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**The LGBTQ Movement in Argentina:  
A Study of Activists in Córdoba**

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**The LGBTQ Movement in Argentina:  
A Study of Activists in Córdoba**

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## **Abstract**

### **The LGBTQ Movement in Argentina: A Study of Activists in Córdoba**

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Within the historically conservative city of Córdoba, Argentina, LGBTQ activism has grown in the past year during a period in which the movement has achieved significant advances nationwide. This thesis examines how a new LGBTQ organization, Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba, formed its identity by creating boundaries between itself and other organizations in Argentina through a frame of diversity and horizontalism, in which members have an equal opportunity to participate. While the group was able to maintain diversity through its activities, its attempts to create and follow a horizontal structure were not successful. Because of this failure, hierarchies based on members' social and political capital developed within the group, despite the organization's commitment to equality.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **The State of LGBTQ Activism in Argentina**

On July 15, 2010, Argentina's national legislature passed a historic law that legalized same-sex marriage, making it the first country in Latin America to do so. This law is the culmination of years of struggle by LGBTQ<sup>1</sup> organizations to obtain equal rights, ranging from local campaigns for civil unions and inclusive anti-discrimination laws to national movements to legalize same-sex marriage through the judiciary and legislative branches. What makes this success even more impressive is that just a little over twenty years ago, under a newly-established democracy, sexual minorities faced police repression and general discrimination that made it difficult to publicly disclose one's sexual identity. Overall, the LGBTQ movement continues to push politics and public opinion in the right direction in Argentina.

Within the past year alone, studies have demonstrated that public support for LGBTQ communities has improved since the repressive period of the 1980s, even in the interior regions, which are generally believed to be more conservative than Buenos Aires. For example, a study conducted in 1998 in the city of Buenos Aires showed that only 33% of the population accepted homosexuality, while 25% rejected it and 42% were indifferent (Kornblit, Pecheny, and Vujosevich 1998, 24). By 2009, a study based on 800 surveys from Greater Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Tucumán, Córdoba, and Rosario demonstrated that 66.3% of Argentineans were in favor of same-sex marriage, with 67% from Buenos Aires and 60% from the interior supporting it (Bimbi 2009). Another study

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<sup>1</sup> While some groups in Argentina use the term "LGBT," I chose to use "LGBTQ" to refer to current organizations because of the growing inclusion of queer groups in the movement, especially in Córdoba.

conducted in June of this year, shortly before the passage of the same-sex marriage law, showed an increase in support, with 68.5% of those surveyed in the city of Córdoba either agreeing with or strongly agreeing with same-sex marriage compared to 71.7% from Greater Buenos Aires (Informe 2010). In addition to this increase in general support, the 2009 study shows that 57.3% of Catholics reject the anti-gay and lesbian stance of the Church in a country with a vocal Catholic hierarchy<sup>2</sup> (Bimbi 2009). Overall, public acceptance of equal rights for LGBTQ people has continued to grow in Argentina, in both Buenos Aires and interior provinces such as Córdoba, over the past twenty years.

However, despite these advancements in public opinion, the struggle for LGBTQ rights in Argentina is far from complete. For instance, there is no national anti-discrimination law that includes sexual orientation and gender identity, and transgender people must confront difficulties associated with the lack of legal recognition of sex-reassignment surgeries. Furthermore, police edicts from the province of Córdoba, known as the Código de Faltas (Code of Misdemeanors<sup>3</sup>), allow police to detain people for actions that violate public decency and create public scandals (Policía de la Provincia de Córdoba 2007, Art. 44, 52). Also, actions that bother other people, affecting their “personal decorum” in public sight, are grounds for detainment (Art. 43). These codes in effect legitimize the discrimination and harassment of suspected LGBTQ individuals, especially transgender women who often work in the vulnerable field of prostitution.

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<sup>2</sup> See *Progreso a la Iglesia argentina: las relaciones de la jerarquía eclesiástica y los gobiernos de Alfonsín y Menem* by Rubén R. Dri (1997) for more on the Catholic Church’s stance on sexual minorities in Argentina.

<sup>3</sup> All translations are my own.

In addition to police harassment, LGBTQ people are subject to discrimination and violence from the general public. For instance, in August of 2009, three members of the LGBTQ organization Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba (Meetings for Diversity in Córdoba) were attacked by a local business owner during a protest against the Honduran coup because of their assertion that transgender people needed protection in Honduras too. After running from their attacker, these three individuals were then stopped by police with force and the threat of being taken to jail. The attack resulted in serious facial injuries for two of the group members and minor injuries to the other member (*Día a Día* 2009). Another violent incident occurred in March of this year when a lesbian was murdered by her girlfriend's stepfather because he disapproved of their relationship (Molina 2010). This continued discrimination and violence means that the need for LGBTQ activism in Córdoba remains strong.

In order to combat the difficulties faced by LGBTQ communities in Córdoba, several organizations have formed in the past several years with great success. For instance, in November of 2009, these groups organized the first LGBTQ pride march in the city in over ten years, with the participation of over 600 people (Romero and de Mauro 2009). Just seven months later an estimated 4,000 to 8,000 people participated in a march in the city in support of the national same-sex marriage law (Cravero 2010; *Día a Día* 2010). Overall, LGBTQ activism is growing in Córdoba, but faces many obstacles in the historically conservative city.



## **Purpose**

Due to the central position Buenos Aires has occupied in the LGBTQ movement until the past few years, there is little information on the history of the movement in Córdoba. Despite this lack of research, Córdoba provides an interesting case since the city is big enough to be known as “gay-friendly” to people who move there, such as university students, because of the existence of gay clubs and the possibility of anonymity (in comparison with small towns in the interior). However, it is a very religious and conservative city at the same time. With the intention of forming an understanding of how LGBTQ organizations function under this dynamic in Córdoba, I conducted research for five weeks during the summer of 2009.

At the time of my field research, there were four important organizations within the movement in Córdoba: Cóncavos y Convexos (Concaved and Convexed), the Coordinadora LGTTB (LGTTB Coordinating Committee), the Asociación de Travestis Transgéneros y Transexuales de Argentina (Transvestite, Transgender, and Transsexual Association of Argentina, or ATTTA), and Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba, which I discuss in more detail in the following chapters. While conducting my research, I began to focus on the last group, hereby referred to as Encuentros, because of both its growing importance within the city and the frequency of its meetings.

During my research, I observed weekly group meetings and activities, such as a goal formulation workshop, a march protesting the recent coup in Honduras, a demonstration commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stonewall, and a fundraising party. I also conducted in-depth interviews with four individuals involved in the LGBTQ

movement in Córdoba, two of which were from Cóncavos y Convexos and two from Encuentros. Through my observation and interviews I was able to form an understanding of the ways in which the group sought to create its identity early on. The remainder of my information about Encuentros comes from a group list serve through which members promote its activities, circulate group documents, and share news and opinions about progressive activism in Argentina and the rest of the world, starting in May of 2009. While this information is limited to what members share on the list serve, it allowed me to continue to examine the degree to which the original goals of Encuentros have been implemented through a study of the group's activities and discussions.

Towards the beginning of my research in Argentina, I noticed that Encuentros, Cóncavos y Convexos, and the Coordinadora LGTTB, emphasize the need to unite various segments of the LGBTQ movement that were previously separated, such as gay men, lesbians, and transgender people, under one organization. According to members of Encuentros, the best way to create an organization that brings together people with different gender and sexual identities is through a horizontal structure and a focus on diversity, in order to avoid the formation of hierarchies in the group. I will demonstrate in this thesis that Encuentros has employed this discourse of horizontalism<sup>4</sup> and diversity since its inception in an effort to form its identity and distinguish itself from other LGBTQ groups in Córdoba and Argentina. While the group was able to maintain a diverse organization, its attempts to create and follow a horizontal structure in which

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<sup>4</sup> Horizontalism (from the term "horizontalidad" in Spanish) is a term commonly used in progressive social movements in Argentina and by members of Encuentros. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, it implies a non-hierarchical organizational structure where each member has an equal opportunity to participate (Sitrin 2006).

members have equal opportunity to participate were less successful, because of the disorder of the meetings and method in which members use the list serve. Because of this failure, hierarchies based on members' social and political capital exist within the group.

As a woman from the United States who does not identify herself as LGBTQ, in many ways I was in a privileged position in relation to some of the activists I observed. However, like many of the members I am a student, and being a woman placed me in a subordinate position when interacting with men in the group, which meant I was not in a continuously privileged situation. I also had the benefit of knowing a few activists in the movement from my previous study abroad experience in Córdoba, which allowed me to gain the trust of other members early on in my research. Finally, as a self-identified ally of the LGBTQ movement my interests in conducting this study were to learn how organizations in Córdoba confront conservative stances in the city and to hopefully provide activists with some insight into how they have succeeded and in what ways they can improve. Therefore, while members of Encuentros were aware of my sexual identity and outsider position as a foreigner, I believe that because they viewed me as a partner in the struggle for LGBTQ rights, I was able to gain a clear understanding of the identity-formation of Encuentros.

Furthermore, in my desire to demonstrate how LGBTQ groups in Córdoba confront discrimination based on individuals' sexual and gender identities, I will show that these groups are not exempt from their own forms of discrimination. My discussion of the possibility that hierarchies will develop, such as those which occurred in

Encuentros, is not a criticism of only LGBTQ groups. On the contrary, it is meant to show how the categories of the dominant in society, such as those based on race, class, gender, and sexual identity, can find their way into organizations that attempt to overcome these categories through politics of diversity and equality, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 3. Overall, I hope to provide activists within Encuentros and other LGBTQ organizations with some insight into how to frame their group identity so as to best avoid the creation of hierarchies.

## **Structure**

In order to understand the current state of the LGBTQ movement in Córdoba, I will first provide a history of the movement in Argentina starting from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Chapter 2. I will also describe the most politically and socially active organizations that exist today in Buenos Aires and Córdoba in this chapter. Next, in Chapter 3, I will give an overview of theories on sexuality, followed by an examination of identity formation in social movements through frame theory. Then, I will finish with a depiction of how hierarchies can form in equality-based social movements, using Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of the field and habitus and two examples from the LGBTQ movement in the United States. In Chapter 4, I will show how Encuentros formed its frame of diversity and horizontalism through the creation of boundaries between itself and other LGBTQ organizations in Argentina, followed by an analysis of the success or failure of these frames through the group's activities and discussions. Finally, I will

conclude with a discussion of recent developments in the movement in Córdoba and formulate some proposals for the future of this research in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 2: The History of the LGBTQ Movement in Argentina**

The LGBTQ movement in Argentina has faced significant obstacles since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with several oppressive dictatorships that often restrained liberal social movements and democratic governments that failed to protect the rights of LGBTQ groups. However, since the most recent return to democracy in 1983, LGBTQ groups have obtained significant advances, such as ending repressive police edicts, introducing non-discrimination clauses and same-sex civil unions in several cities, and finally, a national same-sex marriage law. Furthermore, organizations had to overcome domination by middle-class gay men in order to promote the interaction of different sectors of the LGBTQ community that occurs today<sup>5</sup>. While the struggle for the rights of sexual minorities in Argentina is by no means complete, the history of the movement in Argentina shows how far these groups have come today.

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, like in many countries at the time, was a period in which sexual minorities in Argentina faced discrimination and violence at the hands of both the government and the general population. For instance, in the 1910s, the upper classes in Buenos Aires became preoccupied with the increase of “crimes against the social order,” such as homelessness, gambling, and drunkenness, because they were worried that these crimes would negatively affect the image of Argentina in Europe during a period when immigration from Northern European countries was strongly promoted (Berco 2002, 426, 433). In addition, increases in cruising in parts of the city

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<sup>5</sup> For this reason, I refer to the early stages of the movement as one of “gay rights” and later stages as “LGBTQ rights.”

led to a panic among Argentine intellectuals that rampant homosexuality<sup>6</sup> amid Southern European immigrants was corrupting young men and affecting the overall hygiene of the country<sup>7</sup>. This panic caused officials to advocate for heterosexual prostitution as a way for youth to express their sexual desires (440).

The preoccupation with homosexuality continued into the 1930s, with federal police edicts that made it illegal to cross-dress, dance with members of the same sex, and have any homosexual relations (Bazán 2004, 217; Jáuregui 1987, 164). Even though these edicts went against the national penal code of 1886, which did not contain any provisions that criminalized private, adult, consensual sex, police continued to create and use edicts until 1996 (Ben 2010, 34, 36). In 1949, during the first presidency of Juan Perón, these edicts became part of the *Reglamento de Procedimientos Contravencionales* (Regulations on Contravention Procedures), which allowed the federal police to enact edicts regarding unforeseen security issues. Perón also continued to endorse heterosexual prostitution as a means of preventing the homosexual perversion of youth, effectively promoting discrimination and violence against sexual minorities (Jáuregui 1987, 165). In 1957, two years after a military coup against Perón, the Supreme Court declared the ability of the police to issue and enforce edicts unconstitutional. However, in the same year, Congress granted the police these powers in a national law (166). In essence, the police were able to determine on their own which individuals they considered suspicious or

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<sup>6</sup> While the term “homosexual” is no longer used by scholars to refer to sexual minorities, I have chosen to use it when discussing the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to maintain the wording used by the government in this period.

<sup>7</sup> See *Médicos maleantes y maricas: higiene, criminología y homosexualidad en la construcción de la nación argentina (Buenos Aires, 1871-1914)* by Jorge Salessi for more on the panic over hygiene.

harmful to the morality of the country, thereby allowing them to openly harass and detain suspected gays and lesbians.

Despite continued dictatorships and oppression in Argentina in the 1960s, the gay rights movement began to take form at the end of the decade. At this time, international and national activism increased with the uprising of gays and lesbians at Stonewall in the United States, a growth in left-wing movements, and a student and worker rebellion in 1969 in Córdoba known as the Cordobazo. The Cordobazo in particular demonstrated the weakness of then military dictator Juan Carlos Onganía in his ability to deal with popular uprisings<sup>8</sup> (Brown 2002, 126-127). Under these conditions, the first gay rights organization in Latin America, Grupo Nuestro Mundo (Our World Group), formed in Buenos Aires in 1969. The leader of the group was an ex-communist activist who had been pushed out by other activists for being gay, and lower-middle class men made up the majority of the group. For the next two years the group's main strategy was to inundate newspaper editorial columns in Buenos Aires with bulletins about gay liberation. In 1971, the group merged with gay intellectuals who had been inspired by the Gay Power movement in the United States to become the Frente de Liberación Homosexual (Homosexual Liberation Front), or FLH (Perlongher 1997, 77). While the FLH originally conceived of itself as an opinion group formed around Marxist ideologies, it became more confrontational when a small student group named Eros joined them in March of 1972. Gradually, more groups began to join the FLH, and during its largest period between September of 1972 and August of 1973, it consisted of about ten

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<sup>8</sup> See *Historia Argentina: La Política en Suspense, 1966/1976* (2000) by Liliana de Riz for more on the Cordobazo.



autonomous groups that coordinated common actions, including feminist groups and “movimientos de liberación nacional y social” (“national and social liberation movements”) (78). In addition, the FLH was able to form contacts with other organizations in Córdoba, Mendoza, and Tucumán, although the need for secrecy at the time limited collaboration (79).

In its activities, the FLH called for the end of repressive police actions and edicts and the release of gay prisoners, and keeping with its Marxist origins, it argued that compulsive heterosexuality was reinforced by capitalism (78). Because the group was fairly poor, members organized parties to raise funds and contributed a small, monthly dues. In addition, Eros coordinated strategies for cheap forms of publicity through passing out flyers (*volanteadas*) and graffiti campaigns (*pintadas*) in public places with slogans such as “Machismo = Fascismo” (“Machismo = Fascism”) and “Por el derecho a disponer del propio cuerpo” (“For the right to have your own body at your disposal”) (79). Other members also organized “consciousness-raising” meetings, which were modeled after activities used by feminist groups, and some took on the task of sorting through theoretical documents relating to gay men (79).

Over the next few years, a majority of the group supported the Peronist movement through activities such as the participation of around 100 members in the celebration of Perón’s inauguration in 1973. However, the increasingly open political participation of the FLH led to more publicity and thus police detainment (80). Finally, after rightist groups accused the Peronists of being homosexuals and drug addicts, more conservative Peronists began to distance themselves from the FLH with equally discriminatory

statements (Bazán 2004, 354, 365). This anti-homosexual stance led the group to become disillusioned by mainstream Peronism, and the only groups that continued to accept the FLH were some Trotskyists and anarchists (Perlongher 1997, 81).

During the next few years the FLH dedicated itself less to political parties and more towards gay liberation with the establishment of the magazine *Somos* at the end of 1973. The magazine covered topics such as theory, literature, and information about the state of the movement in Argentina and occasionally abroad. Between 1973 and January of 1976 there were eight issues created, which members distributed by hand to around 500 readers (81-82). The FLH also continued to work with feminist groups during this time, such as the Unión Feminista Argentina (Argentinean Feminist Union) and the Movimiento de Liberación Femenina (Feminine Liberation Movement), and joined them and heterosexual sympathizers in the Grupo Política Sexual (Sexual Political Group), a weekly discussion group focusing on sexuality (82).

Following the death of Perón in 1974, right-wing paramilitary attacks on sexual minorities increased and the group began to disperse. For instance, in 1975, the weekly fascist magazine *El Caudillo* called for people to put an end to homosexuals, even advocating for their lynching, with an implicit reference towards the FLH. Shortly thereafter, the group reduced to around thirty members who mainly participated in theoretical discussions, and by June of 1976 the group dissolved. While some of the members were able to escape to Spain and organize there, most were left to focus on their own survival (83). This dispersal marked the beginning of a seven-year period of harsh

violence against sexual minorities and other progressive groups in Argentina, known as the Proceso, or Dirty War.

When the dictatorship began in 1976, the government condemned homosexuality as subversion against the state, and gay clubs and bars were forced to function clandestinely, if at all (Jáuregui 1987, 168). In a six-month period in 1978 alone, as part of a campaign of moral cleansing prior to the soccer World Cup held in Buenos Aires, over 1,400 gays and lesbians were arrested in various bars (169). Also, the government prohibited any oral or written mention of same-sex relations, along with topics such as abortion, premarital relations, and contraceptives, during the first few years. Overall, the goal of the police was to scare away sexual minorities from the street “para que no perturben a la gente decente” (“so that they do not disturb decent people”) (169-170). When conditions started to ease towards the end of the dictatorship in 1982, a few groups began to reemerge under the Coordinadora de Grupos Gays (Gay Groups Coordinating Committee), but in the last months of the Proceso a new surge in murders occurred, leading to the death of 18 gay men in Buenos Aires. Overall, it is estimated that around 400 of the 30,000 people that were “disappeared” during the Proceso were sought out because of their sexual identity, although the *Nunca Más* report of 1984 did not include this information (Brown 1999, 112).

After the return to democracy in 1983, several small organizations began to form, such as the Grupo de Acción Gay (Gay Action Group), Pluralista (Pluralist), Oscar Wilde, and San Telmo. Uniting under the Coordinadora de Grupos Gays, these organizations sent a survey to political parties inquiring about their stances on gays and

lesbians. This survey determined that the Union Civil Radical represented by presidential candidate Raúl Alfonsín offered the most hope for sexual liberties, and the group backed him in the elections. Following Alfonsín's election, the so-called "verano democrático" ("democratic summer") led to the unprecedented opening of gay bars and tolerance from the police, and the Coordinadora dissolved feeling its goals had been met (Jáuregui 1987, 200-201). However, within a few months of the presidential inauguration, former members of the Coordinadora and other previously politically inactive gay men realized that Alfonsín would not carry out many of his promises. Although torture was no longer used, police repression continued under Alfonsín, such as when police detained around 150 people when they raided a gay club in 1984. It was under this continued repression that the Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (Argentinean Homosexual Community), or CHA, which would become one of the leading LGBT<sup>9</sup> rights groups in Argentina, formed in order to fight back for their rights (201-202).

In April of 1984, about 100 people came together in an assembly to form the CHA and a few weeks later a list of fourteen people willing to publicly work with the group was created (202). In another assembly, the group set as its objectives the promotion of the right to a dignified life for sexual minorities, restoration of rights guaranteed by the constitution, solidarity among these minorities, and an atmosphere of reflection and study about sexuality. The group then published these objectives in an advertisement in the newspaper *Clarín* in order to encourage others to participate. Shortly thereafter, the group learned that the police had contacted *Clarín* to gather

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<sup>9</sup> I do not include "Q" when referring to the CHA because they follow a mainstream, assimilationist approach.

information on the adherents to the document. Instead of fearing the actions by the police, members called the police station to offer them their information, because they were no longer willing to hide their identities (203-204). Finally, in September the CHA appeared for the first time in public when about 100 people participated in a march in support of the presentation of the *Nunca Más* report (204-205).

Following these initial events, the CHA followed a more assimilationist strategy in comparison with more radical groups such as the FLH, by focusing its campaign around a discourse of human rights, as was popular among many groups at the time (Brown 2002, 128). For instance, it used the idea that gays and lesbians are like everybody else by appealing to people's sense of moving away from the past with an advertisement in *Clarín* titled "Con discriminación y represión no hay democracia" ("With Discrimination and Repression There is No Democracy") (Jáuregui 1987, 225). During this period, it also called for the repeal of the use of police edicts and fought against LGBT discrimination within society, by meeting with both the government and human rights organizations such as the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. However, in the late 1980s the human rights discourse was discredited after Alfonsín's government granted several concessions to the military, and the CHA changed its focus to health issues instead by launching the first HIV/AIDS prevention campaign. Also, the group increased its efforts to obtain legal recognition from the government (Brown 2002, 125).

In order to pressure President Carlos Menem to legally recognize the CHA, the group contacted organizations in the United States and Europe which staged protests during visits by Menem in 1992 (Mogrovejo 2000, 288). The same year, he signed a

decree that officially recognized the CHA, which was the first time the government recognized a LGBT group. However, since many lesbians and transgender people felt ignored by the male-dominated gay rights organization, they created the Convocatoria Lesbiana (Lesbian Convocation) and Transexuales por el Derecho a la Vida y la Identidad (Transsexuals for the Right to Life and Identity), the first transgender group, in the same year. Further disagreement between members of the CHA over the changes to pursue next caused some others to leave to form their own groups, such as the Sociedad de Integración Gay-Lésbica Argentina (Argentinean Gay-Lesbian Integration Society, or SIGLA) and Gays y Lesbianas por los Derechos Civiles (Gays and Lesbians for Civil Rights). Despite exclusion of transgender groups and minimal lesbian participation, the CHA and other organizations organized the first gay pride march in 1992 (Brown 2002, 122). It was not until 1995, however, that gay and lesbian groups began to work together and 1996 that the rights march included transgender groups (123). When Carlos Jáuregui, a founding member of the CHA, died in 1996 of AIDS, these groups came together for one of the first times by presenting the legislature with a proposal for a non-discrimination clause, which was then included in the new municipal charter of Buenos Aires, making it the first Spanish-speaking city in Latin America to protect sexual preference from discrimination (Brown 1999, 110).

The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century also brought significant changes in Argentina thanks to the efforts made by united sectors of the LGBTQ community. For instance, in 2002, the Legislature of Buenos Aires enacted a law that established civil unions for same-sex couples under pressure from groups like the CHA, making it the first city in

Latin America to do so. Couples who register for civil unions must have legal residence in Buenos Aires and live together for at least two years. These civil unions guarantee some of the rights of marriage, such as health benefits and hospital visitation, but do not include the rights of inheritance and adoption (Meccia 2006, 56, 66-67). Similar laws were passed in the province of Rio Negro in 2003, the city of Carlos Paz in 2007, and the cities of Rio Cuarto and Villa Maria in 2009, all three of which are in the province of Córdoba. However, Carlos Paz has yet to enact the ordinance that would put this law into effect (*La Voz del Interior* Sept. 2009; *La Voz del Interior* Oct. 2009). Finally, in 2005, the CHA presented a national civil union law to Congress, that would include the right to adoption, but this law was never put to a vote and the CHA turned its focus to a national marriage campaign instead (Meccia 2006, 67). Overall, the CHA has pursued an assimilationist strategy of promoting the legal recognition of LGBTQ rights, without questioning the overarching reasons why sexual minorities are subordinate in Argentinean society.

### **LGBTQ Organizations in Argentina**

Due to Buenos Aires' size and the location of the national government, it traditionally has been the center of the LGBTQ movement in Argentina, although organizations in the interior of the country are working to reduce this dominance, as in the case of Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba. In recent years, the most politically and socially active LGBTQ rights groups in Buenos Aires have been the CHA, SIGLA, ATTTA, and the Federación Argentina LGBT (Argentinean LGBT Federation, or

FALGBT). According to its website, some members of the CHA split from the group and found SIGLA in 1992, as an organization that promotes the integration of sexual minorities and supports scientific studies and activities that discourage discrimination, with special attention given to HIV/AIDS and STI prevention, through reflection groups, counseling, and conferences. ATTTA started in 1993 as the Asociación de Travestis de Argentina, and then added Transexuales in 1996, and Transgéneros in 2001, according to its website. Today it functions as a network with representatives in provinces throughout Argentina in the promotion of trans rights. For instance it works to change laws regarding gender identity and the rights of transgender prostitutes, such as the Códigos de Faltas, through activities such as recording instances of police violence, holding national conferences on transgender issues, and submitting a bill to Congress which would allow for the legal recognition of sex/gender transitions. Lastly, members of ATTTA, other LGBTQ groups in Buenos Aires, and one group in the province of Santa Fe created the FALGBT in 2006 as a means to coordinate actions between different organizations in order to promote diversity, according to the FALGBT website. Overall, these groups achieved significant improvements in LGBTQ rights in Argentina in the past few years.

In 2009, the CHA and FALGBT launched a national marriage campaign, both in the judicial and legislative branches, that achieved unprecedented success with the help of organizations in provinces outside of Buenos Aires, such as Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba. In November of 2009, the judicial fight for marriage attained a victory when a judge in Buenos Aires declared the inability of same-sex couples to marry unconstitutional based on a case brought by a gay couple with the help of the FALGBT



(*Agencia EFE* 2009). However, another judge overturned this decision a few days later (*Página 12* 2009). Finally, this couple participated in the first same-sex marriage in Argentina in the city of Ushuaia at the end of December when yet another judge ruled in their favor (*AG Magazine* Dec. 28, 2009). In the meantime, the FALGBT had launched a campaign of hundreds of *amparos*<sup>10</sup> throughout the country, starting in the province of Córdoba in the cities of Córdoba and Villa María (*AG Magazine* Dec. 1, 2009; *INFOBAE* 2009). While the *amparo* was rejected in the city of Córdoba, prior to the legalization of same-sex marriage on July 15, eight more marriages occurred in Argentina, including a marriage of a lesbian couple (*Clarín* Apr. 2010; *Clarín* July 1, 2010). In addition, a civil union between a man and a transwoman who belongs to ATTTA took place in Río Cuarto (Schlossberg 2009). Overall, this judicial campaign created important breakthroughs in Argentina's fight for same-sex marriage in a short period of time.

At the same time as the *amparo* campaign, national same-sex marriage laws presented by the FALGBT and CHA were being debated in Congress. In March of this year the Comisión de Legislación General (General Legislation Commission) and the Comisión Familia, Mujer, Niñez y Adolescencia (Family, Women, Childhood, and Adolescence Commission) in the Chamber of Deputies debated laws that would change the Civil Code so that marriages are not limited to "men and women," and both commissions approved the laws, which sent them to a general vote in the lower house (*Clarín* Mar. 2010). This approval marked the furthest a same-sex marriage law had gone in the Argentine legislature. In May, the Chamber of Deputies approved a

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<sup>10</sup> In the case of Argentina, *amparos* are methods of appealing to courts by citizens to judge the constitutionality of a law.

combination of the two proposed laws in a vote of 126 in favor to 109 opposed (*Página 12* 2010). Finally, in July of this year, the Senate approved same-sex marriage, with a vote of 33 in favor and 27 opposed (*Clarín* July 15, 2010). However, this legislation would not have been attainable without the influence of organizations in provinces outside Buenos Aires such as Córdoba. This influence included the organization of citywide marches, dissemination of information on which political candidates support same-sex marriage, and the networks necessary to find people willing to present *amparos*.

As the second largest city in Argentina, with a population of around 1.5 million, Córdoba has a growing LGBTQ movement which plays an important role in the national struggle for equal rights. As previously stated, during the time of my field research, there were four important LGBTQ groups in Córdoba: a local branch of ATTTA, Cóncavos y Convexos, the Coordinadora LGTTB, and Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba. Cóncavos y Convexos<sup>11</sup> is a small subset of a larger group in Buenos Aires which is affiliated with the Humanist Movement and promotes non-violence in its fight against discrimination, including discrimination between different sectors of the LGBTQ community. The Coordinadora LGTTB is a relatively older, independent group which also works to unite different areas of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community in its struggle for equal rights. The group arranges meetings and activities for LGBTQ individuals and other human rights organizations in order to end discrimination and avoid domination by institutions such as businesses, the education system, and the

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<sup>11</sup> While members disagree on the origin of the name, it implies different bodily forms and expressions.

government. Finally, Encuentros is a group of mostly middle class students and non-students in their twenties that shares similar goals as the other two groups. Since the foundation of the group in March of 2009, they organized meetings to discuss their goals and strategies and participated in protests and public demonstrations, such as a protest against the coup in Honduras, participation in a feminist rally, and the coordination of a citywide pride march. As I will make evident later, the group uses a frame of diversity and created boundaries between itself and the rest of the LGBTQ community in Argentina to avoid the formation of hierarchies within the group.

In conclusion, the LGBTQ movement in Córdoba has started to take an active role in the fight for rights and inclusion in Argentina, with Encuentros leading the way. The history of the movement shows how these groups evolved in the past century to create a more unified front in the face of violence and discrimination. Overall, LGBTQ activists have come a long way in Argentina, but the struggle is far from over.

### **Chapter 3: The Formation of Individual and Group Identities**

In order to explore the ways in which LGBTQ organizations organize themselves in Argentina, it is important to first understand how a person forms his or her sexual identity and the ways in which it intersects with other identities, such as race, class, and gender. In this chapter I will provide a brief history of the evolution of theories of sexuality, from essentialist standpoints to social constructionism and finally queer theory, which help to explain sexual identity formation. In addition to examining how individuals form their identities, I will provide a description of how social movement organizations (SMOs) create a group identity, using frame analysis. Finally, I will show how an organization that frames its identity through diversity or horizontalism does not imply that hierarchies will not form within the group. So as to understand how individuals or groups in an LGBTQ organization can create hierarchies by reinforcing the categories of the dominant in society, such as gender, race, and class, I will introduce Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic violence and the field, along with examples from LGBTQ organizations, to demonstrate how power is manifested in SMOs.

#### **Theories of Sexuality:**

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars assumed sex, gender, and sexuality to be naturally linked, in that a person's biological sex determined his or her gendered behavior and (hetero)sexual attractions, which were fixed for life. However, by the 1970s sociologists began to conceptualize these three categories as social and historical products, leading to a distinction between essentialists and constructionists (Epstein 1994,

188). While essentialists view all people as either heterosexual or homosexual, constructionists believe that these categories do not apply to everyone and are “the consequence of an interactive process of social labeling and self-identification” (193). The argument for social constructionism reached a peak in 1980 with Michel Foucault’s first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, which, according to Steven Epstein, claims that “sexual and erotic desire encompassed a diverse set of practices, strategies, discourses, institutions, and knowledge’s that were historically contingent and were played out on a dispersed field of power” (192). This historical construction is evident in the formation of the term homosexuality itself, as it was not adopted until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when focus moved from sexual acts to identity (Foucault 1978, 43).

In the last twenty years though, scholars brought these prevailing concepts of the construction of sexuality into question with the introduction of queer theory. Rather than accepting the binary between heterosexuality and homosexuality, queer theorists contest sexuality itself and the utility of identity politics (Seidman 1994, 174). Starting in the 1980s, activists who rejected the assimilationist strategies that the early gay and LGBT movements of the three previous decades employed began to formulate queer theory. At the time, many activists grew frustrated with the lack of response from government institutions to the AIDS crisis and looked for new strategies. Instead of using a human or civil rights approach, queer activists employed confrontational strategies such as kiss-ins and cross-dressing, designed to shock the public (Epstein 1994, 195). In addition to questioning the hetero/homosexual binary, queer theorists emphasize the intersectionality of identity formation, meaning that race, ethnicity, class, or other differences may

influence a person's identity as much as or more than his or her sexual preference. For instance, African Americans, Latinos, and women often felt that they had to downplay their racial or gender identities in the mainstream gay movement, and turned to the queer movement instead (Valocchi 2005, 754). Furthermore, queer theorists argue that sexual identities are not limited to specific desires and practices, but are shaped by repeated performances influenced by the norms of society<sup>12</sup>. In the case of Argentina, along with the United States and other Western countries, heteronormativity, or "the set of norms that make heterosexuality seem natural or right and that organize homosexuality as its binary opposite," affects the ways in which we perceive the sexuality of ourselves and others (756). Male same-sex attraction is then associated with femininity, and therefore denigrated in these male-dominated societies. In addition, subordinated groups such as sexual minorities may play a role in reinforcing these norms, along with categories such as race, ethnicity, and class, in their everyday performances. Understanding how these categories of the dominant can take form in an LGBTQ organization that promotes diversity and horizontalism, first requires an examination of how SMOs form their group identity through frame analysis.

### **Social Movements through Frame Analysis:**

When examining social movements, frame analysis provides a lens through which to examine the ways an organization creates its identity in relation to others. According

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<sup>12</sup> See *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* by Judith Butler (1989) for more on performativity.

to a definition cited by Hunt, Benford, and Snow, a frame is “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environments<sup>13</sup>” (1994, 190). These frames help form the identity of all SMOs by influencing which individuals or collectivities participants view as protagonists, antagonists, or audience members (186). Participants see protagonists for LGBTQ organizations as supporters of the movement, such as liberal politicians and community leaders or other human rights social movements, while antagonists would be conservative groups such as most politicians in Córdoba or leaders in the Catholic Church, in the case of Argentina. Audience members, on the other hand, are neutral observers that provide the opportunity for the organization to present themselves favorably to the community, such as the local media or some public institutions.

In order to relate itself to protagonists, antagonists, and audience members, a SMO will use a process known as boundary framing (194). This process is “conditioned and constrained by SMO actors’ interpretations of world, local, movement, and organizational histories” (195). According to Taylor and Whittier, boundaries “promote a heightened awareness of a group’s commonalities and frame interaction between members of the in-group and the out-group” (1992, 111). In other words, boundaries help an organization form a group identity through its understanding of what it is not by relating itself to other groups or individuals.

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<sup>13</sup> While queer theory questions the use of binaries, frame analysis utilizes an insider/outsider binary to demonstrate how a group identity is formed through boundaries. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, these boundaries are often more permeable, as queer theory would suggest.

However, according to Joshua Gamson, the queer movement questions the role identities and boundaries play in the establishment of SMOs. While traditional social movement theorists view identities as existing prior to the formation of a movement, such as the categories gay or lesbian, and New Social Movement theorists regard identity formation as an ever-changing process that takes place after collective action has occurred, Gamson notes that the impulse behind queer activism is to destabilize identity (1995, 392). For instance, queer activists reject the boundaries created by mainstream gay and lesbian groups which limit the type of activism that is allowed and the influence race, ethnicity, and class have on the movement. In spite of Gamson's argument, I believe that queer activism continues to create its own boundaries and collective identity through the formation of group norms on what is considered "queer" and the ways mobilize in order to achieve its goals. With this in mind, I will demonstrate how hierarchies and boundaries can form in social movements, whether the movement includes queer activism or not.

### **Hierarchies and Boundaries within Equality-Based Social Movements:**

Even if members of an organization are aware of systems of domination in society and work to fight inequality such as heterosexism, it is possible that hierarchies will still form within the group. For instance, some members may take on a more privileged position to the exclusion of others, such as when dominant men left lesbians and transgender people out of the early gay rights movement in Argentina. This system of reproducing the dominant categories of society in a movement that claims to promote



diversity and horizontalism can be explained through Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, which is then enforced through the field. In this section, I will provide an overview of these two concepts, followed by examples of how hierarchies can form based on cases in the lesbian feminist movement in the United States and three LGBT<sup>14</sup> organizations in Los Angeles.

According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence contrasts with overt forms of top-down domination in that the dominant exert their will with the unconscious complicity, or doxa, of the dominated through regular and repetitive practices. In *Language & Symbolic Power*, the editor describes dominance as "established and maintained through strategies which are softened and disguised" (Bourdieu 1991, 24). In order for the dominated to be complicit in their domination, they must both recognize themselves in a power system of classification, but misrecognize the arbitrariness of this system at the same time (23). It is through this process that heterosexuality and masculinity are socially constructed as the criterion for what is normal and thus dominant. Furthermore, Bourdieu claims that even if one is aware of the system of domination and symbolic violence, it cannot be escaped because it is deeply rooted in the body and habitus, which is the set of dispositions that influence our actions (Bourdieu 2001, 39). Therefore, Bourdieu would argue that even though members of LGBTQ organizations are conscious of their subordination on the basis of their sexual and gender identities, their practices will face difficulty in overcoming other forms of dominance. In addition, despite the lack of political power held by LGBTQ organizations in conservative cities such as Córdoba, one member can

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<sup>14</sup> In this case I will maintain the acronym that the author chose to use.

still be in a position of relative power over another. Thus, hierarchies will form within the group based on the existing system of dominance, whether around gender, race, class, or other forms of social capital.

Another way that symbolic violence is imposed is through the field, or “the site of struggles in which individuals seek to maintain or alter the distribution of the forms of capital specific to it” (Bourdieu 1991, 14). In each field there is an effort to determine its boundaries by deciding who may be a part of the field and what are legitimate actions within it, which leads to certain people or activities dominating others (130). In the political or social movement field such as those of LGBTQ organizations, the dominant create a discourse of common sense in order to maintain the field’s boundaries (131). Overall, you must be complicit in the construction and maintenance of these boundaries and rules to participate in the field.

Taylor and Whittier provide an example of boundaries created within a field that led to the exclusion of certain groups in their presentation of the lesbian feminist movement in the United States. The movement emerged out of the feminist movement in the early 1970s when lesbians demanded greater recognition but both radical and liberal feminist groups did not accept them (108). Lesbian feminists then created alternative institutions such as rape crisis centers, women’s shelters, and media groups which they structured in ways that they thought would eliminate hierarchy and form consensus (119). They also formed a community in which men were disparaged and women exalted in its creation of boundaries between themselves and outside groups, as men became associated with hierarchy, violence, and individualism. In this sense, they viewed lesbianism as the

next step to feminism, as it allowed for relationships between two equals. The authors refer to this process of excluding men as negotiation, or “the symbols and everyday actions subordinate groups use to resist and restructure existing systems of domination” (111). For instance, men, older male children, and male-to-female transgender women were banned from lesbian feminist events and businesses (112-113). These boundaries also led to the exclusion of more “feminine” lesbians, because followers of the movement thought they were conforming to men’s standards of femininity, and of possible male allies from the movement. Furthermore, some women criticized the movement for its lack of attention placed on inequality based on race and class, such as differences in the ways women present themselves based on their culture (121). Overall, the boundaries that the lesbian feminist movement established allowed for a strong group identity, but also caused the exclusion of other important individuals and groups, on the basis of sex, presentation of gender, and race.

Another example of how hierarchies can form within an organization that claims to promote equality can be seen in Jane Ward’s *Respectably Queer: Diversity Culture in LGBT Activist Organizations*. In this book, Ward examines “what happens when mainstream and ‘respectable’ diversity politics come into conflict with a movement rooted in efforts to *defy* respectability” (emphasis in original) such as queer movements, through a study of three LGBT organizations in Los Angeles (Ward 2008, 2). She argues that these groups took on a rhetoric of diversity, which she terms “diversity culture,” in order to compete for funding and improve their legitimacy with the mainstream public. According to Ward, diversity culture is a strategy used by LGBT organizations which is

part of “the broader culture’s growing interest in intersecting forms of difference” (5). However, it led to a sole focus on forms of difference that conform to normative, white methods of organizing, to the detriment of many lower-class activists and people of color (17). Within the organizations studied, members expected queer identity to be expressed within a set of rules of etiquette that defined respectable forms of activism and privileged types of diversity accepted by mainstream society (138). Overall, Ward’s study provides an example of how hierarchies may form in a group that frames itself around diversity.

In conclusion, a frame that promotes equality on the basis of sexuality and gender in an organization does not necessarily mean that limitations to who can participate in the group and in which ways will not form. With this possibility in mind, I will examine Encuentros’ rhetoric of diversity and horizontalism in an effort to determine what types of hierarchies and boundaries developed within the group in order to demonstrate how the categories of the dominant can form in subordinate groups.

## Chapter 4: Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba

### Boundary Framing within Encuentros

In an attempt to distinguish itself from other LGBTQ groups in Córdoba and the rest of Argentina, Encuentros has used a frame of diversity and horizontalism since its inception. This frame can be seen in a list serve email which contained the unabridged version of an article written by members of Encuentros for *Soy*, a supplemental section of the newspaper *Página 12*, in August of 2009:

La idea del espacio es poder construir una herramienta asamblearia y horizontal que articule organizaciones sociales y personas independientes a fin de generar un instrumento de comunicación, encuentro, debate, difusión, lucha, emancipación y movilización, todo lo necesario para conquistar los derechos para la “comunidad” LGTTBIQ. (The idea of the space is to be able to construct an assembly-based and horizontal tool that connects social organizations and independent people in order to generate an instrument of communication, meeting, debate, diffusion, struggle, emancipation, and mobilization, all that is necessary to achieve rights for the LGTTBIQ ‘community.’)

The article goes on to describe how the group “aspira a poder ‘articular’ la mayor cantidad de expresiones organizativas que estén convencidas que ‘otro modo de entender la diversidad es posible’” (“aspire to be able to ‘articulate’ the highest quantity of organizational expressions that are convinced that ‘another way of understanding diversity is possible’”). This discourse of diversity and horizontalism is also prevalent in the meetings and communications of Encuentros, as part of its effort to form an identity

that creates boundaries between itself and other LGBTQ organizations. I will demonstrate in this chapter that although the group maintains a diverse organization, its attempts to create and follow a horizontal structure were not successful, thus leading to the formations of hierarchies in the group based on social and political capital. In order to demonstrate the relative success or failure of this frame of diversity and horizontalism, I will first describe what the members of Encuentros understand the terms to mean. I will then examine how the group uses this discourse in order to form boundaries between itself and other LGBTQ organizations in Córdoba and Argentina. Finally, I will use group activities and communication as evidence for the success of diversity and failure of horizontalism.

*Diversity:*

When asked who makes up the organization, members respond with a wide variety of categories, from gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people to queers and people that prefer not to self-identify. In order to not limit identities to the typical LGBT or LGBTQ categories, the group initially chose the name Encuentros por la Diversidad en Córdoba, and while members understood it to be a temporary name, it remains the same over a year later. Also, when friends would ask Ana<sup>15</sup>, an active female member, about Encuentros when it first started, she would tell them that it is a collection of people with different ideas that support each other. This perspective is echoed in an article written for the blog Gaymente by another female member, when she describes the group as

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<sup>15</sup> All names are pseudonyms, except for Andrés, who requested that his name be used.

supporting “la igualdad ante todo, de género e ideas, basada en el respeto mutuo, del ser y sus derechos humanos” (“equality before anything, of gender and ideas, based on mutual respect, of the human being and his or her human rights”). Overall, conversations about diversity within Encuentros reveal that members understand it as consisting of more than just a homogenous group of individuals with the same sexual and gender identities, socio-economic status, and political ideologies.

When discussing the forms of sexual and gender identities that make up Encuentros, members such as Miguel assert that gay men are not the only members of the group, so its activities need to represent their varied interests, such as those of transwomen and lesbians. For instance, in a series of emails debating whether Encuentros should participate in a march commemorating Argentina’s independence, Andrés, a founding member, responded to an email sent by a member of the Coordinadora LGTTB named Luis by saying that Encuentros should not fall into the “machista” logic that says gays are the only sexual dissidents. In another email sent to say he couldn’t attend a meeting, Felipe, a sociology student and another founding member, encouraged members to avoid falling into the hetero/homosexual binary and attend a forum on transgender rights. Finally, at a meeting, Andrés commended Encuentros, in comparison with other groups in Córdoba, for its inclusion of queer people and people who choose not to label their sexual or gender identities. As I will show in this chapter, activities that Encuentros organizes and participates in reflect this understanding that diversity should include different forms of sexual and gender identities.

A second way in which members of Encuentros define diversity is through class and race. In the aforementioned article written for *Soy*, the group claims to come together to debate, plan, and fight against “la violación de los derechos de personas diversas, *sobre todo de los sectores populares*” (“the violation of the rights of diverse people, *above all of popular sectors*”) (my emphasis). While members have varied opinions about the causes of poverty due to their different political backgrounds, they understand that one’s sexual and gender identity is strongly tied to class and race. For example, according to an email from Andrés, middle-class, white gay men are not the only diverse people, and certainly not the most oppressed, so the group should not only follow their goals. He discussed this oppression in his interview when he stated that if you are perceived to be gay and poor and have darker skin, the police are more likely to harass you. Other members agree that being *negro/a* (black) or *morocho/a* (dark-skinned) is often tied to poverty, as seen in a series of emails when someone who was new to the list serve commented that Encuentros should make an effort to avoid looking like “putos criados en una villa” (“fags raised in a shantytown”) by damaging city property with political graffiti. Members then replied that there is no shame in being poor, *villero/a* (from a shantytown), or *negro/a*. For example, David, a philosophy student, responded that he is tired of conservative gay men who view Córdoba as a tourist city through their class privileges and do not want transgender or poor people in their clubs, and several others defended the right to use graffiti as political campaigns. These views led the group to emphasize the need to support lower-class, minority LGBTQ communities that the movement traditionally ignored. For this reason, Encuentros



participates in marches and activities alongside workers movements, such as the march for the Día Internacional de los Trabajadores (International Workers' Day) on May 1st. Also, as I will describe in detail later in this chapter, members often criticize so-called gay-friendly clubs because they create a false sense of a sexually diverse community, which in reality is limited to those who can afford the entrance fees. However, despite this inclusion of socio-economic status in the group's definition of diversity, members realize that mostly middle-class students make up Encuentros, which they address through their activities and strategies, as I will show later in this chapter

A final way that Encuentros conceives of diversity is through the representation of various political ideologies. Unlike in many other LGBTQ organizations, members of Encuentros belong to other politically-oriented groups such as La Bisagra (The Turning Point), an independent student group at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (Workers' Socialist Movement), and Pan y Rosas (Bread and Roses), a feminist group that is part of the Partido de Trabajadores Socialistas (Socialist Workers' Party). In his interview, Andrés discussed how this coexistence between different leftist political groups which usually find each other in antagonistic positions that do not allow them to work together is one of the main strengths of Encuentros, which he had never seen in another organization in Córdoba. Also, following a personal argument between Luis and Andrés that led to each of them questioning the political motivations of the other through the list serve, Patricio, an engineering student, responded that Luis should express his opinions in person at the meetings more often, since he believes dissidence is the best form of participation. This

acceptance of different political views, apart from those views that criticize sexual and gender diversity, is evident in the protests Encuentros takes part in and their organization of the first pride march.

*Horizontalism:*

According to Marina Sitrin in *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina*, horizontalism in social movements contrasts with vertical methods of organization in which power is structured from the top down. Instead, horizontalism implies a non-hierarchical organizational structure where each member has an equal, or democratic, opportunity to participate in decision-making (Sitrin 2006, 3). For example, instead of following the decisions provided by a board of directors or president, a horizontal organization would debate a topic in an effort to reach consensus among all members. This structure would imply a more fair and balanced decision-making process within Encuentros and other similarly organized groups.

When members of Encuentros discuss what they mean by horizontalism, they emphasize that anybody with an interest in promoting diversity can participate freely in the group. One way through which this openness is possible is that there are no group leaders so that everybody has an equal opportunity to participate and express their ideas. As I will elaborate later in this chapter, the founding members (two men and one woman) left the Coordinadora LGTTB because they felt the leaders set the goals and opinions of the group based on their own interests, while they ignored dissenting opinions. With this distinction in mind, members of Encuentros want the meetings to be a free and relaxed

environment where anybody that feels interested can come and participate. For example, anytime somebody new to the list serve emails the group about the meetings, another member will reply that they should come to the next meeting to see if the group is a good fit for them.

The group's emphasis on diversity also influences this horizontal structure, because dissenting or different points of view are seen as a way to improve the debates and activities of Encuentros. For instance, in an email inviting people to the first meeting of 2010, Nicolás, a psychology student, argued that it is important to interact with different people in order to “vencer nuestras limitaciones, alimentarnos de las ganas y puntos de vista de todas y todos” (“overcome our limitations, fuel ourselves on the wishes and points of view of every man and woman”). In another email during the early stages of the organization that responded to somebody from Chubut, in the south of Argentina, who professed interested in Encuentros, Andrés expressed that everybody in the group is new to the movement, and hopefully the group will never believe that it knows everything and can not learn anything from others. Overall, members attempt to promote a non-hierarchical structure in which anybody is free to participate.

The main strategy through which Encuentros promotes open, horizontal participation is the use of *talleres*, or workshops. These workshops, which are held every month, are dedicated to determining the activities or positions of the group. Members are divided into smaller sections which debate a topic and then present their ideas to the group as a whole where they form a consensus. This strategy allows people that do not feel as comfortable talking in a big group setting to express their opinions and ideas. In

addition, in a later workshop the group formed seven task sub-committees to organize work that needed to be done, such as reaching to outside organizations, publicizing activities, informing about and protecting civil rights, and fighting for transgender equality<sup>16</sup>. Members join the committees based on their own interests and where they feel they can provide the most input. These committees then report their suggestions to the whole group at weekly meetings and the group decides whether to implement their ideas. However, despite the format of the meetings and workshops, I will demonstrate that the group's understanding of the ways hierarchies can form and the use of a horizontal structure have not been successful in preventing forms of domination to appear.

### **Boundaries Formed by Encuentros**

In its establishment of a group identity, Encuentros created boundaries between itself and other LGBTQ organizations in Córdoba and the rest of Argentina, along with other political organizations and private groups. As proposed by Taylor and Whittier, these boundaries provide a way for the group to legitimize its purpose by determining what type of organization they do not want to be, while allowing them to collaborate with these groups in movement activities. In this section, I will show how Encuentros created strong boundaries between itself and other groups in Córdoba and weaker boundaries

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<sup>16</sup> The sub-committees are the Equipo de Trabajo de Comunicación, Equipo de Trabajo de Articulación, Equipo de Trabajo de Salud y Educación, Equipo de Trabajo de Identidad de Género, Equipo de Trabajo Antirrepresivo, Equipo de Trabajo de Derechos Civiles, and Equipo de Trabajo de Cultura.

with groups in the rest of Argentina. I will then describe another way in which the group formed its identity by limiting contact with private businesses.

### *LGBTQ Organizations in Córdoba:*

The three main LGBTQ organizations that Encuentros comes in contact with in Córdoba are the Coordinadora LGTTB, Cóncavos y Convexos, and ATTTA, in addition to the occasional interaction with a smaller transgender group called Los Jueves (Thursdays). While members of Cóncavos y Convexos participate in some Encuentros meetings and activities, the only group that Encuentros has a truly positive relationship with is ATTTA. As I mentioned earlier, people who left the Coordinadora LGTTB formed Encuentros because they opposed the organization's hierarchical structure. In the series of email arguments between Luis and Andrés, Luis claimed that he understood why the Coordinadora kicked out Andrés, since he only accepts that people follow his own opinion. Andrés replied by describing how the Coordinadora ejected him after conflicting with the group dogma. He also explained how the leader of the Coordinadora controlled the focus of the group based on her own interests and ideology, and the rest of the members did not allow him express his own opinions about the group's activities because he is not working class, from Córdoba, or an anarchist. Furthermore, while he claimed that the Coordinadora does not allow its members to belong to other organizations, he contrasted it with Encuentros, which allows its members greater freedom of thought and participation in groups such as those which are part of the workers movement. Another example of Encuentros' disagreement with other LGBTQ

groups in Córdoba occurred when Marcelo, a transgender male, argued that Los Jueves also discriminates against people who break from the group's lines and does not want to work with them in the future for that reason. Finally, David referred to Cóncavos y Convexos as “diversamente pelotudes” (sic), roughly meaning “diverse assholes,” after a meeting because of their focus on diversity but their inability to implement their ideas successfully. The only local LGBTQ group that consistently participates in meetings with the full enthusiasm of Encuentros is ATTTA, which can be seen in the group's promotion of transgender rights, as I will show later in this chapter.

Despite these disagreements with other LGBTQ organizations in Córdoba, members of Encuentros understand that it is necessary to work with these groups in order to promote their goals. In the previously-mentioned email publicizing the first meeting of 2010, Nicolás stated that working with other organizations that the group has something in common with will help them learn other points of view about the state of the movement in Córdoba. In addition, in an email commemorating the Día Internacional de Lucha Contra la Homofobia, Lesbofobia y Transfobia (International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia) this year, the group claimed that “la organización y solidaridad de la comunidad LGTTB en Córdoba, el país y el mundo es la única manera de conquistar todas nuestras demandas” (“organization and solidarity in the LGTTB community in Córdoba, the country, and the world is the only way to achieve all of our demands”). During the planning of the first pride march, Encuentros invited these groups to help, along with other student, workers, and human rights groups. The group also participated in the Multisectorial de Justicia por Natalia Gaitán (Coalition for Justice for

Natalia Gaitán), which formed in response to Natalia's murder by her girlfriend's stepfather, along with other LGBTQ groups in Córdoba. Finally, Encuentros interacted with LGBTQ groups in the province of Córdoba since its inception to help local organizations campaign for same-sex civil unions, such as during marches in Río Cuarto. For instance, in December of 2009, the Colectivo Feminista de la Diversidad Sexual (Feminist Collective on Sexual Diversity) in Villa María invited Encuentros to participate in a roundtable discussion promoting civil unions. The Colectivo then reminded Encuentros that they participated in the pride march and that groups from Buenos Aires and Rosario are always willing to help them, so they wanted to form a community of groups in the province of Córdoba. In the end, Encuentros decided to participate in the activities in Villa María. Overall, the group formed stronger boundaries with LGBTQ organizations in the city of Córdoba than the rest of the province.

The reason Encuentros maintains boundaries with LGBTQ organizations in Córdoba, such as Cóncavos y Convexos and the Coordinadora LGTTB, is that it must fight with them for political power in a climate in which government institutions often ignore LGBTQ groups. Because these groups are often marginalized, they must compete for power in the form of resources, whether physical or symbolic, such as monetary funds, number of supporters, or access to politicians or the media. By increasing their relative power through building their membership and political connections, the group will have more resources to use to achieve their goals. This power will also legitimize the group's horizontal organizational structure and commitment to diversity, by showing it to be the most successful in the city. However, since Encuentros does not have to

compete with groups in the province of Córdoba for members and access to politicians, it can maintain weaker boundaries.

*LGBTQ Organizations in Argentina:*

While Encuentros disagrees with some of the goals and strategies of LGBTQ organizations in the rest of Argentina, the boundaries they created are less rigid because they do not have to fight with these groups for power in Córdoba. This relationship can be seen in the recent involvement in the national campaign to legalize same-sex marriage. After an organizational workshop held by Encuentros in March of 2010, the group decided to work with the FALGBT and CHA on projects such as the campaign in which they share similar goals, despite disapproval of the organizations for the lack of attention paid to transgender groups and to violence against the LGBTQ community. Also, members criticize the centrality that Buenos Aires plays in these projects, to the detriment of the goals and input of groups from the interior of the country. Finally, members condemn organizations in Buenos Aires for what they view as the overemphasis of these groups on mainstream political parties. For example, Jorge, a high school teacher and member of Pan y Rosas, stated that groups such as the CHA and FALGBT have too much faith in the Kirchner government and the belief that pressuring Congress will help implement change, when independent mobilization is what is really vital. However, despite these disagreements, Encuentros supports the efforts of outside LGBTQ organizations while promoting their own projects at the same time because the group recognizes the influence these other groups have in the government and the need for



same-sex marriage legislation. In conclusion, Encuentros is more willing to work with groups outside of Córdoba because it is a necessary political strategy.

*Private Businesses:*

When forming its group identity, Encuentros limited its involvement with private businesses due to possible conflicting interests. In the first organizational workshop, the group concluded that it would work with public organizations on a case by case basis. Furthermore, they decided that the group should rarely establish coalitions with private businesses and only after considering the business's objectives. Members were put in this situation when they were planning the citywide pride march for November of 2009 for the first time in ten years. Encuentros sent letters to other SMOs within the city and province to invite them to participate in the planning of the march and to join the march itself. They also debated whether allowing so-called "pink businesses" such as gay-friendly dance clubs or bars contradicted with the decisions about private businesses made at the workshop earlier in the year. In the end, they concluded that it would be impossible to exclude the pink businesses from the march and that the final decision should be made by all organizations participating in the planning. Overall, members of Encuentros are open to working with other organizations with similar goals of diversity, but also do not want to compromise their ideals because of private interests.

## **Diversity and Horizontalism in Encuentros**

Despite following a discourse of diversity and horizontalism, it is possible for contradictory actions to take place in the activities of an organization, such as shown in Chapter 3, through the examples given by Ward and Taylor and Whittier. As I will demonstrate in this section, Encuentros has been successful in its strategy of diversity by including and promoting the goals of different sexual and gender identities, lower-class communities, and queer groups. However, it has not been able to maintain a horizontal structure due to the lack of organization in its meetings and its forms of communication through the list serve.

### *Diversity:*

Since the organization was formed by three students and their friends, Encuentros began with a middle-class, student bias. Also, there were slightly more male participants than females and few transgender people, with several transgender women from ATTA and one transgender male. The group is aware of this bias though, and tries to find ways to encourage more underrepresented groups to attend the meetings. For example, this discussion played out in a debate created when a friend of Andrés accused the group of being only middle-class social science students who merely talk about what they want in the world without doing anything to change it. Patricio responded that not everybody in the group is a social scientist, as he studies engineering, and that they often take their concerns to the streets in the form of marches and protests. David explained that he is not the type of social scientist that is going to use his privileged position as a student to try to

teach the masses about queer theory, and that Encuentros is organized in order to overcome social categories through political interventions. Finally, Felipe admitted that there is a middle-class, student bias, but that meetings organized to determine the strategies and proposals that Encuentros will follow address these group limitations. In the end, the members encouraged the friend of Andrés to come to a meeting so that he could give his input and the organization could continue to grow.

Another way that members of Encuentros are trying to broaden their membership to include all sectors of the LGBTQ community is by strategizing over the time and location of the weekly meetings. When the group first formed, members publicized meetings through the internet, usually one or two days before the meeting took place. This method meant that only individuals with access to the internet and the free time to check it often were informed of the meetings, thus enforcing a class bias. After a few months, the group organized a calendar with the set dates of meetings and established them in a central location that everybody had access to at least a week in advance. The meetings also vary between Thursday and Saturday nights to increase the likelihood of attendance, and organizing workshops are scheduled on the weekend for members who work. Finally, at an early meeting Silvia, a female student, suggested that the meetings could be brought to the location of people that are not attending meetings, such as the transgender community. However, despite the attempt to attract a more diverse group of people to meetings, this strategy was not as successful as it could have been because of the failures of horizontalism, which I will discuss in the next section.

Aside from discussions of how to encourage underrepresented groups to participate in Encuentros, the group reflects its commitment to diversity in its activities, which promote the rights of women, transgender people, lower-class groups, and the queer community, in addition to other historically mainstream gay groups. First of all, a few months after the formation of Encuentros, the group participated in several protests against the coup that took place in Honduras with other political organizations in Córdoba. In addition to condemning the coup for its undemocratic nature, Encuentros sought to make the struggle of the feminist movement, LGBTQ activists, and the lower-class groups visible, according to an email sent by Jorge which informed members about the upcoming protest march. The group publicized this sentiment in its official declaration against the coup a few weeks later, and members continued to inform each other through the list serve about human rights violations that were taking place against women's organizations and transvestites in Honduras. Encuentros' support for these groups even resulted in the violent attack on several members that I mentioned in Chapter 2, as they were painting "Ni golpe de estado, ni golpe a las travestis" ("Neither coup, nor hitting transvestites") on a wall in a public plaza after another protest march. Overall, the protests over the coup in Honduras demonstrate how Encuentros has incorporated women's, transgender, and working class issues in its activities since the beginning.

Other manners in which members support diversity is through women's rights, such as their attendance at the Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres (National Women's Meeting) in Tucumán in October of 2009 and through informing members on the list serve about the need for reproductive rights such as abortion and the end of trafficking

for prostitution. Also, the Equipo de Trabajo de Salud y Educación (Health and Education Work Team) sub-committee decided at a workshop in August of 2009 to promote sexual education that includes lesbians and puts a stop to their eroticization. In his interview, Felipe discussed this lack of sexual education for lesbians, even at forums on safe sex for gay men, because of a male-dominated view of female sexuality. Finally, Encuentros has worked with Las Históricas, las Mufas, y las Otras (The Hysterical Women, the Ill-humored Women, and Others), an anti-capitalist feminist group, in activities such as the planning of the pride march, the protest against the Honduran coup, and through the promotion women's rights at a forum marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. On the whole, the activities of Encuentros reflect the group's emphasis on gender diversity.

Another way that Encuentros promotes diversity is through the inclusion of transgender issues. While members view groups such as the FALGBT and CHA as ignoring transgender rights in favor of gay rights, Encuentros, on the other hand, has proven its dedication to these rights through its activities. For instance, during the legislative elections in June of 2009, members went to voting locations to protest lines that separate voters by sex because they exclude transgender voters. After a debate over which strategies would be most effective, Encuentros decided on a *montada*, in which members dressed in non-gender normative clothing in order to get the attention of voters and the media. Also, one of the sub-committees formed at a workshop was the Equipo de Trabajo de Identidad de Género (Gender Identity Work Team), which decided to promote the abolishment of the Código de Faltas, which discriminates against transgender people,

the passage of the Ley Nacional de Identidad de Género (National Gender Identity Law), and the education of the public and lawmakers on transgender and intersex communities. In October of 2009, the sub-committee created Córdoba Trans, a blog dedicated to the “encuentro, articulación, discusión, planificación, vinculación, sobre cultura, experiencia y política trans en Córdoba Argentina” (“meeting, articulation, discussion, planning, connection, about trans culture, experience, and politics in Córdoba, Argentina”). Finally, at the last workshops of 2009, the group decided to make equal transgender rights one of its primary goals for 2010, working closely with ATTTA. One method they proposed to promote these rights was to create a monetary fund to help transgender people pay for their sex-reassignment surgeries and legal costs, along with personal expenses that are difficult to pay because of unemployment due to discrimination. Another strategy is to create a campaign of *amparos* for the recognition of sex changes, similar to the national same-sex marriage campaign. Lastly, they planned to support the change of health education at provincial, municipal, and university levels so that transgender health issues such as hormone treatment and the reduction of harm caused by surgeries is included. Overall, Encuentros attempts to advance transgender rights and everyday needs along with ATTTA in its promotion of diversity.

The final manner in which Encuentros manifests its focus on diversity is through the support of queerness. According to Andrés in his interview, the group organizes cultural and artistic events under the consideration that “no solamente somos personas diversas en el sentido de nuestras orientaciones de género y orientaciones ideológicas sino también de intereses” (“we are not just diverse people in the sense of our gender

orientations and ideological orientations, but also our interests”). These events became known as “actividades queerturales” (“queertural activities” (sic)) that took place weekly. For example, the group organized a LGBTQ film series during the summer of 2009 and an exhibition of performance artists at a university forum on sexual health. Furthermore, members of Encuentros do not pressure each other to label their sexual or gender identity with mainstream terms, such as gay, lesbian, or transgender for instance, and many members do not label themselves at all. In conclusion, Encuentros’ frame of diversity has been successful through the active promotion of workers, women’s, and transgender rights and the queer movement.

#### *Horizontalism:*

At first glance, it appears that Encuentros’ commitment to avoid hierarchies by not having designated leaders and determining group goals and activities through workshops would result in a horizontal organization. For instance, members are aware of ways in which power can manifest itself unevenly, such as through gender, race, and political experience. However, despite this knowledge and emphasis on avoiding hierarchies, the group has not been able to maintain a horizontal organizational structure, as is evident in the disorganization of the meetings and methods of communication through which certain members begin to dominate.

On a theoretical level, members of Encuentros understand that if horizontalism becomes only a discourse and not a concrete strategy for organizing people, it will not be successful. For example, in an email in July of 2009, Jaime, a psychology student,

argued that many times talk of horizontalism can obscure reality because people assume it exists and do not question their own need to talk in meetings. Instead, he saw the meetings become anarchic as people hide behind discussions of horizontalism, and proposed that the group implement more restraint. Also, Felipe discussed at a meeting that horizontalism often becomes a lack of responsibility because members always trust that somebody will take care of a task. Nicolás then agreed with him and claimed that it is not fair that responsibilities always fall on the same people. Andrés also mentioned this lack of responsibility in his interview when he characterized the way in which tasks fall on a few members because of their political experience or beliefs or personal charisma as the major weakness of Encuentros. In his view, delegative democracy<sup>17</sup> (“democracia delegativa”) is so inscribed in people that it is hard for members to adapt to an assembly-based (“asamblearia”) method of organization in which everybody participates. Although he believed this difficulty would be solved through practice, time has shown that horizontalism still has not been achieved.

On a more day-to-day level, the manner in which members organize meetings and disperse information limits the horizontalism in Encuentros. First of all, one feature which stands out from the meetings is that they appear to be very unorganized, with more outspoken people dominating the conversations. In order to address this unruliness, a member generally starts to make a list of whose turn it is to speak, but this list is difficult to enforce. Referring to this difficulty, Luis commented in an email that everybody needed to reflect on their own need to talk during the meetings and that each attendee

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<sup>17</sup> See “Delegative Democracy” by Guillermo O’Donnell in *The Journal of Democracy* 5, no.1 (1994) for a description of delegative democracy.



should be given an equal opportunity to address their opinions. Patricio also invited members to think about how their methods of participation are workings of power, based on personal characteristics or political experience, which may incline some individuals to not speak during meetings. Despite these attempts, it is often hard for people to talk at meetings if they are not one of the most active members. Andrés, who is one of these members, described in an email that when his friend came to a meeting to offer to make a website for the group, most other members ignored him. Overall, a group of about five to six members, made up of two women and four men, including the founders, tend to dominate the conversations because of their outgoing personalities, to the detriment of more introverted members.

Another characteristic of the meetings that stifles horizontalism is that members often change their time and location at the last minute. Although the group created a calendar so that people without regular access to email could attend the meetings, this structure did not continue for very long. Despite the complaints of some group members, meetings are frequently cancelled or moved to another time or location by notice of an email a few hours prior to the planned meeting. Other times, people go to the meetings only to find that nobody else comes. The frustration caused by these changes is summed up in an email sent by Patricio in which he stated:

Es una falta de respeto este cambio repentino y me parece que hay q  
desconocerlo... Justamente en lo que tenemos que crecer es en no hacer cambios  
repentinos y menos sin discutirlos. Estuvimos en una discusión inmensa de  
cuando hacerlo y ahora “llega” un mail que dice que no se hace. (sic) (This

sudden change is a lack of respect and it seems to me that we need to not accept it... The way in which we have to grow is by not making sudden changes, much less without discussing them. We were in an immense discussion about when to make [the meeting] and now an email “arrives” that says it is not being done.)

In order to avoid these situations several members have proposed a phone chain various times, in which each person contacts another until the whole group has been communicated with, but the continued complaints over last minute meeting changes shows that this strategy has not been successfully implemented. Finally, in August of 2009 the group discussed that meetings should be in a public, central location in the city instead of in members’ houses or apartments because they are spaces of power for that member that put them in a dominant position over other members. However, meetings continue to take place in apartments, perhaps due to the last minute need for a location.

A final way that horizontalism is limited is seen in the manner in which the list serve is used. Because of the high quantity of emails that different members send each day through the list serve, ranging from newspaper articles on LGBTQ activism throughout the world to information on the activities of other organizations that members belong to, important details about the activities of Encuentros, such as times and locations, become lost in the clutter. Carlos, a member of Cóncavos y Convexos, reminded others in an email that the internet is not the space to vent personal opinions, but a way to diffuse information about activities and workshops. In another email, David told Jorge, who sends a lot of emails, that he should only contact individual members who are interested in the same topics as him. Some casual observers even left the list

serve because of the large quantity of emails, thereby inhibiting the expansion of Encuentros. Finally, members often remind each other that discussions over what strategies to follow should take place at meetings instead of through email because, as elaborated by Felipe, it limits the ability to form a consensus and delegitimizes the opinions of people who worked hard in meetings. Nevertheless, the suggestions for how to use the list serve have not been successfully implemented.

Due to the failure to implement a horizontal organizational structure, hierarchies have formed within the group based on members' personalities and political capital. For instance, all of the three founding members are among the dominant group, essentially putting them in a leadership position. Also, everyone in the dominant group is a university student and either formerly belonged to or currently participates in other social movement organizations. While this dominance could have formed because they have academic knowledge of gender and sexuality and experience in coordinating political activities, it causes day-to-day knowledge of discrimination and organizing to be less represented. However, when the group works on transgender issues, transgender members often hold a leading position because of their first-person understanding. Finally, although list serve communication allows for more people to participate in Encuentros, the overwhelming amount of daily emails means that this form of communication is not as effective as participation in meetings.

In conclusion, Encuentros' use of a frame of diversity to distinguish itself from other LGBTQ organizations has been successful through the group's activities. The implementation of the group's frame of horizontalism, on the other hand, has failed

because of the unstable structure of the meetings and disorganization in the list serve, leading to hierarchies within the group. Furthermore, the lack of horizontalism places limitations on the group's ability to expand its membership since participation falls into the hands of a few individuals. Therefore, it will be difficult for the group to become more diverse in its membership, despite the promotion of diversity in its activities.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### New Developments in Córdoba

After the pride march in November of 2009, a split led by Felipe occurred within Encuentros that led to the formation of a new group called Devenir Diverse (Diverse Transformation). The group is made of several former members, such as Andrés, Ana, and Felipe, along with people who had never joined Encuentros. According to a member of Devenir Diverse, the group is different from Encuentros because it has decided to work more closely with the FALGBT and other political organizations, in order to achieve concrete advances such as the same-sex marriage law. However, this division has created conflict between the two groups as they struggle for power in Córdoba. For instance, in May of this year, Andrés wrote an email to the Encuentros list serve accusing Jorge and David of moving the group in an elitist direction and trying to break up Devenir Diverse. In June, Felipe sent a similar email that asked Encuentros to stop threatening him with violence because that is not the way to “construir ni mucho menos de cooperar y aunar esfuerzos para tener una sociedad más diversa, justa y libre” (“neither construct nor much less cooperate and combine efforts to have a more diverse, just, and free society”). Jorge then responded that although he agrees with the need to transform society and fight the real enemy, he asks that Devenir Diverse stop defaming Encuentros and its members. Unfortunately, the information I have on this division is limited to the occasional list serve argument and brief explanations from contacts in both groups. For this reason, it would be necessary for me to return to Córdoba to develop a clear understanding of the situation through observation. Without further field research,

it is unknown how the split will affect Encuentros' success or failure in following a frame of diversity and horizontalism and whether Devenir Diverse will be more successful.

In addition to incomplete knowledge of this division, my analysis of Encuentros' frame of diversity and horizontalism is limited to observation of the early stages of the group when an identity was being formed and later email communication between members. While I have a clear impression of the rhetoric used by the group and the goals and activities it promotes, it is impossible to fully understand the ways individual members react with each other without direct observation. For this reason, more field research in Córdoba is needed. However, I do not believe that my conclusion that Encuentros failed to implement and maintain a horizontal structure is solely due to my reliance on the group list serve, because the disorganized manner in which the group communicates and manages its meetings alone means that equal access to participation is limited.

### **Further Questions**

According to Pierre Bourdieu, as discussed in Chapter 3, knowledge of the ways in which domination forms in a field does not mean that hierarchies will not evolve. In the cases presented by Taylor and Whittier and Ward, groups which framed their identities around diversity failed to maintain a diverse organization and thereby formed hierarchies around gender and sexual identity, race, and class. While Encuentros was successful in promoting diversity through its activities, the failure of its frame of

horizontalism once again led to hierarchies, only in this case they are centered around political and social capital.

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider whether it is possible for an organization to implement a truly horizontal structure. In order for Encuentros to become a more horizontal organization, it would need to restructure its form of communication so that members only publish information on group activities through the list serve. It would also need to improve the format of meetings to allow equal participation among members. However, these changes would require the initiative of one or several members, who must then be willing to step aside from this leadership position once the changes have occurred. It is also possible that the division within Encuentros could be the impetus for this change, as members begin to rethink the ways in which the group identifies itself and interacts with other LGBTQ organizations in Argentina.

In the future, more field research is required in Córdoba to observe the progression of Encuentros' frames of diversity and horizontalism over time and to understand how the creation of Devenir Diverse will impact these frames. Finally, research on progressive political organizations that form their identities around horizontalism and diversity is necessary to determine if both of these frames can be successfully implemented and their ability to limit hierarchies within the group. Overall, the case of Encuentros in Córdoba provides an example of how hierarchies can form in a political field, despite the organization's commitment to equality.

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## **Vita**

Lindsey Michelle Stringer grew up in Gainesville, Florida and moved to Jackson, Mississippi at the age of 15. After graduating from St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Jackson, Mississippi, she entered The University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi. She spent the spring semester of 2007 studying at the Universidad Católica de Córdoba in Córdoba, Argentina. Lindsey graduated from the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies and Spanish in May of 2008. In August of 2008, she entered the Master of Arts program in Latin American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin.

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