

# Performance of the Narcomessages: Panic Rumors in the Cities of Northern Mexico\*

## Performance de los narcomensajes: los rumores de pánico en las ciudades del norte de México

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### Abstract

*This paper analyzes the configuration of liminal spaces in the cities of northern Mexico as a result of the spread of narcomessages as panic rumors in the context of the "war against drug trafficking" (2006-2018). The analysis of this rumors involves getting into social networks and in several journalistic sources to identify trends and the dissemination of the news of dubious origin. In addition, the ethnography is an excellent methodology to verify the incidence of narcomantas in urban spaces. The digital research shows that these rumors of panic are presented as a performance, that is, as part of a dramatization of the violence that is distinguished by its originality, its emotional intensity and its evocative capacity. The performance makes possible the configuration of liminal spaces in the areas of the city, i.e. in spaces that are presented as indefinite, interstitial and dangerous.*

### Keywords

*Panic rumors, liminal spaces, performance, North of Mexico, narcomenssages.*

### Resumen

Esta investigación se propone analizar la configuración de espacios liminales en las ciudades del norte de México, a raíz de la propagación de narcomensajes como rumores de pánico en el contexto de la "guerra contra el narcotráfico" (2006-2018). El análisis de los rumores de pánico implica adentrarse en las redes sociales y en diversas fuentes periodísticas para identificar las tendencias y la difusión de noticias de dudosa procedencia. De manera complementaria implica realizar trabajo etnográfico para constatar la incidencia de narcomantas en los espacios urbanos. La investigación digital demuestra que estos rumores de pánico se presentan como un *performance*, es decir, como parte de una dramatización de la violencia que se distingue por su originalidad, su intensidad emocional y su capacidad evocativa, misma que hace posible la configuración de los espacios urbanos en espacios liminales, es decir, en espacios que se presentan como indefinidos, intersticiales y peligrosos.

### Palabras clave

*Rumores de pánico, espacios liminales, performance, norte de México, narcomensajes.*

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## 1. Introduction

One of the expressions of violence generated by the presence of organized crime groups are the narratives expressed fundamentally as rumors of panic disseminated in social networks announcing kidnappings, confrontations and executions on behalf of members of criminal gangs. As part of these narratives, the denominated *narcomantas*<sup>1</sup> placed beside the murder victims found on the city streets are part of the *performance* of the violence. With an over 10-year losing war against narco-trafficking -begun by Mexico's president at the time, Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) and continuing the President Enrique Peña Nieto's term (2012-2018)- the narratives have had an impact on the way northern Mexico's largest cities are inhabited, especially Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez.

The studies on the propagation of the rumors have highlighted the importance of the ambiguity as the main feature for acceptance in uncertain situations (Allport & Postman, 1946; Shibutani, 1966; Kapferer, 1990). Other investigations have focused on analyzing the effects that generate the acceptance of the rumors in emotional terms. By giving meaning to uncertain situations, the rumors help vent the anxiety; it is a collective catharsis derived from the same contradictions that a particular situation can present (Knapp, 1944; Rosnow, 1991). Finally, different investigations have highlighted the formal characteristics of these rumors. Guerin and Miyazaki (2006) propose, for example, that the characteristics that make the rumors successful in terms of their propagation, are related to the tendency of alluding to new, dangerous situations. It's about short messages that are difficult to verify (with a certain ambiguity), yet are still believable.

The ambiguity of the rumors is perhaps the most evident expression of irreverence to formality. Rumors shy away from verification and classification of reliable information. They represent the *performance* of the non-institutionalized violence -not exercised by the State-

that maintains fear in the population and an effect in the configuration of the spaces lived in by the inhabitants of the cities in liminal spaces characterized by being grotesque and subversive. In other words, rumors have an undeniable perlocutionary ability that is observed in the behavior of the inhabitants of the cities of northern Mexico and in the configuration of public spaces in liminal spaces. The importance of social networks in the propagation of panic rumors has been undeniable. Like never before, the speed at which content of dubious sources spreads has been a determining factor for the generation of collective psychosis.

## 2. The analysis of the panic rumors like performance and liminal spaces

For various decades, Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman (1946) warned, and rightly so, that for alert rumors to be successful in their propagation they must announce events of importance, when there is a lack of official timely information. Indeed, the main characteristic of the panic rumors and, therefore, their acceptance or rejection has to do with the importance of the same information and "to be in place of something"; to be in the place of timely information that allows for clarification of present or future events. Rumors are, in this sense, re-presentations of official information: they present themselves in the absence of something feigned to be that something and they do it concisely, but also ambiguously. When the importance of the information multiplies due to its ambiguity, the effectiveness of the propagation of the rumor is ensured (Allport & Postman, 1946). This proposal has been central not only to understanding the rumors as part of the public life when there are events that are uncertain; it has also been fundamental to defining the formal characteristics of the rumors and the ambiguous language.

Different studies have demonstrated that in situations of tension, violence and extreme

anxiety (in the case of Mexico, these are attacks with violence, conflicts between criminal gangs, kidnappings, homicides and beheadings, armed robbery, baby snatching, etc.), the individuals of a community are subject to believe panic rumors and propagate them (Thomas, 2007; DiFonzo & Bordia, 2007; DiFonzo, 2008; Bhavnani, et al., 2009; Sunstein, 2011).

Panic rumors are expressions of the language that seek to understand a limitless reality (unprecedented violence in the last years) with resources that are also limitless. There lies its inscription in the performative perspective characterized by the displacement, the rewriting and recreation of stories and manuscripts (Díaz-Cruz, 2008). In daily life, the *performance* implies "to display, go to the extremes, put emphasis on an action for those who observe" (Schechner, 2012:58). The narcomessages, like panic rumors, are irreverent and break with the way messages are transmitted. The threats are presented as statements that alter the order and manage to "do" something. There is a correspondence with the violence generated by the drug trafficker. The excess of violence generated by the narcotrafficker is, without a doubt, a performative act. This violence can be understood as a dramatization that seeks to express specific cultural conditions (Blair, 2004). But the narratives of the rumors placed on the narcomantas make up part of this dramatization characterized by the transgression. They are placed at night in places that are solitary but visible in the morning light and generally accompanied beside mutilated, defenseless bodies with their hands tied.

Different investigations have focused on analyzing the relationship of physical violence and the presence of narcomessages. The disputes for the dissemination and propagation of this propaganda between the drug cartels has enabled the identification of an evolution of violence in this context of the war on drug traffickers. Based on a classification of the narcomensajes and the analysis of the discourse we propose that there is a

causal relationship between a higher dissemination of these and the increase of physical violence on behalf of these organized crime groups (Paniagua-Vázquez, 2012; Martin, 2012; Astueta, 2016).

It's evident that the characteristics of the narcomessages have an influence on the daily life of those living in the city of northern Mexico. Although the majority of these panic rumors are disseminated on social networks, they allude to specific spaces like shopping malls, plazas and public parks<sup>2</sup>. Narcomantas are placed in strategic places -like pedestrian overpasses- so they can be seen by people on foot and those driving cars. They are blankets or cardboard signs written in Spanish and slightly illustrated with some drawing.

These spaces named by the panic rumors are liminal spaces. A characteristic of the liminality -according to Victor Turner (1982)- is this paradoxical and ambiguous character; touching on a "anti-structure" characterized by the dissolution of established norms for daily life in community. This processual approach on the war against the drug trafficker, allows for warning of the confluence of panic rumors that announce imminent dangers that attack the life of the inhabitants of a city in urban spaces. Once they are named, these urban spaces occupied for the *performance* of violence, pass through a liminal period. It's possible, at that time, to exclude and distinguish them from daily life. They are left as marked spaces of possibility and with, of undefinition.

### 3. Methodology

To understand the way in which this spatial configuration is made, various panic messages have been reviewed to identify those that have paralyzed the cities of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez in the last years. The search was done in journalistic media using the virtual newspaper and periodicals library in order to analyze the language using social networks. The digital ethnography allows identification of cultural

expressions and ways of organization derived from the new technologies of virtual communication and interaction (Crystal, 2004; Whitehead & Wesch, 2009; Coleman, 2010). At the same time, the identification of those messages that had consequences on daily life comes from fieldwork done in the areas mentioned. In attempt to prove the perlocutionary character of the panic rumors, there is an analysis of the context of November 11th (11N) of 2008 when narcomessages were disseminated, generating an emotional crisis among the inhabitants of the city of Chihuahua. Secondly, the syntactic and discursive features of narcomessages disseminated on social networks in 2015 were analyzed to show that these panic rumors, like texts, not only form part of a specific context, but are also responsible for the conformation of a context (Van Dijk, 2012).

## 4. Analysis

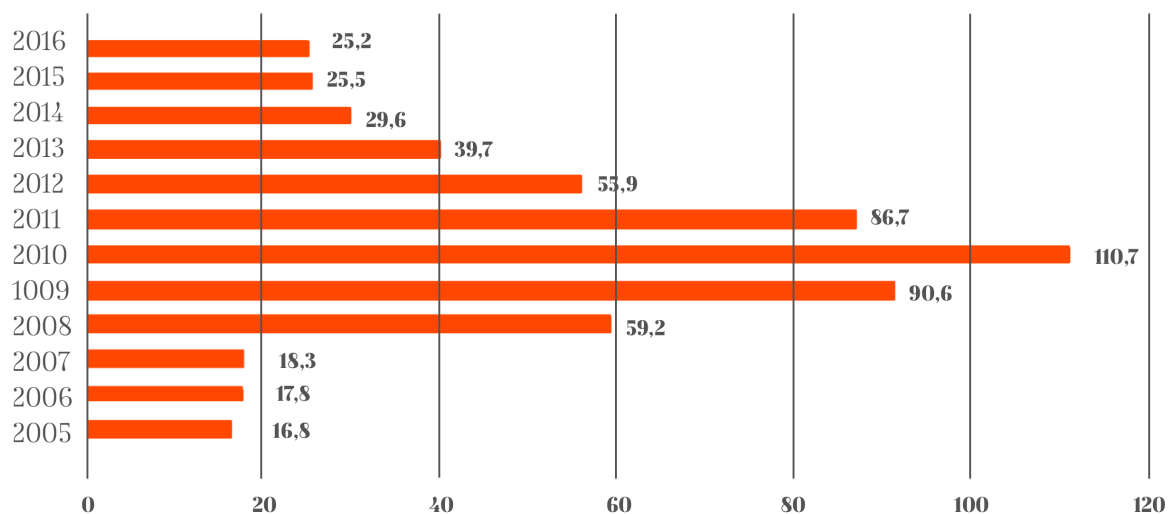
### 4.1. 11N: a performance of the violence in the city of Chihuahua.

Over the last decade, Chihuahua has experienced critical moments of violence. From 2008 to 2010, the premeditated murder rate increased drastically: from an average of 18.3 in 2007 per 100,000 inhabitants, to 59.2 in 2008, 90.6 in 2009 and 110.7 in 2010 (see Graph 1).

Starting in this period (2008-2010) most of the violence was concentrated in certain Mexican states. The state of Chihuahua, which represented at that time 3% of the country's population, had 18% of the murders on a national level. This concentration coincided with the

**Graph 1:** Homicides per year per every 100,000 inhabitants.

— Homicidios al año por cada 100.000 habitantes en Chihuahua



implementation of the denominated "operativos conjuntos" -in this case Operación Conjunta Chihuahua was implemented- on behalf of the federal government that basically meant military presence on the country's main roads to fight, together with the federal police, drug trafficking (Escalante-Gonzalbo, 2011).

In Ciudad Juárez, this denominated war on drug trafficking was made public; the protagonists were not just from the drug cartels fighting amongst themselves, but rather the same institutions in charge of combating these groups with the army and the federal police. With the militarization of the streets of northern Mexico violence from the state was presented. The tactics to fight organized crime have been used by the same army deserters, often times forming paramilitary groups with the Zetas. Also, criminal groups, like "Línea" in Ciudad Juárez, were able to infiltrate police organizations and take control of violence perpetrated by the state (Azaola, 2012).

It was this militarization and the battle between the organized crime bands that brought about an unusual social situation to favor the perception of insecurity on behalf of the inhabitants of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez. From 2008 to 2010, the cities and touristic areas became a war zone where scenes of mass murders multiplied<sup>3</sup>. In the face of apparent ineptitude of the state and federal authorities, in January 2009 a paramilitary group appeared in Ciudad Juárez, called "Comando Ciudadano por Juárez". In a press release sent to local and national media, the Comando Ciudadano por Juárez presented itself as an alternative to the terror that had taken over the streets of the city and ante the ineffectiveness of the authorities to fight organized crime. As an immediate action, they proposed executing a criminal every 24 hours (Chalk, 2001).

The violent events that marked these first years of war against the drug trafficker and the weakness of the institutions in charge of impeding violent death between inhabitants of this region of northern Mexico allowed for never seen before propagation of panic ru-

mors: an increase of narcomessages that alerted, via social networks, of curfews<sup>4</sup>. Internet searches of these topics also increase during the same time that there were high rates of violent deaths<sup>5</sup>.

The different panic rumors that were disseminated on 11N of 2008 are a good example of the impact of violent acts and the dissemination of threats on social networks. They were narcomessages sent by cellphone and emails warning of a curfew at 9pm, with threats of massacres and kidnappings to demand the resignation of the then prosecutor of the state of Chihuahua. The messages caused panic among the inhabitants of Chihuahua<sup>6</sup>. The federal agencies, via the Operación Conjunta Chihuahua spokesperson -that consisted in the deployment of 2,000 soldiers and 500 federal agents in the region- they were obligated to clarify said rumors. An official press release said the following:

1. It is evident that this series of rumors seek to create anxiety and destabilization of the Chihuahua society.
2. All the statements about threats of organized crime on various public sites, schools and malls are false.
3. The head officials of all different public security agencies (federal, state and municipal) are performing their daily functions and are in contact with all their operative personnel. No threats or messages have been received.
4. There news of imposing or requesting a "curfew" in the city and at diverse educational institutions is false. No classes have been cancelled for today, or tomorrow. Schools will operate as usual.
5. We ask citizens to remain calm and we inform that the security forces of the Operación Conjunta Chihuahua are coordinated and patrolling the streets of the city. We fully disapprove of this series of rumors that seek to jeopardize citizens' trust in their institutions<sup>7</sup>.

Despite the speed to clarify the panic rumors<sup>8</sup>, the inhabitants of the city were "bombarded" by messages coming from different sources. The newspapers reported the death of various people in the city of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez. The day before there was a report of a discovery of a human head outside the city



with two narcomantas<sup>9</sup>. There was also talk about 10 murders in the last hours and there were threats, via the narcomessages, that there would be more<sup>10</sup>. Even when the threats directed at the main authorities of the State of Chihuahua had been constant months before<sup>11</sup>, the “narco-psychosis” that occurred that day obligated the authorities to clarify said rumors. The then governor of the State of Chihuahua alluded to the existence of political interests and asked citizens to remain calm (Chávez-Echavarría, 2008)<sup>12</sup>.

11N can be considered the climax of a social drama that had been building for months. During this climax the inhabitants of the city of Chihuahua and those of Ciudad Juárez experienced a *performance* of the violence characterized by the deployment of crossed messages both by the members of organized crime groups that fought among them a war to ensure “la plaza”, and the authorities that sought to counteract the panic messages with messages calling for citizens to remain calm. This *performance* came with mutilated bodies, especially with human heads placed outside the city of Chihuahua or at monuments in the city’s downtown. 11N of 2008 was a very emotionally intense day on which city spaces passed through a liminal period; at time when the anti-structure occupied the urban spaces destined for specific purposes. For example, various public and private schools, like Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, cancelled classes due to bomb threats. The bars, cantinas, restaurants and businesses closed early starting at 7pm. The city experienced a collective psychosis<sup>13</sup>. You could feel the fear on the streets to such a degree that it affected the behavior of commuters: honking the horn or fighting with another driver were reason enough to push a killer to losing his calm and killing passersby.

#### 4.2. The configuration of liminal spaces.

The main characteristic of panic rumors has to do with their participation in the situations of violence via the transformation of language (Das, 2007). They have real effects

on the mood of a group of people; provoking fear, hate and anguish<sup>14</sup>. And they do it via the misrepresentation of unknown situations or magnifying the events. Despite being messages of alert blanketed by anonymity or covered under some pseudonym, they make up part of those sentences characterized for “doing something” (Austin, 1962). They are sentences with undeniable perlocutionary power.

For example, in 2015 the following message was disseminated on a social network (WhatsApp) by the supposed members of different crime organizations<sup>15</sup>:

Today there is an alert message for all residents of Gpe and Calvo Guachochi, El vergel, Balleza, Parral, Zaragoza, San Buenaventura, Casas Grandes, Nuevo Casas Grandes, Juarez, Villahumada and Chihuahua, and nearby town, to not be on the street after 11pm as the Antrax and Gente Nueva operative group arrived, and we have come to return order to this house of innocent people. All the minions that go about wanting to be fucking snitches, we are going to mess you up we come from Culiacan Sinaloa on behalf of the Guzman Family, we are here and we are here to stay. Working together with all the bosses, all together for MR. JOAQUIN GUZMAN LOERA and SONS AND MR. RAFAEL CARO QUINTERO that are in charge of the corporations. Do not take this message lightly, we warn you we are not playing!!! we are going to torture, kill and cut up the busters from el Golfo and the bitches from the Cartel of the Zetas together with the Jaliscas and all those who want to step into our territory, we will not forgive anyone... All those who are on the street at 11 pm whether walking, on motorcycle, in cars, trucks with or without tinted windows will be picked up and tortured until they speak or die. We do not want to confuse anyone so do as we say, it is the Zetas, Jaliscas and Golfos hunt, the full cleaning of the territory of CHIHUAHUA. Everyone be warned!!! Starting now we will begin to pick up all those who appear to be lookouts, carriers or some little job in

particular and above all those fucking crystal meth heads both sellers and consumers don't try and be brave because what you will find will be people wrapped in blankets on the side of the highway. Those that go around blasting "narcocorridos" music on the street will be stopped and if they do not obey our demands, they will be taken down by our people. Remember we did not come to mess around, you are forewarned and you better send this message to all your family and friends and others for their own SAFETY Regards: CORPORACION ANTRAX AND GENTE<sup>16</sup>.

This narcomessage mentions concepts associated to practices in the distribution and operation of groups and people associated to organized crime: "fucking snitches", "pick up", "fucking meth heads", "people wrapped in blankets", "minions", "we are going to mess you up", "lookouts", "carriers", etc. The same way they refer to the "opposition", as well as the spelling used has an important effect performatively speaking. The writing is a dramatization of the violence fundamentally focused on informing. It has a perlocutionary character. All these categories constitute cultural representations between the people of Mexico relative to organized crime. In other words, they form part of what has been called the "battle field" where "the criminals make their plans and leveling of the space and time a kind of peculiar exaggeration: they give it their own symbolisms, content, myths, images, icons, representations" (González-Rodríguez, 2014: 85).

In its own way and style, you can see that one of the main objectives of the message is alert both the opposition as well as the general population so that they take precautions. It is a warning of imminent danger in indefinite places. The otherness is located in indefinite spaces. The importance of the formula proposed by Allport and Postman (1946), consistent in multiplying the importance of the information by the ambiguity of itself, allows us to understand why panic rumors like this one take on such high relevance. Without a doubt, the acceptance of panic rumors has to do with

the characteristics of the social networks and the speed at which they are disseminated. In other words, the information that circulates on social networks does not stay at one point in order to be disseminated, but rather it is disseminated thanks to the interaction of users on social networks -regardless if they have few friends- with *hubs*, or in other words, with the information available for any user of one of the social networks (Doer, Fouz & Friedrich, 2012).

Panic rumors disseminated on social networks reproduce the same situations of massacres and attacks that have occurred in the main cities of Chihuahua for over 10 years. For example, a few months ago – October 26th, 2018- narcomessages were disseminated on Facebook threatening that they would "make heads and tongues roll". After the threats, four freezers with human heads were found and they asked, via the same social network, "chihuahua or to madera?". In other words, the murders themselves asked on Facebook, openly, to which city they should send the human remains: to the city of Chihuahua or to the city of Madera<sup>17</sup>. In addition to the threats to the members of the other criminal groups and the population in general, these narcomessages are directed to authorities to denounce complicities and corruption<sup>18</sup>.

The *performance* of these messages is accompanied by irreverent forms in syntactic and grammatical terms. It is an aggressive, ambiguous and provocative language. They use grandiose words paying no attention to their spelling. They highlight the use of capital letters of important names in drug trafficking and crime, as well as using too many signs of admiration (making grammatic and spelling mistakes). The different ways of naming violent death touches on the excess that the war on drug traffickers has defined. Perhaps these characteristics would be sufficient to locate them, like Moulin does, on the "frontiers of language", in which the "others", who don't have a voice, they make others listen by naming the indescribable (Moulin 2010).

Returning to the content of the narcomessage of 2015, it is evident that it is on the frontier of language; it lies on an interstition that separates the truth from fiction. The authors (or author) of the panic rumor seem conscious of this limit between the believable and unbelievable; between false and true. But the message clarifies that it is not about a "game": "Do not take this message lightly, we warn you we are not playing!!! we are going to torture, kill and cut up the busters from el Golfo and the bitches from the Cartel of the Zetas together with the Jaliscas and all those who want to step into our territory, we will not forgive anyone...". The success of the messages is due to the reference of events that happen in daily life; the blanketed bodies on the side of the highway are not just an allusion to what could happen; it is a practice used to do away with rivals in the drug trade.

In this insistence of rumor *performance*, spaces mentioned in the message acquire more importance due to the danger and violence announced. These spaces are where death take place and this is where the "others" fall. The sides of the highway convert in interstitial areas where anything can happen. In this sense, panic rumors are those that create liminal spaces. At a time of crisis, "the entire territory" becomes a place of war, of danger and fear.

The consequences in the configuration of the urban space are more than evident: curfews affect commerce, tourism and daily life that takes place in public places<sup>19</sup>. Narcomessages placed on main pedestrian overpasses like commercial signs are the physical occupancy of panic rumors and the installation of an interstitial space; the *performance* of the language of the rumor accompanied by the bodies and the excess violence represent what Rodrigo Díaz (2008) calls "cultural performance". It's the moment when different *performance* genres converge in a social drama that updates it and reinvents it.

## 5. Conclusions

The irreverence of these messages for the indifference to the rules of the acceptable in grammatical and logical terms is the expression of the *performance* and the possibility of configuring and reinventing the spaces of the city of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez in liminal spaces. Spaces, finally, that share the *performance* of the rumors: are ambiguous, uncertain, irreverent, violent, anonymous and interstitial. The ability of the rumors to affect entire cities is undeniable. An example of this occurred on 11N of 2008 when the inhabitants of the city of Chihuahua experienced a collective psychosis. Despite the official releases calling citizens to remain calm, the social drama was already at its climax and, therefore, the conformation of a liminal period in the city was inevitable.

The ambiguity, the anonymity and indetermination allow panic rumors to be successful messages in terms of their propagation and acceptance. Transmitted on social networks and directly from mouth to mouth, the rumor becomes more and more contagious and there is nothing to stop it. The propagation is accompanied by a perlocutionary force; panic rumors have shown that they can mold and transform city spaces similar to the *performance* that represent interstitial, dangerous and uncertain spaces of transgression. They are liminal spaces like expression of social drama that citizens of northern cities experience, despite attempts to limit freedom by way of designing walled-up residential neighborhoods to protect occupants from violence. The cities of the north of Mexico have been affected - symbolically- by this social drama.

The actions that rumors announce are diverse. They allude to solitary, hardly transited areas like the sides of the highway or the outskirts of the city. They can also be highly transited places like malls, bars, pedestrian overpasses and even the same private neighborhoods. The liminal spaces alluded to (created) by the panic rumors show the social dramas experienced in these cities; it reminds the population that violent events can happen here.



## Notes

1. The narcomantas are pieces of cardboard or cloth where supposed members of organized crime groups leave narcomessages. The content of these narcomessages can be directed at state and federal government authorities, members of rival gangs and/or the general population. They are usually left beside the bodies of people murdered as part of a performance of violence.
2. They create 'psychosis' on social networks for supposed kidnapped children. (9 April, 2015). <http://www.larednoticias.com/noticias.cfm?n=154907> Sourced on 2 July 2017.
3. Massacre in Creel municipality of Bocoyna Chihuahua (18 August 2008). <http://kikka-roja.blogspot.com/2008/08/masacre-en-creel-municipio-de-bocoyna.html> Sourced 12 January 2014. Slaughtering of young people rehabilitation center in Ciudad Juárez. An armed commando stormed into a rehabilitation center and killed 17 people there. (3 September 2009). <https://www.univision.com/noticias/narco-trafico/matanza-de-jovenes-en-centro-de-rehabilitacion-de-ciudad-juarez> Sourced 13 November 2013. Kill 14 at student party in Juárez. (1 February 2010). *El Universal.com.mx* <http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/74607.html> Sourced 23 October 2018. Gunmen kill 19 people at rehabilitation center in Chihuahua. (12 June 2010). <http://notifamaestatal.blogspot.com/2010/06/sicarios-asesinan-19-personas-en-centro.html> Sourced 24 May 2014.
4. In the context of the war on the drug trafficker, the curfew is a state of alert that makes reference to the threat of losing his life by being on the streets of the city. Generally, they establish a specific period of time of danger, especially at night.
5. During 2008, you can find a large number of searches on internet about curfews in Chihuahua. You can research the incident on the Google trends search engine: <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=MX-CHH&q=toque%20de%20queda>
6. The members of the crime gang "Gente Nueva", linked to Sinaloa Cartel, and members of other opponent groups linked to "La Línea", of the operative group of the Juárez Cartel, fought over control of "la plaza" and claimed, on behalf of each group, favoritism on behalf of state and federal authorities.
7. "Curfew" denied in the city of Chihuahua. (11 November 2008). *XHEPL Noticias* <http://www.xepl.com.mx/completa1.php?i=6348> Sourced 26 October 2018. Narco-psychosis in Chihuahua for threats to corporations (12 November 2008). <http://www.larednoticias.com/noticias.cfm?n=17466> Sourced 26 October 2018.
8. Rumors seek to destabilize society. (11 November 2008). *El Ágora un espacio de libertad*. <http://www.elagora.com.mx/Rumores-buscan-desestabilizar-a-la,9089.html> Sourced 13 October 2018.
9. Human head found in Chihuahua. *El Ágora. Un espacio de libertad* (10 November 2008) <http://www.elagora.com.mx/Encuentran-cabeza-humana-en,9045.html> Sourced 26 October 2018.
10. Cano, L.C. (11 November 2008). 10 executions reported in Chihuahua. *El Universal.mx* <http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/554663.html> Sourced 26 October 2018.
11. New blankets with threats to Governor Reyes Baeza appear in Chihuahua (24 July 2008). <http://www.jornada.com.mx/2008/07/24/index.php?section=politica&article=014n1pol> Sourced 26 October 2018).
12. Execute directors of municipal public safety in Chihuahua and Michoacán. (13 November 2008). *La Jornada.com.mx* <http://www.jornada.com.mx/2008/11/13/index.php?section=politica&article=014n1pol> Sourced 23 October 2018.
13. Narco violence causes collective psychosis. (November 12, 2008). *El Universal.com.mx* <http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/554991.html> Sourced 26 October 2018.
14. These characteristics and the emotional consequences in a determined group can notify with

panic rumors in terms of the spread of unknown illnesses. A few years ago, for example, countless panic rumors were spread about HIV/SIDA causing anxiety and fear due to the lack of knowledge about how the illness is transmitted (Cortazar Rodríguez, 2008; Heller, 2015). Another more important case occurred in Mexico in 2009, when panic rumors were spread about the A H1N1 virus (Fernández Poncela, 2012).

15. The spelling and grammar style of the document sent on social networks is left as is in order to show the characteristics of the information and the use of language.

16. Message on WhatsApp circulates warning about curfew imposed by narco. (19 April 2016). <http://chihuahuanoticias.com/?p=120758> Sourced 10 October 2017.

17. 'Heads and tongues will roll... in Madera. (6 December 2018). [calibre800.noticias.com](http://calibre800.noticias.com) [http://calibre800noticias.com/index.php/2018/12/06/rodarian-cabezas-y-lenguas-en-madera/?fbclid=IwAR-1Fc\\_GUubgpgj56OlpghsVn4JQCzAt2B6eYKIfWYw-VKWH4tdD2uLiKkzrY](http://calibre800noticias.com/index.php/2018/12/06/rodarian-cabezas-y-lenguas-en-madera/?fbclid=IwAR-1Fc_GUubgpgj56OlpghsVn4JQCzAt2B6eYKIfWYw-VKWH4tdD2uLiKkzrY) Sourced 8 December 2018.

18. Narcomensajes on social networks uncover corruption in SEMAR. (5 January 2018). [Almi-nutoinformativo.wordpress.com](https://almi-nutoinformativo.wordpress.com) <https://almi-nutoinformativo.wordpress.com/2018/01/05/narcomensaje-en-redes-sociales-pone-al-descubierto-corrupcion-en-la-semar/> Sourced 8 December 2018.

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