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Mobilizing in the Barrio:
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Mobilizing in the Barrio:
Conflicting Identities and the Language of Politics

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Abstract. American ghettos and barrios have been overlooked because of their low capacity for mobilization and political participation. In particular, barrio residents have been considered to be either culturally or structurally unable to participate in American politics. The use of such concepts as the "sub-culture of poverty" or the "underclass" has maintained a vision of these segregated spaces as non-political. Indeed, low voter registration and turnout, the lack of party campaigning, and a large proportion of disenfranchised individuals may characterize the barrio. However, although the barrio is not at the core of electoral politics, it is a paradigmatic urban arena where the use of social capital transforms a non-political space into a political one. The narratives of San Diego Barrio Logan residents show that conflicting identities and strategies are elaborated both to preserve the Barrio as a specific place and to participate in the definition of "Latino politics." Not only are forms of mobilization present within the Barrio, these narratives are a performative discourse that provides the conditions for articulating and claiming citizenship rights and a self-definition of the common good.

Introduction

(A) : "Hay mucha politica en el Barrio, aunque no vivan alla los hispanos que hacen politica alla, hay mucha politica, porque es una comunidad de hispanos"

(CO) : "The question is: How do you begin to make this change happen? To make start the conversation at home ? That's the way we could start do something for the non legal residents, to make people speak about their ideas, and they have bright ideas for the community. That's hard work on my fantasy, specially in a all disenfranchised community, because inside they think that: nobody cares about us"

This paper reflects a work-in-progress and does not pretend to establish any formal conclusions. It presents field data collection and tries to suggest different hypotheses that need to be refined. That's why your input is so important at this stage. The title corresponds to my overall research project: an interrogation on forms and factors of mobilization in a Mexican Barrio, based on a qualitative approach. I hope I will provide sufficient background for discussion.

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[1] Emmanuelle Le Texier received her Certificate of International Studies from El Colegio de México in 1998 and a Masters in Hispanic and Latin American Literature from the University of Rennes in 1999 and a Masters in Political Science at the Institut D'Etudes Politiques de Paris in 2001. She is currently conducting fieldwork as a Fulbright Fellow at CCIS and at the Center for U.S-Mexican Studies and is also a Ph.D. candidate associate at the Center for International Studies and Research in Paris, where she recently published a study entitled "Latino Power? Latinos and the Access to Politics in the U.S."

My argument is the following: the Barrio is a political space and it is a paradigmatic urban space for the study of identity politics. The Barrio is not at the center of electoral politics, as measures as low voter registration and turnout, lack of electoral campaigning, and a large proportion of disenfranchised individuals can show it. But, it is important to point out the existence of factors and forms of political participation and mobilization in the Barrio. The study of individual narratives illustrates the way ethnicity impacts political participation and representation and how it influences the legitimacy to act for a community.

In the future research, I will focus on variables that affect political participation. In particular, I will emphasize on determinant factors such as: political structure of the city, residential segregation, and the way ethnic identification[2], gender and class matter. I will address the reasons for mobilization, the militants' trajectories, the actors' socialization and motives. I will also point the logics of collective mobilization, and emphasize the results or retributions obtained regarding the goals individuals or groups have.

Urban place matters

The existence of ghettos and barrios show that American cities are facing issues that are political in nature. The segregation of groups based on social, racial or income discrimination means that citizens have not an equal access to public goods, such as schools, health services, parks, or a clean environment. The concept of underclass[3] was the only concept that linked this phenomenon to its spatial dimension. Unfortunately, it has served to reinforce the media and public opinion 's stereotypes of ghettos or barrios as spaces whose problems come from internal causes (e.g. the theory of the subculture[4]). It also partially ignored the political and

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[2] Although research on political socialization shows that major determinants are the family, the school and the media, I will focus in particular on the fact that ethnic identification plays a critical role in the formation of Chicanos/Latinos political participation. Cf. JANKOWSKI SANCHEZ, Martin : *City Bound. Urban Life and Political Attitudes among Chicano Youth*. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1986. Jankowski examines the socialization of Chicano youth in three cities San Antonio (Texas), Albuquerque (New Mexico), and Los Angeles (California) and defines the cities as respectively a caste-type, class-type, and mass-type to characterize their social relations.

[3] See the seminal work of WILSON, Julius : *The Truly Disadvantaged : The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987 ; WACQUANT, Loïc ; WILSON, Julius : "The Cost of Racial and Class Exclusion in the Inner City", in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1989. The concept initially built for Black ghettos is discussed for Latino Barrios in MOORE, Joan ; PINDERHUGHES, Raquel : *In the Barrios. Latinos and the Underclass Debate*. New York, Russel Sage Foundation, 1993, 252p.

[4] WIRTH, Louis : *The Ghetto*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1928. ; GANS, Herbert : *The Urban Villagers. Updated and Expanded Edition*. New York, The Free Press, 1982 (1962). On Mexican and Mexcian American subculture, see GAMIO, Manuel : *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1930. ; LEWIS, Oscar : *Les enfants de Sánchez. Autobiographie d'une famille mexicaine*. Paris, Gallimard/Tel, 1963

structural factors of poverty concentration. In the 1990s, scholars shifted their approach to emphasize the complexity of "dual cities" and to analyze the characteristics of political exclusion, with a particular focus on electoral inequality[5]. Among the factors of non political participation, three seem to be most influential: the sociodemographic characteristics of these areas (e.g. low-income and low educational attainment) ; the structural organization of the political system that discriminates against minorities (electoral redistricting, knowledge and framing of the rules of the game, access to resources) ; the fragmentation of leaders or coalitions that affects the capacity for political participation.

Generally speaking, ghettos and barrios residents have been seen as either culturally or structurally unable to participate. The Barrios have been under-appreciated, looked as problem spaces with low capacity for political participation. However, as Raúl Villas recalls in "Barrio Logos"[6], the persistence of certain patterns experienced by the Mexican population since the XIX century have raised the attention of scholars who studied the social and spatial transformations experienced by Mexican urban population. For instance, the Los Angeles neighborhoods of East L.A. have been sites of the scarce but significant literature on Barrio communities in the United States[7]. Few other Barrios were studied outside of Los Angeles[8].

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[5] (Trad. Française), 638p. ; GREBLER, Leo ; MOORE, Joan ; GUZMAN, Ralph : *The Mexican American People. The Nation's second largest minority*. New York, The Free Press, 1970, 751p.

[5] MOLLENKOPF, John ; CASTELLS, Manuel (ed.) : *Dual City. Restructuring New York*. New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1991.

[6] VILLA, Raul : *Barrio-Logos. Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*. University of Texas Press, Austin, 2000.

[7] Work by historians include : GRISWOLD DEL CASTILLO, Richard : *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890 : a social history*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979. ; CAMARILLO, Albert : *Chicanos in California. A History of Mexican Americans in California*. San Francisco, Boyd and Fraser, 1984, 139p. ; ROMO, Ricardo : *East Los Angeles. History of a Barrio*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1983 ; SÁNCHEZ, George : *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1993. Work by political scientist and sociologists include : PACHÓN, Harry ; ARGUELLES, Lourdes : "Grass-Roots Politics in an East Los Angeles Barrio: A Political Ethnography of the 1990 General Election", in DE LA GARZA, Rodolfo ; MENCHACA, Martha ; DeSIPIO, Louis (ed.) : *Barrio Ballots: Latino Politics in the 1990 Elections*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1994, pp.115-160. ; MOORE, Joan : *Going Down to the Barrio. Homeboys and Homegirls in Change*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1991. ; VIGIL, James : *Barrio Gangs. Street Life and Identity in Southern California*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1988, 202p. Work on urban spaces include LECLERC, Gustavo ; VILLA, Paul ; DEAR, Michael (ed.) : *Urban Latino Cultures. La vida latina en L.A.* London, Sage, 1999.

[8] Historical works include : NODIN VALDES, Dionicio: *Barrios Norteños. St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 2000, 379p. Political science and sociological studies include study of the San Antonio Barrio by RIVERA, George : *El Barrio : A Sociological Study of Acculturation in a Mexican American Community*. Ph.D. Dissertation, State University of New York, 1972, 127p. ; MOORE, Joan ; PINDERHUGHES, Raquel : *In the Barrios. Latinos and the Underclass Debate*. New York, Russel Sage Foundation, 1993, 252p. See also : DALY HEYCK, Denis : *Barrios and Borderlands. Cultures of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*. New York, Routledge, 1994, 485p. ; and work on the New York Portorican Barrio by BOURGOIS, Philippe : *In Search of Respect. Selling Crack in El Barrio*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

In most cases, the literature would focus on Barrios as "internal colonies"[9] or powerless spaces.

The purpose of my research is to make the Barrio visible as a political space, not only because mobilization would come from outside actors, but also because it is a political arena in itself . It is extremely important to study this two-way process. On the one hand, el Barrio is originated by the regulations from "outside" actors, and local-national structures. On the other hand, it is created by the strategies from "inside". These strategies are used by residents to directly or indirectly preserve "their" neighborhood as a specific social, cultural, and identity place. Barrios exemplify the dilemma between integration and communitarianism, between a space that represents a site for cultural and political affirmation and a place to demand against marginalization.

In these terms, we can shift the perspective from the one that considers residential and racial segregation as a constraint to participation to one that offers resources for participation. The experiences of immigrants and residents of Mexican origin in segregated areas may also prepare the conditions for articulating and claiming citizenship rights. My purpose is not to suggest an enthusiast -and naive - view of segregated spaces, but to bring out a reflection first, on the meaning and value of active citizenship; and second on the existence of different forms and strategies to exercise a political voice. Citizenship is not only a set of procedures, but also a set of practices, qualities and identities. Communities that create social capital transform spaces that are not considered political into political spaces. In other words, people's narratives from the Barrio not only make them visible in politics; they illustrate as well as transform the concepts of political participation and urban change As Mary Pardo stated: "The quality of life in a community reflects unrecorded social and political processes, often originating in grassroots activism. Different from electoral politics, grassroots activism happens at the juncture between larger institutional politics and people's daily experiences. Women play a central role in the often unrecorded politics at this level"[10].

Case study

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[9] BARRERA, Mario ; MUÑOZ, Carlos ; ORNELAS, Charles : "The Barrio as an internal colony", in HAHN, Harlan (ed.): *People and Politics in Urban Society*. Urban Affairs Annual Reviews, vol.6, Beverly Hills, Sage, 1971, pp.465-498.
[10] PARDO, Mary: *Mexican American Women Activists. Identity and Resistance in two Los Angeles Communities*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1998, p.5.

Political science scholars did not study barrio Logan, located southeast of San Diego - California -, except in the late 1960s and early 1970s[11]. Various hypotheses can explain this lack of interest. First, Scholars studied mainly Chicago, Los Angeles and other southwestern cities. Scholars of Mexican American / Latino/a political participation focused more on electoral participation or pan-ethnic forms of participation. Local research center - such the Center for U.S-Mexican Studies at UCSD- traditionally favored non-local issues such as border issues, or binational and transnational politics. Second, the decline of political mobilization after the 1960s Chicano movement has given the impression there was no mobilization anymore. The remaining community organizations from that time have become part of regular urban politics. They are much less threatening to established power and work mainly within the political system. The context seems less favorable for the study of political mobilization. Third, minorities in San Diego have long been denied access to the electoral sphere. The 1990 redistricting and lawsuits led by the Chicano Federation of San Diego County helped terminate with the at-large elections system and initiated the rise of Hispanic/Latino electoral representation, both at city and state levels. Nevertheless, San Diego's political system is still perceived as "static and boring".

Nevertheless, interestingly enough in San Diego, many individuals and organizations claim they are the legitimate spokesperson for Barrio Logan. Why do they struggle for the representativity of a marginalized community? I started with basic questions: Are there visible forms of political participation in Barrio Logan? Who mobilizes the Barrio? And, Who speaks for the Barrio? Which kinds of discourses are produced?

The paper shares some of the narratives by residents, community organizations and institutional representatives on a specific issue: gentrification. I argue these narratives reflect

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[11] The few existing studies date back to the 1970s : BONJEAN, C ; CROW, W. : *Voices that count: Establishment, brown and black influentials in San Diego County, California*. La Jolla, Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, 1969. ; STEWART, Robert : *A Method of Analyzing Community Power Systems in Southeast San Diego*. Master Thesis, United States International University, 1972, 128p. ; ERICKSON, Rosemary : *Social Profiles of San Diego. A Social Area Analysis*. La Jolla, Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, 1973 and ERICKSON, Rosemary : *Social Profiles of San Diego. Poverty and Race*. La Jolla, Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, 1973. CROW, Wayman ; ERICKSON, Rosemary ; LEROY, Grissom : *The War on Poverty in San Diego County, 1967-1969*. La Jolla, Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, 1969. On the history of Chicano Park, the literature is spread and mostly non academic, except : DELGADO, Kevin : "A Turning Point: The Conception and Realization of Chicano Park", in *The Journal of San Diego History*, winter 1998, vol.44, n°1. ; ROSEN, Martin ; FISHER, James : "Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: Barrio Logan, City of San Diego, California", in *The Public Historian*, fall 2001, vol.23, n°4, pp.91-112. ; COCKROFT, Eva : "The Story of Chicano Park ", in *Aztlan,* International Center of Chicano Studies Research, vol.15, n°1, spring 1984, pp.79-103.

that the representations, definitions and meanings of the Barrio are at the center of participation. These narratives also show resources and factors for participation in a segregated space.

Note

For descriptive purposes, I will use the term "Mexican" for first-generation immigrants from Mexico (naturalized U.S. citizens or not). For any other immigrant generation, I will use "of Mexican origin" or "Latinos" or "Chicanos", depending on the self-definition used by individuals during the interviews. It is clear that ethnic classifications have a complex situational, contextual and political genesis. Individuals have used one term exclusively or in combination with others, or none of them - I will try to respect this as much as possible[12].

Use of abbreviations

(A) = Authority (such as Latino elected officials, city staff, police officers, public agencies staff, social worker, etc.)

(Resident) = Barrio Logan resident not involved in any organization

(CO) = Members or leaders of community organization (based in or out of Barrio Logan, but dealing with issues in Barrio Logan)

Barrio Logan, a disenfranchised community

A Barrio will be firstly defined as any community which population is mainly Mexican and of Mexican-origin and which is characterized by *three criteria*:

Demographics criteria

Residential segregation: Data from the 2000 Census Bureau show that Barrio Logan has almost 40,000 inhabitants, of whom 43.6% identify White, 10.71% Blacks, 34.41% as other race, 4.39% as two or more races. 68.5% identified as Latinos, of whom 98% are from Mexican origin. They represent more than 10% of the overall population of Mexican origin in the city. Back in the 1970s, the racial and residential segregation was stated in the following

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[12] I have never asked people how they prefer to identify themselves, how others are identifying them, or how they identify others. I noted that individuals could label others and themselves only or alternatively as Hispanic, Latino/a, Hispano/a, Mexicano/a, Chicano/a, Mexican American, Raza, Homeboys, Homegirls or even none of the above or all of the above. See OBOLER, Suzanne : *Ethnic labels, Latino Lives. Identity and the Politics of Re(Presentation) in the United States*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995, 226p.

terms: Barrio Logan "is a section in the metropolis (…) that predominantly houses the black and brown communities"[13].

Racial and Ethnic categorization - Barrio Logan and San Diego (%)

	White Alone	**Black or African American alone**	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	**Some other race alone**	Two or more races	**Hispanic and Latinos**
Barrio	**43.6**	**10.7**	1.4	2.9	0.2	**34.2**	4.4	**68.5**
City	**60.2**	**7.9**	0.6	13.6	0.5	**12.4**	4.8	**25.4**

Sources: Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau 2000. Census Tracts 36.01, 36.02, 36.03, 38, 39.01, 39.02, 49, 50, 51.

Heterogeneity of migratory experiences: 63.56% of the population is native born, whereas 36.43% is foreign born, which is more than 10 points above the city average (25.7%). Among the foreign born population, only 22.34% are naturalized citizens when the city median is 42.78%. In numbers, it means that more than 13,000 people are foreign born, and only 3,032 are naturalized citizen.

Nativity and place of birth - Barrio Logan and San Diego (%)

	Native Born	**Foreign Born**	Naturalized citizen	**Not a citizen**
Barrio	63.5	**36.5**	22.3	**77.7**
City	74.3	**25.7**	42.8	**57.2**

Sources: Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau 2000. Census Tracts 36.01, 36.02, 36.03, 38, 39.01, 39.02, 49, 50, 51.

Socioeconomic criteria

The inhabitants of Barrio Logan remain socially excluded. For example, unemployment rates are more than triple those for the entire city (21.7% versus 6.1%) and the median household income is 57% less than in overall San Diego ($19,968 versus $45,733). Moreover, almost 40% of the neighborhood's population lives below poverty level[14] (39.5% versus 14.6% overall).

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[13] Quote: "Chicano Barrio means Chicano ghetto; Chicano neighborhood; place where Chicanos live", in STEWART, Robert : *A Method of Analyzing Community Power Systems in Southeast San Diego*. Master Thesis, United States International University, 1972, p.1. and p.67.
[14] Poverty level is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. http://factfinder.census.gov/ glossary.

Poverty Status in 1999 - Barrio Logan and San Diego (%)

	Income in 1999 below poverty level	Under 18 years old	18 to 64 years	65 years and over
Barrio	**39.5**	44.5	53.1	2.4
City	**14.6**	33.6	61	5.4

Sources: Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau 2000. Census Tracts 36.01, 36.02, 36.03, 38, 39.01, 39.02, 49, 50, 51.

The printed media diffuse an image of Barrio Logan defined as a crime ridden area, the "poorest neighborhood", "plagued by gang-related activities", in brief a "Chicano ghetto". However, data on crimes committed in Barrio Logan which concentrates only 3% of the city population, show a place where violence certainly happens, but not in such a disproportionate number as pictured.

Crime Rate per 1,000 Population in 2002 - Barrio Logan, Gaslamp, La Jolla and total San Diego City

	Murder	Rape	Robbery armed	Robbery armed	Aggress. Assault	Total violent	Burglary residential	Burglary commercial	Theft	Vehicle theft	Total Property
Barrio Logan	0.12	0.35	1.74	1.39	7.09	10.69	2.09	2.44	14.41	11.04	29.98
Gaslamp	1.19	1.19	5.96	8.34	78.67	95.35	3.58	17.88	179.98	39.33	240.76
La Jolla	0.06	0.10	0.26	0.48	1.56	2.46	5.45	3.32	20.54	6.03	35.33
Totals	**0.04**	**0.26**	**0.51**	**0.78**	**4.13**	**5.73**	**3.66**	**2.42**	**19.57**	**8.53**	**34.19**

Sources : San Diego Police Department, 2002. http://www.sannet.police/stats/index.shtml

Political criteria

As socioeconomic variables, immigration status is often analyzed as a negative predicament of political participation. In Barrio Logan, a large proportion of the population does not have any legal immigration status, whereas another large proportion does not have the U.S. citizenship and any access to voting. For instance, in terms of year of entry by citizenship status for the foreign-born population, for the eldest immigrant group arrived more than 20 years ago, less than a half is naturalized, for the middle group arrived between 10 and 20 years ago, less than 19% is naturalized, and for the newest immigrants arrived less than 10 years ago, less than 7% are naturalized. There is no data to evaluate precisely the proportion of unauthorized immigrants - but it might range between 15% and 25% of the population.

In terms of voter registration and turn out, both at the local and state level, they are extremely low. The example of San Diego City Council District 8, which includes Barrio Logan,

symbolized the lack of electoral participation, with a turnout ranging from 7% to 30% of the registered voters.

City Council level - District 8 turnout (1991-2002)

Elections	Registered voters	Total Voted	Turnout
27/02/2001	44,748	7,802	17.44%
02/06/1998	40,741	12,550	30.08%
19/09/1995	38,687	2,768	7.15%
21/09/1993	41,387	2,778	7.05%
16/02/1993	42,200	9,263	21.95%
17/09/1991	36,529	8,027	21.97%

Sources : Adapted from San Diego County Registrar of Voters.

http://www.sdvote.com/reports/line.htm

Barrios and Barrio Logan: evolutions and new approaches

Since the 1980s and 1990s, Barrios in the United States have experienced important mutations. Academic research has evolved and produced new frames to apprehend these changes.

Economic transformations. The concept of ethnic entrepreneurship[15] has provided a new approach to residential and racial segregation, in terms of the existence of immigrant's networks and economic niches specific to ethnic areas. It permits to understand how individuals resist the economic restructuring, the loss of industrial or heavy factory work (de-industrialization) or high rates of unemployment in the formal sector. If we recall A. PORTES' definition of an ethnic enclave as "an economic formation characterized by a spatial concentration of immigrants who organize a variety of enterprises to serve their own ethnic market and the general population", then ethnic entrepreneurship is an approach of ethnicity as a resource. Nevertheless, Barrio Logan is mainly a mixed-used zone of residential and industrial area, with very little commercial use.

Institutional evolutions. The end of the 1960s social programs funded during the War Against Poverty has provoked the disappearance of community organizations. Joan MOORE argued that: "These agencies were generated by and supported by significant groups of "respectable" leaders within the community, as well as by the newly mobilized ex-offenders. (…) A few agencies became institutionalized - mainstreamed - offering greatly expanded mental health services, for example. Others became absorbed into existing institutions so that the visible, accessible grassroots staffed community-based agencies all but disappeared"[16]. The remaining organizations of the Chicano movement have undergone an integration process and a shift from advocacy and political work to service-providers agencies.

Urban transformations. Different paths are competing in the Barrio. On the one hand, ethnic concentration seems to create a permanent marginalized community (gangs as

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[15] Cf. PORTES, Alejandro : *The economic sociology of immigration : essays on networks, ethnicity, and entrepreneurship.* New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1995.
[16] MOORE, Joan ; VIGIL, James : "Barrios in Transition", in MOORE, Joan ; PINDERHUGHES, Raquel : *In the Barrios. Latinos and the Underclass Debate*. New York, Russel Sage Foundation, 1993, pp.27-50.

socialization agent[17] ; the underclass debate). Barrio Logan is rejected spatially and racially, which strengthens the phenomenon of barriorization[18]. As an example, narratives evoke forms of "environmental racism"[19]. As Vigil stated: "Poverty, discrimination and group choice helped to create Mexican barrios, but urbanization and the concomitant poor city planning and neglectful and uncaring authorities make the barrios an ecologically inferior place in which to raise a family". On the other hand, gentrification is already affecting Barrio Logan. If we consider that gentrification happens in three phases: an initial period (the deterioration of life and housing conditions) ; a transitory period (renovation of housing, revitalization and beautification) ; and a final period (only the former home-owners remain in a mainly "Anglo" neighborhood) , then Barrio Logan would be situated at the beginning of the transitory phase.

These mutations deeply affect factors and forms of participation in the Barrio. They also convey changes in the way individuals choose different agendas and strategies to speak for the Barrio. I argue that recent urban changes explain that Barrio Logan is more visible as a political space, because its meaning and future have become the center of participation.

Research design : a qualitative approach

The methodology used is a qualitative ethnography based on the study of narratives. This study is ethnographical[20] and sociological. As McAdam[21] stresses, the consciousness of a shared frustration and of a possible opportunity for action grows from strategic efforts elaborated by groups of people. People build common comprehension of the world and themselves that legitimate and motivate both personal involvement and collective

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[17] VIGIL, James Diego : *Barrio Gangs. Street Life and Identity in Southern California*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1988, 202p.

[18] Richard Griswold del Castillo and Albert Camarillo call the formation of socially and residentially segregated barrios the accelerating "barriorization" of the Mexican population, since the beginning of the century, cf. CAMARILLO, Albert: *Chicanos in a Changing Society*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1979 ; GRISWOLD DEL CASTILLO, Richard : *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890 : a social history*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979. See also VILLA, Raul : *Barrio-Logos. Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*. University of Texas Press, Austin, 2000.

[19] in VIGIL, James Diego: *Barrio Gangs. Street Life and Identity in Southern California*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1988, p.24. Cf. MAIN, Hilary ; STIEFER, Patricia : *Analysis of Air Toxics Data Collected in Barrio Logan, California from October 1999 trough March 2000*. Final report. Sonoma Technology Institute, Petaluma, 2001.

[20] KING, Gary ; KEOHANE, Robert ; VERBA, Sidney : *Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, 247p. ; BECKER, Howard : *Les ficelles du métier. Comment conduire sa recherche en sciences sociales*. Paris, La Découverte/ Repères, 2002, 351p.

[21] MCADAM, Doug ; MCCARTHY, John ; MAYER, Zald : *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.6.

mobilization. The feeling of injustice and the determination of common good[22] are based on individual experiences, but framed and used by different actors to get others involved. That's why I analyze content and forms of narratives, their meanings and motives. I study five forms of verbal exchanges: informal dialogue, meetings' discussions, written media, semi-open interviews, and biographical narratives. Because narratives are structured around key words and notions that explicit the systems of representations of each individuals, repeated words, feelings and ideas present in narratives have a strong explicative power[23]. They show antagonistic symbolical universes[24].

My research examines how individuals, mobilized or not, determine common interests, and similar, conflictive, or complementary spheres of representations. The performative narratives are also a form of political participation.

The first-hand data for the study were acquired in five ways: a) 114 semi-structured interviews[25] were conducted with activists, elected officials, government agencies representatives (police, social workers, redevelopment agency etc.), non profit organizations' leaders and members, and local media involved in the Barrio ; b) 19 Barrio residents, first-generation immigrants, not politically mobilized, were selected for in-depth biographical interviews[26] ; c) A questionnaire was distributed and collected from 75 first-generation Mexican immigrants, all students in Citizenship classes. Meanwhile, an observation of citizenship classes was conducted for three months, in two Barrio schools and one outside school, in six different classes; d) Regular observation[27] of public and organizations' meetings was hold during the last 8 months, in particular monthly-institutionalized meeting, and biweekly organizations' meetings. In addition, I observed other community events such as

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[22] RIGGINS, Stephen : "The Rhetoric of Othering", in RIGGINS, Stephen (ed.) : *The Language and Politics of Exclusion. Others in Discourse*. London, Sage, 1997, pp.1-30. ; CLEGG, Stewart : "Narrative, Power, and Social Theory", in MUMBY, Dennis (ed.) : *Narrative and Social Control: Critical Perspectives*. London, Sage, 1993, pp. 15-45. ; HOWARTH, David ; NORVAL, Aletta ; STAVRAKAKIS, Yannis (ed.) : *Discourse theory and political analysis. Identities, hegemonies and social change*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000.

[23] DEMAZIERE, Didier ; DUBAR, Claude : *Analyser les entretiens biographiques. L'exemple des récits d'insertion*. Paris, Nathan/Essais et Recherches, 1997, p.37.

[24] GEERTZ, Clifford : *Savoir local, savoir global*, 1986, p.115, quote in KAUFMANN, Jean-Claude : *L'entretien compréhensif*. Paris, Nathan, 1997, p.96.

[25] BOURDIEU, Pierre ; CHAMBOREDON, Jean-Claude ; PASSERON, Jean-Claude : *Le métier de sociologue, préalables épistémologiques*, Paris, Bordas, 1968.; BLANCHET, Alain ; GOTMAN, Anne : *L'enquête et ses méthodes : l'entretien*. Paris, Nathan, 1992. ; GHIGLIONE, Rodolphe ; MATALON, Benjamin : *Les enquêtes sociologiques : théories et pratiques*. Paris, Armand Colin, 1978.

[26] PENEFF, Jean : *La méthode biographique. De l'école de Chicago à l'histoire orale*. Paris, Armand Colin, 1990, 144p. ; MICHELAT, Guy : "Sur l'utilisation de l'entretien non directif en sociologie", in *Revue française de Sociologie*, vol.XVI, n°2, 1975, pp.229-247.

[27] BEAUD, Stéphane ; WEBER, Florence : *Guide de l'enquête de terrain : produire et analyser des données ethnographiques*. Paris, La Découverte, 1997, 327p. ; BECKER, Howard : *Outsiders : études de sociologie de la déviance*. Paris, Métaillé, 1985, 247p. ; BOURDIEU, Pierre (dir.) : *La misère du monde*. Paris, Seuil, 1993, 944p.

'national days' (Mexican independence day, 5 de Mayo, Day of the Dead, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Columbus Day etc.), political events (anti-war march, anti-Gatekeeper protest, political parties' rallies, and local demonstrations), sports (hand-ball tournament, soccer), and social activities (Women's day celebration, *Dia del niño*, organizations' anniversary etc.). A photographic database was designed and it is available on http://www.usmex.ucsd.edu/research/photo_essay/index.html , e) Finally, participatory observation[28] in Barrio Logan helps clarify in the findings.

I tried to gather the maximum diversity possible and do not pretend to reach any proportional representativity. Nevertheless, my data allow establishing comparison between three generations of immigration, different education level, income, professional attainment, status, age etc. When I anticipated significant differences between sub-groups, one of the first findings is the relevance of categorizing by gender and status to explain factors and forms of participation.

Second-hand data are the following: a) Quantitative data: census data 2000, INS publications on naturalization, local statistics; b) Local media: methodical reading of newspapers articles in the local press from 200 to 2003; c) Literature on urban sociology, collective mobilization theory, qualitative research methodology, discourse analysis etc.

The limitations of the research have to be underlined. First, this is still a work-in-progress. I identified five major actors: residents, community organizations, elected official, city representatives, private actors. However, I could not reach almost any private actors and I did not include any members from the Churches and Unions. Second, some individuals denied being interviewed or recorded. Due to the heterogeneity of the population, some residents fear for their immigration status. All excerpts are anonymous. I only provide a few sociodemographic details to contextualize the interviewee. Third, the *Outsider Position*[29]: Negative effects for the interviews and the access to the community were related to racialization[30]: White often meaning *Gringa, Gabacha*, *American*, or *Anglo*, and secondly to

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[28] BOURDIEU, Pierre : *La misère du monde*. Paris, Seuil, 1998, 1460p. ; BECKER, Howard : *Outsiders : études de sociologie de la déviance*. Paris, Métaillé, 1985, 247p. ; WACQUANT, Loic : *Corps et âme. Carnets ethnographiques d'un apprenti boxeur*. Marseille, Agone, 2000.
[29] BACA ZIN, Maxine : "Field Research in Minority Communities: Ethical, Methodological and Political Observations by an Insider", in *Social Problems*, vol.5, n°2, déc.1979, pp.18-24.
[30] "Racialization refers to those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities…The concept therefore refers to a process of categorization, a representational process of defining an Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically", in MILES, Robert : *Racism*. London, Routledge, 1989, p.75.

linguistic, cultural, class, social, gender, and age aspects. Positive effects were paradoxically and partially linked to the same variables. I call this set of limitations the "*desconfianza* factor".

(Resident) : " Tu te miras bien sincera, hay gente que viene, y yo no quiero hablar, porque, qué me dan ? Nada mas quieren tomar algo, **luego no se sabe lo que escriben**, yo les miro a los ojos a la gente, y tu te miras bien sincera, verdad?"

(CO) : "the Chicano movement was like a big table, some of the people just seated there and were sharing their meal, some other just wanted to be close to the table, to grasp some part of the meal and leave : so where will you be seated? **What do you want from us and what will you do and give to us?"**

So Barrios and Barrio Logan have been considered as either culturally or structurally unable to participate in politics. Indeed, as the data presented show, Barrio Logan can be determined as a disenfranchised community. However, the narratives and fieldwork demonstrate that not only are forms of mobilization present within the Barrio, but that the actors' narratives are also performative discourses that provide the conditions for articulating citizenship rights. Because these narratives revolve around the definition of the community, of the space and the common good, they show that residential segregation can provide resources for participation.

The Politics of Community Identity

Since the 1990s, a new context has favored the rise of mobilization in Barrio Logan. At the federal level, Operation Gatekeeper and immigration-related policy gave to the organizations a possibility to mobilize on binational issues and human rights violations in a border city. At the state level, California anti-immigrant policies (Proposition 187, 209, 227) have crystallized the emergence of new groups. At the local level, urban redevelopment have first affected minorities - African American and Latinos. Finally, the election of the first Latino elected officials in San Diego, even marginal in numbers, has renewed demands from the constituency.

I characterized two forms of Politics in Barrio Logan. Visible politics involves electoral politics, protest politics and interest group politics. Invisible politics involves "informal" politics and performative narratives.

Here I focus on narratives from both visible and invisible actors who debate images of the community, its meaning, existence, and future. In particular, I chose the topic of

gentrification because it shows that Barrio Logan is the object of participation. Its definition reflects conflicting identities and visions of common good and interest. The rhetoric of the community demonstrates how functional is the Barrio and how it permits to discuss Young's argument that "segregation may be an expression of a 'differentiated citizenship' in which people are perhaps exercising their right to be 'together-in-difference"[31]. I define community as a "unit of belonging whose members perceive that they share moral, aesthetic/expressive or cognitive meanings, thereby gaining a sense of personal as well as group identity. In turn, this identity demarcates the boundary between members or non-members. **Communities therefore are constructed symbolically** through an engagement with rituals, signs and meanings, they provide a container within which individuals members negotiate meanings and construct and reconstruct different kinds of social relationships over time" (Cohen 1979).

Outside images and the role of the media. First, I would like to bring up the issue of stereotypical community images. It may seem commonplace but I believe it does contribute to understand better local politics. When I collected the stories of city officials, representatives, and policy-makers involved in Barrio Logan, I found a high degree of diversity and density. Some individuals focused mainly on the negative images of the Barrio as a place "where you should not walk through, but only drive through", plagued by gang-related activities. The role of local media is instrumental in framing the outside image of the community. The San Diego Union Tribune newspaper articles continuously translate the word Barrio as a "problem space" and deny it any internal complexity. A recollection of two-years and a half of articles shows that 85% of the articles carry negative images of Barrio Logan, stigmatized as a "dangerous and powerless place".

(A - a) : "You know, if you keep the neighborhood clean, the violence decreases, **and people feel safer, they feel less that they live in a poor neighborhood,** it is less damaging to them, that's our own tactics so far to eliminate gang violence. When the economy is down, like now, people feel more frustrated with everything, also with the community organizations, with the government, and people go to jail, people get killed"

At the same time, others individuals acknowledged these negative images failed to capture the full range of social relations in the community. In fact, they also question the effectiveness of their work for the betterment of the community. Their narratives also

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[31] "The idea is to move resources to people, and not people to resources: the causes of social injustice may lie not in racially segregated neighborhoods, but in redistributive policies", cf. ISIN, Engin : "Introduction: Cities and Citizenship in a Global Age", in *Citizenship Studies*, vol.3, n°2, 1999, pp.169.

expressed alternative views of the Barrio by identifying it as a neighborhood or *la comunidad*, the community they serve.

(A) : "I got the choice to do it or no, and I chose to work here, there is a need for officers speaking Spanish and understanding them. In this station, very few people speak Spanish, and this is a way to understand why people act this way, **there is a need for my community to be understood also**".

(A) : "All these people who come to the meeting, you heard them, they want to make their community better, to be a nice place to go and walk around (…). **I want to give back to my community, I grew up here** (…), all my family lived here for a long time, it was so important for me to give back to my community, and that's the way I chose and asked to work in these areas"

Inside images and its complexity. Interviews with residents and community organizers integrates the "outside" image of the Barrio as poor, politically powerless, neglected, and dangerous. They emphasized that this description is used to legitimate "dumping" everything no other community would accept (polluting industries, shelters for homeless, freeways, etc.).

(CO) : "I wanted to go against this neighborhood deterioration, **we were neglected by the city**; they just wanted to allow everything in this neighborhood. You know, they started to accept all these industrial complex, then all these homeless coming down (…) with all the men coming with diseases, prostitutes, drug dealers, and drug addicts**, just because we are Mexican American** (…) They feel with no dignity and that they could behave like that, they would not have done that with any other nice neighborhood".

Simultaneously, while they acknowledged, among other issues, the poverty of many residents, the silent status of unauthorized immigrants or the existence of gangs, some people also argued that the community was doing much better than 10 years ago. They presented the Barrio as a cultural place, a "community with pride and achievement" despite discrimination, neglect and lack of opportunities.

(CO) : "Aqui le demostramos que esta comunidad se ha mantenido libre de drogas, con familias trabajadoras, que nos gusta nuestra comunidad y **que somos muy orgullosos de ella**. Es un modelo para otros proyectos, y para la comunidad también".

On the opposite, others recalled an old age when community organizations were numerous, mainly during the late 1960s and 1970s (the Chicano movement era), or when community cohesiveness was greater and life much livelier, with a movie theatre, restaurants or social clubs, referring to the 1940s and 1950s.

(CO) : "(We) started in 1968 to be involved in the community, as many organizations did in the 1960s, there were lots of social changes, social movements and changes going on at that time. (…). We were really in the process of learning how to use our power, (…). We did not have lots of good administrative people to handle money. **We were new to that, that was requesting skilled people, so that's why also many organizations did not survive that time, just a few**"

(Resident) : "we were beach lovers, I used to go the beach there, we were swimming there, **I remember**"

As a consequence, the community identity results not only from social processes and a dialogue with others - other communities, the media, the city or state - but also within the community. Debating images of the community, inside and outside is a source of participation. The debates around the use of space and on the community boundaries highlight this even stronger.

"Mi comunidad": a source of participation and mobilization

Barrio Logan is conceived as a particular changing space, its **geographical** specificity makes it both a source for bargaining power and a weakness. Potential displacement can stimulate activism, the development of organizations, and the participation of residents. The vision of revitalization as basically positive for the populations affected has tried to dismiss first the negative consequences of the displacement and gentrification processes; and second it has hidden the social conflicts experienced within the neighborhood. Again, the vision of Barrio populations are powerless and apathetic based on their poverty status are predominant. But strategies against displacement and group consciousness do emerge in narratives. On the one hand, some individuals feel powerless.

(CO) : **"**The redevelopment issue, I prefer not to talk about it… the Ball park is being built and everybody will be affected... we are renting this space here, the lease is for three years, and what are we going to do if they tell us to leave ? We are too close to the Ball park now… (…). You know there are so many little groups fighting against that, but the gentrification is the result of the capitalist system, I can see that this is happening, and I see we can't do much about it…"

(CO) : "the rents were increasing so much, they were going to the roof, and it is a double edge sword, because this neighborhood was long neglected and did not receive any help, but now there is more interest and it has a major impact on the families, especially because of the rents increasing so much. People really feel under attack, because hey don't know how to get organized, they don't realize they have a say with which kind of people and development they want to have".

On the other hand, the Barrio redevelopment is an issue of definition of the community boundaries. Paradoxically, structural obstacles to minorities' political integration in the U.S. can lead them to use ethnic identity as a political tool, as a strategy to gain access to individual and collective benefits. Residential segregation and fear of displacement, or real displacement can translate into action.

(R) : **"**With the (redevelopment), we felt important, because before that nobody looked at our neighborhood. It was a mixed industrial and residential area, nobody had interest to come, now everything is developed and going through renovation ! It started a few years ago, it was so cheap to buy property when I bought my house, and

now prices are so high. I think it is good for homeowners, we want to put up on things, it is good for homeowners, but we don't want to let build anything either".

Abstract space vs. social space. The Barrio is more than an object; it is a social construction with different meanings. As a source of identity and cultural continuity, it provides resources and means for the residents. To recall the dichotomy established by Henri Lefebvre in *La production de l'Espace* (1974), gentrification opposes two different logics and perception of spaces. The first logic is the one of abstract space, exemplified in the use of terms such as beautification, revitalization or redevelopment. The second logic is to see the Barrio as a social space.

(A): "In terms of issues, I think housing is what my constituents are worried about, the first issue they are concerned about, **to beautify the areas**, such as Barrio Logan and Sherman Heights, and then affordable housing".

(Resident) : "The real estate agencies, the promoters, they see homes and houses as places to invest money, to make money, while the people from the Latino community , they see the housing as a place of life, as a home".

Therefore, residents feel attachment to Barrio Logan, because living in a Mexican Barrio means something important to them. These sentiments can be seen as forms of cultural resources that can be developed as resources for action and participation. In particular gender seems a determinant factor for preserving the neighborhood as an identity place. For women, to maintain their place in the neighborhood means a challenge not only to owners and government agencies, but also to their husbands[32].

(CO) : "Me di cuenta del problema de la comunidad, que antes una casa para comprar costaba unos 180.000$, 190.000$ ahora está por más de 280.000 $. En Logan Heights, en Sherman Heights, mucha gente son imigrantes, trabajan en los hoteles, en los restaurantes, es gente que trabaja en el downtown, y ganan apenas 15.000$ al año (…),Uno de los problemas más grandes es tener affordable housing, porque hay muy pocos affordable housing aqui en San Diego. Yo creo que para que un niño salga bien en la escuela, tiene que salir bien su familia, porque si el niño llega sin comer, y sin casa donde dormir, como es que crees que estudie en la escuela ?"

(Resident) : "Pero **quiero vivir aqui porque es mi barrio**. Si compro una casa, la compro aqui. Mis amigos en el trabajo me dicen : pero no ! buscate una casa en otro lugar, ya no andas en Logan. Pero yo, yo no vivo como cholo! Y la gente se quedo mirandome mal."

El Barrio, a paradigmatic political space

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[32] MUÑIZ, Vicky : "Resisting Gentrification and Displacement. Voices of Puerto Rican Women in the Barrio", in SEDILLO LOPEZ, Antoinette (ed.) : *Latino Communities. Emerging Voices. Political, Social, Cultural and Legal Issues.* New York, University of New Mexico Press, 1998, p.20.

In all cases, ethnic identification is used as a resource for political participation and representation, to be the legitimate spokesperson for the community, "nuestra comunidad"[33]. Interestingly, the Barrio is not a political space only because of outsiders - but it is per se a political space where the definition of the community and common good is debated and confronted.

In Search of Identity: Insiders vs. outsiders

The most visible and most socially constructed division is built on **ethnic lines** (to sum up White versus Latinos/Chicano/Mexicanos). Racialization is both integrated and used by actors to determine them in front of the other.

 (CO) : "We are saving this neighborhood, with anger, determination, but we will save it from that, it has already been under attack, in particular with the urban city planning department, who is our greatest enemy. This is the issue of the last **Mexican American community** on the southeast of California, you see, we are the only one and after us is the bay front and the industry and them".

(Resident) : "Se sube mucho la renta ! y luego no hay casas para gente de bajos recursos (…). No es justo. Ademas aqui es una comunidad muy antigua, **es una comunidad latina, para los Latinos, y no esta bien que vengan los Americanos**. Por que cada comunidad tiene su cosa, no ? Es lo que hace las comunidades distintas, aqui es por muchos años una comunidad latina, y no me parece bien que la gente ya no pueda vivir aca"

The rhetoric of the other is also framed in generational terms. The second generation constantly affirms that ethnic identity understood as **language,** being Spanish-speaking could be viewed as a basis for discrimination for the first generation (powerless minority) but a tool for internal solidarity and community empowerment. To be bilingual is seen as part of ethnic identity and resource.

(CO) : "My mom is Mexican, no habla ingles, they don't want to challenge because **they've been oppressed for so long**. It is a long process to make people feel they can challenge. People were scared because they don't know, pero si pueden hablar, no querian hablar ni a las juntas, but then they saw other people talking at the council and they get confident"

El Barrio is presented as a cultural and social space defined by its boundaries that have to be preserved and not disintegrated. These boundaries delimit who is part of the community and who is not. The Barrio is a place of identification, a *locus* that means ownership and self-determination.

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[33] "Ethnic and racial identity, solidarity and mobilization are key determinants of social and neighborhood organization, often serving as a form of social capital", in MELENDEZ, Edwin : "The Economic Development of El Barrio", in BONILLA, Franz ; MELENDEZ, Edwin (et al.) (ed.) *: Borderless Borders. U.S. Latinos, Latin Americans and the Paradox of Interdependence.* Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1998, pp.195-127.

(CO) : "We formed ourselves because there was no organization, or other organizations they come from outside. The other day we had a community meeting, people came from all over the place, they said : we need this here **! They don't even live here** !"

In Search of Legitimacy: Insiders vs. Insiders

Gentrification crystallizes the hidden political and social conflicts experienced within the neighborhood, on the different meanings of the community and common good. Internal and external factors can determine the legitimacy of actors to act for or speak for El Barrio. First, narratives highlight a social class-based conflict between homeowners and tenants.

(CO) : "This lot is owned by (XX), they hosted a so-called community meeting last week, they were **homeowners,** and people showed up because other told them, but this was no an open community meeting, this was a homeowners meeting!"

(R) : "I think they only think about their personal benefits because they did not invite the **community**, I felt the meeting was bad, I felt offended, I am a tenant for all my life, the treated us like dirty, they said they pay more taxes than me, I really felt very offended"

Second, the criteria for insider legitimacy are reflected to be based not only on territory, but also on a on more qualitative basis such as experience in working in the community, commitment or sacrifice to the community. The rhetoric of the community is both used to gain power and to serve the community.

(CO) : " I don't leave the Barrio, I belong here, (…). As a non profit, **I have lots of responsibility, for the community**, it is a compelling work, and I tell you, it takes all my time and my life, it 's constantly challenging me".

(CO) : "So we have to make us visible and heard. We have to show that **we have the community support**, and that this project is economically viable and makes more sense, and show the educational consequences for the community.

These parameters create conditions more or less favorable social involvement and political participation. These external factors determine the legitimacy of speakers depending on criteria such as expertise and official recognition. What does the city offer to *Latinos* who accept changes quietly and what does it offer to those who voice their demands? The legitimacy gives the spokesperson the right to express what is the common good for the community.

(CO) : "The City Council wants Latino leaders, because it looks good, (…), you know what I mean, these people are caciques, you understand the word in Spanish , right ? it was during the colonial times, and it is still the same today, the caciques, the ones you cannot remove, they concentrate all the power and work hand in hand with the government".

Conclusion

El Barrio is a political space, not only because of outsider's actors involved in it, but its s a political space per se. Ethnic identification is a resource for participation. The debates on the definition and allocation of public space show that the rhetoric of the community is also a struggle for power within and outside El Barrio. Residential segregation can express a right to be together in difference. The conflicting identities highlighted in the narratives determine both integration in and exclusion from the American political system. I would like to have shown how individuals resist, challenge or adapt the state's definition of **community and common good.**

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