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REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE
GAY SOCIAL MOVEMENT OF TIJUANA, MÉXICO 1980-1993

by

Jesse Anguiano

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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June 2019

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Jesse Anguiano

REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE GAY SOCIAL MOVEMENT OF TIJUANA, MÉXICO 1980-1993

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Western Michigan University, 2019

Social movements are shaped by the historical context in which they emerge and provide a window to understand how collective action develops. The literature on social movements suggests that macro factors such as political climate and dominant social scripts affect the direction of a social movement. However, examining solely the macro perspectives on a movement reveals only part of *how* and *why* groups mobilize. This dissertation uses historical and archival resources to document the social history of Gay men living in Tijuana, México. This research is guided by a main research question: *What explains the successful and ongoing mobilization of the Gay community of Tijuana, México?* I focused on this area because I wanted to identify the factors that shape how and why this community organized and resisted repression through collective action. This dissertation argues that their mobilization was in part motivated by the ascendancy to power of the conservative political party PAN (National Action Party) in Baja California in 1989. It is important to study Tijuana's Gay Movement in order to preserve the historical memory of Gay struggles for human rights.

To illustrate how the movement was successful, the analysis of this research is framed by Herbert Blumer's (1955) five elements of *mechanisms and means*: (1) agitation, (2) esprit de corps, (3) the development of morale, (4) the development of group ideology, and (5) the role of tactics.

To put these mechanisms and means into context, I delve into analyzing a chain of events within four phases of movement development. First, I considered early forms of collective organization, which can be defined as a period of *agitation*, in which members were recruited and group consciousness in relation to inequality was developed. Second, by the mid 1980s, the Gay community began to solidify as a group by means of fellowship formation. Fellowship was characterized by an *esprit de corps*, which enabled the movement to find solidarity beyond its borders. In addition, group identity expressions, such as the publication of *¡Y Qué!*, became a noteworthy tool of resistance that helped preserve their culture. Third, by the mid 1980s and into the early 1990s, AIDS took a toll on the health and well-being of Tijuana's Gay community. The *development of morale* galvanized the Gay community to find solutions to help those affected by AIDS. Four, in 1991, the Gay community mobilized collectively when two gay bars were raided by local authorities. This protest gained national and international attention. Activists resisted the raids and their aftermath by adopting a *group ideology* based upon a human rights philosophy. The process of resistance was supported by the interstices of *tactics*.

While not all movements are about resistance, the Gay movement of Tijuana legitimated their collective mobilization through acts of resistance that became progressive. This Gay male oriented movement at the United States-Mexico border should be understood as an ongoing process that confronts power structures of exclusion through continual efforts of resistance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Charles Tilly (1978) characterized a social movement as “a group of people identified by their attachment to some particular set of beliefs” (p. 9). According to Stammers (2009), “The specific term ‘social movements’ is relatively new, developing largely in the latter half of the twentieth century and emerging largely out of the discipline of sociology” (p. 34). Researchers studying social movements utilize analytical perspectives with respect to external and internal forces which shape them. For example, Meyer (2002) observed that those who study social movements from the outside are concerned with examining “the grievances, resources and opportunities provided by forces outside the social movement” (p. 12). For instance, a group that is being oppressed may come up with demands and secure resources, including monetary and technological means, as well as the formation of networks to combat social inequality. On the other hand, those scholars studying movements from the inside are prone to study them from the angle of “the self-conscious decisions and values of those within movements and their lives prior to and through social movement participation” (Meyer, 2002, p. 12). This involves taking into consideration the members’ emotions, biographies, and philosophies of life, including the values and antecedents of their community. Moreover, “most of the people who study social movements focus either on individuals, organizations, or events in the best instances trying to capture the interdependence between them” (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 2). Who are the visible leaders involved in a movement? How do they expand their influence, ideas, and knowledge onto other members? What triggers the galvanization of a Gay community to occur? How does a Gay

community defy authority? In what ways do social groups mobilize to transform a hostile environment that excludes them into one that asserts they belong? When have they been explicit about their identities? What social, political, and cultural factors are at play in their decision to collectively mobilize?

The following research centers on documenting the social history of the Gay community of Tijuana, México by addressing aspects associated with the emergence and progress of their Gay rights struggle between 1980-1993. This time period is concerned with the origins of *why* this community contested inequality. Part of the answer suggests that in order to understand their collective mobilization one needs to consider the intermix of what was going on politically both regionally and locally. Yet, additional analysis requires documenting internal developments within the movement to address key questions: what facilitated this community to organize? How did the movement assert collective identity? In what ways were group allegiances central to the success of the movement? What resources were put in place to reassert the Gay communities' rights? In what ways were the unique biographical traits of the movement's leaders instrumental to counter subordination? The answer to these questions is supported by the parameters set forth by Herbert Blumer (1955) in relation to the analysis of movement success.

This dissertation argues that the intertwining social and political influences on the Gay movement gestated a noteworthy force that energized this group to take action. However, to find out how this process unfolds, it is important to consider a series of historical events that identify the relationship between how they sought out means of resistance. With respect to recording the movement's success, a central main question is established: *What explains the successful and ongoing mobilization of the Gay community of Tijuana, México?* In an attempt to provide an answer to this meta question, this research applies a set of criteria from Herbert Blumer's (1955)

social movement mechanisms and means: (1) agitation, (2) esprit de corps, (3) the development of morale, (4) the development of group ideology, and (5) the role of tactics. Table 1 offers general descriptors of Blumer's mechanisms and means.

Table 1

Descriptions of Blumer's Five Mechanisms and Means

Mechanisms and means	General descriptors
Agitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of members • Excitement, arousal of feelings and impulses
Esprit de corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphernalia • Sense of belonging • solidarity, informal fellowship
Development of morale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting convictions • Eradication of what is evil or unjust • Group will
Development of group ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement's philosophy/psychology • Universal human rights • Body of doctrine/beliefs
Role of tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining and holding adherents • Reaching objectives • Operating through the nature of the situation

Each of these features varies in degree. Each one reveals aspects of phases that point to movement development. But most importantly, these indicators serve as a framework to uncover the success of a movement. The best way to contextualize these five mechanisms and means to our topic—the Gay movement of Tijuana—is to examine a series of key events that display continual mobilization of this community. Jenkins (1983) contends that “mobilization is the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed for collective

action” (p. 532). Community, on the other hand, is “the implicit notion of community as a *we*” (Wiesenfeld, 1996, p. 337). Wiesenfeld (1996) defines *community* as “a homogenous group of individuals, clearly distinguishable from *others*” (p. 337). The movement and its body should not be taken as a single unit of analysis. Rather, the movement should be understood as a multiplicity of events that yield a number of specific causal explanations as to why members engaged in collective action. To give order to the movement and its trajectory, I established four phases that trace how this movement operated.

The first phase was to pay attention to early forms of collective organization. In 1979, the Gay community of Tijuana began to recruit members. Recruitment efforts and interaction with like-minded people took place inside private homes. These meetings were an opportunity to bring an awareness of their subordinate status through questioning social structures. This early period of collective effort can be seen as one of *agitation*.

Second, in 1980 the Gay community sought various forms of fellowship by launching FIGHT (Frente Internacional por las Garantías Humanas en Tijuana); in 1983 Grupo Liberalista was launched, and in that same year a segment of the movement started the production of Gay media outlets such as *¡Y Qué! (So What?)* magazine. These means of collective action were an important asset because they bolstered the movement forward through the validation of their culture and the articulation of principles. This phase is associated with *esprit de corp*, which offered the movement the opportunity to create an environment of belonging.

Following the arrival of the AIDS epidemic in 1983, the Gay community in Tijuana was confronted with an atmosphere of heightened alertness. Lives were lost. Bodies were rejected from hospitals for fear of contagion. This was the third phase, leading to the *development of morale*. Public outcry blamed Gays as being solely responsible for the spread of the “*la peste*

rosa” (the pink plague). The development of morale played a crucial role in the ways these communities confronted the social condemnation brought about by the first cases of AIDS, which, as elsewhere, was first being detected in Gay males. As a result, Tijuana’s populations, including government officials, began to equate AIDS with homosexuality. Under these conditions, the movement fostered group will through community work. As a first response, they began to attend those affected by AIDS through giving comfort and shelter. HIV prevention efforts were part of the building block of resistance which compelled activists to secure safe havens and medications by financing these with money from their own pockets.

The fourth phase of the movement, group coherence and community group will, continued through the late 1980s. In 1989 and appealing to an electorate that demanded change in the political landscape of Baja California, the right-wing leaning PAN (Partido Acción Nacional/National Action Party) took control of both the gubernatorial office and the mayoral seat of Tijuana. The newly elected PAN administration represented a conservative political change for the area. Its stand on social issues unleashed an antagonistic relationship with the Gay community. The party’s inherent, strong connection with conservative Catholic values clashed with this group. On November 30, 1991, two Gay bars were raided. Patrons were detained, fined, and jailed. In its attempts to dismantle homosexual behavior, the administration contested and justified the raid, while Gay communities resisted and addressed the hostility through a *group ideology* supported by a human rights angle. Collectively, their response reflected a much more visible community. Following the raid, Gay communities established *tactics* and strategies to discredit the local administration. The role of tactics was crucial in attaining legitimacy as communities, which expanded channels of defense to help them advance toward social recognition.

All together, these four phases, in connection to Blumer's mechanisms and means, constitute the central assets that trace the movement. Following this framework, my analysis establishes a point of departure, to begin documenting the social history of the Gay movement and shifting away from linking Gay bodies to dominant constructions of criminality, as past research has been accustomed to do.

Why Tijuana?

Ernesto García Canclini once mentioned that Tijuana was a laboratory of post-modernity as a result of its linkage to the metropolis and the periphery. Additionally, he considered Tijuana a hybrid city because it has been traditionally dependent on a globalized world. To understand his reasoning, Tijuana is a city that is conditioned by the many cultural fronts that settle in this geographic space. Furthermore, the process of its formation as a city has also been linked to the United States by both its economic and cultural aspects. Theoretically and practically it makes sense to situate my research in Tijuana because as a metropolis this border city provides context to explain the status of group inequality with regards to sexual orientation; one must note that Gay males living in industrial cities such as Tijuana have found a unique sense of liberty usually not found elsewhere. It is apropos to focus my study on this city because key historical events in Tijuana represent an emphatic point to observe how Gay people have engaged in collective mobilization. Within the political realm, this study takes into account the cause and effect of the historical win of the PAN (Partido Acción Nacional). This is, in fact, an event that differentiates Tijuana from other urban cities in México, because Baja California was the first state in México to be won by the conservative opposition in 1989. This marks a precedence in examining how this political party engaged and interacted with marginalized populations.

As with historical research, the primary data stems from a combination of the written record left behind by the Gay community, and that of mainstream newspapers from the time. In the evaluation of these data, I had to search for meaningful events to identify causal relationships within group activism. Moreover, this approach involved winnowing out low range content and classifying high level content in a chronological manner, thereafter, categorizing themes associated with patterns of collective action. To better illustrate this, think of being in a gigantic *milpa* (corn field) with machete in hand. My duty was to clean this field of weeds (low content) in order to save as many bushels as possible (high content information). This effort can be perceived and taken as bias. However, to increase validity, I cross-examined information using secondary sources, including relying on personal communication with a mixture of Gay activists. This technique allowed close contact with my group of study, as I maintained a neutral objective posture in the interpretation of my findings. All in all, the Gay political movement of Tijuana was an upwards outgrowth of leadership based on the protection of the Gay social movement of Tijuana and should be understood as the product of interrelated episodic events shaped by the social, cultural, and political environments of the time.

Influences That Aided This Research

My 10-year friendship with Max Mejía was influential in my conducting further research on the Gay social movement of Tijuana, México as I progressed through the Ph.D. program in Interdisciplinary Studies at Western Michigan University.

The economic support for the initial stages of this doctoral dissertation came from a *beca* (scholarship) given by the Mexican Consulate in Detroit, Michigan, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of México, and for its completion therewith I was granted a doctoral associateship with candidacy from the Graduate College at Western Michigan University.

My social location as a low-income, bilingual Mexican-American, “out” Gay male, born and raised in Los Ángeles, California, facilitated my entry to this community.

The interdisciplinary nature of my academic career helped shape this research through the use of qualitative methodologies of social analysis.

The spirit of activism and that of my orientation to community grassroots organizing compelled me to contribute to writing the social history of this community on the U.S. - México border with the end goal of preserving its history.

Language Usage

The word *Gay* refers to self-identified male-gendered individuals. Domínguez-Ruvalcaba (2009) contended that

the introduction of the word “gay” to the Mexican lexicon underlines the creation of a space of liberation, the designation of a legitimate social identity—in sum, the creation of a culture that would embrace subjects previously scorned because of their sexual preference. (p. 116)

But why is this so? Mexican Gay writer Carlos Monsiváis (2010) points us to a probable answer. Monsiváis observed that the word *Gay* is part of a broader international movement.

Mexican feminist Marta Lamas (1999) explained that Monsiváis envisions

que el espacio semántico de la palabra *gay* se transforma en el espacio social de la tolerancia: asumirse *gay* es formar parte de un movimiento internacional, es pasar de una condición problemática a un modo de vida extravagante, pero *moderno* [that the semantic space of the word *gay* becomes a space of social tolerance: to consider oneself gay is to be part of an international movement, to move from a problematic condition to a way of life that, while extravagant, is *modern*]. (n.p.)

The word *Gay* has also played a role in ameliorating the negative effects of words used to insult homosexual people in México: *joto*, *puto*, *maricón*, etc. Monsiváis recognized that “al imponerse el vocablo *gay*, y al unificarse internacionalmente el comportamiento de estas minorías, se desvanece un gran número de los agravios contenidos en las palabras denigratorias, y esta

‘deshistorización’ mediatiza el prejuicio” (“as the term *gay* is used internationally, within a common behavior among minorities, a great number of insulting terms that denigrate fade away, and this ‘dehistorization’ obstructs prejudice”) (p. 304). In addition, the word *Gay* should be best understood as a sexual identity and ethnic concept. This self-identification has gained international and global normalcy as a response by Gay males in the United States as a response to experiences of oppression regardless of cultural differences. Cantú (2009) noted that “the rise of a gay identity [in México] is linked to the transnational ties of globalization between Mexico and the United States, in particular the gay United States” (p. 102).

While I understand that the term *Gay* can carry the weight of cultural white dominance, since the word has been propagated and imposed onto people and communities at times unwittingly or unwillingly, I have identified *Gay* as the word of choice used by the Gay community of Tijuana as a means to label themselves individually and as a group. The phrase *de ambiente* at times will be used to describe the experiences of the Gay community as a collective. The term was a domestic concept used by Gay men in México to define a place, situation, or person who was knowingly homosexual. In the 1970s, “la palabra ‘gay’ acuñada por los americanos, ya circulaba por la frontera y el termino nacional ‘de ambiente,’ ya era de uso generalizado en sustitución de la palabra de desprecio: ‘maricon’ (“the word ‘gay,’ coined by Americans, was already circulating at the border, and the national term ‘*de ambiente*’ was used in substitution for the word of scorn: maricon”) (Mejía, 1993, p. 7). Quotes from sources in the Spanish language have been translated to accommodate monolingual English speakers.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized by chapters as follows. Chapter I presents an introduction to the dissertation topic and is followed by a review of the literature in Chapter II. The literature

review provides a general overview of past research that showcases what has been learned about social movements. The aim is to extract key themes and variables relevant to this case study. In addition, I review the literature of existing studies that deal with Gay communities in México at the national level, including examining research that addresses Gay people in Tijuana. This review begins with a broad view and then narrows in scope to focus on the central topic of this dissertation: Tijuana, México's Gay movement. Chapter III, Sources and Methods provides a descriptive narrative of the research site. It then informs the reader of when and how the data were collected for this investigation, in conjunction with presenting the methodological tools used to assess the sources.

Chapters IV through VIII present the findings of the investigation. In Chapter IV, Period of Agitation, I take the mechanism of agitation and expand it to provide the rationale behind the initial stages of the movement. The introductory phase was greatly influenced by Emilio Velásquez, the father of the movement, who was involved in bringing about a conscious awareness of societal maltreatment among its members. Velásquez played an important role in agitating the minds of those who would be the movement's members and forged an initial path of resistance. Chapter V, Esprit de Corps, focuses on examining the international ties with foreign organizations. This web of connections helped legitimize the movement itself and opened the doors to empathy with other groups, such as the Central American people, whose countries were being subjugated by dictatorial regimes that were supported and set up by the United States during the 1980s and which continue today. This chapter also offers insight into how the movement established autonomy by forming FIGHT (Frente Internacional por las Garantías Humanas en Tijuana) and developing their own media, and what spurred the movement to bifurcate because of differences concerning the movement's path.

Chapter VI, AIDS and the Development of Morale, discusses the emergence of AIDS in Tijuana and how it wreaked extensive havoc destroying Gay lives. This community faced a new reality, the creation of discourses in the dominant society that linked homosexuality with the AIDS virus. Chapter VII, Group Ideology and the Role of Tactics, explores the ways the movement responded to a November 30, 1991, anti-Gay raid. The movement was able to seize the moment, dismantling the inflammatory rhetoric that local authorities used to justify the raid. This rhetoric included blaming Gay people for the propagation of AIDS and accusing them of touching their private parts, an alluded homosexual behavior, which was prohibited for males in the city. The movement succeeded because of its maturing coordination and the participation of new activists such as Max Mejía, who became a central figure in the movement. A unified strategic approach permitted this collective to craft tactics to ultimately receive public social recognition.

Chapter VIII, Conclusion, summarizes the movement as a gradual process of short-term events that together caused this community to cherish democratic values in the long run. The invested energy and effort from pioneers in the movement enabled new members to live in a less repressive Tijuana. This chapter also identifies the constraints and limitations of this research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to present cross-disciplinary scholarly work pertaining to social movement research. I begin the review broadly and then focus on the Gay movement in Tijuana, México. I have structured this literature review as follows: (a) evaluate general social movement theories; (b) describe ways by which social movements have been studied; (c) discuss how Gay social movements fall under the “new” non-class approach lens; (d) show how Gay social movements and Gay male thematic research have been studied in Latin America, with a focus on México; and (e) present the small amount of research that has been done in Tijuana regarding Gay male subjectivities.

Consequently, this organizational sequence has led me to identify a “gap” in scholarly research related to the Gay movement in Tijuana. The content and context employ an interdisciplinary lens of inquiry to fill this void.

General Social Movement Literature

A Classical Approach for Analyzing Social Movements

Zald (1996) notes that “prior to the 1970s, the social psychology of social movements focused largely on motivational manners” (p. 265). Such research, according to Stryker, Owens, and White (2000), “was strongly rooted in a social psychology that concerned itself with ‘collective behavior’” (p. 1). These scholars, as Smelser (1962) points out,

frequently describe collective episodes as if they were the work of mysterious forces. Crowds, for instance, are “fickle,” “irrational,” or “spontaneous,” and their behavior is “unanticipated” or surprising. . . . They imply that collective behavior flows from sources

beyond empirical explanation. The language of the field, in short, shrouds its very subject in indeterminacy. (p. 1)

Furthermore, individuals involved in such movements were often cast as reactionaries, insubordinates, and provocateurs. This brought forth a direct stigmatization of participants in a movement, including the movements themselves. In his survey on social movements, Engel (2001) concludes that the conventional and classical approach observed collective protest “as a pathological explosion of participation resulting from the breakdown of societal values characteristically attributed to rapid industrialization” (p. 168). From this perspective, Klandermans (1997) adds that these breakdown theories “owe their name to the underlying assumptions that the social movements are epiphenomena of societal change and of the breakdown of social arrangements and bonds associated with social change” (p. 200).

For classical theorists, the movement must be justified upon a rational choice of behavior, “which deems behavior rational if it acts within the existing institutional context and irrational if it acts outside of that context” (Engel, 2001, p. 168). In classic thought, not only are social expectations and behaviors monitored by surveilling whether participants in movements act in a rational manner, but the main premise holds that a movement attends to therapeutic benefits and does not quite take us to a path of a political end goal (Engel, 2001, p. 170). Engel (2001) further judges the classical approach as it frames movements as “pathological and ignores the historical impact of movements” (p. 172). Encompassing the political matters of a movement and those of its historical dimensions within which a movement emerges are important to capture the nature of its complexity. For example, the political process model connects the political environment with the trajectory of a movement and includes the “resources external to the group” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 20).

Political Process Model/Political Opportunity

The exemplar of political process considers the interaction of social movement actors and governing structures at the meta level. According to McAdam (1996), scholars who follow this concept “saw the timing and fate of movements as largely dependent upon the opportunities afforded insurgents by the shifting institutional structure and ideological disposition of those in power” (p. 23). Meanwhile, Tarrow (1998) notes that “an advantage of the concept [political opportunity] is that it helps us to understand how mobilization spreads from people with deep grievances and strong resources to those with fewer ones and less resources” (p. 77). An important factor involved in political opportunity is embedded in the idea of a weak government and its contraction, which enables collectives to become adversaries of the state. This approach also focuses on the ways by which individuals often seek political entrance into a government’s structure. Their individual interest and involvement have a purpose: to influence the social-political landscape with their ideas and actions to benefit therewith empowering the body of collectivism to which they belong.

Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource mobilization theory points out the pre-organization aspects of a social movement. Resources may include pre-existing organization, crises, allies, networks, and the cultural production of media from Gay communities (Engel, 2001). Organization is a key component of resource mobilization theory. The success of any social movement relies on the organizational aspect of the group. Olson (1965) noted that “organization can therefore perform a function when there is common group interest” (p. 7). For Gay communities and those of Tijuana their struggle has progressively absorbed a framed based on a human rights ideology. Moreover, the organization of an oppressed community merits engaging in promoting a shared Gay identity

that enables the formation of in-group networks. According to Melucci (1994), “Networks between the movements ensure a certain degree of continuity and stability in the identities of individuals and groups in a social system where this identity is constantly fragmented or destructured” (p. 117). Social movement organizations through the construction of networks seek to bring actors together to permit local dialogue and allow for the exchange of information. According to Keck and Sikkink (1998), “Information binds network members together and is essential for network effectiveness. Many information exchanges are informal—telephone calls, email, and fax communications, and the circulation of newsletters, pamphlets and bulletins” (p. 18). Information networks are a key strategy to diffuse and disseminate ideas. This information may function as a counter discourse, which aims to dismantle official discourses that intend to discredit the collective unity and legitimacy of a group. Moreover, written information allows one to learn about group social history.

Returning to the evaluation of resource mobilization theory, Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) note that “resource mobilization theory triggered an expansion of social movements research by changing the core question of the field from ‘Why are people aggrieved?’ to ‘Why do aggrieved people protest when they do?’” (p. x). A groundbreaking contribution of resource mobilization theory is that it considers “social movements as conscious actors making rational choices” (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 15-16). This perspective differs from past theoretical analytical canons which centered around irrational behaviors. However, the make-up of this theory continues to acknowledge aspects of the classical approach of studying social movement by relying on institutional settings. For example, Jenkins (1983) notes that traditionally “resource mobilization theory has been posed in terms of collective actors struggling for power in an institutional context” (p. 530). Jenkins acknowledges that studies

using this theory must engage in a macro scale of analysis, and very few studies have involved micro-mobilization analyses, which “have not yet extended to deal with personality transformation or cultural change” (p. 530). Therefore, it is crucial to focus on the micro-local activism within Tijuana’s Gay community by thus illustrating their activism and its transformation after making social demands.

Ways in Which Social Movements Have Been Studied

The critical role that organizations play in the success of a movement is another important variable that is considered when studying social movements. According to Smelser (1962), “Organizations associated with a movement, moreover, influence the movement’s development and its success or failure” (p. 82). Organizations may aid in efforts to educate the society at large about the movement itself, fomenting solidarity among its members and facilitating ways to strategize in combating oppression. The idea of oppression

exists when one group has historically gained power and control over valued assets of a society (e.g., wealth information and political power) by exploiting the labor and lives of other groups and then by using those assets to secure its position of power into the future. (Smelser, 1962, p. 23)

Organizing also includes the formation of networks. Keck and Sikkink (1998) define networks as “forms of organization characterized by voluntary reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange” (p. 8). In addition, “networks undoubtedly facilitate mechanisms like the mobilization and allocation of resources across an organizational field, the negotiation of agreed goals, the production and circulation of information” (Diani, 2003, p. 10). Under a common identity, a disadvantaged group of people may resort to social networks to “build and reinforce the identities of individuals and provide them with a political consciousness that allows them to get ideologically closer to a political issue” (Passy, 2003, p. 23).

Organization also may involve creating task forces, committees, and media newsletters under a collective identity. According to Stryker et al. (2000), “Collective identity refers to emergent shared beliefs about membership, boundaries, and activities of a social movement held by movement members” (p. 6). Another face of those who study social movements, as Della Porta and Diani (2006) noted previously, the examination of events leads and gives rise to collective action.

Blumer’s Theoretical Model

Blumer’s (1955) theoretical model establishes that general social movements have specific characteristics that give them meaning. Among these characteristics are the cultural influences that alter such movements. According to Blumer (1955), social movement activity is defined in relation to a group’s desire to alter and change their “current form of life” (p. 199). For a movement to take shape and form, there needs to be an introspection of the ways a group sees itself in relation to the social reality in which it’s living. In addition, Blumer explains that movements such as those of the youth, the women’s, and labor are products of cultural changes that happened in society, which he refers to as cultural drifts. He explains that “such cultural drifts stand for a general shifting in the ideas of people, particularly along the line of conceptions which people have of themselves, and of their rights and privileges” (p. 200). The self-examination and the existential inquiry of a group is derived from the expansion of a new set of values “which influence people in the way in which they look upon their own lives,” (Blumer, 1955, p. 200). These movements Blumer categorizes as being part of New Cultural Trends that are centered around “gradual and pervasive changes in the values of people—changes which can be called cultural drifts” (p. 200). In other words, social movements are responses to shifting social values and attitudes of society. To explain further, Blumer (1955) suggests that “over a

period of time many people may develop a new view of what they believe they are entitled to—a view largely made up of desires and hopes” (p. 200). Gay movements fall into this category as these movements alter the social structures of society with regards to new cultural valid perspectives of group existence. Blumer’s observations are closely related to new social movement theory which is built around identity formation and cultural trends. I felt compelled to use this model because Blumer’s principles of general social movement within the new cultural trend’s scope provide a link to a group’s culture in relation to society as a whole. It adds value to culture as one can trace the relational effects the dominant culture has toward marginalized groups.

Gay Identity

Scholars who analyze identity contend that it is socially constructed, fluid, and malleable—not fixed. On the one hand, identity serves as a survival tactic by assisting individuals in finding others like them, but, on the other, as Fraser (2003) notes, the identity model benefits only the hegemonic dominant culture. Fraser explained: “What requires recognition is not grouping identity, but rather the status of individual group members as full partners in social interaction” (p. 27). Meanwhile, Whittier (2002) also notes the importance of the formation of a collective identity as a strategy to foil hegemonic impositions. She asserts that “some movements, like the women’s or lesbian and gay movement, want to construct new collective identities that challenge subservient definitions of the group” (p. 290). In categorizing identity formation, Bernstein (2002) argued that identity has three-dimensional key notes in a social movement: (1) Identity as Empowerment, (2) Identity as Strategy, and (3) Identity as Goal (p. 87). These three characteristics posed by Bernstein serve as guides to discover how these Gay communities asserted their identity through collective mobilization. However, while a Gay

community may adopt a clear and unified Gay identity, this process may bring disadvantages. García-Düttmann (2000) explains that this position initiates a backlash because, in the instance in which a group claims a “different identity in order to secure legal, social, institutional, and political equality status and treatment, the struggle of recognition disappears in a reformism which admits of differences only to the extent that they can be considered as valid differences” (p. 105). To explain further, Stammers (2009) notes that “liberal theorists and politicians argue that only individual human rights are ‘real’ human rights and are suspicious of an authoritarian potential being necessarily embedded in any concept of collective right” (p. 41). A dilemma ensues. Collective action limits the ability to acquire social benefits as a group, but it does allow an important avenue for group recognition as a Gay identity.

Approaches to “New” Non-Class-Based Social Movements

Social movements around the globe, including burgeoning Gay movements of the 1960s and 1970s, gave rise to a new conceptual framework that paid attention to identity formation. These movements came to be known as “new social movements.” Della Porta and Diani (2006) note that these movements flourished in the late 1960s, which brought forth matters related to “women’s rights, gender relations, environmental protection, ethnicity and migration, peace and international solidarity—with a strong ‘new’ middle class basis and a clear differentiation from the models of working-class or nationalist collection action that had preceded them” (p. viii). In like manner, Lee (2007) points out that the concept of new social movements “is generally intended for non-class specific contemporary social movements, issues oriented in citizen protests, and varied collectivities demanding social recognition” (p. v). Alternatively, Offe (1985) offers an even more important perspective. Offe observes that new social movements are related with “a (physical) territory, space of action, or ‘life-world,’ such as the body, health, and

sexual identity; the neighborhood city and the physical environment; the cultural, ethnic, national, and linguistic heritage and identity; the physical conditions of life; and survival for humankind in general” (pp. 828-829). And yet, Buechler (2011) emphasizes that new social movement theories have “looked to other logistics of action based in politics, ideology, and culture as the root of much collective action, and they have looked to other resources of identity such as ethnicity, gender and sexuality” (p. 442). While diverse perspectives from these scholars might take us down a variety of paths and at times cause mix-ups, Buechler (2011) clarifies that it is “more accurate to speak of a congeries of interrelated ideas and arguments that comprise new social movement theories with many variations on a general approach to the topic” (p. 159). Rather than experiencing the new social theories as concrete entities, Buechler divides new social movement theories into eight thematic principles. To each of these eight themes, listed below, I have added my own meta themes, bracketed in italics, which speak overall to the topic of this dissertation.

- *Theme 1:* The identification of a distinct social formation that provides the context for the emergence of collective action [*Gay struggle*];
- *Theme 2:* The causal claim that leads these movements to postmodernity [*Globalization*];
- *Theme 3:* Movement not rooted in class structure, but in sexual orientation [*Gay male sexual orientation*];
- *Theme 4:* The ability of people to form a collective identity for collective action [*Same-sex identity*];
- *Theme 5:* The blurring of the lines of political and personal life [*Social networks*];
- *Theme 6:* Movements that seek autonomy and democratization [*Human rights guarantees*];
- *Theme 7:* Cultural and symbolic forms of resistance [*Gay geographical spaces*];
- *Theme 8:* Organizational forms that are decentralized, more in tune with symbolic expression of movement values and member identities [*Gay media outlets*].

(Buechler, 2011, pp. 159-161)

Gay Latin America

Generally, Gay research in Latin America has focused on the core countries of México, Brazil, Argentina, and Cuba. These countries hold a great deal of historical weight with regard to same-sex eroticism dating back to colonial Latin America. For example, Sigal (2003) notes that “at the time of the conquest, same sex eroticism existed in many, perhaps all, of the indigenous societies of Latin America” (p. 1). In his article “Crypto-Sodomites in Colonia Brazil,” Mott (2003) notes that “homosexuality has been present in Brazil since its prehistory, being vividly practiced by Amerindians—existing even very close to Pernambuco in the neighborhood of Paraíba, a type of ‘gay campus’—nudist by tribal tradition, but homoerotic by choice” (p. 173). Meanwhile, in México, leniency toward homosexual behavior practices was present in religious rituals, including in the Zapotec indigenous community (Mejía, 2000a).

In contemporary times, Encarnación (2016) suggests that “in recent years Latin America has begun to exert considerable global leadership on the issues of gay rights” (p. 2). While this leadership may stem from a local, strong self-conviction and self-awareness of inequality among the social fabric of their Latin American societies, they are also inclined to allow such public acts of tolerance and acceptance due to international pressure. In *Different Rainbows*, Drucker (2000b) contends that in Latin America, as well as in other parts of the world, the imposition of a universal Gay identity has altered the sexual landscapes of these territories. In part, he claims, it is attributed to the “process of ‘globalization’ of lesbian/gay identities at work, functioning by analogy to economic globalization” (p. 14). Also, as countries tend to merge into a globalized, more compact world, with shared values and affinities, economic integration with international powers is not free. Policies are exchanged for economic support from various grounds, including from non-profit organizations and governments that want to pursue an agenda in the name of

democracy. For example, in November 2017, the United Nations (UN) launched a campaign in Guatemala to influence its population to end discrimination against Gay people. While this is an advancement toward the protection of Gay people, the discrimination lies within the compass of cultural perceptions against homosexuality. Encarnación notes that “Latin American culture is steeped in machismo, and the region is home to almost half of the world’s Catholic population, including [the] two largest Catholic countries (Brazil and Mexico)” (p. 3). The combination of machismo and the constant stigmatization by the Catholic Church strengthen the forces that go against homosexuality. The Catholic Church has strategically co-opted the familial structure in México to hold greater economic power, as well as to influence the internal organization of the Mexican family.

The body of work within the anthology *Latin American Male Homosexualities* (Murray, 1995) is given to understanding the culturally significant factors which define homosexuality. Specific attention is devoted to examining the familial ties in relation to the construction of machismo. As well, the role that the family plays in relation to the individuals who continue to reside within their nuclear family “eliminates the possibility of the kind of residential concentration that in the United States and Canada preceded (and enabled) the development of gay institutions and a sense of gay community” (Murray, 1995, p. xi). Gay Mexican men’s interaction with the family unit inhibits their Gay identity formation because of the deep historical and spiritual link to the Catholic Church that exalts hetero-normative masculinity.

Case studies related to masculinity and Gay oppositional culture in México is also found in the edited book *Masculinity and Sexuality in Modern Mexico* (Macías-González & Rubenstein, 2012). In this collection, diverse scholars show the connection between male sexual behavior and sexual identity developing at various historical times in that country.

Another important anthology that includes Latin America's Gay populations and elsewhere is *Different Rainbows* (Drucker, 2000a). Works in the anthology devote attention to an array of subjects, such as religion and Gay identity formation about which Drucker calls third-world countries. Included in that anthology is Max Mejía's (2000a) œuvre "Mexican Pink." Mejía analyzes past and present Gay struggles around the effect that Mexican culture has on homosexuality. Mejía also addresses the role of religion and how the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) (National Action Party), Mexico's conservative party, imposed vigilante campaigns to dismantle Gay organizing.

There is no doubt that Latin America has been making important strides toward Gay rights, but Gay people throughout Latin America still face savage assassinations. Brazil reports a death daily due to homophobia. México is in second place. These deaths are mainly targeted toward the transgender community. Consequently, efforts from the Gay community in Latin America have historically centered on combating homophobia via festivals and conferences. According to Ian Lumsden (1991), since the early 1990s, The Círculo Cultural Gay had "mounted an annual series of debates, films, theatrical performances and art displays prior to Gay Pride Day" (p. 67). Noteworthy also are the actions emitting from Mexico City's Gay community to use the arts as a tool of cultural empowerment. One example is the literary novel specializing in Gay culture. Among them Luis Zapata's: *El Vampiro de la Colonia Roma*.

Research Related to Gay People in Mexico City and Guadalajara

There is a notable trend that when scholars address the Gay Mexican movement, they refer to that of Mexico City. This is because Mexico City has been the core of activity for marginalized sexualities. The scholarly work of Monsiváis (2010), *Que se abra esa Puerta: Crónicas y Ensayos Sobre la Diversidad Sexual*, is a foundational text that chronicles the Gay

experience in México namely popular culture, literature, politics, and history. Efforts to provide additional insights into Gay Mexican culture are unveiled in the book *México se Escribe con J: Una Historia de la Cultura Gay* (Schuessler, Capistrán, & Bautista, 2010). This compilation provides gay culture through various authors' works of poetry, music, photography, and Gay people's social life, among which are from Salvador Novo, José Joaquín Blanco, and Carlos Monsiváis.

In his article "The Transnational Homophile Movement and the Development of Domesticity in Mexico's City's Homosexual Community, 1930-70," Macías-González (2014) stresses the formative social and economic conditions in the networks of affluent Gay intellectuals in Mexico City who were a literary group called *Los Contemporáneos*. Max Mejía (2000a) observed: "... to this group of writers we owe the first defense in Mexico of a gay sexual orientation" (p. 47). According to Macías-González, "Their transnational circulation and connections abroad positioned upper-middle-class and elite gays to serve as conduits for ideas about homophile spaces in Mexico, at a time when heightened surveillance on public gay spaces encouraged them to socialize at home" (p. 523). However, while homosexuality was perhaps tolerated in the 1930s, acceptance was not always granted. Monsiváis (2010) noted that

in the capital, homosexuals with resources, talent, ingenuity, audacity, money, and social relationships get the concession of a "moral dispensation," which without totally isolating them, never offered full integration, not even in the case of the most highly respected Carlos Pellicer, whose sexuality, while never obvious, was always known. (p. 17)

Carlos Pellicer was a modernist Mexican poet who was engaged in the arts. Pellicer's class position and that of *Los Contemporáneos* predominantly enhanced opportunities in Mexico City's upper class.

While in the 1930s Mexico's Gay upper class had ties with external transnational networks, Mexico's Gay middle class gradually, 40 years later, resolved to work toward social visibility at the grassroots level. The hippie movement of peace and love, along with women's movements and the Gay social movement in the United States, were external forces that created advantages for social change, including avenues of sexual liberation. Blanco (1986) notes that, in the 1970s,

en esa década la homosexualidad salió de los sótanos y comenzó a perfilarse como una opción sexual y a tomar distancia de las condenas de la iglesia y de la "ciencia" aún cuando este fenómeno solo haya ocurrido en ciudades como México y Guadalajara, y solo en sectores de la clase media [in that decade homosexuality came out of the closet, and placed itself as a sexual option, and distanced itself from the church's condemnation and that of "science," even when this phenomenon had occurred only in cities like Mexico and Guadalajara]. (p. 126)

Mexico City marked the path of "Gay liberation" in México. Visibility was the key to affirming the phrase "out of the closet and into the streets." In order to advance Gay rights, the Gay struggle had to be visible to civil society. According to Encarnación (2016), "Mexico City held Latin America's first gay pride parade in 1979" (p. 29). The power of the Gay march had a crucial effect which spread to other Gay sectors such as Guadalajara and in Tijuana.

Visibility was also manifested in the appropriation of space. For example, In "Gay Male Places of Mexico City," Sánchez-Crispín and López-López (1997) observed that in the 1980s, the number of Gay venues increased, "featuring an important change in their spatial distribution; the periphery of the city started to be the recipient of some of these establishments and public sites" (p. 200). Gay space, specifically the Gay bar, in the 1980s was central in solidifying a Gay identity, aside from constructing a collective social reality that embraced being different.

Other important scholarly contributions related to Mexico City's Gay movement include those of Ian Lumsden (1991). His book *Homosexuality: Society and the State in Mexico* provides

not only an understanding of the constructs of machismo but signals the political and social environment that have shaped Mexico's Gay movement. Also, Lumsden's accounting contributes to understanding the overwhelming effect of HIV/AIDS.

With regards to HIV/AIDS, Carillo's (2002) book, *The Night Is Young: Sexuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS*, draws from research conducted in Guadalajara to explore the ways AIDS has altered urbanite sexuality. A major contribution was the mobilization of communities affected by this disease via AIDS prevention networks.

Above and beyond the foregoing work of de la Dehesa (2010) holds significant value in understanding the Gay social movement in México. His book *Queering the Public Sphere in Mexico and Brazil* explores Mexico's and Brazil's Gay activism from a comparative macro national angle. Rafael de la Dehesa identifies how some Gay members' participation in politics at the national level by specifically examining "the interplay between evolving democratic arrangements and activists' negotiated terms of entry into the political public sphere" (p. 2). For example, not only did some of Mexico's City's Gay movement social actors participate in the internal part of the movement, but Max Mejía, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, and others tried to gain themselves placements in government seats to advocate for marginalized communities (de la Dehesa, 2010).

Recent qualitative scholarship focuses on the usage of visual art as a medium that puts into context the Gay social movement of Mexico City. For example, McCaughan's (2016) scholarly article "Art, Identity, and Mexico's Gay Movement" utilizes visual art works as data sources to tell the story of the Gay social movement in Mexico City. Furthermore, McCaughan uses art and images to portray modes of "discourses and imagine new subjects constituted around the intersections of gender, sexuality, and national identity" (pp. 89-90). The surge of this

analytical form, using artwork as a tool of inquiry, reveals another form of disclosing aspects of movement mobilization.

Research Related to Gay People in Tijuana, México

Topical research related to homosexuality and Tijuana began with anthropologist Joseph Carrier in the late 1960s. Carrier (1999) recollects: “My initial field observations were made in the Mexican border cities of Tijuana, Ensenada, Mexicali and San Felipe, all located in what is now the State of Baja California Norte” (p. 210). He began his research at a time when homosexuality was frowned upon by academia. Carrier (1995) remembers that in the “1960s homosexuality was still considered too risky and odious topic for a graduate student to pursue” (p. x). In the 1980s, he continued his ethnographic research by making observations along Mexican small towns, inside *zonas rojas*: “traditionally high-conflict areas, so police patrols are a regular feature of these segregated entertainment areas in Mexico” (Carrier, 1995, p. 65). In addition, his book *De los Otros: Intimacy and Homosexuality Among Mexican Men* makes an important contribution to understanding the social forces involved in relation to Mexican culture and homosexuality, including the documentation of Guadalajara’s 1981 Gay social movement.

In the late 1990s, sociologist Lionel Cantú, Jr. (2009) briefly conducted ethnographic research on the Gay population of Tijuana. His field note observations recounted:

On June 14, 1997, I crossed the U.S.-Mexican border at San Diego to observe (and celebrate) Tijuana’s third annual gay and lesbian pride parade. Standing on the sidelines of Avenida Revolución, in the heart of the city, I cheered as the march began with mariachis leading the procession. The parade was small compared to Los Angeles and San Francisco gay pride events, but for many reasons, it seemed so much more important than those heavily commercialized events. (p. 74)

Cantú’s field observation points to these communities’ visible cultural activities—those activities which preserve their collective identity. In addition, his statement relative to crowd size

is important. While Gay parades are affirmative of group pride, in the United States they have been, to a large extent, co-opted by big corporations. By contrast, what I have observed is that Tijuana's Gay parade, dating back to 1995, continues today to garner support from small Gay and non-Gay businesses which gives it autonomy.

With the 1990s critical surge of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, research on this matter began to proliferate. However, most of this research has conflated Gay people with populations such as prostitutes and prisoners. This is because these three populations have been cast as high risk for contracting HIV. For example, in their research titled "Comportamiento Sexual y Abuso de Drogas en Homosexuales, Prostitutas y Prisioneros en Tijuana, México," Guereña-Burgueño, Benenson, Bucardo Amaya, Caudillo Carreño, and Curiel Figueroa (1992) explore the sexual behaviors of these populations. The significance of child exploitation has also been exaggerated with relation to the Gay population. For instance, in a general report from UNICEF and DIF titled *Stolen Childhood: Boy and Girl Victims of Sexual Exploitation in Mexico*, Azaola (2000) linked homosexuals to the problem of the sexual exploitation of children in Tijuana. Azaola observed the following:

Most of the children's clients are homosexuals from the locality and Americans who go to look for them in the northern zone, mainly in Plaza Santa Cecilia, Teniente Park and outside the gay bars where children are waiting for them. (p. 85)

While Azaola's (2000) work is exclusively related to sexual exploitation of children, her research profits by labeling Gay people carelessly as sexual predators.

The topic of prostitution has also been a source of researchers' interest regarding the Gay community, although researchers tend to investigate this phenomenon using sexual masculinity as a variable of inquiry. For example, Bringas Rabago and Gaxiola Aldama (2012) explored Tijuana's Plaza Santa Cecilia as a site where prostitution thrives among males and tourists.

While this is undeniable, the fact of the matter is that Plaza Santa Cecilia is more than just a site of prostitution. This plaza is a site where Gay people have historically manifested their Gay identity and group activism that goes moves beyond the realm of prostitution.

Taken together, these studies show that Tijuana's Gay male population has been relegated to be discussed under social stigma. Consequently, Tijuana's Gay population continues to be misrepresented. There is an urgent need to tell a more unbiased narrative of Tijuana's population. Such an account will help preserve the community's history and raise scholarly awareness by demonstrating that this community has a social history, one which invokes agency and components of social resilience.

This literature review researched the ways by which social movements have been studied. Much work on Gay mobilization has intended to analyze the interplay of micro aspects about identity and network formation, and how this sustains or does not sustain activism. I argue that the experience of Tijuana's Gay social movement has been influenced greatly by a combination of the political atmosphere and the organizational aspects propelled by available resources that helped sustain this Gay movement. Additionally, the new social movement theory draws me to analyze aspects of Tijuana's Gay subculture by attending those areas whose Gay members claim community through the negotiating of their sexual identity.

In addition, the "take-aways" of the Gay-related work done previously in Guadalajara and Mexico City are reference points that allow me to consider variables such as class, space, Gay identity, and religion, which help shape a Gay subculture. Moving forward, to understand Tijuana's Gay social movement, one must examine the phenomenon of public space where sexual minorities gather. The earlier work of Carrier and Cantú provide important anthropological and sociological observations on Gay male subjectivities. For example, Carrier's

work analyzes familial ties and the aspect of homosexuality on an individual basis. His research is of relevance to this dissertation because it provides a basis for understanding how social-cultural forces such as religion within the Mexican family shape the development of one's sexual orientation. Cantú's vivid observation of Tijuana's Gay pride offers insights of group visibility from manifests of solidarity. This research also shows areas in need of further investigation in part by tracing the processes involved through documentation of Tijuana's Gay movement. There has been limited attention given to the sociological dimensions of this movement below the United States / Mexican border. To fill this gap, this study supplies factual evidence that documents Tijuana's Gay collective mobilization and its progress. This task sets forth a precedent that speaks to the experiences associated with their activism. The next chapter will focus on the methodology and procedures employed for this dissertation.

CHAPTER III

SOURCES AND METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to share information about the setting for this study, followed by information explaining when, what, why, and how the data were collected. In addition, the chapter addresses the empirical techniques used in the process of analyzing this evidence. A map is provided that gives the location of Tijuana, Baja California (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Tijuana, Baja California

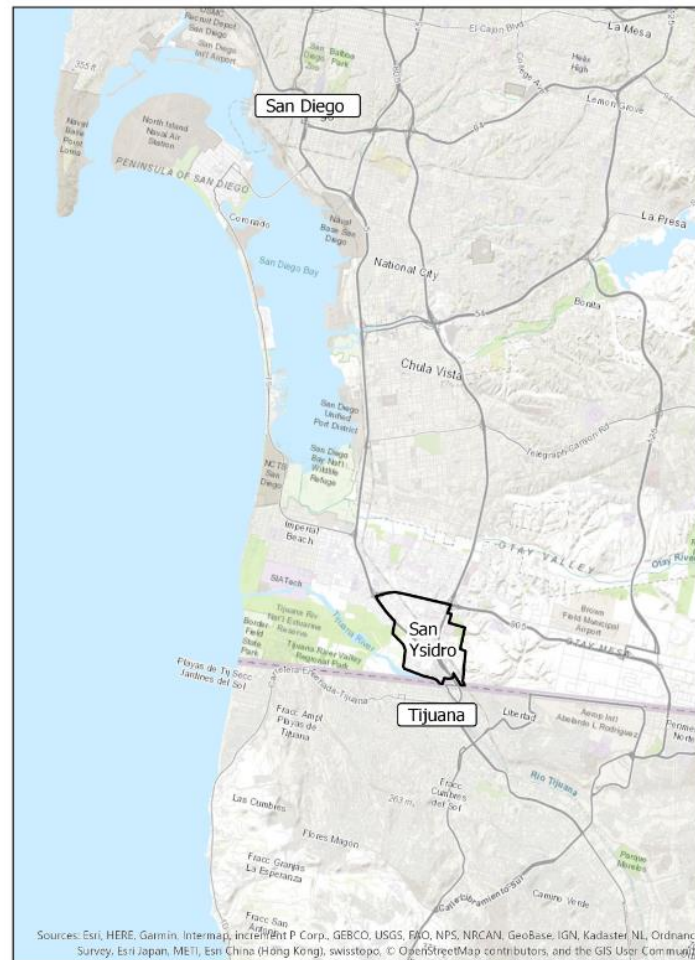
Study Area

I chose Tijuana as my research site for several reasons. While a master's student at San Diego State University, I was able to travel to Tijuana on a weekly basis as part of a course that I took on human rights matters with border activist Víctor Clark-Alfaro. The class met at the *línea*

internacional entre México y Estados Unidos. This hands-on experience brought me closer to things affecting vulnerable populations. I also met Max Mejía, a co-founder of the Gay movement of México on a national level and resident of Tijuana since the 1990s until his death in 2015. My *acercamiento* with the Gay community has grown throughout the years. In 2006, Max Mejía invited me to write for *El Arte de Vivir, Voz de la Diversidad*, a quarterly Gay publication contributing pieces in Spanish about topics related to immigration and literary criticism. In 2010, I participated in a round of conferences hosted by the 1st Annual GLBT Festival presented by COCUT (Comunidad Cultural de Tijuana) in which I shared my academic work in connection with the Gay movement. At this time, Gay activist Lorenzo Herrera asked me to participate in the 15th-year Gay Pride March of Tijuana. In reciprocity, I invited a small contingent of members of Tijuana's Gay movement to participate in the June 27, 2010, San Francisco Gay Parade. We marched the streets of downtown San Francisco and won an award for best international out-of-town contingent. Subsequently, I have been involved with various projects, including opening the first LGBT Resource Center in Tijuana and brainstorming with other members for ways to preserve their history.

Tijuana is the major urban epicenter on the northern Pacific West Coast of México. As the window to Latin America, Tijuana is known to be the busiest point of entry between two culturally different countries. The city neighbors San Ysidro, California (see Figure 2) and is 17 miles from San Diego. In contrasting these two cities, American essayist Richard Rodríguez (1992) observes that

Tijuana is not in the same historical time zone. Tijuana is poised at the beginning of an industrial age, a Dickensian city with palm trees. San Diego is a post-industrial city of high impact plastic and despair diets. And palm trees. (p. 1)



Created by J. Glatz, Western Michigan University Libraries Mapping Service

Figure 2. San Ysidro, California

Rodríguez's observation contrasts these two cities; although different on many levels, the economic and cultural influence on both sides of the border makes them dependent upon one another. Meanwhile, Mejía (2006) defines Tijuana as

una multicultura improvisada, una suma de muchas provincias vecindadas que se amontonan unas junto a otras, obligadas por el exilio forzado de sus pueblos de origen y por la necesidad de la supervivencia económica, y que da como resultado habitantes que tienen poca consciencia y poca identificación con el espacio en que viven [an improvised multi-culture, a summation of many provinces, that are piled together, driven from their towns of origin and forced into exile and economic survival, resulting in a population

with very little consciousness, and poor identification with the space in which they reside]. (p. 4)

Survey data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) gauged that, in 2015, Tijuana had a total population of 1,641,570 inhabitants, making it the sixth most populated city in Mexico. However, experts on border subjects, such as Víctor Clark-Alfaro, estimate that 2 million people reside in the city. The numbers vary because of the physical location of the city. The city's bi-national residents are constantly moving between México and the United States. It is common to see Tijuana residents attending schools and working *en el otro lado* [the other side]. On a daily basis, border experts estimate that legally 40,000 pedestrians enter the United States, while another 70,000 do so in their vehicle. The urban demographic composition of the city is diverse. Large numbers of its residents are migrants from Oaxaca, Michoacán, Sinaloa, and Jalisco. Among the immigrants who form this mosaic of diversity are Chinese, Haitians, and, more recently, Central Americans from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

This last wave of immigrants into Tijuana has caused tension among its native residents because of the violent way they entered the southern Mexican border territory: *a la brava* (recklessly). While, on the one hand, the grand majority of Tijuana residents sympathize with Central Americans and understand that they left their countries of origin because of violence and limited opportunities for employment, xenophobic sentiments have arisen from a small percentage of Tijuana residents who perceive Central Americans as a “chaotic mob.” Among this percentage is the conservative Tijuana mayor, Juan Manuel Gastelum, who publicly declared to *Milenio Noticias* that among the first 2,000 Central Americans to enter Tijuana are *una bola de vagos y marijuanos* (a bunch of bums and pot-heads). Gastelum also complained to this media

outlet that 87 individuals from the LGBT collective were taken to a private residence in Playas de Tijuana, a middle-class neighborhood, neither informing neighbors nor the metropolitan area of Tijuana.

This LGBT group was able to secure housing in the upscale Playas de Tijuana neighborhood through the Airbnb internet platform. After their arrival in this neighborhood, this newcomer collective was not warmly received by neighbors, who showed discomfort and anxiety from the presence of this gay lower working-class group. This scenario speaks volumes about the historical undesirability of LGBT people in the city of Tijuana. The city has been a site of ideological conflicts, where sexuality must be regulated. On the other hand, in the *zona de tolerancia* street prostitutes are subjected to abuse (sexual among others) and bribery by the local police force in exchange for plying their trade. One may question why that is the case, especially since Tijuana is so close to progressive California? The amalgamation of the cultural-social remittances that immigrants bring has greatly influenced the resistance of the dominant society to progressive changes within the area of sexual rights.

Data Collection

Data were collected for this investigation throughout two consecutive summers: July 2010 and July 2011. The first summer I visited two *hemerotecas* (newspaper and periodical libraries), one lodged inside the Archivo Histórico de Tijuana (see Figure 3), and the second located inside the *Biblioteca Pública Regional Benito Juárez No. 347*. I gathered newspapers' stories taken from *El Herald*o (1941), *El Mexicano* (1959), *Zeta* (1980), *El Sol de Tijuana* (1991), and *Diario 29* (1991) between December 1991 and January 1992. This time period was explicitly chosen with the intention of extracting information related to the November 30, 1991, Gay protest event. Clemens and Hughes (2002) noted that “newspapers, whether local ‘sheet’ or

a ‘newspaper record,’ are a staple for research on past protest” (p. 205). Expanding this thought, Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, and Giugni (1995) recognized that

Newspapers can be considered relatively reliable when it comes to reporting the “hard,” factual aspects of protest events, such as their timing and locality, the number of participants, the action form, the stated goal of the protesters, and the number of arrests that were made. (p. 254)



Figure 3. Jesse Anguiano, Summer 2010

Supplementing these newspapers, in the summer of 2011, I was given archival documents pertaining to this community. This gesture was a gold mine for my research. The plethora of sources included life histories of members of the movement, personal letters, photographs, and archives from *¡Y Qué!* and *Frontera Gay*. The sources were given to me by Gay activist Oscar Soto Marbán, who confided in me and understood then and now the necessity of documenting the social history of his community. These Gay memorabilia helped me understand the essence

of their culture and to learn how it operated. Additionally, in 2015, I purchased copies of whole texts of *¡Y Qué!* from the Joseph Carrier Special Collection at the University of Southern California (USC). All together, these historical records constituted the primary sources that assisted in explaining the successful ongoing mobilization of Tijuana's Gay movement.

In addition to these primary sources, secondary ones were used as well to support concepts pertaining to how movements have been studied, including the presentation of information with the aim of providing background information of the case study to the reader. In addition, literary and nonverbal sources were used as they "communicate the values, ideas, and feelings prominent in a given society" (Cantor & Schneider, 1967, p. 81). These include written works of Carlos Monsiváis and Max Mejía and the artwork by Roberto Lugos found inside *¡Y Qué!*.

Data Analysis and Procedures

Michael Billig (2004) suggested that a "*methodology* involves presenting rules of procedure about matters such as the collection of data and their analysis" (p. 13). The collection of data was an ongoing process. It required much patience, intuition, and a frank disposition to rely on informants back in Tijuana, México. But most importantly, it required a willingness to do detective work to uncover past events, circumstances, biographies, and the political, social, and cultural climate of the epoch. Historical research "involves a systematic process of researching data from the past that can help us understand what is going on now and what may occur in the future," (Martella, Nelson, Morgan, & Marchand-Martella, 2013, p. 339). Moreover, the task of an historian is to "obtain information about the past and then to make judgments about the significance, meaning, importance, and relevance of these bits of information" (Cantor & Schneider, 1967, p. 19). How does one begin to put facts together? In the early stages of sorting

out my resources, I immediately constructed a “an archive file in chronological order, reading this archive file several times for a preliminary assessment of the event” (in this case the Gay Raid), and thereafter I began to write “notes about compelling incidents, sequences of actions, repetitive acts, and other critical details that inform [my] understanding of the scene” (Lindholm, 1995, pp. 219-220). The archive file was kept in a manila folder, where copies of the newspapers were secure. A note was attached to each report with important information of the article: the date, page number, name of the newspaper, name of the reporter, and at least three notable themes found in the newspaper report. Having a prior knowledge of key events, obtained by word-of-mouth from my informants, facilitated the task of looking for specific information.

To further expand on how this process was launched, I credit a fourfold technique recommended by Cantor and Schneider (1967):

1. Bring to your analysis of the source texts as full a knowledge of the period as possible.
2. Read the text carefully from beginning to end until a pattern of meaning and significance appears.
3. Consider whether the pattern you have perceived is totally or just partly a valid interpretation of the significance and meaning of the text.
4. Use the general pattern of meaning that you have established as the key to interpreting every detail in the source. Go over the text paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence, and work out all the implications of the general interpretation. (pp. 47-48)

After conducting this first stage of data analysis, I took the process a step further using the qualitative approach of event-structure analysis, which led me to uncover the make-up of key events within Tijuana’s Gay social movement.

Schutt (2012) noted that event-structure analysis

relies on a systematic coding of key events or national characteristics to identify the underlying structure of action in a chronology of events. The codes are then used to

construct event sequences, make comparisons between cases, and develop causal explanations for a key event. (p. 390)

Schutt observed that event-structure analysis has five main principles of implementation:

1. Classifying historical information into discrete events;
2. Ordering events into a temporal sequence;
3. Identifying prior steps that are prerequisites for subsequent events;
4. Representing connections between events in a diagram;
5. Eliminating from the diagram connections that are not necessary to explain the main focal event.

(p. 390)

The summation of these qualitative historical approaches lessens the daunting task of sorting out the mass of data. In so doing, not all events were considered, while others were omitted after consideration. In spite of this, historical archival research helped with the inquiry of “When and how and why have people resisted authority?” (Clemens & Hughes, 2002, p. 201). Newspapers transmit reliability because they answer mere basic questions: the who, when, and where of past events. However, newspapers may be subject to bias from those who write the stories. In order to ameliorate such a scenario, a variety of newspapers were chosen. The process of conducting historical research requires the investigator to judge information in order to recreate the past. While this in itself is a biased act, I consulted with documents (e.g., Gay memorabilia) that carried authenticity. Authenticity is the result of taking into account the perspectives of those whom we study and how they see their social world. This generates the possibility of learning the thoughts, feelings, emotions of members of the Gay community. I identified these aspects through the first-person narration of *testimonio*.

In this dissertation, the *testimonio* of various members of Tijuana's Gay community was used as a tool to understand the blow of the November 30, 1991 Gay Raid, a decisive event that directed the movement to become the adversary of local authorities. A *testimonio* is a first person subjective narrative account. John Beverley (2004) explained that *testimonio* "represents an affirmation of the individual subject, even of individual growth and transformation, but in connection with a group or class situation marked by marginalization, oppression, and struggle" (p. 23). A salient characteristic of a *testimonio* is that it is a source of strength because it lets individuals speak their minds with regard to a pressing situation of conflict. The *testimonio* benefited this investigation because it considered the factor of authenticity; "It reflects a belief that those who study the social world should focus first and foremost on how participants view that social world, not on developing a unique social scientists' interpretation of that world" (Schutt, 2012, p. 51). Equally important is the fact that the *testimonio* puts emphasis on the holistic side of what it is to be human, as it relates a scope of emotions, ideas, and feelings concerning how resistance develops and how it is sustained. *Testimonio* becomes an even more important tool of analysis in a time when "anthropology no longer speaks with automatic authority for others defined as unable to speak for themselves ('primitive,' 'pre-illiterate,' 'without history')" (Clifford, 2004, p. 386).

The sample of five *testimonios* was drawn from the 1992 Vol.1/No.5 Gay publication of *Frontera Gay*. The *testimonios* rely on the voices of males who experienced the hostility of the November 30, 1991 anti-Gay raid by local Tijuana police. These firsthand accounts stem from three Mexican nationals and two Americans. Their ages vary from 23 to 56 years. To carry out the examination of these five *testimonios* I employ the account-giving technique which helps to learn about critical areas surrounding the raid, including leading us to learn about the emotional

and psychological experiences of the arrested. The account-giving technique as a tool for examination considers “the specific use of narrative where people try to account for, justify, excuse, legitimate, and so on, their actions or their situation,” (Gibbs, 2004, p. 310). The reliance upon using the voices of sexual minorities is added value to this research as these narratives account for a defense of individual rights.

Additionally, to facilitate a broader and deeper understanding of Tijuana’s Gay world, I offer an informal interview with lifelong Gay Mexican activist Max Mejía located in the Appendix C. Mejía’s answers were sent to me via email in 2011, as I sought to learn his point of view in relation to the advancements made regarding Gay rights advocacy in Tijuana.

Altogether, the data collection and the qualitative methodological strategies of analysis offer this research the mechanisms of interpretation that showcase the influences and motives that led this movement to form and assert itself.

CHAPTER IV

PERIOD OF AGITATION

The formative period of agitation in Tijuana's Gay movement began in the 1970s. Agitation functions "to dislodge and stir up people and so liberate them for movement in new directions" (Blumer, 1955, p. 205). For members of this community, this decade constituted an insecure time to disclose one's sexual identity. Coming out of the closet was a dangerous act: one could run the risk of losing one's job, be disowned by the family, or be beaten and harassed by police. While progress has been made in the advancement of Gay rights, etc., these scenarios still prevail today. Silence of one's own sexual identity consisted of repressing internally one's own feelings of desire for the same sex. The social organization of Tijuana's Gay community during the 1970s was primarily centered around one's own home, inside movie theaters, the Málaga bathhouse, and recreation areas such as *Teniente Park*, including a bar called Los Equipales, first raided in 1976, then again in the early 1990s. These private and public sites of desire offered the opportunity to socialize and find encounters of homosocial and homoerotic activities in the Gay subculture.

In the 1970s, Tijuana gained notoriety for the Las Vegas nightlife culture, which offered cabaret shows with ostentatious garments worn during the performances. These elaborate garments were usually designed by effeminate Gay men. The entertainment industry helped effeminate Gay men to be noticed. As choreographers and make-up artists for shows, they gained a level of respectability and recognition, whereas they may have encountered social rejection elsewhere. On the other hand, Gay men with masculine characteristics and with money often

passed as heterosexuals and were able to adapt easily to society and gain acceptance and security among heterosexuals. Class also played an important role for Gay men who were ensconced within the milieu of middle-class education and the arts. Among these privileged men was Emilio Velásquez, considered to be the founder of Tijuana's Gay movement (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Emilio Velásquez

Velásquez was slim and well-mannered with a full set of hair, and he wore a mustache well, enhancing his masculine physical features. The border culture, with its diverse cultural traits, granted Velásquez the opportunity to be fluent in both English and Spanish. Born into a middle-class family,

Emilio came to Tijuana from Mexico City with his parents and three sisters in the mid-1950s, when his father, Ildefonso Velásquez Martínez, was appointed head of the Tijuana district attorney's office. While his father was mayor, between 1962 and 1965, the boy went to public schools and lived in a large house in the exclusive Cacho district, near downtown. Emilio had a fascination for the arts. Upon graduating from law school in 1973, he performed in the national touring company of the rock musical *Jesus Christ, Superstar* and later worked on other musicals. (Matthews, 1990, p. 3)

Velásquez's transient stay in Mexico City allowed him to identify himself with his homosexuality. He had lived in Mexico City and had witnessed the student protests in 1968. The combination of his progressive mindset, creativity, love for the arts, and innate spirit of activism were assets that easily equipped him to take on the responsibility of an agitator in the early phases of Tijuana's gay movement. What is the role of an agitator within a movement? An agitator specializes in making "people aware of their own position and of the inequalities, deficiencies, and injustices" (Blumer, 1955, p. 205). As John D'Emilio (1983b) points out in relation to the Gay movement in the United States,

Before a movement could take shape, that process had to be far enough along so that at least some gay women and men could perceive themselves as members of an oppressed minority, sharing an identity that subjected them to systematic injustice. (p. 4)

Blumer (1955) identified two types of agitators: one who is an "excitable, restless, and aggressive individual" and another that is "more calm, quiet, and dignified" (p. 204). Velásquez possessed the latter set of traits. As the leader of the Gay movement, Velásquez's first intervention was to bring a degree of communal awareness of social inequality. Michael Warner (1991) described this consciousness as "a queer self-understanding" or knowledge that their stigma in society is "connected with gender, the family, notions of individuals' freedom, the state, public speech, consumption and desire, nature and culture . . . deep cultural norms about the bearing of the body" (p. 6). Articulating this awareness helps explain the early mobilization of the movement.

Membership recruitment for the movement started in 1978. These early meetings were informal and private. According to Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2003), privacy establishes a zone within which certain activities that would not be permitted “in public” are legitimated (p. 7). The first gathering materialized at the house of Juan Enrique Amezcua, located on Turin Street in the Roma neighborhood. Among those who participated in this first meeting were Emilio Velásquez, Juan Carlos Díaz García, Pedro Luis Amezcua, Juan Enrique Amezcua, Daniel Eduardo Camacho, Frederick William Scholl, and Sergio Ruvalcaba Carlos. The second private meeting took place at Sergio Carlos home, located between Guanajuato and Dinamarca streets in the Cacho neighborhood. In this second meeting, members explored the idea of collecting personal money to fund the movement. This idea extended outside their small group, opening the possibility of asking personal friends and acquaintances for donations. Sergio Carlos remembered receiving funds from personal friends, family members, and closeted homosexuals. In exchange for the monies, donors requested discretion and that their names be withheld for fear of any repercussions to their reputation. Being gay and associating oneself with a homosexual was socially discouraged (S. Ruvalcaba Carlos, personal communication, September 21, 2018). Affirming one’s homosexuality in the open posed a serious threat and created unnecessary conflict, resulting in stigmatization by the dominant heterosexual elements. Donors, however, understood the importance of the movement; thus, giving funds indicated a spirit of their desire to help a community living in the margins of society.

The meetings accelerated members’ consciousness by inspiring them to “raise questions about what they have previously taken for granted and to form new wishes, inclinations, and hopes” (Blumer, 1955, p. 205). Furthermore, the purpose of these meetings was to discuss strategies to recruit members and ways to educate others regarding the social construction of

homosexuality. The educational efforts began with passing out flyers at Gay venues to inform the gay community that homosexuality was not a disease, nor was it unnatural. Homosexuality and its culture were here to stay. While dominant society viewed homosexuality as unnatural and perverse, leaders and followers of the movement resisted by refuting this discourse. Addressing homosexuality as normal, Tijuana's Gay movement activated a line of communication that challenged the status quo.

By the early 1980s, members met in a public space, the second floor of Emilio's Café Cantante which became the hub of the movement's operation. This venue was opened for at least 25 years until it closed. In the absence of a Gay center, Emilio's Café was the first public meeting venue for Tijuana's people. The café along with Plaza Santa Cecilia became locales of resistance where these growing populations shaped its social identity. (Plaza Santa Cecilia is the main venue for Mariachi singing groups in Tijuana, much as Mexico's City's Plaza Garibaldi.) Korostelina (2007) suggested that "social identity becomes a surrogate for society: it serves as a 'home' that no longer exists in an individualized world of globalization and is perceived as a comfortable shelter that provides protection and certainty" (p. 17).

For Tijuana's Gay community, Gay spaces have constituted an important part of the agitation phase of the movement because they shape gay culture. Hindle (1994) defined Gay space as

the physical manifestation of gay community; it can include any area which gay uses, a space where gay people can be "out", and it can exist in a variety of scales from individual premises to agglomerations of those places and the spaces between them. (p. 11)

While there are established Gay enclaves in the United States, such as The Castro in San Francisco, Hillcrest in San Diego, West Hollywood in Los Angeles and New York's Greenwich

Village, etc., there is a different scenario in México. In uncovering possible reasons behind the absence of Gay neighborhoods in México, Murray (1995) explained that the family and machismo are two factors in Latin America that have halted the proliferation of Gay community formation. Murray explained that

continued residence with their family limits the flamboyance of those inclined to gender variance as well as nearly precluding same-sex couples living together. It also eliminates the possibility of the kind of residential concentration that in the United States and Canada preceded (and enabled) the development of gay institutions and a sense of gay community. (p. xi)

Expanding on Murray's perspective, Mejía (2006) argued that the nonappearance of a Gay community in Tijuana, México, has to do with the lack of

una buena dosis de cultura comunitaria, pero también la idea fija de que el desarrollo de la comunidad gay se mide por la concentración geográfica en una zona o barrio de la ciudad. Lo cual por cierto es inencontrable en Tijuana, donde los gays viven revueltos en la ciudad y sus lugares de diversión igualmente se encuentran dispersos en varios sitios [a good sample of communitarian sample, but also the fixed idea that the development of the gay community is measured by the geographical concentration in the zone or neighborhood of the city. What for sure is findable in Tijuana are Gays scattered in the city and their places of entertainment equally are found dispersed in various sites]. (p. 2)

Drucker (2000b) asserted that Gay neighborhoods are a "North American specialty, rare even in Europe" (p. 24). Tijuana has no established Gay neighborhoods. There are no long-term living quarters in the immediate area of Plaza Santa Cecilia because the neighborhood is given over to small businesses on one hand and to the red-light district on the west side of Calle Primera. Despite not having a living enclave the Gay community in this border has able to secure spaces of its own. They have done so by forming community inside the historical landmark of Plaza Santa Cecilia. Geography may be used as an analytical tool to understand the interplay among space, place, and community. How is gay sexuality constructed in this Plaza? How does space/place shape identity? What is the relationship between space and people's agency as a

community? These questions *help explain the successful and ongoing mobilization of the gay community in Tijuana, México.*

Plaza Santa Cecilia

Plazas are the central gathering point of Mexico's cities and towns and have been important spaces in which Mexicans socialize. Taylor (1986) has observed that

plazas lend themselves particularly well to homosexual activities because many of the special rules of interaction common to parks are in force. Regardless of class, financial status, sexual orientation, or social respectability, in the plaza's citizens are free to mingle with one another, loll, and loiter as they please. (p. 125)

Taylor (1986) affirmed that in "Mexico, men commonly look for male companionship and adventure in plazas late at night" (p. 126). For gay people, Plaza Santa Cecilia is not only a place where one can cruise and find a male counterpart for an erotic experience, but it is a place where Gay people can openly and freely affirm their sexual identity. Before its inauguration, this space served as Argüello Street, in honor of Santiago Argüello, an early founder of Tijuana.

The traditional layout of a Mexican plaza typically consists of a kiosk in the center space, a main Catholic church of the city or town, and a city hall. However, Plaza Santa Cecilia does not exhibit this generic format. A main kiosk is not present (except for those of the Mixtec indigenous community). The city hall that once thrived in the area is now a museum of Tijuana's beginnings and is home to the *Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad* (Historical Archive of the City). The non-modernist Cathedral of Guadalupe in Tijuana is in proximity, but not close enough to be considered part of the plaza. Being so close to the *zona de tolerancia* [zone of tolerance], Plaza Santa Cecilia has been cast as a space of moral depravity.

Zonas de Tolerancia

Zonas de tolerancia are physical spaces where deviancy is tolerated. Historically, homosexuals have been visible in this area, dating back to the 1920s. According to Cantú (2009), these zones emerged during the post-revolutionary period; “*zonas de tolerancia* were conceived as a way to regulate spatially various forms of social deviance, including prostitution and homosexuality” (p. 60). Curtis and Arreola (1991) observed that these zones of tolerance “have been vital and conspicuous elements in the Mexican border city scape, a reflection of the importance of prostitution and adult entertainment in the local economies” (p. 333). However, these spaces may be vulnerable and may be targets of cleansing sprees by local administrations because they pose a threat to the good morale of the city. Bell and Binnie (2000) affirmed that “the cleaning up of the sex zones goes hand in hand with an ideology of the production of safe domestic space, where families can occupy space without the contagion from alternative forms of intimacy” (p. 95). Perhaps that is why *zonas de tolerancia* are often regulated and constricted in certain locations—away from wealthy urban neighborhoods. To provide a better understanding of where the *zona de tolerancia* is located, I have provided a map in Figure 5.

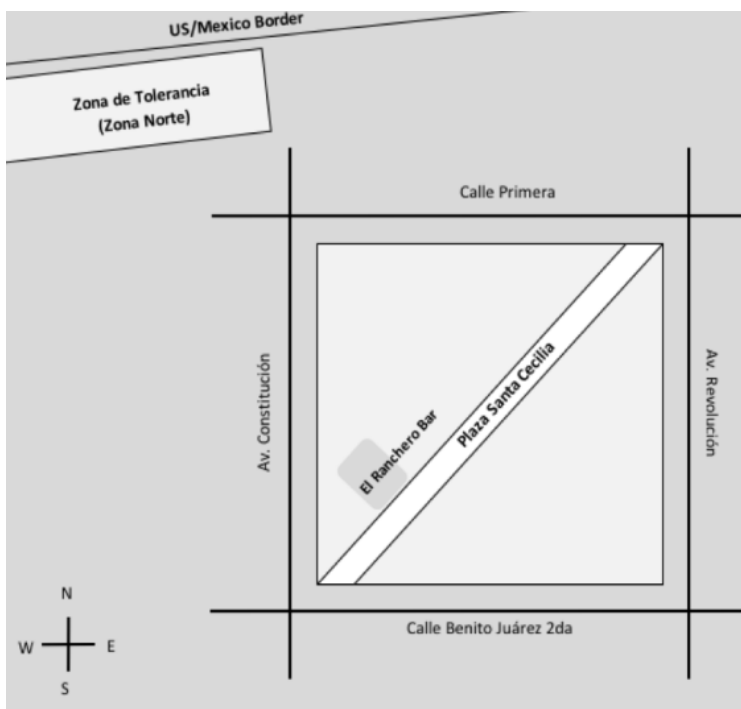


Figure 5. Zona de Tolerancia/El Ranchero Bar

Plaza Santa Cecilia lies in the Zona Norte district of downtown Tijuana and is about a 15-minute walk to the US-México border. It is a corridor of businesses catering to both local and American tourists which was founded on November 22, 1980 in a time when Tijuana was experiencing an urban renewal. This space is a cacophony of smells and of noises. Local writer Martín Romero (1999) describes Plaza Santa Cecilia as

heterogénea, multiracial: intelectuales, obreros, turistas, inmigrantes, padrotes, artistas, limosneros, carteristas, dementes, meretrices, *gays* . . . La Santa Cecilia permanece gracias a los bebedores, los buscacoitos, que da vida al lugar y así buscan el deseo y el sentido necesarios para continuar funcionando en este maravilloso estado de cosas.

[heterogeneous, multiracial: intellectuals, laborers, tourists, immigrants, pimps, artists, beggars, pickpockets, looneys, prostitutes, gays... Santa Cecilia remains thanks to the drinkers, those looking for sexual intercourse, that gives life to this place, and like this, they look for the necessary desire and meaning to continue to function in this marvelous state of situations]. (p. 62)

Among the businesses in Plaza Santa Cecilia are dentists who fix one's teeth for a low fee, public notaries, affordable restaurants of Mexican cuisine, barbers' shops, parlors, and small yellow kiosks attended by Mixtec autochthonous peasant migrants who sell Mexican novelties. Plaza Santa Cecilia is a hub of diversity, of people, of music tastes, and of religion. The tunes of *mariachi* are heard, including those of the *conjunto norteco*, or the guitarist who soulfully plays a ballad for \$20 pesos. On the weekend, the main stage is taken over by young folkloric dancers, local singers, and evangelicals who preach the second coming of Christ. Later that same day, one may hear the chants of Mennonites from Minnesota, as onlookers are mesmerized by their garments and their ability to sing in the Spanish language.

Agitation's function was to persuade members to create a movement fostered by esprit de corps: "the development of informal association on the basis of fellowship" (Blumer, 1955, p. 207). This esprit de corps kept the movement alive through the introduction of local, national, and international fellowship. This enabled the movement to gain a broader audience, to connect itself to a wider support system, and to identify itself with kindred outside struggles. The esprit de corps phase also propelled the movement to begin publishing its own media. This written record constituted an important resource for the movement.

CHAPTER V

ESPRIT DE CORPS

The success of Tijuana's Gay movement was substantially influenced by a flowering esprit de corps. It is crafted through a common identity relying on what Blumer (1955) calls paraphernalia of ritual: "a set of sentimental symbols, such as slogans, songs, cheers, poems, hymns, expressive gestures, and uniforms" (p. 208). Furthermore, esprit de corps serves the purpose of authenticating ideological arenas of solidarity by means of fellowship and organizational endeavor. The socialization of a movement's members is crucial to "developing feelings of intimacy and people have the sense of sharing a common experience and of forming a select group" (Blumer, 1955, p. 205). As an expression of this earlier form of group solidarity, on June 1983 Alejandro García, and a small contingent of 25 Gay men decided to march the streets of Tijuana. This first attempt of public Gay pride backfired. The group was met with social repudiation, by frustrated and angry Tijuana spectators, who, with displeasure, threw eggs and *mentadas de madre* [insults to one's mother] to participants (Sergio Carlos, personal communication, 2017). The Gay organized contingent learned that transgressing social public boundaries was not yet possible. Moreover, the movement learned that social cohesion among them became a link to the movements' survival. According to Blumer, esprit de corps is asserted in three ways: (1) in-group/out-group relation, (2) the formation of an informal fellowship association, and (3) participation in formal ceremonial behavior (p. 206).

To be successful, a movement must have an adversary or opposition against whom it can justify the reasons why the movement has emerged. By Blumer's reckoning the essence of the

in-group/out-group exists “when two groups come to identify each other as enemies” (p. 206).

The out-group, in this case, the Gay community, was

regarded as unscrupulous and vicious and is felt to be attacking the values which the in-group [dominant society] holds dear . . . the in-group not only feels that they are right and correct, but believe they have a common responsibility to defend and preserve their values. (Blumer, 1955, pp. 206-207)

The attitudes and sentiments of both groups in Tijuana gave rise to actions and discourses that highlighted their opposing social ideas. Each group came up with rationales to justify their actions and not lose power over the other. On the one hand, a large segment of the dominant society denounced the Gay community as deviant and non-normative, created a pretext to keep the Gay community subordinate (as we will see in subsequent chapters); and found this Gay community at “fault” for various ailments of society. How did this community find ways to contest and deflect forms of inequality? At times, the dominant group ceded some degree of power to the subordinate group to relieve some pressure without relinquishing its power completely.

As part of its repertoire of resistance strategies, the movement utilized its esprit de corps to establish a relationship between local and international organizations. On the international front, for example, members traveled to Washington, D.C. in 1979 to attend the first National Conference of Third World Lesbians and Gays, hosted by the National Coalition of Black Gays (NCBG). Members of the Tijuana Gay movement and the national Mexican delegation took advantage of their stay on the East Coast. After attending the National Conference of Third World Lesbians and Gays, the Gay movement of Tijuana became energized. This energy was translated into an immediate action to form FIGHT (Frente Internacional por las Garantías Humanas en Tijuana).

FIGHT was “una organización de servicio comunitario que se ha convertido en una organización no-lucrativa, sin intereses políticos o religiosos y debidamente registrada” (a non-profit organization of community service, with neither religious nor political interest and was duly registered) (FIGHT, 1993, p. 2). The mastermind behind this move was Emilio Velásquez, who deliberately chose the name FIGHT (in Spanish, *lucha*) for its symbolic interpretation. The word is also an expression of a slogan that recognizes an international element to their struggle. In terms of empowerment, FIGHT came from the need for an informal association that resulted from their social exclusion. FIGHT became one of the first local Latin American Gay organizations in support of the welfare of Gay people. This local organization was an instrument connecting members to a chain of regional and international associations. For example, Tijuana’s Gay movement had ties with IGA (International Gay Association, now International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association [ILGA]) established in 1978. According to ILGA’s press kit, this organization “speaks and lobbies for more than 1,200 member organizations from 132 countries” (ILGA, n.d., p. 1). The esprit de corps solidarity was also bolstered through the empathy extended from other groups who were struggling with oppressors.

About this time, Latin American’s Gay movements denounced the U.S.’s intervention agenda in Central American countries. Tijuana’s Gay movement showed support by participating in the 1983 *2do Encuentro Fronterizo de Solidaridad con el Pueblo de El Salvador* (2nd Border Encounter of Solidarity with the people of El Salvador). “Donde su mayor objetivo fue apoyar al pueblo salvadoreño por sus derechos políticos, humanos y de libertad, los cuales son vilmente atropellados por la dictadura militar que existe en El Salvador” [the main objective was to support Salvadorean people with regard to their political, human, and liberty rights, which are vilely run over by its military dictatorship] (Rubalcaba, 1983, p. 4). The Salvadoreño dictatorship

and those of other Central American countries were backed by the interventionist United States. Other primary actions by various activists of Tijuana's Gay movement were their notable presence in 1984 in the Los Angeles, Echo Park March supporting Central American people. The esprit de corps of the movement revealed the group's empathy toward other people who were struggling with oppression. Also, the activists of Tijuana's Gay movement manifested how an extension across boundaries resulted in wider connections between people; but most importantly it demonstrated that

the imagined political geography of location is intended to resist a politics where the spaces of difference and differentiation are erased, where the experiences of power relations are universalised, where struggles are organised only through one experience of injustice, injury, and inequality. (Pile & Keith, 1997, p. 28)

In the likeness of Central Americans, Gay people in Tijuana were resisting power structures. The members of Tijuana's Gay movement knew that their struggle for liberation was not merely a Gay related experience, but a universalized understanding of oppression that extended to class/group prejudice. This instance of expanding their solidarity with the Central American people was defined by the Gay community's strong rejection of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalist ploys stemming from a domineering United States.

Their geographical proximity to San Diego allowed the movement to create ties with gay activists in that city. Among these activists was Pat Brown, founder of the militant Gay movement in San Francisco which preceded Stonewall by three months. Brown was also heavily involved in FHAR (Frente Homosexual de Accion Revolucionaria in Mexico City in 1979). Emilio and Brown were political comrades and close friends. Emilio was the major key in creating the socio-political relations outside of Tijuana.

At the same time, another member of the Tijuana movement, Enrique Alejandro Jiménez García insisted in establishing relations outside of Tijuana and San Diego. He was enmeshed with working for Gay groups of Rosarito, Ensenada and Tecate, including his hometown of Mexicali. Soon a sharp division between Emilio and Enrique Alejandro surfaced.

In 1983, a crisis emerged amongst members of the movement. Tensions and differences arose. Enrique Alejandro claimed that he and others were withdrawing from FIGHT because of differing perspectives, problems with the treasury, and the lack of commitment by its members (García, 1983). Max Mejía (2000a) later wrote that the tensions among members of FIGHT had to do with fighting for the leadership of the group, and that these differences resulted in “*choques de caracteres, competencias de liderazgo y celos personales*” [character flaws, vying for leadership and petty jealousies] (p. 4). García attributed the low retention of participants to the proliferation in Tijuana of Gay discos. The social arena of the Gay discos temporarily threatened the cohesiveness of the movement. Business began to capitalize in connection to a gay clientele that were eager to spend hours in this new culture. The Gay bar as a phenomenon in contemporary history was augmented by the need for a refuge from the violence on urban streets and public plazas nourished by the anxiety, alienation and self-hatred created by the archons of a heteronormative homophobic Mexican culture.

With respect to Emilio's and Enrique Alejandro's divergent views, these two departed ways in 1983. Emilio continued to lead FIGHT, while a discouraged Enrique Alejandro started a new Gay group: Grupo Liberalista (later Grupo *¡Y Qué!*) whose trimester bulletin was *¡Y Qué!* (*So What!*). *¡Y Qué!* was distributed in Tijuana, Mexicali, Mexico City, Los Ángeles, and San Diego. In Mexicali the *¡Y Qué!* publication could be found in the *Librería Universitaria*; in San Diego, at the Grass Roots Cultural Center; in Los Angeles, inside “A Different Light Bookstore.”

By branching out, the publication gained readership, but most importantly, it allowed the movement to network outside its local boundaries. The editor responsible for *¡Y Qué!* was Alejandro García. As the first gay magazine in Tijuana, *¡Y Qué!* established networks: en la medida de nuestras posibilidades económicas y personales, se mantiene comunicación e información con organizaciones gay/lesbianas de México, Guadalajara, EEUU, y otros países. Participa también con intervenciones en favor de la homosexualidad fuera del *ghetto* gay” [in the measure of our personal and economic possibilities it maintained communication and information with gay/lesbian organizations of México, Guadalajara, the U.S., and other countries. It participated also with involvements in favor of homosexuality outside the gay ghetto] (Garcia, 1984, p. 3). *¡Y Que's!* philosophy was to

informar y orientar sobre acontecimientos y temas que afectan de una u otra manera el estilo de vida de la gente gay/lesbiana. Además dentro de sus objetivos se pretende, concientizar sobre la necesidad de establecer una organización de liberación homosexual en Baja California [inform and orient about happenings and themes that affect one or another manner gay/lesbians lifestyles. Moreover, its objectives were the raising of consciousnesses for the necessity of establishing an organization for gay freedom in Baja California]. (“Cuales son los Objetivos,” 1985, p. 1)

García chose the slogan *¡Y Qué!* (*So What?*) intentionally. So what? If I am Gay, so what if I love differently? This mantra revealed a standoffish ideology that shrugged off the wiles of the dominant over-culture—the “enemy” of the gay community. Blumer (1955) suggested that a functional characteristic of esprit de corps is “the creation of group opposition through the identification of an enemy as a scapegoat that “serves to rally the members around their aims and values” (p. 207).

Esprit de corps flourished in *¡Y Qué!* through poetry, political, social, and cultural analyses of society, and artwork by Roberto Burgos. Burgo’s illustrations complemented textual written material. His artwork highlighted the emotional state of the Gay community. For

example, in the poem “Nostalgia” by Oscar d’México (1985), Burgos’s black-and-white imagery captured the sorrow of the author by illustrating a hairy-chested male figure with tears running down his face. The image expressed the longing and affection for a past love. The memory of love and pain are both reflected in the poem and within Burgos’s art. For the Gay community, *¡Y Qué!* offered, for the first time, a positive public visual forum to express one’s internal feelings and emotions; which otherwise would have remained hidden. This gay publication symbolically provided a place of acceptance and resistance. *Esprit de corps* offered many benefits, as previously discussed, including “the new conception of himself that the individual has formed as a result of the movement and of his participation in it” (Blumer, 1955, p. 205).

Tijuana’s Gay movement grew in various ways by affirming group cohesiveness and individual self-hood. Through *¡Y Qué!* the Gay community set forth printed material that accentuated their organizational effort. Both Emilio and Alejandro drew on the community’s isolation in this first phase of the movement. Isolation was a thing of the past. Their efforts to create a world alternative distant from heteronormative social control gave the movement a fluid state of being. Noteworthy, this fluidity of response is found with the start of the AIDS epidemic in Tijuana. The movement created a united front for those affected by the disease. Tijuana’s Gay men learned that morale was keyed into ameliorating the psychological impact of this disease. The next chapter addresses how the dominant society characterized Gay men as being innately associated with AIDS.

CHAPTER VI

AIDS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORALE

The first cases of AIDS in México emerged in 1983 when detected in a homosexual man (Valdespino-Gómez et al., 1995). Gay urban men found themselves ailing from various symptoms: flu, fever, dramatic weight loss, swollen lymph nodes, and the appearance of skin rashes on their body. These symptoms pointed to what was referred to by health officials as GRID (Gay-related immune deficiency), because these symptoms mainly surfaced among gay men. Meanwhile, inside the circles of the Gay life of Tijuana, AIDS was referred to “la peste rosa” (the pink plague). Many experienced despair and anxiety and refrained from sexual contact, which meant further limitations in their social and personal worlds. As a consequence, the Gay social life of Tijuana diminished, which meant further marginalization; admitting being Gay was a self-inflicted societal suicide. Protection came from silence.

Outside the purview of Gay Tijuana, Mexican media characterized this disease as a variation of a homosexual cancer. Mexican health officials downplayed the effect of the disease. For example, as Hector Carillo (2002) noted, “The official view was that the disease did not represent a problem for Mexicans” (p. 214). For example, the Mexican government continued to point out how AIDS was a foreign problem. As Dr. Carlos Díaz, González-Villareal and Morales (1991) noted, “Toward the end of 1986 and in April of 1988, shortly after the former Secretary of Health, Dr. Guillermo Soberón, had declared in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua in the aftermath of some police raids, that A.I.D.S. *was a foreign disease and only a problem for Americans*” (p. 105). As a consequence, an inadequate response from Mexican officials displayed a lack of

perspective and little interest in a disease that was spreading. It may be that this dismissal of the severity of the advent of AIDS had to do with the fear of identifying the disease with a sexual matter. This attitude generated a clash with dominant Catholic values that prohibited the use of this preventative measure as it transgressed the rhetoric in place about constraints in relation to sexuality. The implications of an open social dialogue would threaten the sexual silence embedded in Mexican society. In this sense, rather than to publicly disclose sexual matters, concealment and silence often were social signifiers that demanded being prudent. To this matter, Hector Carrillo (2002) notes that some of characteristics of sexual silence involved avoiding sexual matters in the open and a form to evade “the realities of sex” (p. 139). Carrillo questions further the implications of the social phenomena of sexual silence in Mexican society by explaining to the core its function: “It constitutes the only acceptable strategy to deal with sexual difference because it provides avenues for the tacit tolerance, and perhaps even acceptance, of sexual desires and behaviors that escape the narrow confines of the core of ‘normality’” (p. 139). It is argued that the slow response from government officials resulted because the disease affected homosexuals, a community that warranted eradication from the face of the earth. For example, in terms of government support in México, Carlos Monsiváis (2010) noted that

en los gobiernos de Miguel de la Madrid, Carlos Salinas de Gortari y Ernesto Zedillo, la Secretaria de Salud no lanza campanas dirigidas específicamente a los gays, es de suponerse, el Estado no puede ni debe reconocer la existencia de enfermedades derivadas de perversiones [in the government of Miguel de la Madrid, Carlos Salinas de Gortari and Ernesto Zedillo, the Health Secretariat of Mexico does not put in place campaigns directed to gays; the State cannot nor will it recognize the existence of diseases derived from perversions]. (pp. 164-165)

The economic crisis of the 1980s in México did not help the AIDS cause, as government officials were uncommitted to measures decreasing contagion, instead implementing austerity

measures that cut back on social services. Furthermore, the early dismissal of the AIDS crisis ensued a drawn-out discussion of condom usage.

In addition, AIDS fostered a consistent pattern of myths and tales that cast homosexual males as responsible for their own demise and for the propagation of the disease— yet another reason for the social control of this community. Within this context, the Catholic Church argued that AIDS was a consequence of promiscuity and immoral sexual behaviors among homosexuals. For example, the Italian Catholic prelate, Girolamo Prigione, declared AIDS a *castigo de dios* (God's punishment). In addition to this public condemnation, "fear of the disease resulted in discrimination against people with AIDS and the systematic violation of human rights of people with HIV in hospitals, clinics, and their workplaces" (Carrillo, 2002, p. 214).

Considering these scenarios, in what ways did the Gay community of Tijuana address the AIDS crisis? How was this crisis confronted? How does the movement's response speak to its success?

In *Frontera Gay*, Max Mejía (2000b) writes that the arrival of AIDS in Tijuana drained the energy of members of the gay movement:

el trabajo que libran en el campo del sida drena sus energías al por mayor. Enfrentan esa actividad en condiciones, absolutamente desventajosas, con muertos aquí y allá, sin recursos propios y sin los mas mínimos reconocimiento y comprensión por parte del gobierno y de la propia sociedad" [the work that they wage in the AIDS field drains their energy wholesale. They face this activity in conditions that are absolutely disadvantageous, with dead people here and there, without their own resources and without the least recognition and understanding on the part of the government and of society itself]. (p. 5)

The absence of governmental support during the early stages of the AIDS crisis generated at the local level the dismissal of the gravity of the disease; it was articulated by Dr. Ismael Llamas Amaya, head of the federal health department of Tijuana, who characterized AIDS as a *puto's* (faggot's) disease. In sharp contrast, the Gay community of Tijuana oriented their efforts

to provide comfort for those in distress. AIDS, in many cases, was experienced in isolation and elicited further violence, segregation, exclusion, and emotional states of shame and guilt that lowered the self-esteem of those affected and at times led to suicide. Matthews (1990) noted: “Emilio is convinced that violence against gays has escalated since AIDS claimed its first victim locally, a newspaper reporter for *El Mexicano*, in Tijuana, in 1983” (p. 1). The development of morale among Gay members was crucial to cope with the spread of AIDS.

Blumer (1955) argues that morale “can be thought of as giving persistency and determination to a movement; its test is whether solidarity can be maintained in the face of adversity” (p. 208). Blumer further observed that morale displays three elements. The first-dimension calls attention to the idea that “what is evil, unjust, improper, and wrong will be eradicated with the success of the movement” (p. 208). Judged by society, the Gay community felt a sense of obligation to ameliorate the effects of *la peste rosa*. From this standpoint, the Gay community had to put aside their differences and animosity within the collective. Group solidarity and cohesion framed their effort to sustain their ideals of succeeding in the long-term goal of eradicating AIDS.

A second element in the development of morale is associated with the idea that “success is inevitable, even though it be only after a hard struggle” (Blumer, 1955, p. 209). The Gay community maintained an optimistic attitude and deployed preventative interventions to contain the further spread of the AIDS virus. To illustrate, the Gay space of Emilio’s Café functioned as a venue where hopeless Gay men would find positive psychological affirmation in times of pervasive societal contempt. The café opened in 1978 and became a symbol of strength for those individuals who were rejected by hospitals and families. Essential routine procedures— such as

drawing blood— took place at this venue because hospitals refused to perform this activity for fear of contagion.

In 1984, Emilio Velázquez, with the help of medical doctor Carlos Díaz “La Polvorienta”; lawyer Marco Alvarado Kim; AIDS activist Franko Guillén, “La Chesca”; and psychologist Juan Manuel Bustamante, formed *Organización SIDA Tijuana, A.C.* (OST). The organization was responsible for educating local Gay men and society at large about AIDS. A year later, in 1985, Alejandro García became involved, establishing *Proyecto SIDA Tijuana*, which performed a similar function as *Organización SIDA Tijuana, A.C.* Both organizations secured donations, such as medications, money, clothes, and lodging for AIDS patients. By 1987, the state of Baja California reported having had seven cases of AIDS. According to Neal Matthews, in 1990, 65 cases were documented by health officials. However, the census fail to accurately report reality. An official count of AIDS cases in México took place only when the government in 1986 decided to establish CONASIDA (Consejo Nacional de Prevención y Control de SIDA/National AIDS Council).

Men suffering from AIDS experienced the disease in differentiated ways. Those with money who were clinically ill were able to afford the costly treatments associated with prolonging one’s life in the United States. For example, as Matthews (1990) observed, “San Diego AIDS workers were shocked recently when one wealthy young man from Mexico City came to them for treatment, saying he had spent \$30,000 on hospital care down there” (p. 1). But in those days, the socioeconomic status of Gay men did not stop the inevitable death. Gay working-class men, in the meantime, were relegated to receiving medical services from public health officials who donated their time and expertise to help those living with an AIDS diagnosis. Individuals like Dr. Carlos Díaz and nurse practitioner Mary McCarthy were

motivated by personal convictions to help Gay men. Mary McCarthy was a nurse who worked at University of California, San Diego, Owen Clinic.

With the apex of contagion in the early 1990s, Gay men's health continued to be compromised at various levels. Ernesto is a case in point. His ill health was documented by Neal Matthews (1990), a reporter from San Diego Reader. Ernesto's health, which was publicly disclosed, provided a window that captured the effects of AIDS. Matthews reported:

He was on AZT for a time, but it was so toxic for him, it was discontinued. His mother feeds him 26 vitamins a day, dissolved in water. . . . She gives him 12 different medications every day, including KP, the mysterious "Korean AIDS Treatment," available on the underground market. (Matthews, 1990, p. 1)

Closely attuned to her son's health care, the mother, Sra. Armendáriz —clinging to past memory— was mindful of her son's deteriorating health condition. Matthews observed:

The *señora* takes out Ernesto's passport and shows his pictures around. The extraordinarily handsome face bears almost no resemblance to the half-dead man in the next room. But she has a need to exhibit the picture, a compulsion to remind herself and anyone else who will listen and look that her son once was beautiful. (p. 1)

While many Gay men died away from their nuclear family, Ernesto's story is a testimonial to the way Mexican mothers met the threat of AIDS by not withdrawing nor pulling back from the company of their sons. Sra. Armendáriz stood by her son till his death. The mortality rate from AIDS continued well through the 1990s, and the inadequate response from local hospitals became even more evident. Argelia Lu (1991), from *Diario 29*, documented the case of José N., who died in the streets because he was abandoned by Tijuana health officials. Similarly, reporter Felipe Ortiz Morales, from *El Herald*o, documented the case of Javier Ávila, a 27-year-old who was systematically rejected from General Hospital in Tijuana because he was in the terminal stages of AIDS. Fortunately, a group of Samaritan women, volunteers from Grupo México, were finding support for Javier. "Esta muy decaído, continúa una de las buenas señoras, ya no come

nada, todo lo devuelve, hoy que iba a salir para la Ciudad de México ya no pudo ni levantarse, y pensamos que si sale, no llega vivo” (He is downcast, continues one of the good women, he does not eat, he vomits everything up, today when he was going to depart to Mexico City, but he couldn't get up, and we think that if he does leave, he won't arrive alive) (Morales, 1992, 4a). The health profile of Ernesto, as well as that of Javier and many others, serves as an example of how Gay men experienced AIDS. In addition, the success of the movement is also attributed to the role of Gay activists, including women, serving as liaisons who advocated and cared for gay men.

The third element of morale development is oriented toward a sacred mission that allows a movement to discover success (Blumer, 1955, p. 209). The sacred mission of the movement was manifold. Among its many missions was the slowing down of AIDS by using educational efforts to disperse information about the virus. For example, in 1985, Centro de Información de la Comunidad Homosexual y Lesbiana (Information Center for the Homosexual and Lesbian Community) was established to provide resources to people, including information related to AIDS, basic legal inquiries, employment, housing, etc. The idea behind this locale was to mirror its equivalent center in San Diego, which was established in 1972. To ensure the success of the movement with regard to the epidemic, *Organización SIDA Tijuana* circulated information about proper condom usage and safe sex practices. This measure had been implemented by the organization since 1987. Also important was the launch of a telephone hotline in 1988 that served individuals who had questions about AIDS and its transmission. The hotline provided a space of anonymity, particularly for those individuals who feared face-to-face exposure and the disclosure of their sexual orientation. These overall efforts depended on numerous volunteers and a wide range of fundraising.

Strategies for fundraising were critical to support AIDS-related causes and services for those cast out of society. In the 1990s, it was not unusual to witness bi-national support between Tijuana and San Diego for the collection of money. For example, a fashion show, carried out by *Fundación SIDA de Las Californias* and sponsored by Hotel Omni and several businesses from Horton Plaza, was able to raise \$6,000 (U.S.) to be used to train medical personnel, including ongoing training for Tijuana nurses, at the Owen Medical Clinic at University of California San Diego (“Desfile de Modas para el Centro Regional VIH de Tijuana,” 1990, p. 4). The historical record reveals that collaboration between Tijuana and San Diego played a key role in AIDS prevention efforts to help Gay men. Additionally, on May 29-30, 1991, *Organización SIDA Tijuana* collaborated with *El Show de Francis* to raise funds for the organization (“Organización SIDA Tijuana Presenta: El Show de Francis,” 1991, p. 8). Francis was the first crossdressing male entertainer, a celebrity in México who performed impersonations of Mexican and internationally renowned figures at a time when it was considered taboo by the prudish and puritans. Having Francis as an ally was of great importance for Tijuana’s Gay movement, because most of his show’s attendees were heterosexual. His performances created an opportune moment to share an angle of public visibility for Tijuana’s Gay men.

In retrospect, Tijuana’s Gay movement saw itself as a representative force of dissidents undertaking the fight against AIDS. The collective engaged in the formation of developing a morale that raised their sense of urgency to alleviate the situational struggles that Gay men faced during the AIDS crisis. In addition, Gay spaces such as Emilio’s Café were resources that provided living quarters for those afflicted by *la peste rosa*. In response to the slow intervention of local and national authorities to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, the Gay community turned to grassroots organizational efforts to lift their spirits and, at the same time, to show dominant

culture that the Gay social world was working to manage and to reverse further inclemencies related to the epidemic. However, their efforts failed to convince society who continued to serve as the gatekeepers of social moral order.

A conflation of circumstances aggravated the growing antipathy against the Gay community. Since 1989, the conservative party (PAN) had controlled both the state of Baja California and the city of Tijuana, stressing a social crusade for moral order. As a result, the movement and local authorities became adversaries. This antagonism is best illustrated when two Gay bars were raided on November 30, 1991. Rather than recoil, the Gay community responded with various acts of protest. These actions were anchored by group ideology through tactics that gave meaning to the struggle. Moreover, in the dawn of the 1990s a new social activist, Max Mejía, appeared on the scene of Tijuana's Gay movement. Mejía and a constellation of diverse social activists, including an awakened civil society, helped to activate a front that the conservative party had not yet acknowledged. In Mejía's view, "El PAN se ha topado con un límite que desconoce; la actitud despierta de la sociedad civil; en contra de la reducción de las libertades individuales" (PAN has stumbled upon a limit not recognized, an awaken civil society, against diminishing individual liberties) (Mejía, 1997, p. 58). Chapter VII will concentrate on analyzing the ways the Gay community responded to the Gay raid and how they confronted authorities in their quest for social recognition.

CHAPTER VII

GROUP IDEOLOGY AND THE ROLE OF TACTICS

Blumer (1955) notes that an ideology of a movement “gives a set of values, a set of convictions, a set of criticisms, a set of arguments, and a set of defenses” (p. 211). Since its beginning, Tijuana’s Gay activists applied a humanistic perspective to destabilize the dominant society’s unequal application of law to the same-sex minority’s rights. The unequal power balance provoked harsh behavior amongst the police force and the bureaucrats resulting in open hostility by raiding of Gay bars, squelching limiting freedom of expression. Gay activism in Tijuana resisted this distorted social order by adopting and illuminating universal human rights ideology.

At this stage of Tijuana’s movement, Max Mejía one of the major pioneers of the militant Mexican Gay movement which began in Mexico City in 1978 brought to Tijuana the impetus to counter the forces of dominant regime. He had pursued studies at the *Consejatorio Nacional de Música* in Mexico City. His career as a social anthropologist drew him into questioning the macro structures of dominance that eventually led him to get involved in the political life of México inside the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (PRT) (Workers Revolutionary Party), which was Trotskyist in orientation. Mejía (2000a) called for “reforming the Mexican constitution, reordering the antiquated legal system, and the current process of democratic change in the country’s political system” (p. 54). Prior to establishing himself as a Tijuana resident, Mejía lived for two years in San Francisco, where he co-founded the Gay/lesbian group

Gente Latina de Ambiente (GELAAM) in the late 1980s. A Gay Trotskyist, Max Mejía, contributed his wit and militancy in agitating for Gay rights.

In this chapter I turn my attention to examining tactical strategies used by Tijuana's Gay activists in the aftermath of the November 30, 1991 Gay Raid. What compelled them to stand up to authority? What action plans were forged to make their voices heard? What grievances were presented and to whom? What strategies and demands were key to their struggle?

Blumer (1955) observes that “tactics are always dependent on the nature of the situation in which a movement is operating and always with reference to the cultural background of the movement” (p. 211). I argue that the raid was influenced by a new conservative political party, Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party), which had taken control of the state of Baja California, including the city of Tijuana. The November 30, 1991 Gay Raid came to be the groundbreaking event that galvanized the movement. Leading the effort to contest the raid was Max Mejía. Mejía and his colleagues—Emilio Velázquez, Marco Alvarado Kim, Víctor-Clark Alfaro, and Ricardo Duéñez, among others—joined together in a militant defiance of contesting the raid.

Contextualizing the National and Local Political Climate

In the early 1980s, the PRI's (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Institutional Revolutionary Party) candidate for the presidency of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado (1982-1988), ran his campaign under the motto of “la renovación moral de la sociedad” (the moral renovation of society). Foucault (1978) argued that morality rests upon “a set of values and rules that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies such as the family (in one of its roles), educational institutions, churches, and so forth” (p. 25). These sets of rules are passed on to its citizens via macro—and micro—structural

institutions and with time they help maintain social hierarchies of inequality. In addition, morality in society brings about social order. Defenders of morality use feelings and emotions to distinguish good from bad. The morality of exclusion may be “based on religion and is primarily about regulation—self regulation in the form of conscience and the direct and indirect regulation of others” (Jakobsen & Pellegrini, 2003, p. 11). The ideology behind Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado’s moral renovation was meant to curb and gut out corruption, including that of controlling immoral behaviors. As a candidate, he proposed “que una sociedad que tolera, que permite la generalización de conductas inmorales o corruptas, es una sociedad que se debilita, es una sociedad que decae” (a society that tolerates, that permits the generalization of immoral or corrupt behaviors, is a society that weakens, is a society that declines) (“La Renovación Moral,” 1982). Morality consists of surveying and regulating human behavior.

Under De la Madrid’s presidency Gay communities throughout México suffered from patterns of repression that were felt widely. This repression was focused on raiding Gay establishments. These acts by local authorities were aimed at suppressing homosexual activity. Urban centers such as Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Tijuana felt this constraint. In Tijuana, Gay activist Alejandro García recalled that on January 28, 1984, 27 homosexuals dressed as women were detained in a string of raids on Avenida Revolución (¿Será 1985 Otro Año de Represión a la Gente Homosexual de Baja California?” 1985, p. 6). Meanwhile, on June 15, 1984, the disco bar *Gris y Gris*, in the neighboring city of Mexicali, was shut down. Local authorities claimed *Gris y Gris* was a hub and gathering site for homosexuals and lesbians (¿Será 1985 Otro Año de Represión a la Gente Homosexual de Baja California?” 1985, p. 7).

In Tijuana, such patterns of repression and persecution against Gay people intensified after the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) (National Action Party) took control of the state of Baja

California and the mayoral seat in Tijuana in 1989. PAN's stand on social issues was aligned with that of the Catholic Church: "It opposes abortion, it is against sexual liberty (for example, in matters related to homosexuality and birth control), and it supports strong family values" (Mizrahi, 2003, p. 24). The party was established in 1939 "as a response by a group of conservative intellectuals, professionals, businessmen, and Catholic activists to the allegedly socialist and state-led policies introduced by President Cárdenas" (Mizrahi, 2003, p. 17). The party's rise to power in Baja California is said to have occurred because of the "active participation of its population, including the vigilance of the PAN in the electoral precincts" (Espinoza Valle, 1996, p. 28). What drove PAN to secure the election? The fact was that Tijuana alone accounted for more than 50% of the electoral vote (Montoya, 1995, p. 100). PAN's victory in Baja California opened a new direction in the political landscape of Mexican democracy. Rodríguez and Ward (1994) noted that "Baja California became the first state in history in contemporary Mexico to be governed by a party other than the PRI" (p. 3). In addition, PAN's structural internal changes, starting in 1982, were key in the development of its major political influence in México, as it began to "reformulate its strategies and strengthened its links with foreign capital, the national corporate sector, and the traditional church hierarchy" (Rodríguez, 1985, p. 115). While the political landscape was strengthened by a new political party taking power the fact of the matter was that, within the social realm, PAN reinforced the social control of selected groups of people. PAN conducted itself as an adversary to the Gay community by sustaining the hegemony of repressive norms relative to homosexuality.

Ernesto Ruffo Appel (1989-1995) took helm of the gubernatorial seat of Baja California., while Carlos Montejo Favela joined the political sphere of power as Tijuana's mayor. Favela was a "Catholic practitioner and a warm man, who lacked decision, and who had nothing to do in

politics, and who was characterized by scandal” (Montoya, 1995, p. 101). Soon after taking office, Favela implemented social control measures against a diverse group of people. Tilly (1978) noted that “social control consists of the efforts of authorities, or of society as a whole, to bring deviants back into line” (p. 99). For example, Favela’s administration alienated “los ambulantes del primer cuadro de la ciudad” [the street vendors from the central block of the city center] (Montoya, 1995, p. 100). As a result of anti-popular policies emanating from the governor's social communication’s office, the reporters of the media outlets assembled in a silent protest (Montoya, 1995).

The administration’s pattern of hostility continued. In 1991 the Gay community became the regime’s adversaries when two Gay bars: El Ranchero and Los Equipales were raided in order to crack down on behavior that went “against the image of the family in Tijuana, and promoted moral decay,” (Romero, 1992, p. B-1). El Ranchero bar is located within the geographic threshold of the *zona de tolerancia* [red light district].

The Gay Bar Under Threat

For the Gay community in Tijuana, the Gay bar has been central to socialization and homosocial relations. The bar has historically functioned as a site where Gay men in Tijuana have found camaraderie and escape from street harassment by police forces and “rough trade.” In the mid-1980s, Tijuana experienced a proliferation of Gay bars *de ambiente* (of Gay atmosphere): Bar Taurino, El Noa Noa, TJ Disco, Tropicana, Mi Kasa Bar (1984), El Ranchero (1986), and Mike’s Disco (1994). Although Gay bars provided a space for homosocial activities, the internal and external physicality of these venues was under constant threat but still safer than being out in public. Local authorities intimidated the Gay community by shutting the bars down with little to no justification. For example, Mi Kasa opened on October 18, 1984, and shut down

less than a month later under the justification that immoral activities were taking place inside the venue (¿Será 1985 Otro Año de Represión a la Gente Homosexual de Baja California?” 1985, pp. 6-7). Achilles (1992) notes:

Police relations with gay bars are closely linked to the politics of city government. When a change of administration is due or there are reports in the press about sex crimes or increasing crime rate, the pressure on the homosexual bar intensifies. The closing of a bar tends to pacify the public demand for action, and makes it appear that the administration is doing a fine job of cleaning up the city. (p. 238)

The city of Tijuana, with its gallimaufry of social arrangements has not been in many cases a stress-free environment for Gay people. Persecution for “immoral behaviors” had been a constant in this city through police sweepings inside Gay territory that were a constant since the 1970s. In tracing police sweepings in both Brazil and México, de la Dehesa (2010) acknowledges that police procedures such as these often came “alongside sex workers, the lower classes, and other stigmatized populations, a socially ‘marginal’ realm inscribed outside the public order where proper police procedures and the rule of law assumed relative standing” (p. 33). In particular, the Gay space of Plaza Santa Cecilia located at the boundary of the *zona de tolerancia* (zone of tolerance) has functioned as a territory where Gay people have historically been visible and where they have been able to secure and create a stable place to thrive as a response to their social exclusion. However, at several historical times, this regularized space has been an unstable territory for the Gay community because Gay elements within the *zona de tolerancia* have been harassed for being Gay unlike the prostitutes who pay the police off with bribes or trade (sex coerced by the cops). A prime illustration of the foregoing passage is the combined *razzia* (police raid) on both El Ranchero and Los Equipales.

The November 30, 1991 Gay Raid

On November 30, 1991, at approximately 22:00 (near midnight) a squad of 12 cops with walkie-talkies in hand entered the establishments of El Ranchero and Los Equipales in an effort to crack down on the “queer crowd.” According to *El Sol De Tijuana* (“Atentado a Garantías SIDA-Tijuana,” 1991), 75 people were detained, among them 15 Americans (p. 3). Those individuals of “costumbres raras” (strange manners) were then taken to the Comandancia de Policía No. 8. (precinct station No. 8). Some of those detainees were fined \$50 to \$100 (U.S.) on the spot (a bribe). Max Mejía, an eyewitness of the El Ranchero raid, observed that those detainees were “femmes.”

Entré al bar y el ambiente era tenso. Nadie se movía. Pasaron junto a mí algunos policías con detenidos, quienes observe iban bien vestidos y no tenían facha de malvivientes o revoltosos. Lo único que tenían en común era su aspecto “femenino” [I went into the bar; the atmosphere was tense, no one was moving. Some policemen passed next to me with detainees whom I observed were well dressed and did not have the mug of a rowdy or a malefactor. The only thing that they had in common was there “feminine aspect.” (“Testimonios,” 1992, p. 9)

At the Comandancia de Policía No. 8, detainees were booked and photographed. Their sexual orientation was questioned. The *testimonios* of Ricardo Duéñez, Antonio, and Rafael offered a look at how the booking process unfolded. Ricardo recalled:

Cuando cada persona llegaba, este oficial preguntaba: ¿Eres o no eres gay? Todos contestamos que no. Después de que contestamos que no, nos dijo que íbamos a salir sin pagar, Cuando yo pase y conteste no, el otro oficial que me había detenido en el bar me dijo: Entiendo, no eres gay, pero te gustan los *jotos* [As each detainee was unloaded at the dock the cop would ask: Are you, or are you not gay? We all answered no, after we all said no, he told us that we were going to get out without paying a fine (mordida) the official would ask Are you gay or not? All answered no. When I drew near and answered no the other official who had detained me at the bar said: “I understand that you're not gay but you like faggots. (“Testimonios,” 1992, p. 6)

Admitting and self-declaring out in public that one was Gay in the presence of authority resulted in that individual being penalized and sanctioned. Being Gay was representative of

criminal activity. Furthermore, dodging the question of one's sexual orientation and not admitting to being Gay resulted in one's freedom being granted. However, local authorities still had to have the last word by socially humiliating an individual with further stigmatization; "liking faggots" continued to characterize one as having a tendency for queer activity. Suppressing one's sexual orientation resulted in—to some extent—a scrutinizing image of one's identity.

Another detainee, Antonio, snagged at Los Equipales recalled:

Llego uno [policía] y nos acusó de que nos encontraron tocándonos las partes bajas y todos protestamos por que dijimos que no [another cop approached, and he accused us of toying with ourselves and we protested that that was not so]. ("Testimonios," 1992, p. 4)

Referring to "touching one's lower parts" without specifically stating which parts reflects a culture of middle-class silence in Mexico when speaking about sexual acts. One must be prudent and maintain a puritanical stand when speaking about sexuality. Rafael's, another detainee, sustained another account of why local authorities executed the raid. Rafael remembered that the *juez calificador* (qualifying judge) read various legal citations relevant to the ordinance of good manners and customs. Rafael recalls that the judge explained that he had committed moral offenses saying to him:

Que este era un bar y no para bailar con hombre con hombre . . . que estábamos faltándole el respeto a la demás gente: al público, a las mujeres, hombres y niños" [that this was a bar and not for man to man dancing... that we were lacking respect for other people: the public, women, men, and children]. ("Testimonios," 1992, p. 4)

The judge's moralizing overtones regarding what is right and what is wrong was a judicial error. The normative categories at large—women, men, and children—are the judge's presumption of the norm without any sexual orientation attached. There is no note that women or children were in the bar.

The Justification of Why the Raids Took Place

Tijuana's police chief, Luis Ortega Ramírez, stated that "sexual acts were taking place in two bars," which violated a new city code that had taken effect in September 1991 (Portillo, 1991, p. B-2). Ortega Ramírez was referring to codes found in the *Reglamento del Bando de Policia y Buen Gobierno*. These municipal codes imposed sanctions for offenses against morality and traditional customs. Authorities also justified the raids by saying they were aiming to stop the spread of AIDS. At that time, Gay activist Emilio Velásquez noted that those actions were counterproductive because they caused fear among people, deterring them from getting tested and pushing them even further into clandestine living (Mejía, 1992, p. 2).

Chiming in on the matter, the city manager, Jesus A. Sandoval, issued a statement to *El Mexicano* newspaper blaming and characterizing "homosexuality as a problem." Sandoval stated that "la sociedad debe definir lo que es moral" (society must define what is moral) ("La Sociedad Debe Definir lo que es Moral," 1991, p. 9-A). Sandoval also expressed to U.S. newspapers that homosexuality was not tolerated in Tijuana because, contrary to Europe and the United States, it was perceived as immoral in Mexico (Portillo, 1991, p. B-2). This perspective speaks to powerful normative moral discourses, contrasting the immoral dangers of the United States with moral family-centered México.

Collective Action in Response to the November 30th Gay Raid

Immediately after the raid, the movement established the *Comité de Defensa de la Comunidad de Ambiente* (CDCA), (The Committee of Defense for the Community of Ambiente) (see Figure 6). According to newspaper *El Mexicano*, this committee was formed by: "El Frente Internacional por las Garantías Humanas en Baja California, el equipo editorial de Frontera Gay, Comité Libertariano de Asuntos Fronterizos [Libertarian Committee for Border Matters] y el

grupo Y Qué, así como por la Comisión Binacional de Derechos Humanos, [Binational Commission of Human Rights] (December 25, 1991, p. 7, Section A). The committee's purpose was a strategic review of how to react in the aftermath of the raid. Likewise, this coalition signaled to local *panistas* that Tijuana's Gay community was not alone.



Figure 6. Comité de Defensa de la Comunida de Ambiente (CDCA)

While authorities justified their actions on moral grounds, the Gay community resisted by using a counter-narrative tactic “such that a new angle of vision, vantage point, and or interpretation is provided” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 623). The counter-narrative permitted the Gay community to replace the dominant narrative with one that addressed their state of oppression. For example, the Gay community crafted four grievances that were published in the local newspaper *El Sol de Tijuana* on December 6, 1991 (“Cartas al Sol,” 1991).

- *Grievance 1* made the public aware of the raid and when it happened.
- *Grievance 2* stated the contradictions within the new regulatory police codes of governance were used by the police to impose sanctions on people.
- *Grievance 3* stated that the people detained the night of the raid were insulted and fined.
- *Grievance 4* stated that the detainees' human rights had been violated.

By making the grievances public, the Gay community spilled forth a Pandora's box by showing the intolerance of the PAN administration toward Gays. This strategy drew the attention of the print media from Tijuana and the Southern California region. Televised media were also interested in giving air time to the aftermath of the raid. For example, the popular talk show of Cuban host María Laria, *Cara Cara*, invited members of the Gay community to disclose the hostile environment of homosexual men in Tijuana. The movement's grievances armed a defense by framing their struggle under the banner of a human rights matter. Frames "render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614).

Zald (1996) defines frames as "the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode to suggest alternative modes of action" (p. 262). By framing their cause as a human rights battle, they gained the sympathy of social activist Víctor Clark Alfaro. As a social human rights advocate, Clark Alfaro was vocal in defending this community by suggesting that non-Gay bars were not subject to the hostility of raids. In tandem, the Gay Latino organization in San Diego, (GLLO) (Gay and Lesbian Latinos con Orgullo), gave the movement renewed impetus. As an act of solidarity, on December 21, 1991, GLLO wrote a letter to Mayor Favela condemning the Gay raid. This letter disclosed that some of the detainees of the raid were Puerto Ricans and Nicaraguans. Plus, the 1993 organizers of the National Libertarian Party convention in San Diego published a letter expressing their "concern for the safety and dignity of conventioners—if Tijuana wishes to maintain a policy of harassment against its Gay Citizens and visitors, Libertarians and our money will stay on the north side of the border" ("Tijuana Activists Meet,"

1992, p. A-9). Gay Americans also established solidarity with Tijuana's Gay community by threatening a border boycott. Argelia Lu (1991), from *Diario 29*, reported that

dichos grupos gays norteamericanos están dispuestos en caso de que la autoridad municipal no accede a detener la persecucion, a boicotear la frontera tijuanense, promoviendo entre los diversos sectores del otro lado que no es seguro venir a Tijuana para que afecte en el ramo turistico y comercial [said North American gay groups are ready in case Tijuana's municipal authority does not want to end the persecution, to boycott the Tijuana border, to promoting among the diverse sectors on the U.S. side that it is not safe to go to Tijuana, so it will affect American tourist and commercial interest]. (p. 10)

During the development of this phase of the movement, violence against this community increased. For example, the newspaper *El Mexicano* reported that a 30-year-old Gay male was found with his head crushed and a tree branch in his rectum; “*le dejaron clavada en el recto una rama de árbol como estaca*” (Castillo, 1991, p. 12). Furthermore, the newspaper *El Sol de Tijuana* reported that a 17-year-old juvenile had killed Raul Padilla Moran at Teniente Park (“En el Teniente Guerrero: Por Pedirle Sexo le Metio Tres Plomazos,” 1991, p. 10). Mocking the Gay community by double-lynching its members was another way the dominant culture exerted control. For example, conservative local newspaper *El Herald* mocked the Gay community in a sensationalistic piece headlined “Los Homosexuales Siguen Haciendo de las Suyas” (Homosexuals Are at It Again) (1991). *El Herald* not only reported a theft by Pedro Méndez González but offered additional information disclosing his homosexuality: “por haber robado dinero a un visitante, fue detenido el homosexual, de 21 años de edad” (for having stolen money from a visitor, the homosexual Pedro Méndez González was detained at 21 years of age) (“Los Homosexuales Siguen Haciendo de las Suyas,” 1991, p. 8A).

Expanding their efforts to find a resolution with local authorities, the Gay community requested a hearing with those responsible for the raid. However, local administrators were not

willing for this to take place. Concerned, the Gay community began to exert further collective pressure. On December 4, 1992, the movement filed a formal complaint to *Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos y Protección Ciudadana de Baja California* (Public Prosecutors for Human Rights and Human Protection of Baja California). The activists involved in this action were Emilio Velásquez, Marco Alvarado Kim, Max Mejía, and Ricardo Duéñez. The complaint had merits: “por presunta violación a derechos humanos, privación ilegal de la libertad y abuso de autoridad” (for the presumed violation of human rights, illegal privation of liberty, and abuse of authority). This human rights agency eventually reached a conclusion suggesting that the Gay community had an inherent right to freely meet in public places and to not be “objeto de injerencias arbitrarias en sus vidas privadas” (an object of arbitrary interferences in their private lives) by specifically referencing Article 12 of the Declaration of Universal Human Rights (“Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos y Protección Ciudadana,” 1992). Moreover, apart from this general emphasis, the resolution exhorted the municipal government of Tijuana to take action along the following lines:

1. To identify the authority who ordered the raid on November 30th;
2. To punish the person held responsible for the abuse of power by using the Law of Civil Responsibility for Public Officials;
3. To identify the abuse of authority used; and
4. To identify if the proceedings used that night were in accordance with the rule of law.

Not wanting further consequences, Favela agreed to follow these recommendations. These efforts yielded a measure of success: The combination of efforts from a human rights perspective and the use of available tactics by this community resulted in a hearing with Interim Mayor Jorge

Ortíz (Carlos Favela Montejó was being treated for a heart ailment) and the Secretary of Tijuana, Jesús Alberto Sandoval Franco.

On January 8, 1992, Max Mejía boldly read a status assessment of what had happened the night of the raid, including demands to stop the hostility against the Gay community, as media from both sides of the border observed. According to *Diario 29* within 45 minutes of the hearing, and with considerable pressure, Jorge Ortíz declared: “No habrá redadas contra homosexuales” (There will be no raids against homosexuals) (Díaz-García, 1992). Cua (1992) commented that “the gathering marked the first time gay/lesbian community in Tijuana received an official acknowledgment . . . secondly, the meeting [with Tijuana’s mayor] was an unprecedented demonstration of unity for the Tijuana gay community” (p. 7). Above all, this moment was the outcome of 22 years of an ongoing battle. Their victory sent a convincing message to the broader society: Gay people were no longer going to tolerate discriminatory practices from local authorities.

While their actions had challenged PAN in Tijuana, the movement did not see major changes with regard to society’s view on homosexuality. In 1992, the Gay space of Plaza Santa Cecilia located adjacent to the zone of tolerance district was hit by violence that affected the businesses in the area. Surrounding businesses blamed the Gay community for the rise of violence. In a move of discontent, concerned citizens produced a letter with over 40 signatures. The letter argued that violence had taken place at this corridor and that action from local authorities was needed. According to *El Heraldo* newspaper, the letter of complaint stated that some activities in certain bars in the plaza were uncontrollable, which encouraged the wave of violence. In particular, the letter targeted Gay-friendly establishments:

Que esas cantinas que son El Paso, La Ballena, El Patio, y El Ranchero no respetan horarios y son refugio de homosexuales, prostitutas, y polleros, y que, además, al sacar mesas a la vía publica extienden la cantina y sus malos espectáculos a la calle [that these bars which are El Paso, La Ballena, El Patio, and El Ranchero they do not keep reasonable hours, and they are a refuge of homosexuals, prostitutes, and human smugglers, and besides they place tables in the public foot path extending out the bar and its wicked spectacles into the street. (“Piden Retiro de Bares,” 1992, p.7-A)

El Ranchero bar became a scapegoat from violence in Plaza Santa Cecilia. The violence cited was of Gay men being mugged and robbed in the men’s toilet of El Ranchero. This *modus operandi* extended itself out into the vicinity, causing business owners to accuse the Gay community of criminal activity. Max Mejía (1996) noted that those engaging in violence “son individuos que vienen de los alrededores, la mayoría de los cuales vienen expresamente a robar tentados por la idea de que se puede robar y agredir fácil e impunemente a los homosexuales” (are individuals who come from surrounding areas; the majority of them tempted by the idea that they can rob and easily assault homosexuals with impunity) (p. 5). In fact, mainstream media held forth that the Gay community was responsible for what was taking place. Mejía (1996) additionally noted, “En algunas tribunas de radio y periódicos locales se manejan por el contrario que es obra de los propios homosexuales, ya que ambos lugares [El Ranchero y Plaza Santa Cecilia] están de esa clase de gente” (In some local radio and newspaper broadcasts they mentioned that the situation is a work of the very same homosexuals, as both places [El Ranchero and Plaza Santa Cecilia] have those kinds of people) (p. 5). The Gay community defended their Plaza Santa Cecilia terrain by publicly denouncing the lack of police presence in this area. Their point had great validity intended to deliver a message to set authorities need to provide security of all citizens. Revealing such information resulted in a larger police presence.

Miss Gay Nacional Pageant

In 1993 opposition to homosexuality continued. The Catholic Church delivered a series of statements to halt a Gay pageant. Aaron Rodolfo García Ocegueda, coordinator of Miss Gay Nacional, was denied a permit for a transvestite event at The Wild Oh! discotheque. According to “Pocho del Otro Lado” (1994), similar pageants had been held every year in Tijuana since 1985 at both Gay and straight venues without any problems from local authorities. However, feeling threatened by this event Rubén Fernández Aceves, the city’s manager at that time warned that “such a homosexual oriented event would have a negative effect on the ‘morality of Tijuana’s children and youth,’ and on ‘the morality and good customs of the community’” (“Pocho del Otro Lado,” 1994, p. 16). Meanwhile, the Ethical Counsel of Tijuana’s Dioceses published a missive in local newspapers asserting that the event went against biblical teachings. The Ethical Counsel made reference to the traditional Catholic Catechism: “Los actos homosexuales son intrínsecamente desordenados” (homosexual acts are intrinsically disorderly) (Comunicado del Consejo Diocesano de Tijuana Sobre el Concurso “Miss Gay Nacional,” 1993, p. 7A). In addition, the statement expressed intolerance: Homosexuality was abnormal, a disease, and a deviation. Moreover, the letter affirmed that homosexuality was curable. Following the declarations from the Catholic Church, and the dismissive attitude from the municipality, the Gay community summoned local media to express their discontent about the discriminatory response by the municipality. García Ocegueda addressed that “los gays somos ciudadanos con derechos como cualquier miembro de la comunidad, por lo que no debe tratarnos como si fuéramos bichos raros” [We gay citizens have rights members of the community; therefore, we should not be treated as bizarre “critters”] (“Miss Gay Nacional,” 1994, p. 7).

Echoing García Osegueda, Max Mejía declared that the action from the municipality “es un trato discriminatorio contra un grupo de la sociedad [it is a discriminatory treatment against a sector of society] (“Miss Gay Nacional,” 1994, p. 7). Soon after this press conference, Fernando Aceves agreed to meet with the Gay community. In the meeting, which lasted an hour and a half, Aceves declared “hay sectores de la población que se oponen a que el Ayuntamiento conceda el permiso, por considerar que la naturaleza del evento atenta contra la moral y las buenas costumbres” [there are sectors of the population who oppose that the city council grant the permit, considering that the nature of the event goes against morals and good customs]. In the exchange, Aceves incendiary comments sparked controversy: “las personas de la sociedad, tenemos el derecho a desarrollar nuestras familias y educar a nuestros hijos en un ambiente de paz y sin el mal ejemplo de las conductas inmorales y negativas” [the people of society, we have the right to develop our families and educate our children in an atmosphere of peace and without the bad example of immoral and negative behavior]. This assertion from Aceves, speaking as for the minority conservative voice equated homosexuality as problematic to the moral order in relation to the values of the so-called majority — silent majority. Aceves refused to concede the permit for the event even after meeting with the Gay community. Upon hearing the statements, and drawn to fair treatment, the movement was not dissuaded. They pursued a variety of strategies to resist social dominant attitudes and constraints. They depended on publicly announcing their concerns by telling their version of their story. Opening their voice to mainstream media helped to persuade their audience that homosexuality was not the problem, instead they pointed out the authority's unequal treatment as a worrisome matter to the Gay community.

Meanwhile, the conservative Diocesan Bishop of Tijuana’s Catholic Church, Emilio Berlie, exchanged words with the Gay community as he merited that their behavior and their

public comments muddled the name of the Catholic Church. His remarks came after Max Mejía voiced out that “la iglesia tiene una actitud anti-cristiana de Santa Inquisición, de persecución contra los gays...contradice las enseñanzas de Cristo, deberia ser mas cuidadosa con lo que dice acerca de la homosexualidad, pues en sus propias filas hay muchos homosexuales y lesbianas [the church has an anti-Christian attitude of Inquisition, of persecution against gays ... it contradicts the teachings of Christ, it should be more careful with what it says about homosexuality, because in its own ranks there are many homosexuals and lesbians] (“Miss Gay Nacional,” 1994, p. 7). Mejía’s personal comments revealed the double morality of the Catholic institution: the convention of Christ loving everyone, and the local hierarchies demeaning people in an unnatural fashion. Furthermore, Mejía’s noting the large presence of Gays and Lesbians in the Catholic Church, as well gravitate to the need of individuals to hide their homosexuality within the Church, therewith characterizing this institution as an enclave of ostensible hypocrisy.

The 1991 raids at El Ranchero and Los Equipales plus the case of Miss Gay Nacional in 1993 show that Tijuana’s Gay movement used a variety of tactics to contest their subordinate status in Tijuana. Publishing *testimonios* in *Frontera Gay* about detainees on the night of the raid highlighted how they were mistreated. These recollections allowed Gay men to claim space in this event’s aftermath. While in 1991 the conservative administrations declared a halt to further Gay raids, the objectionable outcry of homosexuality as an anomaly kept up. As Plaza Santa Cecilia came to establish itself as a haven, in 1992 a wave of violence in this space erupted against Gay life styles. The increased violence was in fact a product of the limited presence of authorities policing the area. The Gay community became the scapegoat of this violence; interestingly enough, the presence of police forces was necessary to patrol this urban space.

Social power against the Gay community continued in 1993, when the local administration influence by normative injunctions of the Catholic Church reinforce their disdain against the homosexual community by demeaning the *Miss Gay Nacional* pageant event as inconsistent with the bedrock values of dominant society. The sharp criticism precipitated a reaction of the Gay movement to criticize the Church. All together, these efforts of resisting social purity forces inform *how* and *why* they contested structural inequalities.

As a follow up to these major events, the two anti-Gay raids and Miss Gay Nacional to boost the cohesiveness and morale of the Gay community, FIGHT programmed the first *Verano de Orgullo Gay* [Summer of Gay Pride]. In like kind, *Frontera Gay* conducted a survey among the Gay community to see whether the community was ready to participate in a Gay pride march in 1994. Behind this effort was Oscar Soto Marbán, member of FIGHT. This informal survey was conducted to test the waters, to ascertain if Tijuana's Gay community were ready to join in a public march. While the response was favorable, Alejandro García of ¡Y Qué! (*So What?*) found out about FIGHT's plans and opportunistically cut short the plans for the 1994 march and preemptively arranged his own march for June 17, 1995. This Gay and Lesbian pride march was called: "Del Silencio a la Celebración por los Derechos de Humanos de Gays y Lesbianas" [From Silence to Celebration for Gay and Lesbian Human Rights]. The stated theme of the Gay parade was a large wordy statement to jam into a poster placard. Well on excerpting an editorial comment from *Frontera Gay* ("Orgullo Homosexual," 1994) that commended the ¡Y Qué! group for organizing the 1995 march, also criticized the march: "esta dirigida de entrada, esta afectada por la confusion en las formas organizativas y en la seleccion de los destinatarios de la convocatoria. En realidad está dirigida a los habitantes de San Diego y solo muy de pasada a los gays y lesbianas de Tijuana," [this information for starters is affected by confusion in its

organizational forms, and in choice of recipients of the invitations, in reality this march is aimed at San Diegans and only in passing to Tijuana's gays and lesbians] (p. 4). The act of going public not only grounded the Gay community but empowered them to place themselves in the public eye. This collective public ritual was symbolic in terms of conquering and gaining other forms of spatial geography within the city. Over 100 people marched in downtown Tijuana as spectators watched on. This time the response from Tijuana was more of curiosity and of tolerance rather than that of hostility such as the first abortive Gay pride march in 1983 when they were egged by a hostile counter demonstration. Thus, in 1995 a very different scenario in relation to freedom was experienced.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Tijuana, Baja California, is geographically in Northwestern México. Popular culture refers to the *zona fronteriza* (border) as the window to Latin America. Its demographic composition is diverse with 82% of its population being born elsewhere. This border zone is unique as it has created its own cosmos of existence apart from the distant power holders of their respective capitals. A great number of border people are bilingual; their distinct geography orients them to have a close relationship to the United States. The cultural and economic interdependence between these two contrasting nations flourishes in many ways including within the realm of sexual orientation.

Research regarding Gay people in Tijuana has centered around subject matters related to prostitution, drugs, and sexual intimacies. Efforts to counter such a scenario has been done by Joseph Carrier and Lionel Cantú, Jr., who have explored the cultural factors that affect Gay sexual orientation and its processes. However, research has not yet tapped into documenting the social history of this population regarding the emergence of its Gay movement. The historical record shows that rather than being passive subjects, this community has engaged in a collective effort since the 1980s to secure equal rights and treatment. Mexican society and its identity are forged under strong sentimental moral values reflecting Catholic faith which has determined that Gay people should be treated differently, not regarded as equals in society. One may question why this is the case if the geographical location of Tijuana should favor a more liberal mindset with regards to homosexuality. The heterogenous stamp of outside migrants who settle in

Tijuana flowing from the interior of México and elsewhere has led the city to reinforce attitudes of condemnation toward Gay people, attitudes brought by Holy Mother Church and the Inquisition. More specifically, the social remittances that these people bring continue to be tainted by a double morality, and criticism of the same - sexes. Not all migrants bring with them this set of beliefs. However, such homophobic sentiments in Tijuana have been based upon cultural assumptions about masculinity and its heteronormative construction. Catholic doctrine and political spheres of power give continuum to how society thinks. Tijuana's Gay community has historically responded by refuting the anti-Gay fulminations of the hetero-mob.

This dissertation has aimed to show *how* and *why* this community responded to their opponents. Under what conditions did the movement emerge? What historical indicators document the process of their success? What determinant social and political factors influenced them to galvanize? Using a diverse pool of newspapers and documentation, I sought to give answers to my main research question: *what explained the successful ongoing mobilization of the Gay community? What was the chain of events that led to the movement's success?* Within the framework of this research I borrowed the five principles of social movements set forth by Herbert Blumer (1955). This framework of collective action is derived from what he names "New Cultural Trends" from within General Social Movement literature. These principles provide a blueprint of characteristics that speak to the success of a movement. While Blumer does not specifically speak of Gay movements, his interpretation of identity, social, and culture movements, may situate Gay movements under cultural realities of society. The rise of cultural movements is a result of cultural shifts within society at any given time. For the purpose of this dissertation, Blumer's model was also used for organizational purposes as it helps us understand the logic behind how movements developed and why are they successful. Blumer's model

proposes that for a movement to be successful the following characteristics need to be present: (1) agitation, (2) development of *esprit de corps*, (3) development of morale, (4) the formulation of an ideology, and (5) the development of tactics.

The period of *agitation* establishes the grounds to understand how a group of Tijuana Gay males came to understand their existence as a subordinate class. One element was to create ties with prospective movement sympathizers. The movement leadership played an important role at this stage of the movement, particularly by the articulation of the need to assemble themselves as a group. The social actors who kept the movement alive—Emilio Velásquez, Alejandro García, and Max Mejía—were Gay men whose vision aligned itself with a fight against inequality. Velásquez came from a privileged middle-class family and was well connected, which gave the movement its nascent impetus. García, on the other hand, wanted to see immediate results; this caused internal conflict resulting in the bifurcation of the movement. While both Gay men ventured apart, their actions benefited the entirety of the movement. Later, in the 1990s, Max Mejía arrived in Tijuana and intervened as a central figure for the movement. Mejía was witty and his decisions acted as a morale booster. His prowess in the area of Gay rights was developed as a co-founder of the Gay social movement of Mexico City in 1978-1979. He was also the founder of Grupo LAMBDA, a Gay Trotskyist group. In addition, his inclusion into the political and cultural life of Mexico helped to develop those assets which gave Tijuana's Gay movement legitimacy. All in all, the biographies of these three men and their actions expanded the movement's success.

In the process of developing *esprit de corp* the movement found solidarity through fellowship by creating ties outside their circuit. This coordination addressed the politics of location and how groups of marginalized communities form networks outside their immediate

geographies. Further along, the Gay community was able to focus their efforts of solidarity and fellowship through the formation of FIGHT (Frente Internacional por las Garantías Humanas en Tijuana). This nascent organization gave credence to the movement's spirit of safeguarding human guarantees. The name is also suggestive and allocates an element of an international connection to the exterior world. As the movement advanced and solidified, also did the minds of various members including Alejandro Enrique García, who vied openly with Emilio. This early episode of divergent opinions is notable for the movement's ability to cultivate and sustain cohesiveness. This conflict created an arena of competitiveness between these two social activists. However, Garcia's departure from FIGHT lent spirit to a differentiation of tactics in legitimizing the Gay community. If the split in the vision of a rebel movement happened too early, it can destroy the unity of a group in its infancy. If it happened too late it can create a culture subservient to the leader of a personality cult. As well, his retreat opened and made allocations to new channels of resistance. For example, he successfully created *Grupo Liberalista*, which published *¡Y Qué! (So What?)* magazine. *¡Y Qué! (So What?)* was the pioneer media outlet of the Gay movement at that time built around Gay friendly local and international information. The content of *¡Y Qué!* was diverse, and exemplified the ideological foundations of Gay liberation, through poetry, art, photography and news related to AIDS and its transmission, safe sex practices, and social news around México and the world.

Tijuana's Gay movement also created safe space. Among the places where Gay men safely met was Emilio's Café. This was site for meetings of fraternal groups of the Gay community. The social significance of the Café continued during the *development of morale* characterized by the surge of AIDS. This space facilitated housing for those dying of this disease, as Gay men were being rejected from local hospitals. However, not all Gay men suffered

rejection because family relations facilitated care and comfort. Sra. Armendáriz attended the caring of her son Ernesto. As AIDS unraveled in Tijuana, volunteers such as Mary McCarthy and Dr. Carlos Díaz became networks that transformed the climate of isolation by helping those in distress. To ensure additional protection, Velásquez, McCarthy and Díaz established *Organización SIDA Tijuana* (OST) as a strategy for serving the endangered. OST was integral by countering the local, regional, and federal lack of early response from government officials vis-à-vis AIDS; obtaining these medications came by way of friends of those who passed away in San Diego. The well-known Gay atheist, and desktop publisher, Sam Warren, co-operated in this matter; the need superseded the resources.

In 1989, the political landscape of Tijuana changed. The PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) [National Action Party] created a new way of conducting politics in the region of Baja California, Norte. Its engagement with society troubled various sectors of the public, including the broadcast and print media, the center city working class, and the Gay community. PAN's ideology was interconnected with the protection of social morality. PAN's ideology was a prudish interpretation of Catholic teachings reigning in homosexual behavior and censorship of Gay voices. Amidst this crackdown were the Gay Raid of November 30th, 1991 at El Ranchero and Los Equipales wherein 71 plus males were detained. Local authorities justified the raid from differing allegations. As well expressing that said raids had taken place because immoral behaviors were occurring in these two venues; among these comments entangled in this rhetoric was the cop's assertion that homosexuality was not allowed in Tijuana. As a sequel, the local government asked the regions of the dominant culture to define what morality consisted of. Therefore, the Gay community mobilized to contest the *raison d'être* of the raid. Using human rights as a cause and by engaging in *tactics* to frame their counter offensive; almost

simultaneously their formation of *Comité de Defensa de la Comunidad de Ambiente* [The Committee of Defense for the Gay Community], and their publication of various grievances in *El Sol de Tijuana* newspaper were a way to dismantle the arguments of the puritans. Their mobilization displayed a verbal frontal assault on the local authorities. After meeting with local authorities and cranking up the pressure from multiple counter voices the local government agreed to not go after the Gay community in any more raids. While this was a victory for the Gay community abuses continued.

In 1993, the very same bureaucrats displayed their intolerance for the *Miss Gay Nacional* pageant as these prudish bureaucrats claimed that the event went against morality and acceptable behavior of society. This time, the intervention of the Catholic Church reinforced these opinions. Collectively, the Gay community contested these discourses by criticizing the Church and seeking mainstream media as a support mechanism to provide their own version of unfairness.

Today, the strength of Tijuana's Gay movement is carried forward by adherents to the movement who still engaged in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts through various non-profit organization including HFIT (Health Frontiers in Tijuana), COCUT Comunidad Cultural de Tijuana LGBTI, the LGBT Resource Center run by Lorenzo Herrera, Tijuana's Gay culture is also visible through the Gay Pride Parade which dates to 1995. The old guard of the movement is not present, but these new adherents continue to strive for combating inequality by fostering consciousness in Tijuana's' citizenry through conferences which are open to the public. For example, since 2010, COCUT has put together the *Jornada por la Diversidad Sexual*, emulating the *Semana Cultural Gay* established by Max Mejia and Emilio Velásquez. The movement has succeeded by creating these spaces where Gay subculture can be celebrated. Traces of movement

success can also be found today regarding the adoption of the word Gay by Tijuana's sexual minority population. This word has neutralized poignant Mexican words: puto and maricón.

The movement continues to battle internal skirmishes among Gay activists because of differences in opinions, and the shortage of public funding towards Gay causes. The outcome has led for activists to branch out and form alliances with profit and non-profit sectors from the vicinity of San Diego, and elsewhere. The backlash has been that some of these organizations (e.g. AIDS Healthcare Foundation) are resisting other forms of HIV prevention other than condom usage. This has hindered local efforts to engage in seeking other preventative measures including the use of the one-a day pill Truvada as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP if taken daily can prevent the transmission of HIV among HIV negative individuals. The strength of the movement is that the gestation of dialogue among gay activists has ensued to get health officials to use this medication to curb HIV. To date, Mexico City, Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta are cities that benefit from PrEP.

While internal strife among Gay activists in the movement are a fact, this situation has allowed the movement to create a flexible state of self. In other words, allowing various fronts of activism to appear; remaining committed to social justice causes. Since its inclusion in Tijuana's Gay movement, Mejía took note of the internal conflict among this collective. Mejía always returned to this point and concluded that these conflicts not only blinder the Gay movement's progress, but also reduces the movement to jump start initial stages of mobilization. Mejía's prospective outlook for Tijuana's Gay movement assumed a posture that necessitated the identification of social political structures in place that work to include Gay people. This meant, to forcefully and without *tapujos* (pretext) expose discriminatory acts by the dominant regime. In doing so, Gay struggle lays claim to the democratic promise that maintains the treatment of

everyone, of every sector of society —not as outsiders— but as the full complement of society despite cultural and sexual differences. To illustrate this point further, Max Mejía (1997) observes that in order to make progress regarding Gay rights:

Tiene que profundizar y persistir en la denuncia de cada atropello, de cada violación a sus derechos humanos, de cada acto de discriminación en sus derechos civiles. Se trata de escarbar hondo en el iceberg de la homofobia. No me imagino otra manera para que los gays mexicanos puedan influir cambios en la sociedad Mexicana, que convaliden un nuevo tipo de convenio social en el que estén a salvo su calidad humana y sus garantías civiles [It must deepen and persist in the denunciation of every abuse, of every violation of its human rights, of every act of discrimination of its civil rights. It is a matter of digging deep into the iceberg of homophobia. I cannot imagine another way for Mexican gays to influence changes in Mexican society, to affirm a new type of social agreement in which their human quality and civil guarantees are safe]. (p. 57)

Limitations

I am self-conscious that the social history of the Gay movement of Tijuana and the historical events connected to its origin is dependent on the time period of 1980–1993. Such a time frame does not allow the validation of the homosexual background's experiences before and after this period. Rather than seeing this as a shortcoming, the span of these years is concerned with the emergence of their early mobilization. This is important because locating the early initial forms of mobilization helps expand our knowledge into the internal aspects of the movement as well as learning who the activists were and the challenges the movement faced in their pursuit for social recognition. The movement is male oriented, and this should not be denied. As such, a limitation of not engaging voices within the cluster of the LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer) community is necessary.

Research Suggestions

The goal of this research was to document the initial stages of Tijuana's Gay social movement in the quest to showcase its early success and ongoing mobilization. It was important

for me to reveal who the founders of the movement were, including the barriers they faced along the way to strengthen Gay Tijuana culture. At the same time, this dissertation contributes to prior efforts from Joseph Carrier and Lionel Cantú, Jr. to document the history of this community, but for unforeseen personal circumstances led these two individuals to seek research elsewhere.

It is important to give continuum to the social history of Tijuana's Gay community after 1994 to present time. Who are the new activists that give meaning to this movement? In what other protest event instances have members of this community engaged in activism? What battles has this community faced regarding Gay marriage and adoption in Tijuana, Baja California? What role has religion played in the sexual identity of Gay men in Tijuana? How is Gay space use by Tijuana's Gay men to create community?

My other recommendation is to secure a venue for the creation of a *hemeroteca* in Tijuana to preserve the history of the Gay community.

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Appendix A

Founders of the Gay Movement of Tijuana

Founders of the Gay Movement of Tijuana

Daniel Eduardo Camacho Díaz, d. 1982

Pedro Luis Amezcua, d. 1983

Tomás López, d. 1985

Lino Casillas Chon, d. 1995

Juan Carlos Díaz García, d. 1997

Enrique Alejandro Jiménez García, d. 2003

Emilio Idelfonso Alejandro Alfredo Velásquez Ruiz, d. 2006

Frederick William Scholl, d. 2014

Marco Antonio Kim Alvarado, d. 2014

Máximo Mejía Solórzano, d. 2015

Juan Enrique Amezcua, d. 2017

Sergio Ruvalcaba Carlos

Appendix B
Timeline of Tijuana's Gay Movement

Timeline of Tijuana's Gay Movement

1924 – Teniente Park opens. This park becomes one of the first cruising areas for gay men in Tijuana.

1960 – El Patio Bar was frequented by bankers, and students. It was a venue for catering to *gente de ambiente*.

1976 – Los Equipales (Bar Taurino) opens.

1978 – *Emilio's Cafe Cantante* opens. This venue was crucial in the homo-socialization of gay men in Tijuana, especially during the gestation period in which gay members discussed the course of the movement and membership enlistment. In addition, this space became instrumental by providing housing to gay men dying of AIDS.

1979 – Talks about forming FIGHT (Frente Internacional para las Garantías Humanas en Baja California) take place.

1980 – FIGHT (Frente Internacional para las Garantías Humanas en Baja California) is formed.

The commercial corridor of Plaza Santa Cecilia is opened.

Patrick Brown, a founder of the U.S. militant gay movement in San Francisco, three months before NYC's Stonewall, meets with Emilio Velásquez in Tijuana to discuss the Mexican Gay Movement of 1979.

1983 – *¡Y Qué!* the first gay magazine in Tijuana starts publishing under the direction of Enrique Alejandro Jiménez García and leadership of Grupo Liberalista.

1984 – *Organización SIDA Tijuana* (OST) is established by Emilio Velásquez to combat AIDS in Tijuana.

1985 – A phone hotline, *Homosexuales y Lesbianas, Centro de Información* is implemented in Tijuana to provide information regarding AIDS prevention.

Alejandro García establishes Proyecto SIDA Tijuana.

Grupo de Gays y Lesbianas Latinos con Orgullo (GLLO) is formed in San Diego. Among the founders were Teresa Hoyos, Larry Lyons and Franko Guillén (*Franceska*).

1986 – El Ranchero Bar opens.

1989 – PAN (Partido Acción Nacional -National Action Party) takes over the State of Baja California, including Tijuana. PAN's conservative stand of social issues ignited Tijuana's gay community to vie with this party's moralistic crusade.

1990 – Max Mejía arrives in Tijuana after living in San Francisco for two years.

Gay Magazine *Frontera Gay* is formed.

1991 – On July 25 and 26 Marco Alvarado Kim and Remedios Losada coordinated the Primer Encuentro Binacional sobre SIDA en Tijuana.

El Ranchero and Los Equipales are raided on November 30. About 71 males are detained. Among them are 15 Americans.

Comité de Defensa de la Comunidad de Ambiente is founded in response to the anti-gay November 30, 1991 raid.

1992 – Emilio Velásquez, Marco Alvarado Kim, Max Mejía, and Ricardo Duéñez filed a complaint to the *Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos y Protección Ciudadana en Baja California*.

Emilio Velásquez, Felix Castillo, and Víctor Clark Alfaro formed *Vanguardia de Mujeres María Magdalena*, an organization dedicated to safeguard the rights and health of prostitutes in Tijuana.

Triángulo Monarca is formed.

1993 – Local authorities refuse to give permit for the *Miss Gay Nacional* pageant causing the gay community once more to be galvanized. The Catholic Church of Tijuana condemns this event.

Oscar Soto Marbán (assistant editor of *Frontera Gay*) and Alejandra Nin (coordinator of Tijuana's lesbian group CLIT) conduct a survey to assess the political atmosphere and whether the gay community be ready to march in the streets of Tijuana as a collective in 1994.

On July 3rd the first *Verano de Orgullo Gay en Tijuana* takes place.

1994 – Red de Cultura Civil puts up the first festival of lesbian and gay art and culture.

La señora tiene un Rosario play written by Marco Antonio Espinoza opens at Mikes Disco. Max Mejía makes his debut in theater.

Nancy Cárdenas, lesbian activists dies.

Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI candidate for the national presidency is assassinated in Lomas Taurinas neighborhood.

1995 – On June 17 at 6:00 pm, the first Gay March Parade happened in Tijuana. Over 100 people marched. The name of the march was “Del Silencio a la Celebración por los Derechos Humanos de Gays y Lesbianas”

World Aids Day Volleyball game at the U.S.- México border takes place.

POESIDA play based on Abigael Bohórquez poems is presented.

1997 – Alberto Medina contemporary dancer and teacher of the Centro de Artes Escénicas del Noroeste (CAEN) passes away on 1 February.

1998 – The “vestidas” and transvestite community experience a wave of harassment by Tijuana’s Fuerzas Especiales.

Hector Castellanos, President of PAN (National Action Party) remarks that homosexuality is a human deviancy and blames homosexuals for being responsible for AIDS.

Arbitrary detentions take place in Teniente Park as a way to combat homosexual prostitution.

1999 – Governor of Baja California, Alejandro González Alcocer, signs off establishing COESIDA, B.C. (Consejo Estatal para la Prevención y Control del SIDA).

2000 – The 7th annual *Festival Cultural de la Diversidad Sexual* takes place in Tijuana.

FIGHT (Frente Internacional para las Garantías Humanas en Baja California) marks its 20th anniversary.

2001 – Max Mejía runs for a seat in Congress as a substitute for the 16 district of Tijuana within the PRD (Partido Revolucionario Democrático) party.

2002 – The gay magazine, *Frontera Gay*, stops publishing.

2003 – Fondo de Asistencia para El SIDA A.C. (Tijuana GLBTI Pride Mexico) is formed. Lorenzo Herrera directs these organizations.

2004 – *Arte de Vivir, Voz de la Diversidad* gay magazine is born. Max Mejía is editor.

2005 – Jesse Anguiano meets Max Mejía.

2006 – Gay activist and founder of the gay social movement of Tijuana, Emilio Velásquez Ruíz, 57, passes away on September 29 after complications related to cancer.

2010 – First GLBT Festival. Theme: Inclusión en Revolución.

Arte de Vivir, Voz de la Diversidad stops publishing due to lack of funds.

Max Mejía opens Café Argüello in Plaza Santa Cecilia on September 24.

2011 – COCUT (Comunidad Cultural de Tijuana LGBTI, A.C.) is formed. This organization involves itself in a myriad of activities for the LGBTQI community of Tijuana. Such activities include HIV Prevention, movie nights, and annually putting together *Festival de la Jornada Cultural Contra la Homofobia*.

2014 – Tijuana opens first LGBT Center. Lorenzo Herrera, director.

Tijuana's gay activist, Marco Alvarado Kim passes away.

2015 – Luis Vargas and Michael Bujazán become first same sex couple who marry in Tijuana.

Max Mejía passes away in Tijuana of heart complications. His legacy was honored in El *Centro Cultural de Tijuana (CECUT)* on February 21st.

2016 – U.S. Consul General in Tijuana, Will Ostick, raises the LGBT flag at Tijuana's U.S. Consulate.

2017 – Same-sex marriage becomes legal in Baja California.

2018 – During November about 120 LGBTQ Central Americans arrive in Tijuana. A group of Tijuana residents objected to the presence of this group in Playas de Tijuana neighborhood.

Orgullo Sin Fronteras – The Binational LGBTQ educational summit is presented.

2019 – Tijuana's gay community announces a plan to erect a monument honoring the founders of the gay movement in Plaza Santa Cecilia.

Appendix C
Max Mejía Interview

Max Mejía Interview

On 2007, I asked Max Mejía various questions via email. Although not quoted in the narration, his responses inform my perspective in relation to Tijuana's Gay movement.

Como se complementa la diversidad tijuanense con ser gay en Tijuana?

La característica es la misma que atraviesa en general a la población, esto es la diversidad cultural, lo que implica la existencia de diferentes modalidades de ser gay. En cierto modo, la gente gay que llega a Tijuana por distintos motivos (en busca de oportunidades de empleo o con el fin de brincar hacia Estados Unidos, fundamentalmente), encuentra en Tijuana mayor libertad social para experimentar la vida gay. Esta libertad está enmarcada en las libertades generales que ofrece una ciudad habitada por gente de muchas partes. Es decir, es una libertad más bien inherente al ambiente social, que no necesariamente se traduce en una libertad consciente a nivel del individuo. Se es gay, porque en el ambiente social de Tijuana se puede ser cualquier cosa. La ciudad te deja ser lo que quieras, pero eso no significa que seas consciente de lo que eres y haces. Si a ti no te importa definir lo que eres, a la ciudad tampoco le importa preguntártelo. En Tijuana se puede vivir todos los días como gay y al mismo tiempo vivir completamente en closet. La diversidad social de Tijuana, al final funciona como un gran closet, que te cubre con su anonimato y con su ambiente variopinto, donde cabe todo.

The characteristic is the same that crosses throughout the population in general; this is cultural diversity, that which implies the existence of different modalities of being gay in a certain sense gay people who arrive in Tijuana with different motives (in search of employment opportunities or with the end of jumping the fence into the United States basically), gay people find in Tijuana greater social liberty to be able to experience gay life. This freedom is marked in general liberties which offer a city inhabited by people of many places. Therefore, it is a freedom more inherent to the social environment that not necessarily translates into a conscious freedom on the level of the individual. One is gay, because in the social climate of Tijuana, one can be anything. The city allows one to be whatever one wish, but this does not mean that one be conscious of what one is and does. If one does not wish to define that which one is, the city neither manages to ask that of somebody. In Tijuana one can spend all the time, everyday being gay, and at the same time live completely in the closet. Tijuana's social diversity in the end functions as a great closet, which covers one with its anonymity and with its multi-color ambiance where everything fits.

Que influencia tiene la globalización hacia con la población gay de Tijuana?

Pues se han acentuado los intercambios comerciales, tecnológicos, migratorios y culturales con Estados Unidos, fundamentalmente. Esto intensifica el movimiento del dibujo multicultural de Tijuana. En esencia no cambia la ya de por sí acentuada influencia de los modelos gay de Estados Unidos. Los gays y lesbianas comunes van a las discotecas, ya sea populares o de clase media. Los gays con ingresos más altos quieren ser como los gays de Hillcrest, les gusta la ropa de marca y en general portan un look al estilo de aquellos, y su mentalidad es también similar: superficiales y poco interesados en profundizar en temas como los derechos, los abusos de la

policía contra los transgéneros, etcétera. Culturalmente hablando, los gays y lesbianas de Tijuana viven en la globalización, pero no lo hacen de manera consciente. Se dejan llevar por la ola, simplemente. Por otro lado, tampoco hay grupos organizados que provoquen la reflexión.”

Well, they have upped the commercial business, they have increased international business, technologies, migratory and cultural interchanges with the United States fundamentally. This intensifies the movement of the multicultural draw, in essence the accentuated influence of the by now U.S. gay role models. The run of the mill gay and lesbian go to discos be they now popular or of the middle class. Gays with higher income want to be like the gays of Hillcrest. They like fashion label brands and in general wear a look in the style of those of Hillcrest. And there mentality is similar also, superficial, and of small interest, in deepening their knowledge in terms of human rights, the abuses of the police against transgenders etc etc. Culturally speaking Tijuana's gay and lesbians live in a globalized world but they do not do it in a conscious manner, they allow themselves to be carried simply by the current. On the other hand, nor is there any organized groups that provoke or sustain deep thought.

Se ven los gays tijuanenses en todas partes?

En general los gays se ven más en la ciudad de Tijuana. Cuando llegué en 1990 también se veían en varios sitios, pero en los siguientes años sin duda han ganado mayor visibilidad pública. Ahora lo gay se ve por todas partes de Tijuana. Creo que hoy hay mayor conciencia de la población en general acerca de los derechos de los gays y lesbianas (la situación de los transgéneros es más complicada. También se les empieza a ver en distintos espacios públicos, pero los prejuicios hacia ellos son todavía muy fuertes, no solo de parte de la sociedad, sino también de parte de muchos gays y lesbianas.

In general, gays are seen more in the city of Tijuana when I got here in 1990. Also, they were seen in various neighborhoods but in the following years without doubt they have gotten greater visibility. And now gayness is seen in all of Tijuana's places, I think I believe that there is greater consciousness in the general population about the rights of gays and lesbians (the situation of the transgender is more complicated). Also one begins to see them in different public spaces; but the prejudice towards them are still very strong, not only on the part of society but also on the part of many gays and lesbians.

Cuantos varones fueron detenidos en la famosa redada de 1991?

Fueron 71 homosexuales (varones) los detenidos en aquella redada de noviembre 1991. La redada la realizó la policía municipal de Tijuana, por consigna del gobierno municipal. Los detenidos fueron liberados (gracias a mi intervención y al apoyo de algunas personas que me acompañaron) una hora después de fueron arrestados. Yo presencié parte de la redada en el bar El Ranchero, adonde entraron como veinte policías, encabezados por el coordinador de jueces calificadores de la cárcel preventiva. Eso me permitió pruebas de la arbitrariedad que se cometió. Esa lucha duró alrededor de tres meses. En ella participó Víctor Clark Alfaro del Centro Binacional de Derechos Humanos, Emilio Velásquez, presidente del Frente Internacional para las Garantías Humanas en B.C. (FIGHT). La denuncia tuvo gran cobertura de los medios de comunicaciones locales y también ocupó la atención de Talk Show de Los Angeles (el programa

de María Laria), dedicado integralmente a hablar de la redada. También la cubrió el periódico Los Angeles Times. Debo aclarar que también fueron detenidos varios estadounidenses en la redada, sobre todo en la disco Los Equipales. Esto me permitió contar con el apoyo político del gobierno municipal de San Diego, que inmediatamente protestó oficialmente ante el gobierno de Tijuana. Y la culminación de todo aquello fue la realización de la primera audiencia con el presidente municipal de Tijuana, quien en esa reunión, que contó con la presencia de más de 70 representantes de medios locales y de California, se comprometió por primera vez a reconocer y respetar los derechos civiles de la comunidad gay y lesbica de Tijuana. A partir de entonces, quedó en la conciencia de la población de Tijuana el nombre de comunidad gay. También para los gay y lesbianas en general, ese acontecimiento contribuyó a que en adelante se vean como una comunidad que cuenta con derechos y que debe ser respetada por las autoridades. O sea que fue un triunfo político y un triunfo cultural. El problema es que la comunidad gay, como la ciudad de Tijuana en general, es demasiado movediza, de manera que hoy aunque el nombre de comunidad gay y la idea de que los “gays” y las lesbianas tienen derechos, ya quedó grabado en la conciencia de todos, muy pocos saben de donde vino ese cambio. O sea que casi nadie se acuerda de aquella lucha contra la redada.

There were 71 male homosexuals detained in the November 1991 raid. Tijuana's municipal police accomplished the raid by consent of the city government. The detained were freed thanks (to my intervention and the support of some people who accompanied me). An hour after they were arrested, I witnessed part of the raid on the bar El Ranchero wherein some twenty police came in headed by a coordinator of qualifying judges from the preventive jail. This allowed me to prove of the arbitrariness that was committed. This fight lasted around 3 months. Victor Clark-Alfaro and Emilio Velásquez participated in it. The denunciation had great coverage in the local media and also got the attention María Laria's program in Los Angeles, dedicated integrally to speak out about the raid. Also, the Los Angeles Times covered the story. I want to clarify that there were some *gringos* detained in the raid. More in Los Equipales discotheque than El Ranchero. This allowed me to depend upon political support from San Diego's municipal government. Who immediately officially protested before Tijuana's government. The culmination of all this was the realization of the first hearing with the mayor of Tijuana who in this meeting counted with the presence of more than 70 representatives of from California and local print and broadcast media. The mayor conceded for the first time in recognizing and respecting the civil rights of Tijuana's gay and lesbian community. Thenceforth, the name of the gay community stood out in the consciousness of Tijuana's population. Also, for gays and lesbians in general this happening contributed from here on out that they be seen as a community who could depend upon their rights and be respected by the authorities. Be that as it may, it was a political gain and a cultural triumph. It is problematic that the gay community, as is the city of Tijuana in general, is always shifting in the manner that even though today, the idea that the gay and lesbian community have rights, it now stands forth on everybody's consciousness, that very few know from where that change came from. Or be that as it were, no one remembers that long gone struggle against the police raids.

Appendix D
Newspapers Consulted

Newspapers Consulted

Frontera Gay

- Frontera Gay (1990, March-April). No. 2
- Frontera Gay (1991, May). No. 3
- Frontera Gay (1991, July). No. 4
- Frontera Gay (1992, January/February). No. 5
- Frontera Gay (1992, October). No. 8
- Frontera Gay (1992, November). No. 9
- Frontera Gay (1993, August). No. 14
- Frontera Gay (1993, October). No. 15
- Frontera Gay (1994, February). No. 17
- Frontera Gay (1994, November). No. 20
- Frontera Gay (1995-1996, December/January). No. 24
- Frontera Gay (1996, April) No. 26
- Frontera Gay (1996, June-July) No. 27
- Frontera Gay (1996, October/November). No. 28
- Frontera Gay (1996-1997, December/January). No. 29
- Frontera Gay (1997, February/March). No. 30
- Frontera Gay (1998, February). No. 34
- Frontera Gay (1999, September). No. 44
- Frontera Gay (2000, October). No. 53
- Frontera Gay (2001, July). No. 56

¡Y Qué!

¿Será 1985 otro año de represión a la gente homosexual de Baja California. (1985, February-April). *¡Y Qué!*, 7, 6-7.

¿Cuáles son los objetivos de su publicación? (1985, December/February). *¡Y Qué!*, 6, 1.

García, A. (1983, August). ¿Por qué nos organizamos? *¡Y Qué!*, 2, p. 2.

García, A. (1984, March). *¡Y Qué!*, 3.

D'México, O. (1985). Nostalgia. *¡Y Qué!*, 9, p. 10.

San Diego Union Tribune

Portillo, E., Jr. (1991, December 23). Tijuana regulation prompts fear of new intolerance for gays. *San Diego Union-Tribune*, p. B2.

Los Angeles Times

Romero, F. (1992, January 11). 'Beasts' prey on Mexico's gays, lesbians; Tijuana examples reflect country in which machismo rules. *The San Diego Union Tribune*.

El Sol de Tijuana

Cartas al Sol. (1991, December 6). *El Sol de Tijuana*.

Comunicado del Consejo Diocesano de Tijuana Sobre el Concurso "Miss Gay Internacional." (1993, December 12). *El Sol de Tijuana*, p. 7A.

En el Teniente Guerrero: Por pedirle sexo le metio tres plomazos. (1991, December 12). *El Sol de Tijuana*, p. 10.

Atentado a Garantías SIDA-Tijuana: Injustificada Redada en Bares "Gay": 75 detenidos. (1991, December). *El Sol de Tijuana*, p. 3

El Mexicano

Castillo, E. (1991, December 4). Homosexual asesinado: Le machacaron la cabeza. *El Mexicano*, p. 12, sec. D.

La sociedad debe definir lo que es moral. (1991, December 10). *El Mexicano*, p. 9A.

Constituyen el Comité de Defensa de la Comunidad Homosexual. (1991, December 25). *El Mexicano*, p. 7A.

Diario 29

García-Díaz, O. (1992, January 9). No habra más redadas: El Alcalde, Protestan homosexuales por el acoso policíaco en su contra. *Diario 29*, p. n.p.

Lu, A. (1991, December 1). Enfermos de SIDA fueron abandonados a su suerte por autoridades de salud. *Diario 29*, p. N/A.

El Herald

Piden retiro de bares en Plaza Santa Cecilia. (1992, March 3). *El Herald*, p. 7A.

Morales, F. O. (1992, March 18). Rechazo a enfermos de SIDA. *El Herald*, p. 4A.

Los homosexuales siguen haciendo de las suyas en la Zona Norte. (1991, December 15). *El Herald*, p. 8A.

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