes Díaz presented in Chapter One, who understands lynching in Mexico as part of the current conditions of what he denominates 'grey zones of the state's power', which are in line with Roux's interpretation of the Mexican state.

This chapter concludes arguing that even though Sorel and Benjamin present a compelling framework for the interpretation of lynching, it is still not possible to categorise it as a revolutionary act. Nevertheless, what the revolutionary reading does is to enable an understanding of lynching as an expression of non-instrumental violence that aims to challenge a state that is fragmented, negating the mythos of its omnipotent power and control over society. This expression of political violence aims to communicate the contradictions of the modern myth of the capitalist state and the tensions which bring marginalised local communities, such as *San Juan Ixtayopan*, into conflict with it.

Theories of Revolutionary Violence

Georges Sorel and the General Strike

Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* represents one of the most controversial accounts of the theory of political violence. Influenced by Marxist theory, but also by many other sources such as Tocqueville's political thought, Nietzsche's philosophical work and Henri Bergson, Sorel proposed an understanding of violence through the notion of the 'strike' and the 'myth'. Both elements are

fundamentally related to conceptualising revolutionary violence by indicating what imaginary and symbolic conditions lead to radical transformations in society. As Frazer and Hutching point out, for Sorel "the central insight of Marxism was not the material determination of history but rather the idea or myth of the great catastrophic change" (2009: 53).

Violence in Sorel's thought constitutes a central means for social change, either as a pre-political manifestation of social disorder – inherent in modern societies – or as a political expression of the struggle against injustice (Arteaga & Magnoni, 2017: 24). This is because Sorel sees violence as beyond the relationship of means and ends (Frazer & Hutchings, 2009: 55), and revolutionary violence as a non-rational and non-instrumental violent action. He explains that it is because "violence […] is already on the scene" (Frazer & Hutchings, 2009: 56) that the material conditions for revolutionary violence emerge. In other words, following the argument presented in Chapter Five about the dialectic relationship between structural/subjective violence, I interpret Sorel's notion of violence as an expansion of the frontier of justice, one that in this case is revolutionary. Revolutionary violence exists because the violence of capitalism is constantly present.

Sorel assigned the action needed for a political revolution to the proletarian general strike, through syndicalist organisations. He argues that "syndicalism conceived the transmission of power not in terms of the replacement of one intellectual elite by another but as a process diffusing authority down into the workers' own organizations" (Jennings in Sorel, 1999: xviii). The political, in the form of the strike, represents a complete opposition to the bourgeoisie's monopolisation of violence which, in Sorel's theory, constitutes a means by which the bourgeoisie maintains its privilege and power. Therefore, the proletarian general strike embodies the contradictions that exist in capitalist societies, which are largely expressed through violent relations.

In order to sustain this position, Sorel argues for the existence of the *myth*. Potentially the most compelling aspect of Sorel's theory of violence is the understanding of a preconditioned consciousness which aims towards political transformation. Tager argues that Sorel's emphasis on

violence as a vehicle for political transformation reflects the importance of a myth based on and for social change, as opposed to the more traditional forms of politics as discourse or persuasion (2014: 630). As suggested by Salzani, Sorel's myth is described as pure; myth possesses an infinite quality, existing not as mere descriptions of things, but rather as "expressions of a will to act" (Salzani, 2008: 30). In this sense, the myth is a historical and socio-economic product, which is constituted by narrative, words and images that shape communities' experiences (Salzani, 2008: 31).

Similarly, Tager argues that "myth led to action through the formation of an 'imaginary world'" (2014: 48); a way in which people think about the future. In this sense, myth opposes notions of transformation which posit it as based on a sort of rational self-calculation. Instead, humans behave according to a notion of myth, which "grip[s] the mind which a much greater tenacity" (Tager, 2014: 626), allowing them to act in radical ways. Thus, myth is neither a religious construction nor an idea of utopia in which the future is determined by perfection. Rather, the myth is a call to action, an action that forces one to be present for the future. Therefore, "myth operate[s] in this obscure mysterious region that [holds] man's strongest impulses" (Tager, 2014: 627). I interpret this as the affective dimension of political action. Even though Sorel does not argue by way of emotions, this sense of 'will to act', that is a myth, contains the notion that communities (the proletarians) can act in concordance with their thoughts, experiences and emotions, not just by the rationale of aims.

For Sorel, this aspect of the consciousness of the proletarian general strike would allow workers to liberate themselves from capitalist violence, channelling instead revolutionary violence. In Tager's words, "only myths could move men across the threshold between speech and action by transcending politics based on rational calculation. Without myths, one could talk indefinitely of revolts without ever provoking one" (Tager, 2014: 629). Political myths are therefore a prophetic structure which projects into the future as a form of acting on the present (Bottici, 2009: 373).

These interpretations of Sorel's notion of the myth of the proletarian general strike are framed within a traditional understanding of revolutionary thinking. However, as mentioned above, I want to expand an affective interpretation of Sorel's notion of the uses of violence in order to quest for the contestations that lynching makes to the state's monopoly of force. To this end, I want to come back to Sorel's original idea:

> We know that the general strike is indeed what I have said: the myth in which Socialism is wholly comprised, i.e. a body of images capable of evoking instinctively all the sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of the war undertaken by Socialism against modern society. Strikes have engendered in the proletariat the noblest, deepest, and most moving sentiments that they possess; the general strike groups them all in a coordinated picture, and, by bringing them together, gives to each one of them its maximum of intensity; appealing to their painful memories of particular conflicts, it colours with an intense life all the details of the composition presented to consciousness. We thus obtain that intuition of Socialism which language cannot give us with perfect clearness—and we obtain it as a whole, perceived instantaneously (1999: 118)

Through this notion, I argue that essentially Sorel is developing a narrative of the myth as an affective phenomenon. Emotions (sentiments in Sorel's words) are the mobilising condition of the general strike within the proletarian movement. A strike is the manifestation of the collectivisation of communal emotions that run through the working class. Thus, the strike cannot be represented concretely, but through the emotional experiences of those in struggle, e.g. the noblest sentiments and painful memories, mentioned by Sorel. Through this affective interpretation, I argue that violence, in its figurative extension (pure violence), as well as in its 'striking and stabbing' sense (physical violence), works through the affections of those enacting and experiencing the violence.

Sorel's thoughts are relevant for an interpretation of lynching since it allows us to open up violence as a 'will to act' against forms of political and social injustice. Even though non-violent actions have also been understood as mechanism for fighting against injustice (see Atack, 2012), I am looking here at violent actions as a form to comprehend why communities, such as *San Juan Ixtayopan*, turn to violence in order to manifest their grievances to the state. Thus, following Sorel's theory, violent action is, in essence, the motor of transformation (revolution). For Sorel, this is embedded in the working-class. I will expand this idea throughout this chapter, by indicating that the parallel between lynching and Sorel's strike is an understanding of violence as non-instrumental action that expresses itself through the emotional responses of marginalised communities.

Therefore, for Sorel, the proletarian general strike symbolises a contestation of capitalist reification. For Sorel, traditional political violence – what he called the political general strike led by bureaucrats in unions – does not end capitalist violence but instead reproduces it. Thus, Sorel "envisioned a kind of pure violence without hatred or revenge, almost a spiritual weapon in the hand of the proletariat" (Tager, 2014: 630), which it builds up from a political myth of the proletarian imagining of a brighter future.

Walter Benjamin and Divine Violence

In the famous essay 'On the Critique of Violence', Walter Benjamin contributes to new understandings of revolutionary violence. In particular, Benjamin focuses on the inherent relationship between violence and the normativity of law (Frazer & Hutchings; 2010: 128). Making a distinction between 'natural' and 'positive' law, he states that the

> Theory of natural law, according to which violence is a natural given, is diametrically opposed to the positive-law theory of violence as a product of history. If the natural law can assess all existing law only on the basis of a

> critique of its ends, its positive counterpart can assess all emergent law only on the basis of a critique of its means (Benjamin, 2009: 2).

In both cases, violence is bound to the system law, meaning that violence fulfils the role of 'law-making' and 'law-preserving'. These forms of law are dialectically dependent on each other (Frazer & Hutchings; 2010: 128) working in a cyclical logic (Khatib, 2016: n/p). Therefore, those forms of violence existent in capitalist societies and enacted by the state result in the making of a new law, as a fateful cycle of conserving the violence of law-making and law-preserving (Müller, 2003: 469). This is what Benjamin called, mythical violence.

Benjamin established that "the mythic manifestation of immediate violence shows itself fundamentally identical with all legal violence, then its destruction becomes obligatory" (Salzini, 2008: 29). In agreement with Khatib, "whereas the position of natural law is often an issue when armed anti-hegemonic, anti-state, or anti-colonial struggles are to be legitimized, the opposite standpoint of positive law is normally put forward by the state in order to justify state repression and institutionalized coercion" (2016: n/p).

In this sense, the law is a parasitic form of violence wherein the myth of the state has appropriated the idea of a legitimate and eternal return to the performance of violence (Müller, 2003: 469). Preserving a system of law is only possible through a constant reaffirming of the acts and representations of violence, which are monopolised in the figure of the state. "Mythical violence thus pertains as much to the violence of the representation – its ability to strike or shock us – as it does to the representation of violence" (McCall, 1996: 187).

Therefore, the problem with mythical violence is that it is restricted to means and ends, that is, to the law which prescribes particular means and ends given in particular contexts and systems. The state and all its institutions, including the police (Benjamin, 2009: 12) guarantees the maintenance of social domination and the strength of the state (Artega, Magnoni, 2017: 30). Its function, then, is "to extend momentary violence over a temporal span, thus giving it an aura of duration in their

creation of an authorial, authorised power" (McCall, 1996: 191). This is particularly relevant because violence – in its performance and narrative figuration – always suggests a permanent action, which remains the same over different contexts, as a continuum that is "all-encompassing and remarkable as myth and law" (McCall, 1996: 192-193).

Hence, and in harmony with Sorel's idea of the proletarian general strike, Benjamin argues that all non-state uses of violence are threats to existing law, a form of "provoking law-preserving violence" (Frazer & Hutchings; 2010: 128). In opposition to mythical violence, Benjamin argues for an expression of violence as a pure manifestation that is not congealed in the rationality of law-making. Addressing the issues of instrumentality and immediacy (Müller, 2003: 468), Benjamin contraposes mythical violence to what he calls divine violence. Divine violence is defined as "law-destroying, boundary-destroying, breaking the cycle of law-making and law preservation" (Frazer & Hutchings; 2010: 129). In other words, Benjamin proposed an idea of violence that would oppose the state's monopoly of force, by actually destroying (both materially and symbolically) the reproduction of the mythical violence.

Divine violence "is manifested and sanctioned in everyday life" (Frazer & Hutchings, 2010: 129), positioning it entirely outside of state power. In this sense, it does not attempt to install law or justice in the form of rights but transforms the organisation of society as a whole (Artega, Magnoni. 2017: 32). It looks for a form of justice that is not a matter of mediation, but which is an "absolutely decisive, striking and terminating intervention" (Müller, 2003: 470) against the state's system of rule. I argue that Benjamin's divine violence presents similarities with Sorel's account of violence. In a context of perceived (mythical) monopolisation of violence by the state, a different type of violence emerges to disrupt that domination. Breaking the cycle of structural and subjective violence, as I argued in Chapter Five, is what the idea of divine violence in Benjamin's account represents.

Benjamin calls for divine violence that ends the cycle of capitalist violence, which has been historically reproduced through mythical violence. Benjamin characterises and relates this to a conception of human life as "the prison of a life reduced to 'natural life', that is, 'mere life', guilt and misfortune, which drag the human down and bring disaster upon them: the eternal recurrence of violence" (Salzani, 2008: 27). I will argue that this contestation to 'mere life' reproduced by mythical violence can be 'liberated' through an understanding of emotions that permit the surfacing of divine violence.

Lynching as the violence of 'pure means'

The necessity of violence

Arguing that violence is a motor of social transformation, Sorel and Benjamin engage with a non-instrumental understanding of political violence. This account posits political violence beyond its means and aims but aims to understand the implications that exist in the relationship between those means and ends. Considering this as a starting point, I argue that the violence of lynching represents an affective critique of the modern neoliberal state and its uses of violence. By representing this immaterial dimension of violence (with material ramifications), we discover that violence as non-instrumental action *affects* the forms in which we perceive other forms of violence as well, particularly those enacted by the state's forces.

In this context, I want to look at Sorel's justification of violence as based on the idea of necessity. Frazer and Hutchings argue that "is a matter of empirical context rather than conceptual or anthropological universals (…) meaning [that Sorel's] arguments for the necessity of violence is given context of the structural and systematic violence of the modern, capitalist and colonial state" (Frazer & Hutchings, 2007: 186). Therefore, within these circumstances, the use of violence seems to be for Sorel the only answer to the oppressive violence performed by the state. Other thinkers, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Simone de Beauvoir have also expounded this notion of

violence. As Frazer and Hutchings suggest, violence as a necessity must "attend to how violence actors discharge their violence" (2019: 64). This form of the necessity of violence echoes Sorel's position, in the sense that is a "strand of justificatory discourse in relation to violence. This is what we might call an expressive or creative strand, in which violence is justified to the extent that it expresses and instantiates as well as potentially furthers a particular value" (2019: 65).

When looking at lynching, necessity seems to be one of the narratives which flourished among the members of the community. A defensive attitude arose as a justification of the violence: "it was them or our kids" (LaPrensa0207), as a testimony argued when asked about the community's motives to act. Even at the point where the community was informed that the policemen were not in fact kidnapping children, they defended their need to take violent actions. For instance, one witness argued: "We do not know if there are kidnapped kids, but the rumour invades you and that makes you outraged. That someone takes away your son, what would you do? Wouldn't you kill to defend him?" (Reforma0216). Similarly, another member of the community added, "[a]s long our children are involved, we will always respond according to the circumstances. Yes, what we did was justified, because we were afraid that they [agents] were kidnappers" (ElGrafico, 0207). These narratives contain an element of justification as well as an element of reasoning for their actions. I place necessity amid these two understandings, the justification or will to act given the specific contexts (e.g. kidnapping of children). As I explained in Chapter Three, this fear reflects historical and systematic issues of violence lived by the community and Mexican society more generally.

Unpacking the meaning of 'necessity', we find that is to mean an essential requirement or to be in a situation which has forced you to take action; it is an indispensable thing. Thus, how does violence become a necessity? Sorel argues that capitalism produces necessities through economic restrictions, provoking "energetic pressure from below" (Sorel, 1999: 58) that is represented in the general political strike. According to his theory, the revolutionary myth is pure in its means, for which "they allow us to understand the activity, the sentiments and the ideas of the masses as they

prepare themselves to enter or a decisive struggle; they are not descriptions of things but expressions of a will to act" (Sorel, 1999: 28). I argue that to see violence as a necessity we need to look at the emotional conditions that also participate in the process of acting violently. In the case of lynching, this 'will to act' a push against the structural violence produced by the neoliberal's interests that have dominated the state of Mexico since the 1980s, but more acutely since the early 2000s.

Sorel's notion of the necessity of violence is certainly one that can be extrapolated as a universal, in opposition to Sorel's context-specific analysis. However, I do not aim to equate lynching with the general strike and less so with a revolution but to provide an argument in which it is possible to understand political violence outside of an instrumental realm of justification. Even though the violence of the general strike and lynching is different in context, they both share a principle of necessity of violence in order to end forms of structural oppression. In other words, the violence of lynching aims, as I will expand further in this chapter, to break with the violence produced by the state and the endless cycle of law-making and law-preserving that perpetuates the marginalisation of communities.

Illustrating this by way of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*, it can be seen that many voices of those involved express an immanent necessity to defend a community that was submitted to situations of injustice and violence. Drawing from Sorel's notion of the myth, I argue that due to the manner in which emotions of fear and anger *stick* and produce social relations through lynching, they also contribute to the creation of a mythos regarding the Mexican state. This myth permits those collective emotions to move, to challenge societal inertia (Salzani, 2008: 29), existing, as Sorel establishes, as "the activity, the sentiments and the ideas of the masses as they prepare themselves to enter on a decisive struggle" (Jennings in Sorel, 1999: xiv). In the case of lynching, the struggle is not the image of a Revolution, in Sorelian terms, but is the struggle around daily injustices and how structural violence is manifested, such as lack of access to basic material necessities,

disfranchisement from the political system and atomisation of social relations. All of these have been produced and exacerbated by neoliberal capitalist reforms, which have deepened the injustices and inequalities of Mexican society.

Along these lines, according to the Mexican political scientists Rhina Roux, the definition of the state of Mexico cannot be bound to its existence as a set of institutions or as an administrative apparatus. From a historical point of view, in order for the Mexican state to establish political and legal unity throughout its territory, it needed to alienate certain groups of civil society (e.g. indigenous groups, working-class) from the processes of state-formation, reproducing until today forms of colonial relations between marginalised communities and the state (Roux, 2009: 264). Roux claims that the state establishes a bond of command-obedience between rulers and the governed through the recognition (legitimacy) of political authority and through the use (monopoly) of violence (2009: 264), by the exclusion class and ethnicity groups from political participation. The Mexican state is interwoven with conflicts, rupture and negotiations between the dominant classes and subaltern groups – especially peasants and indigenous peoples – whose actions are moulded by experiences of oppression and cultivated by historical symbolic frameworks (Roux, 2009: 265).

This context of historical domination is where the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* can be placed. In particular, alienation from the state's authority under neoliberalism has allowed lynching to emerge amid historical structures of domination and the deepening of the rupture between the community and the state. The realisation of this rupture and the action of violence is, using Sorel's terms, not tied to 'reason', but to 'will' (Frazer & Hutchings, 2009: 54). I interpret this notion of will through what I argued in the Introduction of this thesis as the experience of violence. Thus, I consider the will for action as the capacity of acting by making sense of the world we live through our emotional trails, which are the combination of feelings, memories and thoughts. Thus, the fear of the disappearance of people has been historically constructed, based on experiences and narratives that

influenced the community's actions. This is particularly important to address, as the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* is an illustration of the dialectic between the particularities of a case and the general conditions of the state's structure, amid the experiences through which communities live this relation. One does not exist without the other, especially when we aim to understand that violence is not constrained by traditional understandings.

In this sense, and as I argued in Chapter Three, in the weeks before the lynching community members reported their fear of child abduction to the local authorities, without any consistent response (Reforma0201). This fear grew when rumours about the kidnapping of two children in the days prior to the lynching circulated around *San Juan Ixtayopan*, feeding collective anxiety (Reforma0208). The circulation of the rumours not just affected the members of the community, but also local authorities' attitudes and narratives during and after the lynching, largely due to the high possibility that these rumours were true. As the newspaper, *Reforma* reported, "faced with the reality that kidnapping may have been occurring, maybe the federal authority began to take seriously the claims of the community, rather than simply dismissing them as hysteria. When Admiral Jose Luis Figueroa, head of the Police (PFP) was talking to the journalist Adela Micha, at the same time that his subordinates were being burned (at 9 pm on Tuesday night), he said they were 'looking for kidnappers'" (Reforma0605). The experiences and sentiments of the rupture between the community and the state were not only grounded in the rumours, but also in the behaviour of the victims (police officers) and the politicians in general. A member of the community communicated to the press: "they [the three police officers] did not bring their badges and they were taking photos of the kids". In an open critique of politicians, members of the community declared in the same report: "while our politicians play cards, someone has to do something. It was all of us, and we would do it again" (Reforma0216). These narratives point to the complexity in interpreting lynching through the lens of 'necessity', because while it is not a transformative form of violence in itself, lynching reveals how the community had an irresistible urge to act; they had a will to enact

violence in order to contest their own reality of injustices – symbolised by the disappearances of children.

The rise of lynching in Mexico, as explained in Chapter One, came about with the implementation of neoliberal policies in the country in a context of what Roux has called 'fragmented state'. Neoliberalism, in particular, has created a cycle of capital concentration which has allowed the emergence of a new associated Mexican financial elite related to external capital, which displaced the traditional industrial bourgeoisie (Roux, 2009: 256). Focusing on a method of accumulation by dispossession – financial crisis, manipulation of the stock market, the rescue of banks and privatization of public companies and natural sources (Roux, 2009: 258) – the new elite aimed to govern through neoliberal policies (2009: 260). This led to the 2000 election of Vicente Fox, considered by many as the president of the businessmen. Breaking the collective imaginary initiated by the Mexican Revolution (1910) of the *omnipresent state*, this new oligarchy managed to dismantle the welfare state, disarm the material supports of the sovereignty and remove autonomy from the Mexican armed force. This imposition established further integration with the United States economy, a solid form of capitalist command that does not depend on commitments made with the subaltern classes (Roux, 2009: 260).

The rise of neoliberalism, however, did not mean the disappearance or retreat of the state, and neither what many scholars have called 'the failure of the state'. In opposition, the state under neoliberalism aimed to establish a new relationship between rulers and the governed, breaking the ties of solidarity and collective organisation that existed in previous stages of state capitalism in Mexico. The aim of neoliberal reforms is essentially the reconfiguring of society into an aggregate of isolated and unorganized individuals who cannot rely on the state or other members of their community for support (Roux, 2009: 260). This analysis resonates with the contributions made by Antonio Fuentes Díaz about lynching in the country (see Chapter One). He argued that "in the face of these transformations, some social actors have not reacted with citizen responses, on the

contrary, they reproduce the disorder" (Fuentes Díaz, 2006a: 60) and violence which, as Roux explains, produces a deeper disintegration in the relation between the state and marginalised communities. "The historical state weakness, its infiltration by organized crime and impunity, have led to gaps in the legitimate integration between the state and various sectors of the population." (Fuentes Díaz, 2006a: 69).

What is left in the disintegration of the relationship between marginalised communities and the state? A deepening of the 'fragmented state', which is the pure manifestation the cyclical reproduction of this strained relationship. To be more precise, what is left is the emotions of disappointment, fear and anger which are the expressive narratives that relate to the above described and can be interpreted as the necessity of violence, which does not operate as an instrument, but as a will to act. Returning to Chapter Five, and the commonality of the narrative 'taking justice into their own hands', we can unravel the enacting of this kind of violence that, whilst not justifiable, is not a strategic decision but the mobilisation of emotions that express the grievances of injustices lived under neoliberal conditions. In other words, it is when the contradictions become acute that violence arises, and it does not need to have an instrumental purpose on the basis of means and ends. Therefore, the necessity of violence in the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan* existed in a context of scarcity and onerous living conditions of insecurity and the state's abandonment of the community. In summary, as one of the members of the community in *San Juan Ixtayopan* explained: "I believe that these acts do not reflect more than the incompetence of the authorities to solve the problems, in this case, the insecurity. It is logical that people that feel threatened and are not taken care of, respond in this way in defending their security and that of their children" (ElGrafico0213).

Lynching against the 'mere life'

When Benjamin developed the distinction between mythical and divine violence, he wishes to propose a radical break with the cyclical rule of law. Thus, divine violence represents that force which can destroy the system of law, its preservation and its irrevocable cycle of violent means and ends. The violence of 'pure means' aims to eliminate violence itself from the social relations established in capitalist societies, presenting itself instead as pure expression looking to destroy the conditions in which a capitalist order is established. Benjamin argues for a rupture in the way in which the world exists as reification and fixedness, where the aims and means of violence form an instrumental logic. To strike out against such reification and fixedness is to challenge the very world itself, free from any rational or reasonable aim, which is not an aim in itself, but the violence that seeks to do away with the instrumental correlation of ends and means. This is particularly relevant when the state itself is fragmented, as with the Mexican state. This new configuration of the state under neoliberalism has dismantled the legal framework which has protected the rights of the subaltern classes, such as the disappearance of networks and commitments (legal and informal) tied to the welfare state, the transfer of public goods to private interests and the disappearance of constitutional powers which granted the nation original right over the land, natural goods and subsoil (Roux, 2009: 261). Instead, the state now imposes rationality of private exchange through the market, with a corresponding form of legitimacy and political command.

These transformations lived in Mexico over the past thirty years modified not just the specific composition of the dominant class – the financial oligarchy – but also changed the subaltern communities and their world. This was affected by the increase of inequality in the distribution of social wealth, leading to greater impoverishment. As well, it affected previous forms of sociability and collective organisation, replaced by more individualised and fragmented forms of social relations (Roux, 2009: 269). Roux argues that throughout Mexican history there has been an 'ontological fracture' of the Mexican nation, which has been masked through the notion of legal

equality of the liberal Republic and the ideological project of a culturally homogenous *mestizo*[25] society. The legal structure ideology and culture of the liberal *mestizo* Republic was a form of unification which encompassed all citizens, regardless of their position in the community. This form of narrative was useful for the post-revolutionary period in order to deliver a coherent political project. However, with the introduction of neoliberal policies, we see that the mask of the liberal project has failed to maintain the so-called social order and unification increasing those moments of rupture not only between the state and communities but also within marginalised communities themselves. These cracks are manifested not only economically but also symbolically in the disfranchisement from politics, the fragmentation of communal organisation and the overall atomisation of societal relationships.

Looking at the lynching, this is what the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* was expressing around the events. In a way, the lynching was a claim for reviving communal relationships lost, or as Snodgrass calls an 'agentive moment' (see Chapter One), as well a demonstration of the atomisation of those relationships – with the state – through the pure manifestation that is what Benjamin called 'mere life'. "We condemn the apathy and the total disinterest shown by the authorities of the Delegation of *San Juan Ixtayopan*" (ElGrafico0209), stated a banner in the local main square days after the lynching and as a consequence of the police raid in the community. I relate these communal expressions to Walter Benjamin's thought through two elements: (i) divine violence ends with the 'mere life', which means the end of the disposable life of those marginalised, and (ii) it represents a 'truthful justice' or an expansive frontier of justice, which is not subsumed by the system of law.

Benjamin addressed the problem of 'mere life' in the essay 'Critique of Violence', as that life which is only considered in natural or biological terms, not in the way that is lived. In Benjamin's words,

[25] *Mestizo* refers to the ethnical categorisation that exists from the mix between European and Indigenous Americans. Historically used in Latin American countries and the Philippines (regions colonised by Spain) that has its roots in the word: *mestizaje*, which literally translate into English as 'miscegenation'.

"mythical violence is blood over mere life for its own sake, its divine counterpart is pure violence overall life for the sake of the living person" (Benjamin, 2009: 24). 'Bare life', as Agamben would interpret later, represents in contemporary terms that life which is quantified but not lived, a life that is merely subsistence and which excludes experiences and feelings. Agamben claims:

> The fundamental categorical pair of Western politics is not that of friend/ enemy but that of bare life/political existence, zoēl bios, exclusion/inclusion. There is politics because man is the living being who, in language, separates and opposes himself to his own bare life and, at the same time, maintains himself in relation to that bare life in an inclusive exclusion (Agamben, 1995: 8)

In other words, and in relation to Benjamin's original definition, mere life and "law as a manifestation of the mythic thus condemns the human to remain imprisoned within natural life; it condemns them to the guilt of mere life, whose symbol is blood. Mythic violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake and demands sacrifice" (Salzini, 2008: 28). Therefore, the bare life is a product of modern states in which this life is lived through guilt, a life of perpetual culpability. This bare life is the life of those marginalised from society, those that are affected by power over life, those who have been deprived of 'good life' as the expression of the political.

Even though Benjamin does not reflect upon affects in the tension between life as biological and life as the quality in which it is lived. I argue that these dichotomies exist in the same form as the division of reason and emotion. If mythical violence (the law) has control over the 'bare life' (biological self), it has control not just over our bodies (who can and who cannot use violence), but is rationalised in the mere actions of our bodies (who break or who does not break the law), without actually considering how those bodies, as 'good life', are living in determined social and political conditions. Therefore, emotions are left outside of the 'bare life', they are in opposition to reason, to law and to (justified) violence.

For Benjamin, and as explained earlier in the chapter, the only way of repealing 'bare life' is through violence that is pure in its means. Revoking the 'mere life' is possible with an understanding of emotion as a political component of the expressions of such violence. The divine violence in Benjamin stands against a principle of guilt and retribution, which is the foundation of the modern system of law and its morality, a nexus that is embedded within the mythical beliefs surrounding the modern state (Khatib, 2016: n/p). Following Sorel, Benjamin advocates for a relationship between the proletarian general strike and violence, which becomes pure means, without any particular goals but rather an abolition of state power that could end with the circular logic of mythical violence and bare life.

Divine violence looks to broaden the frontier of justice and is not interested in establishing laws but to 'dramatize the class struggle' (Arteaga & Arzuaga, 2017: 33) as a ruptural moment which challenges the very understanding of what it means to live beyond reification. In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan* and within the Mexican context, it is possible to see some of these elements, which by no means successfully ended the logic of mythical violence, but did challenge the 'bare life' as controlled by the system of law. Lynching symbolically and emotionally dramatizes that suspension of 'bare life' to which communities are submitted. Testimonies from neighbours warned that "it was heavy, but this will serve as a warning for those who want to make their own in this community" (LaPrensa0207); "the crowd continued with the lynching to protect their children and to make it known that the community has *the guts*" (ElGrafico0101).

In sum, what Benjamin's distinction of non-instrumental violence provides for an understanding of lynching is the capacity of collective emotions and experiences of violence to challenge the conditions of life that are experienced by marginalised communities for decades, but specifically in current conditions of neoliberal capitalism where those forms of 'bare life' have been intensified. As Walter Mignolo points out in the context of post-colonial societies, such as Mexico:

> Dispensable lives are instead the consequences of the racist foundation of economic capitalist practices: cost reductions, financial gains, accumulation to re-invest to further accumulation, are economic goals that put human lives in second place. Racism is necessary rhetoric in order to devalue, and justify, dispensable lives that are portrayed (by hegemonic discourses) as less valuable (2009: 81)

When revising the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, an epitome of these practices is reflected not in the form of racism, but by the devaluing of human life experiences. The living conditions of the community are not only bare in the sense of economic marginalisation but are bare in the devaluing of the sense of community. The fight against mythical violence seems to be a necessity – in Sorel's terms – for communities whose lives have become dispensable. In Fuentes Díaz's words, lynching occurs in Mexico because of disembodiment and lack of internalisation of the system of law, which "gave rise to forms of mediation [violence] parallel to the legal guidelines of the state"(Fuentes Díaz, 2006a: 112), forms which are interpreted through local contexts and serve to challenge the state's monopoly of violence. Drawing from Benjamin, I interpret the divine violence of lynching as the embodiment of 'attempting for a good life', in which the pure reason of law does not rule and rule out, those marginalised from society. Therefore, it seems to the community that using violence is an expression of revoking or suspending bare life as it is determined and sustained historically by the system of law.

Lynching against the state

Lynching and non-institutionalised violence

One of the elements that is present in *San Juan Ixtayopan* 's lynching is a counter-state narrative. As I exposed in Chapter Five, a prominent sentiment of enacting justice beyond the state's limits predominates in the recorded perceptions of the community members. This is largely confirmed

by a negation of the ways that local and national authorities negotiated and acted in relation to the lynching, but also how they have perceived it as a vile, illegal and barbaric expression of their society. As Roux claimed, when we look at the 'Mexican Prince' not as a ruler, but as an incarnation of institutions and symbols, it becomes a representation of class domination through the embodiment of a command-obedience relationship between communities and those institutions, as a form of social relations (2009: 242). When the fragmentation is deepened, that embodiment can be broken, producing the rise of extra-state and extra-legal forms of violence.

Drawing an analogy with Sorel's proletarian general strike, lynching moves closer to a political manifestation than to a simple crime. The vitality through which lynching occurs allows us to understand that the phenomenon is built on material conditions and social necessities supported by collective emotional narratives which are historically constructed. As Sorel's strike, lynching is a non-institutionalised and concentrated form of violence which happens outside state institutions and beyond the bounds of the political elite.

As we have seen in the above section, the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* exemplifies the condition of class marginalisation in Mexico - 'mere life'. Located in the peripheral area of Mexico City, this area is characterised by its large indigenous population, low income, high unemployment and high levels of drug dealing (see Chapter Two). Poverty, of course, is not the exclusive condition for lynching, let alone violence, as many of the poorest communities in Mexico have not turned to lynching to express their emotions of fear, anger and frustration toward economic and social inequality. Nonetheless, the violence of lynching is a result of that rupture in the relationship between the state and marginalised communities, a crack that has been expanded under neoliberalism.

This is demonstrated by how lynching seizes control over the notions of justice and punishment, leaving the state out of the intervention and even its understanding. Looking at the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, the anger and frustration demonstrated in the lynching against the police officers

did not carry concrete aims but did challenge the system as a whole. For a few hours, the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* took total control over the juridical system, not allowing the state to interfere and using this total control to foreground the limitations and problems that they were facing. This is reflected in their counter-state narratives: "We did not kill anyone here, we enacted justice with our own hands. So, you can see that we are saying it, we do not believe in the justice of Marcelo Ebrard, neither in the Attorney Bernardo Batiz, nor the President's government" (LaPrensa0208).

Following Benjamin's critique of violence, these emotions are part of the contestation that exists between mythical and divine violence. On the one hand, we have a community expressing through violence the need to end 'all kinds of violence', while at the same time you have the state and its institution reacting toward the lynching as a form of 'barbarism' and 'uncivilised' practise, in an attempt to reproduce that same system of law. In an interview with the National Ombudsman of Mexico on the 25th November 2004, he states:

> The mob not only took the lives of two police officers (…) but also put into question, again, the institution of justice and shocked the rule of law in the country. Getting justice from one's own hand is anything but justice (…) respect everyone within the law, without forgetting that this is the only instrument to nominate coexistence and social relations (LaPrensa0202).

He continues by stating the lynching expressed an "irrational empire of the mob, which does not render accounts to anyone of its actions, it is driven by the worst instincts, is waged as an exercise of violence, vengeful resentment and death. It allows for the emergence of an uncivil society and weakens the possibility of strengthening a democratic order". (LaPrensa0202). Similarly, members of the parliament claimed days after the lynching that "the barbarism registered in *San Juan Ixtayopan* needs to be investigated (…) We cannot allow our institutions responsible for

safeguarding the safety of Mexicans to be subjected to the free shelter of crime and justice of their own hand." (Reform0302).

Without using the categorisations of 'barbarism' but implying the same defence of state rule of law members of the Supreme Court communicated that "the law and institutions should be the means that will free us from the anarchy that threatens us, and at the same time provide us with a less wild country, more humane, less torn apart and happier, under the obligation that the men who direct their destiny have the obligation to provide justice, and benevolence towards 'the other'" (LaPrensa0809). Similarly, the President of Mexico at the time added:

> The fight against crime cannot and should not be done in isolation, so the authorities must work in common agreement, as a team. I also encourage that the population must be present in that struggle. Today more than ever, we need a vigilant society, defenders of the law. We want to join efforts, achieve greater efficiency in these tasks, hence our saying that the battle against crime must be won (LaPrensa0805)

Therefore, the major concern for the state was the uncertainty and incapacity to control a part of the population by using traditional forms of force. Perceiving that this community was able to surpass their functions through the pure manifestation of the anger of violence, local and national authorities became nervous. In other words, the simple challenge of ending the cycle of mythical violence is a sign of how lynching becomes a form of political violence, regardless of its success in overturning this cycle completely.

Even though lynching can be considered a non-instrumental form of political violence, I want to argue here that lynching also represents an ambivalence. The state fought against the existence of lynching; "the lynching is not new, but the impunity that has prevailed in the ten cases that have occurred in the last four years in different communities meaning such acts have gone unpunished forces us to review the matter" (Reforma0308), whilst at the same time trying to understand why lynching was occurring in the country by making visible the unjust conditions in which this

contestation to law emerged from (e.g. "the obligation to provide justice"). This occurs because particularly in Mexico, the state exists in what Fuentes Díaz called, a grey zone. "An area of the social and political space characterized by indistinct practices between legal and illegal, between institutional and non-institutional political" (Fuentes Díaz, 2006b: 421). Therefore, lynching emerges in the grey zone, wherein the state cannot condemn it nor accept and/or allow it.

This reaffirms what was expressed by Roux, the Mexican state is not incomplete, weak or failed (Fuentes Díaz, 2006b: 420), but fragmented in its relations with communities to a point where when external economic and social conditions worsened, the grey zone emerged as, in Agamben's terms, a state of exception. Fuentes Díaz characterised these moments as the lack of distinction between the law and exception in which the law loses it meaning for some communities, creating spaces for the violence of self-defence or popular justice, as is the case of lynching. Even when the state, through the police, attempts to restore the meaning of legality, communities subvert "the criminal order with illegal strategies" (Fuentes Díaz, 2018: 136).

From this perspective, newspapers reported that "the facts demonstrate the existence and the development of a culture of illegality and violence. But they [politicians] did nothing and even seemed to justify these events on the basis of some 'uses and customs', unalterable due to necessity" (Reforma0804). Along these lines, the Mexican Member of the Parliament, Diego Fernandez de Cavallos pointed out that "with the reprehensible facts of *San Juan Ixtayopan* the primitive and criminal expression of giving human hearts to the millennial *Huitzilopoxtli* appears again", referring to the Mexican native god of war, as an analogy of the primitivism of the community's actions.

However, local and national authorities were not the only ones attempting to maintain the cycle of law-making and law-preserving. Primitivism and barbarism are narratives opposed to a civilised regime of natural law, as well as to a civilised society. In the case of Mexico, it is commonly accepted that civilization came as an import from abroad, through colonisation first, but later

through foreign investment and culture. This, of course, has been reinforced by hundreds of years of religious indoctrination from the Catholic Church. As Mignolo points out, "modern/colonial international law came to light in the Christianity's double bind: to defend themselves in Western Europe and to justify their conquest of the New World" (2009:84). In particular, within all the changes that occurred in the last thirty years, the power of the Church is one that has maintained itself, proving their power in society and the Mexican elite.

Therefore, they were not absent from the critique of the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*. As reported in the aftermath of the event, the Archdiocese of Mexico published a message in the editorial of their weekly magazine *'Desde la Fe'*, in which they expressed with energy and indignation that the "wild and the merciless lynching of the policemen" (LaPrensa0602) has no place in Mexican society. This shows that the 'power of evangelisation' is also a tool for maintaining the system of law.

This is reinforced by Benjamin's critique:

> It follows from this maxim that the law sees violence in the hands of individuals as threatening to undermine the legal system. As threatening to frustrate legal ends and law enforcement, perhaps? Oh no; because then what would be condemned is not violence pure and simple but only violence employed for unlawful ends (Benjamin, 2009: 5)

In this sense, Benjamin allows us to understand lynching through the contradictions of positive and natural law. Lynching does not justify its ends through the means of violence, and of course it does not represent a legal mean for (un)just ends. Thus, lynching could be interpreted as divine violence which defies the system of law and, in fact, lives beyond it. Although, this can only occur because of the affective dimension of violence in a lynching. As I have analysed throughout this thesis, the stickiness of the emotions of fear and anger exist and live beyond the imposition of a 'bare life' through a system of rule. In the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, this is symbolically represented in how the community enforced violence against those who were determined to enforce and

preserve the law itself, that is, the police. However, lynching, in general, represents an ambivalence of character, in that those committing the lynching seem to be mimicking punishment (as I examined in Chapter Five), while at the same time attempting to claim back justice as their own.

This ambivalence does not seem to fulfil Benjamin's vision of divine violence as the explosion and termination of all law, though I argue that by looking at the non-instrumental notion of violence allows us to reflect upon the importance of emotions in the imagination of divine violence as a possibility of change. In other words, by enacting violence outside all form of positive law, lynching becomes a chance for imagining a life beyond survival, a life that communities can control themselves, which I claim embodies Benjamin's conception of divine violence. This mirrors Snodgrass' notion of lynching as an 'agentive moment' (2004) in which communities are capable of building their own autonomy through the uses of violence.

The above can be further illustrated with the significant symbolism embodied in the lynching of two policemen *San Juan Ixtayopan*. As Benjamin argues himself, "police violence is (…) is law-establishing its functions and is law-upholding for it places itself at the disposal of those end" (Benjamin, 2009: 12). As the story stands, the policemen were denied the possibility of defence of themselves, undermining their power and function in society, as well as eroding the role of mythical violence. According to the newspaper report, the police allege that "by the time we received the order to go to the scene of the lynching, it was already too late. We arrived at the scene at 22:00 to retrieve the bodies and even at that point there were too many angry people which prevented us from carrying out the work necessary to control the area". The report continues,

> That day we learned at six-thirty in the afternoon that our colleagues were in the middle of a crowd of people and that they were going to be lynched, however, the hours passed and the commanders told us to be patient, they are going to rescue some person. The elements of the PFP argued that when they arrived at

the scene, a boss told us they did not kill them, and immediately they retreated (LaPrensa0313).

In this sense, I claim that what is relevant in the understanding of lynching is its main – and probably most simple – characteristic, it does not have an instrumental purpose, it expresses something beyond-and-against the system of rule that imposes forms of behaving and using violence in society. This does not mean that there are not ambivalences in the process. As I explained in this section, the mimetic as well the overthrowing characteristic of the violence in lynching is present by means of the emotions that emerge in the action as a response to the conditions of 'bare life'. Nevertheless, lynching is overtly in opposition to the state's authority, which conforms and posit its main political dimension.

Creating and fighting myths

Agreeing with Müller's interpretation of Sorel, the myth can be seen as the imagination of the present moment, as to how people frame themselves in present action. It does not offer a utopian future but only operates as the imaginative force that enables us to destroy and transform the current state of things (2003:628). Ultimately, the myth in Sorel's theory is the capacity of imagining a revolution in place. Based on this notion, the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* was mobilized through two dimensions of myth, one that concretely visualises a fatalistic present against one that conceives a better future. This interrelated imagination is produced mainly by the effect that the state has on people's lives. Here, I am not looking at the state as an apparatus and/or a set of institutions, but as Roux establishes, as a form of social relations.

In this sense, when thinking about a 'fatalistic present' built into the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan*, the sentiments emerging were of tiredness and despair against authorities. For instance, when a newspaper asked people across the country about their impression of the lynching, many of the opinions expressed were ones of understanding and justification: "People are tired of there being no authorities and that the laws are useless, we need them to do their job well"

(ElGrafico0213). This sentiment carries a connotation of responsibility for fixing an existing problem in the authorities. Even though there is no clarity in this narrative in terms of what the problem actually is (e.g. inefficiency, corruption, violence), what really underlines it is the imaginary of a fragmented state that only works for the few.

Returning to the discussion about 'failed state' presented in Chapter One, I argue with Roux that when looking at the Mexican state it is important to understand the historical process of dispossession that constituted it. Thus, we are not confronted with a 'failed state' but a 'fragmented' one that was shaped by the exclusion of part of the society, creating the forms of uncertainty and mistrust that we see operative in the case of lynching. With the fragmentation of the 'Mexican Prince' we are not referring to the absence of a ruling elite, an army and an apparatus of public administration, but to the collapse of the body politic, which makes possible the existence of centralised and unified state power in the first instance.

In particular for the case of lynching, the erosion of the welfare state since the 1980s triggered emotions of fear and anger, but also created an imaginary among people of the urgent need to take action into their own hands, to make authorities "do their job better" (ElGrafico0213). As I have been arguing throughout this chapter, the myth that aims for the disruption (destruction) of the current state of things is exacerbated under neoliberalism, primarily because its main composition of individualising communities can only produce violence that is equally autonomous and anonymous, as with lynching.

In particular, such processes had a greater impact on historically impoverished communities, such as farmers and indigenous people, in which dispossession was not only lived through the labour market but also through the systematic dismantling of their relationship with their land and territory. In Mexico, indigenous peoples and peasants were isolated through a historical narrative that characterised them as an archaic society. Thus, one of the main consequences of neoliberal policies was the proliferation of autonomous forms of organization of communities against

dispossession and in defence of their life (Roux, 2016: n/p). Particularly here, Roux refers to vigilantes and 'popular security' actions.

An affective dimension of this situation is the expansion of the frustration at the abandonment and disfranchisement of political life: "There is repressed impotence among people over the merciless attacks of criminals against citizens, which has caused everyone to suspect everyone. But that murder [the lynching] is not justifiable, because if repeated we will end up, through imaginary aggression, against ourselves" (ElGrafico0213). This relates in a similar way to what Roux expressed as the severing of communitarian bonds over the last few decades, which has led to widespread distrust and fear. In this sense, lynching is deeply and fundamentally connected to the conditions in which these communities live, and how violence plays a role within their communities. With this statement, I am not claiming that lynching is a simple 'consequence' or 'symptom' of the system, nor that it is an instrument for challenging the system itself, but that lynching demonstrates (expresses) the intersection of dispossessions created in a post-colonial state under neoliberalism.

In this sense, Sorel's myth is largely embodied in the *San Juan Ixtayopan* lynching. A collective preconceived myth of a fatalistic present, characterised by fear and narratives of the disappearance of people, is the prerequisite for violent praxis. It is the myth that permits the collective to move, to break the inertia (Salzani, 2008: 29). The violence of lynching is the one that clears up the storm in which the mythical violence – in Benjamin's terms – takes place.

As a community member stated "the significant thing is that the community has felt attacked and does not feel that the police protect them (…) it seems that there is a pact of silence among the neighbours of Ixtayopan to protect themselves, placing the guilt on other people from outside the community" (Reforma0309). I consider this to be relevant since the community seeking to protect itself is also a sign of the 'fragmentation' explained above. The community was unconsciously prepared to send a clear message of collective ownership over the lynching. This, therefore, was

an attempt to prevent the persecution of individuals, as the system of law could not persecute a community. For a moment, the community, were the source of law-revoking and law-destroying, in Benjamin's words.

Considering Sorel's position, the general strike is seen as the only political act capable of confronting the myth of the state (Arteaga & Magnoni, 2017: 27) as the protective, omnipresent political system that monopolises violence through the legal order. Lynching becomes that vital force, which is capable to communicate and interpellate, as I said in Chapter Five, the 'Mexican Prince'. Roux's '*El príncipe fragmentado'* follows a neo-Gramscian interpretation of Machiavelli's Prince, wherein she argues that the figure of the Prince is not a natural or finite person, but instead a representation of sovereign power and the unity and immortality of the political body of the state (2009: 242). This process attempts a historical explanation of the manner in which the state is transformed into an ongoing relationship to global powers and the perpetual restructuring of capitalism through the nineteenth century to now.

However, at the same time, and here I want to return to the notion of ambivalence, the mythos of the state's authority challenged through the violence and the emotions expressed in the lynching become unproductive when the system of law does not stop existing because of its violence. Moreover, the law continues its cycle in the aftermath of the lynching by arresting members of the community, attempting to punish them and continuing to operate as usual.

Conclusion

In summary, Sorel and Benjamin's accounts of violence permit us to understand the political aspect of the violent action of lynching. Agreeing with Martel's discussion on Benjamin's notion of justice, the question that arises in the context of lynching in Mexico is similar: "What happens when the central organizing narrative of law and justice is disrupted or decentred? What kind of politics are

we left with when such basic organizing principles are removed (however temporarily)?" (2001: 160).

Using the metaphor of Kafka's story 'Before the Law', Martel argues that "justice is what is promised by the law; its possibility is what keeps us obedient, patient, and hopeful" (Martel, 2011: 159). However, as in Kafka's story, the idea of justice never arrives, and the law seems to be natural, immovable. The tales do not reveal the 'truth' of these legal and political practices, because – as we know – the main character never gets to see or know the law (Martel, 2011: 159).

On the contrary, lynching seems to be something 'after/beyond the law', a temporary suspension of the system of law and criteria of justice which opens up the real significance of what these elements mean in modern capitalist Mexico. The lynching allows us to reveal the 'truth' of those social and political elements that moved the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan* to act violently. In this sense, beyond seeing it as a strictly revolutionary force, lynching represents a political manifestation that vitalises the frustration and fear which is present in communities marginalised by the processes of accumulation by dispossession. Lynching appears in the cracks of the modern capitalist state in order to communicate with violence what is being silenced by the fragmentation of the Mexican welfare state, revealing the enduring myth of the state.

In a newspaper at the time, there was a question that prompts reflection along the lines of Benjamin and Sorel: "are we really tired of the violence?" (LaPrensa0803). Part of the argument provided states that:

> If there was a sense of legality, lynching would never have happened. The federal investigation agents would not have been executed either. It is the classic and obvious execution, which leaves the authorities stumped, mainly because it shows that the institutions of security and justice cannot take responsibility, and this is a danger for the country because we are then in an open national security crisis. On the other hand, the mutiny and the excess of brute force with which the police officers were killed in

> *San Juan Ixtayopan* also make it very clear that no police corporation is ready to react to such barbarism which awaits us. What else is it if not the application of the well-known phrase: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth? (LaPrensa0803)

Agreeing with Arteaga and Arzuaga (2017), the work of Sorel and Benjamin provide us with the elements necessary to understand political violence as a dramatization of social tensions and conflicts, such as fear and rage produced within marginalised communities, as in the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan*. In this sense, lynching is an action which allows certain communities to confront the myth of the state's system of rule, as the protective, omnipresent, unique political system that monopolises violence through the legal order. Lynching, therefore, is vital and communicative, without wanting to be a rational instrument of force.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that contemporary lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence, especially when looking closer to its affective dimension. By examining the case of *San Juan Ixtayopan* in Mexico City, I explored the different scopes that characterise the phenomenon of lynching, illustrating through this case the importance of understanding the relationship between emotions and violence in society. This affective reading of political violence aimed to contribute to a debate on the subject as lived experiences, that could permit future researches on violence to consider emotions as a central element of interpretation.

To conclude, I want first to recap the four main analytical chapters exposed in this thesis in order to highlight its main arguments. Second, I expand on what I consider to be the two primary contributions of this thesis: (i) Lynching provides an important illustration of the types of violence that remain unseen and misunderstood in the discussion of political violence; (ii) emotions are an important analytical dimension for the identification and conceptualisation of political violence.

Recapitulation

I started my analytical argument in Chapter Three, by scrutinising the common narratives in media about lynching, drawing from the lens of the theory of 'moral panics'. I contested both, the notion of

'moral panics' and the portrayal of media about lynching, by introducing the importance of looking at emotions in the analysis of violence. In this sense, this chapter allowed a contextualisation of how lynching is commonly understood, while addressing the importance of the 'crisis of authority' historically constituted an element that produces the violence of lynching. In other words, in this chapter I argue that the violence ruptures and interrupts the political, not by simply eruptions of temporary anxiety (e.g. rumours), but as a result, what Sara Ahmed calls the 'sticky' feelings of fear (2004c) accumulating over time in the community, which are the product of sociohistorical experiences.

In Chapter Four, I began to dig into the notion of the spectacle of violence from the perspectives of Ives Winter and Michel Foucault, which allowed me to establish that the spectacle of lynching aims to communicate through what I called, interpellation. A form of communication of grievances that do not involve speech but contains – in the violence – the interruption of dialogue (*interpellatus*) in order to express what otherwise stays quiet. I argue that interpellation only occurs because anger, as the emotion that attempts to reveal those grievances, emerges as the non-verbal part of the communication process that is the spectacle. Nevertheless, interpellation, as a political process, gets 'blocked' when we introduce the dimension of the crowd. An angered crowd, that is characteristic of lynching, fails to politicise its grievances because society, especially the traditional political sphere, denies the spectacle of the crowd as a sufficient tool for communication. This dilemma does not suggest that lynching is an a-political act, but rather reflects the difficult relationship between violence and politics, when spectacular brutality persists in the front, hiding the meanings that the experience of such violence have on the community of *San Juan Ixtayopan*.

Thus, in Chapter Five, I argued that lynching can be considered a form of political violence that exists within the dialectic relationship between structural and subjective violence. Primarily influenced by the discussions on structural violence (Galtung) and subjective violence (Žižek), I claimed that by expanding, what I conceptualised as, the frontier of justice – that is, the ways in which a community

feels and expresses a will to retribution – the community demonstrates and seeks to address the incapacity of the state to respond to their grievances. Additionally, I extended upon another ambivalence which exists within the act of lynching, which is *the right to* demonstrate condemnation and who in society holds such a right. Lynching, as I suggest, creates a rupture through anger as the will for retribution and thus challenges the notion of who is capable to enact justice in society and how punishment should be expressed.

Finally, I examined the affective dimension of political violence in lynching by exploring the debate around the state's monopoly of violence. If justice is questioned in the act of lynching, then certainly lynching is also a challenge to who normally hold the capacity for justice in their hands, the state. I argued here that even though lynching is not an act of revolutionary violence, it manages to vitalise the fears, anger and anxieties that otherwise are contained within individuals and communities. Lynching is a form of political violence because it allows a community to dramatize the underlying social tensions and conflicts that exist within a neoliberal capitalist society.

Recapitulating these four main arguments permit to introduce the two main contributions made in this research. These two major contributions are primarily theoretical, as I consider this thesis sits in the realm of political theory, though, I also want to highlight that another relevant contribution made by this thesis was the possibility to known in depth the case of lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan*. The research provides detailed insides of the case that reflect on the empirical findings collected during the fieldwork, which I expect can contribute further research on lynching in Latin America through the analysis of media archive and police reports. Then, I further explain the two theoretical contributions that I have named: (i) the re-surfacing of lynching and (ii) emotions amid politics and violence.

The re-surfacing of lynching

One of the issues I have extensively scrutinised in this thesis is the notion of lynching as 'barbarism' and 'criminality'. This view of lynching is pervasive, meaning that the media, politicians and also scholars in Latin America have continually struggled to identify the political dimension of lynching, or even explain to what extent lynching can be seen as part of politics. The extreme use of violence in this act becomes inexplicable (unreasonable) for the majority of those who have witnessed it, making the challenge of traditional interpretations all the more difficult. The brutality of lynching is in a way the totality of its interpretation, leaving those elements that constituted it underneath. However, this also happens with many other forms of violence in society. We remain perplexed by the spectacle and the brutality of extreme violence to the extent that we lose perspective on what they may represent within our society. Thus, the contribution I have made is to re-surface lynching as a relevant violent phenomenon that can inform debates on political violence more generally.

I have defined lynching as a form of extreme violence that involves the killing and/or the torture of individuals who have been condemned and punished outside the system law by a community that is under the pressure of severe social and political grievances. Furthermore, lynching is always enacted by a crowd. As a collective action, lynching does not represent a particular set of ideas or organisation, but it is the expression of a community that gathers together in the struggle around similar economic and social conditions. This is something I consider left outside of our understanding of lynching by the literature on political violence. Because the community does not possess *reasonable* aims and is not acting in pursuance of a clear political goal (e.g. take over the state, transform the political system, etc.) lynching tends to be classified as purely criminal and apolitical action. However, as I have claimed throughout this thesis, lynching can be interpreted as a form of political violence because of its affective communicative dimension. Lynching breaks the 'political' with violence, allowing those normally without a voice in politics, to express their grievances.

As I argued in Chapter One, lynching falls somewhere between a private and public expression of violence. On the one hand, it is interpersonal (it does not seem to be acting *directly* against the state's apparatus), whilst at the same time it is public; it acts within the public space and it creates (shakes) the public realm as a space of civility (as discussed in Chapter Four). Even though the violence of lynching is not explicitly directed towards the state, this does not mean that it is not attempting to interpellate, so, to disrupt and interrupt its normal functioning. The state as implicated in the concerns of the community. It is necessary for the conception of lynching to see beyond the surface appearance of the phenomenon.

Seeing beyond the surface appearance of lynching is achieved within this thesis by examining the act as an affective enacting of violence. The interpretation of violence by way of emotions gives scope to navigate lynching as an experience that cannot (and should not) be limited by its legal-illegal status nor by its cause-consequence dimensions; but instead through how the violence is experienced from the perspective of those who enacted, received and witnessed it.

The experience of violence, as I exposed in Chapter Five and Six, works through different dimensions. First, the most obvious form of violence is experienced by the victims of the lynching; the cruelty of the torture and burning of the bodies is the primary focus of the event. Second, the violence has a daunting effect on those who enacted it; the lynchers are not exempt from experiencing violence through the ripples of emotion that the lynching provokes. In this sense, violence can be seen also in the way that the community was strongly repressed by the police after the events, as well as subjected to discrimination and exclusion. However, and more significantly, they were also subjected to something that has been a primary focus of this thesis, namely, to the structural violence under neoliberalism that serves to (re)produce the conditions under which these forms of subjective violence emerge. Third, lynching *affects* those who have witnessed it, whether through the media or directly. The extreme violence of lynching creates ripples, as Bufacchi and Gilson called it or waves as Galtung expresses it, of emotions that can fundamentally alter the ways in which we feel about violence in our societies. These feelings might serve to reproduce what we already feel (e.g. 'this is

barbarism') or it might change the way we look at marginalised communities enacting this violence, permitting to enter to the darkest side of current neoliberal conditions, those that are driven by a force of, as in lynching, uncontrollable violence.

Emotions amid politics and violence

I consider that another important contribution of this thesis is to help establish the relationship between political violence and emotions. I explained in Chapter Five the importance of looking at the dialectic of structural and subjective violence, as a way of understanding that there are political dimensions to lynching that might not be obvious at first. Thus, lynching serves as a good illustration of how the theory of political violence sometimes overlooks certain events of violence as 'a-political' because they do not fit into a clear understanding of the 'political'. This, as I argue, is partly due to a failure to link the two together through a proper appreciation of emotion and its significance in lending political meaning to the action.

As I have discussed, this has been the result of considering political violence as a rational act. By introducing emotions, especially considering the political dimension of affects, it is possible to deepen the understanding of what is *political* above political violence. Emotions are part of the process of experiencing violence, not only as a violent act but as a process with preceding conditions and future consequences. In this thesis, I illustrated how the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* was part of a 'crisis of anxieties', as a means of putting in context lynching as a phenomenon that forms part of a concatenated historical events of violence that are expressed throughout collective emotions such as the ones I analyse in this research. Lynching is not a spontaneous act of violence that appears as pure uncivility, but it is part of the history of violence under neoliberalism. Emotions, then, become relevant when we want to understand an act of violence that does seem to reveal the dialectic relationship between structural and subjective violence. In Chapter Five, I explored this relationship

through the notion of justice in the case of lynching, although I consider that examining emotions can also do much to add to our understanding of more recent phenomena of violence.

Particularly in current contexts of the global crisis of capitalism and the failure of neoliberal policies, where extreme violence is exploding in different areas of the world, we need to look what is happening in the experiences of those suffering the crisis. For instance, I particularly consider that an affective reading of the increasing violence of far-right movements in the United State and the United Kingdom could be important to reveal the real political meanings that these groups embrace. In addition to understanding those more visible elements that constituted these groups (e.g. racism, nationalism), looking at hate, fear and anger as driving emotions could lead us to a better understanding of those violent acts. Recent research by Ian Burkitt, 'Alienation and Emotion', represent an interesting approach of how alienation in current crisis of neoliberalism have been expressed through strong emotions (instead in the absence of them) by indicating that "feelings, emotions and practical reasoning reflect the increasingly unequal and unfair nature of social relations in neoliberal, globalised capitalist relations" (2019: 63). This idea replicates also, in what I have discussed in Chapter Five and Six in relation to lynching under the current neoliberal crisis.

As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, collective emotions need to be addressed as political in societies wherein political disenfranchisement, disarticulation of the welfare state and increases in poverty and inequality (especially between the Global North and South) exist and are worsening. When we look closely at what people are feeling and experiencing, we are capable to discover the mechanism that communities have to relate and cope with their reality and to understand such processes are themselves important constitutive dimensions of the political. With this, I am not claiming that emotions are more important now than before, but that by incorporating emotions into the analysis of current political and economic contexts, we will be able to see those essential elements that lie beneath the surface of events.

References

Agamben, Giorgio (1995) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Available online: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org.

Agamben, Giorgio (2009) On the limits of Violence. *Diacritics*, 39(4): 103-111.

Ahmed, Sara (2003) The politics of fear in the making of worlds. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(3): 377-398.

Ahmed, Sara (2004a) *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ahmed, Sara (2004b) Affective Economies. *Social Text 79*, 22(2): 117-139.

Ahmed, Sara (2004c) Collective Feelings or the impression Left by Others. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21(2): 25-42.

Arendt, Hannah (1958) *The Human Condition*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, Hannah (1970) *On Violence*. London: Harcourt.

Arteaga, Nelson; Arzuaga, Javier (2017) *Sociologías de la Violencia: Estructuras, sujetos, interacciones y acción simbólica*. Mexico: FLACSO.

Astell, Ann W (2004) Saintly Mimesis, Contagion, and Empathy in the Thought of René Girard, Edith Stein, and Simone Weil. *Shofar*: *An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 22(2): 116–131.

Atack, Iain (2012) *Nonviolence in Political Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Audi, Robert (2009) On the Meaning and Justification of Violence, in *Violence: a philosophical Anthol*ogy, pp: 136-167, Edited by Vittorio Bufacchi. Great Britain: Palgrave MacMillan.

Balibar, Etienne (2016) *Violence and Civility: On the limits of Political Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Barbalet, J.M (1998) *Emotion, social theory, and social structure: A macrosociological approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Benavides, Maria-Victoria; Fischer, Rosa-Maria (1991) Popular Responses and Urban Violence: Lynching in Brazil, in *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal violence*, pp: 33-46, Edited by Martha Huggins. New York: Prager.

Bennett, Christopher (2002) The varieties of Retributive Experience. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 52(207): 145-163.

Bennett, Christopher (2011) Expressive Punishment and Political Authority. *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law*, 8(2): 285-318.

Bennett, Christopher (2012) The Apology of Ritual: A philosophical theory of punishment. *Teorema*, 31(2): 63-66.

Benjamin, Walter (2009) *One-way Street and Other writings*. London: Penguin, Modern Classics.

Berkhofer, Robert F (1995) *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse*. London: Harvard University Press.

Bhabha, Homi K (2004) Foreword: Framing Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Edited by Frantz Fanon. New York: Grove Press.

Binford, Leigh; Churchill, Nancy (2009) Lynching and States of fear in Urban Mexico. *Anthropologica* (51): 301-312.

Bottici, Chiara (2009) Philosophies of Political Myth a comparative Look Backwards: Cassirer, Sorel and Spinoza. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 8(3): 365-382.

Brannan, Matthew (2003) Researching emotions in the emotions of researching: the strange case of Alexithymia in reflexive research. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 4(3): 322-339.

Briceño-León, Roberto (2002) El derecho a matar en América Latina, in *Violencia, Sociedad y justicia en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales.

Bufacchi, Vittorio (2005) Two concepts of Violence. *Political Studies Review*, 3(2): 193-204.

Bufacchi, Vittorio (2007) *Violence and Social Justice*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Bufacchi, Vittorio (Ed.) (2009) *Violence: A philosophical Anthology*. Great Britain: Palgrave MacMillan.

Bufacchi, Vittorio; Gilson, Jools (2016) The ripples of violence. *Feminist Review*, (112): 27-40.

Burkitt, Ian (2019) Alienation and emotion: social relations and estrangement in contemporary capitalism. *Emotions and Society*, 1(1): 51-66.

Castillo Claudett, Eduardo (2002) La justicia en Tiempos de la Ira: linchamientos populares urbanos en América Latina. *Ecuador Debates*, (51): 207-226.

Coady, C.A.J (2009) The Idea of Violence, in *Violence: a philosophical Anthol*ogy, pp: 244-264, Edited by Vittorio Bufacchi. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

Cohen, Stanley (2002) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, Third Edition. London & New York: Routledge.

Darton, Robert (1984) *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. England: Penguin Books.

Debord, Guy (1994) *The Society of the Spectacle*. London: Zone Book Editors.

Dray, Philip (2003) *At the hands of persons unknown: The lynching of Black America*. New York: The Modern Library.

Drudy, John; Scott, Clifford (2011) Contextualising the crowd in contemporary social science. *Contemporary Social Science*, 6(3): 275-288.

Downey, Anthony (2009) Zones of Indistinction: Giorgio Agamben's 'Bare Life' and the Politics of Aesthetics. *Third Text*, 23(2): 109-125.

Duff, Antony (2003) *Punishment, Communication, and Community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eckstein, H (1975) Case study and theory in political science, in *The handbook of political science: Strategies of inquiry*, pp: 79-137, Edited by Fred Greenstein; Nelson W. Polsby.

Fanon, Frantz (2004) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Feinberg, Joel, (1965) The expressive function of punishment. *The Monist*, 49(3): 397-423.

Finlay, Christopher (2017) The concept of violence in international theory: a Double-Intent Account. *International Theory,* 9(01): 67-100.

Frazer, Elizabeth; Hutchings, Kimberly (2007) Argument and Rhetoric in the Justification of Political Violence. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 6(2): 180-199

Frazer, Elizabeth; Hutchings, Kimberly (2011) Remnants and Revenants: Politics and Violence in the Work of Agamben and Derrida. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, (13): 127-144.

Frazer, Elizabeth; Hutchings, Kimberly (2019) *Can Political Violence Ever Be Justified?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Freeden, Michael (2013) *The Political Theory of Political Thinking: The Anatomy of a Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Foucault, Michel (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, Michel, (1988) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. London: The Harvester Press.

Foucault, Michel, (2015) *On the punitive society: Lectures at the College de France, 1972-197*3. United States: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fuentes Díaz; Binford, Leigh (2001) Linchamientos en México: Una respuesta a Carlos Vilas, *Bajo el Volcán*. 2(3): 143-154.

Fuentes Díaz (2005) El Estado y la furia. *El Cotidiano*, (131): 7-19.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio (2006a) *Linchamientos: Fragmentación y Respuesta en el México Neoliberal*. Autonomía Universitaria: Puebla.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio (2006b) Subalternidad y violencia colectiva en México y Guatemala, *Fermentum: Revista Venezolana de Sociología y Antropología*, 16(46): 415-428.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio (2009) Antibiopolitica y violencia colectiva en México y Guatemala, *XXVII Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Sociología*: Buenos Aires.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio (2014) Autodefensa y Justicia en los Márgenes del Estado, *Revista Clivajes*, 2, n/p.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio (2018) Community Defence and Criminal Order in Michoacán, Contention in the Grey Area, translated by Margot Olavarria, *Latin American Perspectives* 45(6): 127-139.

Fuentes Díaz, Antonio (2018) Lo marginal en el centro. Violencia y apropiaciones comunitarias de la seguridad y la justicia, in *Violencia, seguridad ciudadana y victimización en México,* n/p, Coordinadores José Alfredo Zavaleta Betancourt y Arturo Alvarado Mendoza. México: Colofón.

Galtung, Johan (2009) Violence, Peace and Peace Research, in *Violence: a Philosophical Anthology*, pp: 78-109, Edited by Vittorio Bufacchi. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Gamallo, Leandro (2015) Los linchamientos en México en el siglo XXI. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 77(2): 183-213.

Garland, David (2005) Penal Excess and Surplus Meaning: Public Torture Lynchings in Twentieth-Century America. *Law and Society Review*, 39(4): 793-834.

Garland, David (2008) On the concept of moral panic. *Crime Media Culture*, 4(1): 9-30.

Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. London: Fontana Press

Gerrings, John (2004) What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? *The American Political Science Review*, 98(2): 341-354.

Gibson, Robert A. (1979) *The Negro Holocaust: Lynching and Race Riots in the United States, 1880-1950*. Yale: Yale University Press.

Girard, René (1989) *The Scapegoat*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Girard, René (2013) *Violence and the Sacred*. Great Britain: Bloomsbury.

Given, Lisa M. (Ed.) (2008) Emotions in Qualitative Research, in *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, n/p. London: SAGE.

Goldie, Peter (2002) *The Emotions: A philosophical Exploration*. Oxford: University Press Scholarship Online.

Goldsby, Jaqueline (2006) *A spectacular Secret: lynching in American Life and Literature*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Goldstein, Daniel (2003) 'In our own hands': Lynching, justice and the law in Bolivia *American Ethnologist: Journal of the American Ethnological Society,* 30(1): 22-43.

Goldstein, Daniel (2004) *The spectacular city: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia*. Duke University Press: Durham.

Guerrero, Andrés (2000) Los linchamientos en las comunidades indígenas (Ecuador): la política perversa de una modernidad marginal? *Bulletin de l'Institut francais d'etudes andines*, 29(3): 463-489.

Gunn, Richard (1989) In Defence of a Consensus Theory of Truth. *Common Sense*, (7): 1-19.

Hay, Colin (1995) Mobilization through Interpellation: James Bulger, Juvenile Crime and the Construction of a Moral Panic. *Social & Legal Studies*, 4: 197-223.

Hewitt, Rachel (4 December 2017) on 'Thinking Allowed: Politics and Emotion', BBC Radio 4. Link: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09ghmgd

Holland, Janet (2007) Emotions and Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 10(3): 195-209.

Holmes, Mary (2004a) Feeling Beyond Rules: Politicizing the Sociology of Emotion and Anger in Feminist Politics, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7(2): 209-227.

Homes, Mary (2004b) Introduction: The importance of Being Anger: Anger in Political Life. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7(2): 123-132.

Holton, Robert J. (1978) The crowd in history: Some problems of theory and method. *Social History*, 3(2): 219-233.

Huggins, Martha (Ed.) (1991) *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal violence*. New York: Praeger.

Hutchings, Kimberly (2007) Simone de Beauvoir and the Ambiguous Ethics of Political Violence. *Hypatia*, 22(3): 111-132

Johnson, Nicole (2009) The role of self and emotion within qualitative sensitive research: a reflective account. *Enquire*, (4): 23-50.

Keen, Suzanne (2011) Introduction: Narrative and the Emotions. *Poetics Today*, 32(1): 1-53.

Koonings, Kess; Kruijt, Dirk (Eds.) (1999) *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*. London: Zed Books.

Khatib, Sami (2016) *Toward a Politics of 'Pure Means': Walter Benjamin and the Question of Violence*. Published online on 28/08/2011 at anthropologicalmaterialism.hypotheses.org. Updated version on 06/11/2016.

Kirwan, Michael (2004) *Discovering Girard*. London: Darton Longman Todd.

Kleinman, Sherry; Copp Martha A (1993) *Emotions and Fieldwork*. London: A Sage University Paper.

Kleres, Jochen (2010) Emotions and Narrative Analysis: A Methodological Approach. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 41(2): 182-202.

Königs, Peter (2013) The Expressivist Account of Punishment, Retribution and the Emotions. *Ethic Theory Moral Practice*, 16(5): 1029–1047.

Lantz, Andrew (2016) The performativity of violence: abducting agency in Mexico's drug war. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 25(2): 253-269.

Lechner, Norbert (1998) Nuestros Miedos. *Perfiles Latinoamericanos*, 7(13): 179-198.

Lope De Vega (2010) *Fuenteovejuna*, Translated by G.J. Racz. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Lyman, Peter (2004) The Domestication of Anger: The Use and Abuse of Anger in Politics. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7(2): 133-147.

Martel, James (2011) Waiting for Justice: Benjamin and Derrida on Sovereignty and Immanence. *Republic of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics and the Arts*, 2(2): 158-172.

Massumi, Brian (1995) The Autonomy of Affect. *Cultural Critique*, (31): 83-109

Mazzarella, William (2010) The Myth of the Multitude, or, Who's Afraid of the Crowd? *Critical Inquiry*, 36(4): 697-727.

McCall, Tom (1996) Momentary Violence, in *Walter Benjamin: Theoretical Questions*, pp: 185-206, Edited by David Ferris. California: Stanford University Press.

Mendoza Alvarado, Carlos (2008) Linchamientos en México y Guatemala: reflexiones para su análisis comparado. *El Cotidiano*, (152): 43-51.

Meyer, Lorenzo (2017*) Nuestra tragedia persistente: La democracia autoritaria en México*. Ciudad de México: De Bolsillo.

Mignolo, Water (2009) Dispensable and Bare Lives: Coloniality and Hidden Political/Economic Agenda of Modernity. *Human Architecture Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, VII(2): 69-88.

Mignolo, Water (2011) Geopolitics of sensing and knowing: on (de)coloniality, border thinking an epistemic disobedience. *Postcolonial Studies*, 14(3): 273-283.

Monsivais, Carlos (2002) Justicia por mano propia, in *Justicia por Mano Propia*, Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos, México.

Morgan, Benjamin (2007) Undoing Legal Violence: Walter Benjamin's and Giorgio Agamben's Aesthetics of Pure Means. *Journal of Law and Society*, 34(1): 46-64.

Müller, Jan-Werner (2003) Myth, law and order: Schmitt and Benjamin read reflections on violence. *History of European Ideas*, 29(4): 459-773.

Nivette, Amy (2016) Institutional Ineffectiveness, Illegitimacy and Public Support for Vigilantism in Latin America. *Criminology*, 54(1): 142-175.

Nussbaum, Martha (1988) Narrative Emotions: Beckett's Genealogy of Love. *Ethics,* 98(2): 225-254.

Nussbaum, Martha (2013) *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. United States: Harvard University Press.

Nussbaum, Martha (2016) *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*. United States: Oxford University Press.

Paz, Octavio (1999) *El Laberinto de la Soledad, Postdata, Vuelta a 'El laberinto de la Soledad'*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Prokhovnik, Raia (1999) *Rational Woman: a feminist critique of dichotomy*. London and New York: Routledge.

Rodríguez Guillen, Raúl (2002) Los linchamientos en México: crisis de autoridad y violencia social. *El Cotidiano*, 18(111): 19-27.

Rodríguez Guillén, Raúl (2005), Los linchamientos en México: entre el Estado de derecho y los usos y costumbres. *El Cotidiano*, 20(129): 56-67.

Rodríguez Guillen, Raúl (2010) Actores anónimos y linchamientos en México. *El Cotidiano*, (164): 74-88.

Rodríguez Guillen, Raúl (2014) Linchamientos en México: recuento de un periodo largo (1988-2014). *El Cotidiano*, (187): 51-58.

Roux, Rhina (2016) México: territorio sin ley. *Revista Herramientas*, (58): n/p.

Roux, Rhina (2009) El Príncipe fragmentado: México: despojo, violencia y mandos, in *Los condicionantes de la crisis en América Latina. Inserción internacional y modalidades de acumulación*, pp: 241-Edited by Enrique Arceo; Eduardo Basualdo. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.

Roux, Rhina (2007) México, cambio de siglo: La desintegración de la res publica. *Argumentos*, 20, (53): 93-113.

Rude, George (1964) *The Crowd History: A Study of Popular Disturbance in France and England 1730-1948*. London: Serif.

Salmi, Jamil (2009) The Different Categories of Violence, in *Violence: a philosophical Antholo*gy, pp: 311-319. Edited by Vittorio Bufacchi. Great Britain: Palgrave MacMillan.

Salzani, Carlo (2008) Violence as Pure Praxis: Benjamin and Sorel on Strike, Myth and Ethics. *Colloquy,* (16): 18-48.

Sarmiento, Leticia (2012) *Análisis del Linchamiento en México: Contribución a la teoría del castigo*. Tesis para obtener el título de Maestría en Política Criminal. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Unpublished.

Sartre, Jean-Paul (2004) Preface, in *The Wretched of the Earth* by Fanon, Frantz. New York: Grove Press.

Savage, Jan (2004) Researching emotion: the need for coherent between focus, theory and methodology. *Nursing Inquiry*, (11): 25-34

Snodgrass Godoy, Angelina (2004) When 'justice' is criminal: Lynchings in contemporary Latin America. *Theory and Society*, (33): 621-651.

Snodgrass Godoy, Angelina (2006) *Popular Injustice: Violence, Community, and Law in Latin America*. California: Stanford University Press.

Solomon, Robert C (1990) *A passion for justice: Emotions and the Origins of the Social Contract*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Solomon, Robert C (2008) *True to our Feelings: What our emotions are really telling us*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Somers, Margaret R (1992) Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation. *Social Science History*, 16(4): 591-630.

Sorel, George (1999) *Reflections on Violence*. Edited by Jeremy Jennings, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sousa Martins, Jose (1991) Lynchings – Life by a Thread: Street justice in Brazil, in *Vigilantism and the State in Modern Latin America: Essays on Extralegal violence*, pp. 21-32. Edited by Martha Huggins. New York: Prager.

Staudigl, Michael (2007) Towards a Phenomenological Theory of Violence: Reflections following Meleau-Ponty and Schutz. *Human Studies*, (30): 233-253.

Staudigl, Michael (2013) Towards a Relational Phenomenology of Violence. *Human Studies*, 36(1): pages 43-66.

Tager, Michael (2014) Myth and Politics in the Works of Sorel and Barthes. *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 47(4): 625-639.

Ticineto C., Patricia; Halley, Jean (Eds.) (2007) The Affective Turn: Theorizing the social. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Thurston, Robert W. (2011) *Lynching: American Mob murder in Global Perspective*. England and USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Vilas, Carlos (2001) (in)Justicia por mano propia: linchamientos en el México contemporáneo. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología,* 63(1): 131-160.

Vilas, Carlos (2005) Linchamiento: venganza, castigo e injusticia en escenarios de inseguridad. *El Cotidiano*, (131): 20-26.

Vilas, Carlos (2006) Linchamientos y lucha política en los Andes. *El Cotidiano*, 21(140): 115-129.

Walby, K.; Dale, S. (2011) How Emotions Matter to Moral Panics, in *Moral Panic and the Politics of Anxiety*, pp: 104-117, Edited by Sean P. Hier. London and New York: Routledge.

Waldrep, Christopher (2002) *The many faces of Judge Lynch: extralegal violence and Punishment in America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Widdowfield, Rebekah (2000) The place of emotions in academic research. *Area*, 32(2): 199-208

Williams, James G. (2000) *The Girard Reader*. New York: A Crossroad Herder Book.

Wringe, Bill (2016) *An Expressive Theory of Punishment*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Winter, Yves (2012) Violence and Visibility. *New Political Science*, 34(2): 195-202.

Winter, Yves (2018) *Machiavelli and the Others of Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, Amy L. (2009) *Lynching and spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940*. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press.

Yin, Robert K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: SAGE Publications.

Zizek, Slavoj (2008) *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador

APPENDIX ONE
Newspaper Archive List

***REFORMA* NEWSPAPER**

Reforma0101 – Fernández, Leticia (24th November, 2004) "Queman vivos a dos agentes de la PFP", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3996.

Reforma0201 – Sanders, N; Jiménez, B (25th November, 2004) "Todo inicio hace quince días con un carro", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3997.

Reforma0208 – Granados Chapa, M.A (25th November, 2004) "Plaza Pública: Detrás de la Furia", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3997.

Reforma0209 – Woldenberg, J. (25th November, 2004) "Opinión: Masas criminales", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3997.

Reforma0216 – Jiménez, B. (25th November, 2004) "Amanecen entre remordimientos y más rumores", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3997.

Reforma0217 – Brito, Luis (25th November, 2004) "Pierden confianza en las autoridades", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3997.

Reforma0302 – Jiménez, B. (26th November, 2004) "Reclaman en la PFP negligencia de jefes", Diario Reforma, Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3998.

Reforma0306 – Barajas, A. (26th November, 2004) "Acusan a menor de edad", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3998.

Reforma0308 – Aristegui, C. (26th November, 2004) "Opinión: El horror", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3998.

Reforma0309 – Sarmiento, S. (26th November, 2004) "Opinión: Explicaciones", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3998.

Reforma0310 – Aguilar, A. (26th November, 2004) "Tres horas y un llamado", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3998.

Reforma0314 – Jiménez, B. (26th November, 2004) "Enoja Operativo a Ixtayopenses", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3998.

Reforma0315 – Fernández, L. (26th November, 2004) "Buscan prevenir violencia", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3998.

Reforma0405 – Sánchez, Jaime (27th November, 2004) "Territorios Liberados", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3999.

Reforma0408 – González, A. (27th November, 2004) "Viven nerviosismo oriundo de Pena Alta", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 3999.

Reforma0506 – Granados Chapa, M.A (28th November, 2004) "Plaza Pública: Explosividad", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4000.

Reforma0602 – Redacción (29th November, 2004) "Turba Mortal", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4001.

Reforma0605 – Zamarripa, R. (29th November, 2004) "Una de salvajes", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4001.

Reforma0606 – Ruiz, R. (29th November, 2004) "La Ciudad y el Crimen", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4001.

Reforma0702 – Vicenteño, D (30th November, 2004) "Reportan que 'La Gorda' fue detenida y liberada", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4002.

Reforma0705 – Musacchio, H. (30th November, 2004) "Fuenteovejuna y responsabilidades", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4002.

Reforma0801 – Barajas, A. (1st December, 2004) "Llama juez a Delegada de Tláhuac", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4003.

Reforma0804 – Casteña, J.G. (1st December, 2004) "Editorial: Cría cuervos y…", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4003.

Reforma0805 – González, A. (1st December, 2004) "Organizan misa a los linchados", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4003.

Reforma1401 – Granados Chapa, M.A (7th December, 2004) "Plaza Pública: Golpe irresponsable", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4009.

Reforma1404 – Sierra, A. (7th December, 2004) "Dice ex secretario que continuara con la coordinación de la seguridad para los capitalinos", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4009.

Reforma2202 – Barajas, A. (15h December, 2004) "Arman linchamiento 'La Gorda' y marido", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4017.

Reforma2501 – Pardinas, J.E (19th December, 2004) "Mexicanos al grito de Tláhuac", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4021.

Reforma2801 – Sierra, A.; Ocampo, L. (23rd December, 2004) "Volvería a morir. – Regino", Diario Reforma.

Reforma2803 – Padilla, Jesús (23rd December, 2004) "Querían descuartizarlos", Diario Reforma, Año 12, Número 4025

Reforma5601 – Velediaz, J. (2nd April, 1994) "Hay 548 desapariciones sin resolver en CAPEA". [Obtained online: www.reforma.com]

Reforma5901 – Gómez Leyva, C. (24th December, 1994) "La Tregua rota y los Desaparecidos". [Obtained online: www.reforma.com]

Reforma6601 – Jiménez, N. (20th June, 1996) "Sostiene AI que en México no existe Estado de Derecho". [Obtained online: www.reforma.com]

Reforma6901 – Hidalgo, J.A (1st May, 2000) "Ofrecen combatir plagio de niños". [Obtained online: www.reforma.com]

Reforma7001 – Kuri, M. (17th February, 2000) "Es fácil comprar un niño en México". [Obtained online: www.reforma.com]

Reforma7101 – Redacción (17th August, 1999) "Aumenta lucha contra robo de menores" Con el respaldo de la Organización México Unido contra la Delincuencia. [Obtained online: www.reforma.com]

Reforma7201 – Zamora, R. (10th May, 2001) "Buscan niños perdidos". [Obtained online: www.reforma.com]

EL GRÁFICO UNIVERSAL NEWSPAPER

ElGrafico0101 – Herrera, O; Fernández, R. (24th November, 2004) "Incineran vivos a agentes de PFP; la policía no llego", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.605

ElGrafico0203 – Medellín, J. (25th November, 2004) "Descarga Huerta la culpa en autoridades de Tláhuac", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.606

ElGrafico0206 – Laguna, I; Molina, L. (25th November, 2004) "Sabia la delegada de 'sospechosos' en las escuelas", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.606

ElGrafico0207 – Laguna, I; Baltazar, A; Cabrera, R. (25th November, 2004) "Volverían al ajusticiamiento, amenazan vecinos", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.606

ElGrafico0209 – De Mauleon, H. (25th November, 2004) "Como si nada…, amanece Ixtayopan", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.606

ElGrafico0213 – Redacción (25th November, 2004) "La Pregunta del Día: ¿Que opina de que la gente se haga justicia por su propia mano y linche a quien cree sospechoso de cometer crimen?", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.606

ElGrafico0304 - Medellín, J. (26th November, 2004) "Lo mato la gente a la que quiso defender del hampa", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.607.

ElGrafico0305 – Fuentes, F. (26th November, 2004) "Advierten riesgo de que se repita el caso Tláhuac", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 82, Número 21.607.

ElGrafico0901 – Valdez, L. (31st January, 2005) "En Ixtayopan, en dos meses pasaron de victimarios a víctimas", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 83.

ElGrafico1001 – Editorial (27th February, 2005) "Policía impide Linchamiento en Tláhuac", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 83.

ElGrafico1301 – Fuentes, F. (27th October, 2005) "El distrito federal número uno en inseguridad del país", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 83.

ElGrafico1401 – Molina, H. (24th November, 2005) "Ixtayopan, entre el dolor y el estigma", Diario El Gráfico Universal, Año 83.

LA PRENSA NEWSPAPER

LaPrensa0202 – Silva, A. L. (25th November, 2004) "Llamo Soberanes a respetar a todos dentro de la ley" Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.862

LaPrensa0207 – Alvarado, N; Hernández, E; Macías, R; Valles, J. (25th November, 2004) "Lo volverían a hacer", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.862

LaPrensa0208 – Zendejas, G; Alvarado N. (25th November, 2004) "No creemos en la justicia de Ebrard ni de Batiz", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.862

LaPrensa0214 – Ibáñez, A. (25th November, 2004) "Hubo Negligencia, dicen PRIO y PRD en la ALDF", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.862

LaPrensa0305 – Medina, C. (26th November, 2004) "Editorial: Ebrard y sus errores por distancia", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.863

LaPrensa0308 – Macías, R. (26th November, 2004) "Quieren la cabeza de Fátima", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.863

LaPrensa0313 – Alvarado, N; Zendejas, G.; Hernández, E. (26th November, 2004) "Protestan más de 700 policías federales", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.863

LaPrensa0601 – Amador, S. (29th November, 2004) "La composición social y no la seguridad el fondo del linchamiento, aclaro Batiz", Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.866.

LaPrensa0602 – Andrade, S. (29th November, 2004) "Causan dolor y vergüenza los hechos; toda la sociedad es responsable: N. Rivera", Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.866

LaPrensa0605 – Gutiérrez, V. (29th November, 2004) "DF, restablecer el Estado de Derecho", Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.866

LaPrensa0705 – Macías, R. (30th November, 2004) "Mal precedente para las instituciones encargadas de impedir justicia: TSJDP", Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.867.

LaPrensa0706 – Alvarado, N. (30th November, 2004) "Arde Tláhuac", Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.867.

LaPrensa0803 – Bautista, H. (1st December, 2004) "¿De verdad estamos hartos de la violencia?" Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.868.

LaPrensa0805 – Pansza, A. (1st December, 2004) "Fox ofrece hallar la verdad en Tláhuac: no permitirá la impunidad", Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.868.

LaPrensa0809 – Valles, J. (1st December, 2004) "Llama la Suprema Corte a no tomar la justicia por propia mano para dirimir las diferencias", Diario la Prensa, Año LXXVII, Número 27.868.

LaPrensa2704 – Bautista, H. (22nd December, 2004) "2004: Un año dominando por la violencia", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Numero 27.889.

LaPrensa2902 – Editorial (24th December, 2004) "Requiere México una justicia verdadera", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVII, Numero 27.891.

LaPrensa3903 – Editorial (9th January, 2005) "El país está en la ingobernabilidad, inútil dar más poder", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVIII, Numero 27.907.

LaPrensa4802 – Editorial (8th February, 2005) "Vecinos de Tláhuac golpearon a ladrón y ya iban a lincharlo", Diario La Prensa, Año LXXVIII, Numero 27.936.

APPENDIX TWO
Interview Questionnaire

Description:

I conducted three semi-structured interviews with Mexican Journalists that reported the case study of the lynching in *San Juan Ixtayopan* and three unstructured interviews with Mexican scholars who have researched lynching in the country. Each interview lasted one hour and it was conducted during fieldwork in Mexico City between April and July of 2017. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and only in-text quotations throughout this thesis were translated into English. In this appendix, you can find the list of themes that guided the interviews.

List of Themes: Interview with Journalists

1. Introduction of their memories about the lynching in San Juan Ixtayopan.

- What can you remember?
- How did you end up reporting this case?
- Details about the hour-by-hour of the lynching
- Details about their job as journalists

2. Deeping into the details of the case through their memories.

- Description of the number of people witnessing
- Collection of testimonies with members of the community
- The linkage between the case with the broad social and political context
- The relevance of the case at the national level

3. The emotional reaction to the lynching

- How did you feel about witnessing the lynching?
- What is your opinion about how lynching is reported in Mexico?

List of Themes: Interviews with Academics

1. Introduction

- Academic trajectory (years of experience)
- Research interests

2. Why did you decide to research lynching?

- Introduction to subject
- The perspective used to research lynching
- Methodologies used

3. Limitations in the research process

- Explanation of the lack of information
- Suggestions for further research on lynching