


2016-01-01

Bio-Politics Of State Repression: A Case Study Of The Indignados Social Movement In Ciudad Juárez, México

Igi G. Acosta

University of Texas at El Paso, igacosta2@miners.utep.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open_etd

 Part of the [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Acosta, Igi G., "Bio-Politics Of State Repression: A Case Study Of The Indignados Social Movement In Ciudad Juárez, México" (2016). *Open Access Theses & Dissertations*. 791.
https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/open_etd/791

BIO-POLITICS OF STATE REPRESSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE *INDIGNADOS*
SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MÉXICO

IGI G. ACOSTA

Master's Program in Sociology

APPROVED:

Pratyusha Basu, Ph.D., Chair

Irasema Coronado, Ph.D.

Maria Cristina Morales, Ph.D.

Charles H. Ambler, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

COPYRIGHT

In accordance with the University of Texas System Board of Regents' Rules, the Board (University) does not exert ownership in scholarly works UNLESS it is a scholarly work (i) created by someone who was specifically hired or required to create it or (ii) commissioned by the System or a component institution of System, in either of which cases, Board, not the creator, will own the intellectual property. Scholarly works include: educational materials, artworks, musical compositions, and dramatic and nondramatic literary works related to the author's academic or professional field, regardless of the medium of expression. This applies to works authored by students, professionals, faculty, and non-faculty researchers. The Board retains certain rights in these works as set forth in the Policy and Guidelines for Management and Marketing of Copyrighted Works.



To the victims of the Mexican government,
from yesterday, and today.

BIO-POLITICS OF STATE REPRESSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE *INDIGNADOS*
SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MÉXICO

By

IGI G. ACOSTA (B.A)

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Master's Program in Sociology

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

May 2016

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is not easy to conceive an academic research project related to ongoing social problems, where these problems translate into oppressions at all levels. When I first decided to pursue this case study I was not entirely convinced about the direction it was going to take, but thankfully, I was initially oriented towards a clear analysis of repression by my thesis committee chair Dr.

Pratyusha Basu. Scholars have discussed the sociological reality of México through an array of countless perspectives. However, Dr. Basu and I worked together to create a strong theoretically oriented research. I also want to thank the rest of my committee: Dr. Maria Cristina Morales, and Dr. Irasema Coronado. Altogether, my thesis committee helped to me expand my sociological, analytical, philosophical and methodological perspectives through theories, history, society, gender, culture, economy, politics and legality. I cannot thank them enough. In addition to my committee, I want to thank my family, especially my mother, for always supporting me and for giving me advice after advice about life in general. I thank my friends from the Master's Program in Sociology at UTEP, as well as those in the United States and in México for believing in my voice and for supporting my ideas. Finally, I thank the activists involved in this research for allowing me into their lives in Ciudad Juárez, a city that has taught the world that tragedy does not have to end good intentions, especially if these are the revolutionary kind.

ABSTRACT

Police repression has become one of the most widespread experiences of participating in social movements. This thesis provides a case study of how repression is experienced and how it affected the *Indignados* social movement in Ciudad Juárez, México. Specifically, it chronicles the circumstances around two separate repressive events that occurred on November 1, 2011. The thesis has two broad aims. First, it seeks to provide a sociological analysis of how state repression applied through structural and systematic use of police violence affected the political trajectory and lives of peaceful and non-violent activists from Ciudad Juárez. This highlights the violent reality of social protest in México in terms of human and civil rights abuses. Second, it seeks to understand police repression against activists through the lens of bio-politics as theorized by Foucault. This research is organized as a qualitative study, and data was drawn from 20 interviews, participant observation in Ciudad Juárez, and reviewing of media accounts. The *Indignados* movement and police repression happened at a time in which Ciudad Juárez was affected by state-led violence related to an ongoing “war against drugs” being implemented by the federal government of México. Using Foucault’s theory of bio-politics, this thesis argues that activists are being criminalized through police repression, which makes it possible for the rest of society to ignore them and ultimately leads to the end of the movement itself. Thus, state repression affected the political trajectory of the *Indignados* movement as well as the personal ability of activists to continue their fight against injustice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii-viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION: REPRESSING THE <i>INDIGNADOS</i>	1
2. BIO-POLITICS OF REPRESSION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND EMPIRICAL CONTEXT.....	4
2.1 Social Movements and Activists.....	4
2.2 Repression of Social Movements.....	6
2.3 Bio-Politics of State Repression.....	9
2.4 History of Violence and Activism in Ciudad Juárez.....	14
2.5 Origins of the <i>Indignados Juarenses</i>	16
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS.....	20
3.1 Case Study.....	20
3.2 Ethical Issues.....	22
3.2 Interviewing Process.....	23
3.3 Research Experiences.....	26
4. CHRONICLES OF PROTEST AND REPRESSION.....	31
4.1 Broader Context of Repression in Ciudad Juárez.....	31
4.2 Organizing the Social Movement of <i>Indignados Juarenses</i>	36
4.3 Protest against Femicide: Experiences Leading to the First Round of Arrests.....	39

4.4 Experiences of Arrested Activists at the Police Station.....	45
4.5 Protests to Release Arrested Activists.....	48
4.6 Continuing Repression and Eventual Release.....	54
4.7 Gendered Experiences of Police Repression.....	55
5. AFTERMATH OF POLICE REPRESSION: POLITICAL AND PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES.....	58
5.1 Political Consequences of Repression.....	58
5.2 Personal Consequences of Repression.....	64
6. CONCLUSION: UNDERSTANDING THE BIO-POLITICS OF STATE REPRESSION (AND THE NEED TO END REPRESSION OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS).....	70
6.1 Experiences of Police Repression.....	70
6.2 Consequences of Repression.....	71
6.3 Bio-politics of State Repression.....	71
6.4 Need to End Repression of Political Activists.....	72
REFERENCES.....	73
MEDIA SOURCES.....	77
APPENDIX (SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE).....	81
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Diagrammatic Representation of Bio-Politics of State Repression.....	13
Figure 2. Design of Case Study (following Yin, 2011).....	20

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: REPRESSING THE *INDIGNADOS*

My research into repression against social movements began in the face of the reality that state-led violence against peaceful protesters is a part of the experience of resistance in México and in the contemporary world. Through online social platforms, I began observing that protests and activists throughout the world continuously faced the power of police authorities. Ultimately, these forms of repression against mass movements and civil and collective organizations reveal how state power has often been used against demands for social justice.

In this thesis, I detail a specific case of police repression of a social movement. On November 1st of 2011, a symbolic protest activity called *el luto no basta* (mourning is not enough) was undertaken to protest against violence and insecurity in Ciudad Juárez, México. Activists, mainly university students, planned to use water-based paint and paste to affix thousands of paper crosses across a main avenue. Within a short time from the beginning of the protest, a municipal police convoy arrived at the scene and began attacking and forcibly detaining the activists. Later during the same day, a second group of activists, that also participated in or supported the movement, was violently repressed and detained as well. The social movement that had organized the protest argued that they were participating in a legitimate activity before being attacked by the police, and that the violence implemented against them by Mexican authority forces reached a point in which detainees were physically and psychologically tortured and threatened while in custody.

This thesis seeks to gather the experiences of activists who faced police violence due to their participation in the *Indignados Juarenses* social movement, especially violence related to the November 1, 2011 protests. More broadly, it seeks to understand how contemporary forms of state-led police repression are shaping participation in social movements. I call this social

movement *Indignados Juarenses* (indignados translates to outraged, and Juarenses refers to residents of Ciudad Juárez) because that was the predominant label used in media reports after the protests and repressive events of November 1, 2011. The central research question for this thesis is:

How did state-led police repression influence the political trajectory and personal well-being of activists from the *Indignados Juarenses* social movement?

The central question will be addressed through the following sub-questions:

- What were the experiences of police repression of the *Indignados Juarenses* activists during the protests of November 1, 2011?
- What were the political and personal consequences of the repression for the movement and the activists?
- How does Foucault's theory of bio-politics of power provide an explanation for the use of state-led police repression against political activists?

This sociological work ultimately reveals how ordinary Mexican citizens have been affected when they organize in oppositional groups and how their dissidence becomes a basis for various governmental agencies to justify state repression with police violence. The results of this research contribute to interpreting Mexican state-level practices in both theoretical and empirical ways. Theoretically, it provides insights into state-level power and repression, and its relationship to police violence. Empirically, it provides a case study from México that may inform activists facing social repression in other contexts while also providing materials for future research.

The main theoretical framework utilized is Michel Foucault's notion of bio-politics. This concept allows for a navigation through different interpretations regarding state-level structural

and systematic use of repression, from which the power of police in Ciudad Juárez originates. The research design is a qualitative case study. Data was obtained and analyzed mainly through semi-structured interviews, and I have also used media sources, and my own experiences while interviewing activists in Ciudad Juárez to supplement the interviews. Overall, this thesis seeks to contribute to research on how political activists are being affected by state repression in general, but especially that related to police actions.

This thesis is organized into six chapters, including this introduction which is Chapter 1. Chapter 2 reviews literature pertinent to this research, including theoretical approaches to social movements and repression, as well as the history of violence and activism in Ciudad Juárez, México, and the origins of the *Indignados Juarenses* social movement. Chapter 3 details the design and methods of this research. Chapter 4 focuses on experiences of protest and repression of interviewed activists. Chapter 5 examines the aftermath of state-led police repression in relation to political and personal consequences for affected activists. Chapter 6 summarizes and interprets interview findings, and provides a concluding discussion which reiterates the notion of bio-politics and argues for the need to oppose repression of social movements and activists.

CHAPTER 2. BIO-POLITICS OF REPRESSION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND EMPIRICAL CONTEXT

This chapter provides an overview of the notion of bio-politics by situating it within the context of social movement theory. It begins by examining different theoretical concepts related to the organization and development of social movements through examining the related meanings of contentious politics, political process model, and political activism. The chapter then seeks to understand how state repression of social movements has been studied, but mainly how its relation to police use of repression has been interpreted. Utilizing Foucault's work, the chapter sketches a model of bio-politics in the context of police repression of activism. Finally, this chapter introduces the contexts of violence and activism in Ciudad Juárez, as well as the origins of the *Indignados Juarenses* as a social movement.

2.1 Social Movements and Activists

Social movements are collective organizations through which people take action to change existing relations of power and social arrangements (Tilly and Castaneda, 2007: 33). According to Stammers (1999), social movements have typically been defined as constituted by individuals who understand themselves to share some common interests and hence identify with one another (984). For Stammers, social movements are important agents of socio-cultural change which should be defined not solely in terms of their visibility through overt political mobilizations, but rather based on a combination of their political, economic and social impacts on human rights (985). Social movements have thus become an important way to understand the construction of oppositional politics.

Tilly and Castaneda (2007) developed the notion of 'contentious politics' as part of their theoretical approach to social movements. Contentious politics is defined as sustained campaigns

of claims making, using repeated performances that advertise that claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities. Contentious politics occurs when ordinary people join forces to confront authorities and elites: "...mounting, coordinating and sustaining them [confrontations] are the unique contribution of the social movement-an invention of the modern age and an accompaniment to the rise of the modern state (Tarrow, 1988: 2; Mostyn, 2004: 10).

An approach to social movements that is useful for this thesis is the 'political process model' (McAdam, 1982: 36). Under this model, a social movement is seen as political phenomenon that changes over time. However, the narrow definition of politics supported by the political process model, as only activity occurring in reference to the governments of nation-states, would define much social movement activity as non-political (Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008: 78-9). Thus, both the political process model and contentious politics ignore the role of social and cultural identities in social movements. To expand these two approaches, it is important to consider the strategies through which "activists seek the most direct means toward influence on policy, based on their socially constructed appraisals of their resources and social and political location" (Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008: 78).

Activists can be defined as people who generally use their voice and actions to propose or reject changes, especially focusing on the sphere of formal politics, but that are not necessarily part of conventional political channels. Political activists are civilians that use various peaceful or non-violent public strategies to create awareness about specific social problems, and can act independently or through collective groups, such as social movements. News headlines are filled with stories of governments cracking down on nonviolent activists who have mobilized to protect their rights and demand social and political change (Mckone et al., 2015: 2).

Arif's (2011) study of political activism considers how protesters and political activists build strategies that resonate with individuals' belief system in order to mobilize them into participating and sustaining a social movement. For instance, in Pakistan, a new era of democracy was possible as the Internet-based social media gained popularity by generating political dialogue on issues of national importance (Arif, 2011: 197). Activists thus build resistance by empowering specific social groups or citizens through providing information on injustices and democratic strategies to organize protests, thus enabling them to gain greater control of their everyday lives.

Unfortunately, when the media provides news of a specific social movement, it focuses mainly on why the demonstrations began and how they have been organized (Turner, 2012-13: 2). The ultimate broader oppressions that social movements are responding to and that they face as they organize their protests remains absent in such media reports. It thus becomes important to undertake a closer study of social movements and activists.

2.2 Repression of Social Movements

Repression is "any action taken by [government] authorities to impede mobilization, harass and intimidate activists, divide organizations, and physically assault, arrest, imprison, and/or kill movement participants" (Stockdill, 1996: 146). Additionally, Tilly and Castaneda (2012) define repression as an action by authorities that increases the cost – actual or potential – of an actor's claim making. This claim making is an aspect of contentious politics, being interactions in which actors make claims that bear on someone else's interests or programs, and in which governments are targets, objects of claims, or third parties (Tilly and Castaneda, 2012: 39).

Researchers have worked assiduously to understand what factors shape which social movement, or social movement organizations, are targeted for repression, when repression is likely to be more severe, and what might drive police action at particular protest events (Earl, 2011: 17). As social movements have emerged and gathered strength, forms of state repression through police violence have also become revealed. Images of state authority being utilized for repression of social movements are widespread: from Southern sheriffs spraying U.S. civil rights protesters with fire hoses in the 1960s, to tanks crushing student protesters in Tiananmen Square (Earl, 2003: 44). World governments with military leaders have made broad use of the repressive state apparatus to deal with (or eliminate) political dissent (Costa, 2011: 20). The availability of state authority, including police and military, in the service of political and economic elites, translates into oppression and underrepresentation for civil society in most modern states. A perfectly repressive regime never actually faces dissent because dissidence is entirely prevented (Earl, 2011: 7). According to Earl (2011), different types of repression are likely to be imposed by the state during the course of a social movement, (7); even short-term shifts in attitudes towards protests by political elites may affect the type or severity of repression (McAdam, 1982; della Porta, 1995, 1996; della Porta and Reiter, 1998; Earl, 2003: 45).

However, repression agents are not linked only to governmental or state forces. As Tilly (1978) has acknowledged, private actors-particularly private organizations-have an immense capacity to repress movements (Earl, 2003: 46). Earl makes it clear that researchers on this subject must acknowledge that private actors related to social movement repression need to be contemplated as repressive agents. For example, consider how perfunctory our understanding of the civil rights movement would be if social movement scholars did not study the activities of

white-power organizations and focused only on state-based repression of movements (Earl, 2003: 46).

Earl (2003) explains that most prior typologies of repression have focused on the severity of repression, not the type of repression, for what she distinguishes three dimensions of repression: 1) identity of the repressive agent, 2) character of the repressive action, and 3) whether the repressive action is observable (47). For Earl (2003) the ultimate consequences of repression for social movements include three broad potential repercussions that include deterrence, radicalization, or no effect (26). However, there is no research consensus pointing to a singular and predictable sequence of consequences following repression (Earl, 2011: 27).

Earl (2003) also considers that research on repression has developed a skewed and overly narrow image of police response to protest by largely ignoring the range of police responses to protests, for instance the arrest experiences and pre-trial detention serving as informal punishment against protesters (582). For example, in Venezuela, the most common crime attributed to protesters was the obstruction of roadways and other transit, either by fixed barricades or the presence of demonstrators who did not seek official permits for their activities (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Police implementation of state repression may also occur through undercover officers infiltrating themselves into activists' organizational meetings, and serving as provocateurs within social movements in order to justify their use of force. Repression is then excused by designating it as a means to stop people from participating in loitering, looting, subversion, disruption of peace, with extreme justifications including prevention of violence and terrorism. Given that even peaceful, legal protests, that do not express violence against state-actors and properties, are targeted for police violence, justifications provided for repression often do not hold up to impartial scrutiny. When people have general animosity toward protesters or

the groups they represent, police may be more likely to react with violence much as they would in other police situations (Earl, 2011: 25).

State repression ultimately becomes a social and political consequence of participating in activism and organizing with others through social movements. People targeted by state repression are then imprisoned, censored, arbitrarily persecuted, criminalized, monitored, and in many cases deadly actions are perpetrated against individuals or collective groups for political reasons. There is also a need to consider types of repression unrelated to use of force, such as channeling and coercion as forms of obstructing social movements (Earl, 2003: 46). For Earl, overt and covert forms of repression might be expressed differently depending on the country where it is taking place. Contrary to covert repression, overt repression of protest by police has the virtue of being systematically observable and well-studied, as well as serving as a useful indicator of authorities' general program of social control toward particular dissident groups (della Porta, 1995; Earl, 2003: 582).

2.3 Bio-Politics of State Repression

Michel Foucault's theorizing is highly relevant to interpreting state repression. Foucault's interest is in the reproduction of power, and he described a new type of power called "bio-power;" which focuses on the regulation of populations and the control of social bodies (Hewett, 2004: 7). Foucault used bio-power and bio-politics interchangeably, to refer to the same phenomenon of politics concerned with life (Kirstensen, 2013: 8). At the end of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, he summarizes the process by which, at the threshold of the modern era, natural life begins to be included in the mechanisms and calculations of state power, and politics turns into bio-politics (Agamben, 1995: 10). According to Foucault, with the regulation of sexuality, the sexual body was repressed, something that is legitimized through norms,

especially cultural norms. Every period and culture has modeled bodies according to what Foucault (1976) denominated as “devices of vigilance and control” (Reguillo, 2000: 74). As bio-politics continues with the birth of modern nation states, social bodies begin to get systematized according to interpretations of social needs, including in the realms of penal and medical institutions.

The reality of power is that is not reducible to institutions such as the state, because it is not a thing to be held (Hewett, 2004: 8). The overall effect of the organization of these relationships is power, and Foucault claims that power is everywhere not because a thing called ‘power’ is actually everywhere at all times, or because power relationships are always controlling, but because power comes from everywhere – everyone is almost always involved in trying to influence actions and outcomes around them in some way or another (Hewett: 9). This description of power is different from what Foucault describes as the traditional conception and explanation of power: the conception of “sovereign power” (Hewett, 2004: 9). Foucault makes us aware of a historical change in power through the emergence of bio-politics. Instead of obedience in the form of subjection to the king’s will or docility in the face of the disciplinary system, the aim of bio-politics is normalization (Jaakko, 2013: 46).

Bio-power targets natural life through systematic actions over social bodies that mainly include control, vigilance, discipline, obedience, and punishment. To enable this type of power, governments began collecting specific data about population numbers, growth and development of humans, and rates of fertility and mortality, and through these developed norms concerning, among other things, human health standards and development standards (Hewett, 2004: 7). Eventually institutions began controlling the life and social bodies of specific populations

through bio-power; for instance, prisons that sought to regulate crime, and mental hospitals for systematized treatment of populations that needed cognitive correction.

Through understanding how bio-politics introduced in our lives a series of disciplinary and regulatory mechanisms based on the systematization of populations (Foucault, 1997: 227), we can create a possible connection to contemporary state-level institutional power and the systematic use of repression through police violence in order to control mass mobilizations of activists or protesters. Foucault analyzes the institution of the prison and the abandonment of torture in the prosecution of criminals by modern states. He concludes that such dramatic and sudden changes in disciplinary practices was not the sign of a lessening of the exercise of power in public life; it was a shift in the methods of power through increased control over all aspects of the life of criminals and citizens alike (Hewett, 2004: 19). It was marked by new methods of normalization, hierarchies of crimes and criminals, and the further institutionalization of disciplinary methods, including a shift in processes through which criminals are punished and crimes analyzed.

Through systematization of the population, bio-power was no longer focusing on specific types of criminals, or specific types of people, but rather on society as a whole. Foucault then leads us to processes utilized under bio-politics to justify power over others: “With bio-politics, human life became an object of efficient and meticulous governing in western societies” (Jaakko, 2013: 46). Bio-politics is then a technology of power that consists of techniques, practices, and procedures that are aimed at organizing, regulating and governing the phenomena peculiar to life (Kristensen, 2013: 18). Today, bodies have become devices subjected to vigilance and control for reasons of obedience and discipline, and punishment is a consequence. Foucault believed that the body as the major target of penal repression disappeared along this process (Foucault, 1995:

8), but power continued its regulatory function over social bodies. Everyone becomes a possible criminal through a systematization of populations, as criminal characteristics are now considered to be latent in all members of the social body. Normalization of criminality may be related to the act of direct state-led police repression in public streets.

In this thesis, I have developed Figure 1 below to provide a diagrammatic overview of the exercise of bio-power. As the individual body disappears as the main target of authorities, institutionalized expressions of power, mainly punishment, continue being enforced over the population that needs to be regulated, or the social body. In terms of state repression against social movements, repressive tactics become normalized and invisible to those not experiencing it. As repression becomes a generalized tactic against social movements, it is turning into a form of undeclared, institutionalized power that begins meting out punishments in the public streets, and that is generally applied against activists in the same way as it is applied against criminals. Immediate consequences of this are the involvement of all type of actors, from within the state to private, in the application of repressive violence, the restriction of social movements especially silencing those with political goals that challenge structures of state-governments of all kinds; and forms of repression that may be beyond our visibility. Today's modern states represses political ideologies through powerful institutional and systematized structures. Bio-politics then regulates bodies in order to make social movements and itself invisible to the rest of society, ultimately seeking the disappearance of social movements.

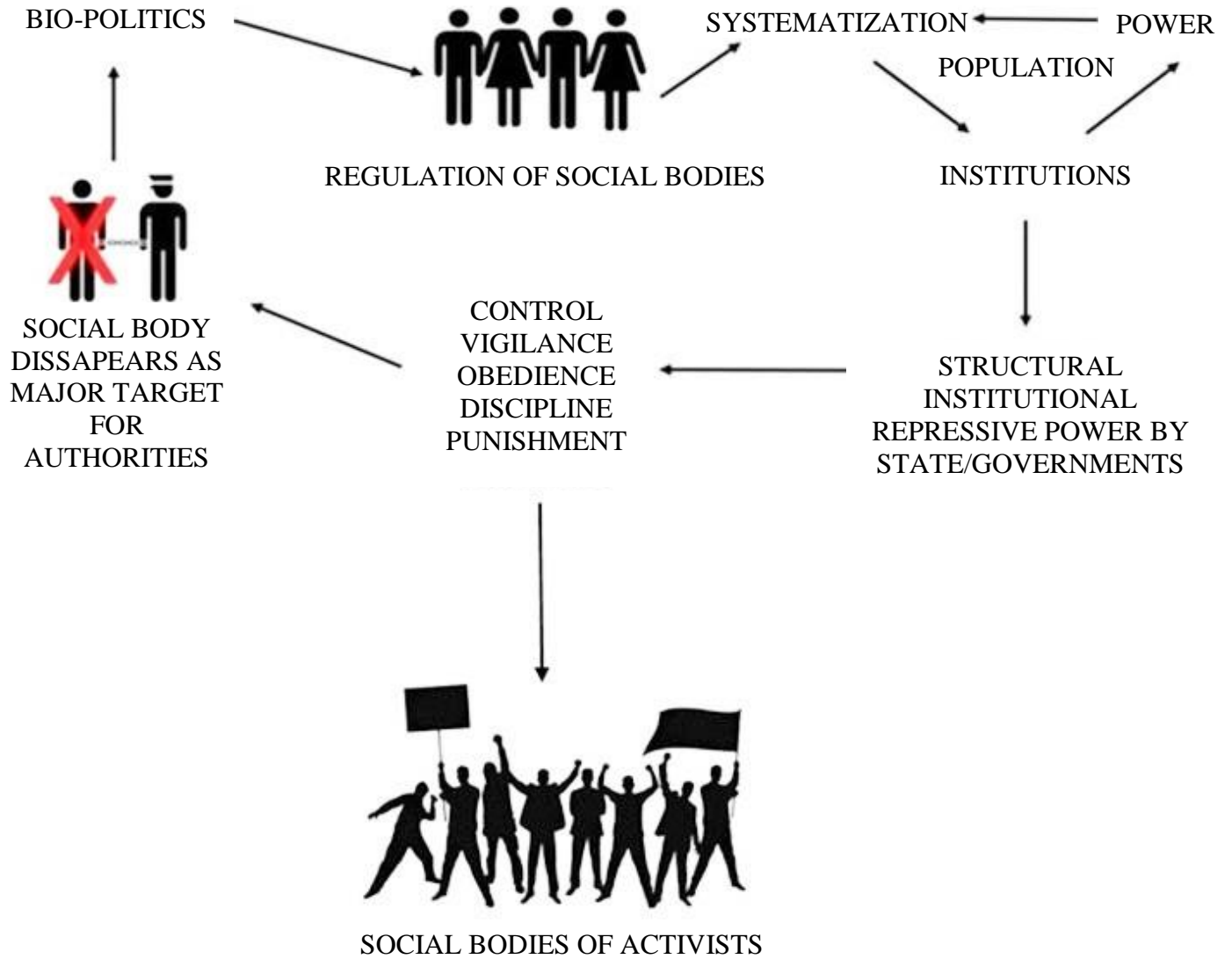


Figure 1: Diagrammatic Representation of Bio-Politics of State Repression

2.4 History of Violence and Activism in Ciudad Juárez

The social, political, cultural and economic history of Ciudad Juárez has been essentially connected to the United States. The Juárez-El Paso enclave is one of several major urban complexes that straddle the 1,900-mile boundary between México and the United States (Martinez, 1975: 1). As a result of the Guadalupe Hidalgo and Gadsden Treaties, negotiated in 1848 and 1853 respectively, México ceded more than half its national territory to the United States; since that time the two countries have been separated politically by the Rio Grande (known as Rio Bravo in México) for roughly half the border distance, and by a geographically unmarked land boundary from El Paso to the Pacific Ocean (Martinez: 4). Ciudad Juárez, in the northern Mexican frontier, played a prominent role in the Mexican revolution of 1910-1920 (Martinez: 76). Subsequently, tourism became an economic mainstay in Juárez due to American Prohibition and the Great Depression. In the 1960s, the city experienced unprecedented advances, becoming the fourth largest city in México (Martinez: 214). Most inhabitants of Ciudad Juárez speak Spanish, but the closeness to the United States makes English a widespread second language, especially for businesses and families that straddle the border.

The U.S.-México border region and the everyday lived reality of its residents and workers is shaped by economic globalization (Staudt and Mendez, 2015: 27). After a slow start in the late sixties, the *maquiladoras* (assembly factories) boomed in the early seventies (Martinez: 259). The major capital boom of the maquiladoras industry happened after the implementation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) in 1993, and this brought dramatic social changes to the city. After NAFTA, México experienced losses of many rural jobs related to agriculture. To this day, poverty remains a normalized social condition, which is reflected in low wages paid at *maquiladoras*. In Juárez, the average pay for a *maquiladora*

worker is about 64.48 pesos a day (approximately US\$6), close to the hourly minimum wage in Texas; Juárez wages are well below subsistence level given that the average cost of feeding a family of four is around US\$50 a week (FIDH, 2006; Morales and Bejarano, 2009: 432).

México's labor unions, historically, have been closely tied to the dominant political party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) (Middlebrook, 1995: Staudt and Mendez: 29).

The U.S.-México border has long been a place of low-intensity conflict, and this has exacerbated with the U.S. "war" on drugs, terrorism, and immigration enforced by a "Border Security Industrial Complex" consisting of governments agencies, corporate contractors, and politicians (Staudt et al.; Staudt and Mendez: 43). Heavily militarized responses is the hegemonic ideology of the border as exemplified by the "war on drugs" (Staudt et al; Staudt and Mendez: 21). Drug war related violence and continuous migration has made it difficult for the Mexican census group INEGI to count the population of Juárez, with an estimation of around 1.3 million in 2010 (Staudt, 2008: 8). Large-scale migration to the Juárez-El Paso area began to take place in the first decade of the twentieth century (Martinez: 66).

Despite the apparent economic progress in the city, in the 1990s, Ciudad Juárez's reputation shifted from one of a booming industrial city to that of a violent center of drug trade, random crime, and outdated manufacturing facilities (Wright, 2003: 370). It could be argued that rural poverty, spawned by NAFTA, has provided fertile ground for the narco-economy in rural areas and narco-migration to the United States (McDonald, 2005: 121). In the mid-1990s, news that dozens of young women had been murdered and dumped along the city's desert edges had shocked the city; many of the victims had worked in the city's *maquiladora* industry (Wright, 2003: 372). In her acclaimed book, *The Killing Fields: Harvest of Women*, Diana Washington Valdez (2006) explains that since 1993 women as young as 12 year olds and teenagers were

found killed, raped and mutilated. Mexican government officials disputed the numbers or trivialized the totals as crimes of passion or normal domestic violence (Staudt, 2008: 19).

The government's 'public woman' discourse argues that, while unfortunate, the deaths of women represent a kind of public cleansing, as the removal of troublesome women restores the moral and political balance of society (Wright, 1999; Fregoso and Bejarano, 2010; Wright, 2011: 714). Wright (2011) examines women's deaths through the concept of necropolitics as elaborated by the postcolonial scholar Achille Mbembe (2008). In this case, death itself becomes an everyday condition of living for *maquiladora* workers. More than two decades later, this phenomenon known as femicide or femicide for the systematic killing of women and girls in Juárez, continues unresolved. In a 2003 monograph on female homicide (femicide) in Juárez, Amnesty International counted 370 female murders from 1993 to 2003 (Staudt: 2).

On March 12, 2002 (as part of an extended International Women's Day event), several thousand people marched through the streets of Ciudad Juárez to publicize the hundreds of murders and disappearances of women and girls since 1993; women activists took the lead in organizing meetings, press conferences, and protests to bring international public attention to the violence (Wright, 2003: 372). Garwood (2002) also makes note of this through explaining that "over the past years, women on both sides of the border have organized marches, demonstrations, candle light vigils, letter writing campaigns, and showings of documentaries" (16). This U.S.-Mexico border town has become an export-processing zone and conflict zone, where women workers are devalued and literally discarded (Garwood, 2002: 2).

2.5 Origins of the *Indignados Juarenses*

The social movement I am referring to as the *Indignados Juarenses* took inspiration from Spain's *indignados*, or the "outrage" (Orozco, 2011). In 2011, the Spanish *Indignados*

movement, also known as 15M, originated in Cataluña on 15 May, 2011, just a week before Spain's national elections of 22 May, when people saw no viable alternative between a neo-liberalized left and a neoliberal and conservative right (Castaneda, 2012: 310). When municipal and autonomous elections were held in the country between May 15 and 22, thousands of people took to the public plazas within the country and outside it, lending visibility to protests against the government in Spain (Haro-Sampedro, 2011: 159).

The 15M was initially viewed as anti-political because it did not have any affiliation with a political party and included many young individuals who were inexperienced in public affairs, party politics, labor and social movements. Congruently many of the *Indignados* did not vote (Castaneda, 2012: 310). These claims seem to be supported as the new Spanish government did not listen to the movement, and instead took a harder stance against the protesters (3). Activists were eventually victims of police repression on different occasions throughout Spain, provoking a civil uproar against such incidents in the country.

According to Castaneda (2012), the 15M social movement was a response to the global economic crisis and administrative actions by the European Union and the Spanish government (1). But the *Indignado's* protests were also more broadly against neoliberal capitalist policies that increased income inequalities by impoverishing working classes and enriching financial classes across the world. This movement was replicated in other parts of Spain as well as across the world, and is viewed as a precedent for Occupy Wall-Street in the United States and *Nuit Debout* (Up All Night) in France. The *Indignados* from Spain had called for a worldwide transnational social movement for which online social media platforms played an important role, and a México-specific Twitter hashtag of 15OMX was created. Eventually the 15M, along with the ongoing Occupy Wall Street in the United States, influenced activists in México, and civil

groups began organizing across the country as *Indignados*, including in the cities of Ciudad Juárez, México City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Xalapa, Acapulco, and Oaxaca.

Staudt and Mendez (2015) explain that Juárez has been situated at the conjuncture of three kinds of experiences since the 1990's: 1) export-processing industrialization, 2) gendered border violence, and 3) anti-militarization alliances (Ch. 2). Activism strategies have also changed accordingly, for instance with the rise of NGO's and civil society protests. The 2001 the discovery of eight young women's bodies brazenly dumped in *Campo Algodonero* (translation: cotton field) inside Juárez galvanized mobilizations onto the streets on both sides of the border, provoked official backlash strategies to divide and rule the activists, and ultimately led activists to focus on lower-key strategies, such as pursuing legal channels, to gain justice (Staudt and Mendez: 39).

Ciudad Juárez is also México's ground zero for organizing activism against militarization (Staudt and Mendez: 2). In the case of México's *Indignados*, activists not only confronted economic struggles associated with a low-wage neoliberal economy, but also experienced violence by the Mexican state military strategy as it controlled discontent against such labor exploitation and the violent drug economy that had arisen in the country. In Ciudad Juárez, thousands of murders became the norm year after year, reaching to more than ten-thousand assassinated civilians, many victimized through kidnappings, and others through firearms violence. Activists from Ciudad Juárez, through different social and political forums, demanded a cessation of violence in the city, and challenged the strategy of militarization of the Mexican state's war against crime and drugs. The *Indignados Juarenses* organized a series of protests against the militarization strategy of the Mexican state, the local femicide, and the general violence the border city was facing.

From 2008 to 2011, the federal army and then the federal police had assumed responsibility for the city's public security, and in 2011, an ex-military colonel known as Julián Leyzaola was assigned as police chief (Wright 2013: 831). Ever since domestic and international human rights organizations have documented record-breaking numbers of human and civil rights violations on the part of Mexican police and military forces (LaFranchi, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2010; Wright 2011: 708). For example, on January 30, 2010, in Villas de Sálvarcar a neighborhood in Ciudad Juárez, sixteen people were massacred at a party; eventually the outrage of their parents spread through the community and caused a public uproar (Staudt and Mendez: 55-56). In 2011, the national *Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad* (Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity), led by Javier Sicilia, acquired wide media visibility in México and the U.S. (Staudt and Mendez: 131). Staudt and Mendez (2015) mention that Sicilia's was very memorable in Juárez as the city was recognized as "the epicenter of pain and tragedy" (132).

It was the violent social environment and movement organizing in Ciudad Juárez that gave birth to the *Indignados Juarenses*, which is one group among many others that had joined forces to protest injustices in the city. Institutions in civil society, including social movements and NGOs, amass the potential of "people's power" to transform individual or personal problems into public or political issues (Staudt: 6). As a social movement, the *Indignados Juarenses* organized in solidarity with the victims of violence in the city, but most predominantly those affected by militarization and femicide.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This research follows a qualitative case study research design, and its principal data collection tool is individual, semi-structured interviews. This chapter discusses the case study design, the interview process, and my own experiences during the data collection.

3.1 Case Study

A ‘case’ is generally a bounded entity (a person, organization, behavioral condition, event, or other social phenomenon) (Yin, 2011: 7). I am considering the repressive events from November 1, 2011 as a single case study, which also reveals the larger and ongoing context of violence and repression in Ciudad Juárez (Figure 2). Compared to other methods, the strength of the case study method is its ability to examine, in-depth, a “case” within its “real-life” context (Yin, 2004: 1). The case study method is best applied when research addresses descriptive or explanatory questions and aims to produce a first-hand understanding of people and events (Yin, 2004: 3).



Figure 2: Design of Case Study (following Yin, 2011)

Through understanding these specific events, we can make connections to other social movements that were repressed by state forces in a similar way and find patterns in use of power by authority both across México and in the international realm. There are many potentially similar examples of police repression in México. An especially well known instance of police violence occurred in 2006 in San Salvador Atenco, a town in the State of México. While the immediate provocation was the removal of street vendors, this community was also famous for having resisted the siting of an airport in 2002, and community members came to the aid of the vendors. The police repression was especially severe leading to beatings, rapes, and killings of community members. Recently the State of México approved the “Atenco Law” to justify police use of violence against social movements. In a more recent case, on September 26, 2014, 43 students from a rural school in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, were forcibly disappeared and killed by police forces after the students organized a protest to commemorate the Tlatelolco massacre. The massacre being commemorated occurred in 1968 and saw the participation of military officials in repressing hundreds of student and civil activists through killings, forceful disappearances, and imprisonments. State repression in México thus shows a specific pattern of violence aimed at controlling, detaining, and stopping people from organizing in the streets.

The incident against the *Indignados* from Ciudad Juárez is only the tip of the iceberg of state repression targeting political activists and social movements through different authority institutions in that city. In 2010, one student was shot by a Mexican federal police convoy as they attempted to disperse a protesting crowd outside of the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez. This last case reflects how violence against activists has reached terrible consequences in México as several activists have also been murdered or have had to escape the city to seek political asylum in other countries due to fears of political prosecution. Known cases of political

asylum seekers into the United States include Karla Castañeda, a mother of a missing girl, the Reyes-Salazar family, and Juan Manuel Fraire Escobedo, son of deceased activist Marisela Escobedo, all having to escape the city of Juárez after receiving multiple death threats.

3.2 Ethical Issues

This research directed me to participants that experienced, or that could have been experiencing state repression, and the viability and risks of this research were expected to become clearer as I moved on through the process. Overall, I continued with this research to the extent that I could protect the identity of interview participants, as well as ensure their safety and my own. I was never faced with insecurity, so the mode of conducting interviews in person in Ciudad Juárez (the main method of data collection) remained the same at all times. Some interviews were conducted online because the participants were not in Ciudad Juárez, but in other regions of México and the United States. Overall, I did not anticipate any risks to their participation in this research other than those we could have encountered in day-to-day life, as well as the activists finding some of the interview questions to be sensitive. I approached activists within a feminist framework of solidarity. I obtain this notion of feminist solidarity from Castellanos (1996). Within this framework, the emphasis is on discovering and relating to the difficulties of others. My intent was to build trust in the interviews through close attention to the voices and stories of the activists. In the case of traumatic memories, I wanted activists to feel comfortable about disclosing them, without forcing them to remember or recall anything they did not want to. I was ready to move on to the next question if hurtful and emotional responses were evident (i.e. anger, frustration, sadness). I was seeking to respect every person's personal and private space. In general, most of the interviewees mentioned negative psychological memories when recalling traumatic events, but in no case did an interview have to be stopped because of

this. Some health related problems were mentioned in one interview which I have mentioned in a way that respects the interviewee's privacy and is based on consent from the interviewee.

3.3 Interviewing Process

Data was collected over February and March 2016, and formal interviews were conducted after IRB approval was obtained on March 7, 2016. Semi-structured interviews were the main data collection strategy. This interview method was useful in two ways. First, it enabled the gathering of systematic information, which served to connect interview data to my central research question on how state-led police repression affected the well-being of activists and the movement's trajectory. Second, the semi-structured questions allowed me to maintain some flexibility so that participants were free to take the research in directions that were useful to them. I was initially drawn to this research topic through a news item, so I also used media sources, including news articles, videos, and websites, to supplement interview data. Another aspect of this research was the opportunity to interview activists in the places in which they had experienced repression, including the sites of protest and detention. I used this experiential sense of place to add to my understanding of the activists' narratives. In the field, I would write field notes and identify key-themes in the interview and my experience of the interview. This allowed me to remember details when I subsequently worked on analyzing the data.

I collected 13 semi-structured interviews of people that directly experienced repression (through being arrested) on November 1, 2011. These included 9 face to face interviews were conducted in public and private spaces, including a communal cultural space, a communal library space, a house, an office, and a park. Four of the interviews were Skype/Facebook online calls, including one to Xalapa in Veracruz, two to México City, and one to Dallas, Texas. The interviews ranged in time from 30 minutes to more than an hour. I asked the same questions

throughout the interviews, and while some participants answered with brief concise answers, others were kind enough to expand on their responses. All semi-structured interview participants were either currently or previously living in Ciudad Juárez. Their ages ranged from 24 to 61. Their involvement in political activism had different origins: from being raised by parents involved in political activism, to dissidence against the general social problems permeating México. Overall, activists and participants were well-informed individuals in terms of human and civil rights.

Additionally, I collected 7 informal interviews: 2 of people who were arrested during the repression; 2 of people who were present during the repression but did not get arrested; and 3 of people that were not present during the repression but who had heard about it. These interviews were considered informal because I did not record the conversation, and did not follow a formal questionnaire; I simply spoke to them about their experiences with the *Indignados Juarenses*. I have not used the information provided by the informal interviewees, but these were useful in finding additional respondents, and adding to or confirming existing insights into the repression.

Interview participants were recruited via a snowball procedure. My positionality as both a supporter of activists and a transnational researcher were key in locating former activists from the *Indignados Juarenses*. The total number of activists arrested on that day were 29, so 13 semi-structured interviews provides a good basis for building a generalized narrative of the arrest experience and its aftermath. In general, I was aware that activists in Ciudad Juárez tend to participate in different social movements, so I knew I could have been referred to other activists that have faced state repression on other occasions. But as I interviewed the activists and listened to their stories I realized that I needed to continue concentrating on their case instead of pursuing

interviews from other groups and people; in this logic I maintained my focus on the *Indignados Juarenses* as the focus of research.

The place for each interview was decided based on arrangements made with every interviewee, but in general public and non-official spaces were preferred. Prior to each interview, I verbally informed the participants about the objectives and procedures of this research, including the facts that their participation was voluntary and that they could skip any question as well as end their participation at any moment. I also introduced myself as a student researcher from UTEP. This method of informed consent worked well being less invasive and ensuring anonymity, and I perceived that they became confident in their responses due to this. The contacts of my committee members were always ready to be provided in case that further verification was needed.

All formal interviews were recorded, based on consent from every interviewee, which provided access to the viewpoints of every participant in their own voices. As mentioned before, informal interviews were not recorded. For both types of interviews, I took detailed notes during and after the interviews. Transcription and translation of the 13 interviews was undertaken by me. Themes for coding were guided by the interview questions and geared towards developing a chronicle of activist experiences and ultimately answering the central question related to how the repression affected their political trajectory and personal well-being. While all participants agreed to share their names and not remain anonymous, with the exception of the informal interview participants, I have decided to use pseudonyms in reporting my findings to ensure that no unintended risks emerge for the participants through my analysis. One of the final questions of the interview was, ‘What do you expect from researchers like myself that analyze general

experiences of activists?’ and the general response was that this research was important in order to continue sharing and exposing the repressive experiences that happened to them.

3.4 Research Experiences

When I began my research in Ciudad Juárez, the city was in the middle of local campaigns for electing the next municipal president. Several of the activists, or my prospective interviewees, were participating in a political campaign supporting an independent candidate for the municipal presidency. This candidate was known as Toñita, a working class woman, who had been protesting for several months through collective strikes and sit-ins outside of the Lexmark factory, and seeking broader national and international support. The workers demanded justice for unjustified firings, including some after organizing protests, the inability for them to unionize, sexual harassment by former employers, and exposure to chemicals. These protests were supported by activists and civil organizers from several backgrounds, including former activists from the *Indignados Juarenses*, who held vigils, camping for 24 hours outside of the *maquiladoras*, and organized other political and cultural events.

My first challenge therefore was that some activists did not have time for interviews, but I was able to find others who could spare time for me. Soon, a former *Indignado* and activist from Ciudad Juárez, which was not participating in Toñita’s campaign, became a key person to learning the names and whereabouts of several activists. This person was not among those arrested, but was present during the repression. I met this person informally a few times to share insights about my research. As I moved forward, I learned that several people were not in the city anymore, or that others were not interested in activism any longer. This was then my second challenge, which was the need to contact people who were not available locally or those who would find a research like this a concern to their current non-activist status. In order to contact

more activists, I decided to take then help of social media. Contacting interviewees through Facebook was very useful as I was able to have my profile visible as an introduction.

During the research process, I noticed that the anxiety from activists I interviewed decreased when we communicated via online calling, through Skype and Facebook, as they readily answered interview questions, without hesitating on the details or displaying self-doubt about their memories. The lack of anxiety among activists interviewed via online calling could have also related to the fact that they were not residing in Ciudad Juárez, which made me think that performing interviews outside of the city could have calmed each participant. While I had good back and forth communication with prospect interviewees via online calling, this did not always work as a few activists stopped replying to me, mainly women, while others never read my messages. Three women activists stopped replying while two more never read my messages. I assumed that my being a male researcher could have influenced this, but in general I mostly believe that it was the stranger factor as I contacted people that I did not know in person. In relation to this, one person refused to participate in a semi-structured interview but thanked the initiative and later agreed to an informal interview. Another person remarked that *el interes tiene patas* (interest has legs), seemingly alluding to the fact that my research disguised a personal interest, for which I clarified that it did indeed have an academic interest. In these instances, I simply assumed that it was okay to let go of those potential respondents. This was important to help me be open to the different attitudes and personalities of the various activists.

As I interviewed participants, I realized that the semi-structured interview questions needed to be modified; for instance, I realized that the questions related to gender and class were confusing to a few of the activists. When discussing gender, I began asking some interviewees about specific experiences of men and women; similarly in a few occasions I substituted the

notion of social class for income inequalities. As I continued interviewing, I became more confident asking questions, and began to be able to insert questions within the natural flow of conversation and ask further details about what they were saying. I realized that I could not always ask questions in the set order of my questionnaire as some participants answered questions ahead of time. In these cases, in order to prevent redundancy, I skipped questions that had already been addressed by their answers.

When some prospect interviewees expressed skepticism and personal worries, I sought to address these through interviewing at public spaces and via online calling. But all participants were not this way. For instance, one participant even introduced me to another person that had suffered repression, a mother of a missing daughter. Although I did not interview this mother, it gave me insights into possibly continuing research on mothers and fathers becoming activists in Ciudad Juárez. In another example of activists' own interest in this research, an activist who I had previously interviewed accompanied me to interview another person. Although this last interview went fine, I realized that the presence of another person during the interview did influence the responses I received; I was simply not fully aware of the relationship between the two activists. In general, skepticism was present among several formal and informal interviewees, due to the University of Texas of El Paso being an institution in the United States.

Mid-way through the interview process, I realized that the effects of repression were stronger than I had originally thought; I had an initial idea about the physical and psychological harm that the activists had experienced, but as I listened to their stories, I understood the real severity of the repression they lived through on a daily basis. Through identifying these effects, I realized that we cannot deny the existence of repression and its damages on society and people, but that we need to challenge it. Every interviewee shared unique testimonies, providing a new

detail similar to what others recalled, but different from each other as their standpoint varied depending on where they were as the police began their repression. This allowed me to reconstruct the repressive events of November 1, 2011, through different perspectives and to introduce myself to a plural scenario as if I had experienced it myself. I also realized that most of them remembered their experiences as if it had happened yesterday, especially with vivid details about the aggression and violent acts of the police. Another thing I realized is that I sometimes needed to step aside from the assumptions made by participants in order to develop an objective sociological standpoint. This became necessary when participants referred to one another according to their gender, sexual orientation, and political background. Borrowing the notion of feminist solidarity by Castellanos helped me to stay objectively oriented while still being sympathetic to interview participants.

Finally, this experience has taught me many things, beginning with the fact that my relationship with the activists from Ciudad Juárez, especially those related to this research, has become stronger. I realized that this type of research cannot end as the experiences of people affected by injustices will remain. The research may also continue because I continue to be contacted by prospective participants. I had finished the interviewing process when I received a message from a person looking to be interviewed. This person provided me with details that made me rethink possible risks related to this research, and made me re-consider the value of pseudonyms as a way to treat data with prudence. I expect that more people will be seeking to get interviewed as this research gets published. Lastly, although I developed this research through experiences of the activists, we may continue discussing my interpretations of repression. For example, when I defended this thesis I received comments from an attendee

arguing against my optimism for a world free of repression in a capitalist society. I hope though that this thesis goes some way towards showing the existence of spaces of resistance and hope.

CHAPTER 4. CHRONICLES OF PROTEST AND POLICE REPRESSION

This chapter describes the repression experienced by activists in Ciudad Juárez based on the interviews and media sources through participants' responses, which are quoted in English followed by the Spanish original. This chapter recreates the repressive events of November 1, 2011. The repression experienced on that day was visible to local media. However, the normalization of repression made the full extent and implication of police violence, in terms of physical and psychological violence, disappear from view.

4.1 Broader Context of Repression in Ciudad Juárez

Ciudad Juárez has experienced different manifestations of violence, including femicide, or the systematic killing of women, since the 1990s. One of the interviewed activists drew attention to this violence.

In Ciudad Juárez, as far as I know, there is a constant repression against the fathers and mothers of missing daughters, who are not allowed to affix posters of their daughters because later on the next day these are taken off. As a matter of fact with the visit of the Pope [Pope Francis' visit to México in February 2016,] the crosses they [parents of victims] had painted on a Monday were erased the following Tuesday (Irv).

En Ciudad Juárez que yo sepa hay una represión que es constante a los padres y madres de hijas desaparecidas, que no los dejan poner sus pesquisas de sus hijas porque luego al día siguiente las quitan, de hecho ahora con la visita del papa se les borraron las cruces que ellos habían puesto del lunes al martes (Irv).

It should be noted that one of the protest activities on November 1, 2011, was the affixing of pink crosses on the walls of public buildings to draw attention to and protest the ongoing femicide.

With the beginning of the so-called ‘war against drugs and crime,’ officiated by then President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa who was in power from 2006 to 2012, Ciudad Juárez was turned into a region that experienced murders, kidnappings, assaults, and extortions. One activist described the violence associated with the drug war as follows.

The process of militarization through [the government of] Calderón begins, and the border is the first place where this political experiment was put into place. We had never seen this in México or in other regions of the country. There was a sharpening of violence by 2010. Calderón follows a plan for rescuing México, one particularly for Chihuahua, and among the people there was hope. But they were divided as well, as some supported the militarization and its complications, while critical voices argued from a constitutional standpoint that the military were not supposed to be on the streets (Nai).

El proceso de militarización, pues se da a partir de Calderón, y posteriormente a ello la frontera viene siendo el primer lugar donde se llevó a cabo este tipo de experimento político social, jamás se había visto en México o en otra regiones del país, lógicamente la frontera a partir del 2010 vive una agudización de la violencia muy difícil, entonces lo que hace Calderón con el plan rescatemos México, uno particular para Chihuahua, es soltar a los militares. Había mucha esperanza por parte de la población, siendo una generalización, pues había como una división entre las personas que realmente estaban a favor de todo esto que viene siendo la

militarización y las complicaciones que esta misma tiene, y por otra parte estaba la voz crítica por la cual se criticaban dichas acciones a partir de que constitucionalmente el ejército no debe estar en la calles (Nai).

Another activist illustrated the link between militarization and transnational economic flows.

Insecurity and impunity are linked to militarization, or with the politics of transnational capitalism, in which by the way Ciudad Juárez has strong interests because of the border and being a place where legal and illegal transportation of merchandise takes place. Obviously, transnational capital is not abstract anymore as organizations and people influence municipal, state and federal governments (Art).

La inseguridad e impunidad que acarrea la militarización pues tiene que ver con el programa, o bueno con las políticas del capitalismo transnacional, que además en Ciudad Juárez tiene intereses muy fuertes, por ser la frontera y porque por ahí es el trasiego de mercancías legales e ilegales, y bueno obviamente pues el capital transnacional no es una cosa abstracta sino que en algún momento se convierte en organizaciones y en personas, y creo que esas personas han influido o influyen con el gobierno tanto municipal como estatal y federal (Art).

Ciudad Juárez in 2011 was a site of violence generated after the Mexican government orchestrated the previously mentioned “war” against organized crime and drugs, specifically against drug cartels, from 2006 onwards. The so-called “war” began drastically affecting Ciudad Juárez in 2008 after the Mexican federal government, with the aid of the United States, implemented a bi-national armed cooperation known as the Merida Initiative, which had the aim to militarize the country. An activist focused on this during the interview:

We were living under a war that we did not understand and under a process of militarization that precisely generated the feeling of war in the border and that left many missing people, and an enormous amount of deaths from 2008 to 2012. In 2011, we were at the peak of a critical conflict and the victims were civilians, unarmed civilians, who did not understand the purpose of the war or who was going to win. But we did know who was going to lose and we knew that all the people of Juárez were going to lose (Arm).

Estábamos viviendo una guerra que no entendíamos y un proceso de militarización que estaba generando precisamente esa sensación de guerra en la frontera que dio una gran cantidad de desaparecidos, una enorme cantidad de muertos del 2008 al 2012. Fue en el 2011, estando en el marco de lo más álgido de un conflicto en el cual las víctimas era el pueblo, el pueblo desarmado, que veía como había una guerra que nadie entendía ni cuál era su objetivo ni quien iba a ganar. Lo que sí sabíamos es quien iba a perder y sabíamos que íbamos a perder todos los juarenses (Arm).

For activists, both femicide and militarization were sites of protest and connected the city to the wider global economy of the border region.

Activists described various forms of state repression and two are quoted below.

From denying the voices of the dissidents, social stigmatization, the despising of someone who thinks differently: repression happens through media sources but also in schools. From threats to arbitrary detentions against activists and the murdering of journalists, there is repression that responds to structural causes. Repression manifests itself through structural causes and through state-level

politics that applies coercive mechanisms to maintain political hegemony in this society (Jul).

Desde la negación misma de la voz disidente, la estigmatización social, el desprecio por el que piensa diferente; la represión se da a través de los medios de comunicación, pero también en las aulas escolares. Desde amenazas hasta detenciones arbitrarias a activistas y el asesinato de periodistas, hay una represión que responde a causas estructurales. Su manifestación es a partir de una política de Estado que implementa estos mecanismos coercitivos para mantener la hegemonía política en esta sociedad (Jul).

Repression is selective. From actions against the youth juggling on street intersections looking for others to aid them with a coin to survive, to women looking for their missing daughters, to factory workers. Repression increased in Juárez as a product of the war against drug cartels (Arm).

La represión es selectiva. Desde las acciones en contra de aquellos jóvenes que están en los cruceros haciendo malabares y buscando que alguien les auxilie con una moneda para sobrevivir, ya no comentaría el caso de las mujeres que buscan a sus hijas, también se ha dado en contra de los obreros de las fábricas. Habrá que decir que esto se popularizo en Juárez producto de la guerra en contra del narcotráfico (Arm).

The connection between repression and poverty was an insight provided by one of the activists.

Inequality, unemployment, militarization, torture – all these goes hand in hand with a plan that eventually turns into a vicious cycle of generating poverty to later

criminalize it, and then criminalization generates more poverty and less opportunities for advancement (Art).

La desigualdad, el desempleo, la militarización, el empleo de la tortura, todo esto va de la mano, es parte de un mismo plan que se vuelve entonces un círculo vicioso, de generar pobreza y después criminalizar la pobreza y a la vez esta criminalización genera más pobreza y menos oportunidades de movilidad (Art).

State repression began to take shape as a political strategy in Ciudad Juárez that, along with drug war related-violence, created an environment of hostility towards the common citizen, but especially against the underprivileged and poor, something that has persisted even after the violence of the drug war has subsided.

4.2 Organizing the Social Movement of *Indignados Juarenses*

In the interviews, activists explained how the *Indignados Juarenses* came together from previous political fronts and collective organizations.

In Ciudad Juárez there are always groups of people that in one way or another are opposing the system (Dan).

En Ciudad Juárez siempre ha habido grupos de personas que de alguna manera están oponiéndose al sistema (Dan).

The indignation from Europe is taken in México and in Ciudad Juárez as a form of solidarity against similar problems provoked by capitalism (Nai).

La indignación en Europa se retoma en México y en Ciudad Juárez como una cuestión de solidaridad en cuanto a los problemas provocados por el capitalismo (Nai).

The Indignados [from Ciudad Juárez] were a supranational organization that reached a global level that had unique elements or programmatically distinct contents across regions. Each region had particular and specific demands, but what made all regions similar was the horizontal decision making forms. There were not leaders and decisions; decision making was horizontal and through assemblies, and initially everything begins in Spain (Ant).

Los Indignados [de Ciudad Juárez] se suponía ser una organización supranacional a nivel internacional que en si en cada región había elementos o contenido programáticos distintos. Cada región tenía demandas particulares y específicas, pero en lo que los volvía similares a cada región eran las formas. No había líderes o dirigentes, las decisiones eran horizontales y por asambleas, y esto en un primer momento surge en España (Ant).

More specific details on the origins of the movement also emerged in the interviews.

I remember that the proposal to create a group of Indignados [from Ciudad Juárez] following the example of the Indignados from Spain originated through the Sociology faculty at the UACJ (Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez). We then organized open assemblies and invited several other groups to join (Nai).

Yo recuerdo que salió una propuesta de crear un grupo con esta cuestión de los Indignados de España en la facultad de sociología de la UACJ (Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez). Nos organizamos en asambleas abiertas e invitamos a otros grupos a sumarse (Nai).

I believe we began to call ourselves Indignados [from Ciudad Juárez] because several activists in Juárez already had some political formation and a way of

organizing, through contacts, networks. Previously, we had already been part of the Frente Plural Fronterizo which was an association formed after the massacre in Villas de Salvarcar, so we had already a type of network and of working together (Mic).

Me parece que decidimos empezar a llamarnos los Indignados [de Ciudad Juárez] porque ocurrió que varias personas activistas en Juárez ya teníamos como cierta formación y como cierta manera de organizarnos, contactos, redes. Anteriormente habíamos sido parte del Frente Plural Fronterizo y ya habíamos conformado esa asociación a partir de la matanza de Villas de Salvarcar, entonces ya teníamos como cierta red y ya nos habíamos calado trabajando juntos (Mic).

The Indignados Juarenses was a plural front that had been recently formed, created specifically to remember the bullet, the tragedy in which the federal police shot Darío Álvarez Orrantia, a sociology student, on the back, within an international forum against militarization and violence that was being held in the university [UACJ] (Ger).

Los Indignados Juarenses era un frente amplio que se convocó de hecho tenía pocos días de haberse formado y se formó específicamente para hacer una manifestación recordando el balazo, el hecho trágico en que la policía federal le disparo por la espalda a Darío Álvarez Orrantia, estudiante de sociología, en el marco del foro internacional contra la militarización y violencia que se llevó a cabo en las instalaciones de la universidad [UACJ] (Ger).

The *Indignados Juarenses* organized protests and forums in public spaces, local universities, and at the U.S. consulate. They also created awareness and demanded the de-militarization of Ciudad

Juárez, calling for an end to both continuing violence against civilians, especially women, and the overall crises caused by the neoliberal policies of the Mexican government.

One activist made comments during the interview about the role of violent social conditions in giving an impetus to the movement.

There were many outrageous things happening, for instance young ladies continued disappearing, and even though some may not have a leftist political orientation, everybody needs to realize that everything is wrong (Bea).

Estaban ocurriendo muchas cosas indignantes, ver jovencitas que están desapareciendo, ya hasta que uno no haya tenido la formación de izquierda ni nada de eso, se tiene que dar cuenta uno que todo está mal (Bea).

The *Indignados Juarenses* were thus adding themselves to a long-fight against specific forms of violence against women and violence in general, and the organization of the *Indignados Juarenses* took shape according to the social conditions related to violence in México at the time. Alongside, although former members had different leftist ideologies, the organization connected to a world-wide movement that highlighted “outrage” against the effects of capitalism and neoliberalism, and did not follow conventional institutional political organizing channels.

4.3 Protest against Femicide: Experiences Leading to the First Round of Arrests

On November 1, 2011, the *Indignados Juarenses* organized a protest activity to commemorate the victims of the violence in the city, and the repression against university students from the *Universidad Autónoma de Juárez* (UACJ) in which a student was shot in the back. This activity consisted of affixing pink crosses on buildings along a main avenue. These pink crosses were meant to symbolically represent the femicide that had occurred in Ciudad Juárez since 1993, wherein hundreds of women and girls have been kidnapped, trafficked, and

murdered, and the activists were highlighting the impunity of the violence against women and the lack of justice that remains in the city. Two activists recall how the main protest activity of affixing pink crosses was organized.

There were several reunions prior to the event that were held a year after one comrade from the university was shot during a walking protest. There had been several attempts for reorganizing the movement; this was because not everybody wanted to go out to the streets, but eventually the most conscious youth from the city decided an activity to affix crosses all along the Paseo Triunfo avenue (Jul).

Hubo una serie de reuniones a un año del disparo que la policía federal había perpetrado a uno de los compañeros del movimiento durante una marcha. El movimiento no se animaba del todo a salir a las calles, habían unos intentos de manifestación esporádicos, y eventualmente los jóvenes más conscientes de la ciudad acordaron realizar una pega de cruces por toda la avenida paseo triunfo (Jul).

I remember that it was a very busy day for me... We had planned several events, and for the first event we had planned to affix ten-thousand crosses for deaths due to militarization in Ciudad Juárez from 2008 to 2011. The first event was then the one I was working on primarily, so my house was literally, where we worked since my dad had a method to cut many crosses at once. The plan was to affix the thousands of crosses starting at the avenues [intersections of] López Mateos and Triunfo all the way to the cathedral [in downtown Juárez]. We were going to be using paste and bond paper, which at the time was not a crime in contrast to graffiti or stencils; well, back then it was not illegal (Mic).

Recuerdo para empezar un día súper atareado para mí...Habíamos planeado varios eventos y para el primer evento pensábamos pegar las diez mil cruces por los muertos que había habido en Ciudad Juárez por la militarización del 2008 al 2011. Entonces el primer evento que era el de pega de cruces pues era en el que yo estaba trabajando primordialmente, entonces pues así de que mi casa literal, mi papa tenía un método para cortar cruces en serie. El plan era que íbamos a pegar las diez mil cruces comenzando en la Triunfo y López Mateos hasta la catedral. Entonces las íbamos a pegar las cruces con engrudo y con papel bond, el cual no estaba tifiado como delito en ese entonces a diferencia del grafiti y de los esténciles, bueno en aquel tiempo no era ilegal en Juárez (Mic).

At the beginning of the activity itself, the police intercepted the activists and the repression began, which was broadcast live by one of the city's local T.V. stations.

Orozco (2011) explains that when the *Indignados Juarenses* were apprehended, the activists had barely started their protesting activities. But the convoy of municipal police armed officers intercepted them and began the arrests by putting them into several pickup-trucks. The whole intersection of the avenues López Mateos and Paseo Triunfo de la República, which happened to be one of the main intersections in the city and that was heavily congested with traffic, was shut down by the municipal police in a matter of minutes, and the explicit excuse to begin repressing was the use of paint on private and corporate property, including a bank and a McDonalds restaurant. The police first grabbed the people with the paint and later everybody else. Women and men of all ages were being brutally beaten and harassed by police officers. They also arrested people that argued against the arrests or sought to pull police away from

fellow activists while they were being arrested. Quotes below describe the experiences of arrest of four activists.

We began the mobilization, the affixing [of crosses], on the left side of the avenue López Mateos, and by the time we reached the right side of the same avenue, about 200 to 300 meters [from the starting point], there was a bank. I remember that a fellow woman activist got closer to the bank, I don't remember the name, and I remember a comrade reaching out for the bank and beginning to stick a cross on an ATM. A few minutes later, two municipal police patrol trucks arrived, full of armed police officers with firearms and dressed as if they were going to war, covered faces, and one individual with a type of cartridge belt across his chest. This group of police officers was the one that began trying to grab us and eventually was the group that kept us in custody until we were handed over to the state police (Art).

Iniciamos la marcha, la pega, de lado izquierdo de la avenida López Mateos, y para cuando llegamos al lado derecho de la avenida López Mateos, que serán unos 200 o 300 metros pues estaba ahí un banco, no me acuerdo que banco es, y recuerdo que una compañera se acercó al banco y comenzó a poner una de las cruces en uno de los cajeros. Pocos minutos después de eso llegaron dos camionetas, llenas de policías armados con armas largas con toda esa indumentaria como de guerra, con la cara tapada, recuerdo mucho a un sujeto, así como con cananas atravesadas en el pecho. Este grupo de policías fue el que primero nos intentó agarrar y fue el que nos tuvo en custodia todo el tiempo hasta que nos entregaron a la policía estatal (Art).

Three police trucks arrived and they begin to harass fellow comrades. I start being hit and they crash my head on the ground, and they even left deep scars on my arms that I still have today (Nai).

Llegaron las primeras patrullas queriendo amedrentar a los compañeros. A mí me empiezan a pegar, posteriormente me estrellan la cabeza contra el pavimento, y de hecho tengo unas cicatrices bastante profundas hasta la fecha (Nai).

That day [of the protest] I had decided not to participate because that day a close person to me had died, but I had agreed to take paste to them, because we were going to use paste, not paint. While we were still at the intersection, the police arrived and begin to repress in a very exaggerated way. I see a young guy on the floor, a comrade being beaten up. I leave my car on the street, this because I was actually getting there late, and I decide to go and try to take that masked man off from my friend (Bea).

Ese día había muerto una persona y decidí no participar, pero yo iba a llevar engrudo, por que íbamos a pegar no a pintar. Estábamos todavía en el punto donde se había convocado cuando empezaron a reprimir de una manera muy exagerada. Entre todo veo que tiraron a un muchacho, a un compañero lo están golpeando. Después dejo mi carro en medio de la calle porque de hecho iba tarde al evento, y decido ir a tratar de quitarle ese hombre enmascarado de arriba de mi amigo (Bea).

What I especially remember from that repression is the impasse and stupidity of the Mexican state: ... They were trying to prevent us from saying that it was wrong to kill people (Ger).

Lo que me rememora de ese hecho de represión es la cerrazón y la estupidez del Estado mexicano: Querían evitar que manifestáramos que era incorrecto que estuvieran asesinando gente (Ger).

The police action culminated in 13 arrests at the site, and the main reason cited for the repression was that the activists had invaded a bank while affixing pink crosses in private building facades along a main avenue. Some interviewed activists recall their mixed feelings about the protest.

I remember there were some initial disagreements as some of us did speak with the media outlets that assisted the event as well... In previous meetings we had agreed to paste [crosses] depending on the strength of the group. When we began [the protest], there were only about 25 to 30 people, and as I said we had agreed to not paste [crosses] on private spaces such as banks or stores to prevent repression. But then as soon as some crosses are affixed in the bank, the police arrive (Irv).

Recuerdo que habían algunos panchos al principio porque algunos de nosotros si hablábamos con los medios de comunicación que estaban ahí...En juntas previas habíamos dicho íbamos a pegar cruces dependiendo de la fuerza del grupo. Entonces habíamos empezado, éramos en realidad pocas personas de 25 a 30, y supuestamente no íbamos a pegar en lugares privados como bancos o tiendas que sabíamos son propensos a que te repriman. Pero se pegó en el banco y llega una patrulla (Irv).

Mixed feelings however would translate into support for the activists once the arrests began and the severity of repression became clear.

4.4 Experiences of Arrested Activists at the Police Station

The repressed *Indinados Juarenses* were taken to a local police station called Aldama, which is now called Universidad. During their time in the police station, the arrested activists continued to experience insults, aggressions, and were psychologically and physically tortured, and all of this reportedly occurred in sight of a judge and higher security force officials. Three activists are quoted below.

They drove us around and threatened that they were going to disappear us, so I was in shock thinking “are we really going to be killed, really?” In the context of Juárez that was really possible, and once they finally took us to the police station [Aldama], instead of presenting us to the judge, they took us to the back. Then they could not find the keys to my handcuffs. Meanwhile, women were taken underneath a porch, while men began to be beaten up by many police officers while they still had the handcuffs on. I remember that I did not want to look up and closed my eyes, which was the main reason why the other women were taken away, so that they would not see. I remember that I may have been crying when I asked a women police officer to look for the keys to my handcuffs, I told her that I knew that she was not in a position to do me a favor and neither I to ask for one, but to please look for those keys. I really believed they were going to kill them, and I really did not want to witness that. Then I was taken with the rest of the women (Mic).

Nos llevaron del lugar de los arrestos y nos amenazaban con que no nos iban a presentar, decían la neta los vamos a desaparecer. Yo estaba en shock y decía “¿es neta que nos van a matar, neta?” Entonces en Juárez esta todo tan jodido que tú dices que todo sería posible, y no pues ya nos llevaron a la estación, y en lugar de

presentarnos con el juez lo que paso es que nos llevaron como a un p6rtico que est1 atr1s. Entonces no podían encontrar las llaves para mis esposas. Mientras tanto a las otras mujeres se las llevan al p6rtico y a los hombres me acuerdo mucho que los empiezan a golpear muchos policías, estando todavía esposados. Entonces me acuerdo mucho que yo estaba, así como no quería ver, cerrando los ojos, a las mujeres se las llevaron para que no vieran. Entonces me acuerdo que no se si estaba llorando y le pedí a una policia diciéndole que la neta yo sabía que no estaba para hacerme ningún favor y yo para pedirle cosas, pero que por favor buscara la llave pues yo no quería estar viendo eso. De verdad pensaba que los iban a matar, y la verdad no quería presenciar eso. Y ya después me llevaron con las otras morras (Mic).

They took us to the police station, and I remember that as we went into the parking lot where they normally bring down the detainees, the police patrol truck in which we were in stopped for a moment, and the patrol behind us did a few signals as if he was saying to not stop there but to rather go forward. The driver continued and we were taken to the parking lot, where they stored their trucks, and a police officer with a covered face, as if we were in a war scenario, gets out of the vehicle, opens the back door, and pulls downs my comrade by pulling his t-shirt's neck. My partner obviously being handcuffed at the moment with his hands behind him receives a punch in the face from the officer out of nowhere. Then they pull me down, they grab my t-shirt, and I receive a similar punch in the face; my glasses fly through the air and I begin to bleed through my nose, a lot of blood (Art).

Nos llevan a la estación de policía, y recuerdo muy bien que hay una puertita antes de pasar al estacionamiento por donde normalmente bajan a los detenidos, y como que se paró ahí un momento la patrulla en la que íbamos, y el de atrás hizo señas que no, que se fuera adelante. Se siguió adelante, nos llevó al estacionamiento de patrullas, y se bajó un policía con la cara tapada con toda esta onda del equipo de guerra, y abre la caja de la camioneta y baja a mi compañero tomándolo del cuello. Mi compañero obviamente todavía esposado de atrás de las manos recibe un golpe así en seco en la cara. Y ya pues como que me bajan a mí, me toman de la camisa, y también me dan un puñetazo en seco en la cara; en ese momento salen volando mis lentes y empecé a sangrar mucho de la nariz (Art).

They take us to a secluded spot of the police station, then they make sort of an Indian line and they make us walk through it as we received slaps, punches, kicks, everywhere they could, in the abdomen, in the face, in the back, in the head. I remember that one comrade was hit in the back of his knees and was bent backwards and just like that they pulled his hair to bring him back up. They put us all together and they continued beating us up, and since we were still handcuffed we could only protect ourselves with the body of the person next to us. I remember the police then ripping apart their uniforms to say that we had done it (Nai).

Nos llevan a un punto ciego de la estación, nos empiezan a apilar esposados y nos hacen caminar en medio de una especie de fila india y en lo que pasamos nos iban dando cachetadas, puñetazos, patadas, en la cara, en el abdomen, en la espalda, en la cabeza. Recuerdo que a un compañero le pegaron en las rodillas y lo doblaron y así mismo como lo doblaron lo levantaron de los cabellos. Al último

nos apilaron a todos y nos siguieron pegando, y como todavía seguíamos esposados nada más podíamos cubrirnos de los golpes con el cuerpo de los otros compañeros. Recuerdo que los policías se rasgaron los uniformes como para decir que nosotros se los habíamos roto (Nai).

The bio-politics of repression in terms of its engagement with the body, as well the invisibility of repression within a police station, is apparent in these experiences.

4.5 Protests to Release Arrested Activists

In response to the arrests at the intersection of avenues López Mateos and Paseo Triunfo de la República, protests at the police station occurred later in the night of November 1. Activists of the *Indignados Juarenses*, several other fellow comrades and leaders from different local organizations including non-governmental, as well as friends and family members of the people arrested, gathered outside of the Aldama police station to demand a response from the authorities about the whereabouts of apprehended activists. One activist describes this protest as follows:

In the first protest, I was able to evade the arrests. But then we were at the Aldama station and more comrades started getting there; we had made phone calls to everybody. So then a group of about 20 people gathered, and almost immediately we engaged in pressuring the police by affixing crosses on the outer wall of the police station as they would not give us information on the condition of the detainees, or confirm that they were not missing, or if they were beat up, etc. (Irv).

Yo logre evadir que me arrestaran en la primera protesta. Llego a un punto en donde estábamos en la estación Aldama y ya había más compañeros; habíamos hecho la labor de hablar y avisar a los contactos. Entonces unas 20 personas hicimos un acto de presión a la policía en corto pegando cruces afuera de la

estación porque no nos daban información de los detenidos, no teníamos certeza de que estaban bien de salud, que no estaban desaparecidos, saber si estaban golpeados, etc. (Irv).

In response, police proceeded to arrest 16 more people, an event again witnessed by local media.

Three activists describe these arrests as follows.

They were not telling us much, so we began to again protest by affixing crosses, as that was the reason the whole repression began. Then somebody said let's go to the doors and we started sticking crosses in the doors. We were screaming and chanting. A police official asked us to go back, but we say no. Then more police officers started getting out of the building in a confrontational manner; it was like a cave of wolves. Then all of sudden they start grabbing a comrade and attempt to take her inside, and in that moment everybody reacted by trying to grab her back. Then the repression begins, similarly as the first time, with police officers outnumbering us (Jaz).

No nos estaban diciendo mucho, así que empezamos una protesta pegando cruces, justamente como había iniciado toda la represión. Entonces alguien dice vamos a las puertas y empezamos a pegar cruces en las puertas, y ya gritábamos consignas. Un policía sale y nos empieza a decir que nos retiremos y nosotros así de nel. Entonces más policías comienzan a salir del edificio ya en una postura de confrontación; era como la cueva de los lobos. Entonces de repente uno de ellos agarra a una compañera con la intención de meterla en corto a la estación, y en ese momento todo mundo reacciona tratando de quitárselas. Y así empieza la represión, similar a la primera, con más policías que manifestantes (Jaz).

I was able to see how the police detained a student after they could not stop him as he kept running around. So when they start beating him up, in that moment it was hard not to react. I start yelling at the police to stop beating him. He was handcuffed already, so there was no reason to do that. Due to that action, I was then subjected to arrest as well (Arm).

Yo pude ver como un policia detiene a un estudiante después de que no lo podían detener, entonces en cuanto lo someten lo empiezan a golpear, y yo en ese momento era difícil no reaccionar, entonces empecé a gritarle al policia que lo dejara de golpear. Ya estaba esposado, no había necesidad de hacer eso. Entonces debido a esa acción a mí también me someten (Arm).

When all the police came out, the wrangling began. A container with paste or paint went flying through the air. Then I realized that the police were grabbing two comrades, and as they were being beat up, I threw them some paste that I had in my hand. Then the police came towards me and grabbed my hair and pulled me backwards. I received a kick in the face which hurt my eye. I was knocked out, then I was grabbed by the hair again and forced into the police station (Jul).

Cuando salió la policia, la trifulca comenzó. Salió volando un bote con engrudo o pintura. Entonces me di cuenta que la policia estaba agarrando a dos compañeros, y así como los estaban golpeando, les avente el engrudo que tenía en la mano. Ya en eso se dejan venir contra mí, me toman el cabello y me tiran. Recibo una patada en la cara que me cierra el ojo. Ya estando noqueado me agarran el cabello otra vez y me jalan a la fuerza adentro de la estación (Jul).

The severity of police violence thus seemed to continue to increase with every new batch of arrested activists.

From the interviewees, it seems that the second group of arrested activists had to receive medical assistance after their release, from surgeries to medical treatment. For instance, another person I interviewed informally and that was also arrested, received a hit on his left ear with a heavy object. This person almost lost his hearing capabilities on the left side of his head. As the second group of activists was demonstrating and being arrested outside the police station, some of the previously arrested activists inside the police station were listening to the chaos. One activist mentioned witnessing the protests outside the police station and being overwhelmed by that experience.

My father was among the repressed, and if I was not in crisis already, when I saw my father, I collapsed. My father is a doctor specialized in anesthesia, and he worked at the social security hospital. He headed over to look for me, and that moment was so strong that I do not know how to describe it. I could not get close to him as they had us separated from one another. I could not speak to him, so I did not know how he was. I could not imagine the terrible things they were doing to him, and obviously he was beat up as well, and on top of all he was very sick when that happened, so his health was very delicate (Art).

Mi papa estaba entre los reprimidos, y si no estaba ya en crisis para ese momento, cuando vi a mi papa pues colapsé. Mi papa era medico anesthesiólogo, y trabaja en el seguro social. Había ido a buscarme, y ese momento fue muy fuerte para mí, no sé cómo describirlo. No podía acercarme a el porque nos tenían separados. No podía hablarle, entonces no sabía cómo se encontraba. No me podía imaginar las

cosas horribles que le estaban haciendo, y obviamente también lo golpearon, y encima de todo él ya estaba muy enfermo cuando eso sucedió, su salud era muy delicada (Art).

Some of the people affected by the repression had not originally been organizing with the *Indignados Juarenses* or had decided to not to attend that day, but they were eventually affected by the police violence as they arrived to assist the first group of arrested activists.

I was not organizing directly with the Indignados [from Ciudad Juárez]. The day of the problem I was on the internet, then all of a sudden I got a message from someone inviting us to join them as several people were arrested at the Paseo Triunfo and López Mateos intersection. Since my daughter generally tended to participate in these marches, I decided to go as I thought she could be there, but once I was on my way my wife calls me and tells me that my daughter was already back home, but I still headed over there (Dan).

Yo no estaba organizándome directamente con los Indignados [de Ciudad Juárez]. El día del problema yo estaba en el internet, y de repente me llega un mensaje de alguien invitándonos a sumarnos pues habían arrestado a varias personas en la intersección entre Paseo Triunfo y López Mateos. Como mi hija generalmente asiste a las marchas, yo decidí ir pensando que ella podría andar ahí, pero ya una vez en el camino me habla mi esposa y me dice que mi hija ya había regresado a la casa, pero aun así me dirigí al lugar (Dan).

I had decided not to go to the protest at the last minute. When the repression began at the intersection, they began transmitting it through television, and by the time we headed over, the detentions had already happened, and the only people there

were those that the police could not arrest, all scared and hysterical. We began to learn about who was missing and we began organizing what we could do. Things were bad in the city, people were going missing, human rights were being violated, and there were assaults, so I feared they would not present them alive or that they beat them up. We then divided ourselves to go to every police station in the city, and finally we found out that they were at the Aldama station (Jaz).

Al último minuto decidí no ir a la protesta. Cuando comenzó la represión en la intersección, lo comenzaron a transmitir por la televisión, y para el momento en que nos trasladamos al lugar ya habían ocurrido las detenciones, y las únicas personas ahí eran aquellas que la policía no había podido arrestar, estaban asustadas e histéricas. Comenzamos a saber quiénes faltaban y a organizarnos como pudimos. Las cosas estaban mal en la ciudad, había personas siendo desaparecidas, derechos humanos violados, había asaltos, y pues temía que no los fueran a presentar vivos o que los golpearan. Nos dividimos para ir a las estaciones de policía y ya después supimos que estaban en la estación Aldama (Jaz).

Before the repression we had an assembly and I voted against the affixing of crosses due to security concerns. I personally decided not to participate, but I was still part of the security committee ready to react in case something happened. I remember that while I was at home, a comrade picks me up after telling that were problems, so we headed over to the place where our fellow comrades were taken (Emm).

Antes de la represión habíamos tenido una asamblea para determinar si se iba a participar dentro de la pega de cruces entonces mi voto fue en contra por cuestiones de factibilidad. En lo personal decido no participar, pero sigo siendo

parte del comité de seguridad por decirlo así para cualquier evento que se presentara. Recuerdo que mientras estaba en la casa llega un compañero por mí y me dice, sabes que acaban de marcar y que se habían presentado problemas, entonces decidimos acudir al lugar donde se habían llevado a los compañeros (Emm).

Thus, some of the activists that were not involved in the initially repressed activity, felt compelled to support their arrested comrades. The reasons for not being involved from the beginning varied depending on their political ideologies and specific circumstances that did not allow them to participate.

4.6 Continuing Repression and Eventual Release

Arrested activists were eventually taken to state-level offices where they continued to be mistreated.

We spent a couple hours of the morning in there [Aldama station], then we were taken to the prosecuting offices of the state across the street, where we spent the rest of the time. As we were taken there, the police continued beating us; for instance, as we walked in a line, hand in hand, with one comrade in front and one behind, we would receive punches in the face and in the abdomen. Once in the prosecuting offices, we continued being mistreated for example by making us stand in squats. They interview you to see if you are hurt, they take photographs of you, they strip searched us, everything obviously in a heavily violent institutional environment. Later in the morning we were fed, some worthless food, and they allowed us to receive visits (Jaz).

Pasamos varias horas de la mañana ahí, y ya después nos llevan a las oficinas de la fiscalía cruzando la calle, donde pasamos el resto del tiempo. Mientras nos trasladaban ahí, la policía continuaba pegándonos; por ejemplo, mientras caminábamos en línea, mano con mano, con un compañero enfrente y otro detrás de mí, recibíamos golpes en la cara y en el abdomen. Una vez ya en las oficinas de la fiscalía, nos seguían maltratando como por ejemplo hincándonos. Nos entrevistaban para saber si estábamos lastimados, nos tomaban fotografías, nos hacían revisiones corporales, todo obviamente dentro de un ambiente institucionalmente violento. Después en la mañana nos dieron de comer, pero comida nada digna, y ya nos dejaron recibir visitas (Jaz).

In the course of their arrest, the activists therefore experienced physical and psychological torture from police officers at three different levels: municipal from Ciudad Juárez, state from Chihuahua, and federal from México City. As local, national and international pressure to release activists continued to mount, they were released on the payment of a fine. This happened at the night of November 2, 2011, approximately 30 hours after the initial repression on the previous day.

4.7 Gendered Experiences of Police Repression

Activists were subjected to the brutality of the violent behavior of police regardless of their gender, but also through a gendered repression. Gender identity was used to physically hurt them more, in the case of men, and sexually harass them, in the case of women. In fact, the gendering of activists occurred right from their arrival at the Aldama police station as men were separated from women. Women activists described forms of harassment as follows:

They [the police] would tell us that we were not even women because we were screaming on the streets, and things like “you will see, you will see when we see you again,” threatening us with getting raped or something like that (Bea).

Nos decían que no éramos ni mujeres porque andábamos gritando en las calles, y decían cosas como “ya verán, ya verán cuando las volvamos a ver,” amenazándonos con que nos iban a violar o algo así (Bea).

I was not beaten as the men were. However, the thing against women I think was more related to humiliation, like look at you a woman and no shame. They would call us through flirting nicknames, all that stuff related to humiliation, misogynistic, like if we were simple things or objects. They were trying to make us feel defenseless due to the fact that you were a woman, something like making you feel alone among police men that could do anything to you, like something very defiant and manly (Mic).

Yo no fui tan golpeada como los hombres. Sin embargo, el rollo con las mujeres era creo algo más de humillación, como mírate eres mujer y no tienes vergüenza. Nos llamaban por apodos, toda esa onda relacionada a la humillación, a la misoginia, como si fuéramos simples cosas u objetos. Nos trataban de hacer sentir indefensas por el hecho de que eras una morra, algo así como haciéndote sentir sola entre policías batos que podían hacerte cualquier cosa, como algo muy desafiante y machista (Mic).

But women activists also spoke of supporting each other as a strategy to cope with police harassment. As one activist recalls:

Women were kept apart [from men] at all times. But in there, they were the more rebellious. They would make noise, they would not stop singing and doing things like that. Even though we were in there they would inspire us to resist, and our claiming spirit remained (Jaz).

A las mujeres las mantuvieron aparte todo el tiempo. Pero estando ahí eran las más rebeldes, simbólicamente rebeldes. Hacían ruidos, no paraban de cantar de hacer cosas así. Y aun así estando ahí nos inspiraban para resistir y para mantener nuestro espíritu combativo (Jaz).

Overall, the repression was evidently connected to the gender of each person arrested. For example, some activists mentioned another activist who was humiliated because of her sexual orientation. Other examples are the severity of the beatings that men received, but also the general harassment faced by women. While some men were threatened with being raped, but all women were exposed to those type of comments. Violence in Ciudad Juárez makes me consider that not only were the activists subjected to a repression regardless of their gender, but that they were specifically targeted based on how their gendered body was used when justifying physical and psychological aggressions against them.

In this chapter, I have organized a chronicle that describes the events of the repression. The initial organization of the *Indignados Juarenses* was connected to the act of performing contentious politics through non-institutional political channels, and was influenced by a political opportunity structure originated in Spain, which corresponded to an anti-neoliberal conjuncture. The encounter with the police however showed that the state has access to institutional means of controlling activism, and the next chapter recounts the political and personal consequences of experienced and continuing police repression.

CHAPTER 5. AFTERMATH OF POLICE REPRESSION: POLITICAL AND PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter considers how the experiences of police repression on November 1, 2011, continued to affect the political consciousness of the activists as well as their personal well-beings. It begins by understanding whether police repression made the activists reconsider their role in political struggle. It then moves on to outlining some of the health effects, in terms of both bodily pain and mental trauma. Overall, this chapter directly addresses the central research question to draw out the long-term effects of police repression on political activists organizing through social movements.

5.1 Political Consequences of Repression

When the activists were arrested, the movement began receiving support nationally and internationally; for instance, activists in México City and El Paso demanded justice for the repressed activists. Outside of the prosecuting offices, the camp of people began to increase pressure on the authorities demanding the immediate release of arrested activists. Once the *Indignados Juarenses* activists were released, they continued organizing to legally challenge the charges and fines against them. They held several public events, including conferences and protests. But state repression against the activists did bring changes to the movement. In some cases, it led to decline in participation or fears associated with participation. The *Indignados Juarenses* social movement ended shortly after the repression, however, some activists continued organizing through other means. As one activist points out:

After the Indignados Juarenses, several former and older activists were organizing through, I believe, the Comité Universitario de Izquierda (Leftist University Committee) at the UACJ, but the repression did indeed hurt the overall movement

in Juárez. When we were repressed, they [the police] would directly threaten us, they would tell us that they were going to kill our families if we continued our activism, and even though you try to process and make reason of that, well, they were trained to do that, they were ultimately real threats, threats they could pursue. During that time, many people were joining the movement, and after an experience like that and maybe because of their lack of experience, it became hard for them to return. Also, several of them were very young and their mothers did not let them continue, so overall it affected the organization very much (Art).

Después de los Indignados Juarenses varios de los activistas con más tiempo se organizaron a través de, creo, el Comité Universitario de Izquierda (Leftists University Committee) en la UACJ, pero la represión si afecto al movimiento en general en Juárez. Cuando fuimos reprimidos la policía nos amenazaba directamente, nos decían que iban a matar a nuestras familias si continuábamos en el activismo, y aunque tú lo intentes procesar y razonar, pues, los entrenan para eso, finalmente eran amenazas reales, amenazas que podían llevar a cabo. Durante ese tiempo muchas personas se habían sumado al movimiento, y después de una experiencia de ese tipo y tal vez por su falta de experiencia, se les hizo complicado regresar. Además, muchos de ellos eran jóvenes y sus madres no los dejaron continuar, sabes, entonces en general si afecto mucho la organización (Art).

Another activist mentioned the uncertainty related to his continuing participation after the experience of the overall state repression.

They [the police] signaled me as the leader, and my fellow partners realized that. So as we planned the next protest after our release, we were doubtful about me going out to protest; but eventually I did, and we protested again (Ger).

Los policías me señalaron a mí como el líder, y mis compañeros se dieron cuenta de eso. Entonces en lo que planeábamos la siguiente protesta ya una vez después de ser liberados teníamos dudas de mi participación en la protesta; pero eventualmente si participe, y protestamos de nuevo (Ger).

Interviewed activists also talked about specific vulnerabilities associated with participation in activism, including threats to livelihood and the targeting of economically vulnerable activists.

We live in a system of social classes, with different nuances and colors that affect the population. In the case of the activists, depending on the degree that your activism affects the state [government], the repression will continue; for instance, I know some comrades that are unable to find jobs because they are already on file (Emm).

Vivimos en un sistema de clases sociales, con diferentes tonos y colores que afectan a la población. Pero en el caso de los activistas, dependiendo del grado en que tu activismo afecte al Estado, esa es la manera que van a seguir; por ejemplo, conozco a varios compañeros que no pueden encontrar trabajo porque ya están fichados (Emm).

In México, expressing yourself or critiquing the government and companies, including transnationals, puts you in a vulnerable position. If you are of a low-income social group, they see you more vulnerable; for instance, you may not have access to lawyers. If they see you alone, they attack you as well, but we are not

alone. There is a lot of different kinds of activism and many kinds of civil organizations here in Juárez. Although there are many radical movements here in the city, those that perform public protests are the ones that become vulnerable for repression in general as I am explaining (Pal).

En México, expresarte o criticar el gobierno y compañías, incluyendo transnacionales, te pone en una situación vulnerable. Si tú eres parte de un grupo social de muy escasos recursos, te ven un poquito más vulnerable; por ejemplo, no tienes acceso a abogados. Más bien si te ven solo o sola y te atacan y pues no, no estamos solos. Aquí en Juárez hay mucho tipo de activismo y mucho tipo de organizaciones civiles. Aunque hay muchos movimientos mucho más radicales, curiosamente no salen, entonces aquí lo que te vulnera a ser reprimido es salir a la manifestación pública y todo esto, en general a eso me refiero (Pal).

Although the *Indignados Juarenses* declined as a movement, leftist and radical social movements in Ciudad Juárez represents a phenomenon that remains constant. Thus, one activist mentioned the formation of activist links even after state repression.

There is organization without a name, like a web of activists that support one another no matter what happens, and that regardless of their ideologies support each other. It does not matter if the person is from MORENA [political party], or the LSR [Socialist Revolutionary League], or a Zapatista, or from any leftist group that exists. What happened to us eventually made us all stronger (Mic).

Hay como esta organización sin nombre, como una red de activistas que se apoyan los unos a los otros sin importar que suceda, sin importar ideologías se apoyan. No importa si eres una persona de MORENA, o de la LSR, o Zapatista, o de

cualquier grupo de izquierda que exista. Lo que nos pasó a nosotros eventualmente nos hizo más fuertes (Mic).

Interviewees also mentioned that state repression actually brought out the truth about state violence, so in some ways, the activists had actually won.

It is sad that they beat us and that we were humiliated, it angers you, but finally everything came out wrong for the Mexican state, and we won the battle, not them. We did not decide to battle, we were dragged to the violence, we did not want violence, we were acting in a pacific way, and we won in a political way as they were exhibited as repressors, as what they are (Ger).

Es triste que nos hayan golpeado y humillado, te causo enojo, pero finalmente todo le salió mal al Estado mexicano, y pues nosotros ganamos la batalla, ellos no. Nosotros no decidimos ir a la batalla, fuimos arrastrados a la violencia pues no queríamos violencia, estábamos actuando de manera pacífica, y ganamos de una manera política ya que ellos fueron exhibidos como represores, como lo que son (Ger).

The state's use of police repression was viewed by interviewed activists as a deliberate and widely-used method of suppressing not just the *Indignados Juarenses*, but all social movements in general. During the beginning of the repression of November 1, although the use of paint was the excuse to arrest activists, the fact that many police trucks arrived to scene in a matter of minutes make the activists believe that the police was already preparing their repression.

There were some official statements that police were not going to be kindhearted with protesters and with all the people that did political mess in Juárez. So besides the paint which was the explicit justification for the first arrests, I believe they

would have found other ways to provoke and stop the protest. I think they already had that planned (Mic).

Había declaraciones oficiales de que la policía no se iba a tentar el corazón con manifestantes y con toda la gente que hiciera desmadre político en Juárez. Entonces independientemente de la pintura que fue el detonante explicito para justificar los arrestos, yo creo que de todas formas hubieran buscado la manera de provocar y de joder la manifestación. Yo creo que ellos de todas maneras era lo que tenían planeado (Mic).

There was a similar repression before ours when the mother of one of the murdered kids from Villas de Salvarcar stood in front of Felipe Calderón. These repressions do have political motives as several civil groups organize to protest against violence or social problems in general (Nai).

Hubo una represión similar antes de la nuestra cuando una de las madres de los chicos asesinados en Villas de Salvarcar se para enfrente de Felipe Calderón. Estas represiones tienen motivos políticos pues varios grupos civiles se organizan y protestan en contra de la violencia o de problemas sociales en general (Nai).

These above quotes reflect a bio-political understanding of state repression of social movements. Bio-politics normalizes the power behind the state's use of police repression. In the case of the *Indignados Juarenses*, their social bodies were the ultimate target of repressive actions that had already been discursively constructed as criminal. Overall, the police repression against this group of activists did not consider the background of each person; instead, all were subjected to the same kind of violence.

5.2 Personal Consequences of Repression

For the *Indignados Juarenses* and their supporters, experiencing direct police repression caused a wide array of problems related to their physical and mental health, emotional state and ability to function in public. In terms of the health-related effects of repression, most of the people that I interviewed reported having physical pain during and after the repression. Others reported more chronic health problems directly related to the repressive experience, including the death of one of the arrested six months after the incident. Once released the arrested activists and fellow comrades visited the Red Cross, among other hospitals, to receive medical attention and evaluation as this was not provided during their arrest period. Some of the health-related consequences mentioned by interviewees included the following four quotes:

I had a back pain for a long time afterwards. Overall, it was a very physical and psychologically draining event; my defenses were weakened, other illnesses were aggravated, including diabetes (Ger).

Traje un dolor de espalda por un buen tiempo después. En general si fue un evento muy desgastante tanto física como psicológicamente; mis defensas se bajaron, otras enfermedades se agravaron, incluyendo la diabetes (Ger).

When I got home I could not sit, something hurt, and after looking at myself in a mirror I found a big bruise underneath my private parts where I had received a kick. Recently, I had a surgery for an infection in the area, and I was told that it was possibly caused by a blow of some kind, for which the only thing that I remember hitting me was that kick during the repression (Jul).

Cuando llegue a la casa no me podía sentar, me dolía algo, y después de verme en el espejo me ví un pinche moretón en mis partes justo donde había recibido una

patada. Recientemente tuve una cirugía por una infección en esa área, y me dijeron que había sido posiblemente causada por un golpe de algún tipo, por lo que yo solo recuerdo el golpe de la patada durante la represión (Jul).

Somebody dropped their cellphone, and I picked it up. I was then detained as well. They twisted my arm in which I had an old fracture, and even as I told them that I was getting hurt, they continued. I was not even resisting, as I kept telling them to grab me by the other arm but they continued hurting me even more. After being released, I headed over to the hospital and later I received a bone graft through a surgery as a consequence of the repression (Dan).

Alguien tiro su celular, y yo lo levanté. En eso me detienen también. Me doblaron el brazo en donde tenía una fractura ya antigua, y a pesar de que les decía que me estaban lastimando, continuaron. No estaba resistiendo si quiera, inclusive les decía que me agarraran del otro brazo, pero me lastimaban todavía más. Después de que se me liberara me fui corriendo al hospital, y después me operaron un injerto de hueso como consecuencia de la represión (Dan).

The father of a friend that was also detained along with me had gone to demand to see his son. He [the father] had health problems, he was going through surgeries and had several scheduled for later on, and he was beaten as well; he was not an aggressive individual nor a person with a strong constitution. Eventually, his health problems worsened and he could not recover; he died months after. I have the feeling that it was because of the repression; he had previous health problems, but obviously on top of that he was affected by what they did to him (Jaz).

El papá de un amigo que también fue detenido junto conmigo había ido a demandar ver a su hijo. Él tenía problemas de salud, había estado recibiendo cirugías y tenía otras programadas para después, y también lo golpearon; él no era un individuo agresivo ni una persona de complexión robusta o fuerte. Eventualmente sus problemas de salud empeoraron y ya no se pudo recuperar; incluso murió meses después. Yo siento que fue a partir de la represión; ósea evidentemente él ya tenía problemas de salud, pero obviamente con lo que le hicieron fue como esas secuelas (Jaz).

Increased fear of police was another major theme that emerged in the interviews. Fear of being surveilled, of being targeted again, and of losing their job due to the arrest was mentioned by the activists. The five quotes below illustrate these feelings of fear as well as actual police harassment.

I used to work with children from 18 months to 5 years of age, and the children saw me on television. They would tell me “teacher, how come the police was beating you?” And this and that, and yeah it was understandable that I could not manage to get a public image like that as I worked with children. For that reason, my boss later told me that I had to lower my profile and if something like that ever happened again, I was going to lose my job. I also remember that even months after the repression the police would follow me to work, so I started getting scared of getting out late. I would think “am I going crazy?”, but then my workmates would tell me “you are right, the police are looking for you, like intimidating you” (Mic).

Yo solía trabajar con niños de 18 meses a 5 años, y los niños me habían visto en televisión. Me decían cosas como “maestra, ¿por qué la policía la estaba golpeando?” Y esto y lo otro, y si era entendible que no podía estarme manejando

públicamente con esa imagen debido a que trabajaba con niños. Por esa razón mi jefa después me dijo que tenía que bajar mi perfil y que si volvía a suceder algo similar perdería el trabajo. También recuerdo que inclusive meses después de la represión la policía me seguía al trabajo, entonces me empezó a dar miedo salir tarde. Pensaba “¿me estoy volviendo loca?,” pero después compañeros del trabajo me decían “tienes razón, la policía te está buscando, te está como intimidando” (Mic).

I had a terrible paranoia as there were cars outside my house. I was really scared they would do something against my family. I eventually decide to move away from the city due to the constant threat (Nai).

Tuve una paranoia horrible porque habían carros afuera de mi casa. Estaba muy asustado que le fueran a hacer algo a mi familia. Eventualmente decidí moverme de la ciudad por la constante amenaza (Nai).

My family became worried about me going out to protests; they were stressed about something happening to me. Even fifteen days after the repression I was stopped by a municipal police unit for a random search and the agents of that unit were part of those that participated in the previous aggression, so they recognized me right away. They would laugh and make bullying comments as they searched myself and my car, saying things like “are you still doing that bullshit?”, and I remember that as they left one of them slapped me in the head. Besides that incident there is a general signaling in the university, where I live, although they don't act aggressively they know where you are (Emm).

Mi familia comenzó a preocuparse de que saliera a protestar; se estresaban que algo me fuera a suceder. Inclusive, quince días después de la represión me detuvo una unidad de la policía municipal para una revisión y los agentes de la unidad habían estado en la agresión anterior, por lo que me reconocieron de inmediato. Se reían y me hacían comentarios de burla mientras me revisaban a mí y al carro, diciendo cosas como “¿todavía andas en esas pendejadas?”, y yo recuerdo que mientras se retiraban uno me dio un bachón en la cabeza. Más allá del incidente hay un cierto señalamiento generalizado en la universidad, donde vives, y aunque no sean agresivos, saben quién eres (Emm).

As soon as I see a police officer, even though he may not be attacking me directly, I overreact. Any contact that I have with an authority, even when I see a uniform, I feel a generalized anxiety and a tremble that many times makes me act in defensive way, or in a violent way by raising my voice, and eventually this causes me more trouble as it is considered disrespectful to authority (Ant).

En cuanto veo a un oficial de policía, aunque no me esté atacando directamente yo comienzo a sobre-reaccionar. Cualquier contacto que tengo alguna autoridad, aunque solo vea un uniforme, me hace sentir una ansiedad generalizada, me da un temblor que muchas veces me hace reaccionar como un mecanismo de defensa, o de manera violenta elevando mi tono de voz, y entonces eso me genera todavía más problemas por ser consideradas faltas a la autoridad (Ant).

After the repression, I did have to change my habits, from making sure the house was locked, to reporting to my comrades, and overall we took what happened as a lesson for the movement. In the long-term, there is a persistent paranoia towards

police, and I see it in myself and in my comrades. At times there were situations that were not as bad, but that also made us feel sensations or emotions similar to those I experienced during the repression by the state (Irv).

Después de la represión cambie mis hábitos, desde asegurarme que la casa esté cerrada, reportarme con mis compañeros, y en general tomamos lo que paso como una lección para el movimiento. En el largo plazo tuve una paranoia persistente hacia la policía, algo que veo en mí y en mis compañeros. En tiempos que hay situaciones que tal vez no son tan malas, me hacen sentir esas sensaciones y emociones similares a la experiencia durante la represión donde estuvimos a merced del Estado (Irv).

Across the people that I interviewed, fear, pain and anger were among the main feelings and emotions that were experienced due to police repression. In addition, their habits had to change if people around them disapproved of their involvement in activism. Effects such as paranoia and anxiety were also present in many of them after they were set free.

The next chapter summarizes interview findings by connecting them to the research questions. As has become apparent, the event of November 1, 2011, was not a minor one in terms of the political and personal lives of the activists. If it was indeed a routine expression of police violence, then the serious challenges facing social movements and activists have to be seriously considered.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION: UNDERSTANDING THE BIO-POLITICS OF STATE REPRESSION (AND THE NEED TO END REPRESSION OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS)

The objective of this research was to reveal the consequences of repression for political activists participating in social movements. Police violence should concern us all due to its political implications for civil and human rights and the fact that it reflects the institutionalization of state-led violence under the guise of promoting security and justice. The *Indignados Juarenses* were seeking social justice through their protest, but the (in)-justice of the state served them in a different way, and although similar events of violence have happened in the past, we have not developed social and political strategies to end state repression. This concluding chapter addresses the research questions of this study and further interprets interview findings from Chapters 4 and 5.

6.1 Experiences of Police Repression

This research was conducted to obtain the experiences and viewpoints of activists who had faced police repression. Through interviews, I have been able to reconstruct the events of the repression, and the focus has been on the physical and emotional experiences of facing repression. Repression was associated with two separate events: the protest itself and subsequent protests against the arrests. As the activists mentioned, the reality of state repression against demands for social justice was revealed through this. There are three interesting findings that emerge from their accounts. First, in preparing for the protest, the activists had sought to ensure that their activities would not invite repression. Paint used by some activists was the explicit excuse made by the police to justify their repression, but the repression was unexpected for the people participating in the initial protest. Second, violence against activists continues with impunity within the confines of state institutions, where it remained invisible to the rest of the population. Third, activists also

mentioned the uncertainties and fears associated with what would happen to them after the arrests. This in itself constitutes part of the disciplinary power of the police and the state.

6.2 Consequences of Repression

The movement of *Indignados Juarenses* came to an end shortly after the repressive events. The activists did not continue their organizational efforts and the movement disappeared after a few protests and meetings. The *Indignados Juarenses* movement could have continued as supporters of the movement had increased, even internationally. But since the main organizers were severely affected by the repression, the movement did not have enough force to move forward any longer. Activists suffered personal consequences, including health complications such as diabetes, renal malfunction, and bone fractures, as well as other physical and psychological problems that emerged after the repression. Their gender identity was also utilized as a weapon against them, especially against women and alternative sexualities. The end of the *Indignados Juarenses*, however, did not stop all activists from continuing to organize through other means or other groups. This difference may be connected to whether activists had a longer history of association with social movements, which allowed them to continue.

6.2 Bio-politics of State Repression

Bio-politics, in my case study, is being used to refer to the regulation of social bodies through institutions that systematically generalizes everyone as a criminal, which then affects the ability of activists to organize and participate in social movements, especially movements for human rights. There is a need to understand and challenge this expansion of the notion of criminalization, which by including activists in its purview both criminalizes legitimate protests against the misuse of state power and makes the bodies of political activists the target of police violence. The normalization of state power has created a scenario in which the general population

is encouraged to ignore those affected by state repression, a situation that puts political activists and human rights at risk. This study reveals how state repression turns peaceful protesters into criminals, and raises the need to question the strategies of power that underlie these constructions of protest.

6.4 Need to End Repression of Political Activists

Through this conclusion, I am making a social demand for repressive acts to stop in Ciudad Juárez and everywhere else. State-led violence was not experienced by Ciudad Juárez alone, but throughout the Mexican territory. Amnesty International reported that by 2014 more than 22,000 people remained abducted, forcibly disappeared or missing, including 43 students from Guerrero state (Amnesty International: 247). Other unofficial reports make higher estimates of human rights violations in México. Ideally, México needs to protect the right to protest, as these are civil rights stipulated across its constitution. The fact that Mexicans have to experience police violence against political activism and social movements puts into question the relevance of human and civil rights altogether. This situation of criminalization of protests and repression of activists holds across all countries and governments in the world.

The repressive incidents of November 1, 2011, were often related to me by activists in a humorous manner, and made me wonder about their personal and health well-being after facing that kind of violence. However, a main theme in all activist accounts was that even as the Mexican state was after them, they had successfully defended themselves. To activists, their shared experience of police repression had made the movement stronger. This research demonstrates the effects of violence in a community that has responded to its political conscience, and constructed solidarity through activism and social movements.

REFERENCES

- Agamben, Giorgio. (1995). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press.
- Arif, Rauf. (2014). *Social Movements, YouTube and Political Activism in Authoritarian Countries: Comparative Analysis of Political Change in Pakistan, Tunisia and Egypt*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Iowa. Retrieved from:
<http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5080&context=etd>
- Armstrong, Elizabeth and Bernstein, Mary. (2008). *Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements*. *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp.74-93.
- Barba, Carmen Haro and Blanco, Víctor Sampedro. (2011). *Activismo Político en Red: del Movimiento por la Vivienda Digna al 15M*. *Teknokultura*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp.167-185.
Retrieved from: <http://teknokultura.net/index.php/tk/article/view/14>
- Castaneda, Ernesto. (2012). The Indignados of Spain: A Precedent to Occupy Wall Street. *Social Movement Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3-4, pp.309-319
- Castellanos, Gabriela. (1996). *Genero, Poder y Postmodernidad: Hacia un Feminismo de la Solidaridad*. Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia. Pp. 21-48. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ub.edu/SIMS/pdf/OrillasPolitica/OrillasPolitica-02.pdf>
- Costa, Arthur. (2011). *Police Brutality in Brazil: Authoritarian Legacy or Institutional Weakness?* *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 38, No. 5, pp.19-31.
- Earl, Jennifer. (2002). *Tank, Tear Gas, and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression*. *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp.44-65.

- Earl, Jennifer. (2003). *Protest under Fire? Explaining the Policing of Protest*. American Sociological Review, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp.581-603.
- Earl, Jennifer. (2011). *A Lawyers Guide to the Repression Literature*. National Lawyers Guild Review, Vol. 67, No. 3, pp.1-27.
- Foucault, Michel. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel. (2000). *Defender la Sociedad*. Fondo de Cultura Economica, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Garwood, Shae. (2002). *Working to Death: Gender, Labor, and Violence in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico*. *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, Vol. 2, No. 2. pp. 2-23. Retrieved from: <http://www.bradford.ac.uk/social-sciences/peace-conflict-and-development/issue-2/#d.en.86753>
- Hewett, Martin. (2004). *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge and Epistemological Prescriptions*. Honors Thesis, University of Richmond. Retrieved from: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1508&context=honors-theses>
- Kristensen, Kasper Simo. (2013). *Michel Foucault on Bio-power and Bio-politics*. Masters Thesis, University of Helsinki. Retrieved from: <https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/39514/Kristensen%20Masters%20Thesis.pdf?sequence=3>
- Kronqvist, Otto Jakko. (2013). *Right of Death and Power Over Life: An Analysis of Michel Foucault's Conceptions of Power and Violence*. Masters Thesis, University of Helsinki. Retrieved from: https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/39650/foucault_violence.pdf?sequence=2

- Martinez, Oscar. (1978). *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juarez since 1848*. University of Texas Press.
- McAdam, Doug. (1982). *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press.
- McDonald, James. (2005). *The Narcoeconomy and Small-town, Rural Mexico*. Human Organization, Vol. 64, No. 2, pp.115-123.
- Morales, Maria Cristina and Bejarano, Cynthia. (2009). *Transnational Sexual Gendered Violence: An Application of Border Sexual Conquest at a Mexico-US border*. Global Networks, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp.420-439.
- Mostyn, Ben. (2004). *Transnational Social Movements and the War on Drugs*. Master's Thesis, University of South Florida. Retrieved from:
<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2169&context=etd>
- Niles, Chavon. (2013). *Examining the Deinstitutionalization Movement in North America*. Health Tomorrow, Vol. 1, pp.54-80.
- Reguillo, Rossana. (2000). *Emergencia de Culturas Juveniles: Estrategias del Desencanto*. Grupo Editorial Norma.
- Stammers, Neil. (1999). Social Movements and the Social Construction of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 980-1008.
- Staudt, Kathleen. (2008). *Violence and Activism at the Border: Gender, Fear, and Everyday Life in Ciudad Juárez*. University of Texas Press.
- Staudt, Kathleen and Méndez, Zulma Y. (2015). *Courage, Resistance, and Women in Ciudad Juárez: Challenges to Militarization*. University of Texas Press.

- Stockdill, Brett C. (1996). *Multiple Oppressions and Their Influence on Collective Action: The Case of the AIDS Movement*. Doctoral Dissertation, Northwestern University.
- Tilly, Charles and Castaneda, Ernesto. (2007). *Revolutions, Social Movements, and Contentious Politics*. How To Do Research: Power Point slides of the last undergraduate course of Charles Tilly. Retrieved from: <http://essays.ssrc.org/tilly/resources>
- Tilly, Charles and Tarrow, Sidney. (2012). *Contentious Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Turner, Sarah. (2013). *Success in Social Movements: Looking at Constitutional-Based Demands to Determine the Potential Success of Social Movements*. Honors Thesis, Indiana University. Retrieved from: <http://polisci.indiana.edu/undergraduate/theses/Turner.pdf>
- Van Susteren, Emma Conway. (2010). *Going "Glocal:" Toward a New Social Movement Theory*. Honors Thesis, Wesleyan University. Retrieved from: http://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1532&context=etd_hon_theses
- Wright, Melissa. (2003). *From Protests to Politics: Sex Work, Women's Worth, and Ciudad Juárez Modernity*. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Vol. 94, No. 2, pp.369-386.
- Wright, Melissa. (2011). *Necropolitics, Narcopolitics and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-US Border*. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp.707-731.
- Wright, Melissa. (2013). *Feminicidio, Narcoviolencia, and Gentrification: The Feminist Fight in Ciudad Juárez*. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 31 No. 5, pp.830-845.

Yin, Robert. (2004). *Case Study Methods*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.cosmoscorp.com/Docs/AERAdraft.pdf>

Yin, Robert. (2011). *A (Very) Brief Refresher on the Case Study Method*. Sage. Retrieved from:

http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/41407_1.pdf

MEDIA SOURCES

Alvarado, Leobardo (2011) *Exigen cese a la represión y llaman a otra manifestación Los indignados de Ciudad Juárez*. Retrieved from: <http://juarezdialoga.org/noticias/exigen-cese-a-la-represion-y-llaman-a-otra-manifestacion-ls-indignads-de-ciudad-juarez/>

Amnesty International (2015) *The State of the World's Human Rights*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/0001/2015/en/>

Amnesty International (2016) *Woman of Atenco: Raped, Beaten, Never Forgotten*. Retrieved

from: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/cases/mexico-women-of-atenco>

Archibold Randal (2014) *43 Missing Students, a Mass Grave and a Suspect: México's Police*.

New York Times. Retrieved from:

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/07/world/americas/43-missing-students-a-mass-grave-and-a-suspect-mexicos-police-.html?_r=0

Aristegui Noticias. (2012) *Seis años después: miles de muertos y un Estado más vulnerable*.

Retrieved from: <http://aristeginoticias.com/2611/mexico/seis-anos-despues-miles-de-muertos-y-un-estado-mas-vulnerable/>

Chretien, Todd and Muldoon, Jessir (2011) *Misery of the Maquiladoras*. Socialistworker.org.

Retrieved from: <https://socialistworker.org/2011/11/18/misery-of-the-maquiladoras>

- CNN (2011) *La policía arresta a un grupo de indignados en Ciudad Juárez*. Retrieved from:
<http://expansion.mx/nacional/2011/11/01/la-policia-arresta-a-un-grupo-de-indignados-en-ciudad-juarez>
- CNN (2011) *Un grupo de 'indignados' en México se suma al movimiento internacional*. Retrieved from: <http://expansion.mx/nacional/2011/10/15/un-grupo-de-indignados-en-mexico-se-suma-al-movimiento-internacional>
- Del Bosque, Melissa (2013) *More Members of the Reyes Salazar Family Win Asylum*. The Texas Observer. Retrieved from: <https://www.texasobserver.org/more-members-of-the-reyes-salazar-family-win-asylum/>
- Dominguez, Alejandro (2016) *La llamada Ley Atenco y el uso de la fuerza en el Edomex*. Milenio.com. Retrieved from: http://www.milenio.com/politica/Ley_Atenco-uso_de_la_fuerza_Edomex-Estado_de_Mexico-Atenco_Edomex_0_709129256.html
- El Pais (2011) *Democracia Real Ya prepara una convocatoria mundial para el 15 de octubre*. Retrieved from:
http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2011/05/30/actualidad/1306761727_898845.html
- El Universal (2011) *Arrestan a indignados en Ciudad Juárez*. Retrieved from:
<http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/805701.html>
- González, Roberto (2011) *El peso, en su nivel más bajo ante el dólar desde marzo de 2009; perdió ayer 1.6%*. La Jornada. Retrieved from:
<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2011/11/24/economia/031n1eco>
- Human Rights Watch (2011) *Centro de Derechos Humanos Paso del Norte gets raided*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/06/mexico-investigate-raid-juarez-human-rights-organization>

- Human Rights Watch (2014) *Punished for Protesting: Rights Violations in Venezuela's Streets, Detention Centers and Justice System*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/05/05/punished-protesting/rights-violations-venezuelas-streets-detention-centers-and>
- Los Angeles Press (2011) *Indignados de Juárez Amenazados de Muerte y Violación*. Retrieved from: <http://www.losangelespress.org/indignados-de-juarez-amenazados-de-muerte-y-violacion/>
- McKone, Kelly; Stephan, Maria, and Dickover, Noel (2015) *Using Technology in Nonviolent Activism against Repression*. United States Institute of Peace. Retrieved from:
<http://www.usip.org/publications/using-technology-in-nonviolent-activism-against-repression>
- Minster, Christopher (2015) *The Tlatelolco Massacre: A Gruesome Turning Point in México History*. Retrieved from:
<http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/20thcenturylatinamerica/a/tlatelolco.htm>
- Orozco, Victor (2011) *The Indignados from Ciudad Juárez*. Retrieved from:
<https://zapateando2.wordpress.com/2011/11/08/los-indignados-de-ciudad-juarez/>
- Ortega, José (2010) *Cd. Juárez, por Segundo año consecutivo, la ciudad más violenta del mundo*. Seguridad. Justicia y Paz. Retrieved from:
<http://www.seguridadjusticiaypaz.org.mx/sala-de-prensa/58-cd-juarez-por-segundo-ano-consecutivo-la-ciudad-mas-violenta-del-mundo>
- Torrea, Judith (2011) *Indignados de Juárez, más fortalecidos: tras golpizas, amenazas de muerte y detención de la Policía Municipal de Julian Leyzaola*. En *La Sombra del Narcotráfico*

- Blog. Retrieved from: <http://juarezenlasombra.blogspot.com/2011/11/indignados-de-juarez-mas-fortalecidos.html>
- U.S. Embassy (2016) *Iniciativa Merida-Panorama General*. Retrieved from:
<https://mx.usembassy.gov/es/nuestra-relacion/temas-bilaterales/iniciativa-merida/>.
- Venturas, Adrian. 2011. Es Juárez el epicentro del dolor nacional: Javier Sicilia. *La Red Noticias*. Retrieved from: <http://www.larednoticias.com/noticias.cfm?n=62241>
- Villalpando, Reuben and Ramos, Leopoldo (2013) *Pide asilo político en EU madre de niña desaparecida en Chihuahua*. La Jornada UNAM. Retrieved from:
<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2013/02/18/estados/032n1est>
- Xolombia: Espacio Cultural Fronterizo (2011) Retrieved from:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/518992468236157/>
- YouTube (2011) *Indignados, Cd. Juárez, México*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md-4EC1GIlw>

APPENDIX (SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE)

Part 1) Establish activist's experience of repression and political activism through social movements.

- 1) Please provide your age, occupation, place of origin, and if you are currently active in political activism through any social movement?
- 2) When and how did you start getting involved in political activism through social movements?
- 3) Do you believe in the existence of or do you have knowledge about repression currently being enforced against political activists and social movements in Ciudad Juárez? What type of repression and who enforces that repression?
- 4) How was *Indignados Juarenses* organized and what were the objectives of activists behind that movement, including yourself?
- 5) What do you remember about the events of November 1st of 2011?

(Further prompts: Can you explain the intentions of yourself and other activists during that day prior to the arrival of the municipal police? Who was behind the repression? How many activists got arrested? Did you also get arrested? Where were the arrested activists taken? How did everything conclude? Were there legal consequences against activists at the end?)

- 6) Did you ever imagine that you would encounter this type of repression during that day? Why do you think the repression originated?

(Further prompts: To what extent do you believe that political motives were behind the repression? What were those motives? Previously to this incident of state repression, had you experienced any other forms of repression before? How about after?)

Part 2) Establish activist's individual personal and class experience of repression.

7) What emotions do you remember feeling as you experienced the repression of November 1st of 2011?

8) Has the repression implemented against you [on November 1st] caused any problems within your personal well-being and in the short/long term? If yes, explain.

(Further prompts: Have you had negative health or psychological effects due to repression?

What have you done or what do you do to cope with the existence of repression and its effects on your life?)

9) Can you say that the gender of activists influenced the severity of the repression [on November 1st]?

(Further prompts: Did your gender influenced the repression? Were there differences between how men and women experienced the repression?)

10) Do you see yourself as part of a specific social group or class affected by the power of state repression? Has repression changed your conception of inequality? How about before and after the repression on November 1st of 2011?

Part 3: Establish political effects of repression on activism and social movements.

11) How did the state repression affect the organization of *Indignados Juarenses*?

(Further prompts: After what happened on November 1st of 2011, did you get closer to your fellow activists? When did activists stop organizing through *Indignados Juarenses*?)

12) Previous to the incident on November 1st 2011, had you already considered repression as a possible consequence of your political activism?

(Further prompts: Had you experienced repression before? How about after? Did you know about similar forms of state repression previously practiced in Ciudad Juárez?)

Part 4) Address final questions.

13) What do you expect from researchers such as myself that analyze general experiences of activists?

14) Is there anything more you would like to add?

15) Would you allow me to publish your name on my final report or would you rather keep yourself anonymous? Yes/No.

If Yes, under what name_____.

Extra: Do you know somebody or do you have a contact that experienced the event on November 1st 2011 and that may be interested in participating in this interview?

Once I finish this work I will contact you again to send you a copy. Thank you for your time.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Igi G. Acosta is currently a resident of El Paso, Texas, and was born in Cancún, Quintana Roo, México. He then moved with his family to north México and settled in the state of Chihuahua. After immigrating to the United States, he earned his G.E.D. (General Equivalency Diploma) through the H.E.P (High Equivalency Program) at UTEP (University of Texas at El Paso). He then taught high school level courses to farm workers and their families through H.E.P. at El Paso Community College. In the fall of 2013, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at UTEP. After that, he enrolled for a Master of Arts in Sociology while being supported with a Teaching Assistantship by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. In the summer of 2014, he naturalized as a U.S. citizen. He has been guest speaker for events in the UTEP campus, including the Cesar Chavez Day commemoration and the H.E.P. commencement ceremony. He has also participated as a panelist in academic conferences and plural forums in Albuquerque, and El Paso where he has shared insights on violence in Mexico. Acosta is very passionate about social justice, and he considers himself an activist.

Permanent E-mail Address: igacosta132@gmail.com