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Pursuing membership in the polity : the Spanish gay and lesbian movement in comparative perspective, 1970-1997

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Abstract: El título de la tesis de Kerman Calvo Borobia es Pursuing membership in the polity: the Spanish gay and lesbian movement in comparative perspective, (1970–1997). Lo que el estudio aborda es por qué determinados movimientos sociales varían sus estrategias ante la participación institucional. Es decir, por qué pasan de rechazar la actuación dentro del sistema político a aceptarlo. ¿Depende ello del contexto político y de cambios sociales? ¿Depende de razones debidas al propio movimiento? La explicación principal radica en las percepciones políticas y los mapas intelectuales de los activistas, en las variaciones de estas percepciones a lo largo del tiempo según distintas experiencias de socialización. Atribuye por el contrario menor importancia a las oportunidades políticas, a factores exógenos al propio movimiento, al explicar los cambios en las estrategias de éste. La tesis analiza la evolución en el movimiento de gays y de lesbianas en España desde una perspectiva comparada, a partir de su nacimiento en los años 70 hasta final del siglo, con un importante cambio hacia una estrategia de incorporación institucional a finales de los años 80. La tesis fue dirigida por la profesora Yasemin Soysal, miembro del Consejo Científico, y fue defendida en la Universidad de Essex.

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Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones

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**PURSUING MEMBERSHIP IN THE POLITY:
THE SPANISH GAY AND LESBIAN
MOVEMENT IN COMPARATIVE
PERSPECTIVE, (1970-1997)**

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Esta obra se presentó como tesis doctoral en la Universidad de Essex (Reino Unido), el 23 de junio de 2004. El Tribunal estuvo compuesto por los profesores doctores Ken Plummer (*internal examiner*) y Olivier Fillieule (*external examiner*).

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Para Pilichina

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Abstract

The Spanish gay and lesbian social movement was born in 1975 amidst the process of social and political change that transformed Spain into a modern democracy. That was a social movement with undisguised revolutionary aspirations, adamant about remaining an outsider of the nascent democratic polity. Two decades later, the movement is a full-fledged insider, committed to mainstream demands, non-violent repertoires of protest and legitimate emancipation models. In the span of two decades, activism has replaced militancy, a culture of cooperation with the authorities has replaced a culture of conflict and, lastly, a discourse based on human rights recognition has occupied the space when a Marxist, revolutionary discourse of rapid and dramatic transformation used to dwell. By an extensive and systematic analysis of the discourse and the strategies of Spanish gay and lesbian political organisations I seek to explain why this social movement has ended up pursuing the mainstream and, as a result, demanding membership in the polity.

In the thesis I link the process of negotiation of reality with the ideas and founding intellectual underpinnings of activists. Social movement scholars – in a context where the so-called structure of political opportunities is assumed to influence social movements to an extraordinary extent – have come to accept that the political environment has a bearing on social movements only after a process of incorporation has taken place. However, we simply do not know how this process of interpretation unfolds. I claim that the founding ideas of political generations, established and assimilated in the process that brings these generations to life, are the key intellectual underpinnings that sustain such an interpretative process. My research reveals that social movement organisations do not respond automatically to the ebbs and flows of the environment; rather, they behave according to the founding principles of activists that, in turn, are crafted in consonance to the particular process of generational building. In the particular case of Spain, the mainstreaming of the gay and lesbian movements

was powerfully embedded in a process of generational replacement: a new political generation was created all throughout the 1980s, nurtured by the expansion of the commercial subculture and the assimilation of foreign discourses on gay culture and human rights. This was a generation that believed in the capacity of sexuality to be a collective identity maker and, as such, it bitterly clashed with the pioneering generation of activism, the one formed during the 1970s (and politically socialized around the ideas of Marxism and social revolution).

Abbreviations

AP.	<i>Alianza Popular.</i> Popular Alliance.
AGAMA.	<i>Asociación Gay de Madrid.</i> Gay Association of Madrid.
CCAG.	<i>Coordinadora de Col.Lectius per a'Lliberament Gai.</i> Gay Liberation Groups' Alliance.
CGL.	<i>Coordinadora Gay y Lesbiana de Cataluña.</i> Lesbian and Gay Coordinator of Catalonia.
CNT.	<i>Confederación Nacional del Trabajo.</i> National Confederation of Workers.
COGAM.	Confederation of Workers.
EHGAM.	<i>Colectivo de Gais de Madrid.</i> Madrid Gay Group.
FAGC.	<i>Euskal Herriko Gay Askapen Mugimendua.</i> Gay liberation front of the Basque Country.
FHAR.	<i>Front d'Alliberament Gai de Catalunya.</i> Gay liberation front of Catalonia.
FLHOC.	<i>Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire.</i> Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action.
GLF.	<i>Frente de Liberación Homosexual de Castilla.</i> Homosexual Liberation Front of Castilla).
IU.	Gay Liberation Front.
LCR.	Gay Liberation Front.
LRG.	<i>Izquierda Unida.</i> United Left.
MAHR.	<i>Liga Comunista Revolucionaria.</i> Revolutionary Communist League.
MELH.	<i>La Radical Gai.</i> Gay Radicals.
MDH.	<i>Movimiento Andaluz Homosexual Revolucionario.</i> Revolutionary Homosexual Movement of Andalusia.
ORT.	<i>Movimiento Español de Liberación Homosexual.</i> Spanish Movement for Homosexual Liberation.
PCE.	<i>Movimiento Democrático de Homosexuales.</i> Homosexual Democratic Movement.
PP.	Democratic Movement.
PSOE.	<i>Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores.</i> Workers' Revolutionary Organisation.
PSP.	Revolutionary Organisation.
PTE.	<i>Partido Comunista de España.</i> Spanish Communist Party.
UCD.	<i>Partido Popular.</i> Popular Party.
	<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español.</i> Spanish Socialist Workers' Party.
	<i>Partido Socialista Popular.</i> Socialist Popular Party.
	<i>Partido de los Trabajadores de España.</i> Spanish Workers' Party.
	<i>Unión de Centro Democrático.</i> Democratic Centrist Union.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION. RESEARCH PROBLEMATIC, STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

On a pleasant night of June 1969, the crowd of the Stonewall Inn, no more than a small battalion of “transvestites, faggots and chicken hawks” (Marotta, 1981) got furious. That night, the anti-vice squad of the police department of New York City raided the bar. Such a thing was hardly surprising: the homosexual commercial subcultures of all major American cities had been regularly harassed by law enforcement agencies since the beginning of the 1950s. On that particular night, however, homosexuals fought back. In an unprecedented reaction, they decided to put a halt to decades of abuse, violence and stigmatisation. The so-called “Stonewall Riots”, three days of unrest and confrontations between the homosexual community and the New York police, are commonly seen as the symbolic birth of the contemporary gay and lesbian movement. In the immediate aftermath of the riots, “Homosexual liberation fronts” (GLFs) were organised in virtually every large urban area in the United States first, and in Canada, Great Britain and Australia afterwards. French homosexuals also reacted to the wave of *homosexual liberation* that originated in the United States. Although a degree of homosexual insurgency had formed part of the wave of revolutionary protest of 1968, the symbolism around “gay power”, “homosexual liberation” and “coming out” was determinant for

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the crystallization of a truly homosexual liberation movement in France.

At the very moment that the youngest and most active elements of the homosexual population of France, the United States, Germany or Canada were demanding visibility, pride and sexual freedom, in Barcelona two lawyers were drafting a letter to be sent to every member of the Francoist Legislative Assembly. Francoist authorities had been considering for a while the need to tighten the grip on homosexuals. Out of these deliberations, the so-called *Social Menaces and Rehabilitation Act* of 1970, a fiercely anti-homosexual text that reified the conceptualisation of homosexuality as an anti-social, dangerous activity, was sent for approval to that legislative assembly. Writing letters to Francoist authorities was not at all a risk-free decision at the time, particularly when the letter included a critique of the regime: Spain was lingering under the rule of a dictator who had severed off Spanish society from the trains of modernity, human rights and collective happiness. These lawyers, who operated under the nicknames of *Mir Bellgai* and *Roger de Gaimon*, felt however that something needed to be done. Close contact with some European organisations, notably the French group *Arcadie* had lead them to understand that a new blueprint for the definition of the relationship between homosexuals and heterosexuals was on the making. Notwithstanding the risks, they felt obliged to employ the limited weapons they had at hand – anonymous letters full of technical discussions - to react against what they considered an “enormous atrocity that would culminate in the genocidal anti-homosexual project of the dictatorship”.¹

So, while Western societies were being exposed to a prideful understanding of sexual diversity, in Spain, the lack of basic

¹ Armand de Fluvià, interview n° 3.

freedoms and liberties together with a well-entrenched homophobia, social and institutional, was making life a very difficult pursuit for the homosexual population. In 1975, however, the dictator died. Almost immediately, a process of regime change began that, by 1978, had resulted in a widely praised democratic Constitution. The Spanish homosexual liberation movement was born amidst the democratic euphoria of those transition years. Between 1975 and 1978 a distinct type of organisation, the so-called "Homosexual Liberation Fronts", was born in Barcelona first, and in other parts of the country afterwards. As they expanded and consolidated, these organizations gave birth to a social movement committed to political activity and visibility. As a result, homosexual political demonstrations were organised, for the first time ever, in Barcelona, Madrid, Bilbao or Valencia. Also, a campaign against the Social Menaces Act was launched, which stands as the first ever collective campaign on behalf of homosexual law reform. Even an ephemeral gay film festival was organised in Seville, one of the most conservative cities in the country.

The first wave of gay and lesbian activism in Spain steered the formation of revolutionary organisations. As had happened in nearby France, an undisguised interweaving between the ideas of sexual liberation and Marxism nurtured discourses and proposals of action that, among other things, aimed to implement a socialist economic system along with a host of similar revolutionary initiatives (including the end of the armed forces or the institution of marriage). These founding organisations were, in many ways, less preoccupied with sexual revolution and more engaged with Marxist politics. Of course, such a revolutionary political consciousness had its bearing on the interaction with power: in a notorious rupture with the dominant political *ethos*, the Spanish homosexual liberation movement criticised the Constitution and criticised the strategy of pacts that governed the transition process as limited and undemocratic. Ultimately, homosexual liberation organisations defined themselves as *outsiders* in the context of the nascent democratic polity. Neither measurable policy influence,

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nor respectability was valuable aspirations for this new social movement.

The longevity of the phase of homosexual liberation is a very peculiar aspect of the Spanish case. Whereas elsewhere in western countries homosexual liberation was a very short-lived phenomenon -not perhaps in the terrain of ideas, but definitely so in the terrain of organisations- Spanish revolutionary homosexual liberation fronts remained as the sole claimants on behalf of the homosexual population until 1986. Even more strikingly, the veteran liberationist groups of the 1970s continued to exist until the beginning of the 1990s, which sets the Spanish case completely apart in comparisons with any other western country. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the pioneering London-based GLF, which was founded in 1971, died out in less than three years. This kind of “cultural autarky”, however, did not last forever and during the late part of the 1980s, a new conception of gay and lesbian activism was already on the making. New organisations, which in my view represent the genesis of a “pragmatic” understanding of activism -as opposed to the previous “utopian” type- started to talk about gay and lesbian communities and gay and lesbian rights. Whereas the pioneering homosexual liberation fronts had battled for the dismantlement of the so-called homosexual ghettos, the nascent “gay and lesbian rights organisations” defined the commercial “scene” as a space of freedom and community interaction. And while liberationist activists had framed the quest of sexual liberation as yet another part of the grander goal of a socialist revolution, the incoming gay and lesbian activists rejected to engage in any battle out of the quest for the recognition of equal rights for gays and lesbians.

In short, what I will refer in the thesis as “pragmatic activism” introduced a new blueprint for the definition, and organisation, of collective action on behalf of gay and lesbian interests. This new generation of activists was adamant about a culture of cooperation with the authorities; it also believed that the provision of services and the satisfaction of the leisure needs of gays and lesbians lied within the remit of gay and lesbian activism. “Utopians”, however,

preferred a culture of confrontation and rejected to involve in the terrain of community politics. From 1986 to some point at the beginning of the 1990s these two understandings of activism clashed with one another. Rather poetically, in seeking to govern the course of gay and lesbian activism, revolutionary and reformist groups staged yet another representation of the well-known antagonism between pragmatism and utopia. During the 1990s, however, utopian, revolutionary organisations faded away. In spite of the efforts of an ephemeral *queer* movement to revamp utopian activism, the ideas and symbols of reformist groups conquered the cultural and political space. Not coincidentally, the victory of pragmatism unfolded alongside a major transformation in the social position of the homosexual population. The steady organisation of homosexual subcultures in large urban areas had culminated in a visible and thriving community, capable of becoming a powerful agent of cultural production.

In embracing pragmatism as the ultimate guiding principle, the Spanish gay and lesbian movement paved the way for its political incorporation as a polity member. As reformist organisations managed to dominate the outward discourse of the movement as a whole, a new mood started to govern the approach of leftist political parties vis-à-vis gay and lesbian organisations. A growing number of the demands of reformist gay and lesbian groups began to find a place in political agenda, while Spanish leftist political parties started to recognise the gay and lesbian movement as a legitimate bearer of political voice. In 1995, the penal code was reformed so that homosexuals were protected against hate crimes. And in 1997, the Spanish Parliament discussed for the first time ever the possibility of granting same-sex couples family rights.

Clearly the crux of the matter lies with the transformation of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement into a pragmatic, “reformist” social movement for, in doing so, gay and lesbian organisations have achieved membership in the polity. This thesis represents an effort to understand why and how the Spanish gay and lesbian movement moved from the defence of outsider politics to the engagement in insider politics. In other words, it chiefly

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seeks to understand why and how this social movement has become a polity member. At the empirical level, three questions are at the forefront of the agenda; namely, why the first generation of activism adopted a revolutionary, utopian outlook, why a pragmatic understanding of activism appeared during the late part of the 1980s, and lastly, why pragmatism prevailed. Ultimately, however, by discussing the transformation of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement I aim to understand how social movements elaborate their *outward political identity*, a fundamental question that, strikingly, has attracted very little scholarly attention.

I organise this introduction in six sections. Firstly, I clarify the question of naming. Language is never neutral: the names that activists use to define themselves are very often laden with marked ideological messages (Jenson, 1995). Although for the sake of the presentation a general terminology is adopted in the thesis, it is important to recognize that when “sexual dissidents” (Phelan, 2001) vindicate a particular terminology, which often is created in opposition to previous naming practices, further meaning is created (Eribon, 2001: 23; see also J.Gamson, 1996 and Jenson, 1995). As Engel (2001: 127) says, “the process of self-naming is an expression of cognitive liberation and collective identity formation”, and, consequently, an irresponsible handling of this question is not acceptable. The second section has a twofold aims: in the first place, I discuss the research question of the thesis; in the second place, I situate that research question in its theoretical background. The third section provides a summary account of my argument. Section four deals with the research strategy of the thesis; there, a number of issues regarding the research design are considered. In section five I introduce the processes of data collection and analysis. Lastly, in section six I summarise the contents of the different chapters.

1.1. A brief discussion about names

What is the best way of addressing the social movement organised around same-sex sexuality? Even the briefest overview of the historical development of this social movement would reveal the plurality of names that activists had used to define themselves. Proceeding chronologically, the organisations founded in several western countries after the Second World War to pursue social and political normalisation defined themselves as “homophile” organisations (D’Emilio, 1983). Back in the 1950s, the term homophile was explicitly defined against the idea of “homosexuality”. Because the homosexual subject was essentially associated with deviance and abnormality, the members of such groups as the *Mattachine Societies* in the United States, *Arcadie* in France or the *COC* in the Netherlands preferred a collective denomination that could sweep away with any derogative reference.

The *Stonewall* revolution gave birth to a brand new symbolism around the idea of “gayness”. Gay broke both with the elitist idea of homophile (Vaid, 1995: 58) and with the medical connotations of the homosexual personae, all in an attempt to transfer the stigma “from the individual homosexual to the bigoted opposition” (Burns, 1983: 216). Hence, images of collective pride and self-affirmation were conveyed. In this vein, the organisations created in the United States, Australia, Canada or Britain during the wave of revolutionary protest of the late 1960s and early 1970s defined themselves as *homosexual liberation* fronts.² Gay certainly captured the imagination of society at large. While a homosexual liberation movement, (later a gay and lesbian rights

² Note, however, that in countries such as France or Spain, liberationist organisations defined themselves as “homosexual” liberation “fronts”, rather than as gay liberation groups.

movement), was fighting for changes in the political arena, a thriving “gay culture” was enriching the social landscape of most western societies. During the 1980s naming practices became responsive to the legitimate demands of lesbians, who argued that the idea of gay was exclusively male-oriented. Accordingly, our movement became the “lesbian and gay” (rights) movement.³

During the 1990s a new wave of radical thought criticised the alleged weaknesses of the gay and lesbian ideology. In this view, the gay and lesbian project had become too complacent with the mainstream, thus unable to tackle the ultimate roots of oppression and subordination. It was felt that a radically different understanding of sexual diversity was necessary; in other words, shaking the ground on which the categories of gay and lesbian had been built was mandatory (J.Gamson, 1996: 395; see also Cohen, 2001). This effort revolved around the idea of “queer”. The turn to queer “was an act of linguistic reclamation” in which a pejorative term was reappropriated to lead a new wave of sexual politics worldwide (Epstein, 1999: 61). Note that this collective process of symbolic appropriation and radicalisation escaped the spheres of political activism. For one thing, it has influenced the perceptions that many people have about themselves. Also, it has steered a thriving academic literature, commonly known as queer theory.

Each terminology (homosexual, homophile, gay and lesbian, queer) is clearly grounded on a distinctive ideology: thinking about the extreme cases, while homophile is intimately associated with the politics of assimilation and sameness, queer suggests revolutionary ideas and the rejection of the mainstream. So, what can we do? In my view, in employing more than one terminology, the presentation can manage to disassociate from the defence and

³ As it is well-known, the current tendency is to opt for the LGBT formula, namely: *lesbian, gay, bisexual and Transgender* groups.

representation of a specific ideological project. Also, it is advisable to waive those categories that seem less prepared to offer a generalist appeal. This is the case with the two aforementioned terms: namely, homophile and queer. This leaves us with the following decision about names: the ideas of “homosexual” (homosexual people, homosexual movement, homosexual organisations, homosexual rights...) and “lesbian and gay” will be used to address the object of research. In my view, these are the least opposed categories; the more so given than the idea of homosexuality is steadily losing its past medical character (Coxon, 2002). In using two relatively neutral categories I disassociate my standpoint with any particular ideological project while gaining some efficiency in the presentation.

1.2. Researching the outward political identity of social movements

Having dealt with the issue of naming, I discuss now two central concerns of any research project. Firstly, the research question is explained. Chiefly, this thesis aims to explain why social movements pursue membership in the polity. Secondly, I introduce my main analytical approach: namely, social movement theory.

1.2.1. Research question and the goals of this thesis

Without the slightest attempt to discredit the implications of social movements and collective protest in the life course of those who participate in them, it cannot be ignored that social movements, per definition, exist to have outward, external consequences (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 13). In participating in collective protest, at the same time that meaning is produced as well as shared, activists and sympathisers elaborate well-knitted understandings of the world while the “ordinary” lives of people

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change enormously. Indeed, activism marks a watershed in the participant's lives, "a point in time around which their biographies can be seen in "before" and "after" times" (McAdam, 1989: 758). However, social movements are first and foremost forces for social and political change, vehicles for the expression of discontent and anger, alternatives for the representation of interests. At times when contemporary democracies offer very little chances for citizens' involvement in politics, participation in social movements and collective protest enable alternative ways of defending certain interests in the political arena.

Being profoundly outwardly oriented, interaction with established institutional actors, whether governments, allies or enemies, stands as an essential feature of the movement experience. When protesters face police hostility, a grant application is rejected, MPs are canvassed or administrative permits are sought, in all these situations social movements are interacting with established institutional actors. Interaction also occurs when social movement organisations support the quest of other collective actors, when movement leaders are co-opted and when activists are imprisoned. Nevertheless, there is one level where the idea of interaction between social movements and politics adopts a particularly relevant, sometimes even dramatic, dimension. Every social movement faces the simple, but sometimes incredibly daunting task of defining its outward political identity, i.e., its position vis-à-vis the constellation of institutional actors in a given political regime. In other words, will the basic rules of the political game be accepted?

Adopting Charles Tilly's (1978) seminal schema, social movements must essentially decide between two basic alternatives: an identity as a challenger or an identity as a member in the polity. When the former is the case, social movements become (or remain as) outsiders; logically, the latter leads to becoming an insider in the polity. Challengers, on the contrary, feel constrained by the imperatives of "normal" politics; instead they prefer to pursue their agenda of social, economic and political change through less complacent means. Note that most of the

manifold decisions that participants take in the course of collective protest depend on this basic standing. Being a member or a challenger is much more than a mere symbolic label with no real transcendence. Much to the contrary, we might well address the definition of a movement's outward political identity as a meta-strategy that inspires a wealth of many other decisions to be taken. Particular attention will be paid in this thesis to three key arenas of decision-making, namely: *claims*, *action repertoires* and *discourses*. I will argue that changes in these arenas effect the transformations in a movement's outward political identity that can lead to membership status.

Considering this, the research question of this thesis can be stated as follows: *why do social movements pursue membership in the polity?* What drives the decision of a social movement to effect major changes in its political and ideological outlook so that an uncompromising acceptance of the founding principles of claim-making and conflict-resolution are accepted? What is the mix of internal (movement-specific) and external (context) variables that shape the definition of a movement's outward political identity? These are the questions that guide my analysis of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement.

1.2.1.1. Describing and Explaining

Questioning about the conditions that makes social movements pursue the mainstream and become members in the polity is both necessary and interesting. It is the former because the literature on social movements has failed to address this issues thus far (see below); the latter because it can shed light on the question of how social movements change across time. Surprisingly perhaps, it is nonetheless the case that sociology in general and social movement theory in particular, is badly equipped to explain the longitudinal evolution of social movements. Unlike with the case of the more specialised topic of collective protest, which due to the theorisation about the cycles of protest as well as the analysis

of protest events is well explained a topic, social movement theory has paid insufficient attention to the longitudinal evolution of social movements as collective actors contending for power vis-à-vis other collective actors in a given political system. Most of existing causal arguments in that field are static in nature, ill suited for the analysis of social processes occurring across a long span of time.

Thus, explaining is the most important thing that I do in this thesis. How the Spanish gay and lesbian movement has come to become a collective actor eager to formulate *legitimate claims*, use widely *accepted modes of claim-making* and *display conventional protest* stands as my central priority. However, description is also something. Never has the attention paid to “sexual dissidents” matched the interest in other instances of collective protest and social movements, such as environmental or peace activism. Take the case of the environmental movement. The existing literature touches on manifold issues, including the origin of environmental movement organisations in several countries (Diani, 1995, Rucht, 1989), their so-called framing activities (Benford, 1993a, 1993b), the organisational life course of movement organisations (Diani and Donati, 1999; Van der Heijden, 1997), its capacity to influence policy (Jiménez, 1999) or a detailed analysis of the protest activities organised around environmental issues (Rootes et al, 2003).

Yet, what do we know about the gay and lesbian movement? Not much really. For one thing, it seems to belong to the category of identity social movements (also called “subcultural”), which are defined as such in view of the role of identity in shaping, on the one hand, the preferences and expectations of activists (Rimmerman, 2002: 106; see more generally Duyvendak and Giugni, 1995) and, on the other, the decisions of movement leaders (Bernstein, 1997). Also we are told that this is social movement that fights two battles at the same time, one against political authorities for gay rights recognition, the other against the institutions of the gay commercial subculture for the support of the homosexual population (Duyvendak, 1995a; Adam et al, 1999b).

In the same line, it is suggested that cultural factors play an extraordinarily large part in moulding the gay and lesbian movement (Duyvendak, 1995a: 176). Note, however, that most of these propositions are still waiting for rigorous empirical confirmation.

In terms of historical data, the American case has been relatively well documented. Insightful works have started to cover issues such as the organisation of the so-called homophile organisations during the early 1950s, the analysis of present law reform battles as well as the organisational structure of the movement in different geographical areas and at various levels (Altman, 1993[1971]; D'Emilio, 1983; Marotta, 1981; Licata, 1980; Cruikshank, 1992; Adam, 1995; Vaid, 1995; Teal, 1995; Epstein, 1999; Valocchi, 1999; Clendinen and Nagourney, 1999; Engel, 2001; Rimmerman, 2002 and 2001; Berstein, 2002 and 1997; Armstrong, 2002). Outside that case, only the trajectories of the British and the French gay and lesbian movements are well known. In relation to the former, and thanks to the work of activists and academics alike, we know that the constitution of the *Homosexual Law Reform Society* in 1958, a textbook homophile organisation, inaugurated a long tradition of activism on behalf of the interests of the homosexual population in Great Britain. Events such as the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967, the inception of the London-based Gay Liberation Front in 1971, the emergence of the gay press during the 1970s, the passing of the ferociously anti-gay "section 28" in 1988 or the reforms to the age-of-consent legislation during the 1990s are the oft-cited watersheds of this history.⁴ Nevertheless, large gaps still remain,

⁴ The testimony of activists is often a very rich and illuminating source of information about social movements. For the British case, see instance, Grey (1997), Power (1993), Tatchel (1992), Horsfall (1988), Burns (1983) and Watney (1980). Weeks (1990), Rayside

such as a detailed analysis of activism during the 1980s, a period of decay and abeyance structures. Also, it is still necessary to pay a closer attention to institutionalised homosexual activism, which in the British case took the form of gay and lesbian caucuses within each of the large national political parties, including the Tories.

Arguably to a less exhaustive extent, the founding layers of the history of gay and lesbian activism and politics in France have been recorded as well. Mostly thanks to Martel's (1999) groundbreaking work, (although see as well Jablonski, 1995; Duyvendak 1995b; and Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999), we know about the inception and ideas of *Arcadie* during the 1950s, the revolutionary outburst that culminated in the creation of the *Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire* in 1971, the crisis of mobilisation of the 1970s and 1980s, the consequences of AIDS or the arrival during the 1990s of new identity-based forms of collective action about gay and lesbian issues. Out of these two cases, the generally short historical accounts included in the collections edited by Adam et al (1999a) and Hendriks et al (1993) offer some limited help. See also Duyvendak (1996) for the Dutch case, Nardi (1998) for the Italian case and Soland (1998) for the Danish case. For non-western countries, see Drucker (2000).

On the whole, the trajectories, successes, dilemmas and problems of gay and lesbian movements in Western Europe are still to be discovered. Thinking about the Spanish case, nothing has been done to explain the Spanish gay and lesbian movements from the perspective of sociological theory. At this level, my thesis rightly stands as the first large-scale work on the origins, evolution and political behaviour of gay and lesbian organisations

(1998), Plummer (1999) and Engel (2001) have complemented this effort from the perspective of academic work.

in Spain.⁵ Note however that my analysis builds on some valuable works written by key activists (most of which have been interviewed). Among these works, Armand de Fluvià (interviewee n° 3) wrote two oft-cited essays about the genesis of homosexual liberation fronts during the transition years (Fluvià, 1978 and 1977). Jordi Petit (interviewee n° 4), both in his newspaper articles and in a number of published essays (Petit, 2003, 1996 and 1983), has shared interesting information about gay and lesbian activism in Barcelona (see also Vilá, 2000). Lastly, Llamas and Vila (1999) have recently sketched the historical evolution of the gay and lesbian movement in this country. To date, Llamas and Vila's essay is the only paper on the Spanish gay and lesbian movement that has been published in English. Note, however, that this contribution is everything but an objective assessment of historical events: being both authors leading personalities of *queer* thinking in the country, far too often the discussion of the empirical evince is tailored to meet their individual ideological positions.

1.2.2. Analytical approach: social movement theory

I draw on social movement theory to organise my curiosity about the Spanish gay and lesbian movement; similarly, the findings of this thesis are meant to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this particular area. Studies on social movements and collective protest represent a rather large body of scholarly

⁵ Hopefully, my effort will be shortly complemented by two other doctoral theses, still unfinished, which address two specialised issues: Gracia Trujillo's thesis explores the ideas, identity and organisational strategies of lesbian-feminist groups. Also, Jordi Monferrer is working on the bearing of gay and lesbian collective protest in the shaping of values and attitudes in Spain.

thinking preoccupied with the explanation of why and how collective protest unfolds. Social movement theory gained strength between the late 1960s and early 1970s. The eruption of what were perceived as new forms of social organising during the 1960s, particularly the civil rights and the anti-war movements in the United States, challenged existing modes of explaining collective unrest. Up to that point, sociology had largely addressed collective protest as the expression of irrational, quasi-pathological behaviour. Strikingly however, there did not seem to be anything irrational or pathological in the strategies, organising and pursuits of civil rights or peace activists. In a bid to shed some light on this new social phenomenon, a host of sociologists, most of which were personally involved in these forms of protest, arrived at a largely distinctive way of addressing collective protest. The so-called “resource mobilisation approach” to social movements succeeded in placing the curiosity about social movements at the forefront of the sociological research agenda.⁶

⁶ The historical evolution of this discipline has been well documented and, therefore, there is little need to proceed with yet another review exercise. Moreover, the consolidation of a very eclectic view in the field, built on past discrepancies among different strands of thinking, makes the historical journey through the founding schools of thinking on social movements (“collective behaviour”, “resource mobilisation”, “political process approach” and “new social movements”) even less necessary. I discuss the current formulation of social movement theory in chapter 2. For reviews of the historical evolution of social movement theory as a field of scholarly academic production, see Della Porta and Diani (1999: chapter 1), McAdam et al (1996), Darvonsky et al (1995), Koopmans, (1995: chapter 1), McClurg (1992), Diani (1992) or Klandermans and Tarrow (1988), among many others.

Soon the workload of these pioneering theorists grew larger: as a wealth of other “new” social movements benefited from the initiator movements of the 1960s, including of course the gay and lesbian movement, the case for further energies to be devoted to the study of social movements strengthened. And as one might say, “one thing lead to another”: whilst the phenomenon of the so-called new social movements was gaining strength as a recurrent feature of the social landscapes of every democratic western country, a growing number of sociologists first, and political scientists later on, turned their attention to this reality, in the United States and in Europe alike (see Rootes, 1997). The logic dynamics of academic exchange and the unstoppable confirmation that participation in social movement was becoming a major feature of western social and political systems rocketed the expansion and sophistication of this academic industry: new questions were touched on while new analytical frameworks and research methodologies were developed.

Note that the question of why and how social movements come to age has consistently been the central preoccupation in the field. Accordingly, a well-knitted argument about the conditions that facilitate the emergence of collective protest has been elaborated over the years, which points at social changes, available opportunities, resources open to mobilisation and decisions about framing as key explanatory factors (see McAdam et al, 1996: 7-12; Diani, 1992: 5-7). Outside the question of origins, the literature is consistently less developed, to the extent that important questions have not even been addressed at all.⁷ The

⁷ Of course that I am not suggesting that social movement theory has ignored every question other than the origins of social movements and collective protest. For instance, during the 1980s researchers developed a curiosity about the mechanisms used by social movement organisations to recruit members and mobilise support (Snow et al, 1986; Snow and

definition of a social movements' outward political identity is one of them. Most of what we know on the particular subject of movements' membership in the polity draws on Tilly's (1978) seminal contribution. As part of an effort to situate the study of social movements within the framework of a shifting political environment, Tilly elaborated on the conceptualisation of social movements as active competitors for political power. In his view, political systems are organised around a core centre where governments dwell, plus different spaces for power relations defined by the proximity to that core. Whereas those collective actors with routine access to governments are deemed to be polity "members", those without such access are defined as "challengers" to the polity. Central in Tilly's argumentation was the belief on the mobility of these positions (see also Lo, 1992):

Benford, 1988). Out of this effort social movement theory has come to acknowledge the role of framing in the unfolding of collective protest. Also, new, groundbreaking work evaluated the bearing of pre-existing networks of social interaction in the emergence of social movements (McAdam, 1982; Rupp and Taylor, 1987). Moreover, still during the 1980s, a number of studies focused on the longitudinal evolution of collective protest, with special attention paid to the ways participants used to interact with the State (Tarrow, 1989). More recently, the field has moved to discuss new issues, such as the consequences of social movements (Giugni, 1998a, Burstein et al, 1995), the cross-national and domestic diffusion of movement ideas (Snow and Benford, 1992; McAdam and Rucht, 1993; Giugni, 1998c) or the differences/similarities among social movements (Duyvendak and Giugni, 1995; Bernstein, 1997). My point only is that the gaps in these specialised areas are more evident. Just to give an example, while the propositions about the role of frame alignment in shaping the individual decision to engage in collective protest hardly attract criticism (see Benford and Snow, 2000 for a review), few empirical works have documented the particulars of the framing activities of movement organisers (Benford, 1997).

challengers can become members, while members can step back to a challenging position. Subsequent research appears to be confirming this. For instance, Meyer and Tarrow's thesis of a "movement society" (1998) essentially builds on the idea that many social movements are becoming members in the polity. Likewise, most of what has been recently written on the issue of the institutionalisation of social movements could be read as a suggestion of the capacity of social movements to become members of the polity.⁸

Summing up, we are told that in defining their outward political identity, social movements can be either members or challengers. Also we are told that members could become challengers, and challengers become members. But, why is this so? What are the factors that lead a social movement through the pathway of membership in the polity? Is the pursuit of membership an inevitable consequence of movement consolidation? Or, instead, is it a response to changes in the political environment? If so, what changes? More to the point, what specific changes is a social movement to effect if its bid for membership is to appear credible? Neither the works that have made a direct use of Tilly's conceptual schema, nor those that make only an indirect reference to the question of membership (most notably works on the institutionalisation of social movements) have discussed the causes of the variation in the outward political preferences of a social movement.⁹ My thesis

⁸ The literature on the institutionalisation of social movements is reviewed in chapter two.

⁹ Bernstein (1997: 532), while discussing the evolution of gay and lesbian organisations in the United States, presented this puzzle in the following way: "The lesbian and gay movement has been altered from a movement for cultural transformation through sexual liberation to one that seeks achievement of political rights through a narrow, ethnic-like

seeks to fill this gap. By discussing the evolution of gay and lesbian organisations in Spain, I seek to sketch a theory of the movement's membership so that this founding question could find an adequate response.

1.3. Explaining change: the Argument

Never this thesis seeks to question one of the basic lessons of social movement theory; namely, context matters for social movements. The redefinition of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement as a polity member is indeed linked with changes in certain dimensions of context environment, domestic and international alike. For one thing, I will show that the process of transition towards democracy was the springboard for fundamental changes within gay and lesbian organisations. In the same line, I have learnt a great deal from examining the interweaving between movement organisations and the so-called structures of "friends and enemies". While the presence of a very active revolutionary leftist political movement during the late 1970s contributed to the definition of the early liberation movement in Marxist terms, the certain moderation of Spanish communism during the late 1980s, and the evolution of the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español's* (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) electoral cycle during the early 1990s facilitated the transition towards a more pragmatic definition of gay and lesbian activism. Similarly, the transformation of the Spanish gay movement into a polity member cannot be disassociated from landslide changes in the international market of ideas. The emporium of Anglo-Saxon references on

interest-group politics. This well-documented transition has yet to be explained."

community politics, identity and human rights discourses have spawned healthy flows of information and symbolic exchange, all of which have been powerful inspiration for the gay and lesbian movement.

Environmental changes, however, do not always effect the changes that theory would predict. For one thing, movement organisers count on limited information; also, they are not always fully equipped to seize incoming opportunities. This often leads to opportunities being missed (Sawyers and Meyer, 1999). And what is more important, interpretation matters. Even in scenarios where healthy flows of information about context as well as the possession of state-of-the-art skills prevent opportunity-missing from happening, transformations in the environment might lead to “irrationality”. Discovering that Spanish gay organisations have often acted irrationally, i.e., against what an automatic application of social movement theory would have dictated, is one of the central achievements of this thesis. External threats (say AIDS) have not always been framed as such, opportunities have been missed while surprising – if assessed from an external point of view – initiatives have been mounted to negotiate the temporal position in the cycle of protest. In light of these findings, and aligning with the most recent works on the issue of political opportunities (see, for instance, Whittier, 2002: 299), I defend that activists' perception of political opportunities and threats is crucial to the strategies they pursue. Thus, diagnosis and problem definition make the ground from which social movements are built: far from reacting mechanically to changes in the environment, social movements play an active part in framing their reality, to the extent that only when environmental fluctuations are framed as either opportunities or threats, action will be launched.

Identifying the centrality of ideas -which are the essence of interpretative politics- for the deployment of social movements' strategic behaviour has led me to search for the origins of interpretation. What governs interpretation? What kinds of influences help activists develop diagnoses about reality? At this

level, my argument stresses the role of generational formation as the space where ideas are permanently embraced so that they can govern interpretation. In my view, people with similar formative experiences, who have developed similar diagnoses of reality and conceive of activism in similar terms too, form political generations of activists. A fundamental system of ideas, what I define as the “collective cognitive maps of political generations”, is what holds generations together. Consequent with the view of social movements are arenas of relentless interaction and the production of meaning, the collective cognitive maps of a political generation are the offspring of a complex and rich process of generational formation, whereby formerly isolated individuals build on continuous interaction and the rationalisation of ideas, both internally and externally produced, to acquire political consciousness.

So, I contend that a previous process of political socialisation, whereby shared, and internalised, ideas bring activists close to each other, governs interpretation. Ultimately, I defend that activists behave as their founding political ideas instruct them to do, ideas that take form in the course of a complex process of generational formation. Accordingly, if those basic ideas change across time, social movements will also change. Going back to the chief preoccupation of this thesis, my analysis of the Spanish case points at the role of generational replacement on the redefinition of the gay movement’s outward political identity. I see the decision to pursue membership in the polity as the offspring of a process of generational replacement that has dramatically affected the perception that activists have about themselves, their role in the wider social and political picture, and the ultimate goals of collective protest.

In defending that the replacement of political generations is what has caused the transformation of the Spanish gay movement’s outward political outlook, I seek to elaborate a comprehensive framework that is both attentive to the bearing of interpretation and capable of assessing the influence of context on social movements. Interpretation is grounded on the collective

cognitive maps of a given generation, that is, on the basic collective ideas that, in turn, are the offspring of a complex process of generational formation. Generations, however, are not formed in a vacuum. On the contrary, this is a process that is very permeable to shifts in the structure of political opportunities and to the evolution of the international market of ideas. In other words, whereas the bearing of very popular arguments in the field of social movements is not basically disputed, particularly in what refers to shifts to three key variables; namely, the structure of political opportunities, the assimilation of foreign ideas and the negotiation of external shocks, I argue that their effects must be inserted in a wider analytical framework. As my analysis will show, in many instances the effects of the environment have a direct influence in the process of generational formation, yet only an indirect one in what refers to the behaviour of social movements. Only transformations of extraordinary magnitude escape the tyranny of interpretation and problem definition.

1.4. Research Strategy

I follow here the tendency of political science to take countries as the unit of analysis (Lijphart, 1975; Przeworsky and Teune, 1970; Landman, 2000; Ragin, 1994; see also Soysal, 1994). Thus, I organise this thesis as a case study of gay and lesbian organisations in one specific country: namely, Spain. The analysis rests on the observation of every political organisation that has been formed in this country from 1970 to 1997. Both are highly symbolic dates. As we saw at the beginning of this introduction, the former date marked the beginning of gay and lesbian collective protest in the country. In deciding to protest against the passing of the Social Menaces Act, the train of Spanish homosexual liberation was set into motion. In 1997, after more than two decades of collective protest, the basic demands of reformist gay and lesbian organisations, i.e., the rights of same-sex couples to be considered as family units, becomes a parliamentary issue. I read

this as the ultimate confirmation of an alliance – between the Spanish left and reformist gay and lesbian organisations – which granted the latter membership in the polity.

Drawing on the available materials (see below), three specific aspects of these organisations have been particularly studied: claim-making, action repertoires and discourses. Thus, the analysis pays close attention to the outward strategic behaviour of movement organisations, enquiring about processes of preference and discourse formation. By the same token, questions relating to organisational designs or recruitment strategies are only marginally addressed. Also, for the sake of the analysis, certain dimensions of context are studied. As part of the effort to evaluate the influence of oft-cited causal stories in the field of social movements and collective protest, I pay attention to the evolution of homosexual law, the shifts in the structures of friends and allies, the consequences of the AIDS epidemic and the international market of ideas.

Although the bulk of the analysis pivots around the explanation of the Spanish case, the presentation takes a comparative perspective whenever this is possible. Building on the existing knowledge on the French, the British and the American gay and lesbian movements, the presentation of the evidence about the Spanish case is often framed in a wider context so that the basic similarities and differences between Spain and other countries can be sketched out. Particular attention is paid to the differences and similarities with the American case: too often misleading conclusions are drawn on the basis of an alleged similarity between American and western European gay and lesbian movements. Indeed, one is recurrently exposed to a tendency that assumes all gay movements to be *like* the American lesbian and gay movement, when this is not the case. In Western Europe, domestic cultural and political traditions shape the deployment of community politics and often question the sheer purpose of engaging in identity politics. Also, internal conflict does not follow similar patterns: whereas American gay and lesbian activists are often torn apart by disputes around the

essentialism-constructivism, or the difference-sameness debates, in Europe these issues hardly steer internal schism. Moreover, the influence of the AIDS epidemic in the development of new strategies, goals and mobilisation strategies needs to be reconsidered in light of the European experience. While a wealth of evidence clearly demonstrates that AIDS transformed the American gay and lesbian movement for good, making a national, policy-oriented, professionalized movement out of a uncoordinated, local and quasi-cultural plethora of organisations, the same cannot always be said as far as European countries are concerned.

Such a clearly asymmetric design, which makes a non-consistent employment of comparison, is not of course intended to arrive at propositions ready for straightforward generalisation. Research designs that take countries as the unit of analysis achieve greater external validity the higher the number of countries compared (Ragin, 1994). This is why social movement research is increasingly committed to transcend the studies of single-countries and engage in large-scale comparative projects. See, for instance, Rootes et al (2003), McAdam et al (2001) and Kriesi et al (1995). It is also true, however, that the efficiency of comparative designs builds on the robustness of previous case studies, where tentative propositions are inferred and working hypotheses are sketched out. This is not our case here: neither the gay and lesbian movement, nor the issue of membership in the polity had merited enough scholarly attention. Consequently, I have opted for a research design where a calmer and more rigorous analysis of empirical materials can be made. The depth of the analysis allows for the consideration of a wider range of variables while, on the whole, a more comprehensive understanding of social processes is achieved.

1.4.1. *Researching political organisations*

There are a number of practical questions about the research strategy followed in this thesis that deserve some consideration. Firstly, a brief note about the decision to focus on formal organisations is in order. The oft-noted distinction between social movements and social movement organisations, a staple in debates in social movements and collective protest, calls for a fluid and flexible understanding of collective action. While social movement organisations are always a central element in social movements, it is also the case that loose networks of solidarity, friendship and social exchange may play an enormous role in several stages in the life-course of a social movement. This applies both to the particular case of the gay and lesbian movement (Plummer, 1999: 138), and more generally to any social movement.

However, in this thesis I only focus on formal organisations. In other words, only the “political social world” of the gay and lesbian movement is discussed (Plummer, 1999). This is a decision based on my particular research question. As the literature confirms, formal organisations are responsible for crafting strategies, reacting to the ebb and flow of the environment, and even for the elaboration of frames of collective action (Tarrow, 1992: 117). In a similar fashion, the definition of a movement’s outward political identity rests on formal organisations. Similar reasons also justify the decision to focus only on *political* movement organisations. Unlike social movements with a well-defined instrumental profile, the gay and lesbian movement (and other so-called identity social movements) attends to two different kinds of necessities (Adam et al, 1999b: 345; Duyvendak, 1995a: 165; Duyvendak and Giugni, 1995). On the one hand, the gay and lesbian movements has “political” necessities, related to the legal well-being of the homosexual population; on the other hand, it has “cultural” needs, connected with the welfare, leisure and recreational needs of its members. As Altman (1993: 107) puts it,

“The gay liberation movement is directed both inwards and outwards: inward to its own constituency, which ranges all the way from drag queens and butch dykes to respectable businessmen terrified of discovery and ageing women unable to face the sexual foundations of their friendship, and outward to society at large”.

Very often, gay and lesbian organisations navigate both waters at the same time. While campaigning activities are launched, time, money and energies are devoted to a host of cultural activities (publication of magazines, management of a social centre, counselling, AIDS work, promotion of research, etc) designed to attend to the welfare needs of members of gay groups in particular, and the homosexual community in general. We will see that Spanish gay organisations are not exception to this rule, as gay and lesbian groups have ended up deploying both political, outwardly oriented, and cultural, inwardly oriented activity. However, this might not be the case. The more the homosexual population embraces a community model of social organisation, the higher the odds of finding organisations exclusively devoted to the satisfaction of welfare needs. Self-help organisations, hot lines, aid centres tend to gain autonomy from campaigning groups the more community boundaries are reified. Note that these are the kind of organisations that Kriesi (1996: 152-153) would define as either “supportive organisations” – which stands for service organisations that “contribute to the social organisation of the constituency of a given movement without directly taking part in the mobilisation for collective action” – or “movement associations”, i.e., “self-help organisations, voluntary associations or clubs created by the movement itself in order to cater for some daily needs of its members”. Supportive organisations neither participate in the formulation of political discourse nor do they collaborate in outward collective pursuits. Thus, I have generally excluded them from my analysis.

1.4.2. *A thesis on the gay and lesbian movement*

As a social phenomenon, the gay and lesbian movement represents a legitimate object for sociological inquiry. This is something that can be clearly seen from several perspectives; the quest of the gay and lesbian movement has cultural, political and even economic consequences, which are felt in changing social values, processes of legal reform and visible trends in the worlds of arts. Indeed, and in spite of the fact that the links between gay collective protest and processes of gay law reform still need to be clarified, one might plausibly think that the current wave of positive law reform in this terrain has been propelled by decades of collective protest. And by the same token, one should not ignore the bearing of the gay movement in the shaping of sexual regimes, moral attitudes and cultural patterns.

However, there is something about the gay and lesbian movement that particularly attracts my attention; having been built on the observation of social movements such as the environmental, the civil rights, the peace or the women's movements, how well is social movement theory equipped to explain the gay and lesbian movement? And also, given the idiosyncrasies of this social movement, how much can social movement theory learn from the observation of gay and lesbian organisations in different countries? Some preliminary work on the issue of the origins of gay and lesbian movements suggest that, on the whole, existing arguments about the genesis of social movements and collective protest might explain well the birth of this particular social movement (see Adam et al, 1999b). Although a lot more should be said about the role of diffusion and learning – being the gay movement a text-book case of an “spin-off” movement – it appears to be the case that the birth of the gay movement is also connected with processes of social change, the existence of windows of opportunity, and the availability of “framers”, capable of crafting mobilising messages.

Not surprisingly, things turn more complicated as we touch on different questions. As suggested before, gay and lesbian

movements navigate two seas, outwardly oriented political battles on the one hand, and inwardly oriented cultural activities on the other. Campaigning is not the sole purpose of members of gay movement organisations: social networking, the pursuit of sex, or more generally, identity-recreation could be equally for them. Does this affect the way the gay movement interacts with its environment? Also, does this influence the capacity of the gay movement to shape its environment? How is it possible that a social movement so engaged in identity production and recreation has managed to remain visible, operative and effective in the public arena? That goes against the view that identity movements are hardly willing to engage in interaction with politics (Duyvendak, 1995a). Moreover, how do gay and lesbian social movement organisations face the aforementioned twofold task? Is the distribution of internal resources between the two battlefields a factor that shapes the efficacy of this social movement? To what extent are movement organisations forced to compete with other institutions (gay bars, etc) for the support of homosexual populations?

1.4.3. Spain

Doing research on the Spanish case is interesting on a number of accounts. To begin with, social movement theory is unduly biased towards the analysis of Anglo-Saxon and northern European countries. As a consequence, a number of misleading assumptions about collective protest in countries like Spain have been drawn, basically on the basis of very weak empirical evidence (Jiménez, 2002). Foremost of all, it is often assumed that movements in Spain are weak or even invisible. However, existing data on the evolution of social protest in Spain reveals that the number of protest events grew during the 1980s and 1990s (Jiménez, 2002; Adell, 2000). Looking to the 1980s, while the decision of the socialist government to remain in NATO revamped the Spanish peace movement (Prevost, 1993), a new general

education law was contested by a very active students movement (Laraña, 1999). And if we take a quick look at the evolution of the social movements sector in the southern European region, the immediate conclusion would be that Spanish social movements are stronger and more effective than any of their southern European peers.

Secondly, the Spanish case offers a unique opportunity to explore in great detail the consequences of long dictatorial regimes on the evolution and consolidation of social movements. As it is well known, Greece, Portugal and Spain suffered from long-lasting dictatorial regimes, which prevented the emergence of democratic politics until the 1970s. During the 1960s, when new forms of protest and collective organisation were enriching the social and political landscape of most western democracies, Spaniards were fighting for basic civil rights. And during the 1970s, when most western social movements were maturing or mutating into new forms, Spanish social movements were caught between a short-sighted process of regime change and the anxieties of a segment of the population that demanded a radical departure from the past.

Whether or not an authoritarian past has affected the individual propensity towards participation in collective pursuits is still unclear. In this vein, a number of authorised voices have linked the prevalence of negative attitudes towards politics with that idiosyncratic background. In this reading, the absence of a democratic tradition would have caused entire generations of Spaniards to suffer from political disaffection, to the extent that these maladies have become a cultural, and thus stable, phenomenon (Montero et al, 1997: 45). This cannot be tested with my data. However, in broadening my temporal span so that the transition years (1976-1982) became included in the analysis, I have been able to clarify the ways in which the process of regime change has affected social movements in Spain. I will elaborate on my argument about this particular issue in chapter 4.

1.5. Data collection and Analysis

The bulk of the empirical material was collected between October 2000 and May 2001. During these seven months most of the collection of textual material was done; the largest part of the interviews also took place during this period. However, some of the interviews were run at a later stage, fundamentally as a consequence of unexpected cancellations of original appointments. The last four interviews took place between May and June 2002. Most of the fieldwork was done in Madrid and Barcelona. The archives of the Madrid-based COGAM (*Colectivo de Gais de Madrid*, Madrid Gay Group), and the Barcelona-based *Casal Lambda*, and the library of the Juan March Institute in Madrid (where the search for press releases took place) have been the main sources of textual material. Having said that, two interviews took me to Valencia, and some archive work was done in the *Hall-Carpenter Archives*, at the LSE library in London.

So, interviewing and the analysis of textual materials make up for the thrust of the processes of data collection and analysis. I organise the discussion of empirical materials and analysis around the three main categories of data that I have used in this thesis: news, texts and interviews.

1.5.1. News

Press releases have been the first source of information. The tradition to use press releases to investigate the longitudinal occurrence of protest is well consolidated among social movement specialists (Rootes et al, 2002; Jiménez, 2002 and 1999; Fillieule, 1997 and 1996; Ozlak, 1989, among many others). This strategy, which has given way to the so-called “protest event analysis” (PEA) approach is a powerful instrument intended to “count” social protest, that is, to provide quantitative data as to the frequency, magnitude and aims of street-based collective protest. A “protest event”, in the specific arena of environmental protest

has been defined as “a collective, public action of non-state actors with the expressed purpose of critique or dissent together with societal and/or political demands related to the environment in a broad sense” (Rucht, 1998:1; in Jiménez, 1999:5). It should be noted that PEA is becoming the chief analytical strategy in some research agendas. The more students of social movements aim to arrive at truly specialised knowledge about the dynamics of protest and collective action, the more PEA is becoming the research tool *par excellence*. Very roughly, PEA shares many of the defining characteristics of content analysis, such as the elaboration of samples of data units and the crafting of coding rules that specify the information to be searched in those samples (Fillieule, 1996: 11). Questions about the number of events per year, number of participants, geographical location, and claims brought forward are often pursued.¹⁰

In spite of the fact that this thesis is grounded on an extensive review of press materials, a rigorous application of PEA has not been considered appropriate. The first stages of the analysis revealed that the coverage of homosexual protest events has been very deficient (when it exists at all). Neither the nationwide, nor the local press paid attention to the initiatives of gay and lesbian organisations and, as a result, only a fragmented and never systematic coverage of their activities was possible. Thus, the basis for a systematic discussion of basic aspects of protest (intensity, geographical location, modes of protest, issues and claims, and so on) is very poor. Considering these limitations, the revision of press materials has been conceived of as an instrument

¹⁰ For an example of a systematic use of PEA, see Jiménez's (2001) work on environmental protest in Spain.

to achieve basic descriptive information about gay and lesbian protest politics in Spain.¹¹

I have compiled a sample of 605 “political news”. “Political news” has been defined as falling into any of a number of categories. These are: “gay and lesbian organisations in Spain”, “law reform in Spain”, “social attitudes”, “discourse of activists”, “developments at the international level”, “judicial rulings”, “police”, “church”, “political parties” and “public administration”. These categories, and the codes designed to track them in the texts, were drawn deductively. A second coder tested the validity of the system of categories by examining a small percentage of the sample (20%). She managed to resume all the information in the system of categories designed beforehand. Accordingly, news related to cultural events (such as gay film festivals, book reviews and related cultural expressions), “scandals”, and news on the so-called “gay lifestyle”, have not been included in the sample.

The sample was made in two stages. Firstly, a sample from *El País* was created (526 news, 77 per cent of the total). To do so, the system of categories was manually applied to every piece of news listed under the heading “homosexuality” (which in turn is part of the broader heading “sexuality”) in the yearly digest of this newspaper. The temporal distribution of political news is presented in graph 1.1. The number of news per year comes from the sum of political news published in every regional edition of the newspaper. This does not mean, however, that the number of political news per place is even. Much to the contrary, the peaks in media attention registered in 1986 and 1989 were caused by a detailed coverage by the Catalanian branch of *El País* of specific events taking place in Barcelona. 30 per cent of the news

¹¹ The available data on the magnitude of protest is reported in chapter 3.

registered for both years were not published nation wide. That said, the graph shows a noticeable level of attention during the years of the transition, which declined at the beginning of the 1980s. If the extra information produced by Catalonian readers is discounted, we appreciate a steady increase in the attention to gay political events during the 1980s, which clearly speeds up during the following decade.

Secondly, after an initial analysis of this sub-sample, key dates were highlighted, and a further search was carried out –only in those specific dates – in *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia* and *Abc*. While *El País* is generally perceived as a center-left newspaper, sympathetic to the quest of social movements, the other three occupy different positions at the right side of the political spectrum. My interviewees were generally content with the way *El País* and *El Mundo* has treated the gay and lesbian movement. In some occasions, my search in the press archive of the Madrid-based COGAM and the Barcelona-based *Casal Lambda* pointed at some pieces of information (normally from regional or local media), which were ultimately added to the sample. This information is quoted by reporting the name of the newspaper, in italics, plus the date when this information was published (for instance, *El País*, 1 January 2004). As many of these pieces of news have been retrieved through online databases, it has been often impossible to report page numbers. For the sake of consistency, I do not include them in the quotations.

1.5.2. Texts

Very often social movements are large-scale producers of written materials. In the pre-Internet era, when on-line forums where not a possibility for organising the flows of information, both horizontal and vertical communication largely built on the circulation of position papers, statements of objectives, ideological manifestos and so on. Thus, what we might define as the “movements’ literature” is essentially inwardly oriented and

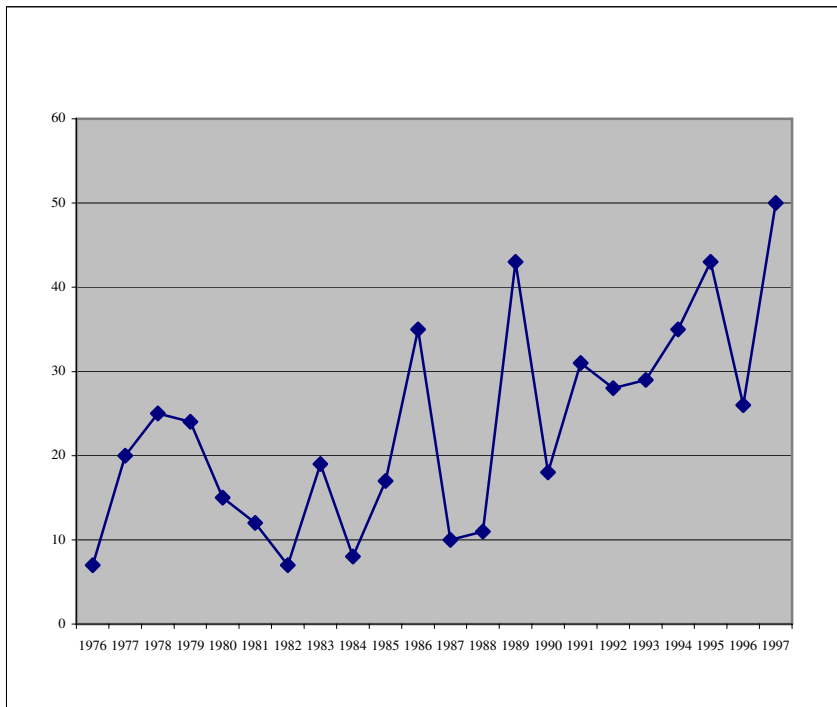
serves a twofold purpose: on the one hand, it is a vehicle for the interaction between leaders and grass-roots members; on the other hand, it allows for horizontal interaction among movement members. Nevertheless, the elaboration of written materials can also have an outward purpose, as a means, for instance, to inform political authorities of future lines of action.

Spanish gay movement organisations, particularly during the years of homosexual liberation, were indeed adamant about putting their principles down on paper. For instance, the early homosexual liberation fronts defined themselves as “the spokespersons for the anxieties, the worries and the progress of gay people” and, as a consequence, they ought to be “ideological leaders, the vehicle for the expression of their [non-politicised homosexuals’] demands and their political manifestation.”¹² Under the heading of texts I have compiled and analysed two kinds of materials. Firstly, I have looked at the *editorials* and *position articles* of the magazines and bulletins published by the different gay and lesbian organisations. Information about the publications reviewed can be found in the appendix.

This kind of publications represents a very specialised aspect of the so-called “gay press”: although some of them have a limited commercial distribution, most of these magazines are essentially conceived for internal use, often exclusively distributed to members free of charge. Unlike well-known gay commercial publications such as the “Gay Times”, internal bulletins usually keep a stronger focus on issues related to campaigning, including diagnoses of the situation and calls for further participation. The decision to concentrate on editorials and position papers is grounded on a simple rationale: namely, they represent the group’s

¹² FAGC, in *Debat Gai*, “extraordinary” issue (1978:1). The emphasis is mine.

Figure 1.1: Political news on homosexuality in "El País" (1976-1997).



Source: *El País*.

official position on particular issues and, hence, they are instances of discourse. This information is reported by quoting the name of the publication (in italics), plus the issue, year of publication and page number (for instance, *La Pluma*, #0 [1978: 1]).

Secondly, by "texts" I also understand a miscellany of position papers, manifestos and related ideological papers that are not made public through their publication in internal bulletins. The

full list of these documents is presented in the appendix. I include within this category position papers elaborated for discussion at general meetings, drafts of press releases, *ad hoc* papers written on the occasion of particular internal debates, and so on. These documents are exclusively for internal use. Note that a rather simple criterion has governed the sampling process: I have examined every document that I have been able to trace. Gay movement organisations are often badly resourced, and, consequently, they do not always care about organising their stock of documents. Deficient storage conditions have also affected the conservation of some of these materials. I quote these materials by reporting its technical date, a capital d, plus a number and the year when the document was written, if possible, and page numbers, if available (for instance, D58, 1994:3).

1.5.3. Interviews

In-depth interviewing is of course a very valuable source of primary information. The capacity to produce well-grounded understandings of social reality is what keeps qualitative interviewing as a key method of data collection, widely used in both sociology and political science (Warren, 2004: 524). This is also a commonly used method in studies of social movements. The analysis builds on twenty interviews, falling into two categories: leaders of organisations (15) and politicians (5).¹³ Information

¹³ Together with formal in depth interviews, I have held a fruitful dialogue with Emilio Gómez Zeto and with Ricardo Llamas. Interviewing them was not possible. Emilio, via no less than twenty e-mails, sent me very precious photographic material about his years in activism (1986-1991), along with a good number of (scanned) documents. Ricardo, unlike Emilio, both an activist *and* a theorist (see,

about the interviewees is provided in the appendix. The thrust of this effort has consisted of conversations with movement leaders. By this I mean individuals occupying top-responsibility positions, such as “presidents”, “coordinators” or “general secretaries”. Movement elites, on the one hand, carry the brunt of the internal decision-making process and, on the other, tend to take a general view of the evolution of the movement as a whole (unlike grassroots members, who often take a more specialised, organisation-specific perspective). Together with the interviews with activists, I have also made four interviews with politicians; namely, three interviews with MPs at the national Parliament and two interviews with the two Socialist Ministers of Social Affairs. In doing this I have sought to give a richer understanding of the political implications of the gay and lesbian movement. Also, these interviews have shed much light over the image that the political elite had about the gay and lesbian movement. The three MPs have been selected on their active participation in Parliamentary debates on gay and lesbian rights.

Sampling has not interfered much with the selection of interviewees. Note that the population of movement leaders is a finite one, the more so when “top” movement leaders are taken into account. Considering this, (and without ignoring the sad reality of the consequences of AIDS, which has deprived the Spanish gay and lesbian movement of much valuable human capital including a number of leaders), my “sample” of interviews includes the top leaders, plus at least one of his or her closest

for instance, Llamas and Vila, 1999), was more attentive to my analysis of the empirical material. However, he also shared with me many documents, leaflets, press releases, etc related to his experience in *queer* activism. I deeply regret not to have been able to do justice to this material, a task that had involved a much more specialised analysis of queer activism.

associates, of every organisation that I discuss in this thesis. On a more technical note, all of the interviews have been recorded and transcribed. While the interviews with activists, on average, lasted between one hour and a half and two hours, the interviews with politicians never exceeded one hour. While formal follow up interviews were not considered necessary, I have contacted some of my interviewees a number of times after the original interview (mostly by e-mail), in a bid to clarify some particular issues. I designed two different interview lists, one for activists and one for politicians. Both lists had a specialised and a common part. Whereas the latter involved a battery of broad topics that I wanted to discuss in every interview, the former included *ad hoc* questions designed in view of the different interviewees. Thinking about the common topics, in the case of activists, I asked about the role of AIDS in the evolution of his or her organisation, the impact of public funding on the calculations/autonomy of gay groups, the sources of internal conflict, the approach/relationship with the commercial subculture and the media, and about the stances of his or her groups vis-à-vis political parties and trade unions. The search for *contents* in the interviews has been done inductively. A software-package for the analysis of texts – WINMAX – has been used for these purposes. The interviews are quoted by reporting the name of the interviewee and the interview number (see the appendix).

1.6. Organisation of chapters

After this introduction, *Chapter 2* focuses on the theoretical framework of this thesis. The chapter begins with a presentation of the basic analytic “tool-kit” of social movement theory, which consists of three pillar-ideas: mobilising structures, political opportunities and framing processes. Most of current theoretical discussions about social movements and collective protest make direct or indirect use of any of these ideas (or the three of them). Having introduced social movement theory, I proceed to explore

the dependent variable of the analysis: namely, the pursuit of membership. Pursuing membership and experiencing institutionalisation is not exactly the same thing. While these two concepts relate to one another on a number of accounts – institutionalisation is indeed one of the routes that result in membership in the polity – not every scenario of membership can be explained from the perspective of movements' institutionalisation. After settling that matter, the presentation touches on basic aspects of the dependent variable, such as the conceptualisation of membership as a procedural outcome or the elicitation of the tests of membership that a candidate for membership in the polity needs to pass. Also, the definition of the pursuit of membership as representing a battle between two contending understandings of activism - utopian versus pragmatic - is introduced.

Induction plays a large role in this thesis: due to the absence of previous works on the transformation of social movements into members in the polity, the search for causal explanations takes a very open standing: it is mostly a task for the data to specify the explanatory model behind the transformation of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement into a polity member. However, one cannot ignore the bearing of decades of research in social movements. Perhaps designed to explain different things, it is still important to discuss a number of popular causal arguments that are recurrently used by students of social movements. Thus, in the second part of chapter 2 I critically discuss four lines of investigation, namely: the institutionalisation, the abeyance, the opportunities and the diffusion arguments. Considering the weaknesses and strengths of these explanations, I defend in the last section of the chapter the need to adopt a generational perspective.

The presentation of empirical evidence commences in *Chapter 3*, which consists of an overview of gay and lesbian protest politics in Spain from 1970 to 1997. A journey through the dependent variable of the analysis represents the chief goal of this chapter. Ultimately, in showing evidence about the transformation of the claims, the action repertoires and the discourses of Spanish

gay and lesbian organisations, chapter 3 seeks to demonstrate that the movement's outward political identity has changed. Firstly, the chapter discusses the birth of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement. Special attention is paid to the effects of the process of transition towards democracy in creating the conditions for movement emergence. A picture of the pioneering "homosexual liberation fronts" constituted between 1975 and 1978 is also provided. Secondly, I move to the years of the decay of the liberationist project. As I show in this chapter, Spanish homosexual liberation fronts chiefly pursued the decriminalisation of homosexuality, which was achieved during the last days of 1978. After that, homosexual organisations grew unable to foster further mobilisation. So, the period between 1980 and 1986 featured organisational decay and demobilisation. Also, internal tensions emerged that spawned some factionalisation and the consolidation of an autonomous lesbian-feminist movement. Thirdly, I pay attention to the emergence of "pragmatic" activism. Between 1986 and 1990 new organisations emerged, in Barcelona first and in other parts of the country afterwards that challenged the prevailing liberationist *ethos*. Pragmatic and "utopian" groups battled on three fronts: claims, action repertoires and discourses. Foremost of all this was a dispute about the value of pursuing membership: whereas the veteran liberationist organisations flagged revolutionary ideas to justify a position as an outsider in the polity, the new gay and lesbian rights groups activated human rights discourses and constitutional arguments to justify the engagement in insider politics. The last part of the chapter is precisely devoted to show the consequences of that battle: pragmatism prevailed and membership in the polity was achieved.

Chapter 3 ends with the identification of three empirical questions. Why the Spanish homosexual liberation movement was a *revolutionary* rather than a *radical* liberationists movement is the first one. **Chapter 4** aims to answer that question. Also, this chapter, in explaining why the pioneering homosexual liberation fronts did not seek membership in the policy, introduces the generational perspective: I show that the discourse and strategies

of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement – based on the rejection of community politics and the support of a strategy of confrontation with the authorities, was firmly founded on revolutionary intellectual principles. Testing “conventional” explanations is the first thing that I do in the chapter. Perhaps that intensity of the conflict between the nascent homosexual liberation organisations and democratic political authorities was based on a particular configuration of the structure of opportunities. Also, given the similarities between the French and the Spanish cases, the role of diffusion in shaping the process of preference formation needs to be assessed. Despite the clear connections between the revolutionary *ethos* of the pioneering homosexual liberation movement in Spain and exogenous factors, I show that a number of gaps remain in the explanation. My analysis reveals that rather than as an automatic reaction to the ebb and flow of the environment - including here both shifting opportunities and diffusion processes - the appropriation of a revolutionary identity was clearly influenced by the basic ideas of these activists, (whom I refer to as the generation of homosexual militants). Substantiating this argument involves, firstly, a discussion of the collective cognitive maps of this generation of activists; secondly, a rational linking ideas and preference formation (ideas as designers of a repertoire of possibilities that determine that plausibility of different courses of action), and lastly an analysis of the process that lead to the internalisation of basic ideas, beliefs and principles for action.

Chapter 5 explores the two remaining empirical questions. Most important of all is the analysis of why a reformist view emerged during the late 1980s, for this gives us the clues about what is really behind the process of pursuing membership. The chapter begins with a discussion about the permeability of revolutionary organisations to a number of shifts in the environment: namely, transformations in the structure of political opportunities –caused by a major reshuffle of the structure of alliances – the coming of AIDS and the worsening of the demobilisation problem. It is showed there that notwithstanding

slight adjustments, homosexual liberation fronts did not react to the pressures for change. On the contrary, and building on their collective cognitive maps, Spanish homosexual militants insisted in challenging the polity from outside. In other words, despite exogenous pressure, which in many other western countries was leading to the political incorporation of the gay and lesbian movement, Spanish homosexual liberation remained revolutionary and defiant.

However, not only revolutionary organisations were embroiled in a hectic process of frame interpretation and issue definition. On their part, the incoming reformist organisations that started to become public from 1986 onwards also put their ideas into motion: in a stark contrast with the revolutionary diagnosis of reality, the generation of gay and lesbian activists framed exogenous factors put out a community response to the AIDS menace as well as to the problem of decay, while actively pursuing the mainstream as an strategy to foster governmental responsiveness and policy impact. As it is shown in the chapter, a direct correlation can be found between the founding ideas of this new generation and the decisions that reformist organisations taken in the political realm. In presenting gay and lesbian people as forming an aggrieved minority, the seeds were planted for a brand-new political outlook, based on the ideas of collective rights and identity protection. In the last part of the chapter I tackle the last empirical question emerging from chapter 3: namely, why reformism prevailed. It is argued in that section that such a question needs to be addressed both from the perspective of a further strengthening of the community roots of the gay and lesbian movement and also from the perspective of shifting attitudes on the part of the political elite.

The thesis concludes in **Chapter 6**, which provides a summary of the empirical findings of the thesis as well as an assessment of the theoretical implications of these findings. There I stress the need to observe the question of movement change from the generational perspective, which in conjunction with conventional explanations based on changes in the environment, offers students

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of social movements and protest a new way of observing how social movements negotiate reality.

CHAPTER 2: MEMBERSHIP IN THE POLITY. THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter situates the empirical questions of this thesis in their proper theoretical context. Social movement theory is an integrated body of scholarly thinking preoccupied with the understanding of collective protest and social movements. As a field of scholarly work, social movement theory figures in central debates in sociology and political science. It takes from sociology its concern about the motivations for, and social bases and organisation of, social movements as collective behaviour (Rootes, 1997: 81). From political science, it takes the concern about the role of exogenous, contextual variables in shaping the life-course of collective protest. The chapter begins with a brief introduction to social movement theory. A very eclectic view, originated in a consensus among formerly opposed schools of thinking, governs research in the field. As a consequence, social movement theory has arrived at set of agreed upon, fundamental theoretical constructs that guide scholarly practice in the field. This basic “tool-kit” consists of three main ideas: structures of mobilisation, political opportunities and framing processes. Together, they build what is primarily a theory of social movement emergence.

I move in the second section to the discussion of the idea of membership in the polity. The *pursuit of membership* is the chief dependent variable of my analysis. Thus, a clear conceptualisation of what gaining membership represents is clearly in order. The

section begins with an important note as to whether or not the phenomenon that I try to analyse is akin to the idea of institutionalisation. Then, the discussion touches on the categorisation of membership as a procedural outcome. Lastly, the tests of membership that a social movement needs to overcome if its bid for membership is to appear credible are considered. Having discussed the main aspects of the dependent variable, I move in the third and fourth sections to the review of causal arguments. Section three considers the extent to which popular causal stories in the literature of social movements are of any use to explain why a social movement pursues membership. More concretely, four arguments are discussed – namely, the institutionalisation, the abeyance, the opportunities and the facilitating factors arguments. Under that heading, I consider both the bearing of unexpected shocks and the role of diffusion.

All of these arguments offer elements to organise the inquiry on the transformation of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement into a polity member. However, they are unable to provide a finished picture of that transformation. The fourth section introduces what I call the “generations argument”. Some works on the American women’s movement have suggested the possibility that generational replacement might be a driving force for social movement change. I build on these propositions to outline a coherent argument about the nature of *political* generations as the centrepiece of interpretative politics.

2.1. A brief introduction to social movement theory: the basic tool-kit

Research in social movements and collective protest has become a buoyant academic industry. The relevance of contentious politics both for the shaping of contemporary democracies (see McAdam et al, 2001), and for the life course of those who participate in them only reinstates the case for further

work, theoretical and empirical alike, on these matters. Meyer and Tarrow (1998: 4) define social movements as:

“Collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities.”

This is a widely accepted definition, which emphasises four basic elements.¹⁴ Firstly, social movements constitute *collective* efforts where a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations interact informally with one another (Diani, 1992: 8). Indeed, more than anything else, social movements represent spaces of interaction and networking (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 112). Secondly, participants in collective protest are linked by a collective identity. Collective identities, defined as “the shared definition of a group that derives from its members common interests and solidarity” (Taylor, 1989: 771), are central to the movement experience: by the creation of a collective consciousness, they define the boundaries of a social movement, stipulating who is to be a member and who is not (Pizzorno, 1978; Melucci, 1989); also, they confer meaning to collective action (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Tarrow, 1992); moreover, they induce further collective action (Taylor and Whittier, 1992). Thirdly, social movements exist to exercise *sustained* interaction with other collective actors in the polity. Thus, episodic instances of protest do not qualify as a social movement. Finally, this

¹⁴ Despite the consolidation of this field of research, the doubts about “just what kind of thing a social movement is” have never disappeared completely (Oliver and Myers, 2000: 4). In particular, scholars have been troubled with the distinction between social movements, interest groups and NGOs. Also, whether or not social movements use distinctive modes of protest has been a subject for heightened debate.

interaction is based upon conflict and takes place outside the institutional sphere of life.

This last feature is crucial to understand the extent to which the transformation of social movements into members of the polity is a relevant phenomenon. The birth of the social movement sector needs to be observed, on the one hand, as a response to the excesses of the modernisation process (Dalton et al, 1990:4), and, on the other hand, as a logical consequence of an unequal distribution of power in society. The pioneering “new” social movements of the 1960s and early 1970s conceived their mission as a quest to raise the voices of socially and politically subordinated people (Darnovsky et al, 1995:vii); that is to say, peoples who needed to break with traditional values of the capitalist society but, however, could not do so through conventional means (Tarrow, 1996: 874; Flacks, 1995: 251; Klandermans, 1991:28; Offe, 1990; Jenkins, 1985: xiii; Tilly, 1984: 306; Zald and Ash, 1966: 329). Thus, participation in collective protest emerged as an alternative channel for the involvement of citizens in politics, a form of protesting that was radically different from the one political parties, trade unions or pressure groups offered.¹⁵

Three pillar concepts, mobilising structures, political opportunities and framing processes, are customarily employed to address research questions in the field of social movements. This is the classic social movement agenda, a basic tool-kit built on four decades of scholarly production on this area (Benford and Snow, 2000: 612; McAdam et al, 2001; McAdam et al, 1996).

¹⁵ From a Weberian perspective, the activities propelled by the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s can be seen as a challenge to the division between the political and non-political arenas that was meant to lie at the heart of the modernization process of western societies (Weber, 1947).

Firstly, the concept of *mobilising structures*, which refers to the internal world of social movements, is a legacy of the pioneering school of the “mobilisation of resources” (McCarthy, 1996; McCarthy and Zald, 1979; Jenkins, 1983). Following the inroads of the civil rights and other leftist movements, resource mobilisation theorists defended a view of social movements as normal aspects of political life; movements were seen as rational efforts organised by movement entrepreneurs that aimed to foster social and political change on behalf of grieved communities. As part of the emphasis to legitimise the study of social movements, resource mobilisation stressed the significance of organisational bases, resource accumulation, and collective coordination for popular political actors. It was proven that there was ample choice at the time of organising protest, and that this choice bore consequences (W. Gamson, 1990; see also McAdam et al, 2001:15; McCarthy and Zald, 1979; Zald, 1987; and Oberschall, 1973).

Resource mobilisation shook the ground on which studies of social movement had been built. In observing with the greatest care the hidden organisational mechanisms that set protest into motion, a radically new blueprint for the understanding of collective protest was proposed. Alas, by the same token resource mobilisation theorists made a serious mistake: having attributed too much weight to movement-controlled variables, resource mobilisation ended up ignoring the full scope of the implications of political circumstances on the genesis and development of social movements. A host of new students of collective protest, who situated social movements in the context of a shifting and interactive political environment, filled this gap. These efforts resulted in the so-called “political process approach” to social movements (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982). The emphasis on *political opportunities*, an idea that refers to the manifold political characteristics of an State that shape the life-course of social movements, is one of the greatest contributions of this strand of thinking (Della Porta and Diani 1999: 195; Rootes, 1997; Kriesi et al, 1992; Brockett, 1991;

Kitschelt, 1986; McAdam, 1982). Also set this approach the scene for the systematic study of the power relations between social movements, other constituted collective actors, and governments, all in the context of a given political system (McAdam et al, 2001: 10-13; Lo, 1992: 230; Tilly, 1978: 98, 117). We will go back to this important distinction later on in this chapter.

The idea of framing processes complements the theoretical arsenal of social movement theory. As in the case of the political process approach, the discussion about frames, frame alignment and framing processes originated in the excesses of resource mobilisation (McClurg, 1992). Frame theory sought to provide a more nuanced understanding of social movement formation, by shedding new light over the question of why individuals engage in costly collective pursuits. On the one hand, resource mobilisation suffered from “hyperrationality” (Zald, 1987: 330), assuming that both grass-roots participants and movement organisers always behaved rationally. On the other hand, resource mobilisation theorists saw the basic problems that motivate the genesis of social movements, the “grievances”, as objective realities, social data unmolested by the tyranny of perception, interpretation and meaning. A host of writers familiar with the basic tenets of social psychology and sympathetic with the defence of the role of collective identities in the life of social movements disputed these assumptions.

Firstly, it was argued that movement politics are deeply embedded in emotions, feelings and interpretation (McAdam et al, 2001: 15). Within a social movement, rationality cohabits, sometimes peacefully, sometimes not, with irrationality. Secondly, it was argued that grievances were prime targets of interpretation, perception and meaning (Tarrow, 1992: 117). Social movements are agents of meaning and, as such, they are deeply embroiled in what has been referred to as the “politics of signification” (Hall, 1982, quoted in Benford and Snow, 2000: 613). In this signifying work, social movements give birth to the so-called frames of collective protest, schemata of interpretation of reality that affect

the likelihood of individual participation (Benford, 1997 and 1993a; Snow and Benford, 1988).

As Benford contends (1993a: 205), “the extent to which a movement is able to overcome the free rider dilemma can depend on how successful its social movement organisations are in fostering a sense of severity, urgency, efficacy and propriety”. Moreover, framing guides the life-course of the social movement. Indeed, in producing mobilising ideas, social movements not only foster ideological connections between social movement organisations and potential individuals; but also they launch interpretations of reality, based on self-made diagnoses of problems and interpretations of political and social events (Whittier, 2002; Tarrow, 1998; Gamson and Meyer, 1996; McAdam 1994). This is of crucial importance in the context of this research, where we will see the extent to which collective ideas are a powerful source of evaluation and interpretation of external and internal events.

2.2. Pursuing membership: the dependent variable

This thesis represents an attempt to explain why and how a particular social movement has negotiated its transformation into a polity member. Thus, the “pursuit of membership” is the chief dependent variable of this analysis. I dedicate this section to fleshing out this variable. Firstly, I tackle a seemingly superficial question; how to name my variable? This is relevant in so far as my concerns *appear* to touch on the issue of institutionalisation of protest (indisputably one of the hottest concepts in current debates on social movement research). Secondly, I discuss the concept of membership in light of the debate as to whether or not membership amounts to something other than a change in “procedure”. Lastly, I discuss a number of issues regarding the conceptualisation of social movements as candidates for membership in the polity.

2.2.1. Membership and institutionalisation

Only recently – and motivated by an obvious transformation in the role of social movements in contemporary societies - the literature on social movements has started to consider the transformation of social movements into polity members. It is so recent that even basic questions have not been properly dealt with yet. I call my dependent variable the pursuit of membership. In doing so, I seek to capture the element of shifting preferences and motivations that are associated with the redefinition of a movement's outward political identity. Having said that, I should also note that alternative terminologies can be found in the literature. Zald (1987: 329-331) and Lo (1992), for instance, write about “accessing the polity”. Giugni (1998b) has opted for the idea of “incorporation” of social movements, while Rochon and Mazmanian (1993) prefer the idea of “inclusion”. Considering the literature on the gay and lesbian movement, two ideas have particularly appeal. On the one hand, the concept of “mainstreaming” is used to denote those scenarios where collective protest pursues the defence of “social, legal, cultural, and political legitimation, rather than social change” (Vaid, 1995: 36; see also Phelan, 2001 and Rayside, 1998). In pursuing the mainstream, social movement are said to become political insiders. On the other hand, the idea of “assimilation” has been widely used to denote a “let-us-in approach to politics” (Rimmerman, 2002:2; Plummer, 1999: 144; see also Epstein, 1999; Altman, 1993 and Marotta, 1981).

At a general level, all these ideas find elements of similarity with the concept I prefer, and, eventually, they could all be used indistinguishably. This, however, does not apply to the idea of co-optation. In the context of social movements, *co-optation* normally refers to those situations where established institutional actors integrate some elements of a social movement within its own organic structure, to the extent that these elements cease to belong to the co-opted social movement. Co-optation is foremost of all a defensive mechanism, used by the powerful to neutralize a given

threat (Bertocchi and Spagat, 2001). The term, therefore, involves a great deal of active interference in the life course of a social movement and, because of that, has less general use. Having said that, special attention needs to be paid the oft-cited concept of *institutionalisation*. Is the idea of pursuing membership akin to the institutionalisation of social movements? Is it safe to hold these two concepts as equivalents?

At times, it appears so. Indeed, many authors are turning to the concept of institutionalisation to encapsulate the transformation of social movements into a “normal element” of the political system (Jimenez, 2002 and 1999; Seippel, 2001; Meyer, 2001; McAdam et al, 2001; McCarthy and McPhail, 1998; Meyer and Tarrow, 1998; McAdam, 1998; Tarrow, 1998; Van der Heijden, 1997). In this sense, institutionalisation is presented as a change in status (Giugni, 1998b) and, as such, it fits nicely with the concerns of this thesis. However, the idea of institutionalisation has also been used in a different way; namely, to refer to a very specific “trajectory” that social movement organisations can follow. Here, institutionalisation not only refers to a given outcome, but also to a coherent chain of events and causal connections that organise the life-course of social movement organisations.

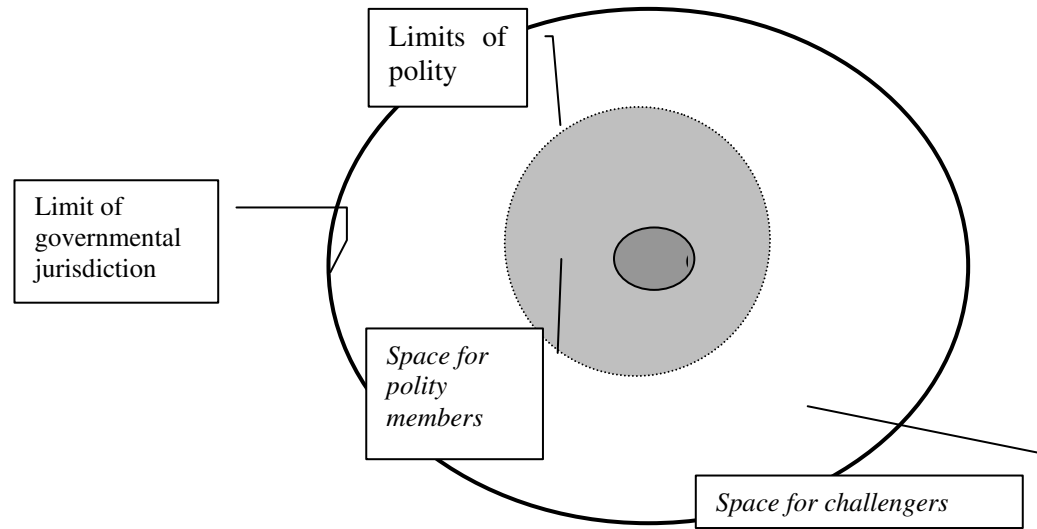
Basically, the institutionalisation argument proposes a linear evolutionary path whereby organisational growth sets a series of changes into motion. As collective protest lasts over time, social movement activists set up organisations to sustain protest (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 138). If these organisations consolidate, the gap between leaders and grass-roots activists widens (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998: 19). This is what Kriesi calls “internal structuration” (1996: 154-155), a process clearly embedded in Michel’s propositions about the longitudinal evolution of organisations. Internal structuration involves the professionalisation of staff and leaders, the centralization of decisions, and the very formalisation of the categories of leaders and members (Van de Heijden, 1997: 32; Jimenez, 1999: 165). As the argument goes, internal structuration fosters “external” structuration, that is, the abandonment of disruptive modes of

protest and the pursuit of “reform goals” (Seippel, 2001: 133; Duyvendak, 1995a: 151; McAdam, 1982: 58). In other words, organisational formalisation induces political conservatism. The institutionalisation argument comes full circle by suggesting that externally structured organisations gain access to the polity. At this point, the proponents of the institutionalisation thesis disagree as to what happens after access is achieved. The traditional position is that institutionalised movements become pressure groups (Kriesi, 1996: 156; Ibarra, 1995: 53). Recent works, however, refuse to accept that institutionalisation signals the end of social movements (Jiménez, 2002 and 1999; Seippel, 2001; Giugni, 1998b); institutionalised members can remain independent and ready to engage in contentious politics.

The main problem with the institutionalisation thesis is its biased empirical basis. Most of the references to the institutionalisation of social movements are drawn uniquely on the experience of the environmental movement. Indeed, many environmental movement organisations, in their road towards substantive impact, have transformed into pressure groups (Jordan and Malhoney, 1997). Outside the environmental movement, however, social movements usually struggle to keep their structures of mobilisation running. And, thus, a question emerges: is the institutionalisation argument of any use to describe the life-course of those social movements where internal activities, connected with the production of culture and collective identities, are as important as political campaigning? And from a different perspective, should we assume that institutionalisation is the only trajectory that causes access to the polity to happen?

Here the answer is a negative one. There are manifold situations where social movements have pursued membership, not as a response of organisational consolidation, or internal and external structuration, but instead as a response to difficult times. Often, weak movements redefine their outward political priorities to compensate for lack of resources and the scarcity of opportunities. Does this mean that the institutionalisation thesis is to be discarded altogether? Far from that: institutionalisation is

Figure 2.1: Political regimes



indeed one of the routes towards membership. Broadly speaking, it explains well the situation of those social movements that aim for policy reform and have developed a wide network of structure of mobilisations in the course of a wave of mobilisation. However, institutionalisation is only one among the possible routes that terminate in membership in the polity, one that is particularly ill suited to explain the evolution of in-crisis social movements. This is why I insist on distinguishing between the pursuit of membership and the institutionalisation of social movements and protest.

2.2.2. *Membership as political voice*

The pursuit of membership is a metaphor that evokes a drastic reshaping of a movement's outward political identity. It is a master-strategy that involves the decision to break with the past and negotiate the interaction with friends, enemies, the state and society from a brand new standpoint. In essence, it involves the conscious decision to abide by the rules of the political game. Any discussion of the differences between members and challengers (and the mechanisms that permit challengers to become members) should start with a presentation of social movements as constituted collective actors in a given political regime (see chart 2.1). In any political regime, governments represent the helm of power, the ultimate source of political decisions in their area of jurisdiction (see McAdam et al, 2001: 11-13).¹⁶ Governments are surrounded by a plurality of constituted collective actors (and subjects) that

¹⁶ This is a reading that sees public politics as consisting of "claim making interactions among agents, polity members, challengers and outside political actors" (McAdam et al, 2001: 12).

compete with one another for governmental resources, influence and power (Tilly, 1978: 98).¹⁷ Judging on the extent to which routine access to governments has been achieved, the literature distinguishes between two basic kinds of actors in the polity: challengers and members.¹⁸ Members regularly consult with governmental authorities and routinely provide input into decision-making bodies (Tilly, 1978: 117; Lo, 1992:230; McAdam et al, 2001: 12). On the contrary, challengers do not have direct access to decision-making processes.

Members dwell within the polity, that is, a space for political interaction among collective actors where illegitimate claims are not formulated, generally accepted bargaining strategies prevail and contenders frame their claims in accordance with prevailing modes of claim-making. Challengers are inhabitants of a space outside the polity, but within the limits of governmental jurisdiction, where illegitimate claims can be formulated, violence can organise protest (although with certain limits) and discourses

¹⁷ Power is thus defined as consisting of “a group’s making its interests prevail over others with which they are in conflict” (Tilly, 1978: 125).

¹⁸ Is this all? Can social movements be something other than members or challengers? More specifically, do social movements have the possibility of “switching off” from politics? Should we stick firmly to the definition of social movements outlined in first section of the chapter, such a theoretical possibility should be rejected. By definition, social movements are meant to operate in the public realm, interacting with institutions, social actors, the media and society at large in order to improve the life conditions of the constituency they represent. If movements become exclusively culture-oriented, they can no longer be addressed as social movements. A different question is whether or not *some* movement organisations can step back from politics while other organisations remain political. This is something entirely possible (Taylor, 1989).

are not bounded by dominant ideas and modes of formulating claims. These are not immutable categories. Challengers can become members, while members can eventually become challengers. The crux of the question is *why* and *how* this can happen.

An essential element of the definition of membership in the polity is the question of what amounts to “access to governments”. Ultimately, is access taken to mean the capacity to foster governmental activity? In other words, is it the capacity to provoke immediate, short-term changes what distinguishes challengers and members? In order to elaborate on this question we need to consider the distinction between procedural and substantive outcomes. In their interaction with politics, social movement organisations can bring about two outcomes. In the first place, it could happen that social movements gain a new position in the polity process. Having gained “acceptance”, a challenging group is recognised “by its antagonists as a valid spokesman for a legitimate set of interests” (W.Gamson, 1990: 28). This is what Giugni (1998b) understands as incorporation, Kitschelt (1986) as “procedural” success and Zald (1987) as gaining “standing”. In the second place, social movement organisations can “gain advantages”, an idea which encompasses the wide range of outcomes that induce some sort of (positive) change in the lives of the movement participants. In doing this, movements “transform” their environment (Giugni, 1998b), gaining “significant concessions, partly fulfilling at least one of the movement’s goals” (Lo, 1992: 230). Note that what “advantages” are remains understandably poorly defined in the literature, as different social movement organisations demand different responses from their environment, and what amounts to success in one case might well be taken as failure in others (Rochon and Mazmanian, 1993; Meyer, 2001). More to the point, there are several areas of potential success where drawing measurable indicators is a difficult thing to do, as when social movements set out to transform cultural patterns, values and/or social attitudes. However, the task is less pressing in other situations, as new

advantages crystallise into law reform, shifts in policy, changes in income, and so on.

In the view of some authors, both procedural and substantive outcomes are essential requisites for the attribution of membership (Lo, 1992:230; see also McAdam, 1982: chapter 3). However, I defend a different understanding of membership, one that sees membership as the achievement of political voice. Discussing whether or not members should be able to cause policy change adds confusion to the debate. For one thing, it should not be forgotten that, in gaining access to the deliberative process, future policy impact could be on the making. As Rochon and Mazmanian (1993: 77) contend, “the acceptance of new groups as having legitimate interests generally leads to an expansion of the consultation process that precedes the formulation of policy”. However, even when policy change is not clear, membership can be conquered. When considering how and why challengers become members we are situating the curiosity at the level of basic motivations and collective understandings about how a social group is to define its relationships with other groups in society, other institutional actors, and the state. As I will defend later on, it is a question of deciding between pragmatism and the utopia.

Thus, I see polity members as contenders for power who have achieved “recognition” of their collective rights to wield power over the government, and have “developed routine ways of exerting those rights” (Tilly, 1978: 125). Members are not defined by their alleged capacity to woo government, but instead by their entitlement to exercise political voice. Members have been recognised as legitimate spokespersons on behalf of a given set of interests and, as such, they are entitled to participate in the polity process. In the language of chart 2.1, membership involves a change of scenery, a whole new political identity that organises the interaction with other polity members from a new perspective. On the contrary, challengers are not recognised as legitimate bearers of claims, and as such their actions are met with

opposition. In Tilly's words (*ibid.*), a challenger "contends without routine or recognition".

2.2.3. *Social movements and the pursuit of membership*

Rather than being viewed as a natural development, the decision by a given social movement to seek membership in the polity should be treated as something problematic, i.e., as something to be explained. Indeed, in many ways, the idea of social movements becoming members of the polity is a paradox: social movements were born to problematise institutional, insider politics, not to be part of them (Flacks, 1995: 255-256).¹⁹ The fact that the pursuit of membership brings about internecine disputes strengthens this impression that the pursuit of membership is a course of action that in many ways violates the essence of the movement experience. It suffices to say by now that to enter the polity, any challenger needs to abide by the rules of the political game. And in that game, prudence, a willingness to arrive at compromises, and a shortsighted understanding of social and political change are much appreciated virtues (Bernstein, 2002: 421; Meyer and Tarrow, 1998: 6; Tarrow, 1998: 208; McAdam, 1998: 234; Duyvendak, 1995a: 25). In other words, in order to pursue membership, social movements must strategize, i.e., they must

¹⁹ Such was the normative weight of the identification of social movements as "agents of social change" (Boggs, 1986) that a good number of social movement scholars stubbornly refused to accept that the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s were, in the 1980s, redefining their outward political identity. Many even thought that Michel's "iron law of oligarchy" (1962) could be transcended at last. This helps explain why the transformation of social movements into members of the polity has failed to attract scholarly attention before.

debate “how to balance their beliefs about what is possible with their views on what matters, what compromises are acceptable, and who they are (their collective identity)” (Whittier, 2002: 299).

The real problem is that not everyone who participates in social movements is ready to strategize. This is the time to remember that it is a fallacy to conceive of a social movement as a coherent decision-making entity (Oliver and Myers, 2000: 4; see also Gamson and Meyer, 1996: 283). Instead, social movements are a “broadly based overlapping cluster of arenas of collective activity lodged in social worlds in which change is accomplished” (Plummer, 1999: 137). Thus, internal conflict is inextricably linked to participation in social movements. At times, internal conflict and factionalization paralyse collective action, although they might well serve as a vehicle for movement’s continuity (Schwartz, 2002: 157; Plummer, 1999). Anyhow, and in the absence of a general theory of internal conflict, it is plausible to suggest that schisms and internal dissent will be more severe the more the debated questions relate to founding issues, such as the definition of the participants’ common “we” or the ultimate purpose of collective action.

In relation to the issue of membership, there will always be those that oppose membership along with those who favour it. I call the former “utopian” activists and the latter “pragmatic” activists.²⁰ Pragmatic activists are willing to strategise, whereas

²⁰ The distinction between utopians and pragmatic activists is *not* the prevailing way of referring to the basic positions that activists can take at the time of facing the question of how political and social change should be pursued. Taylor and Whittier (1992), for instance, distinguish between “liberals” and “assimilationists”, while Plummer differentiates “liberals” and “radicals”. Epstein (1999) distinguishes between those peoples and groups pursuing a “mainstream liberal model of identity politics” versus those that prefer “non-identity politics based on difference”. Bernstein

utopians are not; in the trade-off between ideological purity and instrumental success, pragmatic activists favour the latter, while utopians prefer the former. Both views coexist within a social movement at any given point in time (Lo, 1992: 232). Moreover, it is likely that they will be distinctly organised around different structures of mobilisation: cohabitation under a common roof might prove to be a daunting task for activists with markedly divergent views as to what is the ultimate purpose of militancy (see, for instance, Whittier, 1995 and Taylor and Whittier, 1992).²¹

Building on the foregoing discussion, I can now assert that the question of why and how social movements pursue membership can be reframed into two related concerns; namely, in the first place, why a pragmatic position develops within a social movement and, in the second place, why the utopians are outclassed. These are indeed the basic questions that I will address in the forthcoming chapters. However, before moving to that important task, one last issue needs to be addressed in this section. How do social movements pursue membership? What kind of changes should challengers operate to conquer the right to use political voice? In other words, what kind of *tests* are social

(2001) has recently differentiated between “cultural activists” and “political reformists”. Rimmerman (2002) and Engel (2001) prefer the opposition between “liberationists” and “assimilationists”. Lastly, Vaid (1995) and Rayside distinguish between “liberationists” and those pursuing “legitimation”. Nevertheless, in all cases the attempt is to oppose an unrealistic, yet ideologically pure understanding of social and political change against a less rigorous, success-prone approach that is willing to negotiate and make compromises. The distinction between pragmatism and utopianism, in my view, encapsulates this essence.

²¹ However, it is not difficult to find empirical examples or large social movement organisations that, at particular times, have hosted rival factions.

movements to pass if their bid for membership is to appear credible?²²

I distinguish between three tests of membership that candidates for membership should pass (see table 2.1). Firstly, if their bid for membership is to have any credibility, social movements need to abandon “illegitimate” aspirations. Whether or not a social movement is eager to abide by the founding principles of the political system can be accurately gauged by observing what social movement organisations demands. It is extremely difficult to set objective, permanent criteria to assess the legitimacy of claims. Tilly (1978, 25) stressed the shifting nature of the criteria for membership, because:

“Each new entry or exit (in/from the polity) redefines the criteria of membership in a direction favourable to the characteristics of the present set of members.”²³

Certainly, democratic political regimes are founded upon a set of stable, basic values and principles that guide individual and collective behaviour and that are unlikely to change in the short term (Crouch, 1999; Schwartz, 1994). Claims that threaten those values are automatically rendered illegitimate. Nevertheless, the evaluation of claims does also depend on contingent, short-term circumstances, linked to prevailing moral views and panics, the ebbs and flow of the agenda of the media, and son on. Moreover, if a longitudinal perspective is taken, one cannot ignore that value systems change (Inglehart, 1990), propelled in many

²² I borrow the idea of tests of membership from Tilly (1978: 125).

²³ He went further, affirming that questions about “what features of action make actions acceptable, and what features of groups make groups acceptable” are tough, demanding empirical questions (Tilly, 1978: 110).

circumstances by the sheer existence of collective protest and by the changes in the composition of the polity.

Table 2.1. Tests of membership

	CHALLENGERS	MEMBERS
Test 1. Nature of Claims	Illegitimate claims	Legitimate claims
Test 2. Repertoire of Protest	Unconventional	Conventional
Test 3. Emancipation Model	Emancipation model is not embraced	Acceptance of Emancipation model

An example will perhaps clarify this point. In Spain, the homosexual liberation fronts that appeared between 1975 and 1977 demanded the transformation of the institution of marriage so that homosexual people could marry.²⁴ At the time, however, the very suggestion about the non-heterosexuality of marriage – in a context where women had just achieved legal contractual capacity and divorce was in the process of political negotiation – was considered, as one of my respondents recalled, “offensive, provocative and anti-social.”²⁵ It clearly appeared as an illegitimate, subversive demand, typical of an actor with no willingness to play by the rules of the institutional game. Today, however, this issue has entered the political agenda. The main political parties of the left include promises to grant same-sex couples the right to marry and public opinion is overtly favourable (Calvo, 2003). Moreover, the loyalty and legitimacy of gay and lesbian rights organisations that demand the recognition of gay

²⁴ The evidence on this issue will be discussed in chapter 3.

²⁵ Interview n° 3, Armand de Fluviá.

marriages is not questioned. So, a similar claim can be treated very differently at different points in time.

Nevertheless, a candidature for membership can still fail even if legitimate claims are pursued. Members expect challengers to be able to use the “grammar” of institutional politics; in other words, candidates for membership need to be prepared, on the one hand, to employ widely accepted bargaining strategies and, on the other hand, to speak the language that members of the polity understand. This boils down into two further tests of membership. In the first place, challengers confront the test of the “repertoires of protest”, which evaluates whether or not they are willing to employ “conventional” modes of protest. In the second place, discourses are scrutinized in order to find out whether or not a given candidate for membership aligns with the dominant emancipation model in society.

So, the second test refers to the repertoires of protest, also often called “action repertoires”. The repertoires are the “culturally encoded ways in which people interact in contentious politics” (McAdam et al, 2001: 16), i.e., the different modes of collective protest that non-governmental actors can employ to defend a given set of interests. Continuing a long tradition in political sociology focused on the types of citizen’s participation in politics, Kriesi et al (1995) distinguished between three types of modes of protest, namely conventional, unconventional and modes leading to direct democracy.²⁶ Litigation is an example of conventional protest, while rallies, marches and boycotts exemplify unconventional protest. Referendums, either official or unofficial, belong to the third category. Members evaluate whether or not a given social movement is willing to relinquish the

²⁶ A recent update of this schema has distinguished between “institutional”, “political” and “social” protest (Jiménez, 2002: 211).

generalised use of unconventional protest, particularly related to the systematic use of violence or similarly disruptive modes of protest that threaten the maintenance of public order. Membership is not concomitant with an absolute rejection of unconventional protest (see Jiménez, 1999). However, it does require an effort on the part of the challenger to promote modes of protest that members regard as valid and legitimate.

The third test relates to the compliance with the prevailing emancipation model in the polity.²⁷ Challengers are not only expected to employ conventional modes of protest; but also they must frame their demands according to the parameters set up in the polity for the formulation of claims. As citizenship theory has stated over the years, the experience of previous collective struggles, and the dynamics of political and social change end up giving form to a set of basic, fundamental rules about the optimum ways of putting up claims in the polity arena (Brubaker, 1992; Soysal, 1994). The combination of these rules nurture the emancipation model of the polity, a set of underlying principles and assumptions that help existing members evaluate whether or not claimants are willing to play by *their* rules. Here, as in the case of the two previous tests, challengers have a choice. By framing their claims in accordance with the prevailing emancipation model, they can actively work in presenting themselves as truthful, loyal participants in the institutional game. Thus, the production of discourse becomes a field of contention where the different positions regarding the question of membership will inevitably surface (Melucci, 1996: 356).

A good illustration of this argument can be found in Fillieule and Duyvendak's (1999) work on gay and lesbian activism in

²⁷ I borrow the concept from Adam et al's (1999) comparative work on the gay and lesbian movement.

France. After comparing the situation of the gay and lesbian minority in France with the American and the Dutch cases, these authors contend that the discourse and strategies of gay and lesbian organisations are powerfully moulded by prevailing “dominant political cultures”. In France, they argue, the prevailing emancipation model – anchored in the republican tradition - has traditionally forced the gay and lesbian movement to speak the language of egalitarianism (Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999: 189-190). The attempts to engage in identity, minority politics have only widened the gap between gay groups and institutional actors (see also Brubaker, 1992 and Martel, 1999). American or Dutch political cultures, however, have promoted a different emancipation model around the idea of “political minorities”. In those settings, the discourse of minority, group-specific rights should be utilized if particular social groups seek redress for cultural and political exclusion (Engel, 2001: 136).

Emancipation models are context-specific. Also, the extent to which they have become a solid, comprehensive set of rules varies according to the particular political tradition of a given country. In Spain, for instance, one cannot ignore the legacies of decades of authoritarian ruling on the patterns of political culture formation (Montero et al, 1997). Nevertheless, there is a common element that links the emancipation models of virtually every democratic system worldwide: “rights talk”. The universal consolidation of trans-national symbols based on the recognition and protection of rights is increasingly conferring an enormous weight to rights-talk as a political strategy (Soysal, 1994; Smith, 1999: 20-21). Despite domestic differences, it is becoming universally accepted that members to the polity should enter in rights-based struggles, confirming the view of rights as political resources. Thus, social movements need to be fluent in the language of rights if their bid for membership is to appear credible and truthful. The engagement of rights-talk does not confer membership on its own: today, all kinds of collective actors frame their demands, however legitimate, in the language of rights. But it is also true that the

rejection to speak the language of rights hampers the acquisition of polity membership.²⁸

2.3. Explaining the pursuit of membership

How does the literature on social movements explain the victory of utopianism over pragmatism? If we are to build up a model to explain why social movements pursue membership, which should be the leading variables? The literature is very imprecise in this regard; even the few works that have touched on the issue of social movements as candidates to membership have failed to address the question of what triggers the transformation of challengers into members. In this section, I peruse the social movements literature for popular causal arguments that have been, either explicitly or implicitly, employed to explain dimensions of movement's change. Perhaps they shed some light over the question of membership. More specifically, I review and discuss four arguments: the institutionalisation argument, the abeyance argument, the opportunities argument, and the diffusion argument. However, none of these oft-employed arguments is fully equipped to address the transformation of social movements into members of the polity in a fully satisfactory way. Thus, in the new section, and building on the findings of this thesis, I discuss the generations argument.

²⁸ The foregoing three tests of membership will be the skeleton of the presentation of the empirical evidence in chapter 3.

2.3.1. The institutionalisation versus the abeyance arguments

A basic tenet of social movement theory is that collective protest, like the economy and many social trends, unfolds cyclically. Phases of heightened social conflict across the social system are replaced by periods of demobilisation and decay (Tarrow, 1998: 141-148).²⁹ When the cycle is expanding, the number, intensity and geographical remit of protest events increase. This is also the time when most social movement organisations are likely to be born (Meyer, 2001: 13). Logically, at the other end of the cycle, protest events shrink in number, while a good number of movement organisations and related structures of mobilisation disappear. The basic implication of this reading is that the temporal location in the cycle of protest, i.e., whether a social movement is surfing a wave of mobilisation or a wave of demobilisation, should matter. It makes sense to believe that resources, threats and opportunities might vary in accordance with that location (Brockett, 1991; see also McAdam, 1996 and Tarrow, 1989).

But the literature relates membership with both mobilisation *and* demobilisation. While the institutionalisation thesis reads access as an inevitable consequence of mobilisation, what I call the “abeyance” argument relates the entrance of movements in the

²⁹ Despite the popularity of the idea of cycles, a good deal of uncertainty surrounds their functioning. For one, it is not always clear when and why the tides change. For instance, in the case of the peaks of mobilisation, it has been argued that both total success and total failure forces exhausts a wave of protest. However, what is the measure of this? Is there a something akin to a “threshold of satisfaction” that activists must overcome before feeling fully satisfied (and hence no longer interested in collective protest)? More generally, what is the role of exogenous influences in the unfolding of the cycles of protest?

polity to periods of crisis and decay. The basic traits of the institutionalisation thesis were reviewed in the previous section. We saw that institutionalisation is commonly viewed as a linear, unstoppable trajectory that affects movements with a dominant instrumental, outwardly oriented purpose. Organisational expansion triggers the institutionalisation sequence, and it terminates, in the opinion of some, in the transformation of movements into pressure groups or, in a different reading, in the entrance of social movements in the polity. For our present purposes, the most important implication of this hypothesis is the suggestion that membership is something that exclusively (and necessarily) takes place in booming times, when growing mobilisation fosters organisational expansion and consolidation.

We saw as well that the institutionalisation thesis has been largely built on the analysis of the environmental movement. But what happens when the perspective is enriched with the experiences of different social movements? Not surprisingly, a radically different argument emerges: at times, membership is pursued when social movements face difficult times. During inhospitable times, social movements can accept the protection of hosting institutions that, in exchange of collaboration and support, demand loyalty and subordination (Tarrow, 1990).³⁰ When this happens, challenging social movements become (perhaps provisionally) “movements-in-abeyance”.

³⁰ Although we still lack a comprehensive theory of the interaction between social movements and political parties, some authors have pointed at a number of resources that the former can share with the latter. Tarrow (1998: 88), for instance, is of the opinion that “challengers can make politicians appear as the tribunes of the people”. More systematically, Maguire (1995: 203-204) suggests that movements and political parties can exchange resources of four kinds: organisational, constituency, cultural and policy.

The idea of abeyance structures originates in important works on the American women's movement (Rupp and Taylor, 1987; Taylor, 1989; Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Whittier, 1995). In its original formulation, an abeyance structure is deemed to be a particular structure of mobilisation (often a movement organisation) to which the most committed of the movement's member base will retreat during difficult times. In this reading, abeyance structures become micro-universes where collective identities and mobilising ideas are kept alive with the hope that a more favourable tide can eventually arrive. In short, in-crisis social movements do not always disappear: much to the contrary, they are often able to find a way to overcome difficult times while remaining political.

Building on these ideas, Ruzza (1997) studied the Italian pacifist movement during a period of crisis and decay. The Italian peace movement during the 1980s was seriously affected by a crisis of demobilisation and the related maladies of a shrinking militant base and lack of policy influence. This movement, like the American women's movement during the post-war period, managed to avoid extinction. However, different were the means: while American women's groups during the 1940s and 1950s hibernated in non-partisan movement-controlled structures of mobilisation, Italian peace organisations accepted the invitation of "housing" institutions, namely the Italian Communist Party and the Catholic Church, which offered protection and resources in lieu of political collaboration. In doing so, the Italian peace movement did not disappear. However, it became embroiled in the dynamics of electoral competition and partisan politics, particularly those of the Italian Communist Party. Ruzza's view offers a more flexible understanding of the abeyance argument: playing still with the capacity of social movements to navigate difficult waters, his analysis pointed at the plurality of forms that abeyance structures might adopt.

Jointly approached, the two arguments that I have discussed in this section provide us with interesting approaches to the question of membership. For one, it becomes evident that an inquiry on the

causes of the pursuit of membership needs to pay some attention to the location of a social movement in the cycle of protest; also, it is reasonable to stay alert to the possible influences that specific organisational inertia could have on the definition of a movement's outward political identity. However, the very fact that these arguments arrive at sharply divergent propositions casts doubts over the extent to which the temporal location in the cycle can explain the incorporation of a social movement. If both mobilisation and demobilisation can lead towards membership, it is clear that we need something else to build a coherent explanatory model.

2.3.2. The opportunities argument

Is the pursuit of membership in any way associated with changes in the political context? Is it plausible to suspect that the definition of a movement's outward political identity is shaped by the ebb and flow of the environment? If so, to what extent? And what kind of changes could have this effect? Testing the opportunities argument is the way to work these questions out. The literature on social movements has coined the term "structure of political opportunities" to encapsulate the external circumstances that impinge on the life-course of collective protest. When talking about "the structure", the attention is directed towards the complexity of this environment and, consequently, more than a single variable, the structure of political arguments should be regarded as a cluster of many single variables, each of which is meant to tap a different dimension of context (Tarrow, 1988: 430; Rootes, 1997: 94).

Note that, in spite of the popularity of this construct, students of collective protest have found it difficult to agree on the specific dimensions that the structure is meant to cover. A first cause of this disagreement is the variety of uses of the construct. The dimensions of political opportunity vary depending on the question one is seeking to answer (McAdam, 1996: 29) and,

consequently, the formulations of the structure of opportunities have varied according to the different research questions. For instance, the changes that grant opportunities for mobilisation do not always coincide with the changes that permit movements to influence policy (Meyer, 2002: 15). Also, it appears that different social movements “activate” different structures of opportunities (Duyvendak and Giugni, 1995; Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). To put this differently, some social movements are more sensitive to the bearing of particular elements of the political system than to others. Thus, the definition of the dimensions of context that matter inevitably varies according to the particular social movement studied.³¹ Thirdly, it remains unclear the extent to which cultural facilitating factors, such as a worldwide increase in the propensity of protesting or the development of new empowering ideas in the international arena, are part of the domestic structure of political opportunities. While some authors prefer to liberate the structure of political opportunities from non-political elements (McAdam, 1996), one can also find formulations of the structure of political opportunities where cultural shifts play a large role (see Gamson and Meyer, 1996: 279). Lastly, there are doubts as to how “structural” the structure of political opportunities is to be. While some authors stick to a rigorous understanding of the structure, one that does not include contingent political elements (see, for instance, Rootes, 1997), some other writers find it convenient to encompass both purely

³¹ For instance, compare those social movements that engage in rights disputes (civil rights, gay and lesbian) with those social movements that demands changes in the design and/or implementation of policy (consumers, AIDS, environmental). While the former are particularly sensitive to political realignments (shifts in the composition of government, parliamentary majorities), the latter are fundamentally affected by changes affecting governmental agencies.

structural elements along with somehow volatile political variables (see, for instance, Tarrow, 1996: 54; see also Kriesi et al, 1995 and Della Porta and Rucht, 1995).

Having considered the uncertainties that remain in the definition of the structure of opportunities, in table 2.2 I set out the dimensions of context that *appear* to have a bearing on the pursuit of membership. Two main layers make for this structure. The first one – the stable element, what I define as “the forma institutional structure of the country”- refers to those aspects of the political system that are inert over time (Kitschelt, 1986: 58-59). Note that a stable element is part in every definition of the structure of opportunities (McAdam, 1996: 27). At this level, two types of shifts will be taken into account. Firstly, transformations that affect the basic definition of the political regime will be tracked down (i.e., “changes in the rule of the game”). A typical example is a process of regime change, where a dictatorship gives way to a democracy (or the other way round). Also, grand-scale redefinitions of the organisational structure of the country, (such as a decisive move towards territorial decentralization or a change in the electoral system), are shifts that pertain to this category. Secondly, “changes in the law” should also be observed as part of the stable element of the structure. This stands for changes in ordinary legislation that have long-lasting effects on the legal entitlements of gay and lesbian people.

A more volatile aspect of the political environment is encapsulated in the second layer. Two sub-dimensions make up for the “informal configuration of power”. On the one hand, shifts in the stability of political alignments can alter the calculations of social movement organisations. Typical examples are the emergence of divisions within the ruling elite, a victory of one particular party at a general election, or the transformation of traditional alliances (such as the one between socialist parties and trade unions). Tarrow’s work (1990, 1989) is a good case in point. Tarrow shows that that cycle of insurgency that affected Italian society during the 1960s was very much the consequence of internecine disputes between the Italian Communist and Socialist

parties. On the other hand, one needs to pay close attention to the presence/absence of allies and enemies (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996: 1630). Allies can share resources with a social movement, expose movement activists to new ideas or collaborate with movement organisations to place particular issues in the political agenda (Della Porta and Rucht, 1995: 236). Similarly, but in a different sense, the existence of powerful enemies has a bearing on the life-course of a social movement. The so-called “countermovements” increasingly use social movement tactics, discourse and protocols of action to oppose a social movement. In doing so, they seek to influence political authorities in particular, and society as a whole, to ignore the claims of the opposed social movement.

Table 2.2. The Structure of Political Opportunities

Main layers*	Sub-dimensions	Examples
<i>The formal institutional structure of a country.</i>	-Changes in the rules of the game. -Changes in the law	-Processes of regime change; Major Constitutional Reform. -Reforms in civil rights and welfare legislation.
<i>The informal configuration of power</i>	-Stability of political alignments -Alterations in the structures of friends and enemies	-Change in Parliamentary Majorities -Attitudinal shifts within particular parties; shifts in the agenda of the media. Appearance of new enemies

*Following McAdam’s (1996) advice, I adhere to a purely political definition of the structure of political opportunities. Cultural variables, related to the emergence of new ideas, symbols and cultural trends must be part of the analysis. However, for the sake of the analysis, their place is not within a loosely defined structure of opportunities.

As a whole, the opportunities argument is a powerful one. Past success in shedding light over a vast array of research questions

proof that. Considering this, the three key empirical questions that I discuss (why the Spanish homosexual liberation movements was revolutionary rather than radical; why pragmatism arose; why pragmatism prevailed) will be observed through the lenses of the foregoing structure of opportunities. However, it should be noted that a critical perspective is consistently taken for, despite its formidable powers, the opportunities argument demands some adjustments. I suggest three arenas where further improvements would be welcome. In the first place, what is “an opportunity for membership”? Linking to the discussion of the influence of the temporal location in the cycle of protest, is membership the consequence of “positive” or “negative” shifts in the structure? Does the consolidation of powerful counter-movements increase the odds of pursuing membership? Or is it the other way round? What kinds of changes in the law make a social movement reconsider its outward political preferences? And so on.

In the second place, the environment cannot be seen as unresponsive to movement activity. In other words, the structure of political opportunities does not remain unaltered when collective protest unfolds. Thus, the application of the opportunities argument should be adjusted to this circumstance, remaining alert to the capacity of social movements, by introducing new issues onto the agenda, sharing resources with particular members or influencing public opinion, to create opportunities for action and/or success (Meyer, 2001: 19; Gamson and Meyer, 1996: 276).³² Lastly, the issue of interpretation needs

³² A particularly interesting avenue for further research in the issue of movements’ “success” is the analysis of social movements as activators of political issues. As Meyer and Staggenborg (1996: 1638) have noted, “movements sometimes succeed in forcing public attention on issues by creating or exploiting critical, often unexpected, events.

to be brought to the fore. Do social movements react automatically to the ebb and flow of the environment? After more than two decades of negligence on this issue, it is now widely accepted that perception and interpretation mediate between the shifts in the environment and the behaviour of social movements (Whittier, 2002; Meyer, 2001; Sawyers and Meyer, 1999; Gamson and Meyer, 1996; McAdam, 1996 and 1994). Opportunities need to be identified and framed as such. Of course, they can also be missed. As McAdam (1994: 39) puts it, the causal importance of expanding political opportunities “is inseparable from the collective definitional processes by which the meaning of these shifts is assigned and disseminated”.

This is unquestionably one of the most promising avenues for new research on social movements. The characterization of social movements as interpreters, and shapers, of their political environment invites a whole new curiosity about how these interpretations take form. What are the sources of interpretation? Thus far, the literature has failed to tap into this crucial question. To the best of my knowledge, the literature has not gone beyond general statements that associate interpretation with a broad plethora of causal processes.³³ More to the point, how does the interpretative process blend with the bearing of contextual and internal influences? Or, in other words, what is the reach of interpretation? I aim to address these questions in this thesis. As we will see in the forthcoming chapters, the transformation of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement has been powerfully anchored

Various types of events can focus attention on issues and provide impetus for social movement mobilisation”.

³³ Whittier (2002: 299), for instance, argues that interpretation grows “from interaction within movement contexts, the ongoing conversations and relationships within the movement constitutive collective definitions, ideologies and oppositional discourses”.

in a process of interpretation of reality, guided by deeply held values and ideas, that casts some doubts over the effects of the structure of political opportunities on the decisions of social movements.

2.3.3. *Other dimensions of context*

The prevailing trend in the literature is to distinguish between those purely political elements that are clearly part of the domestic structure of political opportunities and those other dimensions of context that exhibit both cultural and political attributes.³⁴ As a whole, while the structure of political opportunities has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, much about the functioning of these “non-political” arguments remains unclear. What kinds of factors belong to this imprecise group? McAdam’s thinking on cultural opportunities, which he understands as events and processes that are likely to stimulate the elaboration of mobilising ideas, is relevant here (McAdam, 1994: 39). Closer to our present concerns, I discuss two arguments that might affect the likelihood of pursuing membership, namely the bearing of *unexpected shocks* and the role of *diffusion*.

2.3.3.1. *Shocks*

In the first place, the life of social movements is inextricably linked to unexpected changes in the environment. Unexpected shocks can take manifold forms, ranging from environmental

³⁴ See, for instance, McAdam’s (1996: 25-26) discussion about facilitating factors.

disasters from epidemic outbursts. Media panics, a war declaration or the disclosure of corruption scandals are also typical examples. It is clear that this kind of changes can perform a prominent role in the genesis of collective protest. McAdam (1994: 40) relates movement emergence to the “sudden imposition of grievances”, i.e., dramatic, highly publicized, and generally unexpected events that increase public awareness of and opposition to previously accepted social conditions. However, is the pursuit of membership in any way related to sudden exogenous perturbations? An affirmative answer should rely on evidence that demonstrates the capacity of unexpected shocks to alter the distribution of power between utopians and pragmatic activists.

Existing studies on the impact of AIDS on the strategies of gay and lesbian groups worldwide suggest that the hypothesis might hold. Advancing what we will see in chapter 5, the dramatic spread of the HIV virus among gay males spawned a drastic redefinition of political priorities among American gay and lesbian organisations, to the extent that activists who had formerly refused to engage in mainstream politics drove gay organisations towards inside politics. As Adam (1995: 156; see also Oppenheimer, 1997) note, “AIDS became the impetus for a new wave of mobilisation and a new set of organisations, some of which developed unprecedented, routinized connections to state institutions, social welfare systems, and health bureaucracies”. In a different way, AIDS also affected the evolution of gay and lesbian movements in other countries. In France, for instance, it spawned a thrilling AIDS-specific social movement that ended up revamping, but not without important tensions, the moribund gay and lesbian movement (Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999: 200).

Does this hold as far as the Spanish case is concerned? It seems compulsory to test the effects of the AIDS epidemic on the strategic calculations of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement. However, are external shocks another target for interpretative politics? If opportunities must be framed as such, should we not remain attentive to the interweaving of shocks and perception? This is indeed the case since, far from what one might expect, the

eruption of AIDS as a health crisis first, and as a major moral panic afterwards, was the subject of starkly different interpretations.

2.3.3.2. *Diffusion*

Questioning the role of diffusion reveals a curiosity about the bearing of imitation, learning and the assimilation of foreign ideas. Is the decision to pursue membership in any way affected by the rationalization of previous experiences? Is the redefinition of the outward political identity of a social movement in any way affected by the assimilation of ideas and prior examples? This curiosity stems, on the one hand, from a wealth of data that reveals great similarities among apparently different social movements and, on the other, from insightful developments in political sociology and political science that point at the capacity of ideas to spawn institutional and organisational change (Ruzza, 2000; Soysal, 1994).

On the diffusion of ideas among social movements, two situations must be distinguished. In the first situation, in a given country, some movements might imitate the tactical, organisational and ideological tools of others, particularly if they belong to the same “family of movements” (McAdam, 1995: 218; Della Porta and Rucht, 1995).³⁵ An oft-cited example is the case of the appropriation of the cultural symbols and the language of the black struggle in the United States by several social movements, including gay and lesbian organisations (Engel, 2001: 133;

³⁵ Della Porta and Rucht (1995: 232) define a movement family as “a set of coexisting movements that, regardless of their specific goals, have similar basic values and organisational overlaps, and sometimes may even enjoin for common campaigns”.

Cruikshank, 1992: 63). The civil rights movement designed a resonant set of codes, tactics, symbols and language that other social groups seeking redress readily assimilated (McAdam, 1994: 41-42). In this scenario, it is common to distinguish between the so-called “initiator” movements and the “spin-off” ones (McAdam, 1995). In many ways, the gay and lesbian movement is the quintessential example of an spin-off.³⁶

The second scenario features one particular social movement (say the gay and lesbian movement), which displays similarities across borders, perhaps as a result of what McAdam and Rucht (1993) call the “cross-national diffusion of movement ideas”. This is a phenomenon of relevance in the particular case of the international gay and lesbian movement, although it is by no means restricted to this case (see Giugni, 1998c: 97-98). Adam et al (1999b: 368-370), in a path-breaking essay on the comparison among gay and lesbian movements across the world, stress that transnational diffusion is an important facilitating condition for movement development. Although domestic idiosyncrasies should never be ignored, these authors find manifold instances where gay movements have learnt from each other, resulting in a social movement that despite domestic differences, exhibits remarkable similarities worldwide in terms of evolutionary path, goals and discourses (see also Adam, 1995).

³⁶ McAdam (1995) is right in demanding a serious consideration of this distinction. As he argues, the bulk of social movement theory is based on the case of initiator movements, those that need to face the blend of opportunities, organisational and framing decisions that spawn the genesis of collective protest. Spin-off movements, however, arrive when the structure has been altered, when resources are mobilized and master frames have been launched (Snow and Benford, 1992). Thus, imitation appears to be a central explanatory factor in those movements that do *not* lead to a particular cycle of contention.

In order to understand how diffusion works, in either of the two foregoing scenarios, three seemingly simple questions must be addressed: who are the actors linked up by diffusion, what is the thing “diffused” and, lastly, how diffusion works. Firstly, in the first scenario, diffusion brings together movements that belong to the same movement family. There, an initiator movement sets the pace that a number of off-shots will follow. In the cross-national scenario, diffusion is largely dependent upon the attribution of similarity, diffusion being more likely to take place when movements are institutionally equivalent (McAdam and Rucht, 1993: 63-64). In general, similarity is evaluated in relation to common “issues, themes and goals” (Giugni, 1998c: 90). Note, however, that the attribution of similarity is “a product of social construction rather than automatic identification” (McAdam and Rucht, 1993: 64).

Secondly, in relation to the thing that is diffused, McAdam and Rucht (1993, 66) offer a suggestive argument: adopters borrow from the transmitter a collective identity and a way of defining problems. In fact, this fits well with the prevailing understanding of cycles of protest, which are generally regarded as periods of heightened contention where initiator movements spread out, via the elaboration of master frames, recipes for action, diagnoses of reality, and a given understanding of the action repertoire (Snow and Benford, 1992). The answer to the third question is hardly as satisfactory. Evidently, for diffusion to take place, some channels of transmission are necessary, which will allow for the flow of information. In the national scenario, the literature stresses the role of social networking (McAdam and Rucht, 1993: 62) and the mass media (Giugni, 1998c: 92) as channels of communication. In the international scenario, the existence of international organisations is frequently signalled as the channel of diffusion *par excellence*. However, this does not account for the diffusion of ideas when international organisations do not exist. Even if we know how ideas run across borders, how are these ideas assimilated and internalised? What are the meaning processes that mediate between the reception of foreign influences

and the organisation of action? The fact that ideas manage to travel across-borders does not necessarily imply that they will be assimilated and internalised. For instance, what are the rival ideas?

In sum, ideas are indeed a powerful source of change and transformation. They are an inspiration for activists, who are often more than willing to learn from foreign experiences if such a thing can help them increase the odds of success. The diffusion of ideas, diagnoses of reality and mobilising messages seem particularly operative in cases where social movements are strongly anchored in social communities. In those cases, the transmission of information might well take place at two levels, i.e., at the level of activism and at the level of communities that, by sharing cultural experiences, can resemble one another despite geographical distance. Nevertheless, a conscious effort must be made to explain how foreign influences crystallise into domestic action, because this is something that the literature has not accomplished yet. This analysis should build on a careful analysis of domestic settings and on an evaluation of the need for new ideas.

2.3.4. A summary

Four different ways of addressing the question of movements' change and transformation have been reviewed in this section. The purpose of this effort has been the identification of interesting causal stories that could shed some light on the question of the movement's membership. To summarise the discussion, table 2.3 outlines five basic propositions, some of them in conflict with each other, that stem from the foregoing presentation. Propositions 1 and 2 relate membership with the temporal location in the cycle of protest. However, in spite of sharing a common philosophy, they arrive at sharply different readings of the relationship between cycles and the pursuit of membership.

Proposition 3 reminds us about one of the basic axioms of social movement theory: context matters. Or in similarly vague terms, membership is in some way connected with a

transformation of the political scenery. Such a formulation leaves at least two major issues unresolved: in the first place, the lack of empirical works on this question leaves it unclear whether positive or negative shifts in the structure help membership to occur. As we have seen, this concern links up with the difficulties identified in the first of the propositions: we basically do not know whether membership is a remedy for bad times or a consequence of movement expansion. In the second place, the structure of opportunities neither is immutable to movement activity, nor does it escape the whims of interpretation and perception.

Table 2.3. Theoretical propositions based on the review of the literature

Proposition 1. Social movements are more likely to pursue membership if they are deeply committed to policy reform and surf a wave of mobilisation.

Proposition 2. Social movements are more likely to pursue membership if demobilisation and lack of resources jeopardize their existence.

Proposition 3. The transformation of the structure of political opportunities affects the likelihood of pursuing membership.

Proposition 4. The decision to pursue membership is the consequence of unexpected shocks, which improve the position of pragmatic activists.

Proposition 5. A given social movement is more likely to pursue membership if, (i) the majority of social movements of its “movement family” seeks membership or, (ii), sister movements in different countries are pursuing membership.

Proposition 4 keeps us alert to the influence of unexpected exogenous shocks. I suggested in the discussion the hypothesis

that unexpected shocks might be capable of altering the balance between utopian and pragmatic activists, thus sponsoring the pursuit of membership. However, the proposition is similarly incomplete. For one, shocks need to be interpreted and assimilated as threats. Secondly, the empirical situations that link shocks and the victory of pragmatism are yet to be outlined. Lastly, proposition 5 suggests that membership can be the outcome of a previous process of assimilation of ideas, symbols and cultural references. The gay and lesbian movement seems a very good case at hand to test the role of diffusion and the cross-national assimilation of ideas. Still, important questions demand an urgent response. For instance, how do ideas interweave with other causal factors? Also, how do activists assimilate foreign ideas? In what circumstances do they do so? In what ways do ideas impinge on the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of activists?

In sum, popular causal stories in the field of social movements are both helpful and insufficient. They contribute to a sketch of some of the basic factors with a stake in the pursuit of membership (movement's history, context, ideas), yet, at the same time, they are unable to offer a coherent explanation that links these factors in a systematic fashion. It is the time now to talk about political generations.

2.4. The generational perspective

In observing the question of movements' membership from the generational perspective, a way to integrate the different factors that account for the transformation of a social movement to a political insider is found. Social movements are a compendium of enduring political generations that establish relationships of cooperation and conflict with one another. Generational plurality reveals the true measure of a movement's complexity: as a collective and long-lasting phenomenon, collective action inevitably defines a multifaceted space of social interaction where meaning is produced and alternative perceptions of reality emerge.

The generational perspective, still more a promising avenue for further research rather than a consolidated strategy for sociological inquiry on social movements, helps to develop new and more refined ways of approaching the question of movement change. In this section, I firstly introduce the generational perspective, situating the pioneering work of Nancy Whittier within close to a century-long period of thinking and debating on the role of generational replacement. Then, I discuss a number of issues related to the application of this argument.

2.4.1. Defining political generations

The related ideas of generations and generational replacement pertain to the conceptual armoury of sociology. Seven decades of sociological research on generations have produced a comprehensive theory where generational replacement is signalled as a powerful source of social and political change. Mannheim ([1928] 1952) started this adventure. He argued that when an age group enters social life, its formative experiences produce a distinct and lasting perspective that guides behaviour. By encountering similar events, and by interpreting them in the same way, age groups, or at least some parts of them, become ideological units, distinctive cohorts with enduring commitments and worldviews. Thus, when new age groups replace old ones, a process of cultural and ideational change is very likely to occur. Ryder (1965) elaborated further on the conceptualisation of cohorts and cohort replacement, providing a blueprint for the application of this concept to the analysis of multiple social and

political processes.³⁷ Of particular relevance was the relative disassociation between generational formation and age groups. In Ryder's view, the focus needs to shift from the implications of the time of birth to the understanding of how particular founding events spawn socialisation dynamics.

It is striking that social movement theory has remained immune to the generational perspective. In spite of the studies that demonstrate the capacity of cohort turnover to bring about movement change, very little has been done to acquaint social movement theory with the basic propositions of the generational perspective.³⁸ That was the state of the art before Whittier's (1997, 1995) pioneering contributions to this terrain. Whittier worked on American radical feminist organisations, from the late 1960s – when this social movement was at its peak, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when radical feminism increasingly lost its public presence and political say (see also Taylor and Whittier, 1992). Breaking a long silence on the question of movement's generations, she addressed the evolution of radical feminist organisations from the perspective of incoming generations of activists. Her central tenet is that generational processes of recruitment and cohort turnover are an important micro-level mechanism by which social movements can change (Whittier, 1997: 761).

Basically, Whittier believes that every movement participant belongs to a political generation, or better yet, to a distinctive micro-cohort (which in turn is part of a broader political

³⁷ The applications of the generational perspective in sociology are manifold. They range from classic studies on the bearing of generational diversity on organisational life (Gusfield, 1957) to very recent studies on the evolution of political culture and political attitudes (Montero et al, 1997).

³⁸ These studies are mentioned in Whittier (1997: 761).

generation).³⁹ For Whittier, generations are formed on the basis of shared understandings of the world, which are generally rationalizations of previous political and social experiences. Despite the fact that collective identities are always in the process of being redefined, Whittier argues that the particular time when an activist joins a social movement – what she defines as the “coming of political age” (Whittier, 1995: 15) – imprints a basic sense of collective identity. Thus, people joining a given social movement at the same time belong to the same generation. At this incipient stage, generations are linked by primary notions about the basic purpose of collective protest, and the definition of the common “we” (Whittier, 1997: 762).

Ultimately, generational replacement induces change by moulding collective identities: as new generations come along, new definitions of the group emerge and, as a result, new political outlooks are likely to emerge (Whittier, 1997: 765). In other words, by carrying distinctive rationalized political experiences, new recruits keep the process of identity definition running. In arguing this, Whittier clearly aligns with the position that considers movement’s internal debate and interaction, conflict included, as a wealthy force for movement continuity and evolution. The strength of conflicts over collective identities, in her view, signifies the continued vitality of social movements (Whittier, 1995: 18).

The adoption of a generational perspective facilitates the formulation of sharper ways of addressing the question of movement change. Generational replacement is everything but a mechanical process whereby groups substitute each other with

³⁹ Whittier defines micro-cohorts as “clusters of participants who enter a social movement within a year or two of each other and are shaped by distinct transformative experiences that differ because of subtle shifts in the political context” (Whittier, 1997: 762).

martial discipline. On the contrary, one must be prepared from the outset to read a movement's evolution as a series of overlapping situations whereby veteran cohorts endure alongside much younger ones, even for long periods. Thus, the analysis of generational formation, continuity and decay offers a unique opportunity to substantiate some of the underlying concerns of contemporary social movement theory, namely the role of micro-mobilisation and collective identity-building in structuring the life-course of collective protest.

2.4.2. Applying the generations argument

The essential longitudinal nature of the generational perspective seems perfectly suited to address the question of membership. In doing so, a hypothesis clearly arises: a social movement pursues membership when incoming generations of activists find no esteem for a utopian worldview.⁴⁰ In order to ground the critical examination of this hypothesis (versus the rival ones outlined in the previous section) on a more solid terrain, two basic questions about the generational perspective should be clarified at one. First of all, how do generations come to age? Whittier is clear in dissociating the idea of political generations from a strict "demographic" sense of the term. Political generations are comprised of people of various ages who share similar formative experiences. In this line, I see political generations as defined by the participation in collective cognitive

⁴⁰ Note that this is by no means a tested hypothesis. Whittier used the generational perspective to demonstrate how change and continuity coexist within a social movement across time; she did not touch on the bearing of generational replacement on the definition of the outward political identity of a social movement.

maps, which are systems of beliefs, principles and assumptions about reality that, on the one hand, help activists to identify problems, and, on the other hand, dictate strategies for action. These collective cognitive maps play a vital role in my argument: the interpretation of reality is inextricably embedded in the founding collective ideas of the generation that governs the movement at each particular point in time.

However, Whittier is not immediately clear about how generations come to age. As a matter of fact, for her purposes, it is sufficient to assume that people who join a social movement at the same time will intuitively hold a similar view of the world. In my view, the process of generational formation should attract much more attention; ultimately, this process is of foremost significance at the time of seeking a detailed picture of the collective cognitive maps of a given generation. My position, built on the analysis of the Spanish case, pays attention, in the first place, to the loci of generational formation and, in the second place, to the empowering ideas that foster the acquisition of a collective consciousness. This is what I call collective identification. The combination of a sustained process of network-making and the assimilation of foreign cultural ideas, references and symbols spawns the process of generational formation.

Secondly, are generations sensitive to change and evolution? Or, in other words, is the generations argument built on the immutability of generations? Whittier's position here is that, to a large extent, activists stick to their founding ideological principles. (Whittier, 1997: 763). Adjustments and minor redefinitions are likely to occur. Also, distinctive differences can be traced among micro-cohorts pertaining to the same generation. On the whole, however, these changes do not interfere with the view of generations as possessing lasting collective identities. The empirical analysis will reveal whether or not the hypothesis of immutability holds. In other words, when talking about generational replacement, the data must clarify the extent to which generational replacement could also rest on shifting identities, i.e., on the processes of individual evolution.

Knowing how generations come to age is important because different process of generational formation lead to different definitions of collective cognitive maps. In turn, collective cognitive maps are a key determinant of behaviour. This happens because the collective ideas of a generation are a sourcebook for interpretation. As social movement theory tells us, interpretation is at the heart of the movement experience: far from exerting an “objective” influence on social movements, causal factors, either internal or external, must be mediated by a process of perception and interpretation that, eventually, leads to action. However, what are the grounds from which interpretation is built? I defend that, to a large extent, interpretation is closely correlated with the founding ideas of activists, which in effect are basic springboards for the elaboration of more elaborated courses of action. Instead of as an exclusionary line of thinking, the generations argument should be addressed as a basic analytic thread around which manifold causal stories can operate. For instance, in explaining the process of generational formation, a close attention paid to the cross-national diffusion of ideas, as foreign ideas can be watersheds for the coming to age of a given generation. However, this perspective enriches the diffusion argument, since it closely pays attention to the processes that lead to the assimilation of ideas and symbolic references.

2.5. Summary

The chief goal of this chapter has been to situate the empirical presentation of the chapters to come in their due theoretical context. In addressing the evolution of the gay and lesbian movement in Spain I ultimately seek to fill one important gap in social movement theory: namely, what explains the pursuit of membership in the polity? In order to substantiate this theoretical question, I have firstly offered a basic introduction to social movement theory. Right after that a careful discussion of the idea of membership in the polity has followed; particular attention has

been paid to the conceptualisation of membership as a kind of “procedural outcome” and to the introduction of the tests of membership. Then, the presentation has moved to the evaluation of causal factors (i.e., the “independent variables”). While it is clear that much can be learnt from a thorough consideration of a number of popular causal factors, I have justified the need for a new approach to the question of social movements’ outward political identity. Observing social movements as a compendium of political generations appear to be a fruitful way of addressing the evolution of social movements. In the last part of the chapter I have introduced the idea of political generations, which, in my view, is capable of explaining why social movements change across time.

CHAPTER 3: PURSUING MEMBERSHIP IN A NEW POLITY: GAY AND LESBIAN PROTEST POLITICS IN SPAIN

“Gay movements are no longer a circus.”⁴¹

In this chapter I begin with the presentation and discussion of the empirical findings of this thesis. My chief purpose here is the delineation of the empirical story that needs to be explained, at a quieter pace, in chapters four and five. Thus, this is a chapter about the *dependent variable* of the analysis: I seek to demonstrate that the Spanish gay and lesbian movement has in fact effected a major transformation in its outward political identity. Back in the late 1970s, it emerged as a challenger to the nascent polity, stubbornly committed to put the rules of the democratic game into question. In the 1990s, however, the movement seems to have passed the three tests of membership outlined in the previous chapter. On the whole, it no longer pursues illegitimate claims; violence has been erased from the repertoires of protest, while its discourse is well embedded in prevailing modes of formulating

⁴¹ Eduardo Mendicutti, in Aliaga and Cortés (2000: 204).

claims. Utopianism, however, was not defeated in a fortnight. The drive towards political incorporation has built on a series of instances of internal conflict, where different sensibilities have competed with one another all throughout the 1980s and early 1990s for the control of the movement.

A chronological structure organises the workload of this chapter. Firstly, I focus on the birth and consolidation of what we might call the Spanish *homosexual liberation movement* (1970-1980). In this first section I situate the birth of the pioneering homosexual liberation fronts in their historical context, with a special attention paid to the opportunities brought about by the process of regime change. Secondly, the decay of the liberationist project is considered (1980-1986). That will be the place to consider the pattern of internal conflict and the evolution of the cycle of mobilisation. Thirdly, I move to the emergence of pragmatic activism (1986-1991). During these crucial years, the veteran liberationist platforms witnessed the emergence and consolidation of new groups that proposed a different blueprint for the definition, and organisation, of gay and lesbian collective protest. Lastly, I discuss the consolidation of gay and lesbian rights activism in Spain (1991-1997).

3.1. The birth of the gay and lesbian movement (1970-1980).

Every social movement tends to enthrone a particular event as its founding moment. That might well obscure reality, as social movements rarely emerge out of the blue. Much to the contrary, more often than not social movements consolidate around pre-existing networks of mobilisation (Taylor and Whittier, 1992; McAdam, 1982). Nonetheless, activists are very needy of symbolic dates: this is how they recreate and make sense of their own history. In the United States, the “Stonewall” riots are commonly held to be the starting point of the contemporary gay and lesbian movement. In Spain, the decision of two Catalanian lawyers to lobby Francoist lawmakers in 1970 in the pursuit of a

less aggressive antigay legislation is similarly regarded as the departing point for gay and lesbian collective protest in the country.

In this section I focus on the homosexual liberation movement. Firstly, I provide a brief introduction to the situation inherited from the past. Spain belongs to the group of countries that during the 1970s moved from a dictatorial towards a democratic system. Always convulsed by internecine internal conflict, Spanish society virtually split in half during the 1930s: the instauration of a republican regime exacerbated the tensions among the so-called “two Spains”, one anti-clerical, urban and liberal, the other profoundly religious, rural and deeply conservative. The increasing antagonism between the two resulted in a bloody civil war, which devastated the country from 1936 to 1939. The outcome of this conflict is very well-known: the victory of general Franco over the Republican forces inaugurated four decades long of authoritarian ruling (1939-1976).⁴² The dictatorship represented a living hell for the homosexual population: the Francoist regime sought to implement a Catholic fundamentalist agenda of social and political organisation that promoted an understanding of sexual diversity as an unnatural vice. Homosexuality was criminalised. Secondly, I situate the birth of the homosexual liberation movement in the context of the transition towards democracy. Thirdly, I map out this movement, focusing on its most important structures of mobilisation.

⁴² Although Franco died in 1975, students of Spanish politics signal the appointment of Adolfo Suarez in 1976 as the prime minister as the starting point of the transition process (see Chulià, 2001).

3.1.1. Dangerous homosexuals

The ideology of the Francoist dictatorial regime identified national identity with Catholicism in general and, in particular, with the specific priorities of the Spanish Catholic Church (Linz, 1993). The view of the Church on a host of moral issues became law. For example, divorce was banned while women were deprived of any legal and contractual capacity. It does not thus surprise that the Church's undisguised commitment towards the extermination of homosexuality became a source of new policy. In 1945, for instance, the Francoist Code of Military Justice criminalised homosexual acts (see table 3.1 for a basic chronology of events). Section 352 of the Military Justice Code set the punishment for "same-sex indecent acts" as ranging from six months to six years (Pérez Cánovas, 1996: 85-87). Also, the regime gave *carte blanche* to the police and the judiciary to employ existing legislation against public disorder and for the protection of minors to repress homosexual behaviour.⁴³

In 1954, homosexuality was added to the instances of "social danger" covered by the *Vagrancy and Villainy Act*. This piece of legislation belonged to a legal tradition that trusted the law to be a pre-emptive mechanism against antisocial behaviour and deviation. In this vein, the Act defined a set of dangerous types, categories of antisocial people, which for the sake of the protection of the social fabric had to be re-educated into normality. Danger was not defined in connection with proved illegal behaviour: on the contrary, it was estimated in view of the future propensity (originated in the belongingness of the individual to a

⁴³ General Queipo del Llano, one of Franco's leading generals, set the tone for the initiatives that were to come. He said, "any effeminate or inverted that calumniates our movement should die like a dog." Quoted in Fuentes (2001b: 9).

given social category) to engage in illegal activity. Since the moment when homosexuality was included within the remit of the Act, “known-to-be” homosexuals became dangerous types, creatures that dwelled outside normality and, as a result, were particularly defenceless against governmental intrusion.

The Francoist establishment insisted in categorising homosexuality as an instance of anti-social behaviour. Rapidly changing social and economic circumstances were conferring a new visibility to some social realities, which up to that point had never capture the public’s attention (Monferrer, 2003: 182-186). In particular, the effects of tourism and the emigration of growing numbers of young people to large metropolitan areas spawned a remarkable increase in the activity of those urban spaces devoted to homosexual activity (parks, some theatres, public lavatories, etc). Francoist authorities, which were already scandalised by the eruption of a host of new social problems, such as drug-addictions, and radicalised by the expansion of internal unrest (Aguilar, 2001) seized the opportunity to implement a harsher anti-homosexual policy.⁴⁴ In 1970, the old Vagrancy Act was substituted by the far

⁴⁴ Note that social unrest was a recurring feature of the last fifteen years of the dictatorship. While strikes were causing a dramatic loss in the number of working hours, universities were hosting a very active student’s movement that relentlessly demanded the democratisation of the country. These emerging instances of contentious politics represented a concerted struggle against the endurance of non-democratic politics (Jiménez, 2002; Aguilar 2001 and 1997; McAdam et al, 2001: 171 ff; Laraña, 1999; Pastor, 1998; Alvarez-Junco, 1995; Fishman, 1990; Maravall, 1982 and 1978).

more repressive *Social Menace and Rehabilitation Act* (henceforth Social Menaces Act).⁴⁵

The Social Menaces Act was the first decision of the Francoist establishment on the issue of homosexuality that arose opposition. Two Catalan lawyers canvassed Francoist lawmakers in an attempt to influence the drafting of the Social Menaces Bill. Armand de Fluvià (interviewee n°3), later to be the founder of the first open homosexual organisation in the country, was one of them.⁴⁶ Fluvià and his partner sought to create awareness about the technical flaws of the Social Menaces bill. In order to do so, they sent a letter to every member of the Francoist legislative assembly explaining the technical flaws of the proposed legislation. Also, they requested the help of *Arcadie*, a French homophile organisation. In an unprecedented move, *Arcadie* sent a legal dictum and a press release that was published by the Francoist press. The publication of this report, and the (mild) debate that came about, made some members of that Francoist Assembly consider the need to attend one of the pleas: the need to look separately at two different dimensions, namely behaviour (to engage in homosexual sexual activity) and identity (being homosexual). The Act ended up criminalising only the former.

⁴⁵ In a very provisional estimation, some 1000 homosexuals were sent to prison between 1970 and 1978, out of 5000 judged (Monferrer and Calvo, 2001).

⁴⁶ Armand de Fluvià has left an exhaustive testimony of these events in Fluvià (1978 and 1977). See also Monferrer (2003: 189-198).

Feeling empowered by what they perceived as a victory of the campaigning effort, Fluvià and his partner canvassed a number of established, professional gay males residing in Barcelona to promote some sort of collective pursuit (Fluvià, 1977: 152). A clandestine organisation called the *Movimiento Español de Liberación Homosexual* (MELH, Spanish movement for homosexual liberation) was the outcome of this effort. The MELH, which for a brief span of time had chapters in Madrid and Barcelona, remained fearful of police intervention. Thus, it focused on networking and the diffusion of ideas. Also, the MELH, thanks to foreign collaboration, managed to edit and circulate a clandestine bulletin, called *Aghois*, which at its peak arrived at some one hundred addresses in Barcelona.

3.1.2. Facilitating mobilisation: the transition towards democracy

The causal story behind the birth of social movements has a number of elements. In an scenario of social change, a given social situation needs to be framed as a problem; in the second place, opportunities for mobilisation must exist; lastly, some pre-existing structures of mobilisation are necessary. Opportunities must also be perceived as such. In some situations, the framing processes that lead to the definition of social conditions as grievances involve a degree of complexity, particularly in the absence of direct threats against the well-being of a given population or social group. In other cases, however, the justification of mobilisation is more straightforward.

The birth of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement is directly related to the consequences of the Social Menaces Act. Note that despite the engendering of the transition process, and the steady instauration of citizenship rights that came as a result, the Act continued to criminalise homosexuality. Thus, unlike in other cases, the difficulty in arriving at resonant mobilising messages was not the movement's main handicap. Jordi Petit, one of the

leading personalities in the history of the Spanish gay and lesbian movements, supports this view:

“The question was not really to convince people that we had a problem. Anyone who was a regular patron at a gay bar knew how vulnerable we remained, how defenceless. We just needed the opportunity to organise and become visible.”⁴⁷

As the interviewee suggests, the question was one of available opportunities. They arrived with the unfolding of the process of regime change (the “transition towards democracy”). The transition opened up opportunities for generalised mobilisation that permitted the expansion of social unrest across different social groups and different geographical locations. As the dictatorship fell, citizens steadily acquired rights of association and protest. Also, a free press appeared that, in circulating ideas and publicising calls for mobilisation, soon offered much help to social movement organisations (Herrero-Brasas, 2001: 298-299). Finally, the democratic effervescence of these initial years spawned manifold instances of social organising, creating a climate where the involvement in collective pursuits was generally regarded as the way to exercise long-repressed democratic rights (Aguilar, 2001).

However, the birth of the homosexual liberation movement was particularly influenced by the creation of a new political space for revolutionary protest politics. The transition, in permitting the consolidation of the so-called “revolutionary left” as a visible political actor, provided gay and lesbian groups with a loyal ally that was able to share material and human resources and much precious ideological ammunition. The term “revolutionary left”

⁴⁷ Interview n° 4, Jordi Petit.

encroached an array of small political parties, founded during the 1960s, which represented the more radical manifestations of leftist political thinking, particularly Trotskyism and Anarchism (see Lainz, 1995). These parties had in common a commitment to revolutionary change: despite their manifold differences, the parties of the revolutionary left pursued the coming of age of a truly socialist revolution, that could sweep away a class-based, capitalist organisation of society (Roca, 1994a: 34).

The importance of the revolutionary left for the shaping of the transition process (and for the definition of the democratic regime that was to come) was paramount: in spite of weak electoral returns, the parties of the revolutionary, "extremist" left activated (in the form of grass-roots mobilisation) a reservoir of discontent created by the idiosyncratic pace of the Spanish process of regime change. To begin with, and in the particular case of the homosexual liberation movement, revolutionary leftist political parties shared with gay and lesbian groups mobilising resources. Also, revolutionary leftist militants and sympathisers participated in the demonstrations and protest events organised by homosexual liberation fronts, helping to the success of these events (Guasch, 1991: 80).

Yet it was at a more general level where homosexual liberation fronts benefited the most from this ally. Revolutionary leftist parties, breaking the generalised consensus around the virtues of the transition process, denounced the process of regime change as limited and undemocratic. Unlike the Portuguese transition, characterised by a sharp and violent rupture with the past, in Spain the process of regime change was built on a series of agreements between pro-democratic and pro-Francoist forces. While Francoist forces agreed not to resist the instauration of democracy, democratic forces accepted, in the first place, to forget about the atrocities committed during the dictatorship and, in the second place, to allow the more liberal segments of the previous regime to participate in the new political system (Aguilar, 2001; Maravall and Santamaría, 1986). Why these pacts appeared so problematic is not difficult to see: in the pursuit of democracy,

pro-democratic forces had to concentrate on a number of “big” issues, ignoring the suffering and oppression of some social groups

Although this is perhaps often ignored, the Spanish process of regime change created a large reservoir of discontent grounded in the frustrated expectations of a number of constituencies (including the homosexual population). Revolutionary leftist parties made the activation of this reservoir its chief political asset; a strategy for which the endorsing of “lost” causes was a very valuable thing to do. Considering this, it is hardly surprising that several of these revolutionary political parties came to understand homosexual liberation as a fundamental issue for democracy, “and the collaboration with revolutionary homosexual liberation fronts an inescapable obligation of anyone truly committed with the real democratisation of the country”.⁴⁸

In sum, the Spanish homosexual liberation movement was born out of the legacies of the past, epitomised in a harsh anti-homosexual legislation. The consequences of the Social Menaces Act eased the framing tasks of prospective movement organisers, which justified their particular call for arms on the basis of the need to achieve the legalisation of homosexuality. A changing political scenario provided Spanish homosexual liberationists with the required political opportunities, with the result that from 1975 to 1977 homosexual liberation fronts had been created in most of the large urban areas in the country.

⁴⁸ Statement of the *Liga Comunista Revolucionaria* (LCR, Revolutionary Communist League), perhaps the most important among the parties of the revolutionary left (D2, 1977:2).

3.1.3. Homosexual liberation in Spain

In 1975, the core members of the Barcelona cell of the MELH, together with some younger activists coming from the revolutionary left and the movement for Catalanian national independence founded the *Front d'Alliberament Gai de Catalunya* (FAGC, Gay liberation front of Catalonia). The FAGC was born with the following mission:

“[to] achieve complete sexual liberation, by means of a total overcoming of individual repression, the erasing of homosexual out casting, the demand of a pluralistic understanding of sexuality, ideological clarification of the homosexual question, together with all the necessary activities to make civil liberties available for all homosexuals.”⁴⁹

Undoubtedly, the FAGC was the most visible and active homosexual liberation front all throughout the transition period and during the first years of the following decade. It's role was particularly notorious from 1976 to 1978, as it carried the brunt of the effort against the Social Menaces Act. The FAGC organised in June of 1977 the first-ever homosexual demonstration in the country and launched relentless efforts to provide homosexual groups in other Spanish cities with ideological ammunition. Together with Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid were the other focal points of the nascent liberation movement. In Bilbao, a group of people strongly linked with the Basque's liberation movement took note of events taking place in Barcelona and gave birth to the *Euskal Herriko Gay Askapen Mugimendua* (EHGAM, Gay liberation front of the Basque Country) in 1977. Also inspired by

⁴⁹ Armand de Fluvià, in *El País*, 11 February 1979.

the FAGC, three very short-lived groups were formed in Madrid during 1977. They disappeared in less than a year, and a new organisation was founded in 1978, the *Frente de Liberación Homosexual de Castilla* (FLHOC, Homosexual Liberation Front of Castilla). The example of the FAGC was also followed in Valencia, Seville and the Balearic islands.⁵⁰

The Spanish homosexual liberation movement was organised around a network of formal political organisations. In the absence of commercial urban subcultures, the movement emerged as a truly political force composed of homosexual liberation fronts. With very few exceptions, all of these organisations shared a similar organisational design defined by a powerful general assembly, accompanied by a small team only responsible, at least theoretically, of the daily functioning of the organisation. Armand de Fluvià, in his review of the internal organisation of the FAGC, defined the job of the general secretary as a position with “no real power, only appointed to deal with administrative matters, the coordination of the organisation, and the handling of public relations.” (1978: 157). In reality, however, this figure accumulated a great deal of internal power. As it was the case with the homosexual liberation fronts founded in the large cities of the United States and in the capitals of most western countries, Spanish homosexual liberation fronts were embedded in counter-cultural, leftist world-views that were very wary –at least on the

⁵⁰ An exhaustive presentation of the structures of mobilisation of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement can be found in Calvo (2002), Llamas and Vila (1999) and Fluvià (1978). One of the three groups founded in Madrid in 1977 was the *Movimiento Democrático de Homosexuales* (MDH, Homosexual Democratic Movement), to which two of my interviewees belonged to (interviews n° 9 and 10).

surface - of engaging in organisational consolidation.⁵¹ In theory, these groups were mixed organisations; lesbians, however, played a marginal role in the life of these liberation fronts.

What was the position of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement as regards the question of membership? For reasons that I will discuss in chapters four and five, this social movement was born as a challenger to the polity, that is to say, as a collective actor that refused to engage in inside politics. In the words of one activist, the main task for the homosexual liberation movement was to avoid the so-called “trap of reformism”.⁵² Note from the start that the identification as a polity outsider was not particularly built upon the radicalisation of the action repertoires. While it is true that homosexual liberation groups organised a number of street-based events, particularly the famous “June demonstration” (later to be the *gay pride parade*, see below), on the whole they opted for forms of “indoor” protesting, which were normally tolerated by the authorities. The so-called “*miting-fiestas*” (political parties) combined political messages with a host of recreational activities. In a climate of generalised police brutality against participants in demonstrations (see, for instance, Aguilar, 2001), the police felt clearly motivated to repress the manifestations of sexual insurgency. Also, particularly in what regarded the campaign against the Social Menaces Act,

⁵¹ Marotta (1981: 91-93) shows that in the mind of the founders of the New York-based Homosexual liberation Front, the term organisation conjured up visions of a politically conservative reading of homosexual activism. In stressing that homosexual liberation fronts were not organisations, they wanted to emphasise their opposition against the strategy of “doing everything to please the authorities and keep the support of the Establishment” (Marotta, 1981: 91).

⁵² José Antonio Berrocal, spokesperson of the FLHOC, in *El País*, 27 June 1981.

homosexual liberation fronts employed a good number of “conventional” tactics. For instance, as part of the campaign against the Social Menaces Act, letters were sent to MPs in 1977, conferences and debates were held during 1977 and 1978, and a popular petition was organised in the last weeks of 1977, which according to Llamas and Vila (1999: 219-220) garnered some ten thousand signatures.⁵³

The claims of liberation groups were far more problematic. Embedded in the ideas of revolutionary homosexual liberation, Spanish homosexual liberation organisations elaborated very broad statements of objectives, where legitimate claims coexisted with a good number of illegitimate ones.⁵⁴ In relation to the former kind of claims, homosexual liberation groups demanded the legalisation of homosexuality. At a later stage, the FAGC and the Basque EHGAM pursued their legalisation as organisations. Politicians seemed untroubled about a number of similarly legitimate claims, such as gender equality or the end of censorship. However, Spanish homosexual liberation fronts also

⁵³ In the opinion of Dolors Renau (interviewee n° 1), a leading socialist politician, the architects of the constitutional consensus were not particularly disturbed by the action repertoires of homosexual liberation groups. Although leftist politicians actively discouraged social groups from becoming involved in “public disorder” (they feared that the extension of public disorder could jeopardise the achievement of an agreement with Francoist forces), Spanish society lived at the time amidst a generalised climate of social unrest and democratic euphoria. Thus, “gay groups were simply just another collective that wanted to organise demonstrations”, as the interviewee put it.

⁵⁴ I discussed the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate claims in chapter 2. In 1977, the FAGC drafted a so-called “*plataforma reivindicativa*” (statement of aims) which included some twenty demands. This list, which is reproduced by Fluvia (1977: 489-491), inspired other homosexual groups in the country.

made a number of less than palatable claims, including the dismantlement of the armed forces, the reduction in the number of working hours so that citizens could enjoy a more pleasant sexual life, the deregulation of civil and religious marriage, or the free distribution of condoms.

And, what proved to be more fundamental for the clarification of the relationship between gay groups and polity members, the homosexual liberation movement refused to abide by the *ethos* of Constitutional guarantees that the architects of the transition were seeking to consolidate. While everyone with a say in the transition process (democratic parties with parliamentary representation, the media, the Church, pro-Francoist interest groups, and so) accepted that the passing of a modern, plural yet never-too-radical constitution was essential for the stability of the nascent democratic system, Spanish homosexual liberation fronts criticised these efforts as complacent with the past and unresponsive with the oppression of manifold constituencies. Standing against the Constitutional consensus inevitably hampered the relationships with institutional political actors, which on the whole viewed the power relations defined in the Constitution as the best possible agreement.

In sum, in a context where the polity was being founded upon the basic values protected in a Constitution, the homosexual liberation movement, along with the parties of the revolutionary left, flagged a discourse of Marxist social revolution that demanded more radical and profound social, economic and political transformations. In demanding a place outside the Constitution, the homosexual liberation movement defined itself as a challenger to the nascent political system, unwilling to play by the rules of the political game.

3.2. The decay of the liberationist project (1980 – 1986)

The homosexual liberation movement reached its peak of mobilisation in 1979. After that date, decay and demobilisation

became the rule. I begin this section with a brief discussion of the outcomes of the transition period: homosexuality was legalised in 1978, while the ban on homosexual organisations was lifted between 1980 and 1983. Then, I focus on the cycle of mobilisation, discussing the causes of demobilisation. Thirdly, I discuss the consequences of demobilisation.

3.2.1. Legal reform

Derogating the Social Menaces Act represented the chief obsession of the homosexual liberation movement during the transition years. That was the ultimate purpose of virtually every protest initiative organised between 1976 and 1978, including the “June Demonstrations”. Homosexuals were not alone in this pursuit. Building on ideological affinities, the Spanish homosexual liberation movement soon garnered the support of revolutionary leftist parties, some trade unions, and other movement organisations. At an initial stage, however, the prospects of success were dim. In seeking to abort the risk of involution, both the PSOE and the PCE broke ties with social movements, “new” and “old” alike. Street protesters were indeed embarrassing partners in the journey towards political moderation (Pastor, 1998). So, in spite of the resonance of the protest events against the Social Menaces Act, the PSOE refused to get involved in any such process of law reform (see Monferrer, 2003). As Dolors Renau -already a leading figure within the Catalanian branch of the PSOE- put this:

“[responding to a question about the policy of the PSOE towards the homosexual liberation movement during the 1970s], It

simply was a question of refusing to open new battlefronts. During those years the PSOE had a very clear goal – the consolidation of democracy – and no one really wanted to foster new disputes with the conservatives.”⁵⁵

Issue expansion, however, made the trick.⁵⁶ The publication of a number of newspaper articles by prominent members of the judiciary along with the published views of some leading medical experts effected a major change in the definition of the problem: having been taken to represent yet another group-specific concern, the reform of the Social Menaces Act came to be understood as an issue of Constitutional civil liberties (with no real debate about whether or not homosexuals were legitimate subjects of rights).⁵⁷ Considering the new circumstances, the PSOE modified its position and commanded a parliamentary coalition that forced the government (of right-wing ideology) to reform the Social Menaces Act. This took place during the last days of 1978, right after the enactment of the Constitution. Homosexuality was *de facto* legalised.

The legalisation of homosexual acts shifted the attention over yet another legacy of the Francoist years: the unlawfulness of homosexual organisations. Technically speaking, the prevailing judicial interpretation of homosexual acts as falling within the

⁵⁵ Interview n° 1, Dolors Renau.

⁵⁶ I borrow the idea of “issue expansion” from Haider-Markel and Meier’s (1996) essay on gay rights politics.

⁵⁷ See Llamas and Vila (1999: 220-221). Perhaps it was the positioning of Manuel Rico Lara, at the time the president of the Special Court designed to implement the Social Menaces Act, what contributed the most to read the flaws of the Act from the Constitutional perspective. His views were published in a lengthy article in *El País*, 12 January 1978.

remit of the misdemeanour of public scandal cast doubts over the lawfulness of homosexual organisations. This was the view of the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD, Democratic Centrist Union), which was the party in government since the general elections of 1977: organisations that promoted immoral behaviour should not be legalised.⁵⁸ Note that unlike with the foregoing battle, the Spanish homosexual liberation movement was not united in this pursuit: some organisations believed that in demanding the legalisation of homosexuality, the movement was betraying its revolutionary soul. Only the FAGC and the Basque EHGAM actively worked in this terrain.

Despite its view, the UCD was yet again forced to modify its standing. In 1980, the FAGC was legalised; three years later, and after the landslide victory of the PSOE in the 1982 general elections, the ban against homosexual organisations was lifted on a general basis. Suffice it to say here that never during the transition the UCD managed to achieve an absolute majority in Parliament. Between 1979 and 1980, the PSOE, originally reluctant to endorse the FAGC in its battle, agreed to collaborate: to the surprise of socialist leaders, some fifty local councils ruled by the socialist branch of the PSOE issued an institutional declaration supporting the quest of the FAGC.⁵⁹ Interestingly, the Constitution was again invoked as the ultimate justification for a risky political decision. As a socialist MP declared:

⁵⁸ In order to trace back the position of the Government in this issue, see *El País*, 26 January 1979; *El País* 21, March 1979; *El País* 26, December 1979 and *El País*, 28 December 1979.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, *El País*, 16 September 1979

“This is not a debate about the promotion of homosexuality; instead, we are asked to recognise the entitlements of a given minority to exercise the rights included in our Constitution”.⁶⁰

3.2.2. The party has just begun: decay and demobilisation during the 1980s.

Activists tend to see the reforms of the transition as indicative of their own success. In line with those theorists that see social movements as capable of influencing the setting of public agendas, (see, for instance, Sawyers and Meyer, 1999; Burstein, 1999; Sampedro, 1997; Rochon and Mazmanian, 1993), Spanish early participants in homosexual collective protest believed that, by altering social perceptions about the legitimacy of their demands, the homosexual liberation movement had created opportunities for policy impact. Jordi Petit, for instance, aligns with this view:

“There might be some that think that our campaigns were useless; perhaps they think that the reform of the Act [the interviewee speaks about the Social Menaces Act] was only a logic consequence of the passing of the Constitution [of 1978]. They are wrong. Without our efforts [the interviewee speaks about homosexual organisations in Bilbao, Madrid and Barcelona] it would have been impossible to raise awareness about the implications of the Act. We made people think about this problem, creating an issue for the media, spawning as well a sense of urgency about the need to make changes in the law”.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Carlos San Juan, in *El País*, 12 March 1980.

⁶¹ Interview n° 4, Jordi Petit. The interviewee explicitly reacted against the view of Llamas and Vila (1999: 221) who disputed the role of the homosexual liberation movement in causing polity reform to occur.

However, the authorship of success does not interfere with one of its less praised characteristics: success induces paralysis (Duyvendak, 1995a: 176). When participants in social movements believe that the engagement in (costly) collective protest is no longer necessary, they simply cease to participate. The story to tell about the 1980-1986 period is one of organisational decay and the shrinking of protest. The crisis adopted a twofold form. In the first place, the movement was struck by a dramatic collapse in its structures of mobilisation. Most organisations disappeared, to the extent that only two remained (the FAGC in Barcelona and EHGAM in Bilbao). In Valencia and Madrid organisations appeared and disappeared in less than a year, never able to achieve a minimum level of organisational consolidation. Only the Madrid-based group AGAMA (gay association of Madrid) managed to attract some attention to its activities. AGAMA was born in 1983 and survived until 1985. The group published a bulletin called "*Madrid Gai*" and collaborated with the Human Rights Association in the preparation and analysis of a survey on social attitudes towards homosexuality. Interestingly, AGAMA did not participate in the revolutionary spirit of other liberationist groups. A cursory review of its founding document (D5, 1984) reveals a clear legalist orientation, a taste for lobbying strategies *and* an incipient formulation of gay politics as community politics.

In the second place, the intensity of protest decayed. Graph 3.1 gives information about the evolution of the "June demonstration" in Madrid and Barcelona from 1977 to the year 2000, the only two places where longitudinal data about number of participants can be found. In the absence of an accurate coverage of homosexual protest events by the Spanish media, data about this yearly demonstration represents the best indicator at hand in order to measure the intensity of protest across time. Note as well that, on the one hand, this is the most important protest event of the year and, on the other hand, it is often the *only* such event of the year. The graph reveals the existence of two waves of mobilisation, linked by a long crisis of demobilisation. From 1977 to 1979, an average number of some five to six thousand people participated

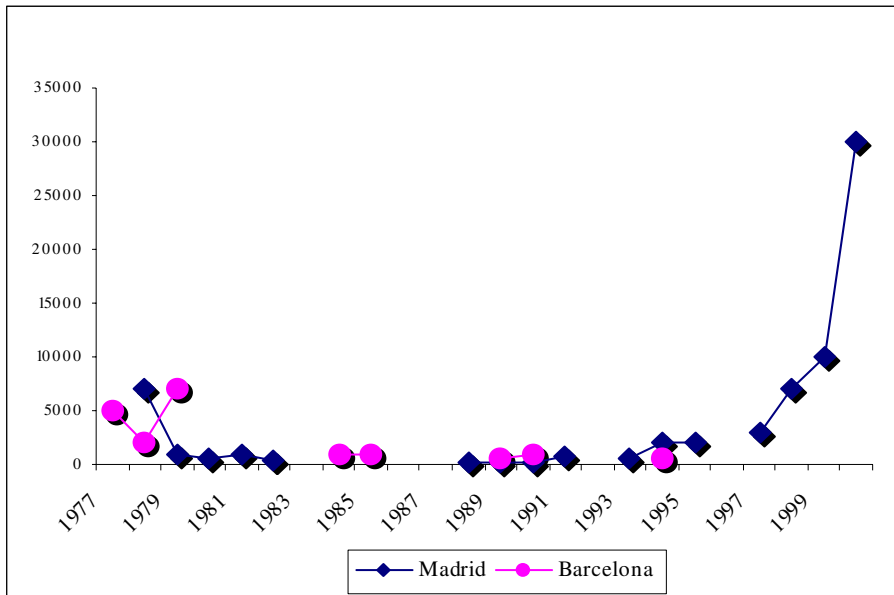
in the June demonstrations of Barcelona and Madrid. These are noticeable figures, not only if they are compared with the numbers displayed during the 1980s, but also on their own right: some of these demonstrations took place under the threat of police repression and assaults by right-wing extremist groups, while others (in Madrid mostly) suffered from very damaging administrative interference. This involved sudden changes in the route of the march, last minute alteration of dates, etc.

Graph 3.1 also reveals a second cycle of mobilisation, which started between 1994 and 1995 and has consolidated ever since. In the span of a decade, the size of the Madrid demonstration alone has increased a vertiginous 1500 per cent. What accounts for this spectacular increase in the number of participants? First and foremost, the transformation of the traditional June political demonstration into a “gay pride” parade accounts for that phenomenon. It is in the interview with Boti García, the chairwoman of the Madrid-based group COGAM (*Colectivo de Gais de Madrid*, Madrid Gay Group), where this idea is most clearly defended:

“ we have no doubt [*the interviewee refers to the official position of the COGAM*], nobody has any doubts! about what has happened. The marches are becoming huge commercial events where there is very little need to show political commitment. Partying has replaced campaigning, and hence more people come. And now, thousands of heterosexuals come, because pride is a lot of fun for everyone.”⁶²

⁶² Boti G. Rodrigo, interview n° 18.

Figure 3.1: Participation in the "June" demonstration, Madrid and Barcelona.



Source: El País

During the 1970s and most of the 1980s, the marches organised every last weekend of June were not gay *pride* parades. In 1977, for instance, the motto of the June demonstration in Barcelona was: “sexual liberation; down with the Social Menaces Act; Homosexual Amnesty!”⁶³ Eight years later, the participants in the June demonstration in Madrid shouted in favour of “body

⁶³ Information found in *El País*, 26 June 1977.

rights” and “down with machismo”.⁶⁴ In fact, explicitly political banners headed these marches all throughout the 1980s, including calls for the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the armed forces (1986) and against queer bashing (1988 and 1989). During the 1990s, however, marches became *parades*. Cultural recreation replaced campaign moods, while the expression of life-style commitments downplayed the manifestation of anger and frustration with the status quo. As Llamas and Vila (1999: 234) conclude, “gradually, 28 June is turning into a time of festive public celebration, showing not so much a unity of political action of indeterminate results, but rather a plural and diverse community.” Foremost of all, the increasing participation of gay bars in the organisation and definition of the event is imprinting a whole new atmosphere to the event. In short, the new emphasis on cultural diversity, recreation and life-style commitments is responsible for the increase in the number of participants.

In between these two waves of mobilisation, a significant crisis of demobilisation governed the life of the gay and lesbian movement all through the insipid eighties. The FAGC introduced the idea of “*reflujo*” (retreat) to define the decay in members and activity that, by 1981, homosexual liberation groups were already starting to experience (FAGC, D5: 6-7). The figures are compelling: by the end of the 1980s, no more than two hundred people participated in the demonstration in Madrid. I discuss the causes of this phenomenon in chapter 5.

⁶⁴ Information found in the Basque newspaper *Egin*, 16 June 1985.

3.2.3. *The consequences of demobilisation*

What are social movement organisations expected to do when they face difficult times? As we saw in the previous chapter, the literature is hardly conclusive on this question. While some evidence suggests that they seek refuge within existing institutional actors (Ruzza, 1997), existing research on the American women's movement says that weakened movement organisations fall into a sort of hibernating state, leaving politics altogether (Taylor, 1989). Interestingly, this is what a number of authors foresee for gay and lesbian organisations in case things go wrong (see Duyvendak, 1995a; and Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999). My data, however, suggests a third alternative: in Spain, the homosexual liberation fronts that survived the wave of demobilisation insisted on their founding ideas and principles. In other words, demobilisation spawned the radicalisation of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement, who neither issued a plea for co-optation, nor retreated politics.

It thus seems that a different approach to the issue of movements' trajectories (Kriesi, 1996) is in order, for different research arrives at different conclusions. However, there is one consequence of demobilisation and decays that steers very little discussion in the literature: it opens up the Pandora's box of internal conflict. Despite the fact that social movements are never free from internal conflict, decay and demobilisation create the optimum conditions for internal dissent to crystallise into schisms and factionalisation. And, of course, the Spanish homosexual liberation movement was no exception to this rule.

Social movement argue about manifold issues, ranging from organisational designs to action repertoires. This often leads to factionalisation (Schwartz, 2002: 157). Internal dissent can be the consequence of internal disputes for power and fundamental ideological disagreements. Moreover, it can also be exogenously promoted, since political authorities very often endeavour to promote dissent as a defence mechanism against movements' protest efforts. In the particular case of the Spanish homosexual

liberation movement, internal dissent unfolded alongside a threefold line: outward political identity, gender and ideology. While the first two are recurrent sources of factionalisation and schisms everywhere (see, for instance, Altman, 1982), the last one seems to be particularly relevant in France (Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999) and Spain.⁶⁵ Also, note that during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Spanish homosexual organisations quarrelled little about two “classic” sources of internal unrest: namely, the origins of homosexuality and the issue of difference. While both of them have caused thorny disputes among American activists (see, for instance, Bernstein, 1997), Spanish activists in particular, and Western Europeans in general have been little concerned about whether or not homosexuals are different from the majority, or whether or not sexuality is “constructed” or “essentially” acquired.

I begin with the conflicts around outward political identity. As we saw in chapter 2, while some activists are sympathetic towards a closer collaboration with the establishment, others – the utopians – are not prepared to pay the costs of engaging in insider politics. In other words, at any point in time, any given social movement is populated by two types of activists (Tarrow, 1998; 96 and 148): firstly, those who prefer to clash with the political establishment; secondly, those who feel comfortable with a consensus-driven political activity, aimed at pursuing slow and incremental social and political change. Conflicts between utopian and pragmatic activists have also driven the historical evolution of the gay and lesbian movement worldwide. In Rimmerman’s (2003: 35) terms:

⁶⁵ Note, however, that classic ideological divisions also divided the founding members of homophile organisations in the United States (D’Emilio, 1983).

“Much of the conflict in the lesbian and gay movement over political and social strategy has reflected conflicts over assimilation (political, social, and cultural “mainstreaming”) and liberation”.

Rarely demobilisation is capable of *creating* these tensions. Rather, scenarios of demobilisation activate a problem that, perhaps, had lie dormant due to the buoyancy of previous times. In our particular case, the process that lead to the foundation of the *Coordinadora de Col.Lectius per a Lliberament Gai* (CCAG, Gay Liberation Groups’ Alliance) should be read along the lines of the tensions between two ways of defining the movement’s strategic priorities. The CCAG was a short-lived spin-off from the FAGC, created by a number of FAGC members who resented what they perceived as an obsession with achieving legal normalisation. While the FAGC campaigned for the legalisation of homosexual organisations, the CCAG insisted in stepping away from legal battles. Also, whereas the FAGC systematically sought to achieve administrative permit for its outdoors initiatives, the CCAG preferred to clash with the authorities in issues such as dates and routes for demonstrations, and so on.

Note, however, that in Spain, for reasons very much associated to the particular process of generational formation that inspired the very existence of liberationist activism, these tensions never reached the point of opposing utopianism and pragmatism. While, on a longitudinal perspective, the transformation of the gay movement into a polity member is grounded on a victory of pragmatism over the utopia, during the years that I define as the “liberationist phase” the movement remained broadly knitted around a dominant utopian view. While rarely Spanish liberationists quarrelled about basic the ultimate revolutionary character of homosexual activism, they occasionally disagreed on issues of strategy. Interestingly, Jordi Petit, a privileged witness of the CCAG affair, described these tensions as opposing “revolutionaries”, the FAGC, and “radicals”, the CCAG (Petit, 1983). Also, such a thing explains, for instance, the insistence on

the part of FAGC leaders to frame the campaign for the legalisation of homosexual groups – the more controversial of the political initiatives taken during the transition years- in a revolutionary perspective. In this sense, it is revealing that Armand de Fluvià defended in 1979 the following reading:

“The question for civil rights recognition is also part of a revolutionary struggle because it is embedded in more ambitious goals, such as individual sexual liberation and the defence of a class-free society.”⁶⁶

Moving now to the issue of gender, the so-called “gender wars” (Plummer, 1999) were also a cause for internal dissent during the liberationist period. Not only in Spain, but in the majority of western countries as well, lesbians have traditionally accused gay males of reproducing oppressive attitudes vis-à-vis women. In particular, they legitimately resent the incapacity of their male peers to understand the specific circumstances of lesbian oppression, i.e., the fact that lesbians are oppressed both as homosexuals and as women. The specific lesbian dilemma has always been whether they belong to a mixed *gay and lesbian* movement or to the women’s movement (Adam et al, 1999b: 347). In Spain, the homosexual liberation fronts founded between 1975 and 1977 sought to encompass the interests of both gay males and lesbians. However, as early as in 1978, the lesbian group of the FAGC decided to leave the organisation, and join the women’s movement in Barcelona. In a press note published in Enríquez (1978: 181), the lesbian group of the FAGC justified its rupture with their male peers on the grounds that “lesbian oppression is ultimately grounded on our condition as women”. As a

⁶⁶ Armand de Fluvià, in *El País*, 16 May 1979.

consequence, “the Lesbian Group has decided to define its revolutionary space alongside the feminist movement”. This triggered a truly lesbian Diaspora in 1978, confirmed in the organisation of the first countrywide meeting of lesbians in 1980 (Llamas and Vila, 1999: 217, 221). By 1981, virtually every lesbian activist had abandoned the gay and lesbian movement.

In the majority of cases the lesbian Diaspora led to the creation of lesbian-only lesbian-feminist organisations, the most notorious of which was the Madrid-based *Colectivo de Lesbianas Feministas* (Lesbian-Feminist Collective), founded in 1981. Empar Pineda (interviewee n° 12) was a leading personality within this group. The chief aim of the so-called lesbian-feminist movement was to help heterosexual feminist activists to “assume an unprejudiced vision of sexuality that would finally defend lesbianism as just another sexual preference” (Llamas and Vila, 1999: 222). Or, in the words of Empar Pineda:

“Our main target, if we see this from a rational perspective, was to “conquer” the space of revolutionary, radical feminism. We felt as feminists, and we thought that our place was alongside the radical feminists. In fact, we had to make them understand that lesbianism was a central element in the very definition of a radical lesbian identity. That was not possible with the more moderated feminists, who had been clearly co-opted by the PSOE and only cared about law reform and the appointment of female politicians.”⁶⁷

Lesbian-feminists went public after 1985, motivated by the outcomes of a series of judicial rulings involving the rights of lesbians (see, Llamas and Vila, 1999: 223-225). As part of these efforts, they actively collaborated in the organisation of the June

⁶⁷ Empar Pineda, interview n° 12.

demonstration in Madrid and in the major feminist struggles of the 1980s (Llamas and Vila, 1999: 226). The organisation of the third countrywide meeting of lesbian-feminists in 1987 represented the peak of this kind of activism. After that date, the heart of the autonomous lesbian-feminist movement ceased to beat: from 1988 onwards, lesbians started to return to homosexual organisations, reinstating the mixed character of that sort of activism.

Thus far in this section two typical causes of conflict have been reviewed; namely, outward political identity and gender. Lastly, I deal with a type of conflict that, despite being of little relevance in Anglo-Saxon countries, explains a good deal of internal unrest in countries such as Spain or France. Spanish homosexual militants, as was the case with their French peers, bitterly clashed on the grounds of their adscription to different families of the left (Linatza, 1978: 27). For instance, an internal document of the FAGC blamed the co-habitation of too many “families and groups of the left” for the lack of internal coordination, “in spite of agreements on a general theoretical blueprint” (Josep Ignasi Berbís, D22(4), 1986: 8). As I show in chapter 4, in the absence of a structured commercial subculture, the original generation of homosexual political activists gained political consciousness by participation in revolutionary leftist parties. However, far from a unitary political movement, the revolutionary left represented manifold understandings of socialism, which more often than not stood in sharp conflict with one another. Although traditional ideology rarely spawned factionalisation, it added a degree of tension to the everyday activities to homosexual liberation fronts.

3.3. The emergence of a new understanding of activism (1986-1990).

What I call the phase of homosexual liberation terminates in 1986. Up to this year, virtually every homosexual political organisation in the country had aligned with the ideas and mobilising messages of the master-frame of homosexual liberation.⁶⁸ Moreover, all of them had participated in a *revolutionary* understanding of that master-frame: as we will see in the next chapter, the interweaving between homosexual liberation politics and militancy in revolutionary leftist parties resulted in a definition of sexual liberation as profoundly embedded in the dynamics of class-politics and in the pursuit of a socialist revolution. In 1986, however, this consensus was broken. This year marks the inception of a number of organisations that, with various degrees and at different paces, challenged the master-frame of homosexual liberation. Above all things, the constitution in 1986 of the *Coordinadora Gay y Lesbiana de Cataluña* (CGL, Lesbian and Gay Coordinator of Catalonia) represented a very damaging blow against the hegemony of revolutionary thinking; for the first time, a group that defended the value of insider politics called for the support of the homosexual population.

I show in this section that between 1986 and 1990 the Spanish gay and lesbian movement found a new place between pragmatism and the utopia. While veteran revolutionary organisations insisted on rejecting insider politics, a host of new “reformist” groups showed a clear sympathy towards a different kind of interaction with existing polity members. I firstly focus on the CGL, a landmark organisation that introduced a wide array of new ideas.

⁶⁸ I borrow the idea of master-frame from Snow and Benford’s (1992) seminal work.

Secondly, in observing the initial years of the *Colectivo de Gais de Madrid* (COGAM, Madrid Gay Group), born in 1986 as well, I show the extent to which the pragmatic ideas of the CGL set an example for groups in other parts of the country.

3.3.1. Breaking with the past: the inception of the CGL.

The longevity of the liberation phase is a noteworthy feature of the Spanish case. Elsewhere, virtually every homosexual liberation front that had been constituted after the liberationist outbreaks of 1968 and 1969 had been rapidly substituted by new organisations that combined radical proclaims with less utopian goals (Amstrong, 2002: 2). In Spain, however, the pioneering generation of activism survived at the forefront of collective protest well until the end of the 1980s. To some extent, the absence of rival ideologies helped the cohesion and longevity of the generation of *homosexual militants*. Spanish homosexual liberation fronts, unlike their peers elsewhere in Western Europe and the United States, did not replace, or compete against, established homophile organisations. Also, the existence of a widespread climate of demobilisation, and the very isolation of homosexual political groups prevented a more fluid process of personnel turnover.

However, for reasons that are at the heart of chapters 4 and 5, things started to change during the second half of the 1980s. The CGL, founded in 1986, is the first gay political organisation that broke with the liberationist tradition. It introduced a new understanding of gay and lesbian protest, anchored in a redefinition of the role of the individual participant (activists that replace militants), in the establishment of links of solidarity between politicised and non-politicised homosexuals (community politics), and in the implementation of pragmatism as the dominant guiding principle of outward political activity. The CGL was a spin-off from the FAGC, created out of a dispute for internal power within that veteran liberationist organisation. On the one

hand, Jordi Petit, who had acted as the group's leader since 1986, was trying to implement a number of ambitious (and unprecedented) initiatives with a twofold aim: first, to attract new recruits; secondly, to raise the prestige of the gay movement among policy makers.⁶⁹ On the other hand, Eugeni Rodríguez (interviewee n° 2) represented the classic postulates of the revolutionary homosexual liberation movement: against the bid for political incorporation that, in his view, Petit was proposing, Eugeni Rodríguez defended the continuation with the *modus operandi* established during the transition years.

More than a mere clash of personalities (made the more pervading by the profound ideological differences between the two),⁷⁰ this confrontation must be addressed from the perspective of membership because, ultimately, membership in the polity was the thing discussed: both factions clashed on the question of whether or not the FAGC had to take the road towards membership in the polity. I will go back to this later in this section. The tensions between the two leaders reached a climax in 1986, coinciding with the FAGC's 4th General Conference. While Petit and his reduced group of supporters demanded a clear change of course, the bulk of FAGC members did not feel prepared to relinquish from their founding revolutionary principles. Petit and his closest allies saw no other alternative but to leave the FAGC and create a different organisation.

⁶⁹ *El País* 2, May 1986. At the time, a highly influential position paper that discussed the future of the homosexual liberation movement claimed that homosexual liberation fronts "had succumbed to lethargy and inertia, a life in which nothing very new ever happens" (Alejo Sarbach, D25, 1986:2).

⁷⁰ Whereas Jordi Petit was an active member of the Catalanian branch of the Spanish Communist Party, Eugeni Rodríguez aligned with the movement for Catalanian national independence.

3.3.1.1. The FAGC vs. the CGL

CGL founders were determined to break with the tradition of revolutionary thinking and implement a host of new ideas about the purpose of gay and lesbian activism and the relationships between the so-called gay and lesbian “community” and the rest of society. In a way, the CGL was determined to break with what we might call the “French model” of gay politics, organised around revolutionary homosexual political organisations engaged in conflict relations with political authorities. The goal was to replace that model with Anglo-Saxon ideas about gay and lesbian politics and culture, based on identity politics and rights-based struggles. Being perhaps simplistic, it is not however no coincidence that while Spanish liberationists read and spoke French, English was the foreign language of the incoming generation of gay and lesbian rights activists.

I reproduce now part of my interview with Xabi Tort, a very active member of the CGL. The interviewee responds to a question about who was part of the CGL:

“A - The CGL attracted young people that had not really been involved with the FAGC or with the disputes that caused the rupture in 1986. We had a background of participation in NGOs, some were close to the young sections of the parties of the left but that was not the rule. Most people heard about us in the bars and discos of Barcelona or in the local and regional press.

Q - But tell me more about this people. To what extent groups like the CGL drew on networks of friendship that already existed in the scene?

A - That is difficult to say, I mean, I do not really know if people joined the CGL because his or her friend was a member if that is what you mean. But I can tell you that, unlike the FAGC, most of the people that joined the CGL, or the Casal Lambda, or COGAM in Madrid, were people *with no prejudices about the*

scene. For Christ's sake, we were all going to the bars; all that stuff about demonising the so-called ghetto was senseless."⁷¹

Indeed, on the whole, the CGL was founded, and later participated, by younger individuals that, foremost of all, belonged to a different political generation of activists. Note, however, that in this thesis I do not insist on the biological aspects of generations; instead, the emphasis is placed on the different ideas and worldviews of activists as they go through different processes of political socialisation. What is clear is that the new ideas of this incoming generation of activism fostered landslide innovations. To begin with, important changes were put in practice in the area of organisation. Internal democracy was no longer praised as the founding organisational principle: efficiency and resource optimisation mattered more. The CGL started as a very small organisation, "just ten gay guys and a fax", as Jordi Petit put this in the interview. However, it grew steadily during the late 1980s, with a sharp increase in members and resources from 1990 onwards. This was caused, among other things, by the flow of public grants, and also, by the partnership between the CGL and some gay commercial venues of the Barcelona area (which resulted in the launching of a loyalty card awarded to CGL members and sympathisers). Thus, some decisions about organisation had to be taken. The CGL designed a hierarchical, "professional" organisation, capable of handling both inwardly and outwardly oriented action. To embark on service provision – and to digest the likely increase in membership that this could produce – the CGL diversified into smaller, autonomous organisations, that had very well defined purposes (religious affairs, AIDS work, juvenile activities, women's issues, etc). At

⁷¹ Xabi Tort, interview n° 5.

the top, a number of committees dealt with legal strategies, the relationship with the media, recruitment, or legal and psychological counselling.⁷²

This, of course, did not exhaust the catalogue of innovations. For the sake of a better organisation of the presentation, I summarise in table 3.2 the differences between the FAGC and the CGL. Note that the implications of this analysis reach well beyond the particular antagonism between these Barcelona-based groups: the causes of disagreement between the FAGC and the CGL were in fact a manifestation of sharp divisions between two understandings of gay and lesbian collective protest, one utopian and revolutionary, the other pragmatic and reformist. The terms “revolutionary” and “reformist” were widely used by Spanish activists. Veteran revolutionary groups like the FAGC and the Bilbao-based EHGAM best represented the utopian side. In so far as they participated in homosexual protest events and shared a number of demands with revolutionary homosexual organisation, lesbian-feminist groups can also be included under this heading. Note as well that that during the 1980s COGAM participated in the revolutionary ideas of the veteran liberationist groups. The CGL commanded the pragmatic, “reformist” side. The Valencia-based group *Col.Lectiu Lambda* (Lambda Group) also aligned with this position.⁷³

As table 3.2 shows, two axes articulated the differences between revolutionaries and reformists:

⁷² Vilá (2000) offers a comprehensive analysis of the organisation of the CGL.

⁷³ The *Col.Lectiu Lambda* was founded in 1986 as a continuation of the tradition of activism inaugurated in that city a decade ago.

1. “Outward activity”, which defines the relationships with existing polity members.
2. “Inward activity”, which defines the relationship between politicised and non-politicised homosexuals.

Table 3.2. Pragmatic and Utopian Activism. The FAGC vs. the CGL

	UTOPIAN Activism	PRAGMATIC Activism
	The FAGC and other groups aligned with revolutionary homosexual liberation, including COGAM (1980s)	The CGL and other Gay and lesbian rights groups, including COGAM (1990s).
<i>Outward Activity</i>		
Claims	-Broad and undefined	- Family rights
Repertoires	-Street based protest	- Lobbying; courts; media
Discourse	-Revolutionary language	- Human-rights discourses
<i>Inward Activity</i>		
	-Consciousness raising	-Community politics

Thinking about outward activity first, CGL founders believed in redefining the relationship with existing polity members. In their view, a shifting political and social environment justified a comprehensive reformulation in political priorities, so that the original culture of conflict could be replaced by a genuine *culture of cooperation* with the authorities.⁷⁴ Such a culture of

⁷⁴ The ideas of “culture of cooperation” and “culture of conflict” are borrowed from Jordi Petit’s interview (interview n° 4). See also Petit (2003: 24).

cooperation, which amounts to no more than a decision to pursue membership in the polity, impinged on the definition of claims, the elaboration of action repertoires, and, lastly, in the formulation of discourses.

The basic aims of revolutionary homosexual liberation were introduced in the previous section. Spanish homosexual liberation aimed at fostering a grand-scale transformation in social, economic and political relations, so that past causes of oppression could be eventually removed. Generally speaking, this kind of groups opted for broad and undefined statements of objectives, based on a very large number of claims. It is true that as time passed by, revolutionary groups effected a number of changes in the definition of claims (see below in this section). However, in comparison with their reformist peers of the CGL, the claims of the FAGC, EHGAM or COGAM sounded vague, unfocused and unrealisable. My interviews with politicians (interviews nº 1, 13, 14, 19 and 20) included questions about how the political elite perceived the messages of the different groups. With no exception, my interviewees, both in Madrid and Barcelona, used terms such as “reasonable”, “moderated”, “pragmatic”, or “legitimate” to define the demands of the CGL, while, in general, they used adjectives such as “unrealistic”, “too radical”, “unreasonable” or “undefined” to define the claims of the FAGC or the COGAM during the 1980s.

Indeed, the CGL defined its ultimate purpose as consisting of a sustained effort:

“To set pressure on political institutions so that the principle of equality under the law could be fulfilled, as the Constitution provides.”⁷⁵

Under this statement of objectives, this organisation soon focused on a number of campaigns that shared a preoccupation with the legal status of gay and lesbian couples. This included initiatives to demand residence permits for the same-sex foreign partners of Spanish nationals, the provision of material support for individuals engaged in judicial battles, or the organisation of conferences and study groups. In this regard, a countrywide conference was organised in 1990 on “homosexual law”, which was widely covered by the national television and the press.⁷⁶ The CGL also introduced important innovations in the area of action repertoires. The contrast between the modes of protest of revolutionaries and reformists groups was stark during the last part of the 1980s. While the latter concentrated on street-based protest, organising a number of protest events denouncing homophobic violence and discrimination against homosexuals in the workplace (Llamas and Vila, 1999: 227), the former focused on liaising with the media (particularly newspapers edited in Barcelona) and with leftist political parties (Petit, 2003: 19-21).⁷⁷ Also, between 1987 and 1989, reformist groups tried the judicial strategy, in a bid to overcome legislative paralysis with supportive judicial rulings.⁷⁸ It

⁷⁵ CGL, in *Iniciativas Gais* #10 (1991). “*Iniciativas*” was one of the free publications of the CGL.

⁷⁶ See, *Iniciativas* #4 (1990:1) and *El País*, 31 December 1990.

⁷⁷ Interestingly, most of the issues dealt with by revolutionary groups during the 1980s became central concerns for the short-lived *queer* movement of the 1990s.

⁷⁸ Note that, on the whole, European movements have been less enthusiastic about engaging in judicial battles than their American peers.

is most revealing that at the same time when the revolutionaries were institutionalising the ritual of terminating their protest events with “mass kissings”, lesbian-feminist organisations should be given special credit for that, the CGL was gained proficiency in the art of canvassing sympathetic policy makers and friendly journalists.⁷⁹

Note as well that the CGL was the first gay organisation in Spain that engaged in electoral politics. While gay and lesbian groups in the United States have a long tradition in using this strategy, their European peers have been far more reluctant to employ an elusive gay collective will as a resource to bargain with in the electoral arena. On the occasion of the local and regional elections of 1988, the CGL designed the so-called pink vote (“*vota rosa*”) campaign. The initiative basically consists of a call to the political parties competing on a given election (local, regional, national or European) to declare their stance in a set of issues. Depending on the responses, gay groups would recommend the vote for one or another party. Ultimately, this campaign, which was hotly criticised from revolutionary headquarters, aimed at turning the problems of the gay and lesbian population into political issues, something that, in the view of the proponents, had

Particularly in what relates to continental Europe, judicial rulings do not create law; thus, gay movements tend to focus on wooing members of parliament rather than engaging in costly cases.

⁷⁹ In spite of the ideological opposition against the engagement in rights-based struggles, utopian groups could not ignore that the tide of history was moving towards the supremacy of rights and citizenship discourses. This created very difficult dilemmas and lead to rather peculiar standings. For instance, the FAGC, wary of institutionalising a rights-based strategy, defended instead a so-called “Charter of Rights for the Free Expression of Homosexual Practice”, which would not be aimed solely at the legislative level (see, *Gay Hotsa* #43 [1989]).

not happened before. In the words of the designer of this campaign:

“The campaign made us political in conventional terms. In many respects, revolutionaries had kept the gay issue detached from the ebbs and flows of normal politics. Yes, I know, they had political demands in mind, but they were always impossible or nearly impossible. In contrast, our decision to appeal to politicians and voters directly was clear evidence that we preferred a different style, that we trusted normal politics.”⁸⁰

In essence, the implications of the Pink Vote campaign were twofold: in the first place, it enabled routine interaction and dialogue between gay groups and political parties (Petit, 2003: 40). This set the base for a fruitful collaboration between the Spanish gay and lesbian movement and leftist political parties during the years to come. In the second place, in engaging in electoral strategies, the message was conjured that gay groups were willing, and had the know-how, to play by the rules of normal politics. In this context it does not surprise that the CGL became an enthusiastic paladin of rights-based political discourses. Whereas during the late 1980s revolutionary militants continued to frame their demands in the language of revolutionary socialism, class-based politics and sexual liberation, the CGL and its allies framed its claims in the discourse of human rights. The language of Constitutional protection, equality under the law and the protection against discrimination inspired the initiatives of reformist groups, to the extent that the CGL recurrently talked about a “right of sexual orientation” (Petit 1996: 308-9).

⁸⁰ Daniel Gabarró, interview n° 6.

The contrast between the CGL and the FAGC was similarly stark in the terrain of inward activity. Homosexual liberation, both in Spain and elsewhere, developed a rather confusing and even contradictory position in the issue of identity. On the one hand, Spanish homosexual fronts – in total agreement with their peers elsewhere – challenged the notion of a so-called homosexual community. Inspired by a well-knitted Marxist argument about the responsibility of the bourgeoisie in perpetuating the oppression of the aggrieved, Spanish liberationists saw the invisible hand of the bourgeoisie behind community practices. In this opinion, the “confinement” of homosexuals in “ghettos” aimed at keeping a leash on the political consciousness of the homosexual population.⁸¹ On the other hand, however, Spanish homosexual liberation felt sometimes pressed to develop a more articulated discourse as regards their cultural and welfare responsibilities vis-à-vis non-politicised homosexuals. In 1981, for instance, the FAGC acknowledged that “gay people have a number of necessities that nobody attends: psychotherapeutic help, lawyers, prevention and treatment of venereal diseases, (...)” (D19(1), 1981: 11).

On the contrary, the CGL addressed the relationship with non-politicised homosexuals from the perspective of what I call community politics. Sexual orientation is regarded in this view as a valid identity maker, capable of engendering and sustaining distinctive communities. Thus, breaking with the discourse of ghettos, the community was envisaged as a site for the free

⁸¹ The identification of community practices with a maliciously designed ghetto appears often in the written output of Spanish homosexual fronts. However, it is in an article titled “the ghetto and its circumstances” (*el guetto y sus circunstancias*), published in the radical magazine *La Pluma*, #0 (1978:3), where this argument is more clearly presented.

expression of what gay and lesbians have in common. In accepting the existence of fundamental similarities among gays and lesbian, gay and lesbian organisations are forced to effect dramatic changes in organisation, strategy and discourse. Now, the movement stands as a representative of the community, and, consequently, new links based on accountability are built. According to this view, the CGL was pioneering in offering a wide range of services exclusively devoted to its *constituency*: namely, the lesbian and gay community. These services included the creation of a hot line (the “pink telephone”) and the provision of legal and medical counsel. This group was particularly notorious for launching a series of “guides” that assisted gays and lesbians in their dealings with governmental agencies and the police. AIDS was also a major concern. Breaking with the passivity of homosexual liberation fronts (see chapter 5), the CGL organised safe-sex workshops, and promoted the information about safe sexual practices.⁸²

Summing up, at the level of the relationship with existing polity members, the CGL promoted the alignment with authorised bargaining practices, so that collective protest could find returns in terms of policy success. Similarly, at the level of the relationship with non-politicised homosexuals, the CGL departed from the liberationist view that criticised community practices as the consequence of structural domination. The pursuit of membership was on the making.

⁸² An exhaustive enumeration of these activities can be found in the CGL’s annual report of 1991 (D36, 1991). See also Petit (1996).

3.3.2. The end of liberation: the moderation of the COGAM

The inception of the COGAM in 1986 interrupted the series of failed attempts to organise a gay and lesbian association in Madrid.⁸³ Its creation responded to the efforts of leading personalities in the field of gay and lesbian activism, who were worried with the disorganisation of gay and lesbian activism in the capital. Aiming at creating a member base for such a group, a workshop dedicated to the future of the gay and lesbian movement was organised. The idea of creating a new organisation was favourably received by a number of young males, which in spite of counting on some experience as participants in NGOs had been thus far scarcely involved in the gay and lesbian movement. Together with these young activists, COGAM attracted the reduced pool of committed individuals, the majority of which were very close to the revolutionary left, which had previously participated in homosexual collective protest in the city.⁸⁴ This is important to understand the paradoxes of the group's early ideology and the velocity with which the organisation moved between largely opposed positions. From 1986 to 1990, COGAM hosted members of the two generations of activism that I deal with in this thesis. This is why it often appeared that COGAM, in spite

⁸³ Originally, COGAM stood for gay group of Madrid. As time passed by, however, the group adopted different names: *Gay and Lesbian* Group of Madrid, and later *Lesbian, Gay and Transgender* Group of Madrid.

⁸⁴ My knowledge about the birth of the COGAM comes from a series of mail exchanges with Emilio Gómez Zeto, a founding member of the group. Although it was not possible to organise a face-to-face interview, his many letters about his experience as an activist have been of invaluable help.

of its seemingly uncompromising revolutionary face, kept a truly reformist soul hidden.

Unlike the organisations that I have discussed thus far, COGAM experienced a rapid and sharp transformation in its political identity in a short span of time. The FAGC, for instance, always remained a revolutionary, utopian organisation. The CGL, on the contrary, never relinquished its support to pragmatism as a founding strategic and ideological principle. COGAM, however, rapidly moved from marked utopianism towards CGL-style pragmatism. As a matter of fact, the “mainstreaming” of this organisation can be read as a concentrated representation of the phenomenon that I seek to explain in this thesis. At an initial stage COGAM burst into the arena of gay and lesbian protest politics with untainted liberationist credentials. In this regard, an editorial of the group’s official publication, (called *entiendes?*, which in a rather euphemistic way stands for “are you gay?”), stressed the compromise of COGAM with the “universality of homosexual desire”. COGAM also endeavoured to create a brand new society, free of gender categories, sexism and *machismo*.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, under the surface of a public infatuation with past revolutionary ideals, very contradictory positions regarding the pros and cons of reformist strategies were on the making. For one, COGAM increasingly associated its outward political activity with the pursuit of equal rights. Following the French and the Norwegian experiences, COGAM drafted a bill that tapped the protection against discrimination in a number of areas. Also, the decision to become a space for socialisation and networking casts further doubts over the robustness of COGAM’s revolutionary

⁸⁵ Calls for action grounded on a traditional liberationist, “anti-patriarchal” discourse can be found up to 1989 (see, for instance, COGAM’s analysis of the purposes of gay and lesbian activism in *entiendes?*, #10 [1989: 14-15]).

ideas. In this regard, the setting up of a hot line was soon followed by a number of initiatives that aimed at transforming COGAM into a social space for the friendly interaction among gay people. As a consequence, the organisation became increasingly populated by a growing crowd that, ultimately, found no interest in participating in political campaigning. Quite paradoxically, COGAM, which insisted on employing revolutionary symbols and discourse elements until 1990, was steadily adopting the form of Anglo-Saxon gay and lesbian groups, where both cultural recreation and political campaigning stand as legitimate organisational goals (Duyvendak, 1995a).

The strategic and ideological confusions of these early years impinged on every decision taken. For instance, while in demanding for a comprehensive anti-discrimination law COGAM was pointing at a more favourable standing as regards the engagement in rights talk, the confrontational style that accompanied the circulation of this proposal (COGAM “warning” politicians that this bill had to be either accepted or rejected, with no room for compromises) made many observers believe that COGAM still participated in the revolutionary modes of the past. Also, the increasing acceptance of engaging in legal battles coincided with fierce condemnation of the “pink vote” initiative. As the group put it: “political parties must be the ones responsible for making promises and gay people, as members of society, and not in the supposed capacity of owners of distinctive voting preferences, should address the different alternatives individually, and as any other member of society decided whom to vote or if to vote at all” (COGAM, in *entiendes?* #9 [1989:3]).

COGAM reached its second general meeting in 1990, after four years of hectic activity, fruitful internal debate, and ambitious plans for the future. Indeed, COGAM, clearly aided by lesbian-feminist activists, had managed to rescue the June March at a time when it was about to disappear; also, between 1988 and 1989 the organisation sponsored a number of street-based protest events that demanded the end of police harassment and protection against homophobic violence. Landslide changes occurred in this meeting.

For one, a new leadership was appointed: Miguel Angel Sánchez (interviewee n° 15), in his early twenties in 1990, did not share the revolutionary principle of previous leaders. Secondly, in an attempt to promote the recruitment of new members, a new organisational structure was adopted, which clearly differentiated between the political and cultural activities. Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, the group endeavoured a far-reaching refurbishment of its principles, ideology and mission. As the writer of the ideological paper of that conference stated:

“The possibility of ideological renewal is rooted in the recent experience of the gay movement in general, and of the COGAM in particular. First, the global crisis of the gay movement points at a panorama of generalised social apathy; Secondly, the steady disassociation between the formal aims of the gay movement and its reality. As a matter of fact, how many people did actually know what COGAM’s ideological definition was?”⁸⁶

Although the process of ideological redefinition was not completed until the 3rd conference (1994), the changes promoted in 1990 signified a major departure from the past: COGAM ceased to align with the revolutionary ideas of the pioneering generation of homosexual activists. In spite of some punctual differences, COGAM declared a clear harmony with the postulates and aims of the CGL, stressing the consolidation of the trend that was transforming the Spanish gay and lesbian movement from a “homosexual liberation” movement to a “gay and lesbian rights” movement.

⁸⁶ COGAM, D58 (1990:4).

3.4. Accessing the policy (1990-1997).

In this, the last part of our journey, the conflict between pragmatism and utopianism came to an end. While the reformist understanding of activism strengthened, revolutionary ideas lost their audience. And as reformism prevailed, gay and lesbian groups were recognised as polity members. Both things are reviewed in this section.

3.4.1. Consolidating pragmatism

Due to a steady increase in members and resources, by 1997, as it had happened between 1977 and 1979, at least one gay group was operating in every large urban area in the country. However, while during the transition the movement pivoted around revolutionary ideas, twenty years later the consensus was rooted on the virtues of pragmatism.

3.4.1.1. Reformist activism during the 1990s

In the first place, COGAM and the CGL steadily grew stronger. For instance, although I have found it impossible to collect reliable data on number of members, *El País* estimated COGAM's membership in 1993 on some three hundred members (a figure widely shared by COGAM activists).⁸⁷ Less than twenty

⁸⁷ *El País*, 2 May 1993. Gay groups have not shared with me any kind of data about their income and expenditure. The heart of the problem is that, in most of the cases, gay groups divert the resources acquired through grants associated with AIDS to cover other kind of

members attended the first meeting of COGAM back in 1986. COGAM and the CGL, despite their punctual disagreements, became the strongholds of a new definition of gay and lesbian activism, which was rapidly succeeding in improving the “marketability” of gay and lesbian issues in the political arena. In the second place, a host of new organisations started to appear in several parts of the country. Most of these groups assimilated the reformist ideational package reviewed in the previous section.

So, in this terrain, reformist groups continued with the strategy of “cleaning political messages” - as this was often put in the interviews - which essentially consisted of eliminating any strategy other than “legalism” (Llamas and Vila, 1999). A token of the consolidation of this discourse is the statement of objectives of the San Sebastián-based group *Gehitu*, constituted in 1994:

“A quest to achieve the recognition of the fundamental rights of dignity, equality and the free development of our sexuality so that all sorts of social and legal discriminations against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals can be eliminated”.⁸⁸

Amidst this broad call for the extension of civil rights to gays and lesbians, the CGL and COGAM commanded the association of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement with the pursuit of a partnership law. In the light of these priorities, both groups arrived in 1993 at draft proposals for a same-sex partnership law, both of which were inspired in the same-sex partnership act passed in Denmark in 1989. While COGAM opted for a “specific and

expenses. Technically speaking, this is not permitted. This is why they are adamant about keeping a lift over the accounts.

⁸⁸ See statement of aims and objectives in the group’s website (<http://www.gehitu.net/info/gehitu.htm>).

viable” text, organised around the idea of “*de facto* family units” (either homosexuals or heterosexual), the CGL designed a more ambitious text that demanded the analogy between homosexual couples and married couples in every aspect of the legal system. In both cases, however, *equal family rights* became the chief and virtually unique claim posed to the system.⁸⁹ Intense media-oriented campaigns and unprecedented lobbying efforts were designed to acquaint the political elite with the new discourse. That was a strategy that was replicated in the years that followed, to the extent that numerous references equating “success” with “high media coverage” abound in the internal documentation of COGAM. Not surprisingly, Pedro Zerolo (interviewee n° 16), the father of the draft proposal and the key personality of the COGAM during the 1990s, contends: “image change and the support of the media are responsible for the booming of the gay movement” (in Aliaga and Cortes, 2000: 202). However, note that Spanish reformist gay groups organised two purely political demonstrations, in 1995 and 1997, demanding a same-sex partnership act.

Generally speaking, the majority of reformist groups also participated in the ideas of the CGL on community politics. COGAM, which from 1987 to 1989 had neglected the “winning formula” of combining insider and community politics, was making rapid steps in this direction. For instance, in 1993 the group signed an agreement with the Regional Government of Madrid whereby the latter would provide generous funding for a number of welfare-connected activities, including AIDS prevention. And the new groups followed this pattern too. Partially to justify funding applications to local and regional governments,

⁸⁹ I have found copies of these bills in the documental archive of COGAM (D37, 1993; D38, 1993).

and partially to make membership in a gay and lesbian organisation less daunting a task, Spanish contemporary gay and lesbian organisations have become committed service providers (particularly in the areas of AIDS prevention) and also sometimes very imaginative entertainers.⁹⁰

However, an interesting exception deserves a brief commentary. In 1996, an organisation called the *Fundación Triángulo* (Triangle Trust) was created. Mostly founded by previous COGAM members (including one of COGAM's previous leaders), *Triángulo* defended most of what lied at the heart of the reformist project; namely, a concerted effort to achieve legal equality through the systematic employment of human rights discourses. Miguel Angel Sanchez (interviewee n° 15), elected president of COGAM in 1990, and founder of this new organisation, defined the aims of the Triangle Trust in the following terms:

⁹⁰ This is the context where one must situate the inception of the Barcelona-based *Casal Lambda* (Lambda House). The *Casal* was created in Barcelona in 1989, out of the efforts of the CGL and local leftists politicians in a bid to attend to the welfare and recreational needs of the gay and lesbian community in Barcelona. The *Casal Lambda* defines itself as a "non-profitable associative centre that seeks the normalization of homosexuality." Social visibility, the education of the public and the promotion of research are listed as central pursuits of the organisation (see <http://www.lambdaweb.org>). *Casal Lambda* is important in so far as its existence signals the consolidation of new strategies of social organisation within the homosexual population. Highly supported by the local government of Barcelona, this organisation operated in the space in between protest and institutional politics, where the homosexual population was addressed as a well-defined social group and the role of institutional actors was defined as guarantors of the rights and well-being of yet another social and political minority.

“The Triangle Trust aims at fostering law reform so that the principle of equality can govern the relationship between homosexuals and heterosexuals in society. Equality, legal and social alike, is what we pursue.”

So, as it can be seen, in so many ways this organisation simply added to the kaleidoscope of reformist, gay rights organisations committed to foster law reform that since the late part of the 1980s had come to dominate the representation of gay and lesbian people in Spain. Neither its claims, nor its action repertoires differed from those of the COGAM.⁹¹ However, *Triángulo* did represent something new under the sun: it did not believe in identity politics. *Triángulo*, a truly reformist organisation, pursued insider politics without accepting the distinctiveness of sexuality as an identity marker.⁹² Quoting the interviewee again:

“Our activities are not orientated towards the reification of the so-called differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals, because, we believe, these differences do not really exist. Difference is an exogenous outcome, I mean, something that only exists because external agents insist on discriminating against homosexuals. Yet nothing essential sustains these alleged differences; on their own they would no endure.”⁹³

⁹¹ Note that an interesting variation in organisational design did take place. The *Fundación Triángulo* constituted itself as a foundation, a type of organisational design where leaders are not held to be accountable to a member base.

⁹² *Triángulo's* founding members explaining the group's position in Sánchez and Pérez (2000).

⁹³ Miguel Angel Sánchez, interview n° 15.

Ultimately, the point that I want to make is that, contrary to an opinion easily found in the literature, pragmatic activism is not *per se* associated with the engagement in identity politics. In this sense, Rahman (2000: 149) argues that, due to the particular organisation of political processes in most western societies, “we need a representative political identity both as a location from which to articulate our experiences and concerns and as a representation of ourselves to the wider political community.” But there are a good number of historical examples that challenge this tenet. For instance, homophile groups, notwithstanding its undisputable reformist standing, never accepted that homosexuals had to struggle for the recognition of differences. So, considering the structure of political opportunities and other exogenous factors, gay and lesbian groups might decide to ground its standing vis-à-vis polity members on a parallel emphasis on identity politics. Yet that is an *option*, a course of action that may, or may not be taken.

Also, the existence of the Triangle Trust touches on a second relevant concern: political generations are not free from internal problems and disagreements. Agreements on a core of basic ideas do not protect social movements from engaging into thorny processes of internal confrontation and factionalisation. Power struggles, exogenously exerted pressure or ideological divisions can foster rivalries and conflicts among activists that, otherwise, are linked by the participation in similar collective cognitive maps.

3.4.1.2. *The Spanish queer movement*

Thus far in this section I have reviewed the powers of the reformist side. However, what was the situation in the opposed camp? The answer is perhaps predictable: the transformation of COGAM into a pragmatic, reformist gay and lesbian rights organisation mortally wounded the hopes of revolutionary activists – increasingly fewer in number – to remain as a solid alternative to reformism. Despite the fact the FAGC and the Bilbao-based

EHGAM did not technically disappear, the membership base of these groups reduced during the 1990's to some twenty to forty members (at most). And although some new organisations in Andalusia and Catalonia exhibited revolutionary flags during the first part of the 1990s, none of them were long-lived (see Llamas and Vila, 1999: 238). Only one exception can be identified in this daunting panorama. The Madrid-based group *La Radical Gai* (LRG, Gay Radicals), virtually the Spanish only *queer* group, sought to display an alternative view to the increasingly resonant principles of pragmatism. In many accounts the LRG was a fascinating creature: organised by a cadre of young intellectuals, provocation and theatrical dramaturgy became its strongest assets. Moreover, the LRG resumed the tradition of thinking and debate that reformist groups had abandoned.

The birth of the LRG was embedded in the tensions among pragmatics and utopians. In 1991, as the logical consequence of the changes implemented in the second general meeting, COGAM broke its ties with surviving revolutionary organisations. More particularly, COGAM abandoned the *Coordinadora de Frentes de Liberación Homosexual del Estado Español* (COFLHEE, Alliance of Homosexual Liberation Fronts of the Spanish State), which was a nation-wide alliance constituted in 1977 by the founding homosexual liberation fronts. This decision, which originated out of an effort to transform the face of this organisation vis-à-vis potential recruits and institutional actors alike, infuriated a number of COGAM members. The rebels argued their case in a letter sent to the leadership on April 1991 (D35, 1991). I reproduce some extracts of this letter below:

“ – We believe that this decision [*the cancellation of membership in the COFLHEE*] (...) represents the ultimate confirmation of a process whereby the ideological space of COGAM is firmly tided up. None of us agree with the tendency to use the concepts of “radical” and “revolutionary” in a pejorative way. In our view, the aforementioned process of ideological narrowness, which we believe is far evident,

excludes the sensibilities and political positions of the undersigning.

- At this stage, we can easily perceive that only those strategies that avoid confrontation with the government will be allowed.”⁹⁴

In short, these activists essentially lamented the drive towards incorporation engineered after the second general meeting. Right after this letter, the LRG was constituted. In the words of Ricardo Llamas, its mentor and key ideologist, this group “once again valued social presence, visibility, the management of pleasure (and) the interchanges of bodies” (Llamas and Vila, 1999: 230). This is why “a critical approximation of the mechanisms through which a homophobic system decides between life and death, be it physical or social, of those who incarnate dissidence” was proposed. As mentioned above, these fundamental ideological premises spawned, on the one hand, a thriving intellectual effort to justify the need for new and fresh strategies of personal resistance against the “imperatives of solemnity, legalism, institutionalisation, recognition and endurance that dominate the space for contentious politics”,⁹⁵ and, on the other, a host of theatrical protest events to denounce homophobic violence, the endurance of homophobia and the stigmatisation of HIV positives. Indeed, the LRG was the only gay group that challenged the mainstream policy based on prevention and education.

Survival, however, became a difficult pursuit. As it has been the case with homosexual liberation groups worldwide, the reluctance to allow any kind of organisational institutionalisation to happen, and their very marginal position within the Madrid Gay and lesbian community made continuity impossible. In 1996, the

⁹⁴ D50 (1999, 2-3).

⁹⁵ See, the article signed by the LRG in *Mensual*, #84 (1997:1).

LRG faded away. Despite its short-lived experience, the story of the Spanish queer movement must be remembered for at least one powerful reason: it yet again confirms that generations are not immune to internal conflict. In my view, queer activists belong to the same generation of gay and lesbian activists. Their worldviews in relation to manifold issues, such as in the existence of basic similarities among homosexual people, do clearly coincide. However, one cannot ignore that queer groups defended a political project that in so many ways clashes, and challenges, the strategies of gay and lesbian rights groups. So? Divisions about outward political identity are a perennial feature of social movements, and therefore they can be traced at any point in time. Yet there are differences as regards the *intensity* of this conflict. LRG members, despite their differences with COGAM or the CGL, shared more with them than with the founding liberationist militants. Differences in the style and the organisation of protest between gay rights and queer activists do not obscure the fact that they operate from a similar ideational package, which serves as a unifying bedrock.

3.4.2. Becoming a polity member

Lo (1992: 231), rather vaguely, suggests that conferring membership involves “something else other than organising a parliamentary hearing”, although she is hardly precise as to how exactly membership is detected. Other works that have touched on the issue of membership are similarly imprecise on this question. I follow the following strategy: I consider the way existing members in the polity, political parties mainly, treat the *issues* of the gay and lesbian movement. Following Eder (1998), the more “issue appropriation” takes place, that is, the more political parties take movement issues as elements for their own political strategy, the closer the proprietors of those issues are of achieving recognition. Issue appropriation is effected, on the one hand, by changes in the electoral manifestos and, on the other hand, by

changes in the parliamentary agenda so that political parties sponsor parliamentary work on behalf of movement issues.⁹⁶

In 1990, Matilde Fernández (interviewee n° 19), Minister of Social Affairs from 1989 and 1993, met with representatives of the CGL. Certainly, the particulars of that meeting are hardly impressive. As she recollects:

“Nothing particularly impressive was discussed in that meeting. We talked about some aspects of their “pink vote” campaign. I also recollect a discussion about the endurance of legal discrimination and unfair treatment towards homosexuals. We agreed on the need to foster a greater governmental involvement in the transformation of social attitudes as regards sexual diversity and AIDS prevention.”⁹⁷

Nevertheless, never before had representatives of a gay organisation negotiated at the highest ministerial level. All throughout the 1970s and 1980s gay and lesbian groups had found not clear access points within the political elite: for the most part, direct dialogue between activists and politicians did not take place. After 1990, however, the CGL first, and the COGAM afterwards, built on their less aggressive political outlook to establish permanent channels of communication with sympathetic leftist members of Parliament, both at the national and regional levels. Particularly since the presentation of draft proposals for a same-sex partnership law (1993), dialogue between (some) gay groups

⁹⁶ The idea to use political manifestos as an indicator of political will has considerably currency within political analysts. The underlying rationale is that, at the end, political parties keep their promises (Klingeman et al, 1994). The decision to incorporate given issues as manifesto items binds the party to deliver polity on the subject.

⁹⁷ Matilde Fernández, interview n° 19.

and the socialist government followed a regular pattern, often at the highest political level.

The consolidation of gay family rights as an issue of generalised political consumption followed a similar pattern. Gay and lesbian groups had traditionally counted on the support of *Izquierda Unida* (IU). A left wing party committed to eco-pacifism and European communism, as soon as in 1986 it had instructed its representatives on every political forum to develop parliamentary work on behalf of the gay movement. Similarly, its electoral manifesto for the general elections of 1986 included a host of promises intended to protect homosexual people from discrimination against them, including adoption rights (IU, 1986: 24). IU, however, has always been a marginal political force.⁹⁸ So, it was the support of the PSOE, between 1982 and 1996 the party in government and indisputable the largest leftist Spanish political party, what mattered.

Between 1993 and 1996, the PSOE's last term in government before the electoral victory of the conservative *Partido Popular* (PP, Popular Party) in 1996, the PSOE effected a number of changes in its approach to gay rights recognition. Altogether they signalled a willingness to cooperate with the gay and lesbian movement on a more systematic basis. A watershed was the reform of the criminal law that, in 1995, entitled homosexuals to seek protection against hate crimes. Also, the Socialist Parliamentary group issued in 1994 a declaration demanding the recognition of some rights to non-married couples, including homosexual ones.⁹⁹ And, in 1996, the electoral manifesto for the general elections came to include, for the time ever, a compromise

⁹⁸ IU's share of the electorate ranges from the 4 per cent, 1982, to around the 10 per cent, 1996, (Montero and Calvo, 2000: table 8.1).

⁹⁹ The technical reference is: *Iniciativa* (162/000122), DS. Congreso de los Diputados Núm. 110 de 29/11/1994 Pág.: 5884.

of this party with the passing of a partnership legislation (PSOE, 1996: 80).

A victory of the PP in the general elections of 1996 sent the PSOE to the benches of the opposition. Right after the constitution of the new parliament, both IU and the PSOE introduced bills in Parliament that sought to confer pension and inheritance rights to non-married couples.¹⁰⁰ That IU sought to make gay rights recognition a central issue in its parliamentary strategy surprised no one. However, in formally defending a partnership bill, the PSOE was effecting a major change in its strategy towards gays and lesbians. In the words of Carles Campuzano, a MP from the Catalan nationalist party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU),

“To say that what they did [*the interviewee is talking about the decision of the PSOE to defend a partnership bill*] “shocked” us is not perhaps accurate. This was part of their electoral manifesto, and, besides, at least two socialist ministers had been flirting with the possibility of such a law for some time. However, no one perhaps expected that they would engage in this debate so soon, just a few weeks after having lost power. For the first time, they actually appeared to mean their sympathetic words about gay and lesbian rights.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ The technical references are: Proposición del Grupo socialista del Congreso, por la que se reconocen determinados efectos jurídicos a las uniones de hecho (nº exp. 122/000046), DS. Congreso de los Diputados Núm. 68 de 18/03/1997 Pág.: 3336. Proposición del Grupo Parlamentario Federal de IU-IPC, sobre medidas para la igualdad jurídica de las parejas de hecho (nº exp. 122/000049), DS. Congreso de los Diputados Núm. 68 de 18/03/1997 Pág.: 3336.

¹⁰¹ Carles Campuzano, interview nº 14.

A long lasting peace treaty between the gay and lesbian movement and the PSOE lied behind this initiative. It represented the symbolic endorsing of gay and lesbian groups as legitimate claim makers, partners to play with in the institutional game.

3.5. Summary

This chapter has chiefly aimed to demonstrate that the Spanish gay and lesbian movement has effected a dramatic change in its outward political identity. We have seen that this movement was born with a revolutionary soul, full of ambitious utopian ideals. The offspring of a rapidly changing environment, the very vital Spanish homosexual liberation movement defined itself as the dweller of a political space outside the polity. Decay and demobilisation followed the thrilling years of the transition. Homosexual liberation, however, endured as the dominant understanding for the organisation of gay and lesbian collective action. If the association of homosexual liberation with Marxist ideas was already setting the Spanish case apart from the Anglo-Saxon pattern, the longevity of liberationist ideas confirmed that Spain “was different”.

Things started to change during the 1980s. Dissident voices denounced the liberationist project as anachronistic and useless. Observing the rapid transformation of the social position of homosexual people in western countries, the soon-to-be founders of Spanish reformist gay and lesbian activism flagged pragmatism as the ultimate solution for the maladies of the movement. Pragmatism built on a concerted plan to break with the isolation of the gay and lesbian movement, both inwardly and outwardly. However, that involved large compromises: for instance, the gay and lesbian movement should cease to appear as the paladin of large-scale projects of social and economic change. Pragmatism and utopianism battled for supremacy. During the 1990s, however, the former prevailed: the Spanish gay movement transformed into a gay and lesbian *rights* movements, sympathetic with the

engagement in identity politics, and committed to set working partnership with existing polity members. As a consequence of the drive towards pragmatism, new alliances were made with sympathetic leftist political parties and, ultimately, membership in the polity was achieved.

The evidence discussed in this chapter gives way to three fundamental empirical questions. Firstly, what explains the revolutionary orientation of the pioneering Spanish homosexual liberation movement? While in the majority of countries, a “radical” understanding prevailed, Spanish liberationists felt close to a system of ideas that interweaved sexual liberation and socialist politics. I address this question in chapter 4. Secondly, what explains the (late) emergence of reformist groups? And thirdly, why is it that pragmatism prevailed? These two questions are discussed in chapter 5. It is the time now to talk about *political generations*.

CHAPTER 4: DWELLING AT THE MARGINS OF THE POLITY. THE POLITICAL PREFERENCES OF HOMOSEXUAL MILITANCY IN SPAIN

The discussion in the previous chapter arrived at three basic empirical questions: namely, in the first place, why the Spanish homosexual liberation movement emerged as a revolutionary force; in the second place, why a reformist view emerged during the late 1980s; lastly, why reformism prevailed during the 1990s. Together they guide the search for a comprehensive explanation about why the Spanish gay and lesbian movement has become a polity member. I commence this task in this chapter. It chiefly seeks to explain why the pioneering homosexual liberation movement in Spain adopted a revolutionary outlook that subsumed the goal of sexual liberation within the more general quest of bringing about a truly socialist society. While the majority of western countries were engaging in a *radical* definition of homosexual liberation, Spanish homosexual fronts aligned with the most *revolutionary* version of it. Why? If emerging as a challenger in the polity is a normal consequence of any social movement's "years of madness" (Melucci, 1996; Offe, 1990), what explains the *intensity* of the antagonism between the Spanish homosexual liberation movement and the nascent democratic political system?

In an attempt to address this question, in this chapter I explore and explain the process of preference formation among Spanish

homosexual liberation fronts from 1975 to 1980. To do so, I begin by considering the applicability of the opportunities and the diffusion arguments (“conventional explanations” henceforth). That is necessary, on the one hand, in view of the connections between homosexual liberation fronts and revolutionary leftist parties and, on the other, in view of the stark similarities between the founding ideas of Spanish and French homosexual liberation. I show in this section that both arguments, albeit useful, are nonetheless incapable of providing a complete explanation. Considering this, the remaining of the chapter is devoted to the exposition of my “alternative” explanation. My argument is that the definition of the movement’s outward political identity was embedded in the founding ideas of the generation of activists that came of age during the early 1970s: namely, the generation of *Homosexual Militants*. As part of the presentation of this argument, section two outlines the “collective cognitive maps” of homosexual militants. Having discussed the founding intellectual principles of this generation, I move in section three to the connections between ideas and political preferences. Lastly, in section four, the process of generational formation is explored. In section five I conclude.

4.1. Forced challengers? Conventional explanations.

Drawing on the theoretical discussion of chapter 2, in this section I discuss whether or not the decision to dwell at the margins of the polity responded to context-related factors. More specifically, the connections between outward political identity and two exogenous factors – the structure of political opportunities and the assimilation of foreign ideas – are explored. Could it be the case that homosexual liberation fronts had no other choice than to engage in conflict interaction with political authorities? The answer to these questions builds on the resolution of two hypothetical counterfactuals: firstly, would the Spanish homosexual liberation movement have refused to seek

membership if the process of transition towards democracy had been different? ; Secondly, would the Spanish homosexual liberation movement have adopted a revolutionary understanding of homosexual liberation if Anglo-Saxon ideas, instead of French ones, had been assimilated?

4.1.1. Tricky alliances: The opportunities argument

Little doubts remain about the beneficial effects of the engendering of the transition process for the consolidation of a social movements sector in Spain (Pastor, 1998; Aguilar, 1997; Alvarez-Junco, 1994). This was particularly the case as far as the gay movement was concerned. New opportunities for mobilisation were created that permitted the organisation of new forms of collective protest. However, in doing so, a process of regime change is not *per se* giving birth to its worst foe. In other words, while the shift in the structure of opportunities caused by a process of regime change certainly helps explain the genesis of a given movement, a more thorough analysis is required to understand in which precise ways that process impinges on the claims and discourses of the nascent social movement sector. Would have the Spanish homosexual liberation movement been different in a different process of regime change? Could we not suspect that the “radicalisation” of Spanish homosexual liberation fronts was the logical response of a given definition of the structures of friends and enemies?

That this is a reasonable thing to suspect was partially suggested in chapter 3, where the connections between the emerging homosexual liberation movement and the political parties of the so-called “revolutionary left” were outlined. To begin with, homosexual liberation organisations confronted a largely unresponsive party system during the years of the transition towards democracy. Expecting any sympathy from the two large conservative parties was simply out of the question. Both the governing *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD,

Democratic Centrist Union) and the right-wing *Alianza Popular* (AP, Popular Alliance) addressed homosexuality from the perspective of moral deviation, clinical disorder and a threat to public order. To give an example in 1980, right after the reform of the Social Menaces Act (which *de facto* had made homosexual relations legal), the UCD disclosed its plans to pass a new criminal law, one that would criminalise “sexual pathological deviations”. A detailed analysis of these plans can be found in an article in *Debat gai*, #4, ([1979/80: 17]). However, and in spite of the fact that leftist political parties are generally meant to stand closer to social movements (Maguire, 1995; Tarrow, 1990), neither the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party), nor the *Partido Comunista de España* (PCE, Spanish Communist Party), were particularly eager to collaborate with social movements in general and with the homosexual liberation movement in particular.

For one thing, both parties were embroiled in an always fragile, pacts-driven process of regime change, which forced them to appear moderate and willing to “pay respect to the rules of the game” (Aguilar, 2001: 12). Considering this, sponsoring street-based protesters was generally deemed to be inappropriate and unwise. And, in the second place, the members (and leaders) of both the PSOE and the PCE remained deeply homophobic. Notwithstanding the fact that the leftist project “was, and is, to fulfil the emancipatory goal of the enlightenment: the universal liberation of humankind from oppressive ideologies and exploitative social structures”, socialist support for homosexual rights “has been at best half-hearted and often entirely absent” (Hekma et al, 1995: 7). In the particular case of Spain, it was José María Bandrés, a prominent leftist politician and Congressman,

and historically one of the closest allies to the cause of gay rights recognition, who best put this feeling down in words:

“The support of left wing parties to the demands of gay groups – sincere as they are – is still very much “nominal”, detached from the real sentiments of grass roots militants and leaders”.¹⁰²

Ultimately politicians were basically in tune with society’s feelings towards homosexuality. Although there is no quality survey data on attitudes towards homosexuality in Spain until 1980 (first wave of the *World Values Study*), a study run in 1975 by an organisation called “*Instituto IBP*” (commissioned by a left-wing magazine called *Guadiana*), offered some data to gauge the magnitude of the problem: in that survey, only 3 per cent of the respondents – out of 1363 - accepted that “society should openly accept homosexuality”. Similarly, 80 per cent of the sample declared their support for antigay legislation (Petit, 2003: 17-18). A few years later, the World Values Study confirmed that attitudes towards homosexuality in Spain were generally very negative. In that survey, 54 per cent of the respondents affirmed that homosexuality could never be justified (Ashford and Timms, 1992: 63; Calvo, 2003).

At the same time that the political parties with parliamentary representation either attacked or ignored the homosexual liberation movement, a political movement comprised of an assortment of small “revolutionary” leftist parties was declaring its sympathy towards the quest of homosexual liberation. Building on what we

¹⁰² Interview with José María Bandrés (D18, 1980:2). On the alleged gap between the official and the real positions, see also EHGAM’s press note for *El País*, 7 August 1978, and the editorial of *El País*, 14 February 1979).

saw in chapter 3, the term revolutionary left stands for a cacophony of small parties that attempted to represent every possible leftist sensibility. Fostering the arrival of a truly socialist society was the central concern of the revolutionary left, a goal that was pursued through unconventional means. Confirming the edginess of this discourse, a shared characteristic of revolutionary leftist parties was the seemingly paradoxical identification of the PCE as a moderate, “centrist”, reformist party that was unwilling to lead the revolution of the working class (Roca, 1995a: 35-36).

To achieve a thorough understanding of the revolutionary left’s role in shaping the preferences of the incoming homosexual liberation movement, a central feature of the Spanish process of transition towards democracy needs to become clear. Following an unwritten division of labour, while leftist parliamentary parties (PSOE, PCE), as part of the strategy to appease Francoist sectors, only dealt with “urgent and important matters” (Aguilar, 2001; Montero and Calvo, 2000; Linz, 1993), revolutionary leftist parties defined themselves as the voice of the aggrieved; in other words, as the agents of those communities whose problems were not urgent enough to be included within the negotiations between democratic and Francoist forces. This facilitated the collaboration between the revolutionary left and the social movement sector.¹⁰³ On the whole, the style, ideas and image of the revolutionary left conjured together to create a sympathetic view as far as

¹⁰³ Note as well that beyond strategic calculations, the embroilment of the revolutionary left with a host of “postmaterialist” issues – environmentalism, feminism, homosexual liberation - was also the consequence of having a very young membership (Portuondo, 1995: 99). Some of these organisations were explicitly juvenile organisations, such as the “Juvenile Red Guard” (*Joven Guardia Roja*), while the majority of them cared about the consolidation of a “juvenile vanguard force” (Laiz, 1995: 145).

homosexual political involvement was concerned. Revolutionary leftist parties supported most of the demands of Spanish homosexual liberation fronts, including the bid for the decriminalisation of homosexuality, and contributed to the success of some of the protest events organised between 1977 and 1979.

A political organisation called the *Liga Comunista Revolucionaria* (LCR, Revolutionary Communist League) deserves a special commentary. Founded in 1971, the LCR was by far the most active supporter of Spanish homosexual liberation among revolutionary leftist political parties. In contrast with some of their revolutionary peers, these “communist revolutionaries” broke with Maoist or Stalinist principles, to create a “vanguard movement” that could align with the youngest cadre of society.¹⁰⁴ Along these lines, a “homosexual study group” was created at the Madrid branch of the LCR in 1977. The group produced a series of reports and position papers on the issue of homosexual liberation.¹⁰⁵ Reading this material together, a three-fold claim can be inferred: firstly, the LCR’s homosexual working group overtly criticised the endurance of homophobia within the left. Being this well-known a fact, homosexual activists appreciated the official acknowledgement of something that was jeopardizing the collaboration among homosexual groups and leftist parties. Secondly, the abstract goal of personal liberation is defended, which links political participation with the abatement of oppression of all sorts. Lastly, a view of sexual liberation as yet another step for the grander goal of achieving a socialist society clearly arises.

¹⁰⁴ The origins, evolution and discourse of the LCR are discussed in Laiz (1995: 143-155).

¹⁰⁵ I have been able to study a number of these reports. See, D1 (1977); D2 (1977) and D3 (1977).

Summing up, while the large parties of the left had no interest in building a working relationship with the homosexual liberation movement, the parties of the revolutionary left did so. So, having been lead to a partnership with the latter kind of political parties, it is plausible to suspect that the decisions taken by homosexual organisations on matters of outward political identity were shaped by the dynamics of this alliance. If the revolutionary left decided to dwell at the margins of the polity, what else its closest and most loyal ally could do? A further piece of information strengthens this tenet. Some evidence suggests that at least some revolutionary leftist parties could have *actively* pressurised homosexual liberation fronts to engage in the kind of conflict-based strategies, discourses and action repertoires that were so typical of the revolutionary left. Between 1977 and 1978, a short-lived group called the *Movimiento Andaluz Homosexual Revolucionario* (MAHR, Revolutionary Homosexual Movement of Andalusia), canvassed several political organisations in Seville in order to know their position on the campaign against the Social Menace Act. To my surprise, some of these organisations explicitly conditioned their support to a close monitoring of the manifestos of homosexual liberation groups. Basically, it was argued that the workers' movement could only engage in collaboration with other "truly revolutionary forces", which they defined as "social movements prepared to understand the historical responsibility of the working class in bringing down the capitalist system" (see D5, 1977 and 1978). Should social movements fail this test, revolutionary organisation could not be prepared to offer support of any sort.

This is of course a major twist in the argumentation: the confirmation that existing political actors exercised some kind of ideological blackmailing against homosexual liberation organisations reinforces the applicability of the opportunities argument. Perhaps, the process of preference formation could be exclusively read as one of subordination of the powerless to the powerful. Even if this evidence remains weak, the connections between the definition of the homosexual liberation movement as

a challenger to the polity and the strategies of the revolutionary left should not be overlooked. In more than one way the evolution of political events put the homosexual liberation movement in the hands of the revolutionary left. Consequently, a solid alliance that fostered a healthy flow of mutual information was favoured. *However*, some gaps still remain. Thus far I have presented a causal sequence that departed from an ideologically neutral gay movement, continued with a given distribution of power among collective actors and terminated in a movement influenced by the sole political actor willing to help. However, the pioneering homosexual liberation fronts were formed by people that already counted on a background of clandestine militancy in the revolutionary left (see below). While it is true that the dynamics of the transition brought homosexual liberationists and revolutionary leftist militants together, it is also the case that most of Spanish liberationist organisations built on markedly revolutionary ideas from the very outset. Perhaps blackmailing was not a general practice because there was no need for it. My point is that instead of seeing the relationship between the revolutionary left and the homosexual liberation movement as a one-way-only causal influence, the possibility of homosexual liberation knocking at the door of the revolutionary left at the beginning of the transition process - hence taking an active role in promoting this collaboration - should be kept in mind as well.

4.1.2. Looking across borders? The diffusion argument.

Important similarities in the formalisation of ideological discourses in France and in Spain suggest that the Spanish homosexual liberation movement could have based its process of preference formation on the assimilation of French ideas. A threefold circumstance endorses this reading. Firstly, the timing of events was clearly favourable for diffusion to take place. By the time that Spanish liberation kicked off (1975/1976), the French homosexual liberation movement had already gained consistency

as a cultural and ideological phenomenon. Aided by a booming gay press (Jablonski, 1995), and building on the work of very active gay intellectuals, French liberationists – despite the chaotic sequence of organisations that emerged and faded away from 1968 to 1975 – managed to delineate the basic contours of a resonant ideational project, which in many cases was put down in writing.

Secondly, privileged channels of diffusion certainly linked the Spanish and the French experiences. For one thing, some of the founders of the *Front d'Alliberament Gai de Catalunya* (FAGC) were regular recipients of *Arcadie* (the name stood both for the periodical and for the group that published it). The magazine “offered readers articles about homosexuality and information on the situation for homosexuals in foreign countries, as well as poetry, short stories, reviews of films and play, and even some advertising” (Jablonski, 1995: 239). Armand de Fluvià touched on this in the interview:

“Although for some of us travelling abroad was not impossible, it is evident that, at that time, mobility was a rare thing. And, of course, there was no chance that the Francoist press could keep us posted about developments on gay and lesbian politics in the world! Fortunately for us, *Arcadie*, the French homophile group, was editing a fairly good magazine. *Arcadie* covered social and political events in many parts of Europe and the United States. Some of us arranged subscriptions to that magazine, and thanks to this, we heard about the Stonewall riots, about the constitution of Homosexual liberation Fronts in the United States, and so on.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Armand de Fluvià, interview n° 3. As we saw in the previous chapter, Armand de Fluvià was the founder of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement in Barcelona.

In addition to that, thanks to the translation of a number of French reference texts on homosexual liberation a larger audience could become acquainted with the essence of French liberationist principles. Examples of these texts are the oft-cited “*Rapport contre la Normalité*”, one of the French FHAR’s key ideological documents as well as Jean Nicola’s “*La Question Homosexuelle*”.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, prestigious American texts on homosexual liberation (say, for instance, Carl Wittman’s “A Gay Manifesto”) remained totally unknown among Spanish homosexuals. So, the timing was favourable and channels of communication existed. Did cross-national diffusion happen? Considering the similarities at the level of discourse, one might well suspect that this was the case.

While Anglo-Saxon and northern European countries aligned with a radical understanding of homosexual liberation, French liberationists first, and Spanish liberationists after them, opted for a revolutionary definition. Although a more elaborated presentation of the liberationist system of ideas is discussed later on in this chapter, it is necessary to introduce now the basic traits of the distinction between radical and revolutionary liberation. A review of several historical experiences reveals that gay liberation has taken one of two forms (Marotta, 1981): in some cases, the emphasis has rested with the personal and cultural dimension of sexual liberation: in others, the economic and political aspects have taken the lead. The former is defined as *radical* liberation, and the latter as *revolutionary* liberation.

Subtle, but important, differences in the attribution of blame, and in the definition of action programmes distinguish radical from revolutionary liberation. Note that in both cases the diagnosis

¹⁰⁷ Mario Mielli’s “*Elementi de Critica Omosessuale*” was also translated into Spanish.

builds on a framework of oppression (Altman, 1993; Teal, 1995: 28). As Valocchi (1999: 68) puts it, this “technique”, established in the new left, analysed the ways in which various institutions as well as dominant culture stigmatised, marginalised, or discriminated against different groups. Homosexuals, due to the functioning of a plethora of strategies of social control and regulation, had been reduced to the status of “impermissible subjects”, second-class citizens deprived of moral and legal legitimacy (McIntosh, (1998 [1968]: 68). However, while radical liberationists – clearly drawing on feminist thinking - underscored the role of moral systems and social codes as sources of oppression, revolutionary liberation blamed the bourgeoisie for the perpetuation of oppression. Moreover, radicals and revolutionaries formulated different *recipes for action*. Whereas radicals went little beyond consciousness-raising activities - an effort designed to “teach homosexual men and lesbians the politics of being liberated persons” (Licata, 1980: 179) - revolutionaries believed that political and economic transformation had to precede cultural and social transformation. So, while radical liberation encompassed the formulation of a strategy of cultural change, revolutionary liberation impelled an understanding of activism as a “vanguard” activity, relentlessly political and always aimed at eroding the bases of the capitalist system.

Whilst in the majority of countries gay liberation unfolded along the lines of radical gay liberation, in France and Spain the revolutionary model was more popular. For instance, in both cases homosexual liberation fronts denounced the economic and political exploitation of the capitalist order. While in France a pamphlet was calling the attention to the oppression of “those who make love exclusively for pleasure and not for production of an industrial army reserve” (quoted in Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999: 189), in Spain the regular participants in the meeting of the FAGC soon realised that,

“(…) Society had a very clear idea about what sexuality is for: namely, it only aims to reproduce the species, and idea that is

clearly linked to the interests of the ruling class” (Fluvià, 1977: 487).

Also, both movements arrived at a similar chief goal: to join the working class in its pursuit of a truly socialist society. Finally, note as well that in both cases homosexual liberationists were torn by the dilemmas of identity. In the French case, the FHAR, notwithstanding its interest in “overturning the stigma associated with being homosexual” (Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999: 189), refused to engage in community politics. Much to the contrary, and consequent with its Marxist ideological base, the FHAR opposed to the development of commercial subcultures. We will see later on that this precisely is a defining aspect of the ideology of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement.¹⁰⁸

To sum up: not only is that a “way of defining problems was exported” (McAdam and Rucht, 1993); both the timing of events as well as the availability of channels of diffusion suggests that the definition of the movement’s outward political identity in Spain

¹⁰⁸ Insisting on the fact that both revolutionary and radical liberation are ideal types is never a waste of time. For instance, Spanish liberationists deeply believed in the idea of the “universality of homosexual desire”. Also, claims were often made demanding “body rights” and the end of patriarchy. Homosexual liberation built on the belief that in spite of the fact that every one had homosexual impulses, most of the people were impelled to negate them due to the stigmatisation of homosexual behaviour. This idea was part of the discourse of Spanish homosexual liberation fronts, which often talked about the need to unleash the “repressed homosexual potential” (D6, 1977: 2). See also an article titled: “*teorías y principios del movimiento gai*” (theories and principles of the gay movement), published some years later in *entiendes?*, (#12, 1990: 6) by Miguel Angel Sánchez (interviewee n° 15) and Pedro Perez.

was the consequence of a successful process of cross-national diffusion of ideas. *However*, we should not be carried away by this wealth of evidence, since some obscure points still remain. Firstly, in parallel to the similarities, a number of important differences set the Spanish and the French cases apart. For instance, while the elaboration of a political platform was an essential element of the activities of Spanish homosexual liberation fronts, in France, from 1986 to 1975, “no political platform emerged from the spirit of revolt” (Martel, 1999: 29-30). Secondly, it is perhaps too risky to assume that the ideas of French liberation reached beyond an enlightened cadre. Recognising that a different kind of data is necessary to gauge this, I count on some testimonies that cast some doubts about the resonance of French ideas. Interestingly, while both Armand de Fluvià (interviewee n°3) and Jordi Petit (interviewee n° 4) – the engine of the FAGC between 1975 and 1980 – have little doubts about the powers of French ideas, Alejandro Mora (interviewee n° 11) – at the time a representative of the youngest and “least cultivated” activists – does not share this view. For him,

“We knew nothing, we had read nothing. We just knew that our quest was a revolutionary one, that for gays to be liberated a dramatic rupture with the *status quo* was necessary.”¹⁰⁹

Thirdly, note as well that by the time the Spanish version of French reference books had arrived (1978-1981), most of the Spanish homosexual liberation fronts had elaborated their statements of aims and objectives, all of which made extensive use of the revolutionary framework. So, it appears that a different way of looking at the diffusion process is necessary. The simple

¹⁰⁹ Alejandro Mora, interview n° 11.

unidirectional model where a transmitter enlightens an adopter does not account for the fact that, in our particular case, the exchange of information could have been initiated in Spain, at least in part. To a certain extent, the incorporation of French ideas was triggered by the need of Spanish militants to learn from *similar* and more developed experiences abroad.

4.2 Working ideas: Spanish revolutionary homosexual liberation.

Conventional explanations are not fully capable of explaining the revolutionary outlook of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement. It appears that the association between Spanish homosexual liberation and a revolutionary framework of thinking and action, rather than a exclusive reaction to the exogenous factors, was something looked for, at least in part. Particularly problematic appears to be the uncritical applicability of the diffusion argument: although my data confirms that Spanish activists often looked for inspiration and advice across borders, it can be well the case that the similarities between Spain and France respond to the existence of some basic structural similarities. For instance, similarities in the organisation of the party system could be partly responsible for this.

Building on these uncertainties, in the remaining of the chapter I test an “alternative” explanation: namely, the connection between ideas and outward political identity. More concretely, I explore the extent to which preference formation is a response to deeply entrenched principles and beliefs, that is to say, a basic worldview that guides political behaviour *notwithstanding* the ebbs and flow of the environment. To do so, in this section, I focus on the ideas of Spanish liberationists. The FAGC publicly defined itself as a “group with a revolutionary spirit” that aimed at a landslide reshaping of power relations (FAGC, in D19(1), 1981: 4). That should give us tips about the kind of ideational framework the Spanish liberation movement was working from. Then, in the

next section, I show that, ultimately, ideas created a repertoire of possibilities that governed the interaction between the movement and members of the polity. Courses of action are not only taken in view of the evolution of the structure of political opportunities, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in connection with the ideas that inspire and define generations of activism.

4.2.1. *A revolutionary diagnosis of reality*

In the opinion of Jeffrey Weeks (1993: 5), gay liberation was extremely useful to “pull previous experiences together, give them a theoretical structure and some sense of history.” Indeed, rather than a single idea, the symbolising around the liberation of gays and lesbians represents what W.Gamson (1992) defines as a “system of ideas”, and frame theorists as a “master frame” (Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow and Benford, 1992).¹¹⁰ I prefer to use the idea of *collective cognitive maps*, a term that both stresses the collective character of the system of ideas (something that the idea of master frame does not always do) and place the basic element of cognition at the forefront of the analysis. What is a collective cognitive map? Collective cognitive maps can be held to be complex system of beliefs, assumptions and proposals for action that condense and simplify reality. In that process, cognitive maps effect a transformation in the definition of certain social conditions, redefining “as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate” (Snow and Benford, 1992: 137). They also attribute causality and sketch a general line of action. Note the

¹¹⁰ Valocchi (1999), for instance, employs the distinction between master frames and single frames to analyse the discourse and ideas of the gay liberation movement in the United States.

essential connection between cognitive maps and strategies: collective cognitive maps delimit the repertoire of possible actions of participants, rendering from the very start some courses of action possible and some others impossible.

To begin with, Spanish liberation groups, in the lines of American, French or British liberationists, insisted on destigmatising homosexuality. Departing from the assumption that “people are unaware of the fact that the capitalist system exploits us all in every aspect of our lives” (D20, 1981:1), Spanish liberationists endeavoured to reveal the true role of sexual oppression in the substantiation of a complex system of domination. In other words, it was acknowledged that for homosexuals to mobilise on behalf of their interests, the ethos of “normality” associated to the subordination of homosexuals had to be dispelled.¹¹¹ In short, homosexuals were subjected to “exploitation” and “domination”, and, consequently, lived in a perennial state of subordination and moral stigmatisation.

Having affirmed the problematic character of homosexuality, the attribution of blame is the next question to resolve. Mobilisation cannot kick off until a culpable agent is found: the possibility of overturning the influence of malign agents is what makes collective action meaningful. In the radical liberation

¹¹¹ This was the basic proposition of one of the Madrid-based FLHOC’s key ideological papers, which first part focused on the “origins of homosexual oppression” (D10, 1979: 1-2). Also, the Basque group EHGAM (D20, 1981), and the FAGC (FAGC, 1977) made an effort to justify mobilisation on the basis of enduring oppression. The FAGC complemented this analysis in several articles published in *debat Gai*, including a relatively well-known article titled: “*Sobre el machismo y la liberación gai: elementos para un debate*” (about *machismo* and homosexual liberation: some elements for a debate), published as well in *debat Gai*, #2 (1978: 12).

model, the endurance of a given system of sexual categories was blamed for the perpetuation of oppression. Clear-cut distinctions between female and male roles, heterosexual and homosexual desire, and private and public spheres were poignantly referred as the hidden engines that sucked homosexuals into oppression (Epstein, 1999: 40). As Altman (1993: 110) put it, liberation:

“Would involve a breakdown of barriers between male and female homosexuals, and between gay and straights. Masculinity and femininity would cease to be sharply differentiated categories”.

The centrality of visibility and “coming out” strategies is the logical consequence of this worldview.

Revolutionary liberation, however, added a new ingredient to this diagnosis: namely, the active role of the bourgeoisie in designing a certain set of social, economic and cultural mechanisms of oppression. Building on the broad concern of radical liberation with the perpetuation of patriarchy and similar social structures of domination, “French-style homosexual liberation” moved forward and identified in precise terms who was to blame for oppression: the owners of the capitalist system. In the purest Marxist tradition, a twofold rationale justified the accentuation of the bourgeoisie’s role in perpetuating oppression: firstly, the capitalist system is an aggressive mechanism that reacts violently against threats. As the Basque EHGAM put it, “the capitalist system opposes with the strongest determination anything that puts its system of exploitation under threat” (in D20, 1981: 3). Secondly, and more importantly, sexual liberation in general and homosexual liberation in particular, represents a central threat to the capitalist order. Being such a threat is what in the minds of Spanish liberationists justified the animosity against sexual diversity. Thus, behind the relentless insistence on arguing that “the capitalist order fights homosexuality to protect its value system” (D20, 1981: 1) laid a Marxist-inspired definition of power relations. In this, both the oppression of women and the definition

of sexuality in reproductive terms were considered instrumental mechanisms of oppression. Both things guaranteed, in the short term, “an endless reservoir of exploitable workers” and, in the longer term, the consolidation of the value system that “normalised” exploitation and domination.¹¹²

Not surprisingly if this rational is taken into account, Spanish liberationist elaborated a rather compelling argument about the responsibility for oppression. In the pursuit of their interests, the ruling classes had designed a set of basic social norms that, despite the appearances, only aimed to preserve the economic structure of society. The reproductive understanding of sexuality, the indissolubility of marriage, the subordination of women to men, and the demonisation of homosexuality were tools with a very precise mission: namely, to avoid any threats to the capitalist economic order. In short, and quoting a particularly incisive editorial of *debat gai* (#0, 1978: 2):

“*Machismo*, sexism and heterosexism, as manifestations of a dangerous social structure particularly designed to safeguard the means of production of the bourgeoisie, are our worst foes”.¹¹³

¹¹² See the FAGC’s *Manifest* (FAGC, 1977), the key ideological text at the time. The idea that sexual liberation could destroy the capitalist order became something close to a mantra, a steering idea to build a comprehensive ideational system. As the juvenile section of the PCE claimed in 1981: “the historical partnership between the gay movement and the worker’s movement demonstrates the existence of a kind of socialism that is very well aware of the role of sexual liberation in the erosion of the pillars of the capitalist system.” The quotation is reproduced in Herrero-Brasas (2001: 334).

¹¹³ An article published in *El País*, 25 June 1978 offered a systematic and clear presentation of this argument.

This led to a rather inflexible repertoire of possibilities, which ruled out every course of action other than the engagement in “vanguard-style” protest activities.

4.2.2. *A revolutionary call for arms*

Having arrived at a comprehensible diagnosis of reality, collective cognitive maps set out a number of chief goals to be pursued by acting collectively. Indeed, arriving at a line of action that organises protest efforts is the ultimate purpose of cognition. Virtually all my interviews with activists included the following question: “*what do you think the chief aim of gay and lesbian protest was at the time when you engaged in militancy/activism?*” Every respondent that participated in the liberation movement conjured a similar answer: “revolution”. Spanish homosexual militants identified the shattering of capitalism as well as the instauration of a socialist society as the chief aims of homosexual liberation fronts. Sexual liberation was not an end on its own right. Much on the contrary, it was merely a step in the fulfilment of a grander aspiration. For instance, in a founding document, the Madrid-based FLHOC stipulated that for sexual liberation to be achieved, the “destruction of the social order of the bourgeoisie and a change in the structures that sustain oppression and perpetuate the repressive and sexist bias of our societies” must be achieved.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ FLHOC, D4 (1978: 2).

And Armánd de Fluviá, wrote in 1981:

“The gay movement, in its revolutionary quest to prompt a definition of sexuality detached from the sexual codes of the bourgeoisie, should aim at a *total change in social relations*.”¹¹⁵

More specifically, the founders of gay and lesbian activism in Spain, greatly inspired by their profound Marxist convictions as well as by the ideas that were crossing the border broke down its revolutionary mission into two chief goals (FAGC, 1977: 11): on the one hand, the role of the family had to be questioned; on the other hand, homosexuals had to be dragged out of their ghettos.¹¹⁶ As well as considering the family the cause of the subordination of women to men, revolutionary homosexual liberation viewed family relations as the intermediate link between the exploitative interests of the bourgeoisie and the perpetuation of oppression. The Basque organisation EHGAM summarised the concern about the family in starkly clear terms:

“The family setting reproduces the system of power relations that in the larger social context sustains that division between the oppressed and the exploiters. The family is the vehicle that the system uses to make up the individual’s mind, making him or her assume the system is their own and, therefore, pre-empting any future dissent.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Armand de Fluviá in D19(1) (1981: 4). The emphasis is mine. See also Fluviá’s interview in *Egin*, 27 June 1981.

¹¹⁶ See *debat Gai*, “extraordinary issue” (1978: 3). See as well Fluviá (1978: 162) and his own arguments in *El País* 16, May 1979.

¹¹⁷ EHGAM, D20 (1981: 2).

Thus, “down with the patriarchal family” soon became one of the leading mobilising messages. Equally important to homosexual liberation appeared to be the destruction of the ghettos. In dismantling (oppressive) community practices, Spanish liberationists intended to apply the Marxist-inspired principle that condemned social categorisation as essentially unjust. The critique of ghettos was justified on a threefold rationale. Firstly, by creating the illusion of freedom, ghettos fostered demobilisation and apathy. Secondly, they privatised homosexuality, adding to the generalised impression that homosexuality belonged to the realm of the private. Thirdly, the spatial concentration of gays and lesbians did *not* represent a natural phenomenon. More to the contrary, ghettos – and by extension the very notion of gay identity – were an artefact used by the ruling class to perpetuate homosexual oppression and segregation from society. A generous quotation from a position paper elaborated by the gay caucus of the PCE illustrates this question nicely:

“The categorisation of homosexuality as a distinctive form of social behaviour and as a different “community” carries the brunt of sexual and homosexual oppression, which is suffered not only by homosexuals but also by the entire social fabric. Homosexual males and lesbians do not belong to a different category of people; their distinctive sexual practices are neither the source of a distinctive personality, nor the basis for a different identity. Every aspect of the so-called “gay sub-culture” is the outcome of stigmatisation and appears as a logical response of a minority that is under threat. In spite of that, neither the culture nor the members of the group can be defined as parts of a single group.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Paper titled “The Communist Party and the Homosexual Question”. PCE, D22 (1986: 5). In spite of the fact that the gay caucus of

This leads us to one of the most noticeable idiosyncrasies of the Spanish case: in this country, more than in any other western country, homosexual liberation involved a conscious “desexualisation” of gay collective protest. Whereas American or British homosexual liberationists cared about the implications of liberationist principles in the common lives of gays and lesbians, in Spain the homosexual liberation movement lacked “an applied theorisation of sexual liberation”. So, instead of setting the ground for long-lasting life-styles, politicised homosexual activists in Spain virtually despised their non-politicised peers falling into the trap of the so-called “golden cage” (the ghetto).¹¹⁹ Uninterested in, and deeply opposed to community building, the strategy of Spanish homosexual liberation fronts stressed the similarities between homosexual liberation and other revolutionary movements, working to generate political consciousness among the homosexual population. This is the context where we need to understand this statement of the Barcelona-based CCAG:

“The fact that the CCAG is mostly composed of homosexuals (at least for the time being) should not lead anyone to believe that we are exclusively working for the improvement of the well-being of homosexuals (as many are tempted to think) (..) We address the system as a whole, we are not merely looking for solutions for the problems of homosexual people, but instead, we

the PCE was not long-lived, its sheer existence demonstrated that this party was rapidly becoming prepared to touch on issues of sexual diversity. Along the lines of the British or the Dutch experience, during the 1990s, gay and lesbian caucuses were added to the organisational structure of a number of leftist parties. IU inaugurated this trend in 1996.

¹¹⁹ This was argued in an article called “*sobre el machismo y la liberación gai: elementos para un debate*” (on machismo and homosexual liberation: elements for a debate), published in *debat gai*, #2 (1978:16).

fight the whole range of our oppression as individuals. Our reality as homosexuals is only a departing point towards a larger critique, never an end point on its own right.”¹²⁰

American gay liberation impelled the creation of gay communes; FHAR’s periodical meetings often “degenerated” into collective sexual activity. Spanish groups, however, in embracing a Marxist-inspired understanding of collective protest basically “abandoned the homosexual to his life”.¹²¹ This contributed greatly to the creation of an enormous gap between politicised and non-politicised homosexuals that, eventually, was to be capitalised by upcoming reformist gay organisations.

4.3. Dwelling at the margins of the polity: Linking ideas and political preferences

In more than one account, the understanding of how social movements negotiate the claim-making process is a black box in social movement theory. Despite the sheer importance of this process we do not seem to know much about it. I show in this section that collective cognitive maps are a key factor in the elaboration of political preferences. If activists’ basic political preferences are disclosed and placed in a given process of collective socialisation, perhaps we will be able to shed some light

¹²⁰ CCAG in *La Pluma*, #0 (1978:1). We saw in chapter 3 that the *Coordinadora de Col·lectius A’Lliberament Gai* (CCAG) was a short-lived group, organised in Barcelona by a number of very young activists that resented the embroilment of the FAGC in a campaign for the legalisation of homosexual organisations. In some respects, the CCAG copied the example of a French group called the “*Gazolines*”.

¹²¹ Armand de Fluvià, in an interview in *Egin*, 27 June 1981.

on this issue. It is argued in this section that the emphasis on revolutionary homosexual liberation served as a basic filter that rendered some courses of action pursuable and others inconceivable. Although the effects of conventional arguments cannot be disregarded – they contributed to polish what initially was little more than rough principles of action – I defend that the decision of “opting out” from membership in the nascent polity is clearly grounded on basic intellectual principles. I firstly relate the founding intellectual principles of homosexual liberationists with the formulation of illegitimate claims. Secondly, the connections between revolutionary ideas and the position in the Constitutional issue are traced.

4.3.1. Demanding the impossible.

Achieving the legalisation of homosexuality – which involved the reform of the Social Menaces Act – was a central goal of Spanish homosexual liberation fronts. Also, the legalisation of homosexual organisations was pursued. However, in parallel to these legitimate concerns,¹²² Spanish homosexual liberation built its political outlook on a set of illegitimate demands that caused much discomfort among politicians.¹²³ These included *free*

¹²² The distinction between legitimate and illegitimate claims was introduced in chapter 2. Rather than reflecting a normative assessment over those claims, the distinction aims to encapsulate the degree of conformity of different claims with the parameters of acceptability established by polity members at each point in time.

¹²³ The so-called “*Plataformas Reivindicativas*” (statements of aims) represented a compendium of claims that were meant to acquaint politicians with the aspirations of the homosexual liberation movement. See Fluvà (1977: 498-491).

abortion, the end of the compulsory military service, free divorce, welfare rights against sexual transmitted diseases, no discrimination against transgender people, the elimination of the age of consent for sexual relations, and finally the reduction of the working day to enjoy a more pleasant sexual life!

Why these demands were rendered illegitimate is not difficult to see. For instance, by aligning with the voices against the compulsory military service, the gay movement was implicitly demanding a tougher civilian control on the armed forces as well as a dramatic reduction in the public presence of military people in social and political life. Note, however, that the relationships between the armed forces and the new democratic political parties were far from settled during the transition years, and the risk of authoritarian involution was always present. Also, by marshalling a moral revolution around far-reaching sexual rights, the homosexual liberation movement was setting pressure on the architects of the new regime to give a solution to the so-called “religious issue”. Indeed, the running theme behind the movement’s platform was the denunciation of the influence of Catholic values on the definition of moral standards. These architects, however, were highly determined to postpone this potentially explosive issue for later consideration, basically in an attempt to deactivate its disruptive potential (Calvo and Montero, 2002; Montero and Calvo, 2000).

Did the participants in the early liberation movement considered that these were feasible objectives? Was the engagement into a discourse based on utopian claims the response of any kind of rational cost-benefit calculations? Far from the rational paradigm, Spanish gay militants were carried away by the conviction that a contribution to a dramatic reshaping of social and political arrangements could be made. It was a deeply emotional sentiment, a basic ideological conviction that led Spanish homosexual liberation organisations to conjure an image of confrontation and open defiance vis-à-vis the system. Many of my interviewees agreed on presenting homosexual liberation fronts as “utopian creatures”, driven by the “naïve” belief that sexual

liberation could change the world”. Luis Aguado, like Pedro Moreno (interviewee n°9), a member of the Madrid-based *Movimiento Democrático de Homosexuales* (MDH, Homosexual Democratic Movement), a short-lived group founded in 1977, commented on this:

“Q: Some of the demands that liberationist organisations put forward were very advanced for the time. Moreover, some of them were very likely to awaken stark opposition from all quarters. In your opinion, what explains this?

A: We or perhaps I should say they [*the interviewee comments on the differences between the MDH and other Madrid-based groups, which are not relevant at this point*] were carried away by a kind of revolutionary euphoria that made us work from an endless sense of possibility. Did we really think that all of that could be achieved? I do not know what to say; this was our ideological project, and we had to state and fight for it.”¹²⁴

In a similar fashion, Alejandro Mora, who belonged to the Madrid-based FLHOC, affirmed:

“We insisted on things that sounded very crazy such as legal reforms so that marriage would be scratched from the civil code and things like that; and we did that we were obsessed with the evils of capitalisms”.¹²⁵

As these interview extracts confirm, an invisible but nonetheless strong linkage was established between the ideas of these activists and the way they defined themselves in political

¹²⁴ Luis Aguado, interview n° 10.

¹²⁵ Alejandro Mora, interview n° 11.

terms. To gain further confirmation, we can observe the debate about whether or not the homosexual liberation movement had to pursue the legalisation of homosexual organisations. Striving for the legalisation of homosexuality (1975-1978) had not caused internal unrest: to frame this quest as an essential part of sexual liberation was hardly difficult and could be clearly done without threatening any basic Marxist principle. Pursuing the legalisation of organisations (1978-1980) was a different matter. Such a course of action inevitably awakened fears of incorporation and institutional co-optation, the more so as the campaign involved a concerted employment of conventional tactics. Despite the rhetoric efforts of some leaders, the links with Marxist principles were difficult to find.

We know already that the legalisation of organisation was pursued and achieved. This responded to a particular obsession of Armand de Fluvià, the FAGC's leader, who exhausted his capital of influence on this battle. However, groups like the CCAG, which were formed out of the internal disputes within the FAGC about this issue, the FLHOC and other (even) smaller liberationist groups in other parts of the country refused to follow the FAGC in this pursuit; they were of the opinion that pursuing the legalisation of homosexuality was a "step in the wrong direction", a goal that demanded "too many ideological sacrifices".¹²⁶

4.3.2. *When the rules of the game just do not seem right*

Falling to pass the first of the tests of membership (claims) sent clear signals about how the relationship between the

¹²⁶ This issue was covered in *El País*, 11 February 1979 and 15 October 1978.

homosexual liberation movement and other political actors were to be organised. This was not a social movement seeking to be a polity member. A symbolic denunciation of the Constitutional consensus, and a certain reluctance to acknowledge the role of political parties as the key agents of interest representation confirmed the accuracy of that judgement. Along with the respect of the rule of law, the post-Francoism Spanish democratic system was built on the principle of democratic accountability through periodic elections. In becoming the bedrock of the political system, elections ensured that politicians could be brought under citizens' control, and also that efficient mechanisms of preference aggregation could be designed (Maravall, 1996:1).

The acknowledgment of political parties as the key mechanism for interest representation as well as the employment of rights talk as a way of bringing demands forward in the political arena are widely held to be weapons in the armoury of every polity member. The Spanish homosexual liberation movement possessed neither or them. In the first place, the movement systematically stressed that the trade union sector, or at best those political parties with revolutionary ends, were their interlocutors *par excellence*. As Petit put it in his interview, homosexual liberationists mostly appealed to the social movement sector and the trade unions, assuming that by creating a grand-coalition of revolutionary actors, the mediating role of political parties could be avoided. In the second place, the movement explicitly refused to give support to the pacts upon which the new regime was being born. The Barcelona-based CCAG resumed this position in clear terms:

“This is what the Constitution means to us: our problems only but became worse. Our golden ghetto and a certain degree of tolerance will endure, because society simply cannot destroy us. However, an insurmountable barrier will keep us segregated

from society (...) This new Constitution will be a new Damocles' sword against all who are exploited and oppressed (...) Democracy is for them, for the bourgeoisie, for oppressors of all kinds, for the institutionalised left, but *not for us*, for homosexuals, for the oppressed, for the exploited."¹²⁷

And, in a similar fashion:

"We do not need any more words (...) the time has come for us to march in the streets again, striving with renewed strength for sexual freedom, for total liberation (...) *Only by creating a strong movement, from the grassroots, extended and real we will be able to challenge the laws that are oppressing us, this new repressive Constitution and this oppressive system.*"¹²⁸

Behind the façade of a rights-based framework of claim making and conflict resolution, the homosexual liberation movement saw the invisible one of the powerful, always attentive to design mechanisms of oppression. Indeed, less loudmouthed groups joined the CCAG in the crusade against the Constitution. Armand de Fluvià, speaking on behalf of the FAGC, argued that "merely a couple of lines in a Constitution" were not enough for liberation to happen, for "sexual liberation is not possible without freedom in all spheres, that is, a society where freedom is every day lived."¹²⁹ Moreover, in 1989, more than a decade after the ratification of the Constitution, the editorial of *entiendes?* wrote (COGAM's periodical magazine):

¹²⁷ CCAG, in *La Pluma*, #1 (1978:1).

¹²⁸ CCAG, in *La Pluma*, #0 (1978:1). The emphasis is mine.

¹²⁹ Armand de Fluvià, D19(1) (1986:2).

“Physical and verbal abuse, social stigma, hidden employment discrimination and the confinement in ghettos are only but a few signs of the prevailing understanding of human relations, one that is perpetuated by the Catholic Church and the alliance between the Armed forces, the business class and the political elite (...) *Neither the derogation of the Social Menace Act, nor the inclusion of freedom talk and protection of rights in the Constitution has been enough to dismantle the oppressive structures.*”¹³⁰

Thus, the question is, what led Spanish liberationists to take this path? It must remain clear that in denouncing the Constitution, Spanish homosexual liberation organisations were far beyond petty provocation: a text laden with the responsibility of safeguarding the country’s smooth return to democratic normality, the Constitution represented the essence of a consensus among formerly opposed parties. Stepping out of that consensus was inevitably understood as an irresponsible violation of fundamental principles and, logically, as a decision to relinquish participation in the nascent political regime. However, any other course of action was deemed unacceptable. Closely knitted collective cognitive maps explained the quest of the homosexual liberation movement as a contribution to the historical mission of the working class. That led liberationist activist to seek, in the first place, the collaboration of their natural allies – revolutionary leftist parties and other “vanguard” forces, and, secondly, to pull out from a Constitutional consensus that, in their minds, said very little about the transformation of power relations between the powerful and the powerless.

¹³⁰ COGAM, in *entiendes?*, #8 (1989:5). The emphasis is mine.

4.4. The origins of ideas: the generation of *Homosexual Militants*

One basic proposition that stems from the foregoing discussion is that ideas are a key inspiration for interpretation. Despite the ebb and flow of the environment, and often violating the predictions based on rationality, activists link ideas and behaviour: ideas define a repertoire of *possible actions* that determine what lines of action will be pursued. In framing particular circumstances as opportunities or threats, activists are basically applying a cognitive framework built on a given previous process of political socialisation and consciousness acquisition. This becomes much clearer in the next chapter, when, in comparing the interpretations of reality promoted by revolutionary and reformist activists, the true magnitude of the power of ideas will be revealed. However, before embarking on that important question, the issue of the origins of ideas needs to be considered.

In this section I recuperate the idea of *political generations*, introduced in the last part of chapter 2. A political generation represents a group of activist amalgamated around a basic set of beliefs, ideas and principles for action (the collective cognitive maps). Thus, a political generation is therefore a group of activists that share a given diagnosis of reality and that, besides, agree on the basic ways of tackling them. In other words, the basic agreement on a worldview is what keeps generations together. To understand how generations come of age, I suggest the need to pay attention, in the first place, to dominant patterns of social interaction, and in the other place, to the market of ideas. Considering this, I link the collective cognitive maps of the generation of homosexual militants with the participation of the founders of the homosexual liberation movement in the revolutionary left. Becoming (leftist) militants was the bedrock that permitted –after exposure to feminist and homosexual liberationist ideas – the ulterior engendering of a distinctive generation of homosexual militants.

4.4.1. When it is not possible to find a boyfriend in a gay bar

Before addressing the role of militancy in the revolutionary left in shaping the basic preferences of Spanish liberationists, it is important to consider why that particular route was followed. In the democratic countries of the west, the launching of an autonomous homosexual liberation movement took root in the previous institutionalisation of homosexual commercial subcultures after the Second World War (Jivani, 1997; Levine, 1998 [1979]). In the United States, by the mid 1950s the gay bar had become the centrepiece of a complex network of social interaction devoted to the provision of sex first, and emotional support afterwards. This should not surprise anyone: as Achilles (1998 [1967]: 176) explained it, bars were leisure-driven institutions, flexible to provide an agile response to constant police harassment, capable of providing a degree of segregation and anonymity, and potentially expandable should the community host new and more sophisticated needs.

The loyalty of bar-goers with their patrons was a decisive element for the formation of collective identities: thanks to these loyalties, stable social networks of people were formed (Archilles, 1998: 180). More to the point, by hosting the collective response to police abuse, bars aided in the consolidation of a shared consciousness among bar-goers. The crowds around particular bars fought together, and they suffered the consequences together as well (Achilles, 1998: 178). As D'Emilio masterly put it (1983:33), gay bars were "seedbeds for a collective consciousness that might one day flower politically". Very interestingly, Portuondo (1995: 97) makes a very similar claim in relation to the formation of a revolutionary consciousness among Spanish university students during the 1960s: it was the concerted and recurrent fight against the police what knitted revolutionary students together. Of course not everyone who participated in the subculture joined the generation of Stonewall. A number of intervening factors must be taken into account to link participation and consciousness acquisition. Generally speaking, "those who

had least to lose by being defiantly open” were more prepared to embrace the new consciousness (Weeks, 1990: 191). Age, the frequency of the exposition to the subculture, the number and intensity of the confrontations with the police, and the links with other protest movements were key variables in this respect. However, on the whole, it is commonly accepted that, in places like the United States, Great Britain and even France to some extent, the homosexual liberation movement originated in the commercial subculture.

In Spain, what we might deem as the process of “consciousness acquisition” could not take place in the framework of a thriving homosexual subculture. As we have already seen, a blend of economic and intellectual underdevelopment, and the *moral magisterium* of the Catholic Church cooperated in solidifying a sexual regime where homosexuality was blatantly stigmatised. Never ignoring that the development of the homosexual subculture in other countries was never immune to external hostility (see for instance Jivany, 1997 for the British case), the intensity of the threat was what set the Spanish case apart. At the same time that homosexuality was very early constructed as an attack to the national identity, a tumour within an otherwise harmonious social fabric (Fuentes, 2001a; Monferrer, 2003), since 1945 a number of legal reforms were introduced so that homosexuality could be criminalised in all fronts. In this line, *El País*, argued in 1978 that Spanish law on homosexuality was the “toughest and most repressive in Western Europe” (*El País*, 25 June 1978).

With all this, homosexuals had to take one of three very dismal options: become effeminate “queens”, shelter into denial or

join the prisons' population.¹³¹ And, of course, the possibilities for the institutionalisation of a commercial homosexual subculture were extremely limited. Confined to marginal areas in the centre of Barcelona and Madrid, only but a few cabaret-style places welcomed gay patrons. Even a smaller number were exclusively devoted to a homosexual clientele.¹³² And, as Armand de Fluvià recollects, attending them was extremely risky.

“The few of us who attended the scarce gay bars in Barcelona were perennially fearful of the police, who dispossessed those that it captured from their ID cards and/or took them to the police stations for long sessions of verbal and physical abuse. And if you were foolish enough to keep an address book with you, they used it to have the time of their lives, calling everyone on the list – (heterosexual) partners, family, employers, telling them that you had been caught at a queer bar and that, therefore, the consequences for them were of the utmost gravity.”¹³³

Unable to offer a permanent refuge against external hostility, the Spanish gay bar became an extreme solution in the pursuit of sex. Bars were either difficult to find, dangerous to visit, or simply

¹³¹ There seemed to be some room in this sexual regime for homosexuals that accepted to “display the grotesque identity – funny, folkloric, extremely effeminate, passive, submissive - that the heterosexual majority assume all homosexuals possess” (Pollack, 1982:47, in Guasch, 1991: 60). The “queen” (“*la loca*”) achieves some degree of social peace (at best patronizing pity) by relinquishing the masculine elements of his identity.

¹³² Some sources suggest that the subculture in Barcelona was more developed and more permissive than in Madrid. See, for instance Viladrich's recreation of the imaginary diary of a Communist Homosexual Militant (Viladrich, 1977:45).

¹³³ Armand de Fluvià, reproduced in Herrero-Brasas (2001: 297).

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non-existent. As a matter of fact, most of the gay male population found no other alternative than to resort to street flirting (*ligue callejero*) and to interact with other homosexuals in non-institutionalised spaces, such as parks, theatres, etc. Considering this, a different route had to be taken if a gay and lesbian movement was to given a solid ground.

4.4.2. So, boyfriends had to be found elsewhere: militancy in the extreme left

The birth of the Spanish gay movement is embedded in the process of generational formation that gave way to the generation of *homosexual militants*. Indeed, the genesis of this social movement has to be read as a combination of two basic factors: on the one hand, the formation of a political consciousness among a pool of committed homosexuals that, after years of experience as militants in the extreme-left, were ready to engage in “gay-specific” collective action; on the other hand, a process of regime change that altered the structure of political opportunities and, in doing so, created opportunities for mobilisation. How the process of regime change facilitated the birth of gay militancy was discussed in the previous chapter. Now it is the time to see how the generation that took advantage of these opportunities was formed. I show, firstly, that militancy in extreme-leftist parties permitted homosexuals to interact with one another on a permanent basis and, as a consequence, form primary social networks around friendship and comradeship. Secondly, I show that by working together in leftist political parties, those that were to give shape to the Spanish homosexual liberation movement obtained solid intellectual tools to understand the world. Lastly, I argue that the participation in revolutionary parties was a gateway to observe international developments and learn from foreign experiences.

4.4.2.1. Looking for shelter

Regular social interaction among male homosexuals (let alone among female homosexuals) was extremely difficult during up to the 1960s. This was so not only because the homosexual subculture was badly institutionalised, but also because membership in organisations other than those explicitly sponsored by the regime was banned. However, the strengthening of internal political contestation during that decade lowered somehow the costs of joining clandestine political organisations. The scale of the conflicts in the workplace, and the weight of the dramatic number of working hours lost forced the regime to tolerate the clandestine trade unions (Fishman, 1990). This made syndicalism a plausible alternative for politicised people. Also, the 1960s witnessed the consolidation of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE, *Partido Comunista Español*) as the force of resistance *par excellence*. Increasing numbers of young people joined the Communist party during those years, pulled in by the need to collaborate in the pursuit of democracy. Moreover, the 1960s made it possible for growing numbers of people to join other kind of political organisations, namely revolutionary leftist parties and nationalist organisations (in Catalanian and the Basque Country mainly).

While the bulk of those prepared to put out a fight against Francoism joined the PCE (and the PSOE but to a much lesser extent), homosexuals mostly joined the revolutionary left - foremost of all the Trotskyism-inspired LCR (see above). Although my evidence is not strong in this respect, it appears that some homosexuals could have also joined the Catalanian nationalist movement and the Basque separatist movement. There are good reasons to understand why so many homosexuals opted for the more radical political organisations. To begin with, the PCE was perceived as a deeply homophobic party, largely at ease with the Stalinist view that defined homosexuality as yet another manifestation of the poor moral stature of the bourgeoisie. A similar thing happened in France, where the French Communist

Party also held clearly antigay views during the 1970s (Fillieule and Duyvendak, 1999: 190). Rumours circulated about internal purges against known-to-be homosexual communist militants, and the Spanish trade union movement had a poor reputation in relation to women's rights and other moral concerns. More specifically, a document was published in 1977 denouncing the backstage manoeuvring of some CNT's leaders of the (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*; National Confederation of Workers) to jeopardize the position of a prominent militant (the text is reproduced in Enríquez, 1977: 123-130). They consisted of spreading rumours about his alleged homosexuality. In the view of many of my interviewees, this incident simply added to the general impression that homophobic sentiments were deeply entrenched among the Spanish working class.

Because of its late consolidation as a powerful political player, the PSOE did not attract much grass-roots support until that time.¹³⁴ However, worrying signs came from the undisguised homophobic rhetoric of some prominent socialist leaders. More specifically, Enrique Tierno Galván, a prominent leader of the *Partido Socialista Popular* (PSP, Popular Socialist Party) – an important leftist party during the transition years, later to be co-opted by the PSOE - became (in)famous for his bitter opposition to the public release of a film called “*El diputado*” (the Congressman). The film, which told the story of a bisexual leftist Congressman who was blackmailed after having an affair with a young boy, was widely assumed to be inspired on the real story of a politician that belonged to the PSP. Eloy de la Iglesia, the film's

¹³⁴ Although the PCE truly was the democratic champion during the dictatorship, its ban was not lifted until late 1977. The PSOE, however, was legalised in 1976, and therefore it was given the chance to compete in the first democratic elections of 1977. That conferred the PSOE an unexpected position of privilege during the transition years.

director and a founding personality of the *Movimiento Democrático de Homosexuales* (MDH, Homosexual Democratic Movement), speaks about this incident in Aguilar et al (1996: 178).

In comparison, militancy in revolutionary leftist parties permitted homosexuals to interact with their peers on a more regular basis. Summarising what we saw at the beginning of the chapter, these parties built on strategic needs (the acquisition of a distinctive profile), and structural factors (a very young membership) to craft a leftist discourse that made clear room for a host of new “postmaterialist” issues, such as feminism or environmentalism. Particularly in what relates to the former, the sway of feminist ideas in the ideology of revolutionary leftist parties created the conditions for a relatively smooth integration of homosexual liberation. Revolutionary leftist parties hosted the formation of networks of homosexuals. In a context where attending gay bars was extremely dangerous, and where private sociability networks were difficult to find (and even more so to be accessed), the relatively stable environment of meetings and actions of protest permitted formerly isolated individuals to network with one another on a permanent basis. By doing so, the possibility emerged to talk about sexual orientation in public, in some cases for the first time ever. Pedro Moreno, a founding member of the MDH, and consequently a privileged observer of the inception of Spanish homosexual liberation, emphasised the fundamental importance of this seemingly innocuous fact:

“For us, the simple decision of disclosing our homosexuality was terribly revolutionary, and wonderfully liberating. Gay talk was not something that we could often do. Some people went to the bars, and others became part of secret circles where homosexuals could interact on a more or less regular basis. But,

well, bars were dangerous and accessing those networks was not always easy, particularly if you were not rich, young, or both! So, at the end, getting embroiled with the revolutionary left was a liberating experience.”¹³⁵

Whether homosexuals found it easy to disclose their sexual orientation to heterosexual peers is difficult to say. Of course a larger sample of interviewees would be necessary to get information on that respect. However, the *perception* among my respondents was that “this was all right unless you pretended to make a big fuss about it”.¹³⁶ The social stigmatisation of homosexuality was so profound that even in the most tolerant contexts the public disclosure of sexual diversity raised some eyebrows. Despite that, homosexuals found the ways to link up with one another, even achieving in some cases some say on the official discourse of the parties they belonged to.

4.4.2.2. *A Gateway to new experiences*

Not only militancy in revolutionary leftist parties offered homosexuals the chance to interact with one another; it also exposed them to different ways of understanding the world. Note that the pool of homosexuals that joined the revolutionary left had only very vague references about how to do that. Certainly, “the questioning of the traditional family and the institution of marriage, the liberation of sexual relations [and] the demand of equality for women in all spheres” (Portuondo, 1995: 98) were recurrent features in the conversation within revolutionary leftist

¹³⁵ Pedro Moreno, interview n° 9.

¹³⁶ Empar Pineda, Interview n° 12.

circles. But little else. Some of my interviewees were active participants in the process of generational formation.¹³⁷ Thus, I asked them about whether the notions of “homosexual oppression” and “homosexual liberation” were familiar to those homosexuals that joined the revolutionary left.

With very little exceptions, my interviewees defined their prior knowledge as “insufficient”, “very poor”, “incomplete” or “non-existent at all”. Pedro Moreno’s answer is again the most illuminative of these answers:

“We knew that we had a problem, that something was wrong with the state of affairs, this is why we did what we did [*joining the revolutionary left*].... However, before joining these parties, we had no clue about what the solution could be (...) ¿an open community of “faggots”?, for God’s sake, we could not even think of that. Then the people we were working with introduced us to basic Marxist ideas, to the credo of the feminist movement, and, of course, we became revolutionary.”¹³⁸

Why homosexual leftist militants assimilated revolutionary ideas so earnestly is thus not difficult to see. In the first place, they were evidently predisposed to embrace extremist recipes for action. Acutely aware of the scope of Francoist repression, only an explosive program for change could satisfy the anxieties of a group that was profoundly stigmatised. Secondly, most of them simply had no alternative intellectual response. This is something that existing applications of diffusion theory to social movements tend to overlook. However, to gauge the salience of a given set of ideas, one needs accurate information about competing intellectual alternatives. Despite the fact that a minority of Catalanian

¹³⁷ Interviews n° 3,4,8,9,10 and 12.

¹³⁸ Pedro Moreno, interview n° 9.

homosexuals followed with endless curiosity the unfolding of events in France, Britain and the United States, (and hence were able to understand the differences between the homophile movement and gay liberationists), knowledge about gay liberation outbursts in the world was in short supply among homosexual militants. Thirdly, Marxist ideas sounded very good at the time, being an example of the kind of ideas that everyone wanted to replicate due to their sheer brightness. Note as well that clandestine activism promoted an iron-like solidarity among participants, which invariably involved consensus about ideas. That pressure only but reinforced the drive towards Marxist ideas.

4.2.2.3. *Homosexual militants*

Dating the precise moment when a network of formerly isolated individuals becomes a generation of activists is an extremely difficult thing to do. Social movements, as signifying agents (Snow and Benford, 1992: 136), are relentlessly engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning, ideas and identities. Thus, to a large extent, generations are the offspring of dynamic and overlapping processes that collaborate with one another in the production of shared meanings and collective senses of purpose. Nonetheless, despite measurement difficulties, there tends to be a point where the transformation is effected. At an abstract level perhaps, it is sometimes possible to situate the moment whereby a network of people gain consciousness as members of a well-defined social grouping. When that happens, generations definitely come of age.

In my reading, the process whereby the generation of homosexual militants was born came full circle between 1973 and 1976. By 1973, virtually every homosexual who had joined the revolutionary left was equipped to define his or her personal problematic as an instance of capitalist malicious use of sexual identities. Key ideas such as exploitation, domination, oppression and liberation were already in their armoury. In the words of

Empar Pineda, “thanks to these so-called “utopian” ideas we were actually learning to look beyond the surface of things and understand who was to blame for our oppression”.¹³⁹ However, with the exception of the few recipients of *Arcadie*, no one had heard about homosexual liberation. In spite of the fact that the ideas of second wave feminism had already broken the iron curtain of Francoist’s censorship, Spanish homosexuals still remained immune to the empowering slogans of American and French homosexual liberationists.

However, the formalisation around 1973 of the *Movimiento Español de Liberación Homosexual* (MELH, Spanish Movement for Homosexual Liberation) was a turning point in the genesis of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement.¹⁴⁰ Despite its incapacity to go public or organise collective protest, the MELH – by circulating a well-known periodical bulletin and by hosting periodical meetings – planted the seeds for the materialisation of a distinctive consciousness as *homosexual militants*. Let me briefly note that this clandestine organisation deployed enormous efforts to disseminate its message across a wide range of individuals, always insisting on the need to “make homosexuals aware of their own oppression”.¹⁴¹ Thus, the MELH became a focal point for the dissemination of foreign ideas. Particularly attentive to developments taking place in nearby France, the growing understanding between the MELH and homosexuals affiliated to

¹³⁹ Empar Pineda, interview n° 12.

¹⁴⁰ We saw in the previous chapter that the MELH was a clandestine organisation, founded in 1971 in Barcelona.

¹⁴¹ *El País*, 25 June 1978. *Aghois*, the MELH’s periodical bulletin, counted on the collaboration of well-known leftist catalonian intellectuals. By 1973 *Aghois* was sent to more than one hundred addresses in Barcelona only. Eighteen issues were edited between 1972 and 1974.

the Catalanian revolutionary left resulted in the formation of a cadre of knowledgeable soon-to-be homosexual militants that was ready to seize any opportunity that could arise to organise autonomous forms of homosexual activism. In the words of Jordi Petit,

“The decision to go public and create homosexual liberation fronts was largely the outcome of a sum of individual transformations, whereby people started to look at themselves not only as queer revolutionaries, but as revolutionaries for homosexual liberation.”¹⁴²

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have initiated our journey through the labyrinth of movements' preference formation. The exploitation of my data on Spanish homosexual liberation organisations has revealed that the deep intellectual underpinnings of a political generation are an extremely powerful inspiration for preference formation and decision making. That does not rule out alternative explanations completely. As I have shown in the chapter, beyond the sheer transformation spawned by the engendering of the transition process, the early configuration of the structure of alliances fostered the ongoing collaboration between the homosexual liberation movement and the most committed sponsor of revolutionary politics in the country: namely, the revolutionary left. Also, the striking similarities between the Spanish and the French cases suggest that the French model was a constant source of inspiration and guidance.

¹⁴² Jordi Petit, interview n° 4.

However, a simple application of conventional explanations leads to a good number of unresolved questions. In the context of the preoccupations of this chapter, the definition of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement as a revolutionary force cannot be merely approached as a question of rational adjustment to a shifting landscape, or as an example of a successful process of cross-national diffusion of ideas. Spanish homosexual militants did not have to wait until the offer to set a revolutionary partnership came: they had knocked at the doors of these parties already. Similarly, it should not be forgotten that, to a large extent, it was an already thriving Spanish liberationist movement who sponsored the circulation of French ideas on homosexual liberation. As Adam et al (1999b: 368) put it, “we should not overlook the possibility that some countries share characteristics, and these common characteristics color the national movements in the same direction” (see also Giugni, 1998c: 91).

In looking at the connections between collective cognitive maps and preference formation, I argue that possible solutions to those questions can be found. From this perspective, the decisions of social movements are understood as the logical consequence of a process of negotiation of reality, whereby the basic ideas of generations of activists determine which courses of action are to be pursued. The particularities of the Spanish social and political context restricted the role of the commercial subculture as a sponsor for the engendering of a political generation of activism. A history of repression, a justified fear of police crackdown, and a sexual regime that defined homosexuality as a deviance and a pathology prevented gay bars from performing this role. Nevertheless, the same idiosyncrasies of the Spanish context opened up an unexpected route for the networking of homosexual people and for the development of a political consciousness around their common sexual orientation: it was militancy in the extreme-left which made the process of consciousness acquisition possible. This kind of militancy allowed for sustained interaction, provided a more or less secure and permissive environment for the

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disclosure of sexual orientation, and exposed militants to ideas coming from abroad.

CHAPTER 5: A NEW GENERATION OF ACTIVISM. FROM REVOLUTION TO CONDOMS, CIVIL RIGHTS AND RECOGNITION

The end of the transition period (1976-1982) was a critical juncture for homosexual militants. The combination of success, which often induces demobilisation and complacency, widespread social disenchantment and lack of communication between politicised and non-politicised homosexuals had started to drag human resources out from militancy. At this juncture, homosexual liberation fronts faced three possibilities. Firstly, they could have relinquished politics, concentrate on cultural, internally oriented pursuits, and wait for a better time to resume their interaction with members of the polity. This is what several voices in the literature would predict (Duyvendak, 1995a; Taylor, 1989). Secondly, they could have ceased in the confrontation with established members of the polity and find shelter in comfortable alliances with sympathetic political actors (Ruzza, 1997). Lastly, they could have simply stayed as they were, insisting on delivering revolutionary messages and engaging in utopian courses of action. Spanish homosexual militants, for reasons intimately connected with the bearing of ideas on the formation of political preferences, stayed revolutionary. That in itself is a question to be explained, not only because it challenges the dominant view in the literature – which links in-crisis identity social movements with abeyance strategies – but also because it finds little parallel in other western countries.

So, despite lack of resources, homosexual militants insisted on remaining actively political and actively revolutionary. Only slight modifications were effected in their platform of demands, and nothing substantial changed in the way homosexual liberation fronts addressed their relationship with non-politicised homosexuals and with political authorities. *However*, things started to change during the late part of the 1980s. In 1986, the *Coordinadora Gai y Lesbiana de Catalunya* (CGL) was found. And the ideas, the discourse, even the style and image of this group had nothing to do with the existing homosexual liberation fronts.

In this chapter two important empirical questions are tackled. Following the timing of events, I firstly discuss that emergence of reformist gay organisations, a process initiated in 1986 with the creation of the CGL, and culminated with the ideological redefinition of the Madrid-based *Colectivo Gay de Madrid* (COGAM). Explaining the emergence of a pragmatic understanding of activism is perhaps the most important thing that I do in this thesis: the march towards polity membership started with a comprehensive redefinition of political priorities at the level of grass-roots activism, which lay the conditions for transformations in claim-making, action repertoires and discourses. Thus, in the first place, a discussion about the permeability of Spanish homosexual militants to exogenous influences is presented (section 5.1). Then, the responses of reformist activists to the same combination of exogenous pressures are discussed (section 5.2). Lastly, the presentation touches on the process of generational formation must be discussed (section 5.3). Then, I conclude.

5.1. Feeling the pressure to change: testing conventional explanations

The essence of my argument in relation to exogenous influences was introduced in chapter 4: context matters, but its

influence in shaping the life-course of social movements needs to be observed from the generational perspective. Never neglecting the capacity of changes in context to alter the calculations of movement participants, I point at the benefits of observing how political generations are created in order to arrive at a more comprehensive view of how participants negotiate change and transformation. In this section I show that ideas have a long-reaching arm. Building on the theoretical discussion of chapter 2, I discuss two exogenous influences that during the 1980s created a climate favourable to change and transformation: in the first place, shifts in the structure of opportunities; in the second place, the bearing of the temporal location in the cycle of protest. AIDS will be touched on later on in the chapter. Both are powerful exogenous factors, with proven capacity to impel change and transformation. However, as we will see, interpretation mediated between those factors and the decisions taken by homosexual militants, to the extent that the dictates of “objective rationality” were hardly followed.

5.1.1. Changes in the structure of opportunities.

Unlike during the 1970s, when the nascent homosexual liberation movement had to define itself amidst a rapidly changing political system, little in the permanent layer of the structure of political opportunities changed during the 1980s that could have affected the process of preference formation. The victory of the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) in the general elections of 1982 signalled the consolidation of the new democratic regime (Maravall and Santamaria, 1986). With the Constitution passed and with the

territorial organisation of the country designed, Spanish social movements basically faced very little changes in the most “structural” part of the structure of political opportunities.¹⁴³ However, a similar thing cannot be said about the more volatile element of that structure. The *structure of alliances* of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement changed during the 1980s in a threefold way. Firstly, the movement could not longer count on the support of the revolutionary left, undoubtedly its main sponsor. Secondly, the relationship with the PSOE worsened. Lastly, the old Communist Party transformed into a euro communist, left-libertarian, social movements-friendly political coalition – *Izquierda Unida* (IU, United left). IU soon appeared as *the ally par excellence* of the social movement sector. Together, these changes started to make survival a rather difficult pursuit for Spanish homosexual militants.

5.1.1.1. Farewell to old friends: the exhaustion of the revolutionary left.

Presenting the revolutionary left as an ally of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement was a central concern in chapters 3 and 4. We saw there that homosexual liberation fronts benefited greatly from the collaboration of revolutionary leftist parties during the transition years. However, one should not ignore that the nature of the relationship between social movements and political parties largely depends on the circumstances of the party

¹⁴³ The decision of the socialist government to join NATO was an exception to this rule. Spanish pacifism, moribund during the late 1970s and early 1980s, was revamped by a political decision that dramatically altered the structure of opportunities of this particular social movement (Prevost, 1993).

in question (Maguire, 1995: 227). And it was the case that the 1980s witnessed the exhaustion of the cycle of Spanish leftist revolutionary parties.¹⁴⁴ The consolidation of normal politics struck the Spanish revolutionary left in a very negative way. Unable to achieve parliamentary representation, and very aware of the rapid solidification of the party system around a much reduced number of nation-wide political forces, revolutionary leftist parties were left with an extremely poor room for manoeuvre. Note that in terms of electoral returns, the project of the revolutionary left failed dramatically: in 1979, in their best result ever, the combination of these parties obtained around 500.000 votes (nearly 7 per cent of the total) yet no parliamentary representation (Laiz, 1995: 13-14; Linz and Montero, 1999: table 1). So, some of these parties moderated, transforming their political discourse into a system-friendly approach. Laiz (1995: 281-282), discussing the concrete cases of the *Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores* (ORT, Workers' Revolutionary Organisation) and the *Partido de los Trabajadores de España* (PTE, Spanish Workers' Party), two very prominent examples of this type of parties, affirmed:

“Once democracy had started, we observe that the electoral manifestos of both parties include no proposal that challenges either the political organisation of the State, the role of the King, or the capitalist system and the market economy.”

Others stayed revolutionary, displaying its familiar anti-capitalist, pro-revolutionary discourse. This was the case, for

¹⁴⁴ Again, I largely draw on Laiz's (1995: chapter 4, especially 285-301) and Roca's (1995b) works to discuss the evolution of revolutionary leftist parties during the 1980s.

instance, of the *Movimiento Comunista* (MC, Communist Movement) and the homosexual-friendly *Liga Comunista Revolucionaria* (LCR, Revolutionary Communist League). However, both alternatives were ill-fated. Those revolutionary parties that decided to play the electoral game found no way to woo voters, who during the 1980s were massively veering towards the hardly revolutionary PSOE (Linz and Montero, 1999). And those that stayed revolutionary simply died slowly. Unable to achieve parliamentary representation (and hence without public funding), and operating amidst a dramatic wave of social demobilisation and apathy, a systematic calls for arms at the street level enjoyed virtually no public resonance. It can be safely argued that, by 1990, the revolutionary left had died away.¹⁴⁵

The consequences of the disappearance of the revolutionary left were twofold. In the first place, the veteran homosexual liberation fronts lost resources, material and political alike. Secondly, homosexual liberation groups lost legitimacy, feeling the erosion of their already poor reputation. The exhaustion of revolutionary parties was taken by everyone as the confirmation of the futility of revolutionary, Marxist-inspired politics. But while these parties were dying away, homosexual liberation groups persisted in exhibiting their revolutionary ideas. Thus, along with the critiques based on the contents of their ideological project, revolutionary liberationist organisations saw themselves attacked from a new front: namely, for being unable to follow the tide of history. Especially in what affects the Madrid-based political elite, the idea that homosexual liberation groups were *essentially* unqualified to play the normal political game became ubiquitous.

¹⁴⁵ Some very small organisations of this sort have survived during the 1990s, although with virtually no public presence.

As a very prestigious publication put it, the gay movement “insists on dwelling at the margins of the political game”.¹⁴⁶

5.1.1.2. On bad terms with the socialists

Political parties find it easier to show a gentle face towards social movement organisations when they are out of power. However, the incentives for a continuous collaboration with the social movements' sector decrease as soon as a party wins an election; whenever they can manage to, political parties prefer to “cast off unwelcome outside influence” (Maguire, 1995: 227). These are simplistic propositions that, nonetheless, serve well to address the evolution in the relationship between the PSOE and homosexual liberation groups after the years of the transition process. If from 1977 to 1982, when the PSOE was an opposition party, an ethos of *tolerance* had allowed for a (rather limited) degree of partnership between homosexual liberation organisations and the socialist party, from 1982 to 1989 – when the party was governing with absolute majority - both actors grew steadily apart from each other.

Framing the attitude of the PSOE towards Spanish homosexual liberation during the transition years as one of tolerance seems very adequate. Tolerance involves neither equality, nor acceptance. It is a response based on circumstances exogenous to the tolerating party itself, who is normally forced to cease in its attacks to the tolerated subject (Phillips, 1999: 128; see also Wilson, 1993: 176). As we saw in the preceding chapters, the PSOE displayed a blend of silence, reluctance to cooperate and last-minute intervention that, in the mind of many observers,

¹⁴⁶ See *Cambio* 16, 9 October 1989.

revealed a deeply entrenched opposition towards the liberationist project. Dolors Renau, for instance, a leading socialist politician, put this in the following terms:

“Homosexual liberation people were too noisy, too radical, too happy with Marxism, in short, too unconventional, for a political party that was trying to redefine itself away from Marxist proclaims.”¹⁴⁷

As the interviewee notes, part of the explanation to the PSOE’s animosity towards the homosexual liberation movement must be looked for in the internal circumstances of this party. Having since its inception defined itself as a political party with a Marxist orientation, the PSOE initiated in 1976 a process of ideological redefinition that only a few years later resulted in the scratching of Marxism from the PSOE’s ideological statement. Advancing the kind of ideological transformation that made the British Labour Party a governing party during the 1990s, the Spanish PSOE engineered a change of course aimed at turning the party into a truly social-democratic party (Maravall, 2003: 25-26; Gangas, 1995: 146-152). Add to this the circumstances set out in chapter 4 - on the one hand, the strategic limitations imposed by the requirements of the transition process; on the other, the endurance of homophobia among party members and leaders – and we arrive at an explanation for what some of my interviewees termed “institutional homophobia”. Because of Constitutional correctness, the PSOE supported in 1978 a cursory revision of the Social Menaces Act, and pressurised the UCD to make homosexual organisations legal. Yet nothing in these initiatives revealed a willingness to attend to the demands of a social

¹⁴⁷ Dolors Renau, Interview n°1.

movement that relentlessly criticised the Constitution and pursued a good number of impossible demands.

As soon as the PSOE gained power, tolerance steadily gave way to hostility. Note that for a lot of people, the socialists' earth-quaking victory in the 1982 general elections represented the promise for so many good things to come. In those elections, the PSOE achieved more 49 per cent of the votes, and 58 per cent of the seats in Parliament (Linz and Montero, 1999: 23). In Juan Vicente Aliaga's view:

"I think that the victory of the PSOE in 1982 was, for many, something very close to the ultimate liberation. Many people thought that this victory was going to mean the solution for so many problems, we have finally got democracy! (...) In a sense, this was a way to delegate, I meant, we had worked very hard, people were very tired of participating in an endless number of demonstrations, not only the gay ones, but of all sorts, some had had a really tough time, and they thought that it was the time to calm down. They trusted the socialists."¹⁴⁸

The PSOE, however, did not meet these expectations. The steady clarification of electoral alignments and the sheer normalisation of political events worked to consolidate the view of gay issues as risky issues in electoral terms. Whereas during the transition years this kind of electoral calculations were not at the forefront of the agenda, basically because political parties were not totally sure about who their loyal voters were, the more democracy consolidated, the more the basic rules of democratic accountability started to operate. In this context, as Dolors Renau argued,

¹⁴⁸ Juan Vicente Aliaga, interview n° 8.

“Homosexual rights recognition was neither a priority, nor even an issue for the socialist governments of the 1980s. It simply was not something that deserved discussion.”¹⁴⁹

I should perhaps note that different inside actors within the PSOE addressed the interaction with gay and lesbian groups differently. For one, the regional branch of the PSOE was more receptive and responsive to the pleas of the gay movement than any other regional section or, indeed, the nation-wide organisation. Opening a future line of research based on the reasons why different inside party actors respond differently to exogenous factors, my analysis revealed that politicians belonging to this branch met regularly with representatives of the FAGC, talked in more friendly terms about gay groups, and showed a higher commitment to translate their promises into action. That was to the extent that Germá Pedrá, a FAGC’s founding member, was included in the electoral lists for the Catalan regional elections of 1980.

Thanks to the ongoing collaboration between Catalan politicians and liberationist groups, the FAGC managed to set a stable working relationship with Dolors Renau (interviewee n° 1), who was to become in 1982 a socialist MP.¹⁵⁰ The passing in 1985

¹⁴⁹ Dolors Renau, interview n° 1.

¹⁵⁰ Because gay and lesbian groups chiefly aim at legislative reform, Members of Parliament (MPs) very often are the prime target of gay collective protest (Rimmerman, 2002). In other cases, think for instance of environmental movement organisations, social movement see clearer profits in canvassing public managers, top-rank bureaucrats, etc. This hypothesis, which indeed deserves further empirical confirmation, has been suggested by a number of authors (see, for instance, Haider-Markel and Meier, 1996). Furthermore, it came up in the course of some of my interviews with politicians. Carles Campuzano, from the Nationalist

of a Parliamentary resolution (Constitutional Committee of the *Congreso de los Diputados*), which in line of the declarations of the European Parliament called for the elimination of legal discriminations against homosexuals, was the one visible output of this collaboration.¹⁵¹ The nation-wide party, however, was far less sympathetic than their Catalanian peers. Whereas no interaction took place between party officials and gay groups during the 1980s, only on three occasions the government met with representatives of the homosexual liberation movement. More specifically, in 1983, with Liborio del Hierro, Deputy Minister of Justice (interviewee n° 21), technically to discuss the legalisation of homosexual organisations; in 1984 with Carlos San Juan, Deputy Home Secretary, to discuss several issues concerning the movements' platform of political demands; lastly, in 1985, with Ernest Lluch, Minister of Health, to discuss AIDS policy. None of the demands of gay groups were attended. While the Health

Christian Democratic CiU, suggested: "all issues are not the same. In some occasions, we have very little choice but to accept or reject of proposal purely on political reasons: technical complexities, lack of time, etc leaves no room for detail. In other cases, and the issue of gay rights might be one of them, we can talk to people, arrive at more informed judgements, and so on" (Interview, n° 14).

¹⁵¹ The technical reference is, n° de expediente (161/000113), Diario de Sesiones, Comisión Constitucional, de 11 de Junio de 1985, pág 9849. The declaration was greatly inspired on the spirit of the *Squarcialupi* report of the European Parliament, which in 1984 had propitiated the first positioning of that institution in favour of gay rights recognition. Without discrediting the symbolic value of this initiative, it has to be noted that the support of socialist MPs to this resolution could hardly indicate a broader commitment on the part of the party. As Renau herself confessed, this particular parliament (1982-1986) was exceptional in as far as the degree of initiative of freedom granted to individual MPs by their parties. This was "corrected" from 1986 onwards.

department declined to take any concerted action to tackle the spread of AIDS, the Government failed to give a convincing response to issues such as the legal treatment of homosexuality in the armed forces, or the elimination of the police records about homosexual people created in the light of Francoist legislation.¹⁵²

A second consecutive victory of the PSOE in 1986 widened the distance between homosexual liberation groups and the socialist government. The grip on the parliamentary party was stronger, and the avenues of dialogue with the parliamentary party disappeared. In this regard, gay groups particularly resented the attitude of the leader of the lower chamber, who actively prevented the discussion of parliamentary initiatives about gay rights recognition (D27, 1987). At the same time, the government showed an increasing insensitivity towards the gay problematic. Note at this stage that homosexuality still fell within the remit of the misdemeanour of public scandal: cases in 1986 and 1987 involving the application of this proviso against homosexual couples remained both politicians and activists about the endurance of that legislation (Pérez Cánovas, 1996).

Antigay sentiments on the part of key ministers, a pressing need to conquer the “centre” of the electoral space and the perception that pro-gay policies could be costly in terms of votes discouraged a more friendly approach to the demands of the movement (Calvo, 2004, forthcoming). However, it was the identification of homosexual liberation fronts as a revolutionary, anti-systemic actor what shifted the balance against the aspirations of the movement. In spite of the fact that Jordi Petit was making some headway in wooing the support of Catalanian leftist politicians, national Congressmen (and the nation-wide media)

¹⁵² I discuss the issue of homosexuality in the armed forces in Calvo (2004, forthcoming).

were directly exposed to Madrid-based groups (especially during the 1980s). And, as we saw in chapter 3, COGAM initially aligned with the revolutionary side. Just an example: in the speech delivered at the end of the 1989 “June” demonstration, COGAM’s spokesperson blamed “the violence and hostility of a patriarchal and sexist society” that used its repressive forces “let them be the police, the armed forces, the judiciary, or religion” to oppose the free expression of homosexual behaviour.¹⁵³ In addition to this, between 1986 and 1988 the Madrid *Lesbian Feminist Collective* went public, becoming involved in a number of highly resonant dramaturgical displays, such as mass kissing at the *Puerta del Sol* (Madrid’s Trafalgar Square). Predisposed to view the movement as a threat, the national political elite built on their experience with Madrid-based groups to render the whole of the gay movement as an illegitimate subject.

To what extent is governmental unresponsiveness a problem? It is generally accepted that the likelihood of success shapes the evolution of collective participation (Tilly, 1999; Tarrow, 1998; Duyvendak, 1995b). When collective action appears unable to achieve its goals, participation shrinks. Moreover, it is also accepted that the more social movement organisations focus on political campaigning, the more the ebb and flow of the political environment affect them. In the Spanish case, the growing perception that governmental unresponsiveness was making participation meaningless added much strain to the already battered life of homosexual liberation fronts during the 1980s. As one of my interviewees put this:

¹⁵³ Reproduced in *entiendes?*, #10 (1989: 14-15).

“Liberationists were trapped; inevitably linked to campaigning, but at the same time doomed to failure and frustration, they were close to a situation of collapse where nothing seems to matter”¹⁵⁴

The “trap” mentioned by the interviewee was grounded in one of the basic principles of Spanish homosexual liberation: namely, “stay political, stay revolutionary”. As Marxist principles guided the rationalisation of collective protest, the possibility of retreating back from politics and “involve” fell outside their repertoire of possibilities. However, staying political was becoming increasingly difficult as well as useless, since the possibilities of fostering the implementation of the liberationist political programme had virtually vanished.

5.1.1.3. And welcoming a new friend: the inception of Izquierda Unida.

To make things worse for the survival of the liberationist project, IU burst into the scene of Spanish politics. IU, which stands for *Izquierda Unida* (United Left) was the offspring of a process of ideological redefinition intended to turn the veteran Communist Party (PCE) into a viable political alternative. Note that in spite of its formidable role in eroding the social bases of Francoism, the PCE never managed to compete with the PSOE in the representation of Spanish leftist sensibilities. Banned from participating in the general elections of 1977, poor results in 1979 and 1982 led to internal tensions, and, eventually, to a comprehensive process of modernisation that resulted in the setting up of IU. Initially born as a coalition of an electoral

¹⁵⁴ Daniel Gabarró, interview n° 6.

coalition of seven communist parties as well as a number of independent figures, being the PCE the biggest and more powerful partner, the success of the experiment induced further merging between the coalition members. By 1992, IU had ceased to be merely a coalition and had become something close to a traditional mass political party (Ramiro, 2001; Taibo, 1997; Gangas, 1995; Sartorius, 1992).

The explicit attempt to enrich the discourse of the left by incorporating the views and aspirations of the social movement sector is what makes IU important at this stage (Sartorius, 1992: 91). Catching the attention of the so-called “new citizens”, that is, voters particularly preoccupied with new postmaterialist issues such as the environment, global peace and minority rights was this party’s chief purpose (Montero and Torcal, 1994). Communist leaders believed that the excessive concentration on the worker’s movement, and a generalised scepticism about “old” Marxist ideas were to blame for the dramatic decay in electoral support. Thus, forging closer ties with the social movement sector was seen as a possible situation. Accordingly, IU defined itself in 1989 as a

“Democratic leftist political force, committed to change, socialism, ecopacifism, feminism, international solidarity and the consolidation of a united Europe” (IU, 1st General Assembly, reproduced in Sartorius, 1992: 97).

A wealth of promising initiatives conveyed the image of IU as a gay-friendly political force. For instance, the party decided to participate in a European summit of communist organisations planned to clarify the position of European communism on the homosexual question (D22, 1986). Also, the electoral manifestos for the general elections of 1986 and 1989 included a number of electoral promises on gay and lesbian rights (IU, 1989 and 1986). The problem for homosexual revolutionary organisation was that IU’s discourse on this terrain was soon embedded in the ideas of gay rights as human rights. Equality under the law, protection against discrimination, and sexual rights became the axis of a

discourse that matched perfectly well with the ideas of the Barcelona-based CGL, but which clashed with the strategies of revolutionary organisations. So, in more than one way, IU's sympathy represented a blow to the aspirations of Spanish homosexual liberation: it consolidated the view that for policy success to happen, gay organisations had to gain proficiency in the language of moderation, institutional compromises and respectability.

5.1.2. The temporal location in the cycle of protest

Why demobilisation is a cause for movement change is easy to see. Although the life-cycle of social movements is not indelibly linked to the cycle of protest – in fact many social movement organisations are born when protest begins to decay – it is clear that variations in the latter shape the strategic and organisational priorities of social movements: their strength and resonance as a social force largely depends on the capacity to mobilise large numbers of supporters (Gamson, 1990). Thus, when demobilisation is a reality, social movements often feel pressurised to deploy new strategies that could protect them from the risk of extinction.

During the 1980s, the Spanish gay and lesbian movement was beset by a widespread crisis of demobilisation. Most of those engaged in homosexual militancy during the late 1970s relinquished activism during the following decade. Protest events outside the yearly June demonstration virtually disappeared, while that veteran demonstration shrank to virtually testimonial dimensions. What explains this? To begin with, one must not ignore that the decay of gay and lesbian activism and protest took place amidst a general crisis of social apathy and political disaffection (Adell, 2000, 1989). Nevertheless, a closer look at the circumstances of the gay and lesbian movement reveals that *exhaustion* is an explanation that must be taken into account as well.

Simply put, with the 1980s, gay people left both groups and demonstrations while the number of gay bars grew and they were fuller than ever. Or in other words, “gay people made it clear that they wanted to make the best out of the space of freedom conquered during the previous decade.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, different observers – when asked to explain the drop in participation at the beginning of the 1980’s – linked the decriminalisation of homosexuality with the creation of new spaces of freedom and social interaction. For instance, Juan Vicente Aliaga, at the time an activist in the liberation front of Valencia and currently a leading observer of Spanish gay culture, puts this argument in the following terms:

“I think that many people saw the victory of the PSOE in 1982 as something very close to the ultimate liberation. They thought that the victory of the socialists represented the solution for so many problems. (...) In a sense, this was a way to delegate, I mean, they/we had worked very hard, people were very tired of participating in an endless number of demonstrations, not only the gay ones, but of all sorts, some people had had a really tough time, and everyone thought that the time had come to have fun and carry on with our private lives.”¹⁵⁶

Jordi Petit also subscribes to this argument in full:

“Q: how do you explain the massive drop in participation of the gay movement at the beginning of the 1980s?”

¹⁵⁵ Fernando Lumbreras, at the time leader of the Valencia-based *Col.Lectiu Lambda*, in *ElPaís*, 28 June 1991.

¹⁵⁶ Juan Vicente Aliaga, interview n° 8.

A: In my opinion, the contrast between repression and the new forms of tolerance, even our very own victories and successes, made people prefer gay bars to political demonstrations, because the most pressing needs – freedom above all – had been already fulfilled”.¹⁵⁷

Similarly, Alejandro Mora, an exponent of the younger cadre of homosexual militants, says:

“Q: what can you tell me about the collapse of activism after the transition years?

A: Yes, that was amazing. Everyone assumed that by ceasing to be dangerous people we had achieved everything that we were struggling for. Funny, right? Apart from the reform of the Social Menace Act, we had something like a hundred other demands. Anyway, without the Social Menace Act, people could go to gay bars, and found no time for further campaigning. It was a simple as that.”¹⁵⁸

Last but not least, Empar Pineda, the founding personality of lesbian-radical activism in Spain, also focused on the diversion of energies from activism towards pleasure:

“While we [lesbians] had no doubt that the reform of the Social Menace Act was not the end of anything, but merely the starting point of a long term battle for sexual liberation, gay males took it as the definitive realization of all their dreams, at least for the time being.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Jordi Petit, interview n° 4.

¹⁵⁸ Alejandro Mora, interview n° 11.

¹⁵⁹ Empar Pineda, interview n° 12.

In short, homosexual liberation fronts suffered from the desertion of previously loyal supporters, whom in view of recent successes swung towards more enjoyable collective pursuits. However, what refrained new people, that is individuals not involved in the struggle of the 1970s, from joining the gay and lesbian movement and/or participating in the events organised during the 1980s? The exhaustion argument is clearly insufficient to address this question. It is true that the expansion of the commercial subculture and widespread societal disillusionment were partially responsible for the growing isolation of homosexual liberation fronts during the 1980s. However, to an important extent, I argue that the movement contributed to this isolation: the evidence shows that the discourses, style and image of homosexual liberation fronts stood in sharp conflict with the views of a large part of the homosexual population.

For one thing, non-politicised homosexuals resented the revolutionary outlook of homosexual liberation fronts (Fuentes, 2001b).¹⁶⁰ The pioneering gay and lesbian movement in Spain exhibited a revolutionary left-wing ideology that might have clashed with the more conservative views of the majority of the homosexual population. Also, the symbolic association between homosexual liberation and queerness alienated homosexuals with a taste for a more virile understanding of sexuality. Quoting Guasch at length (1991: 81):

“Those homosexuals that were not prepared to redefine their sexual condition in effeminate terms could hardly feel represented by an homosexual movement that, despite its calls

¹⁶⁰ For the sake of this presentation, I make a loose use of these terms: “politicised” homosexuals are taken to be those that either are members of gay groups, participate in the events these groups organise, or both.

for a plural sexuality (including virile homosexuality), apparently was (and, ultimately, perceptions are what really matter) governed by queers and transvestites.”

Nevertheless, the brunt of the problem lay in the approach of the homosexual liberation movement to the question of community politics. While in the United States the consolidation of urban subcultures, the engagement in identity politics, and the transformation of the political discourse vis-à-vis other members of the polity all happened at the same time (late 1970s, early 1980s), in Spain, subcultural expansion coexisted during the 1980s with political organisations anchored in the revolutionary ideas of the 1970s. Combining inwardly oriented community strategies with outward rights-based discourses has proven to be a viable recipe for the consolidation of western gay and lesbian movements. At a general level, the Spanish case is no exception to that: the victory of reformism over revolution, or what is the same, the victory of pragmatism over utopianism is greatly explained by the assimilation of this particular model of gay and lesbian protest politics. That, however, was very much in the making during the 1980s, with a homosexual liberation movement tied by ideological constraints and thus precluded from adapting to reality in this way. Indeed, conflict and miscommunication could be the only consequences of combining a political movement earnestly adamant about destroying community practices and a homosexual population that was rapidly engaging in community-based strategies of social organisation.

In a context where no allies could be found and governmental hostility was growing, demobilisation was a clear blow against the liberationist project. In fact, more than anything else, it was the demobilisation problem what triggered a process of internal dialogue and exchange among homosexual militants that aimed at finding a cure for this lethal disease. The pressure for change was mounting.

5.1.3. The responses: staying revolutionary, reinventing AIDS

I have shown in this section that, during the 1980s, Spanish homosexual militants were increasingly pressurised to effect changes in their outward political identity. Old alliances were fading away, success was in short supply, the capacity to mobilise support was not there and a new global threat was menacing the lives of homosexuals world-wide. Worse for them, gay movements in other western countries were actually promoting a number of changes in claims, repertoires and discourses to meet the new climate. In Great Britain, for instance, right after the short-lived liberationist outburst, gay politics were dominated by an organisation called the *Campaign for Homosexual Equality* (CHE). That was a group that combined liberationist and homophile ideas to produce a discourse that was adamant about engaging in cooperation with policy makers as well as with non-politicised homosexuals (Weeks, 1990). In France, homosexual liberation had been dead for almost a decade, while in the United States gay politics were clearly moving towards nation-wide judicial and legislative battles. However, what did homosexual militants actually do? Breaking the expectations, homosexual liberation fronts did not react like an automatic application of the foregoing arguments would have predicted.

Firstly, in what regards the shifting structure of opportunities, the veteran homosexual liberation organisations effected very little changes in their platform of demands. Much to the contrary, Spanish liberationists aligned during the 1980s with the cause of the blood-tainted Basque's liberation movement. No major changes were promoted in the action repertoires either, to the extent that liberationist organisation meet no governmental official or party representative all through the 1980s. More to the point, it is the most revealing that surviving liberationist organisations loudly criticised the engagement of the CGL in electoral politics. And only lukewarm attempts were made to align the cause of homosexual liberation with the modes of claim making based on rights recognition and legalist frameworks.

Secondly, what was the response towards the crisis of mobilisation? Demobilisation is a powerful inducer of change. However, how did homosexual liberation fronts reacted to the mobilisation crisis? Surprisingly for the observer, yet clearly in accordance with their worldview, homosexual militants invoked further ideological work as a mean to revamp militancy. What kind of ideological work was that? Evidence shows that the original insistence on revolutionary slogans was steadily giving way during the early 1980s to a more sophisticated discourse, focused on the idea of *repressive tolerance*.¹⁶¹ This framework took the issue of problem definition to its very initial stages, in a bid to arise awareness about the remaining of oppression. In the words of Eugeni Rodriguez, the FAGC's leader since 1986:

“Gay people did not see that they were no longer affected by a “direct” or “traditional” kind of repression, that one which people had grown used to challenge; instead, they were suffering from a different one, a form of repressive tolerance that constraints the public expression of homosexuality to the boundaries of the ghetto and prevents it in the streets.”¹⁶²

In other words, struck by mounting demobilisation, homosexual militants thought it necessary to insist on the differences between being “legal” and “lawful” (see *País*, 14 February 1983): in spite of the successes of the past, homosexuals remained far from full citizenship as far as rights recognition was concerned and much more had to be done to eliminate social stigma. Note in this regard that in 1987, 74 per cent of the

¹⁶¹ An early formulation of this argument can be found in an interview that Armand de Fluviá gave to the basque radical newspaper *Egin*, 27 June 1981.

¹⁶² Eugeni Rodriguez, interview n° 2.

respondents to a survey run by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* declared that they would be deeply troubled if his or her son engaged in homosexual relations (in the case of daughters, it was a 72 per cent).

In both cases, homosexual militants followed deeply entrenched ideas to believe that the lack of ideological clarification among the homosexual population was responsible for their problems. Again, the capitalist system was blamed for seeking the depoliticisation of the homosexual population. And, consequently, demobilisation was combated with heightened ideological work. In spite of the clear signs of demobilisation, the intellectual underpinnings of homosexual militants deterred them from acknowledging that their discourse could alienate potential recruits. In short, compromising, which in this context involved allowing for service provision and moderating the political discourse, was not a possibility.

It is now the time to touch on the issue of AIDS for this is the terrain where the powers of ideas became more clearly deployed. Unexpected shocks are often decisive in the life of social movements. We simply need to think about the impact of ecologic disasters on the environmental movement. Similarly, war declarations, unprecedented judicial rulings, or health crisis can open/close avenues for political action in ways never expected before. The crisis produced by the massive spread of the HIV virus is the one earth-quaking perturbation that has shaken the ground from which the gay movement builds itself. As Urvashi Vaid says (Vaid, 1995: 73), “as with our personal lives, we can mark two distinct eras: life before AIDS and life after AIDS”.

In the majority of Western countries, the gay movement has come up to the conclusion that the best solution to fight AIDS consists of a blend of political conservatism and a strengthening of identity politics. Idiosyncratic features of the disease - unlike most of other life-threatening diseases, AIDS was intimately associated with the lifestyles of populations that were already heavily stigmatised – and certain aspects of context - during the 1980s politics were swinging towards the right, in terms of new

conservative administrations in key countries as well as in terms of the ascendancy of a highly organised and fully resourced Christian right – resulted in the epidemic adopting the face of a moral challenge. AIDS became a symbol of a “social divide between church and state-sanctioned orthodoxies on the one hand, and the toleration of, or celebration of, single or multiple parenthood, gay and lesbian households, and women-controlled fertility on the other” (Adam, 1995: 155).¹⁶³ Not surprisingly, hostile media and conservative political forces seized the opportunity to demonise homosexuals, instigating a ruthless moral panic around the disease.

Considering this, the American gay and lesbian community was forced to react with unprecedented courage, strength and determination. The sanguineous coincidence of a blatantly negligent government, very active antigay forces, and, lastly, the sheer scale of the problem induced the creation of a myriad of AIDS specific organisations and related collective efforts (Vaid, 1995; J.Gamson, 1991).¹⁶⁴ In a more orderly fashion, the impact of AIDS on western gay and lesbian movements has been twofold. In the first place, AIDS has spawned the redefinition of gay politics as identity politics. By being exposed to a common threat, it became necessary to stress similarities so that a stronger fight could be put out. In the second place, AIDS has placed the movement in the road towards membership. AIDS forced the

¹⁶³ The “demonisation” of AIDS and its definition as a *moral panic* was not the exclusive province of American politics. Smith (1994: 197), for instance, discussed the ways the AIDS outbreak assisted the British Tory Party in its symbolic and legal assault on gay and lesbian rights.

¹⁶⁴ By 1985, 23,194 cases of AIDS had been reported in the United States (UNAIDS, 2002). The number rocketed to 200,905 in 1990. During the 1980s, almost 80 per cent of the infected were homosexual males.

American gay and lesbian movement to “institutionalise, nationalise and aggressively pursue the mainstream” (Vaid, 1995: 74; see also Rayside, 1998: 6).

Spain soon became one of the European countries most ferociously attacked by AIDS.¹⁶⁵ Infections dramatically grew between 1985 and 1988, reaching in 1990 the figure of 100.000 people living with the HIV virus. By 1996, 38,386 people have developed AIDS symptoms. More than half of them had died.¹⁶⁶ From a comparative perspective, Spain scored in 1994 two hundred cases of AIDS per million habitants; the United Kingdom or Germany did not reach twenty cases per million. By the end of the 1990s, the AIDS problem was worse in Spain than in France, the European country where the efforts to tackle the disease had been least successful. In 1998, for instance, 52.216 cases of AIDS were reported in Spain. In France the figure was 48.760, while in Germany and Great Britain it was well below 20,000 cases (Steffen, 1999: 7). Spanish policy against AIDS displays the familiar blend of negligence, tardiness and relative inefficacy that defines world-wide policy in this area.¹⁶⁷ After the report of the

¹⁶⁵ Epidemiological information on the population affected by the HIV virus can be found in the reports of the Spanish Ministry of Health (www.msc.es/SIDA/epidemiologia) and in the yearly reports of the European Centre for the Epidemiological Monitoring of AIDS (www.eurohiv.org). Valuable secondary sources are Steffen (1999) and Villamil (2001: 312-322).

¹⁶⁶ *El País*, 24 May 1996.

¹⁶⁷ A detailed presentation of AIDS policy in Spain can be found in Villamil (2001: chapter 4). It must be stressed, however, that AIDS awareness was much higher in Catalonia than in the rest of the country. The Catalan regional government, as well as funding prevention campaigns, - “although they always wanted to keep a low profile, due to the political risks involved” (Xabi Tort, interview n° 5) - fostered the

first case (1982), a monitoring group was appointed that, however, had no policy capacities. Policy started in 1987, both at the national and the Catalan regional levels, with the publication of the first awareness campaign. However, a systematic and coordinated policy was not implemented until the mid 1990s. On the whole, Spanish policy on AIDS is characterised by a primacy of care (instead of prevention), a focus on the individual (instead of on groups), and the ill definition of the target groups (heterosexual population under the risk of getting infected through unprotected sex instead of drug-users).

However, in what relates to AIDS, homosexual militants declined to understand the specific implications of AIDS for the gay community (Aliaga and Cortes, 2000: 95). Paraphrasing Martel (1999:206), it is as if sexual liberation had kept liberationists “from understanding the condom issue”. Spanish homosexual liberation fronts engaged in a war of words designed to challenge the discourse that linked homosexual behaviour and HIV infections (Petit, 2003:34-35; Llamas and Vila, 1999: 230-233; Aliaga, 1997). Never denying the basic existence of a new, life-erasing sexually transmitted disease, homosexual militants nonetheless elaborated a counter-discourse that questioned the prevailing ideas of “risk groups”, “normal population” and “promiscuity”. Basically, they found frightening similarities between the mainstream discourse on AIDS and past strategies of social regulation that targeted the homosexual population. Ultimately, it was defended that AIDS was just another disease: AIDS was there, yet it had little to do with the gay movement. In the words of Xabi Tort, (who was the CGL member in charge of AIDS):

networking of epidemiologists and NGOs to launch campaigns against the spread of AIDS.

“The FAGC and similar revolutionary groups insisted that AIDS was everyone’s problem, not something falling specifically within the remit of gay groups.”¹⁶⁸

Also, Alejandro Mora had a clear opinion about this issue:

“AIDS represented a very traumatic experience (...) COGAM [*the interviewee made particular reference to its leader*] did not want to demand welfare policies; AIDS was understood as a public health problem, we were not a risk group, that is, COGAM accepted the existence of practices of risk but not that we were a risk group, and, therefore, we were not meant to get involved in the fight against AIDS, it was other people’s responsibly. This was a terrible blunder, a terrible miscalculation that prevented some groups from realizing that we [*as homosexuals*] had to do something about a disease that was affecting us directly.”¹⁶⁹

The initial stance resulted in very debatable decisions, such as the call against AIDS testing launched 1983 to 1986 (Villaamil, 2001: 385), or the condemnation against prevention campaigns targeting the homosexual population (Llamas and Vila, 1999: 231). The situation was even worse in France. There, the remnants of the homosexual liberation movement simply “refused to believe in the reality of the risk” (Martel, 1999: 207), contributing to the devastating impact of AIDS on the homosexual population in this country. Blindness was a particularly serious issue in France, where gay bar tenders strongly opposed the deployment of prevention campaigns in their premises all throughout the 1980s. Back in Spain, the few homosexual militants in Madrid and Bilbao

¹⁶⁸ Xabi Tort, interview n° 5.

¹⁶⁹ Alejandro Mora, interview n° 11.

committed to AIDS work, (mostly because they were directly affected by the disease) had to relinquish from militancy. This was the case, for instance, with Manolo Trillo, first chairman of the COGAM. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that, during the 1980s, AIDS work largely rested in the hand of non-gay associations, mostly the so-called *Comité Ciudadanos Anti-Sida* (AIDS hotlines), which distributed free condoms and offered the scarce information about how to stop being infected that was available at the time.

So, the question again comes up: why did homosexual militants react this way? Applying the cognitive tools that they had at hand, Spanish homosexual militants arrived at a diagnosis of reality that essentially questioned the sheer existence of a gay-specific threat. Following a three-layered argument, it was argued, in the first place, the such thing as a gay community does not exist; consequently, as nothing is essentially especial about gays and lesbians, so-called “gay diseases” cannot exist either; lastly, the gay movement should no engage in kind of political strategy that reify the categorisation of homosexuals as members of a special group.

To sum up: basically immune to the changes in the environment, an increasingly feeble homosexual liberation movement opted for continuity rather than for change. AIDS was negated; further intellectual work was presented as the best weapon against demobilisation, while the closure of the structure of opportunities spawned no major change in strategy. Reformists, however, did not quite think this way.

5.2. New solutions for old problems: ideas in action

The 1980s witnessed the clash of two different generations of activism: while the veteran homosexual militants struggled to cope with changing times, a new generation of activists – the generation of *gay and lesbian rights activists* – was starting to demand its place under the sun. Of course, different names suggest different

underlying realities. In terming my generations this way, I have followed the view of my interviewees: while some of them addressed the process of change as one of “activists replacing militants”, others talked about “homosexuals becoming gays”. In this section I show how different the worldviews of both generations happened to be. Following the route outlined in the previous section (structure of opportunities, AIDS and temporal location in the cycle of protest), the responses of the CGL to the rapidly shifting environment are discussed. What the CGL did and said represents a very valid cue to understand the worldview of the incoming new generation. Then, as I did in chapter 4, a systematic presentation of the collective cognitive maps of this generation is presented.

5.2.1. The new responses: opportunities, AIDS and demobilisation

Fernando Lumbreras, who during the late 1980s was a key sponsor of reformist activism in Valencia, argued in an interview for *El País* (29 June 1991) that the Spanish gay movement had effected a dramatic change of strategy during the last part of the 1980s. More specifically, he said:

“Our aim was to replace the old framework based on conflict – which was necessary in its time – with a new strategy based on cooperation and education in tolerance”.

This statement is a useful starting point to report on the colossal differences in the responses towards environmental changes that set homosexual militants and gay rights activists apart during the late part of the 1980s. Beginning with the transformations in the structure of opportunities, while homosexual militants generally refused to engage in the kind of political strategies required to woo institutional support, reformist gay rights activists had no qualms about engaging in what they defined as a “strategy of close cooperation with the institutions”

(Petit, 2003: 34). In a groundbreaking move, the incoming generation of gay activists interpreted the combined circumstance of a growingly unresponsive government as well as the birth of a gay-friendly political force (IU) as a clear warning that strategies based in conflict had to fade away.

Considering this, far-reaching changes in the definition of *claims* were effected. Reflecting on its founding mission, the CGL declared in 1991:

“Setting pressure on institutions so that the civil and political rights of gays and lesbians could be protected has been our central concern during all these years”.¹⁷⁰

Indeed, what it was soon to be termed the “legal normalisation” of gays and lesbians became the chief goal of reformist gay and lesbian organisations. Action repertoires changed too. Lobbying, judicial strategies, liaising with the media and the engagement in electoral politics replaced street-based protesting. As we saw in chapter 3, the CGL sponsored an ambitious campaign called “*vota rosa*” (pink vote), which building on the American experience, sought to mobilise electoral support in favour of the party (or parties) that appeared more responsive to movement’s demands. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the discourse of human rights was invoked. In a direct challenge to the mobilising messages based on revolutionary proclaims, reformist organisations crafted a brand-new ideational apparatus around the ideas of “normalisation”, “gay rights as human rights” and “the right to sexual orientation”. This was a springboard for future campaigns based on the

¹⁷⁰ CGL, in *Iniciativas Gais* #10, (1991:1).

demands of same-sex partnership legislation. Very clearly, while homosexual militants still refused to pursue membership in the polity, the CGL and its partners placed themselves right in the middle of the road towards that direction.

Similarly noticeable were the differences in the question of AIDS. Note that the liberationist's response to AIDS was one of the chief factors that led to the creation of the CGL in the first place. Jordi Petit, the FAGC's leader until 1986 and the key personality behind the CGL, had already tried to get the liberationist movement involved in AIDS work. For instance, due to his insistence, movement representatives discussed the implications of the AIDS epidemic with the Ministry of Health of the first socialist government (1985).¹⁷¹ And Petit's voice was virtually the only one who called for the need to involve the "gay community" (and idea that, of course, the bulk of homosexual militancy was not prepared to embrace) in the pre-emption of further HIV infections.¹⁷² However, in doing this, Petit was "annoying the bulk of militants who did not really agree with his position in the AIDS issue."¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ In that meeting, Petit complained about the excessive utilization of the idea of "risk groups". It also demanded the design of policy and resented the lack of involvement of the Spanish delegation in the WHO. The Minister, however, claimed that AIDS was not within the government's remit, as it had to be handled by the regional governments. See *El País*, 8 October 1985.

¹⁷² See, for instance, his call for prevention campaigns in articles published by the Barcelona-based *El Periódico de Cataluña*, 4 October 1985 and 3 June 1986.

¹⁷³ Eugeni Rodríguez, interview n° 2.

Right from the start, AIDS appeared as a chief concern for the newly founded CGL.¹⁷⁴ As Petit has recently put this (2003: 34), “there was the need to confront a completely unexpected historical responsibility”, and the rupture with the “revolutionaries” seemed the first step to take in that pursuit. Or as he put this in the interview,

“We needed a completely different blueprint to organise a concerted response against AIDS. We were losing too much energy in internal infighting, while people were dying.”¹⁷⁵

Indeed, where homosexual militants had only seen a further excuse to revamp the stigmatisation of homosexuals, the CGL in particular, and more generally the new generation of gay and lesbian rights activists were prepared to frame AIDS as a direct threat against the gay and lesbian community. Thus, whereas the surviving liberationist organisations had virtually expelled those members that insisted on engaging in AIDS work, the CGL set up a group devoted to prevention and the provision of care for HIV positives.¹⁷⁶ The CGL was also pioneering in involving the

¹⁷⁴ In this line, AIDS work figured among the central CGL’s aims. As the group declared in one of its periodicals, “what we need is to meet the real problems, leave aside the over-politicised political language of the past and provide services, work on publications that entertain, *work further against AIDS*, set pressure on policy makers to see more rights recognised and, foremost of all, we need to be tuned with the scene.” CGL, in *Iniciativas Gais* (1989:1).

¹⁷⁵ Jordi Petit, interview n° 4.

¹⁷⁶ The group was initially called *Gays per la Salut* (Gays for Health), and later on *Stop SIDA*. A detailed chronological presentation of the AIDS branch of the CGL can be found in [http://www.stopsida.org/ esp/ home_cas/historia.htm](http://www.stopsida.org/esp/home_cas/historia.htm).

subculture in prevention campaigns. Condoms were distributed in gay bars (to the amusement of other gay organisations in the country), and a campaign was launched to “educate” bar tenders in the dangers associated with the HIV. Note that this model was to become ubiquitous, the more so gay groups started to benefit from various sorts of public funding.

Thus far we have seen that revolutionaries and reformists arrived at very different diagnoses in two areas: namely, the relationship vis-à-vis the party system and the responses towards the AIDS crisis. In other words, breaking with isolation represented something close to a mantra for the incoming generation, who resented both the distance between the gay movement and its natural constituency – the gay and lesbian “community” – and the lack of understanding with polity members. Lastly, I show that interpretation also played its part in defining the implications of demobilisation. Together with the need to elaborate a coherent response to the AIDS epidemic, Spanish reformist gay organisations justified its existence as part of a quest to bring the gay movement “in line with reality”. The “catching up with reality” motto summarised a process of interpretation and framing intended to redefine demobilisation as a problem falling within the movements’ sphere of responsibility.

Catching up with reality was necessary for one important reason: the strategies and discourses of homosexual liberation groups had created a tremendous gulf between politicised and non-politicised homosexuals. By refusing to attend to the welfare and cultural needs of the homosexual population, homosexual liberation fronts – the critique said – had come to assume that their highly politicised and leftist extremist worldview was shared at the street level, when this was not the case. People, however, had changed. After the hectic years of the transition years, it was becoming painfully clear that ordinary people were less interested in politics and more in the resolution of everyday problems. Paraphrasing Engel (2001: 40), “it is as if gay liberation had evolved into the right of having a good time!”

Considering this, the new discourse about demobilisation underscored an alleged transformation in the preferences of non-politicised homosexuals as the justification for a comprehensive strategic shift. Reflecting on the origins of the CGL, and more particularly, on the justification for a dramatic rupture with existing structures of mobilisation, Jordi Petit said:

“The testimonialism and the isolation of those trapped in an over-politicised discourse with no use, which mobilises no one and transforms no thing is dramatically detached from reality, for the life of gay people has changed during the past ten years and new problems are emerging.”¹⁷⁷

Note that the debate about the new needs of the homosexual population consumed much of the theoretical production of the CGL and the COGAM from 1987 to 1990. Of particular interest is the observation of the latter: the growing intensity of the calls for further community engagement revealed the true magnitude of the conflict between COGAM’s revolutionary discourse (until 1990) and the preferences of its members. Among the myriad of communications, position papers and related documents that contributed to this debate, two texts are worth noting. In the first one, Alejo Sarbach discussed the means to overcome the gap with the homosexual commercial subculture.¹⁷⁸ Sarbach, who was close to the FAGC, drew on Anglo-Saxon references on identity politics and rights-based struggles in order to ideate an intellectual

¹⁷⁷ Jordi Petit, in *El País*, 5 April 1988. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁷⁸ Sarbach’s text (D25, 1986) was titled “¿Como se podría superar la distancia que nos separa del ambiente? (Which are the ways to bridge the gap with the scene?). This was a paper designed for internal circulation within the FAGC. Petit relied on it greatly to give intellectual support to his political position inside the organisation.

response to the liberationist framework. In his ten pages text, Sarbach conceded that during the transition towards democracy the emphasis had to be in escaping as much as possible from the legacies of Francoism (Sarbach, in D26, 1986:1). However, in his opinion the successes of the transition had already satisfied the basic political needs of the majority of the gay population. And, thus, a more thorough understanding of the relationship between activism, culture and politics was necessary for new cultural necessities had replaced that basic hunger for political change. As he put it,

“When basic liberties are conquered the repressive apparatus, if it does not disappear completely, is bound to weaken; in this scenario, the unequivocal equation between political militancy and movement involvement vanishes” (Sarbach, in D26, 1986: 2).

Very much in line with this argument, Sarbach made a point about the questionable profits of a political strategy that told homosexuals what they should think or do. To the contrary, in engaging in service provision and some cultural activities, the gay movement could easily woo further support and set the conditions for prolonged survival. More to the point, he went as far as suggesting the establishment of “gay associative centres”, spaces devoted to service provision and social interaction on the basis of friendship and comradeship (Sarbach, in D26, 1986:4). Of course, nothing of this kind had even been planned in Spain. Virtually at the same time, Jordi Petit defined these centres as “large associate centres where; as well as lawyers and doctors, people can just find

people to talk with; this is a space for social interaction that society is not providing.”¹⁷⁹

The second key reference is Emilio Gómez Zeto’s 1988 paper on the “alternatives for a new political discourse”, written in the context of a process of discourse redefinition on the part of COGAM (D31, 1988). Zeto’s analysis also departed from the proposition that the gay movement was not attentive to the evolution of the preferences of non-politicised homosexuals (Zeto, in D31, 1998: 4): Spanish society had gone a long way since the end of Francoism, and gays and lesbians could not remain immune to these changes. Indeed, what the gay community was demanding from gay and lesbian groups was changing as well: instead of broad pursuits, gays and lesbians craved for answers to their own individual problems. In his words:

“We need to realise that the participation of gay people in the movement is a function of what they are interested in: personal development, personal fulfilment, sexual relations, etc., and we must not mix sheer ideological reasons with other motivations of social and cultural nature.” (Zeto, in D31, 1988: 8-9)

This is why the author advised gay groups to understand that social networking, the pursuit of love and sex, and service provision could be very powerful motives for people to join gay groups. Zeto’s contribution is particularly relevant for a twofold reason: firstly, because it consolidates the idea that the motivations to join gay and lesbian groups are hardly uniform. Whereas some would participate in groups to fulfil a political consciousness, other could well do so to find a boyfriend (or a girlfriend, or both!), expand his or her network of friends, or enjoy different

¹⁷⁹ Jordi Petit, in *El País*, 2 February 1986

sorts of recreational activities. The text was also important because it introduced Spanish gay and lesbian organisations to a new framework, where the institutions of the commercial subculture were regarded as competitors for the support of the homosexual population. A theoretical rationalisation of this argument can be found in Duyvendak (1995a).

To sum up: in substantiating the idea of a gay and lesbian “community”, these texts were a springboard for the definition of new discourses and strategies vis-à-vis the homosexual population. A new model of activism based on the “strategic utilization of leisure” was in the making that believed in community practices and refused to describe the commercial subculture as the gay (political) movement’s worst foe.

5.2.2. New collective cognitive maps

I have thus far insisted on presenting the CGL and the COGAM as the most visible examples of an incoming generation of activists: namely, the generation of gay and lesbian activists. Ultimately, they swept the board in the competition for movement control. During the 1990s, the expansion of welfare and leisure activities organised by gay groups increased the number of members of most of reformist organisations. Moreover, the arrival of a growing number of public grants and the virtual absence of rival alternatives cleared the way to supremacy. With the sole exception of the ephemeral queer organisations, during the 1990s the Spanish gay and lesbian movement firmly planted itself in the road towards polity membership. However, before addressing that point, two issues must be discussed. Here I build on the foregoing discussion to present the collective cognitive maps of this new generation in a more orderly manner. Then, in the next section the origins of these ideas are considered. We saw in chapter 4 that the collective cognitive maps of a given political generation, as interpretative devices designed to make sense of outer events, inspire diagnosis of reality as well as producing guiding purposes.

Homosexual militants understood reality along Marxist lines: homosexuals belonged to a social group cajoled into oppression and exploitation. Naturally, understanding reality in those terms was not something that gay and lesbian activists were prepared to do. Earnestly breaking with the revolutionary, Marxist-inspired ideational framework, the generation behind the incoming reformist organisations adopted an identity-friendly perspective, whereby gays and lesbians were seen as a discriminated against political minority.

At this point, two important qualifications must be made. In the first place, reformist gay organisations in Spain eschewed the debate about the origins of homosexuality and homosexual oppression (see, Petit, 1996). As Jordi Petit put this in the interview,

“Ideological indigestion had already caused too much harm to us. Embroiled in the endless and frightening tiring debate about whom and what was responsible for our condition as homosexuals, the gay movement had lost the bandwagon of reality. We were not going to commit the same mistake.”¹⁸⁰

This is one of the reasons why the essentialism/constructivism debate has failed to capture the attention of gay and lesbian activists in Spain. In the second place, in a bid to emphasise the differences between the European and the American experiences, Spanish gay and lesbian activists often arrived at misleading definitions of the identity debate. Thus, not only groups like COGAM, which during the 1990s became both a political organisation and a gay social centre, but also full-fledged cultural organisation such as the Barcelona-based *Casal Lambda*, which

¹⁸⁰ Jordi Petit, interview n° 4.

since its inception in 1989 has organised a gay and lesbian festival, periodic gay balls, a gay resource centre and so on, refused to define themselves as identity groups. As I hinted above, a solution for this paradox can be found in the certain obsession with setting out clear distinctions between the North American understanding of identity politics and the European one. Pedro Zerolo's viewpoint masterly represents this position:

“I will never defend the idea of community the way Americans do, which dwells on a completely different Constitutional tradition and takes its meaning from the struggles of racial communities (...) The community does exist, it is clearly present now in *Chueca* and in many other venues in the city centre; but to defend the community for the sake of it can easily result in a totalitarian regime, where communities do not listen to each other.”¹⁸¹

With the foregoing in mind, I argue that reformist gay organisations planted their initiatives in an identity-based understand of reality. In this understanding *gays and lesbians* – the idea of “homosexuality” had no sway in this ideational framework – belonged to a discriminated minority. Never going as far as promoting the analogy between sexual orientation and ethnicity, gay and lesbian rights activists believed in the existence of basic links of solidarity and comradeship among gays and lesbians, ties that promoted the develop of a collective conscience. A community was born as a result, one who was unfairly treated by the heterosexual majority. This caused the need for collective action on behalf of gay and lesbian issues to happen.

¹⁸¹ Pedro Zerolo, in Aliaga and Cortés (2000: 220). See also Lambda (1994).

One good way of fleshing out this argument is by observing the discourse on the issue of the relationship with the commercial scene. Believing in the existing of fundamental similarities among individuals with the same sexual orientation very often tends to lead to develop a nicer approach towards commercial subcultures (the “scene”). Indeed, to detect strong community feelings one only needs to look for rhetoric articulations that define these subcultures as “spaces of freedom”. Daniel Gabarró, during the 1980s a key palladin within the reformist camp of politicise of collaboration among political groups and the subculture, approached this issue in the following way:

A: “For years we had been wrongly demoting the gay and lesbian commercial scene as a “ghetto”. That was terribly wrong, and we set out to make something about it. The scene is a space of freedom, pure freedom, because that is the place where we can really show who we are. With its pros and cons, of course, we regarded the scene as a space of freedom, yes; we even think that real life was in fact the actual ghetto!”¹⁸²

Q: Why of freedom?

A: Well, it is obvious, isn’t it? We gays do have a good number of things in common, don’t we? Considering this, we need to find that space where we can build on those similarities and feel that we belong”

Similarly, Jordi Petit, facing a similar question, said:

“Gay people go to gay bars because they like to meet their peers. Sex is very important, who denies that. However, it is not everything. How could we otherwise explain the wealth of

¹⁸² Daniel Gabarró, interview n° 6

places and sites such as book-shops, bars, internet sites, groups, etc, that enrich the life of the community?”¹⁸³

These are interview extracts that represent a generalised view among gay and lesbian activists: namely, the “scene” offers a space of community interaction built on common interests and shared feelings of purpose. Along with this kind of pronouncements, the justification for the engagement in rights-based pursuits, such as same-sex partnership laws gives additional clues to infer how the diagnosis of reality was made. Referring to Gabarró’s interview again:

“All this discourse about not demanding marriage, or any kind of rights, because the institutions that supported them were oppressive, sexist, and governed by a dark and invisible hand, bla,bla,bla... was very good, but we had no rights, and I wanted them. We just wanted our rights, protection for my partner in case I had one! And, you know, this kind of things. ”

Virtually everything that reformist organisation did (promoting AIDS awareness, launching service provision, demanding collective rights) initiated in the definition of gays and lesbians as part of a social group.

5.3. Why their ideas were so different: the formation of a new generation

As we have seen in this chapter, the alteration of the structure of alliance reinforced the idea that the liberationist, homosexual

¹⁸³ Jordi Petit, interview n° 4.

militant historical project was hardly able to produce policy impact; at the same time, AIDS was setting further pressure on gay groups to veer towards the politics of ordinary problems; finally, weakness was making it clear that something had to be done in order to skip extinction. Also, it has been shown that none of these factors spawned a uniform response among activists: on the contrary, whereas some responded as the literature would have predicted, moderating for instance on the face of AIDS, others remained more or less untouched by the circumstances explored thus far. Homosexual militants refused to take prompt action against AIDS, insisted on a confrontational stance against the government, linked their struggle with very debatable causes (such as Basque or Catalonian separatism) and dwelled on the idea that entering into competition with the subculture for the affection of the common homosexual was a mistake for the long term. On their part, the (generally younger) gay and lesbian rights activists condemned utopian politics, stepped back from the sphere of revolutionary politics, engaged in AIDS work and affirmed that demobilisation was partially the movements' fault.

Again, differences in outward and inward strategy reveal fundamental differences at the level of ideas, intellectual principles and basic motivations. In other words, facing the same environment, different collective cognitive maps lead to markedly different understandings of the world; considering this, the fact that different strategic pathways are taken is hardly surprising. As we saw in the previous section, the thrust of the differences relates to the oft-cited debate of whether gays and lesbians are by any means *different* from the heterosexual majority. When this is taken for granted, movements' politics swing towards courses of action intended to safeguard the integrity of this group. In short, identity politics opens the path towards polity membership. Following the example of chapter 4, I discuss now the origins of the new generation. Far-reaching differences in interpretation and problem definition are anchored in variations in the socialisation process. Firstly, the birth of the new generation of activism is situated in the context of a nascent commercial subculture. Secondly, I

consider the impact of becoming permeable to a new whole set of ideas and symbolic references, namely: Anglo-Saxon ideas on gay and lesbian culture.

5.3.1. A new space for social interaction: the commercial subculture

The consolidation of democracy was a springboard for the modernisation of Spanish society (Alvarez-Junco, 1995). During the 1980s Spaniards became wealthier, fiercely pro-European and rapidly confident about participating in normal, democratic politics. The party system settled in, and periodical elections gave citizens the chance to control governmental performance. In addition to that, a process of cohort replacement effected noticeable changes in the composition of the value system (Montero and Torcal, 1994). For instance, whereas in 1970 almost 45 per cent of the population affirmed to belong to the group of “practising Catholics”, in 1982 the percentage of practicing Catholics had gone down to a 25 per cent (Montero and Calvo, 2000). Similarly, the appeal of traditional models of family organisation began to weaken. Reporting official data from the Ministry of Social Affairs, whereas in 1975 the “nuptial rate” (i.e., number of marriages per a thousand habitants) was 7.6, in 1985 it had decreased to 5.2. Note that in the more developed regions that decrease was even more pronounced. In Madrid, for instance, it went from 9.3 to 5.2 during the same period.¹⁸⁴ In a similar manner, Spanish society started to display different attitudes towards homosexuality; between 1980 and 1990, the percentage of

¹⁸⁴ See, table 2, at <http://www.mtas.es/SGAS/familia/DatosEstadis/Matrimonio.htm>, Spanish Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs.

Spaniards that thought homosexuality never to be justifiable decreased from 54 per cent to 45 per cent (Calvo, 2003: table 1).

Gay urban commercial subcultures in Spain emerged in this changing scenario. Building on the relative permissiveness spawned by the modernisation and secularisation processes, the “institutionalisation of the gay universe” (Guasch, 1991: 74) followed the lines of the American model based on community strategies. Thus, territorial and symbolic strategies took the lead in shaping the interaction among gays and lesbians. To begin with, the arrival of new naming practices pinpointed the existence of a process of change. Homosexual liberationists, as the enemies *par excellence* of community practices, felt no esteem for community talk. Rather, they referred to the spaces exclusively devoted to homosexual interaction as the “homosexual ghettos”. Armand de Fluviá often talked about the “authorised commercial ghetto”, which was generally regarded as a “formidable shield that prevents any dialogue between homosexuals and heterosexuals” (see, for instance, his views in *El País*, 16 May 1979). This was a naming practice with a general appeal at the street level too. However, during the 1980s, the steady emergence of new forms of activism as well as the circulation of a brand new generation of gay magazines, such as “*Mensual*” or “*Gay Hotza*” promoted a new vocabulary based on the ideas of “scene”, and “community”. The expansion of the networks of bars, discos and saunas confirmed that an ambitious process of change was in the making.

What I refer as the “community model” of group organisation exhibits a twofold characteristic: in the first place, territorial concentration in urban areas; secondly, collective identity (Fuentes, 2001b; Eribon, 2001: 44-48; Bailey, 1991, D’Emilio, 1983). The literature on the American case situates subcultural formation in the context of a secret process of migration, from rural to urban, that marked an initial liberating impulse on the part of many homosexuals (males mostly). Once in the city, stigma and hostility promote the employment of so-called “walling strategies” (Warren, 1998 [1974]: 183), which are intended to safeguard group members from unwanted outside interference. As in a

warfare scenario, geographical concentration optimises defence mechanisms.

In Spain, the homosexual commercial subculture exhibited a similar proclivity for spatial concentration, initially made necessary by the endurance of homophobic violence.¹⁸⁵ In Madrid, the *Chueca* district – up to the late 1980s a much neglected district in the city centre- started to host a growing number of bars, discos and saunas. Soon a bookshop added to the foregoing sex-driven institutions. Urban geography and the perils of an area populated by drug dealers and pimps co-operated to trace the borders – very blurred at first, more tuned as time went by – of a nascent community. In Barcelona, a more flexible pattern of territorial expansion was followed, whereby gay bars started to appear in more than one district of the city centre. That is explained, in the first place, by a more permissive social climate – the product of both social tolerance and the circumstance of Barcelona as a focal tourist destination- and, in the second place, by the Barcelona urban lay out, less rich in spatially well-defined districts. During the 1990s Madrid has increasingly taken the lead as the heart of the Spanish gay and lesbian universe. Gay and lesbians have clearly conquered a space that is widely regarded as the home of the local gay community, rich on identity displays and populated by institutions of all sorts, sexual and non-sexual alike. Villaamil (2001: chapter 7) offers a detailed analysis of the evolution of the subculture in Madrid during the 1990s.

¹⁸⁵ Neo-fascist groups such as the “*Milicia Catalana*” (Catalonian Militia) in Barcelona, or the “*Commando de Extrema Derecha*” (Extreme Rightist Commando) in Sevilla caused much fear among the homosexual population between 1986 and 1990. In Madrid, homosexuals experienced regular attacks by Skinhead groups.

Together with territorial concentration, the community model is defined by the creation of common symbolic references. These, ultimately, determine who is allowed to participate in the institutions of this subculture. In many ways, the engendering of collective identities is a logical consequence of territorial concentration: in inducing segregation, further inter-group solidarity is inevitably promoted (Chauncey, 1994). However, sex actively collaborates in this pursuit. The beginnings of American, British and French gay subcultures were marked by the emergence of subcultural institutions where the provision of sex among males ranked as the number one priority. However, a whole new symbolic space was created around sex and sex provision, a full-fledged process of identity construction that effected changes in the ways gay people addressed their peers. In other words, the provision of sex was the springboard for a more sophisticated process of consciousness acquisition anchored in a good number of collective elements.

In Spain, sex enriched the nascent gay symbolic space: the pursuit of sex emerged as a bounding factor among gay males, the foundations of a genuine and distinctive culture. Indeed, during the 1980s, bars, discos and saunas – all of them highly sexualised institutions - took the brunt of community/ghetto life, reflecting the “obsession of homosexual males to satisfy their repressed sexual impulses, the quicker the better.”¹⁸⁶ Guasch (1991: chapter 4), in his pioneering work on the institutions of the Spanish gay subculture vividly describes the atmosphere of gay bars and discos. These are dark places, with poor lighting, where a very austere decoration is only interrupted by sexual references of different sort (Guasch, 1991: 110). As a whole, these places recreated the male figure as a sexual appeal, emphasising its

¹⁸⁶ Empar Pineda, interview n° 12.

characteristic as a dominant, secure, powerful figure. The contrast with the image used by homosexual liberation groups is simply stark: while the latter was indelibly associated with the more marginal elements of this universe, i.e., transvestites, queers, and male prostitutes, the subculture appeared as the natural alternative for those males unwilling to propose any challenge to the prevailing sexual regime.¹⁸⁷

A number of more or less measurable consequences were the offspring of the consolidation of this model or group organisation. Firstly, it facilitated the incorporation of populations that thus far had been deterred from interacting with fellow gays and lesbians. The more the subculture expanded, the easier it became to see younger people attending bars, discos and saunas. It became easier to find them in groups. Secondly, gay bars in Barcelona and Madrid offered a new chance for the formation of networks of potential activists. Lastly, the new community model helped to create, and disseminate, a new collective identity among homosexuals. To many gays and lesbians, the participation in the subculture represented the starting of a gay life, the possibility of coming into terms with the collective dimension of sexuality. And by living a gay life, people started to make different evaluations of the world and different calculations of needs and priorities. This idea recurrently appeared in some of my interviews. For instance, as Boti G. Rodrigo, COGAM's chairwoman during the late 1990s, put it:

“In spite of its manifold problems, the scene has offered a gay life to thousands of lesbian and gay people, people who were

¹⁸⁷ Together with bar, a number of gay saunas (bathhouses) were open in Barcelona and Madrid from 1978 to 1982 (Guasch, 1991: 121-126). These spaces are clearly organised for the provision of quick and anonymous sex.

mostly living in denial, who were simply lost in their lives, unsure about how to reconcile his or her sexual orientation with the other bits of their lives.”¹⁸⁸

And in a similar fashion, Jordi Petit said:

“The young people that came to the CGL had something that old revolutionaries did not, and I do not mean that this was good or bad, it simply happened: they had a sense of community, of belonging, if you know what I mean. It was not like in America or England, but these guys happily saw themselves as “gay people”, part of the gay community.”¹⁸⁹

5.3.2. *American gay culture*

Intense conflict and debate have surrounded the idea of gay culture. As Irvine discusses (1998 [1994]: 576), the possibility of cultural groups that were not born as such has always stirred much scepticism, inside and outside the academic world alike. While race or ethnicity is rarely questioned as sources of genuine cultural production, sexuality is questioned as such on the grounds of the lack of external, visible signs of identity. However, the existence of a gay culture is not without support. Different strands of sociological thinking are supporting the possibility of groups that become agents of cultural production. This normally depends on a twofold circumstance: first, the group is the object of stigma; secondly, community institutions give coherence and structure to the group. This second element is often highlighted in discussions on gay culture: gay culture appears when “communities are invented” (Irvine, 1998: 577), that is, when the group had created

¹⁸⁸ Boti G. Rodrigo, interview n° 18.

¹⁸⁹ Jordi Petit, interview n° 4.

a network of institutions that will formalise the interaction among members of the group on a sustained basis (D'Emilio, 1983).

The diffusion and assimilation of American ideas on gay culture is partially responsible for the development of a community model in Spain. Note that the assimilation of the American model should not be taken for granted, for Spanish society – which has only very recently started to receive immigrants and which is largely homogeneous in religious and race terms has very little experience with ghetto making. Internal factors certainly helped: on the one hand, despite outstanding contextual differences, the Spanish homosexual population shared with their fellow homosexual in other countries similar problems. Similar problems can lead to similar solutions. Also, the strategies of homosexual liberation groups eased the way of this model of community organisation. Paradoxically at it might sound, in refusing to respond to the immediate necessities of the common homosexual, non-politicised homosexuals grew hostile against the message of liberationist groups, easing the path for alternative propositions for the understanding of individual and group identities. However, what Nardi defines as “emulation of lifestyles” (Nardi, 1998) also played a large part. As Guasch notes (1991: 113), a journey through these venues revealed an abundance of references to American folk culture: namely, saloon style decorative elements, with wood panels and doors reflecting far west bars as well as cowboy paraphernalia and American flags. Both the nascent Spanish gay press and the owners of gay bars staged the role of cultural diffusers.

To sum up: the more homosexuals interact in spatially, symbolically and thematically restricted environments, the more a community-friendly vision of the world will govern their lives (Aliaga and Cortes, 2000: 188). Sustained interaction in well-defined, non-changing spaces spawns the creation of social networks of friendship, comradeship and sex; in doing so, on the one hand, the role of sexual orientation in the consolidation of individual and collective identities is enhanced and, on the other, a new blueprint for the definition of political preferences is created.

5.4. Summary and implications

In this chapter I have focused on the emergence of the generation of gay and lesbian rights activists. Unlike their revolutionary predecessors, the incoming generation of reformist activists saw the world through the prisms of identity politics. Theirs was not a world explained along the lines of class conflict. Socialised at the time when AIDS and political conservatism was spawning further and stronger community sentiments in other western countries, the future founders of reformist organisations built on the new symbolism around “gay culture” and “gay identity” to justify a different relationship between the gay movement and non-politicised gays and lesbians, and what matters more here, a new approach towards the interaction with polity members. As I have showed in this chapter, in believing that the gay and lesbian movement had to act as the representative of the gay community, the new generation of activists effected changes in the three key dimensions that I have been considering in this thesis: namely, claims, action repertoires and discourses. With no doubt, reformist gay organisations, in making a concerted effort to pass every test of membership, were determined to gain membership in the polity.

To what extent was the context responsible for this? Recuperating the terminology I used in chapter 4, which are the powers of conventional explanations? Contextual changes created a climate favourable to change that, however, did not spawn uniform reactions among activists. Reformists framed those changes as “evident” calls for the moderation, modernisation and professionalisation of the gay and lesbian movement. Revolutionaries, however, hardly agreed with that diagnosis. Thus, the question lastly lay with the variations in the intellectual maps of the two generations. Indeed, thinking about the AIDS issue for instance, a similar exogenous circumstance led two markedly different interpretations: one defined as quintessentially gay problem, the other denied any particular responsibility of gay groups.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS

To discuss the factors and mechanisms that help social movements define their outward political identity, I have chosen to observe in this thesis one of the least studied forms of organised collective protest: namely, the gay and lesbian movement. More specifically, this thesis has focused on gay and lesbian movement organisations in Spain. The Spanish gay and lesbian movement was born amidst the earth quaking transformations stirred by the process of transition towards democracy. A blend of Marxist militant references and foreign ideas about sexual liberation inspired the pioneering generation of Spanish homosexual militants. Socialised in the context of a loudmouth revolutionary movement, identifying sexual and working class liberation soon became a mantra for the forthcoming founders of the Spanish homosexual liberation movement. In 1975, right after the death of the dictator, a group of young homosexual militants took a deep breath and created the first homosexual liberation front in the country. Similar initiatives in many parts of the country followed suit, to the extent that by 1979, every large metropolitan arena hosted one such homosexual liberation front.

The nascent Spanish homosexual liberation movement soon proclaimed itself as a challenger to the polity. We have seen that homosexual militants pursued “illegitimate claims”; this included outspoken claims to adjust the working week with the worker’s sexual necessities. Also, “unconventional protest” was earnestly deployed. Lastly, no effort was made to frame discourses and calls for mobilisation in the incoming language of Constitutional rights.

Why such a defiant stance was adopted has been explained in view of the collective cognitive maps of homosexual militancy. Other social movements at the time, born in the same political and social context, did not join homosexual liberationists in their overt criticism of the nascent democratic regime. And a simple consideration of exogenous factors does not offer a complete answer either: while it cannot be negated that the partnership established between the Spanish revolutionary left and the homosexual liberation movement reinforced the case for confrontation, the analysis has demonstrated that revolutionary ideas and principles were planted in the minds of Spanish liberationists well before the starting of the transition period. So closely intermingled are ideas and political preferences that the latter cannot be understood without entering deeply into the essence of the former.

The first wave of Spanish gay activism made no effort to seek membership in the polity. Breaking with the pattern of so many countries, things actually remained this way well until the end of the 1980s. Despite the wave of demobilisation that was sweeping away most homosexual liberation groups in the country, the absence of rival frameworks conferred a surprisingly long-lived existence to the liberationist project. Indeed, to the surprise of many perhaps, whereas virtually everywhere else in the western world homosexual liberation had died away, Spanish liberationist ideas found channels of expression until the beginning of the 1990s. However, “even the nicest things end” (if I am allowed some irony at this stage). During the late 1980s, changes along the lines of what many of my interviewees defined as “the end of cultural autarky” started to bring the Spanish case in line with other western countries. Of course I am referring to the birth of pragmatic gay activism.

Spanish gay and lesbian politics have been shaken by the consolidation of commercial subcultures in Barcelona and Madrid. Much has been said about the impact of community/ghetto politics in the definition of gay individual identities, the involvement of gays and lesbian in activism, the relationship among members of

the community, and the position of homosexuals in the larger context of the social fabric. Activists and students alike have discussed the flaws of a model where it is often assumed that “only professional males between twenty five and thirty five years of age, who enjoy a high income and follow a certain life style are the members of the gay community, leaving everyone else aside”.¹⁹⁰ All this notwithstanding, it cannot be negated that the firmer community ideas are planted, the bolder the shift is towards movement politics based on the pursuit of the mainstream. And this is what happened to the incoming generation of gay and lesbian activists.

Fashioning a kind of political outlook that I have termed “pragmatic”, as opposed to the “utopianism” of the original generation of homosexual militants, since 1986 reformist organisations displayed responses to environmental fluctuations that ranged from cooperation with political authorities to engaging in service provision. In a bid to bring isolation to a halt, the members of the generation of gay and lesbian rights activists refused to follow the dictates of homosexual militants in either inward or outward strategy. So, legitimate claims were pursued, conventional action took the lead while discourses aligned with prevailing discourses about human rights and equality under the law. Why did they that? Reading the decision of pragmatic activists to pursue membership as a mere reaction to changes in the environment leads to misleading conclusions. For one thing, a sceptical observer would sensibly argue that reformist organisations exaggerated the AIDS threat. Whereas in the United States and in northern Europe homosexuals have always

¹⁹⁰ See Carlos Hernandez’s paper (1998) on the “*pink peseta*” on the *Fundación Triángulo*’s website: <http://www.fundaciontriangulo.es/informes/PesetaRosa.htm>.

constituted the single greatest population affected by the disease, this has *not* been the case as far as Spain is concerned. If in Italy and Spain HIV prevalence among homosexuals stabilised around 14 per cent of the HIV-infected population, in Great Britain almost 70 per cent of AIDS cases had to do with unprotected sex among gay males (Villaamil, 2001: 305 ff; Steffen, 1997:7; López Gay, 1994). More to the point, no more than 25 cases among gay males were known by the time the CGL was using AIDS to justify its very existence.

As a further confirmation of the essential association between political strategies and basic intellectual principles, Spanish gay and lesbian activists also organised their participation in politics around a widely shared diagnosis of reality. Supplanting the Marxist-friendly worldview of their predecessors, the new generation built up a coherent causal reasoning that departed from the view of gays and lesbians as members of an identifiable community; they also came full circle with the engagement in right-based struggles and service provision. If between 1986 and 1989 both views – the old and the new, the revolutionary and the reformist, the utopian and the pragmatic – seemed to be prepared to fight for supremacy, after 1990 that victory was swinging towards the new generation became clear to everyone. Becoming pragmatism a commonplace strategy for gay and lesbian organisations in Spain has much to do with the consolidation of those reformist groups incepted during the 1980s. Committed to liaise with non-politicised homosexuals, it is hardly surprising that reformist groups systematically won in the competition for new recruits.

6.1. Political generations and the lifecycle of social movements: a summary of my contribution

The contribution of this thesis can be evaluated from a twofold perspective. *Firstly*, it takes us further in the understanding of collective protest around issues of sexuality and sexual rights. Of

particular interest is the recurrent attempt to place the Spanish case in comparative perspective; this has proved to be highly useful in dismantling a good number of preconceptions about gay and lesbian movements. For one thing, my analysis gives further strength to the view that the gay and lesbian movement exhibits a number of particularities that social movement theorists should not ignore. Never denying that further comparative work along the lines suggested by Duyvendak and Giugni (1995) needs to support these conclusions, I have identified a number of noticeable peculiarities that set the gay and lesbian movement apart from better-known movements, such as the environmental movement. For instance, gay and lesbian movements, as representatives of a well-defined social group, are particularly affected by conflicts about identity. That is rarely the case with the so-called instrumental social movements.

Also, my analysis vindicates the need to appreciate the differences among gay and lesbian movements in different countries. Without denying the existence of notorious similarities among them (see, in this sense, Adam et al, 1999b), I have shown that gay and lesbian movements in different countries exhibit important differences that affect decisions about strategy, discourse and repertoires of action. Building on the preceding chapters, two broad patterns of movement development can be inferred: on the one hand, what I would tentatively call a “French model” of gay and lesbian protest politics. It is defined by the aversion to identity politics as well as by a clear preference for equality-seeking strategies. On the other hand an “Anglo-Saxon” model, which is characterised by a distinctive commitment towards group-based policies. To a large extent, thinkers pertaining to a variety of intellectual traditions assume that what explains gay and lesbian protest politics in the United States is easily applicable to every western country. In other words, it is often suggested that the Anglo-Saxon model is ubiquitous.

Against that view, I defend that some elements of the American model do not characterise the reality of gay and lesbian movements in some continental European countries, including

Spain. Neither the strong emphasis on community politics nor the interest on the origins of homosexuality stands as defining features of European gay movements. AIDS, and more particularly the influence of the epidemic on the calculations of gay and lesbian organisations, is another area where the differences between the American and the European experiences should be taken into account. Students of the American case see no qualms in the argument that links the catastrophic spreading of the HIV virus among gay males and the transformation of gay and lesbian organisations. Because of AIDS, the American gay and lesbian movement moderated and engaged in the mainstream. In other countries, however, the relationship is not that clear; in Spain, for instance, the influence of AIDS in the political incorporation of the gay and lesbian movement is indirect at best. Failing to stir the sort of moral panic that defined gay people as a direct menace to America's public health, Spanish homosexual organisations navigated the initial wave of the epidemic with a blend of ignorance, mistrust and even negligence. Whatever the causes, the evidence suggests that AIDS alone mattered little for the formalisation of strategic priorities and courses of action.

Nevertheless, arriving at a more informed knowledge about organised sexual dissidents around the globe is not the only achievement of this thesis. *Secondly*, my thesis contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field of social movement theory. In this sense, what defines the relationship between social movements and their political environment? Assuming a political space where – the polity - where a plethora of constituted collective actors compete for governmental resources and power, what leads social movements to define their *outward political identity* in a given way? Building on Charles Tilly's (1978) seminal distinction between "challenger" and "members", I have asked: why do social movements pursue membership in the polity? And how does this happen? As we already know, this curiosity has taken the form of an inquiry into the transformation of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement into a polity member. In doing so I have tried to shed some light over the issue of how

social movements define, and change, their political preferences across time. The observation and analysis of gay and lesbian organisations in Spain during a rather long period of time (1970-1997) has sought to accomplish a twofold objective: firstly, to go further in the understanding of how social movements decide upon issues of political strategy; secondly, and more broadly, to set the foundations of a comprehensive theory of movement change.

Social movements theory, clearly a consolidated and fertile academic industry, has gone a long way in explaining how social movements are born. An increasing attention to the conditions – cultural, organisational, political- that promote the development of collective protest and social movements has arrived at an argument that relates existing windows of opportunities, viable structures of mobilisation and ongoing framing dynamics. This is very solid a bedrock for the explanation of movement emergence in very different geographical and temporal settings. Moreover, a good number of clearly important questions have also been successfully tackled. Unfortunately, the specific question of how social movements define (and change) their political preferences across time does not belong to this group. While the conceptual framework for the study of this question already existed, very little empirical effort has been done to specify the conditions that shape the evolution of a movement's outward political identity.

In disentangling the complex process of preference formation within gay and lesbian organisations, this thesis has arrived at a promising way of addressing both the question of how movements negotiate the preference-making process, and also the more general question of how movements change. A central finding of this thesis is that generational replacement is at the heart of movement's change. Breaking with the tradition of explaining social movements with purely static arguments, I argue that social movements change as the basic worldviews of their members and supporters change. Thus, I read the transformation of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement into a polity member along the lines of the replacement of the pioneering generation of homosexual militants by the newer generation of gay and lesbian rights

activists. Note that this explanation has a much larger appeal; virtually everything that social movements do is planted in the basic principles and ideas of those who are a movement's flesh and blood.

Social movements are made up by "political generations". These are groups of activists who join activism at similar times (Whittier, 1996), and share similar views of the world. Political generations are not strictly biological generations: while generational replacement always involves a degree of age regeneration, it is not at all rare to find people of different ages participating in the same political generations. Ideas, beliefs and expectations, what I define as the collective cognitive maps of political generations, are the ultimate "gluing" factor that brings political generations together. This is why little effort has been made to exhibit the demographical composition of the different generations; instead, the effort has been placed in disentangling the differences in socialisation processes. Indeed, generations do not appear out of the blue; rather, they are the offspring of a process of political socialisation, whereby formerly isolated individuals learn to consider themselves as members of a distinctive -and aggrieved- social group. In this process, which can be also seen as an instance of "collective identification", people become familiar with basic ways of diagnosing reality as well as with certain visions about purpose of collective action. As mentioned above, I call these basic ideas the collective cognitive maps of political generations. In my view, a longitudinal approach to social movements needs to pay respect to the powers of generational formation and replacement; there we will find the answers that we search regarding the change and transformation of social movements across time.

Generational replacement is so powerful a cause of change because the collective cognitive maps of political generations are the key source of interpretation. Linking the generational argument with the paramount role of interpretation and perception as a mediating factor between movements and their environment is a central contribution of this thesis. Mainstream social movement

theory revolves around a central tenet: movements' development, tactics, and impact are profoundly affected by a shifting constellation of factors exogenous to the movement itself (Meyer and Staggeborg, 1998: 1633). In short: context matters. Whether the so-called "structure of political opportunities" is opened or closed, whether or not movements manage to establish alliances, and also whether or not unexpected shocks occur do certainly affect movement outcomes. However, a great deal can be still said about *how* this influence unfolds. Is it not true that social movements can act "irrationally", failing to react upon environmental changes in the way that social movement theory would have predicted them to do? Indeed, movements often act in ways that violate the predictions based on an automatic influence of context on movement outcomes. Opportunities can be missed, while "wrong" courses of action can be followed. Examples of this abound in the preceding pages. For instance, neither the AIDS epidemic, nor the daunting effects of demobilisation, nor governmental unresponsiveness have triggered uniform responses among Spanish gay activists. What on one side was perceived as a clear case for drastic change, the same thing was underestimated as such in the opposite side. While Spanish homosexual militants rejected to engage in AIDS politics in fear of further stigmatisation, those activists that I define as gay and lesbian rights activists believed AIDS to be a clear reason to foster stronger community politics.

That movements' responses to environmental changes are not always uniform can be explained by accepting that interpretation matters. As Whittier (2002: 299) has recently affirmed, "activists' perception of political opportunities and threats is crucial to the strategies they pursue and, indeed, to the outcomes of the movement." Perception and interpretation govern the way the environment is addressed and understood; never an immutable, essentially objective reality, the environment turns out to be an object to be rationalised according to the basic intellectual principles of movement leaders and participants. This thesis, while providing evidence about the extent to which interpretation and

problem definition are key aspects of social movements and collective protest, contributes further to this debate by locating the sources of these interpretative dynamics: the tasks of perceiving, framing and defining problems are essentially embedded in the formative experiences of movement activists. Nothing of this sort had been done before, something that adds further interest to my work. The beliefs and expectations that nurture and shape the collective cognitive maps of political generations are a determinant *filter* through which shocks and influences are tamed and rationalised.

So, behind the façade of generational replacement much more than a mere regeneration of a movement's human capital base will be found. Drastic transformations in the way reality is approached and understood as well as profound changes in the ways activists define their very mission can well be the offspring of a process of generational replacement. In having experienced different process of collective identification and identity building, different generations arrive at markedly different visions about what is just, worthy and desirable. My analysis of the Spanish case clearly confirms this. I have shown that internal unrest is more likely to erupt when the movement space is populated by more than one generation. On the contrary, when the majority of movement organisations are embedded in the same political generation of activism, internal disputes weaken. This is particularly so as far as conflicts about the definition of ultimate mission of activism are concerned. However, belonging to the same generation will not prevent other kinds of conflict from appearing, such as those revolving around traditional ideology or gender.

Summing up, contrary to the underlying presumption in the literature, movement decisions are not exclusively dictated by certain fluctuations in their environment. The more social movements are approached from a dynamic, longitudinal perspective, the bigger the need for a reconsideration of the relationship between movement and their environment. Very often the environment should be approach as an *indirect* force that

causes change to occur in so far as it shapes the process of generational formation.

6.2. So, what comes next?

Pretending to pretend this doctoral thesis as a flawless product is something that I will not do. While some of its weaknesses are already clear to me, I have no doubts that further improvements will be suggested as further qualified readers navigate through these pages. For one thing, it is clearly obvious that my analysis of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement needs to pass the test of comparison. Being reasonable, that can be feasibly done in two ways: firstly, by comparing different types of movements in the same country; secondly, by comparing the same movement in different countries. In pursuing either of the two routes valuable improvements will be made in the field of the external validity of my conclusions; at present, I only hope to have produced a number of hypothesis that can inform future comparative work. Secondly, new data on the issue of generations and generational replacement needs to be obtained. Following the inductive way of thinking, my analysis did not begin by an explicit acknowledgement of the role of generations in the movement's lifecycle. Much to the contrary, this is something that was revealed as the analysis proceeded. Now that the role of generational replace is so clear, my future work should take this aspect into account, broadening the interviewee base as well as obtaining a more detailed biographical account of my respondents.

APPENDIX

1. List of Interviewees (in chronological order of interviews)

	Name of Interviewee	Date and Place of Interview	
1	Dolors Renau	Barcelona, 15 February 2001.	Socialist MP (1982-1986; 1989-1993). In 1985, she promoted the first-ever Parliamentary resolution that demanded the end of discrimination against homosexuals.
2	Eugeni Rodríguez	Barcelona, 16 February 2001.	Leader of the FAGC (1986 -).
3	Armand de Fluvià	Barcelona, 16 February 2001.	Founder of the Spanish gay and lesbian movement. First leader of the FAGC (1975-1980).
4	Jordi Petit	Barcelona, 17 February 2001.	Leader of the FAGC (1980-1986) Founder and first leader of the CGL (1986-1997)
5	Xabi Tort	Barcelona, 18 February 2001.	CGL member, in charge of internal organization.
6	Daniel Gabarró	Barcelona, 19 February, 2001.	CGL founder. Mr Gabarró was the mind behind the “pink vote” campaign.
7	Miguel Ángel Fernández	Valencia, 21 February, 2001.	Leader of the Valencia-based Col.Lectiu Lambda (1990 to 1996).
8	Juan Vicente Aliaga	Valencia, 22 February, 2001.	Participant in homosexual protest events in Valencia during the transition years. Mr Aliaga has written extensively on issues relating to gay and lesbian culture in Spain.
9	Pedro Moreno	Madrid, 15 May 2001.	Founder of the Movimiento Democrático de Homosexuales, a short-lived Madrid-based group (1977).
10	Luis Aguado	Madrid, 17 May 2001.	Founder of the Movimiento Democrático de Homosexuales, a short-lived Madrid-based group (1977).
11	Alejandro Mora	Madrid, 20 May 2001.	Founder of FLHOC (1970s). Member of the CGL during the 1980s (leader of its short-lived Madrid branch).

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	Name of Interviewee	Date and Place of Interview	
12	Empar Pineda	Madrid, 21 May 2001.	Founder and leader of the lesbian-feminist group Colectivo de Feministas Lesbianas de Madrid (1980s).
13	Jordi Pedret	Madrid, 25 May 2001.	Socialist MP (1986-1989; 1993-2004). Nominated by his parliamentary group to defend the position on the issue of same-sex partnership legislation.
14	Carles Campuzano	Madrid, 28 May 2001.	MP, Convergencia i Unió (1996-2004). Nominated by his parliamentary group to defend the position on the issue of same-sex partnership legislation.
15	Miguel Ángel Sánchez	Madrid, 28 May 2001.	Founder of COGAM. Leader of COGAM (1990-1994). Founder and Leader of the Fundación Triángulo (1996-2001).
16	Pedro Zerolo	Madrid, 30 May 2001.	Leader of COGAM (1994-1997).
17	Beatriz Gimeno	Madrid, 6 September 2002.	Long term feminist and COGAM activist. Currently president of the Spanish federation of gay and lesbian groups.
18	Boti. G. Rodrigo	Madrid, 6 September 2002.	Long-term feminist and COGAM activist. Currently leader of COGAM.
19	Matilde Fernandez	Madrid 9 September 2002.	Minister of Social Affairs, 1989-1993 (PSOE)
20	Cristina Alberdi	Madrid 9 September 2002.	Minister of Social Affairs, 1993-1996 (PSOE).
21	Liborio Hierro	Madrid, November 2004.	Deputy Minister of Justice, 1982-1990.

2. List of documents (I)

This is a comprehensive list of internal documents analysed in the course of the analysis. They are sorted in a chronological order. The title of the document is presented in italics and its English translation in brackets. After the year, whenever possible I state the author of the text, either individuals or organizations.

D1. (1977). LCR. “*La Cuestión Homosexual*” (The homosexual question). Study paper prepared by the “Camarada Alex” for the ordinary meetings of the *Liga Comunista Revolucionaria* (LCR, Communist Revolutionary League).

D2. (1977). LCR. “Raport de la Comisión Provincial de Trabajo Homosexual de la LCR a la Conferencia de la Organización Universitaria de Madrid de la LCR” (Feedback from the Provincial Working Group on Homosexuality of the LCR to the Assembly of the LCR’s University Group of Madrid).

D3. (1977). LCR. “*Por la liberación Homosexual*” (Up with homosexual liberation!). Position paper by the Homosexual Commission of the LCR.

D4. (1978). FLHOC. “*Origen de la opresión homosexual. Situación actual. Declaración de objetivos. Plataforma Reivindicativa.*” (Origins of homosexual oppression; Current situation; Statement of aims and objectives).

D5. (1977/1978).

* Between 1977 and 1978, the *Movimiento Homosexual Andaluz Revolucionario* (MHAR, Revolutionary Homosexual Movement of Andalusia) send a copy of a questionnaire to a number of political organizations in Seville. The questionnaire aimed to measure the extent to which the recipients were willing to endorse the claims of the Spanish gay liberation movement. Each of the written answers to the questionnaire are grouped – in subheadings – as D5.

D5(1). Answer from the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, Sevilla (Seville branch of the National Confederation of Workers).

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D5(2). Answer from the *Comité Local de Acción Comunista de Sevilla* (Seville branch of Communist Action).

D5(3). Answer from the *Comité local de Sevilla de la Organización Comunista de España*, OCE (Seville branch of the Spanish Communist Organization).

D5(4). Answer from the *Liga Comunista de Sevilla* (Seville branch of the Communist League).

D5(5). Answer from the *Unión de Juventudes Comunistas de España, Sevilla* (Seville branch of the Union of Spanish juvenile communists).

D5(6). Answer from the *Agrupación Provincial de Sevilla del Partido Socialista Popular* (Seville branch of the socialist popular party).

D5(7). Answer from the *Organización de Izquierda Comunista* (Seville branch of the Leftist Communist Organization).

D5(8). Answer from the *Comité Federal de la JOC de Sevilla* (Seville branch of the JOC).

D5(9). Answer from the *Comité Provincial de Sevilla de la Joven Guardia Roja de España* (Seville Branch of the juvenile red guard of Spain).

D5(10). Answer from the *Organización Autónoma para la Liberación de la Mujer* (autonomous organization for women's liberation).

D5(11). Answer from the *Asociación Democrática de la Mujer Andaluza* (Seville branch of the women's democratic association of Andalusia).

D5(12). Answer from the *Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores*, ORT Seville (Seville branch of the workers' revolutionary organization).

D6. (1977). "*Mesa Redonda. Homosexuales: Una lucha marginal*". (Workshop: Homosexuality, a fight on the fringes).

D7. (1978). LCR. "*Tareas de la LCR. Anexo-2; Comisión de Trabajo homosexual*." (LCR's work in progress. Anex 2. Homosexual working group).

D8. (1978?). Amigos de la UNESCO, Madrid. "Llamamiento a favor de la liberación homosexual". (Demanding homosexual liberation).

D9. (1978). COFHLEE. "*Plataforma reivindicativa de la COFLHEE, 1978*." (COFLHEE's statement of objectives).

- D10.** (1979). FLHOC. “Declaración de Objetivos. Plataforma Reivindicativa. Formas de organización”. (Statement of objectives and aims; organization).
- D11.** (May, 1978). Juventudes Comunistas de España. “*Ponencia sobre homosexualidad; Congreso Unión Juventudes Comunistas de España.*” (Paper on Homosexuality to be delivered at the General Meeting of the Spanish Communist Juvenile Organization).
- D11.** (1979). “*Carta no publicada, remitida a “El País”.*” (Unpublished opinion letter, sent to *El País*).
- D12.** (1979?). Agrupación Mercurio. “*Artículo de Prensa para la revista cuadernos de Sicología.*” (Unpublished essay; prepared for submission at the journal “*Cuadernos de Sociología*”).
- D13.** (1979). FLHOC. “*Comunicado del FLHOC por el que convoca la manifestación del orgullo de 1979.*” (Press release whereby the FLHOC announces the June Demonstration, 1979).
- D14.** (1979). FLHOC. “*Comunicado a la prensa por el que el FLHOC informa de los actos, reivindicaciones y apoyos en el día del orgullo.*” (Press release whereby the FLHOC informs about events, demands and supporters, June 1979).
- D15.** (1979?) Juan Muriel. “*Artículo: movimiento gay: legalización... para avanzar.*” (Essay: the gay movement; legalization.. to go ahead).
- D16.** (1980?). “*Listado de grupos homosexuales.*” (List of homosexual groups).
- D17.** (1980?). FAGC. “*Información sobre Conferencia anual del la IGA, en Barcelona.*” (Press release about the annual IGA’s general conference, Barcelona).
- D18.** (March, 1980). “*Entrevista con Juan María Bandrés.*” (Interview with Juan María Bandrés).

D19. (1981). “*Ponencias para las segundas jornadas de estudio y debate de la COFLHEE.*” (Papers for the COFLHEEs’ 2nd study and research workshop).

D19(1). FAGC. “*Ponencia general.*” (Introduction)

D19(2). FLHOC “*Homosexualidad y vida cotidiana*” (Homosexuality and everyday life).

D19(3). EHGAM. “*Movimiento gay, movimiento obrero y popular*” (The gay movement; a workers’ movement).

D19(4). Colectivo Gay de Santiago. “*Código Penal.*” (*Criminal law*).

D20. (1981?). EHGAM. “*El movimiento gay y el movimiento obrero y popular.*” (The gay movement and the workers’ movement).

D21. (1984). AGAMA. “*Estatutos de AGAMA.*” (AGAMA’s founding document).

D22. (March, 1986). PCE. “*Participación del PCE en el primer encuentro de partidos comunistas de Europa Occidental sobre liberación gai.*” (Report of the participation of the PCE in the first European meeting of Communist Parties on the question of gay liberation).

D22 (1). “*Armand de Fluvià. “Deu anys de Moviment Gai: 1976-1986.”* (Ten years of the gay movement: 1976-1986).

D22 (2). Eugeni Rodríguez and Adolfo Costa. “*Balanc dels 10 anys de Moviment Gai a Catalunya-Situació Actual.*” (Assesment of ten years of gay liberation: the current situation).

D22 (3). Eugeni Rodríguez and Adolfo Costa. “*Gai y Objektor.*” (Gays and conscious objection).

D22 (4). Joseph Ignasi Berbís. “*Organització.*” (Organization).

D22 (5). Xoxe Fernández. “*Balanc de les anteriors conferències. Cap a on anem?*” (Continuity and change : observations of previous general conferences).

D22 (6). Jordi Petit. SIDA”. (AIDS).

D23. (April, 1986). “*Ponencias para el IV Congreso del FAGC.*” (Papers for the FAGC’s 4th General Meeting).

D24. (May, 1986). COFHLEE. “*Comunicado de la 35 reunión de la COFLHEE.*” (Report of the 35th meeting of COFHLEE).

- D25.** (May, 1986). Alejo Sarbach. “¿Cómo se podría superar la distancia que nos separa del ambiente gay?” (How could we bridge the gap with the scene?).
- D26.** (1987). COGAM. “Documento ideológico de Cercedilla. Ideología del colectivo gay de Madrid.” (Ideology of the gay group of Madrid).
- D27.** (March, 1987). COGAM. “Carta de COGAM a Felix Pons, Presidente del Congreso de los Diputados”. (Letter to Felix Pons, President of the Low Chamber of Parliament).
- D28.** (1988). COFHLEE. “Proyecto de ley anti-discriminatoria.” (Draft of an anti-discrimination bill).
- D29.** (October, 1988). “La Pastelera”, for COGAM. “Ponencia sobre Nuevas perspectivas del movimientos.” (Paper on the future perspectives of the gay movement).
- D30.** (October, 1988). FAGC. “Nuevas perspectivas del movimiento gai”. (New perspectives of the gay movement).
- D31.** (October, 1988). Emilio Gómez Zeto. (On the perspectives of the gay movement).
- D32.** (January, 1990). COGAM. “Acta de la asamblea del colectivo gai de Madrid, COGAM, celebrada el 26 de enero de 1990.” (Report on the meeting of the executive committee of COGAM).
- D33.** (October, 1990). Miguel Ángel Sánchez. “II Congreso de COGAM: Propuesta Organizativa”. (COGAM’s 2nd General Meeting: On organization).
- D34.** (October, 1990). Pedro A. Perez. “II Congreso de COGAM: Propuesta de ponencia sobre definición ideológica de COGAM”. (COGAM’s 2nd General Meeting: Ideological definition).
- D35.** (April, 1991). “Comunicado por el que varios miembros del COGAM deciden darse de baja del colectivo.” (Declaration whereby several members of COGAM inform about their cancellation of membership).

D36. (1991). CGL. “*Breu Balanç, Grups Coordinadora Gai-Lesbiana, 1990-1991.*” (Summary report, CGL, 1990-1991).

D37. (1993). COGAM. “Proyecto de Ley de para la Regulación de las Parejas de Hecho.” (Draft of a same-sex partnership bill).

D38. (1993). CGL. “Proyecto de Ley de Parejas” (Draft of a same-sex partnership bill).

D39. (November, 1994). COGAM. “*Acta N° 29 de Junta Directiva.*” (Report on the 29th meeting of the executive committee, COGAM).

3. List of Documents (II)

This is a list of magazines and issues reviewed. In each publication I include information about the organization responsible for its publication and what kind of circulation it enjoyed.

La Ladilla Loca. FLHOC’s monthly magazine. Only internal circulation. Madrid.

#1. 1979(¿)

Nuestra Voz FLHOC’s monthly magazine (previously “La Ladilla Loca”). Only internal circulation. Madrid.

#2. Summer 1980.

La Pluma. CCAG’s monthly bulletin. Quality printing. Limited commercial distribution. Barcelona.

#0, April 1978; #2 July-August 1978;

#3 October 1978; #4 April-May 1979;

#5, May-June 1979.

Gay Hotsa. EHGAM’s monthly magazine. Limited commercial distribution. Bilbao

#43, Summer 1989.

Debat gai FAGC's periodical bulleting. Limited commercial distribution. Quality printing. Barcelona.

#1 September 1978; extraordinary issue, 1978; #2, November 1978; #3 Abril 1979,
#4 winter 1979/80; #0 (new era), 1990.

Barcelona Gai. CGL's bimonthly publication. Low-quality printing. Available at gay bars. Barcelona. (later to be "Barcelona Rosa").

#1 (January 1988); #2 (February 1988); #5 (March 1988); #6 (June 1988); #7 (July-August 1988); #8 (September 1988); #10 (November 1988); #16 (Sept-Dic 1989); #17 (Jan-April 1990); # 18 (Mayo-September1990); # 23 (June-July 1991); # 27 (February-March) 1993; # 28 (April-May) 1993; # 29 (June-July) 1993.

Iniciativas Gays. CGL's bimonthly publication. Low-quality printing. Available at gay bars. Barcelona.

1 (jun-july 1989); # 2 (sept-oct 1989); # 3 (nov-feb 89/90); # 4 (march-june 90); # 6 (dec-jan 90/91); # 9 (june-july 1991); # 10 (august-sept 1991); # 11(nov-dec 1991); # 26 (oct-nov 1992).

Entiendes? COGAM's periodical magazine. High quality printing. Commercial distribution. Madrid.

#1 nov 87; #2 dec 87, #3 feb 88; 4 march 88; #5 may 88; #6 june 88; #7 nov 88; #8 mach 89; #9 june-agugust 89; #10 sept-nov89; #11 dec-Jan 90; #12 march-mayo90; #29 may-jun 94; #30 jul-ago, 1994; #31 sept-oct, 1994; #32 Nov-Dic, 1994; #33 ene-feb, 1995; #34 mar-abril, 1995; #35 may-junio, 1995; #36 Julio-agosto, 1995; #37 sept-oct 95; #38 nov-dic, 95; #39 ene-feb, 1996; #40 mar-abrio, 1996; #41 mayo-junio, 1996; #42 julio-agosto, 1996; #43 sept-oct 1996; #44 nov-dic, 1996; #45 enero-febrero, 1997; #46 marzo-abril, 1997; #48 julio-agosto, 1997; #50 nov-dic, 1997.

De un Plumazo. LRS's periodical magazine. Low quality printing. Available at gay bars. Madrid

April 1990; May 1994; June 1990.

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Madrid gay. AGAMA's monthly magazine. Low Quality Printing. Only for internal consume. Madrid.

#12 and 13, July/August 1984.

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