HECTOR AMAYA

Trafficking

Narcoculture in Mexico and the United States

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Cover art: Spent bullet casings litter a road after authorities reported a gun battle with armed men near the beach resort of Mazatlan, Mexico, July 1, 2017. AP Photo/Mario Rivera Alvarado.

Contents

Prologue

I began writing this book a long time ago out of desperation and impotence, out of the terrible pain and obfuscation that appears when great tragedy strikes the ones you love. I could not help the feelings, nor could I help my people with anything other than my thinking and writing. The resulting work is my attempt at using my thinking and writing to engage the bloody violence tearing Mexico apart, particularly the country's North, where I come from.

The reader will notice that the book is a stubborn retrenchment into historiography and publicity theory, at times an excursion into the past, at others into abstraction. Given the gravity of the events the book tackles, this stubbornness may seem irresponsible to some. Shouldn't my intellectual efforts concentrate on solving actual problems, alleviating the material suffering of those who live with the violence or who attempt to document it and expose those responsible? Shouldn't I propose actionable ideas, things that Mexicans and US Americans can do to reduce the violence, and the culture it inspires, which envelops us all?

Although I perhaps cannot convince all readers that theory and history are more practical than, let's say, policy prescriptions, I can at least share how I believe theory and history will be useful. I don't mean useful in a narrowly conceived sense that defines usefulness only in terms of practicality, and practicality only in terms of a solution to a problem narrowly conceived. Usefulness in this sense may describe something that can be used to reduce violence, such as normative proposals that Mexico improve its legal system broadly speaking and cultural and media policies

in particular. I don't believe this is the only way of conceiving usefulness. Understanding usefulness always depends on our ability to answer the question "Useful to whom?" and thus on understanding context and, in my case, potential readers and publics.

For good or for bad, the context of my work is the academy, and within the academy my work is meant to be useful to those thinking and writing about violence, about cultures of violence, about contemporary Mexico, about Latinos in the USA, and about the cultures surrounding the drug wars in the Americas. Importantly, my work is a response to the gaps in our knowledge of these subjects. I have found plenty of excellent work that archives and analyzes particular events in Mexico and that recommend astute policy and legal prescriptions that may indeed ameliorate the violence. By comparison, I have found little work on issues that historicize and deeply theorize these events. I hope *Trafficking* strengthens this reading list and helps the community of thinkers develop frameworks that can better explain what is happening in Mexico, through attention not only to the moment but also to the longer, broader genealogy that has created the conditions of possibility and meaning for these current events. I also hope the findings and insights in this book can be generalized beyond Mexico and beyond the West. This is the value of theory. Last, my analyses are meant to help us see deeper into our shared past with other Western nations and intellectual traditions as well as with other nations in the so-called Global South. This is the value of history.

This book is indebted to many people and institutions. I am thankful to the University of Virginia, particularly to the College of Arts and Sciences, current dean Ian Baucom, and former dean Meredith Woo, now the president of Sweet Briar College. Associate Dean Leonard Schoppa was particularly instrumental by giving me intellectual support and by granting me time and resources when needed to write and research. I am thankful also to the faculty of the Department of Media Studies, in particular Bruce Williams, Andrea Press, Siva Vaidhyanathan, Aniko Bodroghkozy, Christopher Ali, and Andre Cavalcante. They all read parts of this book and provided wonderful feedback. Moreover, this community of scholars, together with Jennifer Petersen, my wife and the only person who has advised me on the whole manuscript, has provided the intellectual landscape that nurtured every page. I would be remiss if I didn't also thank Barbara Gibbons, the administrator of the Department of Media Studies at the University of Virginia, who, in addition to helping with the daily activities of processing stipends, grants, and other

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Last, I need to thank Jennifer, my wife and my intellectual partner of almost two decades. Although I am certain that whatever I write will fail to capture the deep and broad scope of her influence and impact in this and all my work, I must at least try. Jennifer has taught me about history and theory; she has debated with me my sometimes-dubious ideas and pushed back against my bad intellectual habits, helping me see my limitations. She has also shown me the potential in my work and has kept my faith in intellectual inquiry and my ambition. At times when the writing was painful—and, believe me, pain was unavoidable—she held my hand.

I began this book years ago, and it took longer to write than I expected. Sometimes I thought that the book would be ready at a time when the violence in Mexico had dwindled and readers would be less interested. But sadly, that is not the case. The violence is plentiful and, it seems, never-ending. In fact, 2019 is likely to be the most violent year so far. Perhaps the new presidency of Andrés Manuel López Obrador will succeed where others failed. Perhaps.

Introduction

TRAFFICKING, PUBLICNESS, AND VIOLENCE

Salieron de San Isidro
Procedentes de Tijuana,
Traían las llantas del carro
Repletas de yerba mala.
Eran Emilio Varela
Y Camelia la Tejana.
—Los Tigres del Norte, first stanza of "Contrabando y traición"

The first megahit by Los Tigres del Norte, the norteño band that made narcocorridos famous, was the 1972 song "Contrabando y traición" ("Contraband and Betrayal"). Also known as "Camelia la Tejana," "Contrabando y traición" tells the story of a couple of smugglers, Emilio Varela and Camelia, who travel from San Isidro through Tijuana, cross the border into the United States in San Clemente, fool the customs officials, and make it to Los Angeles, where they deliver the marijuana that was hiding in their car's tires. Emilio then stupidly tries to leave Camelia, who up to that point has been his lover. In response, she empties her revolver into him. I begin this book with a reference to "Contrabando y traición" because this song is emblematic of the type of public culture inspired by drug violence in Mexico and the United States. This song clues us in to the complex imaginary landscapes and types of narratives that drug violence inspires.

"Contrabando y traición" is a story about trafficking and displacement: the illicit or unwanted or forced movement of people, goods, and desires. In this song, as in much public culture that connects to drug violence,

movement does not have the utopian connotations of expansion, freedom, and growth that we may find, for instance, in the road-trip movie.[1] In this song, movement is transgressive, a difficult process of overcoming the challenges brought about by seemingly static giant obstacles, such as the custom officers, the US-Mexico border, and the impractical reality of having to transport an illicit product thousands of miles to consumers. It is a story of border crossings, of displaced people who are here and there, who see the Mexican North and the US Southwest as one and the same territory, even if fences and walls divide it up. It is a story peopled by individuals with complex identities, who are at once fundamentally Mexican and who are also Latina and Latino or, to be more precise, Mexican American. It is a story of money, crime, and violence, the things that move them to trafficking and the essential items of the impassioned, imagined biographies of Emilio and Camelia.[2] The next chapter details the historical context from which the current drug violence in Mexico emanates and the culture that gave meaning to this popular song.

Here I use the song to illustrate some important theoretical and critical concerns that the book develops chapter by chapter. In particular, "Contrabando y traición" illustrates three central ideas shaping this book. (1) The huge popularity of the song reveals that criminal drug violence is quite *visible* and *audible* in public culture. That is, criminal drug violence is an object of inspiration and public fascination, a topic of public engagement, conversation, opinion, and expression. (2) The song's narrative is an example of public culture that captures the sense of *placelessness* experienced by those wrapped up in, or affected by, the drug trade. This is a common feature in criminal drug narratives, and as I show throughout the book, place and displacement are key elements in the structuring of publicity pertaining to criminal drug violence. (3) The visibility of the violence and the feeling of displacement common in these narratives are partly furnished by *media technologies* that increasingly defy space and time constraints, including national boundaries. For instance, songs like "Contrabando y traición" were widely distributed with media technologies available in 1972, which included the cassette tape, a common recording and distribution technology among Mexican Americans and Mexicans from the 1970s to the early 2000s. Current digital media technologies and the World Wide Web (WWW) only exacerbated what the cassette tape began.

This book is an inquiry into the way Mexico's criminal drug violence and media technologies structure publicity, or *publicness*. Although publicness has a theoretically rich and at times contentious history, here I am refer-

ring to the communicative processes of criticism that bring together different social groups to attend to, influence, and/or shape the social collective (Petersen 2017: 153). In Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment democratic theory, publicness is a foundational concept and the wellspring from which other important ideas have flowed, such as the public sphere, public culture, and public opinion. As a concept, publicness is as old as democratic theory itself and has deeply influenced disciplines attentive to expressive culture and communication practices.

Although the term *publicness* is used differently in different intellectual strands, here I am interested in the most common one among communication and media scholars, a Kantian usage in which publicness resolves conflicts between politics and morality and is essential to the process of reasoning needed to create shared meanings, shared ethics, and just laws.[3] Publicity legitimates the state, for it is only in the public realm and through reasoned debate that a government may have the right to rule.[4] Kant thus places the concept of publicness at the heart of the Enlightenment, and though Kant is not the only great thinker of democracy to have engaged with the notion—for instance, Jeremy Bentham's take on publicity is influential and almost purely utilitarian—Kant's normative engagement with the issue inspired many later scholars, including Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, two thinkers referenced later in this book.

In communication and media studies, this Kantian approach to publicness is often associated with media and visibility. Scholars use the phrase *the politics of visibility* to highlight the role of publicity in constituting political objects, subjects, and themes. It is typically a Kantian take on the concept, one that instructs us that justice cannot happen without something or someone becoming public—or, in other words, part of public discourse, debate, or opinion. Visibility does not guarantee justice, but it is a prerequisite to it.

Although terms like *public sphere*, *public culture*, *public opinion*, and *publics* are different from each other, in this book I am not interested in drawing lines that separate them. Instead, herein I presume the shared origin of the terms and examine the original concept, the Kantian take on publicness. This approach has important consequences for the rest of the book, as I will try to swim against the current and explore what is in and around the wellspring of publicness. I must note one more thing: even though the drug violence cases at hand can be gripping and painful, I try to abstain from normative thinking, as normativity is part of the downstream force that I am trying to avoid. Below I expand on the three central ideas fueling this book

as well as on my concern with defying normativity. I also finish outlining the influence of mobility studies on publicity theory, which I will develop throughout these chapters.

THE VISIBILITY AND THEMATIC POWER OF VIOLENCE

The visibility of drug criminal violence was significant in 1972, the year of the release of "Contrabando y traición," and this visibility is even greater today. The reasons are obvious. Mexico's contemporary violence due to criminal drug organizations is massive, with more than 230,000 people killed from 2007 to 2018. Predictably, Mexico's public sphere has been focused on the violence all this time; images of the drug war's horrors have also been quite visible in the United States and the rest of the world.

I began by referencing Los Tigres del Norte's song to illustrate the connection between violence and publicness. "Contrabando y traición" is public culture that happens in the public sphere and that shapes public opinion and brings together immigrants as a public who, thanks to the song, can recognize their shared struggles, the danger they have faced, and the temptations that may ruin them. Criminal drug violence most visibly connects to publicity in this way, as a preferred theme for narratives that circulate as public culture.

This theme has proliferated in fictional and nonfictional forms, shaping political debates in Mexico and the United States and generating aesthetic forms like music, television, film, literature, and other artistic genres in both nations. The drug-inspired film genre of "cine narco"—with films like *Los chacales de Sinaloa*, *Tierra de sangre*, and *Narcos y perros*—has gained viewers on both sides of the US-Mexico border. Narcocorridos, or songs that lionize the lives and deeds of drug criminals, have risen meteorically to prominence in Mexico and the United States, overtaking other popular music genres on the *Billboard* charts. Popular television shows like the US-Mexican-Spanish telenovela *La reina del sur* (Telemundo) have succeeded in both countries.

The theme of criminal drug violence is not only common among Spanish-speaking Latinas/os in the United States. It has huge crossover appeal. Television shows like *Breaking Bad* (AMC), *The Bridge* (FX), *Graceland* (USA Network), and *Ozarks* (Netflix) circulate these narratives among English-speaking audiences seeking "quality" television.[5] Serious filmmakers like Oliver Stone, Gerardo Naranjo, Steven Soderbergh, Natalia Almada, Luis Estrada, and Michael Cuesta have directed compelling films about the violence.

If a structure is understood as the frame that configures an edifice, the proliferation of popular narratives dealing with criminal drug violence suggests that one of the structural elements of the edifice of publicness is economic gain. There is profit to be had in stories about drug violence, which I explore in chapter 4 in the context of narcocorridos in the United States. But the theme of criminal drug violence is not important only to entertainment media. The theme of criminal drug violence has also been important to news organizations, which routinely cover it on both sides of the border. How this theme is covered and discussed and what types of public debate criminal drug violence has generated are important indicators of the discursive connection between violence, publicness, and democracy, as I show in chapter 2. The connection between publicness and criminal drug violence does not end there. Criminal drug violence is also a structural force because it transforms the rules of cultural distribution, shaping cultural policy and law, which I explore in the context of Mexico's changes to censorship laws due to violence in chapter 3. Criminal drug violence alters the rules of public participation and thus structures presence and social membership, as I explore in chapters 5 and 6 in the context of the rise and proliferation of the anonymous blogosphere. In short, this book shows that criminal drug violence structures what we talk about, how we share ideas with each other, and the conditions for participating in public conversations.

The book is not meant to be a catalog of the myriad instances of publicness about violence in these two nations, nor a repository of the many examples of cultural and aesthetic creativity and innovation inspired by the violence. It is an argument about the most salient ways in which criminal drug violence is shaping publicity and a query into the consistencies that animate the structural power of violence. Less interested in description than in reflection, I ask a fundamental question: Why does criminal drug violence have the power to structure publicity in the first place? To answer this question, I use evidence from television, popular music, top newspapers and their websites, and highly trafficked blogs.

The public culture analyzed in the following chapters expresses diverse ideas and feelings about drug violence, revealing common views, fears, and anxieties about violence, illegality, and criminality. Although diversity of views is the norm, the topic of violence has a way of reducing the range of voices, bringing a sort of uneasy harmony across national borders, media, and people. Violence seems to be the thing that most people simply want to stop, and we talk about it in that way. In public, at least, nobody wants violence.[6]

This use of the public sphere fits its normative potential. At least from a normative standpoint, it would appear that one of the goals of being in public, of publicity, is the elimination of violence. This insight has strong supporters. In its broadest sense, publicity emerges as a way of constituting social arrangements free of violence. Arendt embraces this broad position and argues that publicity appears any time people "act together in concert," for this is possible only through the coming together enabled by language and human communication (1958: 26). Publicity thus refers to a very particular way of being in a very specific kind of space. It follows that publicness has at the very least two essential elements: a performance of self and a stage or, if you prefer, an agora-like space. Arendt's emphasis on these two elements is the reason hers is called a dramaturgical approach to publicity.[7]

In her analysis of Greek life, Arendt reminds us of the premodern roots of publicity, publicity's relationship to violence, and the inextricable connection between publicity and politics: "To be political, to live in a *polis*, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence. In Greek self-understanding, to force people by violence, to command rather than persuade, were prepolitical ways to deal with people characteristic of life outside the *polis*" (1958: 26). From these powerful sentences one can quickly infer that the Greeks, like our contemporaries, were concerned with avoiding violence and with finding methods of social interaction that would eliminate it. Violence existed, but not in the sphere of politics that was ruled by talk, rhetoric, and the ideal of shared understanding. These two sentences yield one more important lesson. Arendt does more than argue that violence is the boundary of and the reason for publicity. At least in her Aristotelian and Kantian understanding of publicity, violence, too, is a boundary of politics.

From Athens to today, the conditions for publicity have changed dramatically. Liberal and democratic arrangements in the West, including Mexico, have made normal the peaceful, even if fiery and constant, debate of political ideas. More people and communities are able to participate in the public sphere, and though the conditions of participation are imperfect, the fact remains that more people than ever in history can be part of public debates. Media technologies have revolutionized the way in which ideas are shared and debated, even if at the same time they have constituted a more dispersed and porous public sphere. In general, violence seems a distant specter, an ancient devil that shaped, but no longer substantially influences, today's conditions for publicity. In today's North America, vio-

lence is the thing of video games and blockbusters; criminal violence in the United States—and, until recently, in Mexico—has been declining.

Then it all changed.

Almost overnight, the conditions in Mexico transformed. This also meant a shift in the United States, the nation with more to lose by the increase in power and bravado of the Mexican drug criminal organizations (DCOs). Mexico's homicide rate, which had trended downward for a decade, from 14.3 per 100,000 in 1997 to 8.4 per 100,000 in 2006, quickly reached 18.4 in 2009, according to Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Gutierrez 2011: 29). In the border states, violence skyrocketed. The murder rates in Chihuahua rose to a scandalous 93 per 100,000 in 2009, and Baja California reached 41 per 100,000. Mexico's interior did not go unscathed. Durango saw homicide rates of 47 per 100,000; Guerrero's rate swelled to 45 per 100,000, and Sinaloa's to 42 per 100,000. By comparison, the murder rate in the United States has remained between 4 and 5 per 100,000. Canada's hovers around 1. In Mexico, DCOs took control of huge swaths of rural territory, particularly in Guerrero, Durango, Michoacán, and Sinaloa, and in cities like Juárez, Tijuana, Monterrey, and Culiacán.

Publicity in the Mexican and US public spheres, the right to free speech, the desire to create expressive public culture, all seemed to be captured by the swirling rise to power of the DCOs and the catastrophic effects of widespread violence in Mexican society. Today Mexicans are again painfully reminded of the structural role violence plays in publicity.

DISPLACEMENT AND PUBLICNESS

As diverse as public views and narratives about criminal drug violence in Mexico are, quite often they narrativize violence in relation to space and to displacement.[8] In some cases, as in "Contrabando y traición," publicity captures the sense of placelessness felt by those exposed to violence. It is as if one of the characteristics of publicity is to explain violence as a by-product of displacement and, thus, in spatial terms.[9]

This finding is the most striking when viewed against the diversity of the structural locations analyzed. In this book, I locate displacement at the core of the way we talk about criminal violence and the state (chapters 1 and 2). I identify displacement as one of the core issues addressed through the censorship of violent narratives in Mexico (chapter 3). Displacement has to be addressed in order for a narcocorrido singer to commercially succeed in the

United States (chapter 4), and displacement is a rule for safely participating in the Mexican blogosphere (chapters 5 and 6).

Why is displacement so prominent in the public sphere's engagement with criminal drug violence? I hypothesize that displacement is so prominent because contemporary mainstream uses of violence are often anchored in the political category of order, and we often talk about order in spatial terms. This was true in Kant's take on publicness, which is framed in terms of peace and the orderly constitution and legitimization of government. In most cases documented here, order is imagined as the result of either spatial fixity or disciplined movement through space. These discourses have social counterparts. For instance, Wendy Vogt argues that "everyday physical acts of violence must be understood as arising at the intersection between local and global economies that profit from human mobility. The spatial liminality of transit migration exacerbates processes of exclusion and violence" (2013: 764–65). Others, like Vogt, connect this process of profit extraction from human mobility to "historically deep" and "geographically broad" systems of structural violence (Farmer 2004: 309). They are, in other words, common through time, maybe even traditional, and they happen in particular places.

The connection between publicity and drug violence is important not simply because it clues us in to the way social realities are represented, but also because it sets the terms of public debate in both nations. Take, for instance, the way we imagine solutions to the social problem of violence. Because violence like that which Mexico experiences due to drug criminal organizations is so painful, bloody, and spectacular, in most contemporary political speeches and debates, news reporting, blogging, and in the words of public intellectuals, violence, defined as bloodshed, is the thing that we all simply want to stop as quickly as possible. While this desire to stop the violence is understandable, debating the violence in its bloody dimension can reduce the scope of solutions to the problem of violence. In 2006, contrary to wisdom suggesting that President Felipe Calderón should concentrate on going after the money-laundering operations that financed drug cartels, President Calderón went after the heads of the cartels, the quick fix. This tactic fostered the militarization of the conflict, further disarticulating whatever system cartels had to remain in relative peace with one another. This police strategy, which included turning the Mexican Armed Forces against its own people, fueled the flames, and the violence skyrocketed (Anguiano 2012: 16; Flannery 2013: 182; Ravelo 2011).[10] From December 2006 to September 2013, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission, the

Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH), received more than 8,000 complaints against the army and 116 cases in which the army committed serious human rights violations. The CNDH is also investigating the disappearance of almost 3,000 people by state agents and hundreds of cases of torture and other forms of state abuse (Human Rights Watch 2014). The "solution" to criminal violence has created its own set of terrible problems, but the police approach continues being legitimized by hegemonic voices in Mexico and the United States, including then US president Barack Obama, then US secretary of state Hillary Clinton, and then Mexican presidents Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto.

There are other important reasons that the connection between publicity and criminal drug violence matters. The normative impulse underlying common ways of speaking about violence can be a significant limitation. It is typically articulated by placing the nation-state as the centerpiece to both the problem of and solutions to violence. After all, the nation-state can provide the *order* needed to end the violence (see, for instance, Strydom 2000: 20). Yet the violence in Mexico is clearly due to factors beyond the nation and beyond politics, factors that are transnational, highly dynamic, and, as suggested by Vogt (2013), as much embedded in global capitalism and culture as in state politics. Drug trafficking relies on *structures of disorder* and *cultures of displacement* that obey the logic of neoliberal exploitation (Bauman 2000; Escobar 2004; Kun 2005b; Ong 2006).[11]

VISIBILITY, DISPLACEMENT, AND NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

A culture of displacement is a social and expressive framework for lived experience without the warm promise of the home or the homeland. This culture of displacement is dramatically manifested in the way digital culture inspired by drug violence is organized at the levels of practice, technology, and text. Two things support this hypothesis. First, like "Contrabando y traición," which today thrives in digital form, mediated culture engaging the violence is quite often transnational, inspired by movement, migration, and crime, and is concerned, like the fictional Camelia, with the dehumanizing and uprooting realities of economic exploitation (Herlinghaus 2009). Second, this mediated culture relies on structural tensions engendered by new technologies, often digital, that undermine state institutions and national realities. This goes to the heart of Kantian publicness, which frames the problem of democracy and justice in terms of the sharing of ideas and ethics. New media technologies are quickly changing the conditions for

"sharing" and, predictably, forcing us to alter our understandings of publicness. Thanks to these technologies, Los Tigres del Norte have been able to constitute multinational publics and, from California, become Mexican stars. Their displacement, their migration, and their expressive practices were partly defined by the technologies at their disposal (Kun 2007). Hence, contemporary digital cultures, new media technologies, and media texts that engage with criminal drug violence provide partial, if sometimes contradictory, answers to the need to engage with the excesses of global capitalism at the root of drug violence. Digital cultures are therefore better theorized using what James Hay calls "spatial materialism," a notion that complicates matters of media, culture, and ritual by recognizing that they are always already embedded in space and structured by political economy (Hay 2004; Hay and Andrejevic 2006). Thanks to the fluid nature of new media technologies, cultures of displacement embodied by those who take part in, or are inspired by, the drug trade take up "residence," if you will, in the ether—in the blogs, websites, and music downloaded globally. It is here that "displaced culture" finds its place.

Drug trafficking does not happen in a technological or cultural vacuum, as the foot soldiers, warmongers, and money launderers rely on high-tech specialists, chemists, engineers, and transportation specialists to efficiently carry out their illicit tasks. Beyond depending on increasingly sophisticated technologies for production and distribution of illicit drugs, those who join these complex criminal organizations have cultural incentives (i.e., music, film, video, video games, television, and the internet, or what some call "narcoculture") that are shaped by technological innovation.[12] As this book shows, the trafficking of narcoculture in Mexico and the United States and between the two nations is shaped by the media technologies that allow for its quicker and cheaper production and faster and boundless distribution. This narcoculture has given cartels a rich and sympathetic presence in the daily lives of immigrants to and from Mexico, and Latino and Mexican youths who, some fear, may then model their lifestyles and aspirations to match the fantastic images of wealth and success surrounding "el narco," Emilio Varela's end notwithstanding.

Narcoculture and new media technologies are particularly important to disturbing social relationships set in motion by drug trafficking because they connect two nations, Mexico and the United States, in which, under neoliberalism, the principles of economic and political egalitarianism are thinning. Neoliberalism, an economic system and economic culture that naturalizes the increasing divide between the wealthy and the poor as long

as a nation's GDP is growing, has gained a solid foothold in Mexico through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which has engendered a steady northward flow of consumer goods. A shared culture of neoliberalism has eased the travel northward of drug money; in the United States the money finds a financial system all too happy to launder the blood out of each billion. Mainstream US culture trades in images of drug consumption that portray it as an acceptable form of social transgression, a common way of escaping the realities of social and economic inequality, or a chemical tool helpful in the search for more and more personal productivity. For large swaths of the population, consuming drugs is seen as okay, even if the systematic consumption and trafficking of drugs has ravaged US populations, including African American and Latino youth who make up the bulk of the more than 2 million incarcerated due to drug violations.

Two cultures of growing economic inequality set the stage for displacement, disorder, and violence, and on this stage, new media technologies record and share the lives, dramas, dreams, and nightmares of the millions caught in the crossfire. In our public spheres, the trafficking of images of violence, torture, dismemberment, and beheadings have become normal. More than two hundred thousand have been killed in Mexico in the name of trafficking, and millions of lives have been devastated on both sides of the border. Two nations, Mexico and the United States, are joined by the pain caused by this traffic and are immersed in a sea of recriminations and historical amnesias. Meanwhile, the world watches, marveling at how the power of organized crime in the era of globalization, neoliberalism, new media, and war technologies can so swiftly erode the peacemaking capacity of Mexico, which has the eleventh-largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity in the world. Illicit, criminal, and cultural, the shockwaves of trafficking and displaced populations are transforming the North American continent, altering some of the foundational ways of being public, the way we share ideas and views, and, thus, the way we perform publicness. At stake is more than expression. If publicness is, of necessity, defined in spatial ways, how is publicity altered in the conditions of spatial instability that characterize displacement and trafficking?

THE PROBLEM OF NORMATIVITY

The first edition of Abraham Kaplan's classic *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science* includes one of the earliest published uses of the saying "If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail" (1964: 28).

Kaplan, a remarkable philosopher of science, was responding in this book to the increasing hegemony of positivism in the behavioral sciences and the need to reintroduce pragmatism. He used the hammer vignette ("Give a small boy a hammer . . .") in a section criticizing the way behavioral scientists used the notion of the scientific method to formally and institutionally marginalize nonpositivist styles of inquiry. His goal was not to criticize the way scientists defined problems depending on the methods they knew, which seemed unavoidable, but to warn us against marginalizing some methods simply because others are in fashion.

It is currently fashionable to use a law-and-order framework to talk about the drug violence in Mexico and to define it as a crisis of law and order in state institutions (Astorga 1999; Beittel 2013; Grillo 2012; and many others). This normative perspective on the problem can be synthetized as follows: Mexico's inefficient, insufficient, and/or corrupt police, juridical, and legislative institutions cannot properly investigate, detain, prosecute, and jail drug cartel members. Their actions, however violent, go unpunished. Many remark on the fact that more than 90 percent of homicides are never solved. Impunity is the norm. The state is at fault for not having the proper institutions in place. This is the normative hegemonic frame for thinking about Mexican drug violence, and the reason for its hegemony is perhaps because the majority of those commenting on violence are interested and even trained in politics. Thus, politics, the science of state institutions, provides the theoretical context that defines the problem of violence, and it is thus from the political science imaginary that we determine its solutions. Politics is the hammer that most choose.

I find value in the typical solutions of fixing law-and-order state institutions like, for instance, the Mexican court system and police academies, but I also find limitations in the way violence is defined by this current and most influential approach. The problem Kaplan refers to as "the law of the instrument" does more than marginalize methods: it makes it hard to see beyond the nail. These inquiries, which reduce the causes of drug violence to institutional shortcomings, frame the violence in a narrative of conflict that is both predictable and traditional: criminal violence is a law-and-order problem that would be solved if all criminals died or went to jail. Even if this view is partly true, it assigns blame to traditional culprits and imagines quick answers and solutions. Criminals are an easy target. So is the Mexican state (most states are), and corruption is such a slippery problem that at once we can blame a culprit and rationalize the continuation of violence.

Corruption is slippery; impunity is terrible; and Mexican institutions must improve. Yet I want to see beyond and around the nail, beyond and around the law-and-order framework. Underpinning this exploration is a deep belief in cultural inquiry and in the capacity of expressive culture to give us unique insights into criminal violence and into the cultural roots of our current normative framework. Popular songs like "Contrabando y traición" can help us see the violence in its human dimension, not simply as a state crisis but as a human crisis, one affecting hundreds of millions of people in the Americas.

There are many potential lessons in "Contrabando y traición," but here I want to start with one: the violence of the drug trade has to be understood against the backdrop of immigration, border crossings, and transnational cultural practices. In a study of migration patterns from Mexico, Viridiana Rios Contreras (2014) argues that 264,692 Mexicans migrated to the United States due to fear of organized crime from 2006 to 2010 alone. Violence breeds migration. For this reason, drug-trade violence has to be set in the context of globalized displacement. I define "globalization" here as the most complex of structural transformations occurring in the world due to the increasing rate and speed of mobility of people, goods, information, and culture. This mobility makes possible immediacy where it did not exist, restructuring systems of power and generating new potentialities that are hard to regulate, for they are hard to account for. Globalization produces disorder and conflict. Movement joins two points, but, paradoxically, transnational movement also disjoints, producing friction and energy that may be violently released. This is evident in the histories of immigration, border crossings, and transnational culture. Arjun Appadurai (1996) uses the term *disjuncture* to describe the particular tensions and points of friction brought about by globalization and mobility. These disjunctures are unstable and hard to perceive, and they easily become blind spots. Moreover, as Appadurai notes and this book corroborates, these disjunctural spaces are fertile ground for culture. Just as mediated culture sets in and thrives between these global disjunctures, so do crime, trafficking, and violence, three interrelated types of social practice that benefit from the cracks in institutions found in nation-states *and* the disjunctures between global systems of power and culture.

"Contrabando y traición" itself is an example of the culture of displacement thriving in the disjunctures caused by transnational mediation and immigration. The members of Los Tigres del Norte are all immigrants from northern Mexico who found their sound and fame in California but who

use Mexican musical styles. As importantly, Los Tigres rely on Mexican audiences habituated to norteño music, and on Mexican American audiences who hear in their music the nostalgic call of the homeland. The song itself, a story of crime, trafficking, betrayal, and violence, explores, makes public, in a narrative form, the global disjunctures that give rise to drug trafficking. Culture flourishes in the crevices, between the blind spots, in the cracks of reality.

This song is also a powerful reminder of the political fantasies at the heart of normative law-and-order approaches to violence and culture. State-centric, politics-first, and institutional explanations of violence imply that healthy policy processes, laws, and politics will yield docile and law-abiding populations. For the most part, they are correct if we consider the docility of the majority of Colombians, Mexicans, Brazilians, and US Americans, who carry on their lives in almost perfect legality. But the perspective from the underbelly of society is different: sizable portions of these populations are simply unruly, restless, and seemingly unstoppable. Tracking confrontations of what Erving Goffman (1971) would have termed worlds of front stage and back stage, "Contrabando y traición" reminds us of the unpredictable dynamism of social life; the cunning that so many commit to bypassing institutions, breaking laws, and cheating policies; and the profound political effects of the ghostly, always disappearing, dark practices that nonetheless produce a lasting and powerful criminal world. The network of conceits that gives life to criminal organizations is also found in mediated culture and energized by media technologies. These two networks are evidence that the strength and power of the criminal world have media and technological counterparts that normalize, even if briefly, in evanescent form, the symbols, values, behaviors, and modes of expression within organized crime.

Recognizing the importance of global disjunctures between different planes of reality (what Appadurai terms ethnoscapes, mediascapes, financescapes, ideoscapes, and technoscapes) carries its own methodological and theoretical complications. Let me quickly illustrate these complications by returning to Goffman, whose theories of society have been called, like Arendt's theories of publicity, dramaturgic. He (1971) believed that people behaved very differently when performing their actions in private, backstage, in front of their kin, as opposed to the way people behaved in front of others, in public. This performative theory of society has been useful in helping us understand how behavior is symbolic of an individual's understanding of the situation in which the behavior takes place, the social

landscape, if you will. It gives us clues as to what we think is public and to the particular meanings of public spaces. A man stops us on a dark street past midnight to ask for the time. Is he young? Is he dressed well? Does he have tattoos or scars? Is he wearing clothing that could hide a gun? This mental checklist exists because we know to interpret behavior based on location, nonverbal cues, and on the manner in which the behavior is carried through. If some of this does not check out, we may have to run. But if the dark street happens to be our street, and the man asking us for the time happens to be Freddie, and we recognize his voice from elementary school, and we understand the question because we borrowed a watch from him two weeks prior, we may have to smile. We behave differently, Goffman notes, based on the meaning we give to the space in which a social interaction is taking place.

Dramaturgical approaches to social interactions have their limitations. Separating back stages from front stages is as difficult as understanding the divisions of what is private and public. To put it simply, things are not so neat in life, not with the type of symbolic behaviors that flourish in disjunctural spaces. In the song, Emilio perhaps thought that romancing Camelia was a way of making business more pleasant. Camelia disagreed. As noted from the beginning of this chapter, drug violence and the culture it inspires often are symbolic of transgressions, border crossings, transnationalism, and the disjunctures between social, economic, legal, and cultural structures. All of these issues complicate symbolic space, whether it is public or private, thus making behavior, including criminal violence, political action, and cultural production difficult to assess, particularly with theoretical and methodological tools that were not built with these issues in mind. What would Goffman, Arendt, or Habermas say about political corruption due to organized crime in Mexico, for instance? This is behavior connecting two discrete back stages, that of a criminal organization and that of politics. When a practice happens in the disjunctural space between two back stages, how is symbolic behavior to be interpreted? The publicity this book analyzes, like the example of the fictional Camelia la Tejana, shows evidence of spatial complications due to mobility that impede quick evaluations based on dramaturgy. Publicity, which should always be articulated in relation to space, is quite diverse, and it invites different sets of rules and structural forces. These complications and their ensuing ambiguities necessitate the use of conceptual tools built specifically for the type of spatial transgressions analyzed here and the type of publicity these transgressions call for. It is in this spirit that I use trafficking and displacement as conceptual tools.

MOBILITY AND PUBLICNESS

> The critique of violence is the philosophy of its history—the "philosophy" of this history, because only the idea of its development makes possible a critical, discriminating, and decisive approach to its temporal data. A gaze directed only at what is close at hand can at most perceive a dialectical rising and falling in the lawmaking and law-preserving forms of violence.
> —Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence"

In the epigraph, Benjamin reminds us that the law-and-order approach is a "gaze directed only at what is close at hand." A critique of violence must engage the philosophy of its history: it must query the way violence has collected meaning through time, thanks to historically contingent ways of understanding it as a law-and-order issue. It is not simply an effort to give historical grounding to contemporary phenomena. As Reinhart Koselleck ambivalently notes, the philosophy of history is essentially critical as it positions the object of historical inquiry under critical judgment (1988: 9–10). *This book's first theoretical and methodological goal is to amplify the historical and philosophical range regarding violence, displacement, and publicity so that we can critique violence against the historicity of the law-and-order framework*.[13] I carry on this amplification not at random. In this book I am inspired by mobility studies, which allow me to engage publicity theory at its primordial level.

Mobility studies provide useful ideas for the study of mediated culture, violence, and publicity. John Urry (2000), for instance, uses mobility as a dissenting motif that has the capacity to disarticulate the typical conceptual systems of the social sciences, including, I argue, publicness. Contrary to most sociological approaches, which start with the central metaphor of society to investigate the real, Urry proposes that the central metaphors characterizing contemporary social phenomena are network, flow, and travel and that these metaphors should guide research. He also proposes that the concept of society at the base of most sociological inquiries is both outmoded and narrow. Concept(s) of society have dominated the social sciences particularly in the West, in Europe and North America, and these concepts have often implied or explicitly stated that societies are composed of citizens whose legal rights define them as members of the social body.[14] If society's members are citizens, society thus has political and geographical boundaries, and these coincide with the borders of the nation-state. Perhaps predictably, the mental image that first comes to mind with the word

society is not a human collective that expands across several nation-states or that is composed of residents of all kinds, including undocumented immigrants, but a human collective that, at its most expansive, is as large as a nation-state.

Theorizing movement requires theorizing space and time, which are two of the analytical categories central to global theory, as in the work of Anthony Giddens, Henry Lefebvre, and David Harvey. Because of this connection, mobility studies is concerned not simply with documenting movement but also with recognizing that the increasing changes in the rate of speed, as in our ability to transverse geographical space in faster trains or planes, is transforming human experience.

The transformations to human experience and societies engendered by mobilities and globalization are useful for reimagining modernity, which has profound implications for publicity theory. Instead of linking the rise of modernity to the development of a particular set of political ideas (e.g., the protoliberalism of the Magna Carta or the rise of Enlightenment thought in the seventeenth century) or ways of producing knowledge (e.g., René Descartes's *Discourse on Method* [1637]), modernity could be documented in relation to social, technological, and phenomenological transformations. Geographer Tim Cresswell (2006) goes so far as to argue that the history of mobility is tied to the history of modernity, which he understands as a period of acceleration of movement. Sociologist Piet Strydom similarly locates the rise of sociological thought in the transition between feudal and modern times, which he also links to communication and the new social possibilities of new communication technologies (2000: 9). In feudal times, Cresswell notes, workers were literally attached to the land. It is only through the process of detaching people from the land that we see the rise of protocapitalism, the beginnings of free labor, and the internal and external migrations that made possible urbanization and, eventually, the Industrial Revolution. In the last two centuries, mobility becomes more than the epiphenomenon that allows us to analyze modernity. Mobility becomes the cultural marker of the modern. During the last two centuries, being modern has meant being mobile, in movement—being able to travel, to live your life by the promise of social mobility, to acquire and master technologies of movement, and to break with tradition, the sedentary and static imaginary location of the past (see also Bauman 2000).

Although mobility may better describe the historical and phenomenological experiences of modernity, the history of modern political and

communicative ideas, which include publicness, is mostly a history of the orderly. Publicness, as it is historicized and theorized by Kant, Habermas, and others, is a communicative practice that reinscribes order in conditions of mobility and instability in postfeudal Europe. I am referring here to the rise of religious pluralism in the fifteenth century aided by the printing press; the transformative emergence of mercantilism and colonialism as the two pillars of European power; the massive migrations from rural to urban settings that followed the modernization of agriculture and the beginning of industrialization; the multiplication of the mercantile, professional, and bureaucratic classes; the rise of absolutism that followed and the birth of social criticism during absolutism that Koselleck and Habermas historicize; and the emergence of the political theories of the Enlightenment, which normalized democratic arrangement that relied on the formation and control of public opinion. Publicness is an answer to the question of political and economic disorder that Europe experienced from the sixteenth century onward, and it is not surprising to find Kant's first flirtation with the idea of publicness in *What Is Enlightenment?* (1784), in which public reasoning is a guarantor of public peace, nor is it surprising to find a greater elaboration of the idea of publicity in the appendices to *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay* (1795), where publicity legitimates government. As I show throughout this book, publicity theory fits within the normative law-and-order mindset that emerges during these troubling centuries in the West.

James Scott's work (1998) is helpful at explaining the theoretical harmony between publicity theory and the law-and-order framework. He argues that modern nation-states are organized to bring fixity to the mobile and to organize space and time. According to Scott, the modern nation-state is a project of order. In what follows, I argue that the power and appeal of publicity theory is in its promise to constitute the orderly process of communicative interaction between citizens and the state and to potentially fuel orderly processes of government in pluralistic and mobile societies.

For this reason there is a significant tension between the experience of being modern, and normative theories like publicness, which become encrusted in our political culture even if the conditions of politics and power cannot sustain the type of orderly promise fueling publicity theory. This book locates this tension in different structural elements of publicness and invites a deep engagement with publicity theory to salvage those parts and ideas that can exist both in the real realm and in the normative realm.

WHAT IS IN THE BOOK?

This book puts into practice Benjamin's advice cited above. The book is a critique of violence because it is an inquiry into the "philosophy of its history," examining the manner in which this history connects to publicity theory. It is not an argument about criminal violence as such but, rather, an argument about the way the violence becomes historicized and made public; how it becomes talk, symbols, and meaning; how it becomes memorialized in expressive culture; and how it is embedded in narratives of institutions and practices, which give violence philosophical power, temporality, and specificity. Because histories that win over other histories are those that are repeated and mediated, this critique of criminal violence's publicity is attentive to mediation and to the mediating institutions, as these are not neutral channels or blank canvases on which symbols simply appear. Mediation is a social, economic, and technological practice, the product of choices, biases, affordances, limitations, and power, and it is shaped by its own specific histories.

Each chapter examines one or more structural elements of publicity that are saliently shaped by or affected by criminal drug violence. It is important to make distinctions here. In some cases, criminal drug violence is an agent of change, as when DCOs attack or threaten journalists or news institutions. These threats and attacks have led to changes in publishing policy and a reduction in reporting about violence (see chapter 5). In other cases, an existing structure reacts to criminal drug violence in such a way that it redirects resources or focus to violence, changing its shape in the process. When criminal drug violence first skyrocketed in 2007, news institutions in Mexico reported endlessly on the violence, and even news institutions in the US refocused their attention on Mexico and regularly published on the violence. In both cases, criminal violence is part of the restructuring of news practices, but in the first case the violence spurs the change while in the second the structure adapts to the changing context of news produced by the violence.

By structural elements of publicity I am referring here to social, political, economic, cultural, material, and technological elements central to, paraphrasing Habermas, the "traffic" of news, ideas, experiences, and values that become public opinion, that are subject to public diffusion, public debate, and that need public visibility (1989: 15). The book is not meant to explore every structural element of publicity, only those that are clearly affected by criminal drug violence. My research investigates three broad structural categories by focusing on cases that yield particular but generalizable findings:

1 Public discourse and debate: The massiveness of criminal drug violence in Mexico incites a very particular type of public discourse and debate. Instead of debates about individual deviance, criminal drug violence in Mexico incites debates that are social and political.
2 Mediation: Criminal drug violence transforms the rules of cultural distribution, and it thus structures mediation.
3 Participation and membership: Criminal drug violence alters the rules of public participation, and it thus structures public presence and membership.

Criminal drug violence, of the type that Mexico has endured since the end of 2006, structures discourse, mediation, and participation, and it shapes publicity both in Mexico and in the United States. Besides tracking down these structural changes, this book is attentive to the disrupting and generative concepts of trafficking and/or displacement, to the particular ways in which place, displacement, and mobility become identifiably important notions in the restructuring.

Chapter 1 lays out a basic historical context to the recent violence in Mexico and the manner in which the spike in violence was treated in the public sphere at the level of both broad state publicity and what I call micropublicity. The first section narrates the rise of the powerful contemporary DCOs, the manner in which the violence is being addressed by the government of Mexico, and the arguments that influential public intellectuals in Mexico have made regarding the limitations to these approaches. It starts with a historiography of illicit drugs in Mexico, continues with the development of drug-trafficking organizations in the twentieth century, and ends with the rise of the contemporary forces, which, fueled by cocaine wealth, have taken over drug production and distribution in Mexico and the United States. The chapter also provides a background to the type of solutions the Mexican government has implemented in the last decade regarding the increasing problem of drug crime and violence, the law-and-order side of the equation. This is the chapter in which I provisionally accept the presuppositions and premises of the law-and-order approach and start testing their limits. I locate these limits in the contradiction inherent in imposing state solutions in Mexico to a problem that, at the very least, involves multiple nation-states, including the United States, Colombia, Bolivia, Cuba, and, increasingly, Panama, Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador. This contradiction is masked by a law-and-order approach that reduces the scope of public debate to, in the Mexican context, issues of corruption

and legal and political underdevelopment, rather than issues of economics and neoliberalism.

The massive character of the drug violence in Mexico has permitted very particular types of discourse. Since violence spiked in 2007, there has been a public debate on whether Mexico is at risk of becoming a failed state. With an emphasis on the connection between violence and the nation-state, chapter 2 examines print and digital sources in the United States and Mexico that participate in the failed-state debate. This particular debate does not exist in a discursive or historical vacuum. The chapter locates the terms of the debate in political theories that, since Thomas Hobbes, have claimed that nation-states are primarily violence-deterrent social organizations. Critical of this position, the chapter notes that since Hobbes, the discourse of state violence has always depended on the spatialization of violence. Violence is, in Hobbes and onward, invasion, a spatial transgression that legitimates the use of force. This legitimization cannot happen without a legal discourse of space, which the chapter locates in the history of property and its connection to the rise of the modern nation-state. The rise of the "property regime," as Carol Rose (1994) calls it, is set against the backdrop of colonialism, the rise of capitalism, and the liberal legal state. Joshua Lund (2012) further reminds us of the particular way in which the Mexican national project in the nineteenth century was articulated as a process of internal colonization that integrated the vast territory that was Mexico into a single, orderly, and productive space. He writes: "If liberalism, whether neo- or classical, relates to space, it does so through its tenacious drive to make space productive, enlisting the state (the government and its armed forces) in this task" (Lund 2012: 3). These histories show how the particular Western fantasies of peace and stability have often been articulated within and against the reality of Western colonialism, trafficking, movement, and technologies of war. This reality is present in the way conservative and nativist voices in the United States continue using the image that Mexico is a failing state to justify the increasing involvement of the United States in Mexico, the militarization of the US-Mexico border, and the social and political marginalization of Latinos in the United States.

The centrality of law and order to modern nation-states does more than structure discourse. It positions nonstate violence as the other of the social: we even use the term *antisocial* to describe behavior that engenders violence. Law and order also structures the way culture and ideas are disseminated in their physical manifestations. By controlling and policing media technologies, media systems, and commerce, the modern state becomes the architect

of cultural environments. The goal is not to shape culture, but to craft cultural environments that can become ecosystems for the shaping of good and useful citizens. In this sense, law and order are constitutive of modern citizenship. They are central to the state's authorial function, which involves producing governable citizens. This authorial function is partly accomplished through culture and the state's capacity to censor, which is most active in cases in which cultural expressions embrace violence that threatens the state, such as criminal violence. This authorial function is at its weakest when culture, even violent culture, is transnational and new media technologies subvert the censorial power of the state.

Chapter 3 investigates the musical genre of narcocorridos to illustrate fundamental contradictions within the modernist goal of authoring citizens and the disarticulation of the property regime due to new technologies and global capitalism. Narcocorridos, a type of folkloric music born in northern Mexico that narrates the lives and exploits of drug traffickers, has gained increasing popularity since the violence began to increase on both sides of the border. Different Mexican states have prohibited the broadcast and sale of narcocorridos, but the music has continued to be popular. The chapter shows how new ways of using the internet and digital recording to distribute music have all but thwarted state efforts for censorship. Today a large portion of this recording and distribution starts in California and ends in Mexican homes. Casting the censorship of narcocorridos within the history of a modernity shaped by nation-states, the chapter shows how new media technologies have subverted the ability of the Mexican state to censor by constructing cheap and efficient transnational ways of recording and distributing music and other cultural forms dangerous to the state.

The constitution of governable citizens relies on culture attentive to place and locality. When (violent) culture is deterritorialized, culture stops being tasked with an authorial function and can freely become a vehicle for other social, political, and economic tasks. In the United States, narcocorridos have become hugely successful, fueling the new corporate arrangements that have made Spanish-language radio one of the most dynamic and successful sectors of the US music business. Chapter 4 shows how in the United States, narcocorridos, aided by the systemic marginalization of Spanish-language media in mainstream society, go under the radar of legal cultures, all while the narco-imaginary continues gaining strength among Mexican Americans. Censorship is out of the question. The corporate centrality of narcocorridos in the United States contrasts with its censorship in Mexico. This suggests the conclusion that new digital technologies, when

transnational, are powerful systems of ambiguity, for they disarticulate modernist notions of citizenry. Although censorship is not yet a factor in structuring the US public sphere in terms of the distribution of narratives about Mexican criminal drug violence, the violence does play a role in the structuring of US music distribution. The chapter also shows the types of narratives musicians have to present in order to properly embody the symbolic power of narcos.

In violent times, not all remedies to criminal violence are enacted by the state. Contemporary citizen subjectivities include heroic modalities that task them with getting involved in efforts to try to stop the violence. Yet citizens wishing to involve themselves in the fight against violence in Mexico must carefully weigh personal risks. Chapter 5 examines one salient way in which criminal drug violence has changed the rules of participating in the public sphere. It analyzes the citizen journalism blogosphere in Mexico in relation to the uses and misuses of anonymity by and around two popular blogs, *El Blog del Narco* and *Valor por Tamaulipas*, and the connections between opacity, displacement, and technology. Opacity, especially anonymity, allows for participation in the Mexican public sphere, and it is particularly necessary in situations in which coercion and violence go unpunished. However, the chapter shows that a public sphere based on opacity is fraught and often disintegrating.

The need for opacity is closely connected to the lack of "spaces of trust," public communicational spaces that allow for self-disclosure. Chapter 6 analyzes the famous Mexican website *El Blog del Narco* as symptomatic of the type of publicity common in contemporary Mexico and the way violence has structured the citizen journalism sector of the Mexican blogosphere. The article interrogates how the blog's mode of production and its reliance on anonymity has propelled the bloggers—in particular, an anonymous blogger who calls herself "Lucy"—to the level of civic heroes and how a global community of sympathizers made sense of her actions. In this violent context, Lucy has used anonymity as a necessary mechanism to construct a place of trust and safety. In the process, Lucy has embodied the contradictory figure of the anonymous hero. The analysis is indebted to Seyla Benhabib's classic interrogation of Hannah Arendt's notions of publicity—in particular, Arendt's ideas of heroicness and self-disclosure.

My concluding chapter returns to the theoretical issues animating the cases: the relationship of violence and publicness. It links the history of publicity theory to the history of the law-and-order framework that most people use to define criminal drug violence today. But the history of the

law-and-order framework, which is partly shared with publicity theory, is a troubling history that depends on society being blind to the possibility that the political economy of publicness is dependent on violence and coercion. The conclusion makes a case for at least considering this possibility and reimagining publicness as an European answer to the question of violence that could be implemented only in nations profiting from colonialism and mercantilism. Theories of violence and publicness, both of which present themselves as law-and-order discourses in contemporary times, are grounded in ideas about the state and violence reverting back to the origins of the modern nation-state, the emergence of the international order, the beginnings of capitalism, the rise of the property regime, and colonialism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Throughout the book I use the word *we* to designate my different communities. Hence, these indexical shifts correspond to the intersectionality of my authorial identity. Sometimes *we* refers to the academy; other times it refers to Mexicans; other times it refers to US Americans; and at times it refers to Mexican Americans and Latinas/os.

2 Josh Kun (2005b) points out the tension inherent in the musical personas of Los Tigres del Norte and the band members' actual civic experiences, documented in their song "Mis dos patrias" ("My Two Nations") and throughout their lives as immigrants.

3 Kant's original formulation of publicness was articulated in *To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795). For an argument about Kant's particular notions of publicness, see Luban 1996.

4 Publicity is the central cog of Kant's political philosophy and of the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*), a political notion that proposes that only the united will of the people can legitimate authority. See, for instance, Marey 2017.

5 *Quality television* is a term used to refer to the postcable surge of television networks like HBO seeking a niche market through the use of complex narratives and branding that distinguishes them from mainstream broadcast fare (C. Anderson 2008; Jaramillo 2005).

6 I do not take for granted that all publicity theorists would accept mediated discourse as part of the public sphere. Famously, Habermas (1989) has stated that the demise of the public sphere is related to the increasing salience of mass media. However, for the purposes of this book, I side with those who believe that meaningful political consensus in contemporary societies depends, practically always, on media, media access, and media participation.

7 This dramaturgical approach is part of most theories of the public sphere even if some, like Habermas, have failed to note the dramaturgical character of their proposals.

8 *Displacement* and *cultures of displacement* are terms today associated with "displaced" populations such as exiles and refugees. Violence is often part of the past of these populations and even their present, but the relationship between violence and displacement is epiphenomenal, not discursive. One appears when the other one exists. Displacement may in some cases be treated as an epiphenomenon of violence. The way I use the term here instead makes displacement the root of the metaphoric tree of violence.

9 Others have noted the "violence of non-places," the manner in which the spaces in between transit become symbolically and really connected to violence (Roberts 2014: 17). Nonplaces are the locus of the displaced, the traveler, the refugee, the immigrant. Although for Les Roberts (2014), for instance, nonplaces are specific zones of transit, stasis, and lack of agency, from the perspective of immigrants, refugees, and exiles, all new places are nonplaces, characterized by violence, insecurity, and fear.

10 In the 1980s, in the midst of two forms of drug crises, one crisis of consumption and crime in the United States and another crisis of trafficking and violence in South America, the governments of the United States, Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru attempted to collaborate in reducing the amount of coca leaf available to the drug cartels and implemented a crop substitution program aimed at convincing coca farmers to stop growing the raw material for cocaine. It did not work, for in a hurry to produce solutions, the US government, the program's instigator, failed to make time to develop and implement the research needed for the program to have a chance. Though in this case these governments seemed to be tackling transnational economic issues, they did so with significant limitations. Whatever poverty farmers in Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia have to endure, it is poverty caused by the lasting cultural and economic legacy of global capitalism and asymmetrical economic relations between center and periphery. Even back in the 1980s, USAID had already warned the US government that crop substitution would not work, for no other crop could take coca's place in the global agricultural trade system. No one listened (Marcy 2010: 18–20).

11 Scrutinizing the drug trade through politics, not economics, is misguided. In politicizing drug violence we confuse the dramatic social effects of trade with political effects and produce solutions based on politics, not economics. Immanuel Wallerstein, commenting on the confusion between political and economic analysis, writes: "The distinctive feature of a capitalist world-economy is that economic decisions are oriented primarily to the arena of the world-economy, while political decisions are oriented primarily to the smaller structures that have legal control, the states . . . within the world-economy" (1974: 67). Can we address the global trade of drugs by regulating politics alone? No.

12 Jorge A. Sánchez Godoy notes that narcoculture is not simply about drug mafias; rather, it is about the mixing of licit and illicit sectors, the multiple

actors that "reconstitute, reproduce, and legitimate, every day, this construction of the imaginary that has roots eminently rural" (2009: 99, my translation). However, as Tony Cella (2014) notes, as the business of drug production and distribution becomes a global phenomenon, these rural elements lose ground and some relevance.

13 As Reinhart Koselleck (1988) would note, my project, like his own, uses some of the Enlightenment tools it means to criticize, including the pervading sense of crises that gave rise to the hegemonic standing of the philosophy of history.

14 For a detailed account of the rise of societal thinking, see Koselleck 1988 and Strydom 2000.

CHAPTER 1. PRELUDE TO TWO WARS

1 President Zedillo also carried out the arrest of Raúl Salinas de Gortari, the brother of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the man that Zedillo succeeded and a central member of the PRI. Although the official charge against Salinas was homicide, his alleged involvement with DCOs is quite famous.

2 *El Universal* has another advantage. It is based in Mexico City, a city that has seen little drug-related violence. This data thus gives us a glimpse into how the theme of organized crime violence circulated in nonviolent areas, which, at 70 percent, is the majority of the Mexican territory.

3 *El Universal* does not tell the whole truth. The paper targets the urban (upper) middle classes, which are its powerful main readership. In areas directly affected by the violence, and from rural perspectives, things are more complex. For instance, as Pavel Shlossberg (2015) notes, those living in rural areas affected by drug violence in Michoacán would often draw negative and critical comparisons between what they observed as their local reality and what was reported in the press.

4 I use the term *narcotráfico* because it is the term most often used to refer to the violence and the problems generated by DCOs. I tested my searches by randomly reading one hundred entries from 2000 to 2014 and found that every time the term was mentioned, the news item did indeed refer to DCOs. I did the same with other terms including *drogas*, *narcos*, and *cartel*. These terms were also good indicators but had their weaknesses. For instance, using *drogas* retrieved many items related to health. Using *narcos* was too selective, as the term was not used every time the issue of DCOs was discussed. The same happened with the term *cartel*.

5 Embassy Mexico, "Ambassador's Meeting with Presumed President Elect Calderon," WikiLeaks Cable: 06MEXICO4310, dated August 4, 2006, http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/08/06MEXICO4310.html.

6 Embassy Mexico, "Mexico's Government, Media Process Ambassador's Message on Violence," WikiLeaks Cable: 06MEXICO5312, dated September 19, 2006, http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/08/06MEXICO5312.html.