

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the institutional weakness of the Paraguayan state and its impact on the presence of organised crime in the Tri-border region between Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina. To do so, it employs a methodological design based on a case study of the institutional weakness of the Paraguayan state and its implications for the development of organised crime activities during the presidential term of Horacio Cartes (2013-2018). The methodological design also includes two sub-case studies analysing the institutional weakness of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the National Police, as well as the infiltration of organised crime in these institutions. The analysis allows for the identification of common patterns between the two institutions which reveals institutional weakness due to non-compliance and instability. Furthermore, these results go hand-in-hand with the presence of organised crime in the tri-border area during the period under study. This criminal presence was consolidated by the commission of various acts of violence that were rarely perpetrated by organized crime in Paraguay before the period of study. There is a close link between the presence of organised crime groups and the weakness of the Paraguayan state. Therefore, policies aimed to mitigate organised crime should not ignore the situation of institutional weakness since this constitutes one of the root causes associated with the presence of organised crime groups.