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The Mexican Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity: An Exploratory Analysis of its Origins and Development

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Luz Angélica Ramírez González
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Members of the examining committee:

Dr. Rosalba Icaza
Dr. Helen Hintjens

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Inquiries:

Contents

List of Acronyms

CENCOS	National Centre of Social Communication
CONEVAL	National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy
DF	Federal District
INEGI	National Institute of Statistics Geography and Informatics
MORENA	Movement of National Regeneration
MPJD	Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PGR	Attorney General's Office
PP	Political Process
PR	Presidency of the Republic
SERAPAZ	Services and Consultancy for Peace
SFV	Space for Victims
SM	Social Movements
SMOs	Social Movement Organisations
SSP	Department of Public Security
RMT	Resource Mobilisation Theory

Abstract

This research studies the development of one of Mexico's most significant social processes of the last year: the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD). The 28th of March 2011, the well-known Mexican poet Javier Sicilia lost his son to the so-called 'war on drugs' flagged by President Felipe Calderón[1]. Soon after his loss, Sicilia (2011) publicly expressed the pain, suffering and indignation caused by the outcomes of the government's strategy and made his message clear: "*estamos hasta la madre*" (we are fed up). He called upon the citizenry to unite and demand peace with justice and dignity. Since that moment thousands of people throughout the country and a number of national as well as international organisations have reacted to his call and today they form the MPJD. This research explores how the MPJD has developed since the time of its emergence by applying a rather fluid theoretical perspective that incorporates rational as well as emotional aspects of collective action. Moreover, by focusing on what happens *within* the movement, this study aims to highlight the voices and agency of those whose experiences have been marginalised. A key finding is that whilst the MPJD has not managed to advance agendas of peace and justice, it has been able to counter an official discourse and made the victims of Mexico's dramatic escalation of violence significantly more visible.

Relevance to Development Studies

We live in a world that has been transformed and retransformed over time and in our days it is undeniable that in a significant number of cases social movements have played a key role in bringing about such social, political and economic transformations. This has been pointed out by Della Porta and Diani (2006:1) when they claim that "it is no longer possible to describe protest politics, grassroots participation, and symbolic challenges as 'unconventional'".

It is precisely for their transformational power that the study of social movements is of particular relevance in the field of development studies. The fact that they represent an enlarging body of research (Flórez 2010:15) "demonstrates the continued interest and ability of people to strive for alterations in politics, economics and culture – relevant arenas for traditional development practice" (Huesca 2001:416). Moreover, it is no longer possible to disregard the connection social movements have with the notions of conflict, justice, realising rights, and social transformation, all of them essential for development. As Thompson and Tapscott (2011:4) point out: "the degree

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[1] President Felipe Calderón was elected by universal suffrage for a term of 6 years (2006-2012). After 70 years of hegemonic rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), President Calderón was the second candidate of the National Action Party (PAN), after Vicente Fox (2000-2006), to win the Mexican presidential elections.

to which mobilisation and the formation of social movements at the grassroots level are necessary for the realisation of fundamental rights is a question that extends back to the origins of social movement theory".

Keywords

Chapter 1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to clearly state what this research is about, why it is relevant, how it was conducted and how it is presented in the following chapters. In order to contextualise it, the first section presents a brief overview of Mexico's violent contemporary reality. It continues by justifying the relevance of the study and by setting forward the objectives and questions that guided it. Consequently, I present the methodology followed to collect and analyse data, and reflect upon the scope and limitations of the research. Finally, I establish how this work develops in the following chapters.

1.1   Immersed in a Violent Order[2]

While the focus of this work is on the MPJD, contextualising its emergence is important to get a better understanding of its societal and academic relevance. Mexico is a country of stark contrasts. While several analyses are rather optimistic about its present and future economic performance (Corrales 2012, World Bank 2012), the country is far from being paradise for most of its more than 112 million inhabitants (INEGI 2010). On the contrary, daunting social and economic inequality, corruption across all branches of its government, an inefficient war and a serious security issue that has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, stand on the way of a prosperous present and future.

It is estimated that about 46.2% of the country's total population lives in poverty and about 10.4% in extreme poverty (CONEVAL 2011). Apart from this marginalisation, Mexico has become a thriving environment for drug-trafficking and as a result of its combat – linked to U.S. demands since the 1920s (Serrano 2007) – the country has been experiencing "a persistent public security crisis involving high rates of violent crime and increased violence" since the 1990s (Ríos and Shirk 2011:3). While drug-controls in Mexico have done little to stop the flow of drugs to the U.S., they have made traffickers professionalise "in their efforts to build an economy of scale that can ensure adequate compensation for their risks" (Malkin 2001:102), and today it is possible to identify at least 22 types of highly profitable crimes committed by Mexican criminal groups (Buscaglia 2010:96).

In contrast with how former administrations dealt with the issue, President Calderón declared a 'war on drugs' soon after he took office in 2006 (Sullivan and Beittel 2009:ii). Moreover, it was during his administration that the U.S. became a prominent actor in the battle through the 'Merida Initiative', an "assistance package to help Mexico fight drug-trafficking started under President George Bush" (Ríos and Shirk 2011:15). The loose cooperation that once characterised the approach on the matter has been strengthened to the point of making these two countries intimate partners through a framework

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[2] A more detailed account of Mexico's violent context can be found in Appendix I.

that involves intelligence, training, multiple equipment, and significant funds (U.S. Department of State 2012:1). As far as March 2012 the U.S. Congress had "appropriated $1.6 billion since the Merida Initiative began in Fiscal Year 2008" (ibid.). Therefore one should not refer to Mexico's war on drugs, but rather to a Mexico-U.S. war on drugs.

According to the official discourse the deployment of thousands of military and police forces on the streets is for the sake of 'security'. Yet, in the last six years Mexico has experienced an unprecedented escalation of violence. The dramatic raise in the number of deaths and gross human rights violations are a proof of this. While an upsurge of violence preceded 2006, the number of drug-related killings reported throughout the first four years of Calderón's government, 34,550, "was four times greater than the total of 8,901 such killings identified during the entire Fox administration (2001-2006)" (Ríos and Shirk 2011:8). An increase in violence of 400% is not something that should be disregarded. However it is important to note that the government only considers the deaths of criminals and authorities in their categorisation of drug-related killings (PR n.d.). Therefore, if one considers the total number of assassinations in the country between 2007 and 2011, it ascends to 95,632 (INEGI 2012). Following this trend, Le Monde (2012) has estimated the total number of violent deaths during Calderón's administration to be as high as in 120,000.

But while figures are unable to express the horrifying nature of violence, it is important to note that it has become more brutal and broadly targeted over time. In fact, killings are usually "accompanied by beheadings, dismemberment, torture, and other acts of extraordinary cruelty" (Ríos and Shirk 2011:13). Furthermore, human rights violations such as forced disappearances and displacements are also widespread. From 2006 to April 2011, the CNDH (2011) registered 14,295 cases of people missing or unidentified corpses and it has been estimated that in the period 2010 and 2011, between 2% and 3% of the adult Mexican population was displaced due to the escalation of violence. Considering such population consist of 78 million people, the number of displacements only in that period ranges between 780,000 and 2 million 340,000 (Langner 2012). Despite of this, the government's official discourse regarding the war and its outcomes remained positive for years and President Calderón sustained that all those affected by it were criminals, with the exception of some considered collateral damage. Moreover, there is 98% of impunity in the country, "causing frustration, deception and fear amongst the population" (President of CNDH as cited in Martínez 2011).

In short, the war on drugs and the lack of response from the government has marked the country with a legacy of horror and thousands of families in sorrow. It was precisely in this violent and unjust context that the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD) emerged in March 2011.

1.2 Justification, Objectives and Questions

As it has been observed, the MPJD emerged at a critical time in Mexican history. However, despite these conditions, in a relatively short period of time, 21 months, it has been able to mobilise a highly diverse group of people,

ranging across gender, age, class and political ideology. While the MPJD has had considerable media coverage, hardly any academic work has been done about it. Therefore, there is little or no knowledge about regarding its origins and development.

The purpose of this research is to make a contribution to the understanding of Mexico's violent contemporary social reality as well as of the MPJD, by studying key aspects of how the latter has developed from the time of its emergence. At the theoretical level, this research attempts to contribute to the field of social movements (SM) by challenging the underlying assumption of the incompatibility of rationality and emotions present in most SM approaches of the second half of the twentieth century. Therefore, by looking into a selection of key aspects of the MPJD chosen by their prominence throughout the primary data gathering process for this research, the present work aims to answer the question:

How has the Mexican Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity developed in respect to its objectives from the time of its emergence?

This question has been dissected into the following sub-questions:

1) How did the MPJD emerge?

2) How is the MPJD organised and which have been its main strategies to advance in its objectives?

3) How has the search for peace with justice and dignity been experienced by individual members of the MPJD that are themselves victims of the war on drugs?

The reasons for choosing these particular aspects are twofold. Firstly, given the brutal conditions that prevail in Mexico, there is a need to explain how the MPJD has been able to initiate, expand and sustain mobilisation. Secondly, considering that the MPJD is a movement for peace in a country where violence has increased dramatically in the last six years, it is not surprising that a substantial fraction of its members are victims of this situation. However, their horrifying stories as well as their struggle for justice, are processes that have been marginalised by the media, by placing most attention on the leaders and qualifying the MPJD as 'Sicilia's movement'. This is precisely why, when studying how the MPJD has developed, their experiences deserve primary attention.

Ultimately, by looking at these aspects of the development of the MPJD, this research attempts to gain a better understanding of the complexities of this social movement that in the last 21 months has come to challenge the optimistic figures and flawed policies used by those in power to advance in their own interests, and unveil a national emergency, a humanitarian crisis that is devastating Mexico, its people and their dignity.

1.3 Methodology

This is an exploratory analysis. Therefore, the subjects addressed and the approaches chosen for this research, stem from a personal reflection concerning the aspects that appeared as most prominent throughout my fieldwork experience. With this in mind, the methodology for this work is one that combines the analysis of primary data collected through participant observation, qualitative interviewing and a focus group, both in Mexico City and via Skype, as well as the analysis of secondary data. The reasons for opting for this triangulation approach were that it provided me with the opportunity to collect rich, first hand information from within the MPJD, and at the same time allowed me to rectify and complement data via secondary sources.

On the other hand, the reasons for choosing observation, qualitative interviewing and a focus group as tools for primary data gathering instead of a more positivist approach, such as a survey questionnaire, were that they provided the depth needed to understand complex processes and shed light on a spectrum of less visible aspects of the struggle for peace with justice and dignity in the Mexican context, such as tensions within the MPJD, hardships faced by victims, and the role of emotions in collective action. As Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2000:71) have pointed out, part of the inattention to emotions in SM theory has been methodological: "It is hard to identify them from brief newspaper accounts of protest events. Nor can questionnaires always do the trick". In contrast, participant observation "may be the best way to identify the emotions of protest" (ibid.). Considering this, and given that this research attempts to highlight the emotional and subjective dimensions of the MPJD, a qualitative approach involving the mentioned tools seemed to be the best suited for the endeavour. Refer to Appendix II for a detailed explanation of the primary data collected and how it is distributed thought this work.

The secondary sources used for this research include an array of articles published in Mexican as well as international newspapers, magazines and journals, as well as government documents and reports by national and international organisations. These are particularly used for setting the context. Additionally certain books, chapters of books and journal articles have been used to engage with and present a theoretical discussion relevant for the purposes of this research. Pieces produced by members of the MPJD, and the MPJD are also included.

1.4 Scope and limitations

The scope of this research ranges from the MPJD emergence in March 2011 to its last significant event in September 2012. Given that the MPJD is a social movement in the making, a significant limitation was that the last event covered in this research was being organised at the time of my fieldwork in Mexico City. This made contacting informants and securing interviews much more complicated than expected and is the reason why some interviews had to be conducted at a later stage via Skype.

At a more personal level, undertaking this research was a challenge given that I am also *hasta la madre* (fed up) of the bloodshed and impunity in my country. Detaching myself from this position to be able to write an academic piece on the subject has been difficult, and therefore I am aware of the explicit and implicit biases that this work entails.

1.5   Structure of this Work

Whilst the theoretical approach for this research is grounded on the vast literature of SM theory, particular attention is paid to those perspectives useful to explain *how* the MPJD has developed. Chapter 2 presents a theoretical discussion and my reasons for choosing a fluid approach for addressing the issues outlined throughout this Introduction. Consequently, Chapter 3 addresses how the MPJD emerged in 2011 and Chapter 4 focuses on how the MPJD has developed in terms of its organisation and strategies undertaken. Chapter 5 builds upon the former by looking into the individual and collective experiences of victims. Finally, Chapter 6 attempts to provide some final remarks regarding the contributions and limitations of this research.

Chapter 2   How to Approach the MPJD: In Search of a Lens

The purpose of this chapter is to find a lens for the study of the MPJD according to the questions proposed in the Introduction. In order to do so the first of the following sections provides a brief overview of the evolution of the field of SM by discussing a set of perspectives aimed at understanding their origins and their development. The second section reflects upon the complexity of the MPJD, and drawing from the approaches previously discussed, sets forward a framework for its analysis.

2.1   The Moving Theories of Movements

From the revolutionary and liberation movements in the first half of the twentieth century, to the rights, identity and anti-globalisation movements in the second half, to the contemporary 'Arab Spring' or 'Occupy Movement', the movement 'Yo soy #132'[3] (I am #132) or the MPJD, the fact is that our world is never static and quite on the contrary, ever-changing. Together with their propagation and changing nature, the study of social movements has prospered and undergone several transformations in the last century.

'New' Social Movements: Moving Away from Marxism

The sixties were significant for two main reasons: they witnessed a boost of new types of political participation as well as a change in the "main conflictual issues"; Evidently post WWII social transformations had created "new structural possibilities" for conflicts and several of the actors involved in them were only somewhat associated to the class conflicts that had been prominent in industrial societies (Della Porta and Diani 2006:6). Suddenly the Marxist and structural-functionalist approaches, the two main theoretical models at the time, proved insufficient to explain the 'new' nature of emerging social movements in what was defined as a post-industrial emerging society. Considering the prominence of Marxism in the European tradition, it is understandable that explanations for the emergence of movements in the sixties and seventies by European scholars were an "explicit critique of the Marxist models of interpretation of social conflict" (ibid.: 8).

The new social movements approach (NSM), prominently exposed by Alain Tourrane, Claus Offe and Alberto Melucci among others, criticised Marxism for its particular focus on the economy and the working class, considering it reductionist in both senses, and suggested movements were

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[3] 'I am #132' is an ongoing Mexican movement for the democratisation of its media, initiated in May 2012 by a student's protest against PRI's presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto and the supposedly biased media's coverage of the electoral process.

"struggles for control over the production of meaning and the constitution of new collective identities", emphasising their cultural nature (Canel 1997:189). Considering it an approach that pays particular attention "to the relationship between social structure and collective action" Della Porta and Diani (2006:10) argue that among the merits of NSM are that it "drew attention to the structural determinants of protest, reevaluating the importance of conflict, at a time when nonclass conflicts were often ignored", it placed actors in a central position, and it "captured the innovative characteristics of movements". In line with this Canel (1997:205) suggests that among its strengths is "identifying long-term transformations that create new conditions – structural, political, cultural – which affect the potential for the emergence of SMs". While many of its exponents have reconsidered their views over time and Melucci (1994) has gone as far as to question the relevance of the "newness" of contemporary movements (Della Porta and Diani 2006:9), a major critique to the NSM approach has been that it took as main characteristics of new social movements certain qualities that were not precisely new and could not be generalised (ibid.: 10).

Resource Mobilisation: A Shift From Emotions to Rationality

Contrary to Marxists theorists, American intellectuals often regarded collective action as "crisis behaviour"; Psychologically derived approaches saw social movements as "the manifestation of feelings of deprivation experienced by individuals in relation to other social subjects, and of feelings of aggression resulting from a wide range of frustrated expectations" (Della Porta and Diani 2006:7). Rooted in what he qualified as being "a loosely defined field of sociology and social psychology known as collective behaviour" Smelser (1962:1) wondered why "collective episodes occur *where* they do, *when* they do, and *in the ways* they do". With this in mind he defined collective behaviour as "mobilisation on the basis of a belief which redefines social action" (ibid.: 8), and proposed a value-added scheme for the systematisation of its 6 determinants. Regardless of this significant effort, his work came to be considered under the spectrum of approaches seeing social movements "as purely reactive responses to social crisis and as the outcome of mal-integration" (Della Porta and Diani 2006: 8).

By mid-seventies most scholars in the field agreed on social movements having their origins in "social conditions perceived as problematical" (Marx and Wood: 375). Collective behaviour was often associated with strains resulting from situations such as catastrophes, economic crises or war. However, by the eighties theorists moved on to highlight two essential elements of collective behaviour: "the processes of symbolic production and of construction of identity", and by the nineties many reemphasised "the part played by emotions in the production and reproduction of social movements" (Della Porta and Diani 2006: 13). Among the merits of this approach is that for the first time, collective movements were "defined as meaningful acts, driving often necessary and beneficial social change" (ibid.). On the other hand, two problems commonly identified with it were its focus on unexpected dynamics

(ibid.: 14) and that it often ignored structural factors (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1214).

The resource mobilisation theory (RMT), initiated by Oberschall, McCarthy and Zald, Gamson, and Tilly in the seventies (Pichardo 1988:98) came to deal with this shortcoming. By questioning the 'relative deprivation' theory, theorists stressed that grievances and inequalities are not enough to explain why social movements come into existence and emphasised the movements' political nature (Canel 1997:189). Movements came to be regarded as a fraction of the political process and by focusing on external obstacles and incentives – costs and benefits for the rational strategic actor – theorists analysed "the variety and sources of resources; the relationship of social movements to the media, authorities, and other parties; and the interaction among movement organisations" (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1212). In other words, apart from a shift from emotions to rationality, the theoretical emphasis was no longer on explaining *why* movements emerge, but rather *how* this becomes possible.

While RMT appeared innovative for moving away from 'panic' explanations of collective action, and on the contrary defining actors as rational, the approach has been widely criticised for its "indifference to the structural sources of conflict", its "emphasis on the resources controlled by a few political entrepreneurs, at the cost of overlooking the self-organisation potential by the most dispossessed social groups", and overdoing "the rationality of collective action, not taking the role of emotions adequately into account" (Della Porta and Diani 2006:16). Later on however, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) indeed admitted RMT exaggerated "the centrality of deliberative strategic decisions to social movements" (ibid.).

Overlapping with RMT on its assumption of social movement actors as rational decision-makers and "the grounding of their action in durable social organisations and interests" (Tilly 1998:454), theorists developed an approach known as political process (PP). In contrast with RMT, this perspective highlights "the political and institutional environment in which social movements operate" and focuses on the "relationship between institutional factors and protest" (Della Porta and Diani 2006:16), that is why the State acquires particular relevance (Flórez 2010:50). In contrast to the *how* of RMT this perspective responds to the *when* of collective action (Ibid.: 49). One of its key concepts, political opportunity structures, refers to the characteristics of the external environment that affect or influence the appearance and development of movements.

Moreover, it is due to this approach that contemporary movements are no longer regarded "as phenomena which are, of necessity, marginal and anti-institutional, expressions of dysfunctions of the system" (Della Porta and Diani 2006:17). However, one of its main challenges has been explaining "which aspects of the external world affect the development of social movements and how this development is affected" (Meyer and Minkoff 2004:1459). Moreover, PP has been criticised for its political reductionism and tendency to neglect symbolic challenges (Melucci: 1989). As RMT, PP also falls short by almost completely disregarding the role of emotions in collective action.

Framing: The Link Between Identity and Strategy

Given the weaknesses and strengths of the approaches discussed in the above paragraphs, by the end of the eighties it was becoming clear among scholars that the option was not to sacrifice one or the other, but to "consider them simultaneously"; With this in mind a number of publications were released attempting to link the strategic and identity dimensions of social movements (Flórez 2010:54). It was precisely in this attempt for amalgamation that authors such as Gamson, Snow, Benford, Meyer, and Laraña developed the framing approach to understand the processes through which movements provide sense to their collective action. According to this perspective an effective frame "has three elements: (a) it defines the root of the problem and its solution collectively rather than individually; (b) it defines the antagonists – 'us' and 'them'; and (c) it defines an injustice that can be corrected through the challenger's action" (Gamson 1990 as cited in McCarthy 1994:134). Given its analytic utility the framing approach, together with RMT and PP, came to be regarded as "a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements"(Benford and Snow 2000:612). Moreover, as Flórez (2010:117) suggests, the perspective has the advantage of incorporating conflict as an essential dimension of collective action to the extent that it acts as a "hinge" between the identity constructed by the actor and the context in which he or she acts.

The framing approach resulted rather innovative, positioning movements as knowledge producers, however it also made evident a "tendency to reduce collective action to its cognitive dimension and to understand the subjective as a residual aspect of political activism"; In other words its rational orientation led it to disregard other aspects of collective action which are also key, particularly those in the affective dimension (ibid.: 151). This however, should not come as a surprise, since throughout the approaches discussed so far there has been a tendency to ignore emotions. Ever since the shift away from the approaches of collective behaviour, theorists seem to have made an effort to avoid incorporating emotions into their frameworks and indeed there has not been place for them in the "rationalistic, structural and organisational models that dominate academic political analysis" (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2010:65). This falls within the broader inclination of social sciences of acting as if emotions did not exist, marginalising them from the field of research based on assumptions such as "the irrationality of emotions" (Latorre 2005 as cited in Flórez 2010:151). Fortunately in the last decade there have been several efforts to tackle this issue and authors such as Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2000) have brought emotions back to the SM research agenda.

The Subjective and Emotional Dimensions of SM

While a fraction of social movements theory indeed focuses on the subjective dimension of collective action by looking into loyalty and solidarity dynamics, Flórez (2010:16) argues that the "charm" of such dynamics stems from the fact that they thrive among "tensions and frictions". In other words, space constantly opens and closes between the members of a collectivity and it is in that process that "asymmetries of power" come about. By looking to what

9

happens inside SM, focusing on the internal dynamics that "affect and condition" the course of mobilisations, Flórez intends to understand which are the practices through which movements are able to manage internal power relations (2010:19). In order to do so, she invites us to think out of the binary framework that places power vis à vis resistance. Flórez (2010:20) suggests that while movements should indeed be conceived as places of resistance that confront power apparatuses, it is important to keep in mind that they are also places where power relations are created. This means SM are not coherent units in confrontation with an 'opposite', but that confrontation can also exist within social movements.

However Flórez has not been the only one to point this out. Already two decades ago Melucci (1989:25) strongly critiqued a set of traditional collective action theories for seeing movements as "figures in an epic tragedy, as heroes or villains who are moving toward some grand ideal or dramatic destiny". Melucci argued that in order to stop viewing movements as characters acting towards a predetermined end, the assumption of collective action as 'unified' had to be rejected. Only then, he continued, could the "plurality of perspectives, meanings and relationships which crystallise in any given collective action" be discovered (ibid.). The problem is to "understand how and why these complex and diverse elements actually converge in relatively unified empirical entities" (ibid.). Flórez' proposition goes in hand with this idea.

On the other hand it has been stressed that SM scholars continue to write as if movement actors were "devoid of passion and other human emotions" (Benford 1997 as cited in Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000:73). When in fact it has been pointed out that "'injustice frames' essential to protest, depend on 'the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul'" (Gamson 1992 as cited in ibid.). Polletta connects "movement emotions to broader theories of culture" and argues that "the stories activists tell are critical in configuring mobilizing emotions"; Moreover she suggests that "narratives supply a guide to our own feelings […] a kind of emotional propaedeutic" (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000:76). Another attempt to bridge the emotional gap has come from Stanbridge and Kenney (2009:473) who by looking at collective action surrounding victims' rights in Canada show "how understandings of movement dynamics can be deepened by paying attention" to emotions.

2.2 The MPJD: Emotions, Identity, Strategy and Framing

The fieldwork for this research demonstrated that the emergence and development of the MPJD have been complex processes, which do not fall exclusively within any of the approaches discussed above. Taking this into consideration, the following table explains how several aspects of some the approaches presented in this chapter are applied to analyse how the movements has developed to advance in its objectives from the time of its emergence.

Table 1

Approaching the MPJD

Chapter 3	*Chapter 4*	*Chapter 5*
Origins	*Organisation - Strategies*	*Victim's Experiences*
Strains	**Organisation**	**Motivations**
- Deep grievances	- Network of individuals and organisations in Mexico and abroad.	- Discover the truth and attain justice with dignity.
Resource mobilisation	- Loose and strong links.	- Long-term emotions: love for their relatives.
- Entrepreneurial elite: Javier Sicilia not an ordinary man.	**Resources: SMOs**	**Collective identity**
- Network of friends and colleagues.	- CENCOS (executive)	- Identification as victims.
Framing	- SERAPAZ (grassroots)	- Solidarity.
Stage a)	**Structure**	- Determination.
- Protagonists: Victims.	- Coordination Committee (decision making)	- Find strength and guidance in each other.
- Antagonists: The government.	- Committees according to needs (approximately 15)	- See the MPJD as their family.
- Audience: Rest of society.	**Grassroots Spaces**	- Victims transformed into activists.
Stage b)	- Weekly Plenary Session.	**Strategies**
- Diagnosis: 'National emergency'.	- Weekly Space for Victims.	- Space for Victims:
- Prognosis: Marches, caravans, national pact.	**Strategies**	a) Sharing experiences.
- Motivation: Claim for peace and justice.	- Marches.	b) Discuss lines of action.
Collective Identity	- Caravans.	c) Empower each other.
- Initial marches: First moment of identification (interests, values, emotions).	**Subjective Dimension**	**Subjective Dimension**
	- The MPJD: Not a coherent unity.	- Victims: Not a coherent unity.
	- Unequal power relations.	

Chapter 3
The Power of Agency: Origins of the MPJD

As it has been stated in the Introduction, the MPJD emerged at a critical time. The purpose of this chapter is to look at how it came about, considering the horrendous conditions in which the country was immersed in 2011.

3.1   A Tattered Discourse

Despite the devastating conditions prevalent in Mexico during Calderón's administration– dramatic escalation of violence and 98% of impunity – the government sustained that violence was a "sign of the weakening of the cartels", as the strategies to fight them had "disrupted their trafficking routes and forced them to battle each other for control of the narcotic business" (The World Bank 2012). Moreover, in his 2011 new year's speech President Calderón asserted that the country was "advancing on the right track" regarding the offensive against criminals (Montalvo 2011). For years the major narrative "supported by official statements" was that 90% of those who died "were linked to organised crime" and "innocent murder victims" were simply considered *collateral damage* (Young: 2011). In other words, victims of the war on drugs in Mexico were systematically denied the right to justice and even the right to exist in the system.

Considering this and the number of people directly affected by the violence, it is surprising that the official discourse outlined above remained unquestioned for years. However, in 2011 this came to change. Despite the government's efforts to veil reality, it was becoming evident that the unknown number of victims of the war were by no means collateral damage, but part of a structural problem that required urgent attention. As pointed out by an interviewee, "you cannot expect to declare a war without victims involved". Moreover the population began questioning the 'success' of the government's strategy and expressing their discontent regarding the rampant violence. The official narrative was becoming a tattered discourse.

3.2   A Cry for "No More Blood!"

The discontent among the population regarding the government's tattered discourse grew to the point that individuals and organised groups began expressing their feelings publicly. One of the most significant mobilisations across the country, previous to the MPJD, was one spurred by 10 Mexican cartoonists the 10th of January 2011 called '¡No más sangre!' (No more blood!).

For Eduardo del Río (Rius), initiator of the campaign, it was incomprehensible how together with the escalation of violence grew the state of "importamadrismo" (indifference) of the Mexican population (As cited in Delgado 2011). It was imperative to break the silence that reigned among Mexicans and legitimised the war, therefore he and his colleagues called upon society to peacefully communicate their dissatisfaction regarding the

government's policy with a banner they designed[4]. The aim was to transform the passiveness of thousands of Mexicans into a loud cry that expressed how fed up they were of the violence. Given the normalisation of the situation in the media, the campaign also aimed to "change the media discourse" on the issue of drug-related violence (Young 2011). Certain government officials considered the cartoonists' efforts as "irresponsible" given that "the only valid campaigns in the context of violence" had to be against criminals, and not the government (Cruz 2011).

Considering the massive response it generated, 'No more blood!' was a successful effort to counter the dominant discourse and raise awareness among the Mexican population about their own responsibility in the bloodshed. The banner provided to the population was an accessible tool to join the claim for no more blood and the role of social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, was critical for spreading out the message. However, the mobilisations that it generated across the country lacked coherence and direction. While protesters identified with each other in the sense of being against the bloodshed, they did not develop a deeper sense of collective identity and failed to articulate their expressions of discontent into a line of action. For these reasons 'No more blood!' remained as a mainly online campaign. Nevertheless, the silence had been broken and the agitation that existed among society was about to undergo a process of transformation into a concerted claim for peace with justice and dignity.

3.3 The Emergence of a 'Network for Peace and Justice'

The 28th of March 2011, Juan Francisco Sicilia, Julio César Romero Jaimes, Luis Antonio Romero Jaime, Jaime Gabriel Alejo Cadena, Álvaro Jaimes Avelar, Jesús Chávez Vázquez and María del Socorro Estrada were found dead in the state of Morelos (Sicilia 2012a). They lost their lives to the war on drugs and their deaths, particularly the death of Juan Francisco, marked the beginning of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD). The following sections attempt to explain how this happened.

"Estamos Hasta la Madre"

What happened to Juan Francisco might have been an 'ordinary' event in Mexico's current reality, however his father was and is not an ordinary man. What was significant about the seven people who were found dead the 28th of March 2011, was that among them was Juan Francisco Sicilia, the 24 year-old son of the well-known poet Javier Sicilia. Apart from being a religious man and an activist Sicilia is a poet, novelist, scriptwriter, biographer, essayist, university teacher, and columnist for Proceso and La Jornada Semanal. Moreover, he has founded several cultural magazines, among them Ixtus and Conspiratio. For this reason Sicilia's religious, artistic, academic, NGO and media networks, as

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[4] See Appendix III.

well as their resources were of major importance for the articulation of dispersed grievances and discontent into organised mobilisations across the country.

Perhaps also significant was that the event happened in Cuernavaca, where the poet lives and where he has a well-established network. Sicilia was not in Mexico at the time his son died, however as soon as the event was known his closest friends and colleagues in Cuernavaca organised to demand justice. According to two interviewees, "religious" and "artistic" groups played a prominent role in this organisation. The demonstration that took place the afternoon of the 28th of March 2011 was just the beginning of a series of marches and actions to demand an end to violence and impunity. Within four days of protests large numbers of people had joined the claim for justice. The 1st of April Sicilia was back in the country and apart from thanking the people of Morelos for their solidarity he clearly expressed his message: Mexico is submerged in a "*national emergency*" and "¡*estamos hasta la madre*!" (we are fed up!). The 4th of April Sicilia (2011) made public an 'Open letter to politicians and criminals' in which he corroborated his pervious message and called upon society to unite and participate in the national march that a number of individuals as well as civil society organisations, later known as 'Network for Peace and Justice', were organising. Step by step, consciously or not, Sicilia's actions led him to assume the leadership that was lacking among the dissatisfied. Mexico was about to experience a dramatic transformation.

"No Todos los Padres son Poetas, pero Todos los Hijos son Poesía"[5]

"Sus palabras y sus silencios dicen lo mismo: queremos paz y justicia, o sea una vida digna."[6]
- EZLN

The national march took place the 6th of April in Cuernavaca as well as in other cities in Mexico and abroad, and its main objective was to demand justice and peace. This was the step that took the mobilisation from the local to the national level and the first significant event of the network for its success in terms of participation across the country. Many individuals and NGOs were involved in its organisation, and as noted by an interviewee such organisation was rather "spontaneous" and happened to a large extent through Facebook, Twitter and a blog[7] created for such purposes. Throughout the marches across the country there were widespread expressions against the violence, insecurity and impunity, however there were also deep signs of solidarity and identification. Many identified with Sicilia's sorrow and many others saw themselves reflected on it. Moreover victims' claims for visibility became

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[5] "Not all parents are poets, but all sons and daughters are poetry." (Banner in a march 2011)
[6] "Their words and their silences say the same: we want peace and justice, thus a dignifying life." (EZLN 2011)
[7] Blog: 'marchanacionalporlapaz.blogspot.com'

evident. Among those protesting, a woman, mother of a disappeared lawyer, expressed:

> Everything that is happening hurts me so much, it hurts me what is happening to this man. What I do not think is right is that they only talk about him, that has a last name, and that the media does not provide the names of the other young people assassinated with him, and the others that have died, that are thousands, not only one. We are a lot, the ones that are suffering (Turati 2011).

During the event Sicilia announced that they would occupy the Zocalo (main plaza) until the authorities responded effectively and if by the 13th of April the situation remained the same, they would undertake a march to the capital of the country. Making use of the existing technological platform Sicilia announced his official Twitter account[8] and encouraged the population to follow him through that means of communication. Additionally, in an act with the purpose of initiating a memorial for the victims of the war, seven plaques with the names of those who dies the 28th of March were placed on the walls of the Government Palace and Sicilia encouraged the population to do the same in other parts of the country.

The authorities of Morelos were unable or unwilling to respond to the demands of the protesters, which by then included the resignations of the governor of Morelos and the mayors of Juitepec and Texmico, and another significant march took place, this time from Cuernavaca to the Zocalo (main plaza) of Mexico City from the 5th to the 8th of May 2011. For many, including three of the interviewees for this research, this was "The march" for it was the moment of highest and most diversified mobilisation. Left, right, centre, rich, poor, educated and not, women, men, children, youngsters, the elders, artists, intellectuals, journalists, religious, activists, everyone participated. Even the Zapatistas marched for peace in San Cristobal, Chiapas the 7th of May. The national march, which lasted four days and required considerable organisation and logistics – there were committees assigned for certain tasks and people responsible of providing information and/or assistance – took the form of a silent caravan. Protesters walked in silence as a sign of "unity and dignity" (Sicilia 2011c) and as a cry for justice. Throughout the march people walked side by side carrying posters with the pictures of their dead or disappeared relatives and shared their stories of horror and despair. It was in this encounter that they discovered they were not alone. They discovered that they were not the only victims that had been criminalised and buried in a limbo of non-existence by the government. For many, another sign of identification was the spirituality and faith they share, and expressed it by sharing symbols such as rosaries, stamps and scapulars. For many others the sign of 'No more blood' was their pennant. Artistic and creative expressions illustrating the brutality of the war were widespread.

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[8] Sicilia's official Twitter account: '@Mxhastalamadre'.

Around 300 people left Cuernavaca and thousands gathered in the Zocalo (main plaza) of the Capital. In his speech Sicilia (2011c: 164) wondered when the country lost its dignity and talked about the "horrible desolation" and the "open wounds" that made the population walk that day until that point. Moreover, he addressed the authorities and told them that they needed to learn how to name those who have died and who have been murdered in three ways: by taking their lives away, by their criminalisation, and by burying them in the common grave of silence (ibid.). He questioned the reigning impunity, the presence of the military on the streets, and the role of the United States, claiming that Mexico is trapped in its interests. Additionally Sicilia emphasised the country's 'national emergency' and declared it was urgent to make a pact, a commitment for peace with justice and dignity among all fractions of society and authorities (ibid.: 167). He also announced that the pact was going to be signed in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, "the most visible expression of the national destruction" (ibid.: 168). According to what was read that day, the pact consisted of the following demands:

> We demand truth and justice; We demand to put an end to the war strategy and to assume a citizen security approach; We demand to combat corruption and impunity; We demand to combat the economic sources and the earnings of the crime; We demand immediate attention for the youth and effective actions to restore the social fabric; We demand a participative democracy, a better representative democracy and the democratisation of the media (MPJD 2011a).

While these demands could be considered as the broad 'objectives' of the MPJD, for purposes of this research I focus on those objectives considered as 'core' by the interviewees for this research: a change of the securitisation strategy, justice and the visibility of victims.

The Adequate Spark

As it has been observed, the mobilisation of resources by an elite of individuals and organisations was fundamental for the emergence of the MPJD. Cress and Snow (1996: 1095) identify four categories of resources that can be mobilised: moral (which fits together with the concept of legitimacy), material (which can refer to money or other kinds of goods and services), informational (referring to the 'know-how'), and human (referring to people, their time and energy). Taking these concepts into consideration it can be said that at the earliest stage of the MPJD, the elite of entrepreneurs composed by Sicilia and his network of friends and colleagues, succeeded in mobilising all categories of resources for mobilisation.

As it has been observed in the sections above, in terms of moral resources, the 'Network for Peace and Justice' soon acquired the sympathy and solidarity necessary for initiating and expanding mobilisation. In terms of material resources, they recovered a 'space' for people to encounter and begin to build a sense of collective identity: the streets in which they marched. Then, in respect to informational resources, the network accounted with strategic support by an elite of ideologists in non-violence resistance, those expert in communication strategies (CENCOS), and those expert in peace negotiations (SERAPAZ). There was also technical support by those who facilitated the organisation and

development of the marches. Moreover, in terms of human resources it was clear that from the beginning Javier Sicilia assumed the role of a leader and bystander responded effectively to his calls for mobilisation.

However apart from effective resource mobilisation, it is evident that the mentioned elite also undertook a process of framing. Recalling the premises of this approach, movements conceive themselves as *protagonists* of action, but they also construct their *antagonists* and an *audience*. In this case through Sicilia's open letter and his later speeches, the MPJD conceived itself as a fraction of society that was 'hasta la madre' (fed up), made the Mexican government its main antagonist – although it also assigned certain responsibility to criminals and the U.S. – and called upon the rest of society to act for the reconstruction of the social fabric of their country. Later, however, it would become clear that the actual protagonists of the movement are the victims of old (marginalisation) and new (escalation of violence) grievances.

Moreover, given that SM seek to change a certain situation perceived as problematic," it follows that directed action is contingent on identification of the source(s) of causality, blame, and/or culpable agents" (Benford and Snow 2000:616). In this sense the framing process continued by a *diagnosis*, that is, by identifying the escalation of violence, the continued impunity, and the official discourse on collateral damage as a 'national emergency'. As it has been said, those identified as responsible were the Mexican political class and government authorities at all levels.

The complex process continued by a *prognostic* framing, that is, by outlining "a plan for redress, specifying what should be done by whom, including an elaboration of specific targets, strategies, and tactics" (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994:191). While this process continues to date and it encompasses a number of diverse strategies and lines of action, the earliest example of this kind of framing was the MPJD's proposal of a 'National Pact' by the authorities and all fractions of society. The intricacy and mixed result of this strategy are aspects that will be addressed in the following chapter, however at this point it should be highlighted that the MPJD's earliest stage also comprised a *motivational* framing. As it has been stressed by theorists "for people to take action to overcome a collectively perceived problem or 'injustice', they must develop a sense of compelling reasons for doing so"; In that sense motivational framing is conceived as entailing "the social construction and avowal of motives and identities of protagonists" (ibid.). By actively framing and affirming their grievances in relation to the national emergency experienced in the country, the 'Network for Peace and Justice' was able to mobilise all those who had been affected by the escalation of violence in the country and those who sympathised with them.

However, apart form these rational processes also emotions and identity played a key role in this first stage of the MPJD. This is illustrated by the fact that more than anything, the marches of the 6th of April and 5th-8th of March are characterised by their *emotional* quality and the *collective identity* that began forming through the encounter of people. Marching together granted protesters the opportunity to be supportive and recognise themselves in each other. Noteworthy, this was particularly significant for the victims of the war, those who until then had been qualified by the government as 'collateral

damage'. Moreover, it is also important to key to consider that Sicilia, apart from being part of an elite, is also a victim of the war on drugs and as noted by an interviewee that provides him with a "high degree of legitimacy". In that sense he has acted as a hinge between the two worlds – elite (social actors) and victims – and his legitimacy or moral leverage in both has been crucial for bringing them together and prompting mobilisations.

3.4 Concluding Remarks

As illustrated by the dramatic context explained in the Introduction and detailed in the Appendix I of this work, grievances accumulated for years and by 2011 the contained anger and despair of some factions of the Mexican population were becoming every time more evident, causing significant agitation. However, while societal strains are important when studying the emergence of SM, as stated in Chapter 2, other factors ought to be considered when attempting to explain how collective action comes about.

As it has been observed, previous mobilisations such as the 'No more blood' campaign certainly served to open a space in the structures and placed the issues of insecurity and escalation of violence in the national agenda. Additionally, they served to create an initial sense of identification among the population by adopting and spreading a common message: no more deaths! As stressed by one of the interviewees for this research, this campaign created a "rupture of the system at different levels" and suddenly there was "hope that something could change". Moreover, the tragic event of the son of Sicilia was the spark that was lacking to provide dispersed mobilisations with a sense of coherence and direction.

The MPJD emergence is characterised by the efficient mobilisation of human and material resources, as well as successful framing process by an elite composed of individuals and organisations around the well-known figure of Javier Sicilia. On the other hand Sicilia, moved by his emotions as a victim as well as by his rationality as a social actor, has acted as the link between both worlds. To a large extent its reputation as both (victim and social actor), provided the mobilisations with the necessary legitimacy to become significant from the beginning.

On the other hand, before the 28th of March 2011 victims in Mexico were non-existent. However, from its earliest stage the MPJD radically transform this. While official statistics continue being as meaningless as they have been in the last years, for its lack of honesty and for reducing human lives to numbers, a crucial alteration of Mexico's status quo has been that victims are no longer invisible: they have faces and they have names. The visibility of victims that started at this stage has continued along the development of the MPJD through a strengthening of its collective identity and the empowerment of its members to raise their voices and demand justice. While these are aspects that are furthered analysed in the following chapters, the consequent chapter deals particularly with tow the MPJD is organised and its main strategies so far undertaken to advance in its objectives.

Chapter 4   The MPJD: Organisation and Strategies

As it has been observed in the previous chapter, the march that culminated the 8th of May in the Zocalo (main plaza) of Mexico City was a clear sign of the positive response of the Mexican population to Sicilia's invitation to take action. People from all factions of society seemed to have found strength in their unity and they were motivated enough to continue their struggle for peace and justice together. In other words there was momentum, there was hope, and it appeared as if things were about to change. This chapter builds upon the former and aims to contribute to the understanding of how the MPJD has developed from the time of its emergence by looking at how the MPJD is organised and by addressing the strategies that it has so far undertaken to advance in its objectives.

4.1   The Flowing, "Plural and Open" MPJD

 "What forms do organisations take in their attempts to maximise the strength of collective challenges and their outcomes?" (Della Porta and Diani 2006:6). The purpose of this section is to explain how the MPJD has articulated in its attempt to attain peace with justice and dignity by looking at its organisation.

A Structured Lack of Structure

As a continuation of the framing process address in the previous chapter, the 'Network for Peace and Justice' soon acquired the name of the *Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity*. The elements for this name were evident almost from the beginning, however this step made the purpose and direction of the mobilisations even more evident. Moreover, calling it a movement provided the mobilisations with some sense of coherence. In a number of occasions Diani has sustained that social movements are a "distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action: are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; [and] share a distinct collective identity" (Della Porta and Diani 2006:20). While it has been stressed that defining SM is not an easy endeavour, and providing a definition involves "a complex epistemological process" (Escobar and Alvarez 1992: 6), if one considers the premises proposed by Diani and the characteristics of the MPJD that I have set forth so far and will continue to do so in the upcoming sections, it can be argued that apart from calling itself a movement, the MPJD was in the process of actually becoming one.

Throughout its journey the MPJD has been growing in terms of its organisation and complexity and today it has come to consist of a structure of loose and dense, formal and informal links with individuals, groups and organisations across the country and the United States. In other words the

movement, as confirmed by an interviewee, operates as a "network of individuals and organisations".

Although SM are not the same as the organisations active in them, such organisations usually play significant roles and like any organisation they fulfil certain functions: inducing participation, outlining organisational aims, collecting resources, managing contributions, training and replacing members (Della Porta and Diani 2006:137). Moreover, they act as "powerful resources of identity for a movement's own constituency, its opponents, and bystander public" given that no matter how conscious "people may be of the complexity and heterogeneity of any movement its public perception is likely to be associated with its most conspicuous characters" (ibid.).

As it has been stated in the previous chapter, CENCOS[9] and SERAPAZ[10] already had a significant role in the first mobilisations. Not surprisingly, they have come to be essential for the organisation of the movement by performing as social movement organisations (SMOs). McCarthy and Zald (1987), the first proponents of the term defined it as a "complex, or formal, organisation which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement and attempts to implement those goals" (ibid.:140). This is a rather rigid definition, given that in the last years scholars have pointed out the multiple ways in which SM activists organise, however it provides two key characteristics of CENCOS and SERAPAZ: they identify with the MPJD's objectives, and they are interested in their attainment.

In contrast with CENCOS and SERAPAZ, which provide a structure to the network and continuity "not only in terms of identity, but also in terms of action" (ibid.:138), partner organisations in the network do not form part of the quotidian dynamics of the movement. On the other hand it is important to highlight that although both SMOs are equally important and it is difficult to draw a line dividing their tasks, there seems to be a difference in terms of their character. While CENCOS hosts the secretariat of those in a prominent position within the movement and therefore operates in a rather bureaucratic and closed manner, SERAPAZ is where open plenary sessions and a space particularly created for victims are hosted, therefore is where the grassroots activity actually takes place. This gives an indication of the hierarchy in the structure. Moreover, despite the 'grassroots' spaces, given that both SMOs are based in Mexico City, the configuration that they provide to the MPJD is rather centralised and to a certain extent rigid in terms of participation.

As it has been said the MPJD is not only composed of organisations, but also of individuals that articulate freely within the various spaces that the movement has created throughout its development. One of those spaces is a weekly plenary session in SERAPAZ where all those involved in the movement gather to discuss the issues on the agenda and others that might come up. This is an open space where anyone can take part and contribute to the discussion if desired. The topics discussed are widely varied and range from

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[9] See Appendix IV.I

[10] See Appendix IV.II

emotional to strategic. New victims introduce themselves and their cases to the movement in search of guidance and solidarity, others express their reasons for departure explaining that their cycles in the movement have reached an end, and others bring up resource-related issues. Assistance varies per week given that many members of the movement live in other regions of the country, or simply because they lack the resources to assist, however the average of participants per week ranges around 60. The group of participants is roughly composed by young and middle-aged men and women of all economic statues working for the SMOs or partner organisations, as well as activists, volunteers, ideologists, visitors and mainly, victims. In many cases these categories overlap. Apart from the formal plenary session, there is usually time for causal interaction among participants where it is possible to observe the profound relationships that they have developed along their journey together.

Regarding the source of financial resources, Cress and Snow (1996: 1091) highlight two main possibilities: either they derive from external sources, or they stem from those directly benefiting from the attainment of the movements' objectives, in other words from within. In the case of the MPJD both cases apply, however as pointed out by an interviewee most resources are derived from the network – evidently each organisation forming the network has its own methods and sources of funding – and particularly "from the people directly involved in the movement".

The MPJD is organised in a number of different committees created to respond to certain needs and therefore responsible for particular tasks. While none of my interviewees were able to provide a specific number of these committees, it is known that the number varies across time depending on the necessities perceived. That said, there are, or have been, approximately 15 committees, among them: resistance/non-violence, Don Nepo's brigade, financial, youth platform, communication, alternative media, documentation, and juridical support. Two other rather different spaces are a coordination committee and one created for supporting victims in their processes called 'Space for Victims' (SFV). In contrast with the rest of the committees, these two spaces vary significantly in character and purpose. The coordination committee is integrated by representatives of the different committees and regardless of the existence of the plenary sessions, here is where most important decisions are made. On the other hand, the SFV is conceived as a fixed space to "assist victims in their processes". Given its prominence in that respect, I will go back to this SFV in the following chapter.

An important aspect to highlight is the movement's vertical structure. As pointed out by an interviewee, acquiring a horizontal organisation "has been one of the most difficult tasks" for the MPJD. In that sense the leadership of Sicilia and other representative figures such as Emilio Álvarez-Icaza[11], as well as the attention they attract by the media, have caused tensions in terms of voice inclusion. Moreover, it is evident that while the grassroots is rather

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[11] In July 2011 it was announced that Álvarez-Icaza would retire from the MPJD to assume the charge of Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.

diverse in character with a slight predominance of women participating, the leadership of the movement is conformed and expressed by men. This is another indication of the unequal power relations within the movement.

4.2 Strategies

Along its existence the MPJD has undertaken a number of diverse strategies to advance in its objectives. Among them are protests, sittings is main plazas, marches, caravans, a set of dialogues with the Executive, and an encounter with the 2012 presidential candidates. Moreover, lobbying with authorities has been prominent, particularly for a law and rights for victims. While this list of non-violent actions is not exhaustive, it is important to note that these strategies have had different purposes and therefore, diverse outcomes. Given their prominence in the primary data gathering process for this research, the following section focuses on one kind of the strategies mentioned: the caravans.

Solitude Transformed in Solace

A valid approach for understanding SM is by addressing the "process through which values, interests, and ideas get turned into collective action"; In other words, "what are the roles of identities and symbols, emotions, and networks, in explaining the start and persistence of collective action?"(Della Porta and Diani 2006:5-6). The caravans that the MPJD has so far undertaken serve to address precisely these questions. Moreover, they also serve to illustrate the diversity of the MPJD, certain tensions that have come up, and the manner in which the members of the movement have managed them.

Why marching? Marches have a long tradition in Mexican social movements and are a rather common kind of protest in the country. Among those who have done it to claim their rights are women, electricians, teachers, students, LGBT, peasants, and even Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a two times presidential candidate. However one of the most illustrative examples are the Zapatistas. Since 2001 Sicilia was already a severe critic of drug-trafficking and the economic efforts to combat it. For him there were only two possibilities: to put the economy back in its place, where it would cease being an "absolute value", or to legalise drugs (Sicilia 2001a: 148). This, given that the logic of organised crime, as well as of the war on drugs are embedded in capitalism (2011a: 139). For Sicilia barbarism consolidated in the country when "money, economic development and power became the foundation of its reality" (Sicilia 2001b: 145). Being against the neoliberal model imposed in Mexico, Sicilia has a long history of activism and has walked side by side with the Zapatistas along their struggle. For this reasons it should not come as a surprise that the national mobilisation that Sicilia has been leading has articulated as a movement for peace with a clear Zapatista echo (Anguiano 2011:57). The caravans to the north, south, and across the northern border of the country are clear signs of this.

The caravan to the north of Mexico which began the 4th and arrived the 12th of June 2011 to Ciudad Juárez, was the realisation of the plan proposed by

Sicilia the 8th of May in the Zócalo of Mexico City. The purpose of the caravan was twofold: to walk across some of the most affected regions of the country to make visible the stories of those who had been struggling alone and culminate in what was framed as 'the epicentre of pain', and to reach an agreement regarding the 'national pact' in order to sign it. The strategy was successful regarding the first matter: unveiling the victims of the war across the country. However, an evident characteristic of the encounter in Juárez was a first, rather important fragmentation amongst the mobilised. In contrast with those visions that regard movements as homogenised entities facing structures of power, what happened in Juárez echoes with Flórez (2010) understanding of movements as spaces where power relations and conflict also exist *within*.

The MPJD arrived to a place where violence and despair have been part of its reality for decades and therefore a place where demands for a particular kind of justice, and particular strategies to claim it have been put forward a long time ago. Two issues caused particular confrontation among those – individuals and organisations – integrating the different working groups dedicated to draft different aspects of the 'National Pact'. These two aspects were whether or not to engage in dialogue with the Executive and whether or not to demand a complete and immediate demilitarisation of the country. To illustrate one of these conflicts: On the one hand were there ones willing to engage in a dialogue, and on the other those from the "radical wing", as an interviewee calls them, who rejected any possibility for dialogue and were determined to avoid the development of the movement on that direction.

However, perhaps the most disappointing aspect for those participating in the working groups was the disorganisation and lack of transparency that characterised the encounter. As confirmed by two interviewees involved in the process, it was "too unorganised". While one of them attributes the matter to the amount of people gathered – according to her between 400 and 500 people participated in the nine working groups[12] – the other one asserts that the main problem was the "lack of protocol and transparency". As confirmed by both, no one really knows what happened to the documents drafted by each working group given that most of the issues discussed and set forward in those spaces were not incorporated in the final document of the national pact which was read hours later in a plenary. Another interviewee pointed out that the decision to stick to the original six points at the expense of disregarding the voices of those participating in the five working groups "came from the leadership". However, yet another interviewee has noted that despite the figure of Sicilia, when it comes to those matters "there are thousands of leaders".

Not surprisingly, this discrepancy caused discontent among participants and many of them, as highlighted by an interviewee, went as far as to consider that it had been a "waste of time". Compared to the national march, which represents the moment of highest unified diversity within the movement, this event represents significant fracture and dispersion. According to an interviewee, the MPJD "has not been able to reconcile the opposing factions

[12] See Appendix V.

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that were created", or I would say evidenced, that day. However, the complexity of the matter is illustrated by another interviewee who while acknowledging the intricacy of the process highlights its positive side and points out that, by "sacrificing its capacity for masses" the movement acquired focus and coherence.

The second long caravan that the MPJD undertook was the one directed to the south of the country from the 9th to the 19th of September 2011. This initiative was put forward in one of the working groups for the 'National Pact' in Juárez and its main objective was to reconcile 'new' with 'old' grievances. For 11 days, 15 buses carrying 600 people traversed 3,500km across the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Hidalgo, Chiapas, Tabasco, Veracruz and Puebla. During these days, victims of 'old' oppressions such as the dirty war of the 70s, extreme poverty and overt marginalisation indeed encounter and embraced with the victims produced by the escalation of violence in the last six years.

Moreover, perhaps unintentionally this strategy served to evidence that far from old, the grievances of the south continue being as relevant as those caused by the war on drugs, given that ultimately all remain unresolved. In the act of walking together the stories of those whose sons disappeared in Nuevo León in the last years and those whose fathers disappeared in Guerrero four decades ago merged to portray Mexico's national tragedy. Unfortunately this caravan served to evidence that throughout the country there is pain, suffering and profound despair caused by the inefficiency of a State that focuses on advancing on its own interests at the expense of the population it is supposed to protect. Moreover it evidenced that despite the much-publicised transition to democracy in 2000, not much has changed since then and the number of victims for structural, political and open violence continues on the rise.

In the commemoration of the MPJD's first anniversary Sicilia made clear how fed up they still were of North Americans for their continued drug consumption, their money laundering enterprises and their indiscriminate arms production. Arms that can be "bought as candies in a supermarket" and every day enter Mexico illegally, supplying criminals and therefore fuelling the war (2012a: 7). With this statement he made the United States responsible for the killings, displacements and disappearances in Mexico and called upon U.S. citizens to pressure their government to control the flux of weapons to Mexican territory and decriminalise drugs.

Taking this into consideration, the MPJD organised a caravan to the U.S. known as 'U.S. Peace Caravan', which took place from August to September 2012 and travelled across 25 cities from San Diego, CA to Washington, DC. As stated by Sicilia (2012b), the initiative sought to "promote dialogue with American civil society and its government". The main themes of the agenda were:

> The need to stop gun trafficking; the need to debate alternatives to drug prohibition; the need for better tools to combat money laundering; and the need to promote bilateral cooperation in human rights and human security in two priority areas: promotion of civil society and safety, as well as protection and safety for migrants (ibid.).

According to an interviewee, in the mid-term the U.S. Caravan "seeks an alliance with U.S. sectors". While it is too early to assess its effects, at this point it can be said that the strategy at least served to keep the movement flowing. Given the intricate electoral conjuncture and the emergence of the movement 'I am #132', by June 2012 it was becoming evident that the MPJD was losing stake in the political agenda and therefore attention in the media. This, together with the criticisms that it had been receiving for Sicilia's announcement to spoil his ballot, and from some fractions of the left for not uniting with the Movement of National Regeneration (MORENA), put the movement at risk of losing strength and visibility. Partially it did, however the decision-makers of the MPJD effectively mobilised their resources to transcend borders.

The U.S caravan proved a successful strategy in providing continuity to the movement and regaining presence in Mexican media. Moreover through this action the MPJD went a step forward in relation to its original objectives: it went transnational by extending its mobilisation and demands to the United States. It also enlarged its network by acquiring the support of individuals, organisations and movements in that country and enlarged its audience by attracting the attention of international media. Nevertheless, whether such endeavours bear the results expected by the MPJD, is yet to be seen.

A rather significant event that took place by the end of this caravan is that Javier Sicilia announced to his brothers and sisters from the MPJD that he was temporarily retiring from the movement. He stated that the movement needed to be more horizontal and that it was time for other leaderships to emerge. Furthermore, he stressed that placing everything on an individual is a mistake since it "leads to deception and failure" and these are no longer times for eternal leaders (Sicilia as cited in Michel 2012). With Álvarez-Icaza and Sicilia no longer leading the movement, the MPJD is in the verge of facing radical restructuring.

The bottom-line regarding the caravans, however, has been that they have provided victims with an opportunity for solace and as highlight by an interviewee the relationships that have been developed from these experiences "are significantly profound" providing the MPJD with "cohesion". The victims that conform the MPJD and have walked side by side sharing experiences and telling their stories in Mexico and abroad, do not only share a collective identity but actually, have become a family. This aspect of the development of the movement is further analysed in the following chapter.

4.3   Concluding Remarks

There are several essential points that need to be highlighted regarding this chapter. As it has been observed, the SMOs CENCOS and SERAPAZ played a key role at the beginning of the mobilisations and continue to do so at the managerial and organisational levels of the MPJD. Today the MPJD operates as a network of individuals, organisations and movements in Mexico and the U.S. While some ties and relationships are strong, like those of CENCOS and SERAPAZ, others remain quite loose and therefore the boundaries between membership and support remain difficult to define. Whereas these two SMOs

provide the movement with some structure and the division of tasks by committees according to needs has worked rather efficiently, having a coordination committee for important decision-making makes such structure rather hierarchical and disregards the processes in at the grassroots level.

In line with this, there seems to be a difference in the character of the tasks assumed by CENCOS and SERAPAZ and while the former is more the executive and communications branch, the latter is where the grassroots activity takes place. Inevitably, this also affects the way in which the voices of those at the bottom of the organisation are represented.

Furthermore, whereas the MPJD has undertaken a number of varied and somewhat controversial strategies to advance in its objectives, the ones analysed in this chapter have been the caravans to the north, the south and the U.S. While each of these had a specific and a strategic purpose, the three of them serve to illustrate how individual identities and networks articulate to form a collective identity and at the same time how this one is transformed into sustained collective action. On the other hand, the experience of the working groups for the drafting of a national pact in Juárez has served to illustrate how unequal power relations within the movement can lead to conflict among participants and in some cases dispersion.

Chapter 5   Victims: "The Heart of the Movement"

As it has been observed in the first sections of this work, the horrifying structural conditions in which Mexico has been immersed for the last years and the official discourse regarding the 'success' of the war and the 'absence' of victims became unbearable in 2011, when people across the country broke the prevalent silence and expressed a cry for no more blood! In Chapter 3 I have explained how this agitation and feelings of discontent were transformed into a concerted claim for peace and justice and how the first marches organised by the 'Network for Peace and Justice' provided a space for the fed up population, particularly victims, to walk together and identify with each other. Then in Chapter 4 I have made an effort to illustrate how this process of collective identity formation was strengthen throughout the three long caravans so far organised by the MPJD.

The purpose of this chapter is to complement the last ones and address the question of how the MPJD has developed by furthering the analysis of the experiences of victims within the movement. Why have victims joined the MPJD and what do they expect from it? How do they experience their search for peace with justice and dignity? By addressing their experiences separately I aim to highlight the voices of those who have been systematically marginalised, first by the government for considering them collateral damage, and then by the media for focusing mainly on the leaders of the MPJD, namely Sicilia. At another level the purpose of this chapter is to emphasize how emotions and rationality have been compatible in the MPJD.

5.1   From Victimhood to Activism: "We Will Not Stop!"

This section draws from the primary data I was able to collect during a focus group session with five women who have been directly affected by the escalation of violence in Mexico and who are members of the MPJD. My intention is not only that their stories and experiences are told and heard, but that they are considered, and hopefully understood, in all their complexity.

Victims of the Escalation of Violence

Enough has been said about the brutality of the Mexican contemporary reality. Enough figures and views have been provided about the escalation of killings, disappearances, displacements, the attacks on activists and human rights defenders, the corruption, the impunity, and the indifference of the government[13]. However, any number or estimation provided falls short from what countless mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, aunts,

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[13] See Appendix I.

uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends have experienced when they lose a loved one. The war on drugs has disrupted the lives of thousands of Mexicans and unfortunately their lives will never be the same.

> My son, a federal police, disappeared the 16th of November 2009 with seven others. They never arrived to their destiny. It is said that they were executed in a rather brutal manner. They were disintegrated in acid. Yesterday marked two years, eight months of his disappearance. He was 23 years old. He did not deserve to die in such a cruel way.

> It has been a year, three months and four days that I do not know anything about my daughter. My daughter was married to a military. No one saw anything or noticed anything. Those are lies. They have told me how my daughter was taken from her home, how she was kept in custody, how she was raped, how she was decapitated alive. There are many contradictions.

> I come from a family of human rights defenders. In November 2008 the son of my sister was killed. He received four shots on his back. She continued the struggle and in 2010 she was killed too. My brother was also killed. He was intercepted and killed. Another member of my family… they took her away and she has not appeared. They have been taking everyone.

> My son and three others disappeared the 12th of January 2008. We have not known anything from them. He never called me. It has been four years and seven months.

> My son disappeared the 27th of January 2011. A year and ten months ago our lives changed. He left driving his car and never arrived to Laredo. He disappeared in the highway. It is likely that he was taken in a military checkpoint.

Victims of the Inefficiency and Corruption of the Judicial System

After experiencing the terrible events described above a general trend in these women's struggle for truth and justice indicates that victims have repeatedly reported the crimes committed to the authorities at all levels, from the local to the federal, without an effective response. They have encountered a system where forced disappearance is not typified as a crime, there are no official databases, and there is corruption at all levels of authorities. These women have faced countless obstacles and their cases serve to illustrate the 98% of impunity prevalent in the country. Moreover, they demonstrate that what actually happens in Mexico when one pursues justice has nothing to do with it. Given the inefficiency of the judicial institutions, these women have been obliged to investigate their cases on their own and then they have been told to "shut up" and stop appearing in the media. Moreover, they have been caught up in a system where everyone who is a victim is assumed to be a criminal and therefore, as one of them notes, "deserved it". Hereafter a more detailed account of each of their experiences:

> My struggle has been tireless. I search for eight lives. It has been a journey of pain and tears. The disappearance of people is not typified as a crime. I

had to put forward a claim of presumed death. They tell me to stop appearing in the media because I am affecting the institutions.

The authorities have not even submitted a report. I was told to hire informants and researchers. They have set many obstacles on my way. I requested to speak with the attorney. They called me to tell me that they had found the body of my daughter. It was a decapitated body. This happened after I appeared on the press. I never recognised it as being of my daughter. I paid them to grant me access to the body. The DNA results were negative. Then they told me that I had committed a crime and that I could go to jail. When you present a claim, you are criminalised. They say horrible things about my daughter. Everything is a bundle of contradictions and lies.

We have organised marches to look for them. We have been criminalised. The ones that should be looking after us are not doing well their jobs. They are killing us slowly… daily. We need justice and the government refuses to grant it to us.

When I went to raise the complaint they referred me to a certain police officer. They never opened an investigation. Days and nights my husband and I went to look for him on the streets. I wrote an open letter to Margarita Zavala [First Lady]. All authorities negotiate and they pretend to investigate, but they do not do anything. The detectives that I hired are looking for my son, not the authorities. There is corruption at the highest levels of the police forces and the government. Everything is a sham. They are not looking for our children. Mexico does not have a database of those who have disappeared. It does not exist. There are thousands of non-identified corpses.

Forced disappearance is not considered a crime in Mexico. We had to follow a certain procedure. Our agony began with insensitive, apathetic, and negligent authorities. We also reported the case in another town and have visited every possible institution. We were told not to trust anyone. We have been criminalised. The first thing they tell you is that they were involved in criminal activities. We still do not know anything about him. The authorities do not do anything. We do all the research. I personally handed in a letter to Margarita Zavala [First Lady] and I never received a response.

Victims of Displacement and Threats

As a result of their struggle these women, and in most cases their families, have faced threats by criminal groups and authorities. Actually, for them, both are the same. They have been followed, and told to stop searching or else they might get killed, as many other activists have been killed in Mexico. Many of them have been displaced and have lost everything they had before their lives were so abruptly disrupted, including their source of income. While class and economic status varies among them, some have lost so much that they face days in which they do not even have anything to eat. Moreover, most of these

women have lost ties with their families and friends for their fear of retribution. Hereby their stories:

> They began threatening me. I had to leave my job. It is a situation of search vs. job. The search implies expenditures so my daughter had to drop school. Everything has meant an indelible destruction. Sometimes we cannot even afford to eat tortillas with salt. Your family dissociates from you for fear.

> They had me monitored 24 hours of the day. I realised I was being chased. I escaped and arrived to Mexico City. We receive threats because they want us to stop raising our voices.

> There have been attempts to kill us. We received a poster saying that would happen to all of us. They burned our houses. They shattered their graves. They have continued threatening us. The entire family is in the United States seeking political asylum. Everything that we had, our source of income, stayed there. If we go back they cut off our heads.

> My business in my hometown is closed and I cannot go back. I received calls threatening me. If you go to the police they take advantage of your pain to extortion you. I have been displaced and now I live in the United States. Our family and friends see us as strangers. Some people dare calling us rioters.

> I do not know what has happened to our friends. They do not talk to us anymore. It is as if we had never met before.

Emotions and Rationality: Love and the Need to Take Action

Knowing how the corruption and impunity embedded in the system have made their already painful stories even more difficult, it is hard to imagine why these women have decided to raise their voices to the point of risking their lives. While it is difficult to explain this fraction of social reality through approaches based on the assumption of rational choices made by individuals, for them the logic is simple: they might not get any justice and they might even die in their struggle, but they have they have chosen to lose fear and face the consequences of their actions. They are determined to continue their search for truth and justice and have repeatedly stated that they "will not stop".

> There is nothing more but to speak out, loose fear, and continue with the struggle. If they are after me it is because I am doing things right, that is my strength.

> They set barriers on us because they do not want us to move forward. But none of the mothers is going to stop even if we die along the way.

> Our children, they are the ones that make us wake up every day stronger to continue. We will not stop until we find them.

> I do not want to say that they are dead because we do not know, but they are absent. Every day is a struggle but you have to continue because you have no other choice.

> Authorities are incompetent and this generates frustration. They think we are going to get tired of the situation. We will not. Every day I wonder where he is.

This contrasts sharply with the well-known premise of the RMT, which asserts that actors join movements based on a rational choice and an assessment of the costs and benefits of their activism. These women are aware of the difficulties of attaining justice in the Mexican context – given the high levels of corruption in the judiciary system and lack of will of authorities – yet they are determined to continue with their struggle even if they lose their lives along the way. Apart from determination, the extracts above illustrate aspects of the motivation of these women: "their children". While not all the members of the MPJD are mothers, most of them are close relatives of people who have died or disappeared. While the protagonists of this section had to overcome fear and tears to raise their voices, as illustrated in the following extracts, what motivates them to act despite the risks it entails, is the profound love they feel for their relatives and the hope to find them.

> It is very difficult to lose a loved one. It is very difficult to finally have the courage to raise your voice. However I realised that if I remain quiet I will never find my son and the justice with truth that I search for.

> Everyday you wake up hoping that they are fine. There is a little ray of light.

> I raised my son with so much love, and for what, for this? That is why I want these stories to be known.

However by highlighting their emotions, and in particular the love that moves these women, I do not mean to depict them as irrational individuals. It has already been noted that by "defining rationality in contrast to – and as incompatible with – emotionality" RM and PP theorists "missed powerful springs of collective action"(Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000:71). On the contrary, my intention is to highlight how emotions and rationality, far from being incompatible, interweave in the MPJD. Javier Sicilia – as a victim and an ideologist of the movement – is an expression of this complexity. However, the cases of the protagonists of this chapter, as of other members of the movement whose determination has taken them to places they never imagined, also illustrate this intricacy.

Somewhere along their struggle these five women joined the MPJD, either by invitation or own initiative, and while this has not altered the outcome of their search, it has transformed an aspect of their lives. Since then they have been actively participating in a series of events and strategies undertaken by the movement. Among other things, these women have marched, given testimony of their cases, engaged in dialogues with the Executive, and lobbied for laws.

> I heard about the misfortune of the poet. I participated in the first dialogue with the Executive. My experience began at that point. I have participated in the working groups and advocating for the law for victims.

> Since then we are part of the movement. I have been participating in what I can.

> I heard about what happened to Javier Sicilia. I was asked if I wanted to participate in the march and I accepted the proposal. I have participated and given testimony of my case.

In other words, while these women wish their lives had not been so cruelly disrupted, in their search for truth and justice and through their participation in the MPJD, they have undergone a transformation that is often "suppressed, discredited, disqualified, marginalised" or actually, "actively produced as non-existent" (Santos as cited in Dale and Robertson 2004:18). The transformation I refer to is being victims turned into activists.

Moreover, the members of the MPJD are aware that their strength to face an oppressive system stems from their joined activism. At this point many members of the MPJD have no other resource than their voices and the voices of those struggling side by side with them, however it must be emphasised that this is their strongest resource. The protagonists of this chapter have realised that only together they are heard and contrary to how they experienced their struggles alone, they know that collectively they are even able to sit with the President and expose their cases personally. Therefore they continuously make efforts to overcome their differences and conflicts.

> When you struggle alone they treat you awful. With the movement it is different.

> We cry and cry. There is too much pain. Sometimes there are conflicts, but we overcome them for one cause: facing the struggle together.

Another important aspect to highlight is what these women have found in the MPJD and what it means to them. Some of them had been struggling on their own for years and some others joined the movement almost from the beginning of their struggle. Regardless of this, apart from a platform for activism, the MPJD has become the family and friends that they have lost along the way. The members of the MPJD have walked together, cried together, got frustrated together, and even discovered that they have profound differences. However, the bottom-line is that they have found comfort, solidarity and strength in each other and that has given them the strength they need to go forward:

> They have accompanied us. You meet people in the same position and feel you are contributing in one way or another. We must go forward with tears and everything.

> I have found people with the same pain and the same purpose. We are a family.

The women I had the privilege to talk to want to know the truth of what happened to the members of their families. They want to find them. They want to have their dignities restored. They want authorities and criminals to actually be two separate things. They want transparency and efficiency in the judicial processes. They want to be respected as victims and not criminalised or threatened. They want their stories of sorrow and struggle to be known throughout the world. They want to find peace with justice and dignity. They wish they did not have to become activists, but ultimately and unfortunately, they had no other choice and they will not stop until they get what they want. This is how they experience being part of the MPJD and this is how their love, determination and activism has taken them to places they never imagined they would be.

5.2   Victims: "The Heart of the Movement"

In contrast with the previous section, this section draws from the mentioned focus group as well as the responses of other interviewees for this research. For this reason, a distinction between 'victim' and 'interviewee' is made.

As it has been stated in previous chapters, SERAPAZ is where the grassroots of the movement takes place. Considering this, a particular forum where the victim-activist transformation discussed above has been evidenced, and in many cases started, is the 'Space for victims' (SFV). Contrary to the rest of the committees that have been formed to respond to certain needs and are rather fluid, this space has a more fixed character and particular objectives. According to an interviewee, it was created "in response to the victims' claims" given that:

> They were dispersed, there were no dynamics for them to deal with their frustration, and they needed a space to find each other, to propose, and to organise themselves.

The issue came up in a plenary session in February 2012, and participation in the forum has been constant since its establishment. The SFV is a hermetic space given that it is only for victims and access to outsiders is restricted. In this forum victims discuss the status of their individual situations and in many cases the process of sharing and debriefing has given them the strength they need to carry on their struggles. As it has been stressed by one of them:

> Listening to more heartbreaking stories motivates you to keep on going.

A typical issue along the development of the MPJD has been that victims tend to distance themselves from the movement, conceiving it as an organisation that has to deliver results. However, as stressed by an interviewee "the movement was not created as an organisation to assist victims" and "becoming an NGO has never been an option"; Therefore an objective of the SFV is to "empower victims" and provide them with a forum to "become an individual social subject" by "improving their capacities to discuss, share opinions and propose lines of action". The process has been challenging, however there have been significant accomplishments. Many victims have gone as far as making others' struggles theirs and assuming the roles of guides for other

victims. As pointed out by an interviewee "they have taken the initiative to accompany other victims with an impressive sensibility". And this is the case of some of the women who participated in the focus groups for this research:

> We started looking for our children and now we are looking for everybody's children.

> I also do what I can to support victims in their processes.

However, given that the SFV has been conceived as a space to deal with frustration, it is not surprising that frustration often arises. According to an interviewee this is a space where there are "high levels of tension" and it is common that victims "assist, stop assisting, leave, come back, cry, get tired, get frustrated, continue"; Their experiences "are that complex". Moreover, it is important to highlight that victims with disappeared relatives, are among those who suffer, and at the same time endure the most. As highlighted by an interviewee:

> Forced disappearance is the most horrible thing that can happen to a family. They live eternally in pain. It is like if they were in a limbo. They will look for them through all possible means.

Given this complexity and the tensions it generates among victims, a management mechanism has been to make a clear distinction between those who have died from those who have disappeared, and to keep the hope that the latter could be found. However, despite the tensions and conflicts that may arise in the SFV, perhaps one of its most prominent characteristics is the role it has played in strengthening the collective identity of the MPJD and the links of solidarity among its members. As pointed out by an interviewee:

> The relationships that this mechanism has generated are very strong. Now they feel protected. They accompany each other and there is profound solidarity among them. They are a family.

This resonates with what has already been stated in previous chapters, as well as in the former section. However, in contrast with the marches – which were a first moment of identification – and the caravans – which provided the MPJD with a sense of cohesion, the SFV has been an intimate space where victims have been able to be themselves, become aware of their agency, realise the potential they have together, and in that process, become activists.

5.3 Concluding Remarks

As it has been observed many members of the MPJD have faced innumerable hardships and have exhausted every possible channel to get answers to their questions without effective results. While this chapter is based on the experiences of five women, their stories echo with the national reality. In May 2012 the president of the CNDH met with approximately 70 relatives of disappeared people, most of them women, who denounced "the inefficiency of the investigations of the cases" as well as the "omission, indifference and unwillingness" of the public officials (CNHD 2012b).

Moreover, the stories presented in this chapter not only serve to illustrate the brutality of the war experienced at a personal level, but also the extent to which agency plays a role in relation to the structures. Considering the conditions described in the Introduction and detailed in Appendix I, as well as these women's own troubles, it is outstanding how they are able to exercise their agency. However this agency is often obscured by systems of power, such as the government (by downplaying them as collateral damage and criminalising them), the media (by reproducing the government's discourse and when addressing the movement focusing on the leaders), and even the MPJD itself (by keeping a hierarchy – though efforts are made to become more horizontal). I hope that by highlighting their experiences in this chapter, I have been able to counter this trend, at least to an extent.

On the other hand, it has been observed how the MPJD in its attempts for democratization and empowerment of its members, has provided victims with a space to share their experiences, discuss and propose lines of action. While the forum is often a site where tensions and conflicts arise, there have been significant steps forward. Therefore, the SFV it is also a space where many victims have lost their fear to speak up and empowered by the unity of the group, have been transformed into activists.

Chapter 6   Final Remarks: "Seguimos Hasta la Madre"[14]

This has been an exploratory analysis of the MPJD, based to a large extent on the primary data collected through qualitative methods. As portrayed in Table 1 of Chapter 2, my approach for analysis is rather fluid and incorporates aspects of well known perspectives – resource mobilisation, framing, identity – as well as under-studied and under-theorised areas of SM, such as their emotional an subjective dimensions. This fluidity is also evident in the structure of the chapters, given that while each of them has a purpose and addresses a particular sub-question, aspects of the mentioned approaches are present throughout the research. By doing this, I attempted to counter the usual trend in SM scholarship to either apply and test a particular approach, or try to merge perspectives to come up with an all-encompassing theory.

As evidenced by the characteristics of the MPJD that are exposed throughout this work, the movement is a complex process in which the agency of emotional and rational actors intertwines with particular aspects of the Mexican context. Therefore, restricting its analysis to a rigid set of premises would have been unjust. At the theoretical level, the purpose of this research was to highlight how emotions and rationality, two seemingly incompatible aspects of social life, are indeed embedded in the dynamics of the MPJD. As evidenced by the case of Sicilia and the women whose voices were expressed in Chapter 5, actors of the MPJD exercise their agency moved by both, their emotions and rationality, and actually sometimes it is difficult to draw a distinctions between these two.

Having clarified the above, I would like to go back to the question that guided this research: *How has the Mexican Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity developed in respect to its objectives from the time of its emergence?* In order to specify a focus and facilitate its answer, this question was decomposed in the following three sub-questions: 1) How did the MPJD emerge? 2) How is the MPJD organised and which have been its main strategies to advance in its objectives? 3) How has the search for peace with justice and dignity been experienced by individual members of the MPJD that are themselves victims of Mexico's escalation of violence? Consequently, these sub-questions were addressed in chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

Beginning by how the MPJD came about, in Chapter 3 it has been stated that the movement's emergence was characterised by an efficient mobilisation of moral, human, informational and material resources, as well as successful framing process by an elite, composed of individuals and organisations around the well-known figure of Javier Sicilia. It was also highlighted that emotions played a significant role in the process of mobilisation and the first marches

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[14] (We are still fed up).

served to begin the formation of a collective identity and the visibility of the victims of the war.

Subsequently, in Chapter 4 I addressed how the MPJD is organised and which have been its main strategies to advance in its objectives. In this chapter it was stressed that the MPJD is organised as a network of individuals and organisations and while some ties among these as rather loose, in other cases they are particularly strong. Such is the case of CENCOS and SERAPAZ, which operate as SMOs and provide coherence and structure to the MPJD. While such structure is considerably hierarchical and centralised, efforts are being made to alter this and become more horizontal. The fact that the two most prominent leaders of the MPJD have officially left their positions is an indication that an internal transformation is about to take place. Another aspect addressed in this chapter, were the three caravans so far undertaken by the MPJD as strategies to advance in its objectives. As noted, while each of these had its own purpose and outcome, the three of them served to strengthen the sense of collective identity among members, and furthered the process of visibility of victims that started with the first marches organised by the 'Network for Peace and Justice'.

Thirdly, in Chapter 5 I addressed how victims of the MPJD experience their search for peace with justice and dignity. Here I made an effort to portray how these women experience Mexico's brutal reality at the personal level. However, perhaps the most outstanding aspect to note is that despite the structural conditions and individual adversities they face, these women are resolute to exercise their agency. What moves them is their love for their relatives and that is how they are able to face any risks, but actually when it comes to the actions they undertake to advance in their struggle, these women are particularly rational. Apart from being victims, they have been transformed into determined activists, however such transformation is often disregarded.

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of the MPJD by looking at different aspects of how it has developed in respect to its objectives since the time of its emergence. I would like to highlight that while at this stage the MPJD cannot and should not be assessed in terms of successes and failures, it is necessary to make a balance of where it stands in respect to its initial objectives and *raison d'être* in order to get a better understanding of how far it has advanced in its struggle to challenge Mexico's national emergency and obtain peace with justice and dignity. What are the major landmarks that the MPJD has had so far and where has it fallen short of its own objectives and expectations?

With this question in mind it is possible to say that the movement has had some significant steps forward as well as important shortfalls. Given that the government has not altered its security strategy, and impunity continues being of 98%, it must be said that despite its multiple and varied efforts, the MPJD has not advanced in its structural objectives of peace and justice. On the other hand, perhaps the most notable of its steps forward is that it has been able to challenge the official discourse regarding Mexico's contemporary reality. Through its interpretation of Mexico's devastating situation as a 'national emergency', the MPJD was able to break the cycle of its normalisation and make the evident crystal clear: Mexico is at war. Moreover, through the same

process the movement was able to challenge the official discourse of collateral damage and the criminalisation of the victims of the war. Today it is rather questionable that all those who have died or disappeared in the last six years due to the war on drugs were criminals or members of the security forces. By naming the victims and providing them with spaces for their empowerment and visibility, the MPJD has granted them the first right that they had been denied by the system: the right to exist as victims. Throughout its journey the MPJD has indeed come to challenge the optimistic figures and flawed policies used by those in power to advance in their own interests, and through its various strategies it has unveiled the faces of a national emergency, a humanitarian crisis that is devastating Mexico, its people and their dignity. Moreover, it has gone beyond its initial objectives by undertaking a caravan to the U.S. and in that way broadening its network, its audience, and the addressees of its demands.

Given that at this point the MPJD remains an understudied subject, I would like to encourage furthering its analysis. There are various possibilities for doing so. For example, one of the most outstanding features of the MPJD barely addressed in this work has been its capacity to engage in dialogues with the Mexican authorities and presidential candidates. The interaction MPJD-authorities could be a fruitful path for analysis. Given the shallow and gendered representations of the MPJD is the media, another option is precisely to look at the role the Mexican media has played in representing the movement. In line with this, a gender perspective that would highlight the diversity of the MPJD as well as its internal struggles would also be a fine opportunity for research.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Detailed Context
I.I Dramatic Inequality
Mexico is a country of deep contrasts. On the one hand, several analyses of the country are rather optimistic about its present and future economic performance. As stated by Corrales (2012), over the last twenty years Mexico has experienced an average growth rate of 1.5% GDP per capita and despite substantial shifts in Mexican society, this has allowed 53% of the population to become part of the middle class. However these optimistic figures are not enough to understand Mexico's complex economic and social reality.

Despite its qualification as the second largest economy in Latin America by The World Bank (2012), Mexico is far from being paradise for most of its more than 112 million inhabitants (INEGI 2010). On the contrary, daunting inequality, corruption across all branches of its government and a serious security issue that has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, stand on the way of a prosperous present and future. The National Council on Evaluation of Social Development Policy estimates that following the global economic crisis, the number of Mexicans living in poverty reached the 52 million, increasing by 3.2 million from 2008 to 2010 (CONEVAL 2011). This means that about 46.2% of the country's total population lives in poverty. Moreover, while the number of people living in extreme poverty dropped from 10.6 to 10.4% in the same period, it still implies that 11.7 million Mexicans are living in extreme poverty (ibid.). Additionally, the unemployment rate has grown from 3.6% in 2006 to 5.4% in 2010, and it is expected to close 2012 over 5%. While the number might appear optimistic, this means that about 2.5 million people are currently unemployed in the country. Together with the 13 million people that work in precarious conditions – without a fixed salary and any kind of social security – and the 4 million people that have declared having the need to work extra hours; the 19.5 million people in negative working conditions sharply contrasts with the 15.7 million working under formal conditions (OECD 2011, Cruz 2012).

I.II The Intricacy of Drug-trafficking in Mexico
Apart from these critical levels of inequality and marginalisation, Mexico has become a thriving environment for drug-trafficking. The literature regarding the history, evolution and effects of drug-trafficking in the Americas, and in Mexico, is abundant and varied. While the scope of this work does not allow for a detailed account about the interconnectedness of drug-trafficking and its battle in the region, a brief explanation of how these two are linked and have developed in Mexico is necessary in order to better understand the country's present situation.

According to Serrano (2007) the development of drug-trafficking in Mexico is closely linked with the prohibition of drugs in the U.S. and its harsh foreign policy urging Mexico to do the same. While the production and consumption of drugs indeed became illicit in Mexico, the government's lack

of capacity to enforce the law led to the establishment of a system where drug entrepreneurs and some authorities engaged in a corrupt relationship based on reciprocity. For better or worse this system worked until the 1990s when there was a rupture in these corrupt relationships and violence among criminal groups began taking ground in Mexico. By the end of the decade it was clear that drug-traffickers had gained significant power in the country and were becoming increasingly violent. Since then no mechanism has been able to reverse this trend. As Ríos and Shirk (2011:3) point out, Mexico has been experiencing "a persistent public security crisis involving high rates of violent crime and increased violence" among organised crime groups "involved in drug-trafficking and other illicit activities" since the 1990s.

Taking the former into account leads to assume that the pressure that the U.S has exerted on Mexico for almost a century regarding the prohibition of drugs has only made drug traffickers grow stronger and diversify their range of illegal activities. As Serrano, Malkin (2001:102) suggests that drug-trafficking controls did little to stop the flow of illegal drugs to the U.S. and sustains that "controls have only made traffickers even more professional and entrepreneurial in their efforts to build an economy of scale that can ensure adequate compensation for their risks". Taking this into account, Buscaglia (2010:96 identifies at least 22 types of highly profitable organised crimes committed by Mexican criminal groups. Among these are: acts of terrorism, contraband of diverse goods and services, executions of public officials, extortion, counterfeit of money and documents, credit card frauds, qualified homicides, money laundering, piracy of diverse products, pornography, vehicle theft, kidnapping, arms trafficking, human trafficking and drug-trafficking. Moreover he asserts that while drug-trafficking provides between 45% and 48% of the gross income of these organisations, the rest – between 52% and 55% – stems from the rest of the crimes. The patrimony of Mexican organised crime has grown to an extent that in 2010 it was estimated to be equivalent to 40% of the national GDP (ibid: 97). Following Buscaglia's analysis, criminal groups take advantage of the penurious governability in the country to compete, with violence and corruption, for the political capture of the federal entities to solidify headquarters for the control of this patrimony (ibid).

I.III The Mexico – U.S. War on Drugs

For the reasons outlined above, the battle against drug-cartels was already evident during the administration of former president Vicente Fox (2000-2006). However in contrast with Fox, President Felipe Calderón made the 'war on drugs' explicit and a priority of his mandate shortly after he took office in December 2006 (Sullivan and Beittel 2009:ii). Since then a strong securitisation took place throughout the country and thousands of military and police forces were sent to the streets to fight and dismantle the most powerful cartels operating in Mexican territory. Moreover, it is important to highlight that contrary to how former administrations dealt with drug-trafficking in the country, it was during Calderón's administration that the U.S. became a prominent actor in the fight against drugs. Therefore we should not refer to Mexico's war on drugs, but to a Mexico-U.S. war on drugs. Through the 'Merida Initiative', an "assistance package to help Mexico fight drug-trafficking

started under President George Bush" (Ríos and Shirk 2011:15), the U.S. is a sponsor of Mexico's current brutal situation and the victims that it has created.

According to the U.S. Department of State (2012:1) the 'Merida Initiative' "is an unprecedented partnership between the United States and Mexico to fight organized crime and associated violence while furthering respect for human rights and the rule of law". Moreover, it claims that "based on principles of shared responsibility, mutual trust, and respect for sovereign independence, the two countries' efforts have built confidence that is transforming the bilateral relationship". The 'Merida initiative' has indeed transformed the bilateral relationship between these two countries, and the loose cooperation that once characterized it has been strengthen to the point of making Mexico and the U.S intimate partners in the war against drugs through a framework that involves intelligence, training, multiple equipment, and significant funds. While in recent years Mexico had "not been a major recipient of U.S. economic assistance, particularly compared to other countries —like Colombia— where the United States has tried to improve security through social development spending" (Ríos and Shirk 2011:15), it is clear that fighting drug-trafficking in Mexico has become a priority for that country. Proof of this is the fact that as far as March 2012 the U.S. Congress had "appropriated $1.6 billion since the Merida Initiative began in Fiscal Year 2008" (U.S. Department of State 2012:1).

I.IV The Human Costs of the War

Whereas according to the government's discourse the war on drugs and the budget spent on it are for the sake of 'security', the reality is that in the last 6 years Mexico has experienced an escalation of violence without precedent. The dramatic increase of deaths and reports for gross human rights violations are a proof of this. However the number of victims is not fixed since the government, as well as the media and a number of different organisations, sustain different versions of the measurable impact of the war. In other words, apart from the war on drugs, a war of numbers has also been occurring in Mexico. Ríos and Shirk (2011:3) reflect upon this issue and claim that until January 2011 there had been "little detailed data or analysis available to gauge Mexico's drug related violence". Moreover, they sustain that "the Mexican government released only sporadic and unsystematic data on drug violence, and tracking by media sources produced widely varying estimates" (ibid).

While this work does not allow for a detailed account of the discrepancies in the statistics regarding the escalation of violence and abuses in Mexico in the last decade, it is important to note that two major reasons why these vary so widely are the lack of official registries and differences in categorisations. In respect to deaths, the major problem seems to be the manner in which they are categorised by the government. On January 12, 2011 the Executive launched a public database of the homicides presumably linked to organised crime (PR 2011). According to its methodology, homicides count as "presumably linked to organised crime" if the victim and/or perpetrator is presumably a member of an organisation linked to organised crime; if it is the result of a clash between organised crime groups or between them and the authorities; and if it is the result of an aggression against authority (PR n.d.).

Among the implications of this categorisation is that it disregards the killings of civilians by Mexican security forces and those who have died in crossfire simply for being at the wrong place at the wrong time, leading to the assumption that everyone who has died as a result of the war is supposed to be a criminal or a member of the security forces.

Regardless of the inconsistency of information, a major trend regarding violence in Mexico in the last decade is its sustained and dramatic escalation, particularly in regards to homicides. According to figures of the Mexican Attorney General's Office (PGR) reported by Mexico's National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), from 2001 to 2005 "there were a total of 6,680 drug-related killings"; However from 2007 to 2010, "the total number of organized crime related homicides identified by the Mexican government reached 34,550" (Ríos and Shirk 2011:8). While an increase of violence preceded President Calderón's declaration of war, the number of drug-related killings reported throughout the first 4 years of his government "was four times greater than the total of 8,901 such killings identified during the entire Fox administration (2001-2006)" (ibid). An increase in violence of 400% should not be disregarded. However, I must emphasize, most likely these numbers were calculated on the basis of categories similar to the ones outlined earlier. Therefore, if one considers the total number of assassinations in the country, Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography, points out that between 2005 and 2011 there were 116,005 homicides and between 2007 and 2011, the total number reached 95,632 (INEGI 2012). Following this rising trend, Le Monde (2012) has estimated in 120,000 the total number of violent deaths during President Calderón's administration.

In addition to these shocking statistics, it is important to highlight that violence "has become more extreme and widely targeted over time" (Ríos and Shirk 2011:13). While figures "utterly fail to convey the ghastly nature of many killings" it is relevant to point out that many of them "are accompanied by beheadings, dismemberment, torture, and other acts of extraordinary cruelty"; Moreover "organized crime groups have resorted to more aggressive tactics, including the use of explosive devices and traffic blockades, that have wide-ranging effects on the civilian population" and "to amplify their message of fear and intimidation", they often announce their endeavours "using handwritten banners, viral internet videos, and even popular ballads, or *narcocorridos*" (ibid).

On the other hand, while the increase in homicides has been the most visible trend in the last years, it only accounts for a fraction of the damage that the war on drugs has caused in Mexico. A rise in gross human rights violations is also serious concern. As the national Ombudsman has pointed out, despite existing regulations establishing a broader protection to human rights, there has been an "exponential growth in the number of complaints" for human rights violations, which in the past 35 months – December 2009 to October 2012 – increased by 71% (CNDH 2012g). Forced disappearances and displacements are among these violations and as with homicides, the lack of accuracy regarding the number of abuses is also a concern.

Although in Mexico there is a 'National Registry of Missing People', none of the Mexican official institutions keeps a rigorous account of the people

reported as disappeared or missing across the country. While the Department of Public Security (SSP) keeps a registry of 2,044 cases, the official number of the General Attorney's Office (PGR) ascends to 4,800, and the General Attorney's Office of DF has a record of 5,229 people missing (Martínez 2012). On the other hand, from 2006 to April 2011, the CNDH (2011) reregistered 5,397 cases of "people reported as missing or absent" and 8,898 of corpses that had not been identified, increasing the number to 14,295. On the other hand while Mexico does not account with a diagnosis of the displacements in the country, according to the CNDH the phenomenon has been increasing and changing its character in the last years. From 2006 it was possible to observe "a new form of displacement caused by clashes between criminals and public safety elements in some areas of the country"; To illustrate the case between 2006 and 2009, 110,000 people were displaced from Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua and between 2009 and 2011 violence in the area has displaced another 24,000 Mexicans (CNDH: 2012d).

Apart from disappearances and displacements, there has also been an increased tendency of torture. From 2000 to 2012 the CNDH received 5,000 reports for torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (CNDH 2012f). Moreover, while violence is widespread and in many cases indiscriminate, it is possible to observe a trend of abuses being directed against specific groups. Journalists and civil defenders are among those who have been severely affected by the outrageous violence and system of impunity prevalent in the country. From 2000 to July 2012, the CNDH (2012e) registered 82 homicides of journalists, 16 disappearances and 28 attacks to the media. Moreover, according to reports received by this institution only 19% of these 126 cases had been consigned for investigation by a competent authority, and from such in only 7% of the cases a judge had issued a conviction; this demonstrates an impunity rate of 71% (ibid.). On the other hand, civil defenders have also been a target for threats, arbitrary detentions, physical aggressions and murder in their struggle to protect the population from power abuses. From 2011 to June 2012 the CNDH (2012c) documented 86 cases of "presumed violations to their fundamental rights, from which 27 correspond to the current year". Only during 2012 the CNDH (2012a) recorded more than 155 abuses against journalists and civil defenders.

To sum up, violence in Mexico has been increasing substantially in the last years and as Ríos and Shirk (2011:15) point out, the situation "presents a growing threat to the Mexican state and civil society".

Appendix II: Primary Data

In terms of qualitative data gathering for this research, the following activities were conducted: 1) Participant observation during one of the MPJD weekly plenary sessions; 2) Three semi-structured qualitative interviews in the field; 3) Two semi-structured qualitative interviews via Skype; 4) A focus group with 5 participants in the field. All this took place in the months of July and August 2012. Given that I aimed to select actors from various sectors of the MPJD, from the ten individuals interviewed:

a) One is an academic currently involved in the MPJD (interview).

b) Two are individuals currently involved in the organisational-operative area of the MPJD (interviews).

c) Two are individuals who where involved in the MPJD but no longer are (interviews).

d) Five are women, active members of the movement, and victims of the war on drugs (focus group).

Consequently, the interviews are mainly used for addressing the origins and the organisational-strategic aspects of this research, and the focus group is particularly used to address the question of how victims experience their search for peace, justice and dignity. While my initial objective was to have contact with a more heterogeneous group of victims in regards to gender, this was not possible due to lack of time and the negative response of the men asked to participate. For security reasons, the personal information of the individuals who contributed for this research is not revealed and an effort is made to avoid clarity regarding who said what. Therefore when highlighting their voices, I refer to each of them as: 'interviewee'.

Appendix III: No More Blood Banner

Appendix IV: SMOs
IV.I CENCOS

The National Centre of Social Communication (CENCOS) is a non-governmental, non-profit, independent Mexican organisation in the field of communication that seeks the development of a society based on democracy, justice, equity and dignity since 1964. CENCOS was the first organisation in Mexico to emphasise the importance of using communication strategically and professionally to achieve the objectives of civil society and its organisations. With that in mind they have worked in the proposal of effective communication methods and techniques for the benefit of society. Among the variety of topics that they address are: peace and conflict resolution, migration, human rights, security, environment, gender, fair trade, employment, communications, health, globalisation, livelihoods, sexuality and reproduction, citizen participation, freedom of expression, youth, art and culture, transparency and access to information, no discrimination, education, and food sovereignty. (Sánchez 2000, CENCOS 2012)

IV.II SERAPAZ

Services and Consultancy for Peace (SERAPAZ) is a Mexican, independent, non-profit, civil society organisation. They provide services for peace and social conflict transformation through the promotion and coordination of civil

initiatives, research and publishing, training, counselling, advocacy, and monitoring of processes that contribute to the construction of peace. It emerged to facilitate administrative and financial management in support of the mediation efforts of the National Mediation Commission (CONAI) between the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) and the government. In June 1998, CONAI moved its various mediating and peace-related tasks to SERAPAZ, and since then their aim has been to contribute to the capacity building of stakeholders as subjects of the positive transformation of their conflicts into processes that lead into fair, constructive, democratic and non-violent solutions. (SERAPAZ 2012)

Appendix V: Working groups for the 'National Pact' for peace in Ciudad Juárez

Working group 1: Truth and justice from the victims.

Working group 2: End to the war strategy; Citizen security with a human rights perspective.

Working group 3: Corruption and impunity.

Working group 4: Economic roots of organised crime.

Working group 5: Alternatives for the youth and measures for the recovery and reconstruction of the social fabric.

Working group 6: Participative and representative democracy.

Working group 7: Linkage and organisation of the movement.

Working group 8: Labour reform, unemployment and economic alternatives.

Working group 9: Indigenous rights and culture, migration and alternatives in the field.

(MPJD: 2011b)