

Transnationalism and postnational identities:

The three lives of a Latin King

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César Andrade, *aka* King Manaba, born in Manabí, Ecuador, in 1976, has lived three lives in three different nations. The first life was in Ecuador, from his birth until he turned 27 in 2003, when he decided to emigrate to Spain. He was following the exodus of people fleeing the economic and political crisis that then affected the Andean country, looking for the "promised paradise" in a "mother country" undergoing a time of prosperity. The second life started from this date, as a migrant experiencing the boom and crisis of the Hispanic immigration process, until 2009 when he was convicted of crimes against public health and went to prison for the first time. The third life started when he received the letter of his release from prison in 2013, returning to civil life in his new country and rising up again like the "phoenix". In these three lives he felt part of three different "nations": in addition to his country of origin and his country of destination, which in this case is also binational as it mixes Spanish and Catalan identities, King Manaba has also been part of a third "transnational nation" since he was crowned as a Latin King in Santo Domingo, Ecuador at age 19, becoming part of the Almighty Latin Kings and Queens Nation (ALKQN). Since then he has gone through three other stages in his life that correspond to those prescribed by the *King's Constitution Manifesto*: the "Primitive King" stage in his initiation and expansion phase; the "Conservative King" stage in his time of imprisonment and introspection; and finally the "New King" stage, in his phase of rebirth and maturation. Three stages that correspond to the same number of "homelands": Chicago – the "mother earth"; Santo Domingo – the "original father"; and Barcelona – the adoptive family. Thanks to this threefold experience – biographical, transnational and gang – King Manaba currently lives in a "nation of nations" – according to his own words – and thanks to the Internet he connects daily with the "little brothers and sisters" of the ALKQN from Spain, Italy, Ecuador, almost all of Latin America and the United States. Based on King Manaba's life story, collected in multiple conversations from over the past 15 years, this text addresses the relationship between transnational migration processes and postnational identities.

Introduction: One Sunday at a Youth Centre

It's been almost 15 years since, shortly after meeting him, I promised César Gustavo Andrade Arteaga, *aka* King Manaba, that I would write a book about his life. I still haven't kept my promise, despite his insistence every time we meet. Looking back, I remember the experiences we have had together, and which coincide with the birth, expansion, boom, fall and resurrection of the *Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation*, popularly known as the *Latin Kings*, in Barcelona and beyond. I have now set myself the task of compiling the more than twenty recorded conversations – and many others that weren't recorded – that we have had over these years. I aim to make a selection of transcripts and review and edit them. I don't know whether I will have the patience and courage to turn them into a book, as I promised then, nor am I sure what form our attempt, mine and that of my informant and friend, to put into practice the autobiographical imagination that I have always advocated, will take.¹

It's been almost 15 years since I first spoke with King Manaba, but I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was the first Sunday of June 2005. At around mid-morning I received a call at my house in Vilafranca del Penedès [a city near Barcelona] from the director of the Transformadors Youth Centre in Barcelona, who I had met a few weeks earlier in a postgraduate course I had taught on youth policies. Her voice was shaky because she was in the middle of a delicate situation: the youth centre was surrounded by more than a hundred national policemen. They had come to record and file the identities of the two hundred young people of Latin American origin, mostly Ecuadorians but also a dozen other nationalities, including adolescents, children and mothers with babies, mainly dressed in baggy black clothes (with hints of yellow), who had a meeting at the youth centre that morning. We knew that they were Latin Kings, although neither she nor I knew then what was hiding behind this label. A year and a half ago this name had been in all the newspapers, who associated it with a dangerous youth gang similar to the terrifying Central American *Maras*. It had risen to fame in the wake of the tragic death of a young Colombian, Ronny Tapias, at the doors of a high school in Barcelona at the end of 2003 (although, curiously, in this case the Latin Kings were not victimizers but victims, although the press treated them like they were the bad guys in the movie).

A few weeks before that Sunday I had given the director of the youth centre a letter for the Latin Kings, requesting an interview with the backing of Luis Barrios, David Brotherton and Marcia Esparza, professors at the City University of New York who had been working with this group for years, and who had just published the most important book on the organization (Brotherton and Barrios, 2003). It was the first time that I had used such a formal procedure to approach a youth subculture, but after reading the aforementioned book and other texts about this group, and due to my previous experiences with youth gangs in Catalonia and Mexico (Feixa, 1998), I sensed that it was a much more complex group than a simple street gang. Until that day the letter had not received an answer. In fact, no one officially knew that this group of people were Latin Kings, but when they asked the director to meet at the house on behalf of an association called *STAE Nation*, the City Council informed the local police, who made

¹ The book was finally completed and will be published soon in Spanish with the title *El Rey. Diario de un Latin King* (Feixa and Andrade, 2020). I will refer to the life story of King Manaba in this book along the present article.

inquiries and discovered that the acronym stood for the *Sagrada Tribu Atahualpa Ecuador* (Sacred Tribe Atahualpa Ecuador), a group linked to the Latin Kings. Their first reaction to this discovery was to expel them from the premises, although their behaviour had been extremely correct and they had religiously paid the fee for using the facilities. Luckily, the City Council Prevention Services had commissioned me at the beginning of the year to carry out a study on young people of Latin American origin in Barcelona, motivated precisely by the death of Ronny Tapias. The main objective of the study was to analyse what was myth and what was real in the problem of the so-called "Latin gangs". The director of this service, Josep Maria Lahosa, rightly understood that it was time to try to get in touch with them, to include them in our study and in the process explore the possibility of initiating a mediation. The intervention of the Barcelona Youth Council, which managed the premises and whose board of directors stated that they could not expel a group that had not done anything wrong or illegal, was also a crucial element.

On the Sunday in question the director of the youth centre told me in a trembling voice that the leader of the group, feeling harassed by the police presence, had asked to speak with me. She immediately handed him the phone and I heard the voice of who I would come to know as King Manaba. His voice seemed irritated but firm. I volunteered to mediate in the conflict, I explained our study's objectives succinctly and the possibility of contacting the authorities if they agreed. We arranged to meet the next day in the centre to speak calmly. After a while the director called me again to tell me that the call had had a positive effect. The leader had remained very calm after talking to me and the police had left after recording the identities of all the young people. Later, these files would be used at press conferences to show that the Latin Kings were known and monitored and would not be allowed to expand in Spain.

The next day I arrived in good time to the appointment, along with my son Santiago, who was then eight years old. He had been born in Rionegro, Colombia (the hometown of the leader of the most famous gang in the world, although for other reasons: Pablo Escobar; I recently learned from a Latin King of Chicago who Manaba introduced me to, that the Narco par excellence used gang members and bought police officers to enter the United States through Puerto Rico). As it was school holidays, I had my son with me, but my motive for taking him to the meeting was to show that I was not afraid and that they could trust me. Manaba and two other young people attended the meeting: an Ecuadorian, King Plocky (who was eventually deported to Guayaquil, where he sometimes writes to me with Messenger); and a Catalan, King Baby White (who would eventually become famous for leading a faction of the Latin Kings opposed to Manaba and who is now serving a jail sentence). We talked for quite a while. Manaba confessed to me later that he hadn't been completely sure about me: they suspected that I was a policeman, or worse still, a journalist. However, they had ventured to trust me. The way the letter was written and the mention of Luis Barrios, who they knew not from his books but from the HBO documentary about the Latin Kings of New York, *Black and Gold*, made them think that maybe I was someone they could trust. The meeting confirmed my earlier intuitions about the group: this was not a criminal organization, which would never have accepted a mediation, but rather a youth street group, like those I had been studying since the eighties. However, it was a type of group that was very different from those I had known until then: its transnational character, organizational level and symbolic elaboration were far more sophisticated than the gangs that I had previously studied (including *quinquis* formed by young gypsies, Mexican *cuates*, and the *Mierdas Punks* and *chavos banda* groups; see Feixa, 1998). At

some point I feared that the enemies of the legalization process that began later could use that initial meeting against me, as happened in New York and then in San Salvador, where the mediators ended up becoming the accused. This happened to the aforementioned Father Barrios and Father Toño, a Spanish priest who was involved in the truce between the Salvadoran government and the *Maras*, who I visited at his home in Mexicanos, the San Salvador suburb where the filmmaker Christian Poveda, director of the documentary *La vida loca*, was killed (Poveda, 2009). But, since I had a very clear conscience, and I never offered anything that was outside the law nor could I commit myself or them, and I had the initial support of some institutions, I threw caution to the wind and jumped in the deep end.

From criminal gang to cultural organization

The year that followed that meeting was hectic. We finished our study and presented it at the Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona in November 2005, at a conference attended by two hundred researchers and professionals and a hundred Latin Kings & Queens and members of the alleged rival gang: the *Ñetas*. The book resulting from the study appeared the following year and had a large impact, although it did not focus on studying gangs but rather on the processes of migration and reception of young Latinos in Barcelona (Feixa *et al.*, 2006). Later I promoted a research project on youth street groups, at the time that the legalization process of the Latin Kings and *Ñetas* began, with the support of entities like Fedelatina and the *Catalan Institute of Human Rights*. This culminated in August 2006 with the constitution of the *Cultural Organization of Latin Kings and Queens of Catalonia*, and which was presented to society at the same Transformadors Youth Centre, at a massive press conference attended by a hundred journalists (including the *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*, and Spanish and Ecuadorian television stations, which reported the event in the *prime time* news). The *Ñetas Sociocultural, Musical and Sports Association* was constituted the following year. The next two years were intense: concerts, meetings, the *United for the Flow* project at the Roquetes Youth Centre in Nou Barris, a neighbourhood populated mainly by emigrants (Unidos por el Flow, 2008), the photography project with the MACBA [Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona] (Schoellkopf, 2008), the soccer tournament between the twenty Latin King chapters of Barcelona and its metropolitan area (the *Champion's Kings*), trips to Madrid, Genoa and New York, countless meetings with *hermanitos* and *hermanitas* [brothers and sisters], educators, politicians, police, journalists, religious people, neighbourhood leaders, and even with the National Intelligence Centre [CNI] (who invited me to their headquarters in Madrid to give a talk to a hundred intelligence agents specialized in the subject). King Manaba and Queen Melody – his partner at the time, president of the association and key person in the process – were even invited to solemnly intervene in the youth commission of the Catalan Parliament. As several police officers have pointed out, the violence did not disappear during those years; however, the fights did significantly decrease, and most importantly a network of mediators was created – including police and group leaders like King Manaba – who tried to mediate in the conflicts. Nevertheless, there were also hard times: tensions with sensationalist journalists, disagreements with the City Council and other institutions, internal conflicts within the Latin Kings and also the research team caused by impostors who took advantage of me and the young people, and even accusations in a police conference in Rubí that

all of this was done so an anthropologist could get rich by publishing a book about the experiment (which other police officers confirmed was doomed to failure even before it began).

In 2011, without the situation inside the gangs having changed, the new interior minister of the Catalan government, Ramon Espadaler,² publicly announced – first on *Catalunya Radio* [the public regional radio] and then in parliamentary headquarters – that the “do-goodism” was over and a “hard hand” [*mano dura*] stage would begin (he said this after denying the corruption accusations that had begun to stalk the party in government). The team of police (*Mossos d'Esquadra*), who had worked on the subject with great professionalism and a preventive perspective, linked to the intelligence unit, received new managers, who had a strictly police view of the phenomenon and who depended on the criminal organizations unit (focused then and now on jihadist terrorism and drug trafficking). As one of the agents who had acted as a mediator said to me: “When you have a hammer, all you see are nails”. So all gang members became considered as criminals, including minors who were still in school and for whom the cultural organization had been an effective alternative to the street. He ended the process and began a phase of raids, persecution and imprisonment. This coincided with the worst of the economic crisis, during which many of my former informants lost their jobs, returned to their countries of origin, or served jail sentences. I temporarily left my field work, keeping the numerous and rich ethnographic data collected for another, better occasion, while others who had barely been on the periphery of the process made a career with much more superficial data, sometimes obtained through trickery.³ Of course, I did not publish the book that should have made me rich, and which Manaba did not cease to reproach me for.

As I begin to prepare to deal with this pending issue, César Andrade is part of our research team at the Pompeu Fabra University. No longer the young 29 year old I met in 2005. He has become a mature person, about to turn 44, who has had many adventures, but still claiming the book that I promised him I would write at our first meeting. In 2017 I obtained an *Advanced Grant* from the *European Research Council* – the institution that finances the most cutting-edge research in all scientific fields – to research transnational gangs as mediation agents.⁴ One of my ideas from the beginning of the project was to start by publishing the life story of King Manaba, as he is a magnificent example of the idea of gangs as mediators, without idealizing or stigmatizing them, riding between resistance and resilience (It also meant closing a cycle in my scientific and personal career). The *TRANSGANG* project began in January 2018 and during the first year focused on constituting the research team, composed of more than thirty researchers, who will study the phenomenon in twelve cities in southern Europe, North Africa and America, including Chicago, the “motherland” of the Latin Kings and also of *gang studies*, as well as various places where this group is present – Medellín, San Salvador, Santiago de Cuba, Milan, Madrid, Barcelona, Casablanca, Tunisia and Algiers. For my part, I feel in intellectual and emotional conditions to resume the pending challenges of the research into the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation, which I left unfinished almost 15 years ago.

2 Catalan politician, between 2012 and 2015 he was the interior minister. On that date he was a member of the UDC, a Christian democratic party; In the most recent elections to the Catalan Parliament of 2017 he appeared on the lists of the PSC, a socialist party.

3 This process can be seen in two articles published in *El País* (Feixa and Muñoz, 2004; Feixa *et al.*, 2006b; Feixa, 2016).

4 *El País Semanal* published a report entitled “Professor Punk’s Millionaire Scholarship: Hip-Hop Against Youth Gangs” (1-10-2017).

The three homelands of the Latin Kings

There are several legends going around about the origin of the Latin Kings. All agree that they emerged in Chicago, the same place where the first serious study on the subject was published: *The Gang*, by Frederick M. Thrasher (Thrasher, 1927/2020). But they disagree about the time and circumstances: Some versions maintain that the Latin Kings emerged in the 1940s as a defence of the second generation Latino immigrants against the dominance of Afro-American gangs. Other versions claim they appeared in the 1960s, within civil rights and minority defence movements (which also gave rise to groups like the *Black Panthers* and the *Young Lords*). *Wikipedia* gives the official founding date as 1954 and the official constitution of the group, the *KMC (King's Manifesto Constitution)*, known as the Latin King Bible, says that the group was born in 1962! Although one of the current American referents of the group claims that it was founded in 1963 (Mission, 2008). As we were told recently by some brothers from Chicago that Manaba brought to the university, it seems that the Latin Kings first emerged as a street gang in the Latin quarter of Chicago (around Humboldt Park, a place I visited a few years ago accompanied by a *brother*) and was then officially formed in a jail, where some of the leaders who drafted the aforementioned KMC were serving sentences.⁵ In the 1970s, the Latin Kings expanded among the Latino community in other cities in the United States, mainly on the eastern coast, where Puerto Rican and Caribbean emigration was predominant. In the years of 1980 and 1990 the New York tribe underwent a process of politicization and community commitment thanks to new leadership and the support of intellectuals and religious people. This resulted in a fragmentation among followers of the Chicago doctrine (more traditionalist and hermetic) and those of New York (more reformist and open to contact with external agents). As part of this process, hip-hop was introduced, coming together in the concept of *nation* (drawing inspiration from the *Zulu nation* founded in 1973 by Kevin Donovan, *aka* Africa Bambaataa, a pioneer of rap), around a mestiza *nation* – the *coffee nation* in the heart of the *wasps nation*. A female branch (the *Queens*, led by Queen Zulma) was also incorporated. The result was the official creation of the *Almighty Latin Kings and Queens Nation (ALKQN)*.⁶ The process ended abruptly in 1996, when Rudolph Giuliani, the then mayor of New York and today a lawyer for Donald Trump and involved in his impeachment, after devoting himself to advising the Central American governments on their anti-Mara policy, promoted *Operation Corona*, which took the most combative leaders of ALKQN to jail.⁷

A few years before, in 1994, an Ecuadorian member of the New York tribe, King Boy Gean, was deported to his home country, where he re-founded the *Nation*, under the name of *Sacred Tribe Atahualpa Ecuador (STAE)*. It grew rapidly in the neighbourhoods of Guayaquil and Quito, and began the transnationalization of the Latin Kings. In the year 2000 another Ecuadorian Latin King, King Wolverine, emigrated to Spain and *planted the flag* in the new nation, founding the *Sagrada Tribu América Spain (STAS)*, which was independent of the previous group. In 2004, after appearing on the TV show

⁵ On the Latin Kings of Chicago see the works of Conquergood (1994) and the documentary promoted by the same researcher: *The Heart Broken in Half* (Siegel and Conquergood, 1990).

⁶ When we use *Nation* with a capital letter we are referring to the ALKQN; *nation* with a lower case letter refers to any other nation.

⁷ See Brotherton and Barrios, 2003; Kontos, 2003; Latin Kings, 2019; ALKQN, 2019. The reform phase of the ALKQN in New York is explained in the documentary *Black and Gold*, produced by HBO (Rowley and Soohen, 2000).

"Patricia's Diary", he was arrested and convicted of rape. During the same years, which coincided with a profound economic and political crisis in Ecuador and the economic boom in Spain, other Ecuadorian Latin Kings emigrated to Madrid and then to Barcelona and Murcia, and re-founded the other branch of the Latin Kings (STAE). In 2006 the Catalan branch was officially constituted as the Cultural Organization of Latin Kings and Queens of Catalonia, with the support of the Barcelona City Council, the Catalan government and the regional police (Mossos d'Esquadra). This process had replicas in other areas, such as Alicante, Mallorca and Navarra, although it failed in Madrid due to the opposition of the community president, Esperanza Aguirre (today accused of corruption), who stopped Pedro Núñez Morgades, Child Advocate named by the PP, who had opted for dialogue. In 2007 a trial for unlawful association was held against the Madrid faction of the Latin Kings (STAS), in which I participated as an expert, although they didn't pay much attention to me. The Guardia Civil had promoted *Operation Pañuelo* against this group, based on wiretapping and statements by former members (some linked to relatives of police agents). As behind the trial there were no serious crimes and the evidence was very weak, the Supreme Court overturned the sentence and forced a retrial. In 2012 they reached a definitive conviction, although the arguments and evidence were almost identical; however, the defendants chose not to challenge, since they had been waiting for years and most had assigned attorneys. The social climate had changed and the punitive discourse had become dominant: in 2010 the penal code was reformed, adding new criminal types (criminal group, criminal organization) and simplifying the probative criteria. The State Attorney General's Office, during the term of the PP Government, promoted the idea that *gangs* (identified *de facto* with *Latin gangs*, despite the discriminatory nature of this equalization) should be followed and monitored, which meant that the majority of groups were subject to raids and criminal proceedings (while other *gangs*, such as extreme right groups or those of other ethnic backgrounds, were treated very differently). In 2011 the Mossos d'Esquadra replaced their main leaders with new managers who believed in the criminal route. This coincided with the negative impact of the crisis on Latin American emigrants, some of whom chose to the return to their country, some lost their jobs and some started criminal careers.⁸

In 2007, the Rafael Correa Ecuadorian government, following the path opened up in Barcelona, legalized the Latin Kings as the Latin Kings and Queens Corporation of Ecuador, initiating a mediation process, which significantly reduced crime (Brotherton and Gude, 2018). Today, Latin Kings are present in most Latin American countries and in many European and even Asian countries. At the international level there is no single leadership due to the persistent rivalries between Chicago and New York. In Ecuador they are still legal (they even have a deputy in the parliament: Ronny Aleaga); in Catalonia (they have still) not been declared illegal, although they are not very active; Madrid STAS is an illegal association, but there are other groups that although they are not legal act openly with the support of organizations like Suyae and Rumiñahui, who work with Ecuadorian immigrants in Spain. In all these

⁸ For an analysis of this period, see Feixa *et al.* (2006, 2008, 2011). The first part of this process – legalization – is reported in the documentary *Vida Real: Latin Kings en Catalunya* (Casals and Martínez, 2006); The second part – the crisis – is reported in the documentary *Buscando respeto* (González Morandi, Queirolo and Feixa, 2013).

places the Nation is a reflection on the criminal route, the legal route and the transnational route; this book aspires to contribute to this reflection.⁹

A Google search for "Latin Kings" brings up thousands of entries. The vast majority are news stories based almost always on police sources (mainly from the FBI), which highlight their link to organized crime. Academic studies on this group are inversely proportional to their fame. In the United States, we must cite the classic study by Conquergood (1994) on the Chicago *tribe*, which focuses on its forms of verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as the complete ethnography of Brotherton and Barrios on the New York tribe (2003). In Spain, the only book on the Latin Kings was published by two sensationalist journalists based on what the police confiscated from King Wolverine (Botello and Moya, 2005). Other books on Latin gangs have been promoted by police or security entities, and never offer the viewpoint of the members themselves (Aparicio and Tornos, 2009; Association of Chiefs and Commands of the Local Police –Valencian Community, 2010). It is also worth mentioning the book resulting from our study on young Latinos in Barcelona (Feixa *et al.*, 2006) and the essay by Luca Queirolo (2017) linked to another European project that I directed, and which compares the situation of Latin gangs in Barcelona and Madrid. There is also an autobiographical account of a former Latin King of Chicago, who is protected by the witness protection programme. It has a significant subtitle (*My Bloody Life*), and was translated into Spanish a few years ago (Sánchez, 2000/2007). It seems, however, to be an apocryphal text prepared by the police from several testimonies, without it being clear what is true and what is fiction or exaggeration in the story, as it agrees completely with the black and white portrait painted by the police. Thus, the present book aims to fill a void about the Latin Kings & Queens in Spain and beyond, based on their life stories. It is written so that it can be read by academics and professionals, but also by readers interested in youth culture and migration processes, and especially by kings, queens and members of other *youth street groups* (term we prefer to *gang*).¹⁰

The three lives of King Manaba

César Andrade was born twice. The first time was in Manabí, in the interior of Ecuador, in 1976, within a working class family. The second time was in Santo Domingo, Ecuador, at age 20, in 1996, when he was crowned a Latin King, adding to his name King Manaba. After a few years of commitment to the Ecuadorian branch of the Nation, known as *STAE*, the conflict with other gangs – especially with the Ñetas – motivated him to emigrate. He arrived in Madrid in 2003, where two years earlier the first European branch of the Latin Kings, known as *STAS*, had been founded. In early 2005 he arrived in Barcelona with the aim of expanding the *Nation*, and in June of that year we met and began our collaboration. This led to the establishment of the Cultural Organization of Latin Kings and Queens of Catalonia in August 2006. After three intense years in which he became involved in countless cultural projects, in 2009 he was imprisoned and was sentenced to five years for a crime against public health.

⁹ The Ecuadorian legal branch of the Latin Kings recently starred in a documentary on TVE: *Amor de Rey* (En Portada, 2019).

¹⁰ An alternative version of the *global* history of the Latin Kings can be seen in Mission (2008), a member of the Nation originating in New York, who has direct contact with the brothers from Chicago, Spain and Italy, and who aims to recover the memory of the organization.

After serving his sentence he was released back into civil life and into multiple jobs in the underground economy (during his prison stay he was unable to renew his papers and is currently completing his second regularization process). In 2015 he was arrested again in a macro-raid that had the explicit aim of dismantling the legal sector of the Latin Kings. Although there were no serious crimes behind the accusations, the objective of the new Mossos d'Esquadra leaders and the Prosecutor's Office was to set a precedent, and condemn them as a criminal organization. This had been simplified with the reformation of the penal code in 2010. What they wanted was to prove that Manaba was a leader, although there was no material evidence of who was involved in crimes and the evidence was based on contradictory statements by former members (some allegedly threatened with deportation if they did not cooperate with the police).¹¹ The trial took place in December 2018 and I acted again as an expert (as I did in the trial against STAS in 2007 and 2009, although this time a very professional judge listened carefully to my intervention). When I write this paper, we are waiting for the sentence. In addition to his official biography, Manaba has a *hidden curriculum* that is his added value: He is a great conversationalist with fine irony, he is an affectionate and courteous person, who comes every morning to his office at the university to do his work. At lunchtime he eats his home cooked meal with his tabasco sauce from his lunchbox with the research team in the university staff dining room, and is never disrespectful to us (as we are not to him). Now he is single, although his *Latin lover* fame endures. He is waiting for his son Aaron, who is already 18 years old, to be able to reunite with him and his ex-wife, Queen Melody, with whom he has a cordial relationship. His biggest flaw, in addition to his bellicose past, is to be a fan of Real Madrid, and he does not miss an opportunity to throw the defeats of Barça in our faces (club supported by the majority of Ecuadorian Latin Kings, as the Barcelona Sporting Club of Guayaquil, founded by a Catalan, wears the same colours of the Nation: yellow and black, the colours of the coffee nation).

The life story of King Manaba compiles a total of 12 conversations that I had with him over these last 15 years: the first, still untrusting, is a focus group with the protagonist and two other Latin Kings, which took place in September 2005, at the headquarters of the Ombudsman for Children of Catalonia. Then there are four in-depth interviews (three individual and one with his partner at the time, Queen Melody) from 2006, in the middle of the legalization process and research-action. There are two other follow-up interviews in 2008, two interviews on leaving prison in 2012, and three interviews between 2016 and 2019 (some within a class with first-year university students who listened absorbed to him talk and in an internal seminar of the research group, already within the framework of the TRANGANG project). Another dozen recorded interviews, and many other informal conversations that took place over the years have also been taken into account. Most conversations were transcribed by people on my research team and reviewed by myself. In recent months I have dedicated myself to rereading them, editing them and converting them into a publishable text, putting into practice the methodological proposals of my last book (Feixa, 2018). I have done all this in collaboration with the protagonist, César Andrade, who has reviewed all the material several times and added a selection of photographs, texts written in jail, testimonies of people who talk about how they saw him and how they see him, the glossary, as well as a

¹¹ Although the prosecution requested prison without bail, the judge considered that the reasons given were insufficient and the defendant should be released.

final Epilogue in which he takes stock of his career as a person and as a King. Consistent with my methodological proposals, inspired by the “dialogic imagination” of Mijail Bakhtin (1981), the book is not a monologue of the interviewee or a literary reworking of the interviewer, but the fruit of a dialogue between them, so the authorship and the possible benefits or damage that derive from it are also shared.

The life story is divided into three parts, each of which corresponds to a colour and a state through which a Latin King passes, as defined in the KMC, the ideological basis of *kingism* (the religion of the Kings and Queens). These parts contain the twelve chapters (called Conversations), which follow the chronological order of the interviews (although some biographical landscape is repeated, with significant variations, in more than one conversation). Part I is the Colour Gold, allusion to royalty and corresponding to the status of *Primitive King*, the first phase in which the Latin King seeks the light of knowledge. It contains seven conversations that took place in the initial stage of the study, between 2005 and 2008, focused on the biographical itinerary and the legalization process. Part II is the Colour Black, allusion to the pain and sacrifice of the Kings and corresponding to the state of *Conservative King*, the second phase in which the Latin King matures and regresses. It contains two deep and emotional interviews about Manaba’s prison experience. Part III is Colour Coffee Brown, the brown fruit of the union of gold and black, allusion to the miscegenation of the Latin Race and corresponds to the State of *New King* or *King Reborn*, who is able to overcome death in life. It contains three interviews conducted in recent years, from the last arrest to his Phoenix-like resurrection, and focuses on his and the Nation’s present and future. The Epilogue gives César Andrade’s vision of King Manaba. It is based on a last classroom conversation and has been entirely rewritten by the protagonist. In this concluding chapter the protagonist summarizes the three lives of a Latin King in this way:

Now I’m here as César Andrade, but I want to see King Manaba the way I knew him in Ecuador. In all this time he has matured, he no longer feels involved one hundred percent in the organization, he directly or indirectly helps many young people who follow and continue in the organization but in a way that in my time they did not help me. Because in my times maybe I didn’t have a person who was older than me who could tell me this is good and this is bad. When you are a teenager you do things because you think they are good, but later it turns out that they are bad. So I see that the evolution has been good, time makes you evolve, it makes you more mature. I see that César Andrade sees King Manaba as a Latin King within the three stages of the king, as the New King, as the one who has evolved, as the one who now wants to see different things because he no longer wants problems in the streets. He doesn’t want problems of any kind, he is just focused on his family environment and closest friends, his work on his studies, which is what all young people really should have and do. But of course young people are also crazy, it’s part of the process of this life, of each of us as a person. This has to be the mentality of every Latin King and Queen, to help all young people to prepare, educate them together with the values of the Nation and the values of our parents. This will reinforce the idea much more that every young person who wants to be part of the Nation has to be a King or a Queen of good for their community and society.

In all this time many things have changed. Before, maybe, we had the wrong idea of what the organization was, we were younger, crazier. But when you grow up, as you get older, well you also start to see life differently and the way of behaving with society, with people, you start to experience it differently. Change is always for the good, never think it’s bad, even though during all this time all you see are obstacles, whether you’re young or old you’ll always stumble and make mistakes, because life is made of stumbling and mistakes, and that is what will make you stronger and smarter. In my personal life, I’m a responsible person, in the sense that now with my work, with my personal life, with people, I suppose before I had other worries, I was not thinking much, I’m a bit more intelligent now. The street makes you smart too, the experiences that you live in the

streets of Ecuador, and here in Barcelona and the journey that I've made over almost all of Spain visiting the different groups of brothers, of friends that I have, are things that in the end make you mature and make you be a little more cautious and a little smarter in this life. Because as you get older you get smarter. You have to show that the years have not passed in vain and that they have served to change and so that your values and sacred five points come first before everything else.

What has not changed? Well I have not stopped being a Latin King, I have not retired because, as many people enter the group, they stay for a while and then they decide to sign the letter of expulsion (symbolically speaking), one of the things that has not changed over this time, and I've been part of the Latin Kings for almost 25 years, are my feelings towards the organization: every day that passes I have a feeling that is different and deeper, a bigger feeling. I'm not going to lie: at the beginning it looked like something different, like we had to get respect in the streets, in the neighbourhood, that nobody comes into our territory because we're going to take them out any way we have to, that was the mentality when I was young. But over time my mentality is that young people have to study, to prepare themselves to be someone in life. I know that many young people have their parents to give them the necessary advice, but many of the young people who look for these groups do not see their parents' support, so they are looking for a different lifestyle in us, they are looking for an identity that gives them the self-esteem that maybe in their homes they don't find. Then we give them self-esteem, we give them a power both inside and outside so they enjoy the gift of a leader, which is what we try to put into the heads of young people, who are leaders in their lives and that of people who ask for help, only then can they be an example of help for other young people, the community and society. (King Manaba).

The three stages of the King – primitive, conservative, reborn – correspond to the three colours of the Nation, personified in the bandana:

The bandana for me is an amulet: I usually wear several colours, but in many cases, when I have to talk about my personal life as a Latin King, I wear the yellow and black bandana, it gives me inner strength to express myself in front of people, sometimes I keep it inside my pocket. Its meaning: gold represents the fabulous bright sun in its highest gaze, the radiance of hope in the oppressed people, the brilliance of the mind and the unity in strength, love and sacrifice; the black represents the dominant colour of the universe, the brave and courageous, the darkness of the immense night, it represents people of an idea, a body and mind and soul, the alpha and the omega. They are our primary colours in our organization. The gold and black unite to form the colour of coffee, which is the strength of our skin, of the Latinos and for which we must fight, "coffee strength" we call ourselves. (King Manaba).

Throughout the entire research process we have adhered to the general ethical protocols of ethnographic research and those specific to the TRANSGANG project, with only one exception: anonymization is not total but rather partial. The names of César Andrade and Erika Jaramillo are their real names for obvious reasons and by their own decision, the same as those of the aforementioned adult professionals and public persons. The names of kings and queens appear with their *aka*, the way they are known within the *Nation*. The place names are also real, except in those cases in which compromising situations are explained, in which case we have used generic names. Sometimes it is not easy to find the balance between describing the facts realistically without falling into sensationalism. We always try to respect all the people who appear in the story (young people, police officers, officials, etc.), although we do not necessarily agree with their actions or opinions. The central chapters refer to conflicts inside and outside the Nation at various scales: conflicts over leadership between King Tone and King Mission in the United States; between King Majesty and other kings in Ecuador; between King Wolverine and King Manaba in Madrid; between King Manaba and King Baby White in Barcelona; conflicts and crossed alliances between the North American, Ecuadorian and European tribes (beginning with the break after the legalization, in 2006, between the Barcelona group headed by King Manaba and the Ecuador group

headed by King Majesty). There were also conflicts between the researchers that accompany the process in New York, Barcelona, Madrid, Genoa and Quito. I have met and interviewed the majority of the leaders (except King Boy Gean and King Wolverine, who I coincided with in the trial for illicit association in Madrid, who agreed to meet with me in the prison where he was serving his sentence; however, the prison services did not authorize it on time). The legalization process also caused tensions, and King Manaba's assessment of this process changes throughout the interviews, as he was more enthusiastic at the beginning (when all sectors seemed to support it), and more critical later (when a faction of the Latin Kings withdrew from the process and the City Council and the Mossos d'Esquadra decreased their support). Now, when the successes and failures of the process can be evaluated in perspective, his assessment is more nuanced. We have chosen not to explain the details of these conflicts, which do not appear directly in the story, although the intelligent reader can deduce them. Someone said that the "Latin King curse" had fallen on the people involved in the process (that of having opened Pandora's box, by projecting light on the darkness of the *Nation* and the *nation*, which mummified Tutankhamun). But deep down these conflicts are power and counterpower struggles similar to the "segmental opposition" processes (mergers and fission between halves that are rivals at the local level and allies at the transnational level), which Marshall Sahlins (1972) defined as a central feature of primitive tribal societies (and apparently also modern tribal societies).¹²

Reading keys

What are the reading keys to interpret the life story of King Manaba? I would like to highlight three possible keys: the life story as a *vertical synthesis* of social history and as a *horizontal synthesis* of social structure; the life story as a *chronotope*; and the life story as a *subaltern story* (see Feixa, 2018). First, the final objective of the book is to apply Franco Ferrarotti's proposal to "*read a society through a biography*" (1981, p, 43). According to this author,

every human life is revealed, even in its less generalizable aspects, as the vertical synthesis of a social history. Each behaviour or individual act appears in its most singular forms as a horizontal synthesis of a social structure [...] our social system is entirely present in each of our actions, in each of our dreams, delusions, works, behaviours, and the history of this system is found whole in the history of our individual lives. (Ferrarotti, 1981, p. 41, my translation).

In the case of King Manaba's story, it is about reading contemporary society (Barcelona, Catalan, Spanish, Ecuadorean, transnational), through the biography of a young gang member, initiated as a Primitive King in a coastal town of Ecuador, who emigrated to Madrid and then Barcelona, where he reached the category of Inka, and who after going through prison in his time as Conservative King, was later reborn as New King (becoming somewhat republican in recent years due his contact with another "gang", that of the researchers of the TRANSGANG project). On one hand, King Manaba's story can be read as the vertical synthesis of a social history: that of the Latin American exodus to Europe (the crisis in Ecuador, dollarization, emigration to Spain, arrival in times of plenty, the crisis in Spain, voluntary return *versus* permanence, clandestinity *versus* regularization). On the other hand, his story can also be read as

¹² In addition to the internal segmentation in each city, there is a nationwide segmentation between Chicago and New York, Quito and Guayaquil, Madrid and Barcelona.

the horizontal synthesis of a social structure that originates, maintains and persecutes gangs such as youth street groups (originating in the North American ghettos, re-founded in Latin America as an effect of the deportation policy, transnationalization towards Europe, social segregation of emigration, "zero tolerance" *versus* "inclusive" policies, the influence of media representations, xenophobic discourses, expansion of the neoliberal criminal state, etc.). But far from being a puppet trapped between the two coordinates (horizontal and vertical), King Manaba shows himself to be a conscious and thoughtful actor, able to face his destiny and take charge of his life.

Second, although the autobiographical narrative can be read as an "open work" that is subject to different readings, so the reader becomes (co)author and the interpretation is polysemic and polyphonic (Eco, 1962/1984), our reading key is inspired by the "dialogic imagination" proposed by Mijail Bakhtin (1981), more specifically by the concept of *chronotope*, which we have tried elsewhere to apply in the study of youth cultures (Feixa, Leccardi and Nilan, 2016). In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin showed that the understanding of the space and time of a novel (which can also be applied to autobiography) depends on the *heteroglossic* ability (that is, on the ability to make other voices echo, to interpret not only depending on the text but also on the context). This capacity arises from a double dialogue: the "internal dialogue", fruit of the interaction of the subject with their own memory; and the "external dialogue", fruit of the interaction with the social environment represented by the audience (or by the researcher who asks, transcribes and interprets what is spoken):

The lived statement, having taken meaning and form at a particular historical moment in a specific social environment, cannot avoid undoing hundreds of vivid dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciences around the very object of the declaration; they cannot avoid actively participating in social dialogue. (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 276, my translation).

From this perspective, the spaces and times of King Manaba's life can be summarized in seven central chronotopes: the Nation, the nation, the border, the corner, the gold, the black and the coffee brown force. The first, the *Nation* (in capital letters), is the space-time of the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation, with their myths of origin, their rites of passage, their three states (Primitive King, Conservative King, New King), their four phases (*Observation*, *Five alive*, *Probatory* and *Coronation*), their five points (*Love*, *Honour*, *Obedience*, *Sacrifice*, *Rectitude*), their formal organization in *chapters*, *sectors* and *tribes*, and their informal organization in *factions*, *clans* and *generations*, their annual calendar of local and *universal* meetings, and their culmination in the *360* (the hermeneutic and social circle of the imagined community, which some interpret as the *circle of pain* where neophytes must bear the blows of the initiated). The second, the *nation* (in lowercase), is the transnational space-time that connects the identity of origin (Ecuador) and the identity of destination, also binational (Spain-Catalonia), which is expressed in the concept of "Nation of nations", and is a constant in the story. The third, the *border*, refers to the physical, legal and symbolic barriers that separate continents, countries, neighbourhoods and rival gangs, as well as the instances (political, police, media) that build walls and justify exclusion. The fourth, the *corner*, refers to the connections and alliances that allow these borders to be crossed or mitigated, as well as the refuge-places (parks, youth centres, parishes, discos, etc.) where fraternal and friendship ties can be made. The fifth, *gold*, refers to both the first phase of the protagonist's life (that of the Primitive King) and the luminous and creative moments experienced inside and outside the Nation. The sixth, *black*, refers

both to the second phase of the protagonist's life (that of the Conservative King) and to the dark and depressive time in prison or in spaces of seclusion and failure. Finally, the seventh, the *brown coffee force*, refers both to the third phase in the protagonist's biography (that of the New King), and to the experiences of cultural hybridization and mediation in which he has participated, from his commitment to the process of constituting the association to his interaction with the researchers of the TRANSGANG project, including his task as a "peacemaker" between different factions of the group and between rival groups. The coffee brown force is the magic potion that allows you to be reborn as a republican king, according to the classic Phoenix bird metaphor that resurfaces from its own ashes.¹³

Third, King Manaba's life story represents giving a voice to subaltern cultures, as Antonio Gramsci observed in his *Quaderni del carcere* [Prison Notebooks] (1975). In one of the notebooks written during his imprisonment by Mussolini, between 1932 and 1935, the Italian politician and thinker reflects on the value of autobiographies:

It is true that autobiography has great historical value, since it shows life in action and not only as it should be according to written laws or dominant moral principles (...) However, history, in general, is made on the written law: when new facts that reverse the situation come to light afterwards, vain questions arise, or there is a need to document how the mutation has been prepared 'molecularly' before exploding. (Gramsci, 1975, pp. 1718-24, my translation).

Jail is one of the autobiographical territories par excellence because from this imprisonment space reflection on the personal past and identity arise spontaneously and communicate to the outside by different forms of writing (letter, memory, graffiti, tattoo). Gramsci was one of the first Marxist authors who promoted the biographical genre as a fundamental instrument in social research, compensating for the difficulties of the subaltern culture to make itself heard and become hegemonic. Only through biographies is it possible to see the "mechanism" in action, embodied in real individuals: autobiography can be conceived "politically", because although one life is similar to many other lives, it always contains original entries. History and life are complementary poles in the construction of a type of humanistic *materialism* that allows us to understand not only how structures work, but also how specific people react to historical changes, or in the author's words, how these changes are prepared in an invisible way "molecularly" before exploding. Gramsci himself, in the letters he wrote from prison to his wife and children, shows the fruitfulness of biographical writing and the dialogic nature of all vital reflection. In another jail notebook, the author refers to folklore in these terms:

It could be said that until today folklore has been studied primarily as a 'picturesque' element [...] It should be studied, instead, as the 'conception of life and the world', largely implicit, of certain strata (determined in time and space) of society, in contrast (also in general implicit, mechanical, objective) with the 'official' conceptions of the world (or, in a broader sense, of the cultured parts

13 Brazilian researcher Joao Gabriel Almeida showed me, when the manuscript was in press, some parallels between the colours and rituals of the Latin Kings and those of the Afro-Caribbean santeria. The rule of ifá uses as its foundation the opposition of two colours, yellow and green in the Cuban tradition, and orange and green in the Nigerian tradition, to place life and death in opposition. In addition, the necklace is the symbol of entering a religion, while necklaces with a mallet represent an initiated with higher rank, who already has the approval of the leader in some of the orishas. There is a coincidence of the use of necklaces as a ritualistic element of entry to the group and visual recognition of status, as well as the reference to the idea that being part of the group leads to a pact between death and life, represented by the opposition of two colours. The idea of gold as a reference to light and beauty corresponds to the worship of the goddess Oshun, while the cult to Iku, death, uses a black and white necklace, in which the black represents death in this opposition logic.

of historically determined societies) that have happened in historical development [...] Folklore can only be understood as a reflection of the conditions of people's cultural life, although some conceptions of folklore can be prolonged after the conditions are (or seem) modified or give rise to strange combinations. (Gramsci, 1975, vol. III, pp. 2,311-2,317, my translation; see De Martino and Feixa, 2008).¹⁴

From this perspective, the Latin King subculture, and all the cosmovision contained in the *KMC* and *kingism*, fit with the characteristics of the popular culture of the subaltern classes (generating a "strange combination" that could be called *ganglore* or *kinglore*). On the one hand, it reflects a social structure based on unequal access to resources and power, reproduces traditional values, alludes to the past as something sacred and immutable (as *survival*), and reproduces ethnocentrism and sometimes sexism. However, on the other hand, it also has a great progressive force as an experience of community and resistance, as a channel to express the voice of the oppressed. Ernesto de Martino analysed this two-fold character of the subaltern culture in his works on progressive folklore (which I had the opportunity to translate thanks to the photographic exhibition on the Latin Kings organized by *MACBA*, which also featured images of the photographer who worked with De Martino on his journeys through southern Italy). As some members of the Gramscian studies group in Catalonia recently reminded me, the Latin Kings can be considered as a variant of those "contemporary subalterns" that Gramsci and then De Martino and Pasolini identified in Italy before and after World War II as seeds of social change. This implies not giving up a class analysis or a political reading of autobiographies, combining resistance and resilience (see Feixa *et al.*, 2018).

Conclusion

Somewhere between the criminal band and the musical band, this book aspires to narrate in first person the life of *The King: Diary of a Latin King*. It is conceived as the first part of a trilogy, whose second part (*How is a gang legalized?*) envisages analysing the process of "constituting an association" in Catalonia; and whose third part (*The Golden Nation*) is conceived as a transnational ethnography of the Latin Kings & Queens. This first part of the trilogy is inspired by the life of King Manaba, although its resemblance to reality could be pure coincidence. The *leit motif* is the personal memory of the protagonist, always selective: the exercise of introspection, narrated by a gang member who sometimes reminds us of Tony Soprano, but who has not committed his misdeeds, conversing with an anthropologist who sometimes acts like Dr. Melfi, without being a psychotherapist. From the Italian-American mafia to the Latin gangs – passing through *The Wire* and *Peaky Blinders* – reality sometimes mimics fiction: King Manaba's life seems like a movie (sometimes in the form of a hagiographic *biopic* and sometimes in the form of anti-biographic *flashbacks*, sometimes a comedy and sometimes a tragedy). If a filmmaker turns it into a television series – soap opera, police series, epic story or situation comedy – they will find ample material. So maybe the anonymous police prophecy will finally be fulfilled, 15 years later, which in 2006 said that the legalization of the Latin Kings was done so an anthropologist could get rich publishing a book.

14 In his book on the meaning of life, Joan Prat shows how autobiographies written under the model of social marginalization or exclusion can lead to the dissolution of the subaltern self (Prat, 2007).

Postscripts

Postscript 1. On the day I began to review this text, 22 July 2019, when I arrived home I watched the television summary of the investiture session of Pedro Sánchez as president of the Spanish government and was surprised to hear several references to the term “gang”. The leader of the Ciudadanos party [centre-right], Albert Rivera (who Queen Melody and I met in a meeting on youth policies in Brasilia when he was just beginning his political career in 2009) accused the socialist candidate and his possible political and nationalist allies of being a dangerous “gang”, and addressed Sánchez in the following terms: “With whom is he going to carry out his plan? With his gang, and what a gang! With Otegui [Basque pro-independence left] celebrating with the nationalists in Navarra, with those of Més [nationalist left] in the Balearic Islands, with the nationalists in the Valencian community, with Podemos [left] leading the economy of Spain. Those are his partners and he has a plan and he has a gang. And the question is: Has the gang just got together for this investiture in the next room? No, they have been together for a long time [...]. You have Mr. Torra [Catalan pro-independence president] and his company in the gang. Sánchez has a plan, and he has a gang, those who want to liquidate Spain and those who do not believe in the free market or free trade. You have perpetrated his plan with this gang. The Sanchez plan is underway, the gang already knows who it is and now he wants to put it in the national government.” (*sic*). As the use of the term is a clear allusion to the terrorist gang ETA, Aitor Esteban, a spokesman for the Basque Nationalist Party [PNV], replied ironically: “Let's get to the heart of the matter. How ironic! So patriotic in the chamber that he fills his mouth with the word Spain, the PNV has more institutional sense than them (...) Well, I also imagine him in a band, but in this case a musical band, setting the note from the podium and the serenade from his seat” (*resic*).

Postscript 2. In October 2019, when the book is finished, the brothers from Ecuador send a video to King Manaba with a speech by President Lenin Moreno, who to calm the anger of the indigenous people who are protesting against the economic austerity measures taken on the insistence of the IMF, addresses them with the words: “Citizens, everything is completely clear and it is also advantageous for our indigenous brothers: It is the drug traffickers, the criminal Latin Kings, it is the Correistas who do these acts of vandalism. Luckily the indigenous people have detected them and are separating them from their ranks”(sic). The reference is not trivial: one of the leaders of the Latin Kings and Queens Corporation of Ecuador, Ronny Aleaga, is a deputy in the National Assembly of the party of former President Correa, a division of the government Alianza País.

Postscript 3. On 14 October, 2019, while I am with Manaba in Catalunya Square in Barcelona the day the sentence was published against the Catalan independence leaders, we learn that Moreno has backed down and has withdrawn the decree. Manaba comments: “The protesters in Ecuador are like the protestors here, but with *ponchos*”. And I answered. “I'm sure they won't take long to start talking about the protesters as 'organized gangs'”. On 17 October, after several days of protests in Catalonia, I woke up listening to the morning talk on *Catalunya Radio*. A speaker close to the Ciudadanos party refers to the Maras by saying: “Those of the *Democratic Tsunami* are a violent gang, like the *kale borroka* [street violence in the Basque Country during the era of terrorism]”. To which another speaker responds “there

are gangs, but the most dangerous are the fascist gangs". The "gang", then, as a throwing weapon, stigma and metaphor of political combat.

Postscript 4: In recent times, the three politicians who promoted “hard hand” policies against the Latin Kings and carried out raids and processes accusing them of being a “criminal organization” – Rudolph Giuliani in New York, Esperanza Aguirre [ex-leader of PP right-wing ruling party] in Madrid, and several politicians of the CiU, a [conservative nationalist] party in the Catalan government in 2012 in Barcelona – have been charged with corruption – the Ukraine case, the Gürtel case and the Palau case. In all three cases, large amounts of money allegedly stolen from the public treasury are at stake. All of them have expensive private lawyers; none have served pretrial detention, nor have they been convicted so far (with the exception of some second-level CiU politicians); neither have the political parties to which they belonged, which endorsed or turned a blind eye to these practices, been made illegal. During the same period, the majority of “Latino gangs” in Spain have been prosecuted for “illegal association”, “criminal group” or “criminal organization”. Although there have been some serious cases – whose victims are usually the gang members themselves – in general the crimes allegedly committed are of little economic entity, linked to small drug trafficking, fights or simply group membership. The majority of the defendants went through pretrial detention, were defended by ex officio lawyers – who acted with great professionalism despite the low pay and the many pages of the file that had to be reviewed – and have served or are currently serving sentences. Almost all the groups to which they belong have been made illegal at some point, although their members continue to act openly.

Postscript 5. When the book was completed, I had access to the sentences of the trials for unlawful association against the Latin Kings in Spain, with surprising findings. In the first trial of 2007 the Provincial Court of Madrid published the sentence in record time (barely 15 days after the end of the trial!), which leads us to suspect a presumption of guilt. In 2009 it was overturned by the Supreme Court, due to insufficient justification: one of the speakers was Luciano Varela (progressive member, who has been part of the trial for the Catalan referendum). In 2010 the trial was repeated, again with a conviction, although the arguments were similar but more refined. In 2011, after the reform of the penal code, a new punitive climate and a government of the conservative PP party, the Supreme Court ratified the sentence. One of the speakers was a judge who has recently become famous for presiding over the trial for the Catalan referendum and whom politicians of the PP proposed to chair the General Council of the Power of Attorney because they felt they could control him from behind: Manuel Marchena.

Postscript 6. On 27 January 2020, one day after sending the corrections of the second proofs of this book, and one day before sending it to print, when the two authors of the same were in a practical seminar of the subject "Crime and communication media" part of the criminology degree of the UPF, while the students commented in groups on the news items about Latin gangs that appear in the book, we received a whatsapp from César's lawyer, with an attached document that included another long text of 190 pages: judgment 10/2020, issued by section 21 of the Provincial Court of Barcelona, by the procedure of summary 11/2017, for the crimes of “CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION, THREATS, OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE, MURDER, AGAINST PUBLIC HEALTH, ILLEGAL DETENTION, ABUSE OF WORKSITES AND THEFT” against 23 defendants, presumably members of the Latin Kings legal

sector, including César Gustavo Andrade Arteaga as principal accused, for whom the prosecution requested a sentence of 28 years in jail as leader of the criminal organization, whose detention, preventive detention and trial is described in great detail in the last two conversations of the book. The decision of the three judges who drafted the sentence is conclusive: they condemn six of those accused for minor offences, but César Andrade and the remaining defendants are acquitted of all charges. When we read the news, we jumped for joy: the students, to whom we had just explained the complex relations of the Latin Kings with the press, the police and the judicial system, observed us with surprise and we could not avoid giving them the good news. We explained that when King Manaba was arrested, it was prominent news on the radio, television and in the press (who, despite the secrecy of the operation, were present at 6 in the morning of June 2015 at the house of Santa Coloma de Gramanet where the raid began). In the days following the acquittal, no important media reported the news, with the sole exception of a small digital medium –www.metropoliabierta.com – with the heading "The Latin Kings win a great judicial battle". When we said goodbye after six consecutive hours of class and seminars, we agreed that sometimes there is justice in life. We could not imagine a better ending to this book!

TO BE CONTINUED

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