

CHICANO NATIONALISM: THE BROWN BERETS
AND LEGAL SOCIAL CONTROL

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Chicano Movement was flourishing throughout the western states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Texas in the late 1960's. The movement was made up of a myriad of non-student and student activist groups in communities, colleges and universities. The main goal of the Chicano Movement was the economical, political and educational advancement of the Mexican community. Despite the growth and development of the movement, by the late 1970's, the Chicano movement had declined due in part to the social control efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement officials. This study examines the decline of a faction of the Chicano Movement known as the *Brown Berets* by focusing on the role of state social control.

There were various factions within the Chicano movement that had specific agendas. For example, there were groups protesting against the terrible working conditions of farm workers such as the *United Farm Workers*, or the paltry representation of Mexican-Americans in city, state, and federal government positions known as *La Raza Unida Party*. Most of the factions within the Chicano Movement worked together to try and change social policy while working hard to establish upward mobility for all Mexican-Americans.

In 1968, the *Brown Berets* emerged as a social movement in the East side of Los Angeles, California (Chavez 2002; Montes Interview with Author 2006). Thus, the

Brown Berets played an important role within the overall growth of the Chicano Movement. Most importantly, however, by becoming a type of civilian police force formed to battle police brutality and harassment. The group was made of young adults who were fighting for positive social change among the Mexican community. Initially, the group was involved in local elections for mayoral and school board candidates (Montes Interview with Author 2006).

In time, the Brown Berets evolved into a radical group voicing their concerns about the social injustices occurring in their communities. The organization coordinated and participated in protests regarding several community concerns including police harassment and brutality, unemployment, poverty, and the Vietnam War (Chavez 2002; Lopez 2003). The organization adopted the radicalized term *Chicano* as a new racial identity for Mexican-Americans (Chavez 2002). Mexican-Americans who participated in the movement did not want to have any connection to American ideology, or the word *American* because it meant assimilating to their oppressor. Most Mexicans felt that the ideology of the “American Dream” was nothing more than a lie, persuading minorities to believe that they could achieve anything in life through education and determination (Chavez Interview with Author 2006; Rosales 1996).

Essentially, they believed that Whites were the only ones who had open access to this dream, while their own avenues were blocked. Participants of the movement delved into their historical roots and created a Chicano cultural nationalism in order to self-identify and organize together in fighting against unjust and discriminatory policies in the educational, political and legal system (Munoz 1989). During the Chicano Movement era of the 1960’s, the term *Chicano* characterized a separate Mexican nationalist race. The

term Chicano stands for, “both Hispanic and Indian” (Burciaga: 49). According to Burciaga (1993: 49),

Chicano is more than just a political label for it has a link to our indigenous past. Its etymology dates to the conquest of the Valle de Mexico. Mexica was pronounced ‘Meshica.’ The Spaniards had not a letter for the ‘sh’ or ‘j’ so they put an ‘x’ in its place. Meshico became Mexico... The first Mestizos were born of Spanish soldiers and indigenous maidens. This scorned underclass of ‘half-breeds’ were called meschicanos, which evolved to schicanos Chicanos is nothing more than an abbreviated form for Mexicanos.

During the emergence of the Chicano Movement, the term *Chicano* engendered a politicized meaning in which the individual was aware of the injustices of the Mexican people and fought for self-determination. Self-determination for Chicanos meant that they wanted the right to make their own decisions and to participate in the decisions that would affect their daily lives. Carlos Munoz, Jr. the former president of the United Mexican-American Student organization (UMAS) at California State College, worked closely with the Brown Berets during the late 1960’s and described the meaning of the term *Chicano*:

Many of us had begun to research who we were and where we came from. We had already begun the process of rejection of the assimilationist tendencies in our communities and in ourselves. We began to address the fact that we were not White and not “Americans” but that we were people who were descendants of the Mexicans and way back before then the indigenous people that first civilized the Americas in particular in Mexico. What we had in mind was that if you wanted to be Chicano, you had to be politically active. Not like now days, everybody calls themselves Chicano, not everybody, but those who do, just kind of say, ‘Oh, I’m proud to be Mexican; I’m proud to be of indigenous roots.’ But, it went beyond that to us. To us, it was a political action thing; it was not just a question of culture per se (Interview with Author 2006).

Chicanos did not consider themselves to be *American* because they felt that they were not treated as Americans. Americans had equal and civil rights and were able to

maintain economic, political and educational mobility (Canul 2005). In the Chicanos' view, they believed that there was a disparity in the treatment of various groups of people in the United States and their people had been disenfranchised (Munoz 1989). Chicanos felt they were treated like second class citizens instead of first class Americans. The term *Chicano* was a political identity for the group during that time frame used to foster solidarity and cohesiveness (Munoz Interview with Author 2006).

In regard to the educational system, Mexican-Americans were not able to advance in the school setting and were “funneled” by school officials to join the military (Oropeza 2005: 114). Without proper and adequate education, Mexican-Americans would not be able to obtain a college degree, ruining their chances for upward mobility in the economic sector and severing their chances at a position in government. At the time, the educational system in East Los Angeles, including other schools in predominantly African-American neighborhoods, provided poor facilities, a lack of books, racist administrators and teachers, and a lack of encouragement and support from counselors and teachers regarding their mental capacity and potential for success (Oropeza 2005; Chavez 2002).

Many Mexican-Americans joined the military due to their poverty stricken neighborhoods, and still others joined to escape the police abuse and harassment. Traditionally, Mexican-Americans had developed a commendable military record since World War II (WWII). At the time of WWII, Mexican-Americans maintained that in order to claim a “White” status and gain civil rights, they had to fight in the war. Mexican-Americans believed that they had to prove themselves as “White” in order to receive the same treatment and rights as their Anglo counterparts (Oropeza 2005).

However, in the Vietnam era, young Mexican-Americans did not adhere to these same traditions and beliefs. Research regarding Mexican-American casualties throughout the Vietnam War by Guzman (1960) affirmed that Mexican-Americans from California were being killed in higher proportions in comparison to the overall Mexican-American population for the state of California. The research examined two time periods: First, from January 1961 to February 1967, and second, from December 1967 to March 1969. The research found that during the first period, 821 servicemen were killed; 15% of those killed had Spanish surnames. During the second period, 3,543 servicemen were killed; Mexican-Americans composed 14.8% of the servicemen killed.

These percentages were disproportionately high when taking into account the total Mexican-American population for the state of California was only 10.0% at the time (quoted in Moquin 1971: 372). Many Mexican-Americans felt that their war and struggle to survive was here at home in the United States battling racism and discrimination in all realms of life. Many of them did not agree with the Vietnam War and felt a connection to the Vietnamese who were being subjected to a vast number of horrendous acts (Montes Interview with Author 2006). Growing frustration among Mexican-Americans led to one of America's largest anti-war marches, which was held in East Los Angeles in 1970. The increasing number of Mexican-American casualties in the Vietnam War outraged participants in the anti-war movement.

The American government at this time was in a vulnerable state due to the foreign policy enacted upon Southeast Asia. Mexican protestors, including various other organizations, took to the streets to voice their discontent. As McAdam (1982: 177) states in his theory of political process, "...political instability destroys any semblance of

a political status quo, thus encouraging collective action by all groups sufficiently organized to contest the structuring of a new political order.” I draw from the political process model to examine one faction of the Chicano movement known as the Brown Berets. In this project, I will address the following research questions: 1) To what extent was legal social control used against the Brown Berets? 2) What type of strategies and tactics were used by law enforcement officials? 3) How did the strategies and tactics used by law enforcement officials impact the activities and longevity of the Brown Berets?

In chapter two, I review the relevant literature on social movements, focusing specifically on social control. Next, in chapter three, I discuss the research methodology used for the project. In chapter four I present my analysis, which includes an overview of the movement and a discussion of the government suppression of the Brown Berets. Finally, in chapter five, I conclude with a summary of the findings, limitations of the study, and a discussion of the significance of my research on the Brown Berets.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Drawing from political opportunity theory, I focus on legal social control by authorities at the local, state, and federal level and its repressive effects on the Brown Berets. There has been growing interest in legal social control in recent years (Earl 2003; Carley 1997; Della Porta 1996). In the theoretical framework of this research, I will present the legal social control strategies and techniques by category. Repression needs to be understood as a continuum. For instance, Stockdill (1996: 146) defined repression as, “any actions taken by authorities to impede mobilization, harass and intimidate activists, divide organizations, and physically assault, arrest, imprisonment, and/or kill movement participants.” Social movements are more likely to be repressed when their demands are radical and the scale of their collective action is powerful (Tilly 1978).

State repression is most often used if the movement’s power is perceived to be *menacing*. In order for any radical movement to succeed, it must be more powerful than the polity. Kriesi (1995) argued that state repression will only occur if the ideology and scale of action differed dramatically from those who uphold government power. In this case, any social movement geared towards eradicating social injustice, racism, poverty, and educational neglect against the polity that upholds this oppression could be viewed as a *threat* by the state and therefore neutralized or destroyed.

I will discuss three main categories of legal social control that were garnered from the social movement literature. The first category examines how federal and state law enforcement officials used informants and agent provocateurs in order to collect information on a social movement organization or member. Agent provocateurs are sometimes used to incite violence within a social movement or against law enforcement officials. The second category examines the use of surveillance and dossiers which were used by law enforcement officials to keep large files on specific members of an organization or an entire group. These tactics were used to destroy an individual member's reputation or the reputation of an entire movement. The third category explores the various violent strategies and tactics utilized to neutralize and further disintegrate social movement organizations.

Informants and Agent Provocateurs

Social movements that are repressed by legal officials face various dilemmas. Social control can make the members of the organization more cohesive or it can destroy the movement. The lifespan of the movement depends on how much power the organization can attain (White 1989; Opp and Roehl 1990; McCarthy 1983). A covert tactic used by authorities is to divert the attention of the organization from their intended goals by harassing them in order to dissolve the movement (Goertzel 1974). An example of this is when police officials continually harass members of a movement by taking them to jail and/or questioning them without legal justification. These tactics are implemented in order for authorities to gather information about a group they perceive to be subversive.

Law enforcement officials commonly used informants, or “agent provocateurs” to access viable information regarding a social movement organization during the late 1960’s (Marx 1974). Social movement analyst Gary Marx (1974) made an important analytical distinction between informant and agent provocateur. An informant is a civilian or legal agent planted in a social movement in order to gather information about the movement’s objectives or agendas. The information is then given to his/her superiors to determine if the organization is subversive. The agent provocateur’s duty has much more depth because his/her main priorities are to cause internal dissension, paranoia, influence decision-making, and the disintegration of the group (Marx 1974).

In his discussion of the agent provocateur, Marx (1974: 405) explains, “the agent may go along with the illegal actions of the group, he may actually provoke such actions, or he may set up a situation in which the group appears to have taken or to be about to take illegal actions. This may be done to gain evidence for use in a trial...” The agents can be involved in instigating violent actions or illegal actions within a movement as well. In doing so, the undercover agent’s credibility is enhanced in court or with his superiors. It can also mean an elevated status for the agent provocateur within the ranks of the department, which could entail increased salary, autonomy, and peer recognition (Marx 1988). People often think of a police officer as wearing a uniform and responding to a crime when summoned. However, an undercover agent alters these two characteristics by involving deception, anonymity, and/or provocation upon its designated target (Deflem 1992).

Law enforcement officials, whether at the federal, state, or local levels, have major advantages in using covert repression. First of all, covert repression gives the

government the complete capability to be anonymous in order to influence a destructive effect on dissidents of a social movement who want to change social policy. In many cases, their anonymity is not concealed, which has led to growing interest in the academic arena. Moreover, Gotham (1994: 204) has argued that there are victims who will never realize that they were subjected to “governmental coercion since covert techniques are difficult to trace and confirm.” Secondly, these agents of social control continually deny victims any legal opportunity to challenge the corrupt actions taken against them (Gotham 1994). These two advantages are used allegedly for the sake of public protection.

In their research among the wrongfully convicted Westervelt and Humphrey (2001) discussed the use of informants by law enforcement officials. The researchers affirmed that police officials and prosecutors continue to use informants in arresting, convicting and sentencing despite the mounting evidence questioning their reliability. Law enforcement authorities are pressured by their superiors and, in some cases, the community to solve a case quickly. In doing so, they depend on the unreliable assistance of the informants, who usually have lengthy criminal backgrounds. In most instances, police departments offer payments, rewards or lenient sentencing to informants if they are able to provide any kind of information about a person or group (Westervelt and Humphrey 2001).

There preferential incentives may lead informants to exaggerate a story in order to receive the reward promised to them by the authorities. The FBI encouraged local law enforcement authorities to use informants to infiltrate various social movement organizations during the 1960's and 1970's in order to disrupt or destroy various groups,

“...by whatever way and by whatever means necessary to achieve these results” (Westervelt and Humphrey 2001: 66). In many cases, instead of the informants supplying the authorities with any real damaging information about the targeted group and/or members, they incited intentional violence against the police in order to get the group in legal trouble (see Marx 1979).

In most circumstances, police departments are able to offer informants large amounts of money in order for them to infiltrate a group such as a social movement and garner information about the members and the group objectives. However, Westervelt and Humphrey (2001) concluded that police officials use intense pressure toward informants in order for them to confess about anything related to their target group and/or individual. Typically, informants tend to lie due to the increased pressure from police officials to solve a case. Informants lie or fabricate confessions for leniency or out of complete desperation for reward money offered by police departments.

Legal officials usually select individuals that match the movement’s characteristics, such as, race, age, and gender. Marx (1974) noted that undercover agents are most likely to have the same characteristics as the infiltrated group in order to appear youthful and demonstrate a connection with the movement as a racial minority. This was a typical strategy for authorities in masking their appearance and gaining easier access into the movement without blowing their cover. Informants and agent provocateurs were able to gain access into particular groups because there were no criteria that group leaders used when searching for new or potential recruits. In addition, Marx (1974: 424) notes, “members were generally not carefully screened, and requirements for activism were

minimal. This was all the more true in the case of events- such as demonstrations, meetings and marches – in which anyone could participate.”

Agent provocateurs were also known to deliberately implant rumors about group members in order to cause tension, division, or a break-up among the organization (Klein 1992). This strategy was used with the Black Panther Party (BPP) during the 1960's (Donner 1981; O'Reilly 1989). Not only did these vicious rumors cause divisions between the BPP, but it also caused the Black community to have doubts about the group's agenda. These rumors also made the rest of society suspicious of the organization. For example, the BPP was involved in a free breakfast program for impoverished children, and FBI officials intentionally spread rumors to the community that members of the BPP who were in charge of the food had venereal diseases (O'Reilly 1989). The general public can also be used by government or law enforcement officials to spread rumors. For example, they create personal networks through conversations and spread inaccurate rumors about social movement organizations, causing further disruptions within the movement (Schmid 1983).

In some cases, undercover agents serve as members of a movement from its inception. Arrests and prosecution depends on the gathering of information by informants and the appropriate opportunity to have charges brought forth by the prosecution. According to Marx (1974: 425), the agents only surfaced when they had garnered enough information against the movement and had ample evidence to testify against them in court. Another strategy used by law enforcement officials was to hold movement members legally accountable and to allow the undercover agents to escape with no charges, arrest, or indictments.

Jeffries (2002) explains that informants are also used to instigate trouble in a movement in order to justify police action against its members. This causes further disruption to the group. Moreover, informants or agent provocateurs often act in a wild, unruly, and reckless manner, thus ensuring police action against the group (Jeffries 2002). Infiltrators are a valuable resource to law enforcement because they are able to engage in illegal behavior, and are not held accountable to the law. According to Escobar (1993), informants engage in illegal behavior in order to please their superiors, provoke crimes that would not have been committed otherwise, or to gather evidence for use in a court of law.

An agent provocateur can also cause damage to a movement by instilling feelings of paranoia and helplessness. In examining the Black Panther Party, Jeffries (2002: 82) noted that infiltration works for two reasons. First, the members of the organization are the life of the group. As members are being jailed, new recruits are used to replenish the gradual decline of the membership. Second, potential recruits are not very enthusiastic about becoming involved in an organization that is continually being brutally harassed and monitored by police.

Potential recruits realize that their lives may be at risk once they become a part of a targeted group. Law enforcement officials ensure the demise of many groups by harassing its membership. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was constantly terrorizing Black Panther members. The Bureau would purposely cause conflict between Panthers and other affiliated groups, as well as send vicious letters to the wives of members stating that their husbands were having adulterous affairs (O'Reilly 1989).

Employing these harassing tactics on potential recruits and former members causes them to lose sight of their core issues as they have to respond to legal harassment (Marx 1974). Inevitably, their attention and needs are focused on their own defense rather than the organization's objectives. Marx (1974: 434) also stated there were "latent" reasons for the use of agent provocateurs, such as, "...to harass, control, and combat those who, while not technically violating any laws, hold political views and have life-styles that are at odds with the dominant society."

Surveillance, Dossiers, Mail Openings, and Surreptitious Entries

Law enforcement officials utilize different methods for garnering information on social movement organizations. For example, Donner (1980: 128) emphasized that the FBI uses a number of techniques to collect information, such as, "physical surveillance, pretext contacts, electronic surveillance, surreptitious entry and mail covers." The mail cover method is used by agents to gain access and open mail from a perceived subversive activist in order to garner any personal information about an individual.

In 1941, during WWII the wartime hysteria increased and the FBI was able to convict eighteen leaders of the Socialist Worker's Party (SWP) for "conspiracy" and "advocating the overthrow of the government," leading to jail time for the members (Blackstock 1975: vii). At the time, the FBI was able to accomplish this by utilizing the Smith Act, which is a criminal statute in which an individual or group can be punished for advocating the violent overthrow of the government (Donner 1980). The Smith Act was later declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, but only after the eighteen members had already gone to jail.

In the 1960's, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) had their offices illegally entered and burglarized. No money was stolen, although membership lists and other documents relating to the organization's agenda disappeared (Churchill and Vander Wall 1990). As Blackstock (1975: ix) noted, "specially trained teams of agents routinely burglarized the offices of SWP at least 94 times from 1960 to 1966 – an average of once every three weeks for six and a half years." SWP later unsuccessfully sued the Federal Bureau of Investigation for those routine burglaries. Nevertheless, years later the House Select Committee on Intelligence noted that the SWP was under the watchful eye of federal authorities for over 30 years. Despite these claims, the federal authorities were never able to find enough evidence to secure one single federal indictment against the movement or its members (Blackstock 1975).

Law enforcement officials are also known to utilize *pretext contacts*. This strategy entails an undercover official portraying someone else in the community, such as a doctor, lawyer, or a real estate agent in order to establish a report on the person being watched (Donner 1980). For example, the state utilized this tactic against the Students for Democratic Society (SDS) in the late 1960's. According to Churchill and Vander Wall (1990: 166) "more than 800 wiretaps and some 700 bugs, facilitated by at least 150 surreptitious entries" were conducted on the SDS headquarters by the FBI.

Marx (1979: 363) also contended that legal officials would use information-gathering techniques in order to obtain information, such as, "wiretaps and other forms of auditory electronic surveillance, often requiring breaking and entering...physical surveillance and grand jury investigations." Other tactics included the formulation of a

list of members in the movement considered to be subversive and the warrantless searches and seizures of their offices and homes (Carley 1997).

Klein (1992: 91) described law enforcement surveillance as a “symptomatic social force” in reinforcing inequality against its targeted segment of society. In addition, Klein (1992: 91) suggested that law enforcement agencies are co-opted due to the information-seeking need of the state over society using a “documentary surveillance” method. Documentary surveillance is the “purposeful surveillance for political intentions” (Klein 1992: 92). There are also some criminologists who maintain that federal agencies train and promote this violating surveillance method among local law enforcement agencies (Habermas 1973; Quinney 1979; Sykes 1978).

During the heightened period of the civil rights movement, both the home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the head office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, of which he was the founder and president, were wiretapped. (Garrow 1981: 105). The FBI placed Dr. King under surveillance based on informant reports alleging that Dr. King associated with members of the Communist Party. By collecting information on Dr. King, the FBI hoped to expose alleged meetings with Communist members in order to destroy Dr. King’s reputation (Garrow 1981). Malcolm X, another prominent civil rights leader, was also targeted by the FBI to reveal any involvement with Communists. At the time, groups who were seen as being subversive and influenced by Communist ideology were deemed “unacceptable” to segments of mainstream society. Information “suggesting” Communist ties, regardless of accuracy, was used to damage the Civil Rights Movement (O’Reilly 1994).

Moreover, this type of surveillance can lead to a state controlled by a police force that is unreliable in balancing public order (Donner 1981). For instance, police officials had installed a video camera in a building across the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party headquarters in order to keep a dossier of information on the group's activities (Donner 1990). These types of tactics were used to probe for Communist ideologies or any subversive agendas held by the movement. Once the movement was considered to be out of the mainstream according to the legal officials' criteria, the group was subject to police harassment by any means necessary.

After the Cold War, American dissent towards Communism increased. This led to increased concern and even paranoia that Communist ideologies were being infiltrated into the U.S. population. During the 1960's, federal and local law enforcement agencies began using more surveillance techniques against social movements thought to be subversive. The first major group in the United States that the FBI dismantled was the Communist Party, USA (CP or CP USA). Churchill and Vander Wall (1990) noted that beginning in the 1940's, the FBI had already begun using its surveillance techniques on the CP.

Over time, the FBI began creating an index of names in case of a state of emergency of Communists whose ideologies were not considered to be in the mainstream of America (Churchill and Vander Wall 1990). The FBI used agent provocateurs and rumors in order to cause "factional infighting" (Churchill and Vander Wall 1990: 41). Initially, in the late 1930's, the Communist Party had a strong membership of 40,000 participants. However, by the late 1950's, its membership drastically fell to 12,000 (Churchill and Vander Wall: 36). The federal agency was successful in neutralizing

Communist organizations by diminishing its recruitment and retention efforts. The Smith Act was used as a legal harassment tool against the Communist Party. O'Reilly (1989: 264-265) described the Smith Act as a "World War II-era law that made it a crime to conspire, to teach, or advocate the violent overthrow of the government."

In the midst of the Vietnam War, federal and local law enforcement officials viewed the civil rights, Black Nationalist and anti-war movements as disturbing the domestic tranquility (Klein 1992). For example, in 1967, J. Edgar Hoover developed a "two track" surveillance system (O'Reilly 1989: 261). The first system consisted of the FBI compiling materials and documents on Black Panther Party (BPP) members. In the second system, the agency would use the assistance of the Black community in order to create a type of surveillance community in which Black citizens would inform on BPP activities. The agency also played a key role in publicizing negative as well as slanderous information about the organization. O'Reilly (1989) noted that by the time Nixon became President of the United States, there had been over 30,000 files compiled on the Black Panther Party.

Black citizens in the community informed on the BPP for various reasons. Most importantly, the FBI offered cash incentives or rewards for community informants, who came from impoverished neighborhoods. At one point, the FBI came into possession of a coloring book that the BPP was considering adopting, but later rejected (Shultz and Schultz 2001). The FBI manipulated its text and added various captions that read, "Kill Your Local Hog" (Schultz and Schultz 2001: 220). The FBI did this in order to create animosity between the community and the BPP, causing problems among the few networks that financially supported the BPP.

In examining the anti-war movement, the FBI utilized surveillance techniques because they believed it was inculcated with Communist ideologies. Additionally, the FBI perceived that there was a large number of Communist Party members involved in the organization. In 1968, J. Edgar Hoover presented claims before the House Appropriations Subcommittee, that “the Communist Party was attempting to unite the civil rights and anti-war movements to create one massive movement which they hope will ultimately change our government’s policies” (Gotham 1994: 213). Jenkins and Eckert (1986) supported social control by the FBI in assessing the Black Movement of the 1960’s, in which they described political repression, infiltration, and the involvement of counter-intelligence programs (COINTELPRO) used to destroy the movement.

The Puerto Rican Nationalist Movement in the United States was also targeted under the FBI’s COINTELPRO program. In the 1960’s, J. Edgar Hoover sent a memo to the field Office in San Juan ordering agents to neutralize and dismantle the pro-independence movements comprised of university students and community members (Poitevin 2000). Poitevin (2000) maintained that Puerto Rico was the initial training ground for the FBI involving other countries in its lucrative agenda to neutralize and destroy organizations of dissent. The FBI managed to collect hundreds of names and other personal information from individuals involved in the movement (Poitevin 2000).

Once all the personal information was gathered, the FBI began using various tactics to divide and finally annihilate the Puerto Rican Nationalist Pro-Independence Movement. The FBI used vicious rumors of infidelity and engaged in legal harassment of members while preventing any solidarity amongst the movement leading to its gradual decline (Poitevin 2000). In the end, the FBI managed to successfully destroy the Puerto

Rican Nationalist Pro-Independence Movement by inhibiting the organization's recruitment efforts.

Violent Strategies and Tactics

Social movements considered radical by the state or government present a direct challenge to the system. For example, in the early 1930's, a Nationalist Pro-Independence Movement known as the *Independentistas* was formed in Puerto Rico to fight against United States imperialism of their country. Puerto Rico was seized and invaded in 1898 by the United States military and has since been subjected to economic exploitation (Dello Buono 1991). During the early 1930's, Pedro Albizu Campos became President of the Nationalist Pro-Independence Movement and took a militant stance against their perceived oppressor, the United States, demanding independence, liberty and freedom for their country and people.

During a speech in 1935 by Nationalists at the University of Puerto Rico, three Nationalists were killed by police when confrontations erupted between members and police officials (Dello Buono 1991). Puerto Rican police officials were working hand in hand with United States authorities in order to destroy the Nationalist Movement. Most people in the community were outraged at the intensity of violence used by police officials. However, police officials were instructed by the Roosevelt administration to eliminate the *Independentistas*. In time, the *Independista's* membership had dwindled and the group eventually lost its fervor in Puerto Rico. Police officials were able to achieve the goal of limiting the lifespan of the movement.

Marx (1979: 366) argues that another violent strategy was employed by "destroying the leaders" of a movement or organization. In destroying the leadership,

officials are able to severely damage the movement or completely annihilate it. In 1969, the FBI had been keeping an eye on the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party. Chicago police raided the house of BPP leader Fred Hampton and killed him while he was lying in bed (Blackstock 1975: 12). The “Chief of Panther Security and Hampton’s personal body guard, William O’Neal, was an FBI infiltrator” who had before the raid, given his superiors a floor plan of Hampton’s apartment and indicated the exact location of his bedroom (Blackstock 1975: 12). Hampton was a prominent leader for the Black Panther chapter, but, his influence was cut short by local and federal authorities.

Officials may also cause the demise of a movement by intentionally provoking a battle or riot with movement members in order to arrest them. Historically, police officials have had a negative reputation for handling racial protest by engaging as rioters themselves and deliberately imposing their racist enforcement against the protestors (Marx 1970). Protestors become angry at police for the aggressive manner in which they handled the protest. In this case, the riot between both can last for a number of days before one of the parties decides to end it (Bergesen 2003).

In examining the early twentieth-century history of racial protests and riots, Marx (1970: 22) identified three recurring themes: “(a) the police were sympathetic to (white) rioters and sometimes joined the riot themselves, (b) police often failed actively to enforce the law, and (c) when police did try to maintain law and order this often was not done in a neutral and impartial manner.” Furthermore, Marx (1979), McAdam (1982), Bromley and Shupe (1983) suggested that social movement organizations that were radical or extreme in comparison to more moderate groups had the potential of causing their own destruction, along with the repressive assistance of legal officials.

Piven and Cloward (1977) affirmed that minorities and indigent people are increasingly subject to repressive tactics by authorities and are not as likely to be successful in retaliating against those agents of social control. Gamson (1990) also discussed how repressive social control could infringe on a movement when it is perceived as highly threatening to officials. Another problem perceived by social movement organizations is having police officials present or utilize confrontational tactics. This leads to further complications in a protest by movement members.

Adamek and Lewis (1975) examined the Kent State shooting of four activist members by utilizing self-report surveys of students before and after the incident on May 4, 1970. In this particular study, the researchers formulated two hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated, "...radicalization...suggests that when severe force is used against demonstrators, they will become radicalized in their attitudes and behavior...they will increasingly come to question the legitimacy of existing governmental institutions and processes...they will be more accepting of the use of violence as a political technique to achieve change" (Adamek and Lewis 1975: 664). The second hypothesis asserted that activists would become more passive after various strategies and tactics were used by legal authorities. In concluding their research, Adamek and Lewis (1975) affirmed that the first hypothesis appeared to be consistent with their finding, indicating that activists involved in different organizations are more likely to become radicalized and possibly violent in nature when provoked by violent legal social control agents. The findings of the researchers indicate a mindset of "fighting fire with fire." If legal officials use unnecessary violent social control, most likely, the consequential result will be violence from the protestors.

In August of 1970, The National Chicano Moratorium, a faction of the Chicano Movement, was holding a non-violent march of over 20,000 participants in order to rally against the Vietnam War. However, the rally was violently ended by the Los Angeles Police Department as officials answered a disturbance call in one section of the march. The police called upon the participants to disperse and used excessive force upon the individuals, causing other participants to become involved (Escobar 1993). What should have been a routine disturbance call ended up becoming a major riot, including countless injuries and 3 participant deaths (Escobar 1993: 1484). Escobar (1993: 1484) explains, “Before the mass of people had a chance to leave the park and, indeed, well before most people knew that police had ordered them to disperse, sheriff’s deputies charged the crowd, shooting tear gas and beating fleeing demonstrators with nightsticks.” This incident exemplifies the violent tactics used by police officials in handling an organization deemed by officials as agitating dissenters.

The participants seemingly had no intentions of undertaking any violent actions with law enforcement officials, as the demonstrators were fleeing from police while they were physically assaulted and beaten. Demonstrators were dressed casually and many had brought their children and even had lawn chairs for the occasion. On the other hand, police officials were well equipped for a violent undertaking, as they were suited with SWAT gear and had official posts all around the rally.

Earl (2003: 601) declared, “Large protests, confrontational protests, and protests that endorsed radical goals were more likely to draw police presence...which escalated police response.” This type of response can facilitate brutal tactics towards protestors. Other examples of social movement organizations facing similar conflicts of repression

with authority officials were the African-American Civil Rights movement, American Indian Movement, and the Farm Worker movements.

Barkan (1984) depicted the African-American Civil Rights activists during the late 1960's in their vicious battle with police and judicial officials. He discussed various incidents of police brutality, questionable arrests, and judicial social control at the local and state level. The civil rights activists were able to succeed due to Federal Supreme Court intervention. Otherwise, the movement may have been defeated by the legal strategies and tactics enforced upon them. Moreover, Blackstock (1975: 7) added that in 1965, local police officials savagely beat members of the Civil Rights movement as FBI agents stood and watched the brutality. Finally, as some of the members tried to find "sanctuary on federal property, they were thrown from the steps of the federal building in Jackson, Mississippi by federal marshals" (Blackstock 1975: 7). Jeffries (2002: 75) also discussed how the Baltimore Chapter of the Black Panthers underwent government harassment by J. Edgar Hoover's counter intelligence program which authorized "manhunts, political trials and unprovoked shootings – a search and destroy mission..."

The Oakland Black Panther Party was subject to violent social control tactics as the FBI deliberately caused tension between the BPP and United Slaves (US). The FBI had informants spread vicious lies to the BPP about plans the US had against the BPP in order to create a vendetta between the two organizations. These types of rumors exacerbated rival tensions between both groups and caused an outbreak of shootings and beatings on both parts. The FBI also surreptitiously sent hateful letters and cartoon drawings to the BPP mocking their revolutionary position.

In 1969, at the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA), two Panthers were assassinated by a person or group from United Slaves, which had indirect assistance from the FBI (Schultz and Schultz 2001: 220). The FBI had been anonymously mailing hostile letters to both groups encouraging warfare between the two in hopes of destroying them instead of the agency directly taking part in the ordeal. Furthermore, Schultz and Schultz (2001: 220) noted, “...of the FBI’s 295 admitted COINTELPRO operations against the so-called Black nationalists, 233 were directed against the Panthers.” Despite J. Edgar Hoover’s COINTELPRO era ending in 1971, the FBI’s primary objective continues to be the repression and disintegration of organized dissent and organizations that are not in the mainstream (Carley 1997; Churchill and Vander Wall 1990).

In dealing with social movement organizations, the purpose of the government is to instill fear in the organizations and/or communities considered to be subversive in order to disrupt or destroy it (Jeffries 2002). For example, Schmid (1983) described a climate of terror by law enforcement officials in the south around the beginning of the 20th century, as they would illustrate pictures of lynching in the newspapers to serve as a warning against non-conformity in the Black community. This example reflects how the U.S. government can instill fear upon a group of people it perceives to be threatening and disrupt any dissent from a community.

The American Indian Movement (AIM) was targeted by the U.S. Government for violence and suppression. In 1973, an anti-Indian warfare between federal law enforcement officials including the FBI occurred at the historical site of the 1890 massacre of Wounded Knee against AIM members protesting the installation “with federal support” of an abusive and corrupt leader for the tribal administration of Pine

Ridge (Churchill 1994: 260). AIM members had planned a conference at Wounded Knee in order to protest against the tribal administrator. However, the conference never occurred. Instead there was a violent standoff between AIM participants and federal law enforcement as U.S. officials ambushed AIM members at the site (Churchill 1994).

According to Churchill (1994: 262) “more than 500,000 rounds of military ammunition were fired into AIM’s jerry-rigged ‘bunkers’ by federal forces, killing two Indians...and wounding several others.” In seeking justification for their treatment towards the horrible incident, law enforcement officials stated that it was necessary to use such violence because AIM members had occupied Wounded Knee and taken hostages with them as well. Later, the statement was proven to be false and the federally-supported tribal administrator admitted that the entire purpose of the standoff was to make sure, “AIM dies at Wounded Knee” (Churchill 1994: 262).

The Wounded Knee incident is a prime example of the type of state action taken against dissent when an organization is seeking justice against an unjust act. In its aftermath, “AIM’s leadership was tied up in a seemingly endless series of arrests, incarcerations, hearings, and trials. Similarly, the great bulk of the movement’s fundraising and organizing capacity was diverted into posting bonds and mounting legal defenses for those indicted” (Churchill 1994: 263).

The American Indian Movement (AIM) was not successful in its confrontations with authorities, in part due to its radical stance (Stotik, Shriver, and Cable 1994). AIM dealt with police harassment, frequent arrests, and infiltration by the FBI, surveillance and social control efforts that were directed by President Nixon (Stotik, et. al. 1994). Also, Carley (1997) examined the American Indian Movement and social control tactics

and strategies used by the FBI and COINTELPRO. He contended that these agencies used three types of social control tactics and strategies, such as, direct assault, internal infiltration and opinion control.

Specifically, Carley (1997: 165) stated, “The first and most obvious type of direct assault tactics are physical attacks on movement leaders and supporters...the other major form...can be described as legal harassment.” In doing so, prosecution officials are able to divert the members’ energy, money, time and goals to having to deal with warrantless searches or causeless court trials. Secondly, internal infiltration by legal officials served two main purposes: gathering information and the complete disruption of the movement (Carley 1997).

Information-gathering is any type of strategy used to garner information about the members, objectives, and protest agendas. The disruption is used to cause conflict between the members and their supporters. AIM members, for example, fought about suspicions that were harbored and then turned on one another due to successful infiltration and disruption tactics by legal authorities. Informants who had infiltrated AIM had masterminded violent actions and caused dissension amongst the group by “Badjacketing” (Carley 1997:168). Badjacketing occurs when an infiltrator spreads rumors about the movement or group, accusing members of being government agents or having ties to political officials (Carley 1997: 168).

Churchill (2003: 45) also described how an AIM activist was shot “execution style” on a reservation in the late 1970’s. Before the murder incident, an FBI agent provocateur had used badjacketing methods against AIM and particularly against the murder victim. Churchill (2003) declared that the FBI continues to distort the murder

case to the public, including AIM members. AIM members, however, believe that the FBI was far more involved than just concocting the murder plan. In fact, AIM members believe that the FBI actually did the shooting (Churchill 2003).

In addition, law enforcement officials are able to insulate themselves from interest groups and judicial procedures of the law and courts. Gotham (1994: 206) clearly states, “The logic of this modus operandi is that the ability to conceal instances of political repression from the citizenry will prevent any damage to the regime’s legitimacy, since what is not publicly known cannot have public consequences.” In analyzing all the previous research for this project, it seems as though social movements were legally repressed not so much because they were thought to be engaging in illegal activity, but because they were perceived to hold ideologies that were not in the mainstream.

Based on the literature examined for this research, it is clear that legal social control plays an important role in controlling the life span of many social movement organizations. In addressing the various tactics utilized by law enforcement, I will discuss the strategies and tactics used by the U.S. government to suppress the Brown Berets. These theoretical concerns will inform my analysis of those factors that led to the disintegration of the Brown Berets. I will also discuss implications for the broader types of legal social control tactics and strategies used by law enforcement officials to suppress social movements that they believe to be threatening.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This research project is an exploratory analysis of a faction of the Chicano movement known as the Brown Berets. The focus of the research is on the legal social control strategies and tactics that caused the organization's demise. Legal social control will be examined at the federal, state, and local levels of government. In order to gain a rich and full description of this phenomenon, I used a triangulation method for this qualitative study, which includes: document analysis, telephone interviews, and a historiography. Triangulation is defined by Marshall and Rossman (1995: 144) as, "...the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point. Data from different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question."

Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 3) offer an explanation of qualitative research by stating,

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives.

In using qualitative research methods, researchers are able to capture a rich description of a particular situation, incident, or a subject's point of view. The researcher is able to gain an in-depth insight into the social world of the people they are examining (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). At times, however, there are problems associated with the reliability factor involved in qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

A primary reason is that the researcher is intertwined with the social world of others as well as his or her own world during the interpretation of materials, which is considered to be obtrusive. Both content analysis and historiography (historical analysis), on the other hand, are considered to be unobtrusive measures. Unobtrusive measures are a method of studying social behavior without having to be reactively involved or affecting the analysis (Babbie 2004). For example, there is no need to be involved in experiments, participant observations, or interviews. Unobtrusive measures are limited to some degree because the procedure does not completely eradicate reactive error or subjective bias (Berg 1995).

Document Analysis

Document analysis provides a rich descriptive analysis of the "values and beliefs" of participants in that particular setting and time frame (Marshall and Rossman 1995: 85). In conducting document analysis, the researcher utilizes a skill for interpreting patterns within documents called content analysis. In discussing the use of document analysis, Espland (1993:297) declared, "...formal documents produced by an organization are revealing sources for understanding how power is exerted, legitimated, and reproduced." In this research study, I plan to utilize the content analysis approach. Babbie (2004: 314) defines content analysis as "the study of recorded human communications."

I will search for themes within the documents in order to discover various patterns of the social reality of participants in a particular setting and time (Marshall and Rossman 1995).

Among the documents suitable for study are books, magazines, Web pages, poems, newspapers, songs, paintings, speeches, letters, email messages, bulletin board postings on the Internet, laws, and constitutions, as well as any components or collections (Bailey 1994). In addition, Holsti (1968: 608) states that content analysis is, “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages.” This requires that the researcher use a “criteria for selection,” which is established before he or she begins the data collection process (Berg 1995: 175). When utilizing the criteria selection, the content under examination must be rigidly and exhaustively examined. In so doing, other scholars, researchers and readers are able to obtain the “same or comparable results” (Berg 1995: 175).

There are numerous advantages to using content analysis, including the fact that it can be unobtrusive, it is cost effective, and it is a technique in which trends or patterns can be distinguished among the data over a long period of time. A disadvantage of content analysis is the problems associated with reliability due to the “ambiguity of word meanings, category definitions, or other coding rules” (Weber 1990: 15). Validity in content analysis is affirmed as long as the researcher measures the construct he or she intends to measure (Weber 1990).

In gathering data for this research, I used archives of a local East Los Angeles newspaper, *La Causa (The Cause)*, which was published monthly by the Brown Berets from 1969 to 1972. While I was able to obtain most issues of *La Causa*, some monthly

issues were missing due to the loss of materials over time. In addition, I examined coverage of the Brown Berets in five other newspapers, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Los Angeles Free Press*, *The Militant*, *La Raza*, and the *Chicano Student News*. I was able to acquire information regarding legal social control of the Brown Berets from all those document sources.

I also examined data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) file on the Brown Beret organization, which was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The FBI had the Brown Berets under their watchful eye for approximately five years, ranging from 1968 to 1973. There are over 1,200 pages that were written about the Brown Berets from their inception into their dissolution.

Telephone Interviews

I conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with three activists/scholars from the Chicano Movement. One respondent was the former Minister of Information for the Brown Berets. In addition, I contacted two other respondents, one of whom was president of United Mexican-American Students (UMAS) and worked closely with the Brown Berets on several projects including the 1968 high school walkouts and the National Chicano Moratorium. This individual was also indicted and faced felony charges in the East L.A. Thirteen court case, which included several Brown Beret members. The other respondent has a sibling that was a part of *El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán* (MEChA) organization, which worked side by side with the Brown Berets in many protests and rallies including the August 29th National Chicano Moratorium Conference (NCMC). Because of his sibling's experiences in working with several organizations, including the Brown Berets, he was able to provide insightful

knowledge about many of the incidents that took place. Snowball sampling was used to identify all respondents. Babbie (2004: 184) explains snowball sampling as a “...procedure appropriate when the members of a special population are difficult to locate...” Snowball refers, “to the process of accumulation as each located subject suggest other subjects” (Babbie: 184). The snowball method is generally used for exploratory purposes.

During the interview process, the respondents were asked general open-ended questions regarding their level of involvement and explanations for the dissolution of the Brown Beret organization. The interview guide which was used for the interviews provides the questions used for the interview (see Appendix B). The interviews ranged between 1-3 hours. Probing techniques were used in order to garner a rich description of their participation in the Brown Berets as well as their knowledge of the group (Bailey 1994). Researchers and respondents may feel uneasy about entering a stranger’s home or neighborhood in regards to conducting a face-to-face interview, so telephone interviews are often utilized (Bailey 1994). Telephone interviews are less expensive than mailed surveys and face-to-face interviews and they are considerably efficient in acquiring results (Bailey 1994).

There are disadvantages in employing telephone interviews (Bailey 1994). The telephone interview is conducted in an anonymous fashion and the respondent may be skeptical of the researcher’s motives. There is no opportunity for the researcher or the respondent to view one another’s physical perceptions such as gestures. However, there numerous advantages to conducting telephone interviews such as the convenience in accessing the respondents. For example, for the purposes of this research, the

respondents were living in various parts of the United States and a phone call was much more affordable and convenient approach to gathering data.

Historical Analysis (Historiography)

Marshall and Rossman (1995: 89) define historical analysis as, "...a method of discovering, from records and accounts, what happened in the past." Sources regarding a historical analysis can be described as either primary or secondary. An example of a primary source is a oral testimony. Secondary sources include, "...the reports of persons who relate the accounts of actual eyewitnesses and summaries..." (Marshall and Rossman 1995: 89). In conducting a historical analysis, the researcher is able to re-examine areas that might have gone unexamined in history. As Berg (1995: 163) noted, "Knowledge of the past provides necessary information to be used in the present in order to determine how things may be in the future" (also see Notter 1972).

In eliminating the problems associated with conducting a historical analysis, the researcher must carefully examine the genuineness of the materials. For instance, there may be records that have been deliberately falsified or the recorder possibly might have incorrectly interpreted the summaries (Marshall and Rossman 1995; Berg 1995). In addition, the researcher must be cognizant of the present time period and how certain terms or phrases may have changed over the years when interpreting various sources.

In this research, secondary sources were used in order to garner information, such as, books and other articles related to Mexican-American history and other newspaper accounts cited in books. The books used in this research were mostly authored by individuals who had either participated in the Chicano movement or had immediate family that were invested. While none of the authors who wrote the books were actual

members of the Brown Beret, several authors were participants in social movement organizations that worked hand in hand with the group.

DATA ANALYSIS SECTION

In analyzing the data, I searched for themes and patterns that reflected legal social control as indicated in the review of the literature. I coded all of the relevant data around core themes related to police brutality and harassment, legal harassment, and the use of informants, agent provocateurs, and surveillance techniques used to dismantle the Brown Berets. In addition, I also documented well-known incidents of these types of strategies used by law enforcement officials in order to gather information about the group for prosecutorial evidence. Primary data was derived from the newspapers and telephone interviews. The FBI files supplemented the data by adding a core area examining the use of surveillance used toward the Brown Berets. In the following chapter, I will discuss the critical findings that were gathered from the data.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Before examining the legal social control strategies and tactics used by law enforcement officials, I provide a brief historical analysis of the Mexican-American people. This background helps provide a broader context for interpreting the events that led to the emergence and (eventual decline) of the Chicano Movement. In addition, I will take a historical look at the relations between the Mexican community and the Los Angeles Police Department in order to gain some further insight into the problems that arose there in the late 1960's. Moreover, I will include background data of the Brown Berets in order to better understand how the group emerged as a militant force within the Chicano Movement and was eventually suppressed by the U.S. government.

Mexican-American History

The Naturalization Act of 1790 established that Mexicans were legally "White." According to Chavez (2002), dissent was created amongst Mexicans because of the perception that they were not being treated equally. Some people claim that the oppression of the Mexican-American began after the United States – Mexico War in 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 had granted several rights to the Mexican people who had become overnight citizens due to the treaty (Gutierrez 1995). These rights, however, were never recognized nor upheld by the United States.

Gutierrez (1995: 38) noted, “In formally granting the ethnic Mexican population in the Southwest all the rights of American citizens in 1848, and yet denying them the possibility of exercising those rights, Americans planted the seeds of continuing ethnic discord in the region.”

In California, during the 1940’s and 1950’s, the Mexican population was bigger than in any of the other Western states and was increasing rapidly (Chavez 2002). In Los Angeles alone during the 1950’s, the “number of Ethnic Mexicans was 156,356, but in 1960 had increased to 291,959, a fifty-one percent increase” (Bureau of the Census 1950 quoted in Chavez 2002: 10). The older generation of Mexicans in Los Angeles during the 1940’s and 1950’s considered themselves to be White because they thought that if they assimilated into American culture they would be accepted by their Anglo counterparts. By the late 1960’s their sons and daughters had rejected that same mentality. The question of political identity had always been an issue since the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. In the 1950’s, the Census Bureau had a category that stated, “White persons of Spanish surname (U.S. Census Bureau 1950 quoted in Lopez 2003: 123).” Definitely, at one point in time in America, Mexican-Americans considered themselves to be White, even by the government. In time, Mexican-Americans, however, believed that the rights and privileges did not come along with the “White” label.

Due to the amount of social control and racism by the government, Mexican-Americans in the late 1960’s felt that a new Chicano political identity should be established and that the welfare and advancement of the Mexicans in American society should gain momentum. During this time frame, the Vietnam War was in the media spotlight and Mexican-Americans, young and old, were demonstrating intense dissent

towards the American government due to the increasing numbers of Mexican-American casualties. While opposition to the Vietnam War was widespread across the country, it was particularly rancorous in the Mexican community.

The late 1960's provided ample opportunity for the emergence of a radical and militant Mexican-American civil rights organization. The Brown Berets was formed because these young adults had similar life experiences. These individuals felt that they were being treated like second class citizens and they demanded a positive change in their communities. The members also opposed the Vietnam War and decided to protest against it. They felt that their struggle was not abroad, but here at home in the United States. The group realized that many Mexican-Americans were dying at a disproportionate rate in comparison to the overall percentage of Mexican-Americans in the population of California. In addition, there were many problems associated with the educational system. Students felt disenfranchised and demanded better facilities, books, and teachers. The Brown Berets, along with many high school students, protested the unjust and discriminatory practices that were occurring in their neighborhoods. The next section depicts the relationship between the Mexican community and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in order to gain awareness and a historical understanding of the conflict between the two.

Relations between the Mexican Community and the LAPD: A Historical View

The formation of the Los Angeles Police Department began in 1877. The primary duties and responsibilities of the department were to protect the elite capitalist or the bourgeoisie (Escobar 1999). This elite group of capitalists had been exploiting Mexican-Americans for their cheap labor and intended to continue running their businesses in this

manner despite the terrible consequences for the Mexican community. The Los Angeles Department did exactly as this political machine told them to do. In addition, police officers engaged in corruption and extortion with prostitution and gambling rings (Escobar 1999).

The department did not legally harass or arrest any organized crime leaders in the community as long as the group had contributing connections to the political machine. Other important duties included suppressing organized labor unions. At this point, Mexican-Americans had decided to create their own nationalistic labor unions in regard to their inferior economic status within the labor market (Escobar 1999). Tensions between the Mexican community and the LAPD started because the former group felt that police officials were engaging in brutal and harassing acts in suppressing their labor unions during the early late nineteenth and twentieth century.

In the 1920's and 1930's, police continued protecting big businesses and ensuring that the Mexican workers were docile to this dominance by the local Capitalists. In order to continue suppressing the labor unions and oppressing the workers, the LAPD created a special unit called the Intelligence Bureau, also known as, the Red Squad (Escobar 1999). The Red Squad Unit was developed to specifically suppress and eliminate any dissident workers and labor union organizations. This would ensure complete control by the Capitalists of the Mexican workers in repressing their concerns for economic mobility and equality. The Red Squad Unit caused distrust, suspicion, and animosity among the Mexican community creating a foundation for an ongoing tension.

Furthermore, in the 1920's, there was an economic boom in the city of Los Angeles and there was an influx of immigrants. For example, there were immigrants

from northern and southern Europe; however, the predominant increase came from Mexicans escaping Mexico due to the nation's unstable government and economy. In the late nineteenth century, "Large landholders and speculators were expropriating small farms and uprooting rural families. An 1883 land law allowed private land-development companies to receive up to one-third of any land they surveyed and subdivided" (Takaki 1993: 313). Unfortunately, about one-fifth of Mexico's land had been taken over by these landholders (Takaki 1993: 313).

Beginning in 1910, a Mexican Revolution erupted because of these catastrophic conditions and injustices. The rural peasantry had been left without shelter, employment, and food causing tens of thousands of people to travel north to find safety and prosperity in the United States (Takaki 1993: 313). The revolution lasted more than a decade causing "warring factions" all over Mexico. The Mexican people who sought to leave Mexico did it because they feared for their lives. Many refugees traveled northward to places such as Los Angeles and El Paso. They were in search of better jobs, stability, and treatment. The influx of Mexicans expanded the Mexican population in Los Angeles by a large rate. Escobar (1999: 78) noted later that in 1920, there were 567,673 Mexicans living in Los Angeles and toward the end of the decade it had risen to 1,238,048 (Also see Findley 1958). Other Chicano scholars estimated that there were about 50,000 in 1920 and it increased to 190,000 by 1930 (Escobar 1999: 79). Considering the fact that the total population for Los Angeles was over 1,000,000 the large increase suggests that Mexicans were definitely visible within the city and were perceived as a threat by their Anglo counterparts including the Los Angeles Police Department.

Despite the economic boom, Mexican workers were not able to move up from blue-collar status to White collar as their Anglo counterparts (Romo 1983). As the Great Depression hit the city of Los Angeles in the 1930's, Mexicans were facing extreme hardships, such as joblessness and homelessness (Kasun 1954). The California State Legislature passed various laws prohibiting business owners from hiring illegal alien workers. This placed additional hardships on Mexicans. Business owners began to replace Mexican workers with White workers, which led to several economic and social consequences for the Mexican community, as unemployment rates soared. In discussing unemployment rates, Mexicans represented 13.1% and African-Americans stood at 7.9% as compared to 7.7% among the rest of the city (Escobar 1999: 79). Popular methods of resolving the unemployment problem and expanding Mexican population were to utilize deportation and repatriation tactics.

As more and more Mexican immigrants crossed the border to Los Angeles, fear began to spread throughout the Anglo community. They feared that Mexican immigrants would weaken the fabric of society. Beginning in the 1930's, criminology was emerging as a discipline and various scholars in the area were interested in linking race and criminality. Criminologists were not sure if Mexican criminality was biological or social, but the overly-sensationalized concerns developed the notion within the Anglo community and the LAPD that Mexicans were criminally inclined (Escobar 1999).

Due to this perception, LAPD officials had an excuse to use harsh and brutal tactics against the Mexican community. Police officials within the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department also shared the same perceptions about Mexicans. Lieutenant Ed Ayres, who was head of the Foreign Relations Bureau of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department,

stated in a report, “Chicanos were Indians, Indians were Orientals, and Orientals had an utter disregard for life. Therefore, because Chicanos had this inborn characteristic, they too were violent” (Acuña 2000: 268). This Mexican racial theory of crime became a part of the mentality among the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department and was used as a reason to treat Mexicans in an unjust and brutal manner for many years to come.

In the 1940’s two significant events occurred that helped solidify the uneasy tension between the Mexican community and the Los Angeles Police Department. In the morning of August 2, 1942 a young boy named Jose Diaz was found dying in a gravel pit called Sleepy Lagoon. He was immediately taken to the local hospital, but later died due to head trauma (Escobar 1999: 207). The night before, Henry Leyvas, a boy who lived in the vicinity of 38th street along with his girlfriend were at Sleepy Lagoon and had engaged in a fight with another group of Mexican boys from the Los Angeles suburb of Downey.

After the fight, Leyvas went back to his neighborhood to round up some of his friends in order to go back to Sleepy Lagoon and finish up what the Downey group had started. Coincidentally, when the boys arrived the Downey group was gone and had left to crash a party at the Delgadillo home. The 38th Street boys decided to attend the party as well and had another scuffle with the Downey boys. After the scuffle, the 38th Street group left the party. It is assumed from the witnesses at the party that Jose Diaz, who was an invited guest at the Delgadillo home, had left the party during this time frame. The police then decided to arrest mass amounts of young boys in the nearby vicinity of East 38th Street (Escobar 1999: 208; Acuña 2000). The press sensationalized the entire

episode and labeled the boys from East 38th Street and Downey as Mexican boy gangs and their presumed behavior as a Mexican crime wave that was taking over the city of Los Angeles.

What exactly happened to Jose Diaz was never confirmed. Autopsy reports concluded various scenarios and stated that the injuries could have been caused by a hit and run accident or from self-inflicted injuries due to the fact that the boy had been drinking at the party. Police were infuriated and decided to arrest mass amounts of Mexican boys in the neighborhood on suspicion of burglary in order to force out a confession concerning Diaz's death. Fifty-nine people were arrested for trumped up charges and police officers tried to coerce confessions from the youth concerning Diaz's death (Escobar 1999: 209).

Overall, a total of six-hundred Mexican youth were arrested in the days following the death of Diaz (Escobar 1999). Intimidation and force was used to try and blame the death on a group of youth. Arrests were made, charges were brought against twenty-two boys through the use of a secret grand jury, and prosecutors were set on convicting the group for the death of Diaz. Later, the Second District Court of Appeals reversed the lower court's decision of guilt against the boys due to the racial bias that permeated throughout the trial (Acuña 2000: 271; Rosales 1996).

A year later, the zoot suits had become very popular amongst Mexican youth. The zoot suit style consisted of "baggy pants that fit very high on the waist, deep pleats, and extremely narrow cuffs. The coat had wide lapels and shoulder pads that resembled epaulets and was sometimes so long it reached the knees. Accessories to the zoot suit

included a wide rimmed ‘pancake’ hat, long watch chains and thick soled shoes” (Escobar 1999: 178).

This type of attire was used in defiance of the Anglo establishment including authority figures, particularly police officials and their presumed oppression against the Mexican community. The zoot suiters developed their own sense of style and argot called Caló, which is a derivative of fifteenth-century Iberian gypsy dialect (Escobar 1999: 178). Not only was this argot in defiance to the white community but also to their families and other elders. In addition, some zoot suiters became a part of the *pachuco* subculture, which was primarily a criminal gang. However, most of the zoot suiters were young youths portraying their symbolic rebellion toward the Anglo community and the overall U.S. mainstream culture, but they were not part of the criminal element of the *pachuco* subculture.

Due to the mass hysteria caused by the sensationalized newspaper accounts insisting that there was a Mexican crime wave occurring throughout the city many people became fearful and angered toward the zoot suiter culture. A fight broke out on Sunday May 30, 1943 between a group of zoot suiters and eleven naval sailors. The cause of the fight was not clearly ascertained. However, witnesses stated that the sailors had been dating girls who were dating the group of zoot suiters (Escobar 1999). Fourteen off-duty Los Angeles Police officers started beating up a number of Mexican-American youth in the neighborhoods (Escobar 1999: 235).

Within days after the fight on May 30, 1943 a score of naval servicemen who were stationed in Los Angeles during World War II went to the Mexican neighborhoods in search of zoot suiters. The servicemen engaged in countless fights against the youth -

pummeling them, stripping them of their zoot suits, and beating them to a bloody pulp while the LAPD stood and watched (Escobar 1999; Acuña 2000; Lopez 2003). Mexican youth who were out in the neighborhood were beaten in front of their friends. Those attending dances or the movies were pulled outside by servicemen and were beat up.

In fact, officers arrested the zoot suiters for disturbing the peace. A handful of servicemen were arrested for the riots that took place in the neighborhoods. If they were arrested, it occurred once the servicemen arrived back at their naval bases, but once arrested they were quickly released without any charges filed against them (Lopez 2003).

In essence, these zoot suits riots demonstrated the deteriorating relations between the Mexican-American community and the Los Angeles Police Department. Both parties felt distrust, suspicion, and animosity toward the other. These incidents as well as future ones declared and defined the relations between the two in the city of Los Angeles. In the 1960's, Mexican-American youth are once again overcome with a sense of awareness and take it a step further by becoming politically and socially active in changing the plight of Mexicans in the community and throughout the Southwest.

The relationship between the Mexican community and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) provides an understanding of why the Brown Beret organization was protesting against police brutality and harassment in their neighborhoods. Many Brown Beret members had experienced police brutality and harassment and understood that this had been occurring since the establishment of the department. The Brown Berets were all too familiar with the brutal approach of police officials and the group demanded a change. The next section will provide explanations for the emergence of the Brown Berets.

The Emergence of the Brown Berets

The official beginning of the Brown Berets dates back to April of 1966. The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations sponsored a three day conference in which high school Mexican youth leaders were invited to participate in discussions regarding problems and issues surrounding their communities, values, beliefs, identity and the label Mexican-American (Lopez 2003: 179). These youth leaders realized that they had similar life experiences and they decided to take on these problems by forming the Young Citizens for Community Action (YCCA) in May 1966.

Former Prime Minister of Information for the Brown Berets, Carlos Montes (Interview with Author 2006) explained how this group formed, “Initially, YCCA was involved in civic participation, education, and voting.” This was a group of Mexican-American high school students who participated in local elections and community service. From the beginning, Vicki Castro, a high school senior at Roosevelt High School was the President of the YCCA and other members consisted of Ralph Ramirez, Moctezuma Esparza, and David Sanchez (Lopez 2003).

The group was particularly concerned with education including poor facilities, lack of books, and charges of racism among administrators and teachers. The group supported Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty” program and believed that through the electoral process they could remedy the debilitating educational problems. The Young Citizens for Community Action (YCCA) also provided information to the community about the different candidates running for school board in order to gain knowledge about the background of these candidates (Chavez 2002). Over time, the group began

expanding their focus by examining issues of police brutality and harassment within their communities

The group met in the basement of the Episcopal Church in an East Los Angeles neighborhood called Lincoln Heights. Father John B. Luce, who was a pastor, introduced them to Cesar Chavez, the leader of the United Farm Worker's Movement, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales from the Denver based Crusade for Justice as well as other movement leaders (Lopez 2003). These types of contacts further instilled in the youths the concept of their identity. In the summer of 1967, the Young Citizens for Community Action (YCCA) decided to change their name from "Citizens" to "Chicanos," which emphasized a political and cultural identity and was a crucial part of their organizing.

As mentioned in the introduction, the term *Chicano* engendered a meaning of embracing your indigenous roots and heritage, but most importantly it created a sense of solidarity between Mexican-Americans. At the time, Mexican-Americans felt they were treated like second class citizens in America. They were also aware of the fact that they could not go back to Mexico and be fully accepted since Mexican-Americans were not considered "real" Mexicans (Chavez Interview with Author 2006). Mexican-Americans brought to the forefront the term *Chicano* because it proclaimed a sense of identity unique only to Mexican-Americans.

In the fall of 1967 started several of the group's key members, including the President, Vicki Castro, enrolled in various colleges and/or universities and eventually they drifted from the group. Once Vicki Castro departed the group, David Sanchez took over the leadership role of YCCA. At this point, YCCA began engaging in several activities. For example, they protested at the Sheriff's office in December of 1967 when

a Mexican couple and their daughter were severely beaten, assaulted, kicked, and slapped before being arrested by police (*La Raza*: 7).

This protest marked the first time that the group became “visible” within the community. This incident marked the final straw for the organization (Lopez 2003). Eventually, what changed the basis of their emphasis on local elections and community service to other issues such as police brutality and harassment was the constant police brutality towards the Mexican community. The Young Chicanos for Community Action (YCCA) decided that working through the system of city government was not as responsive as they thought. Some members felt a need for revolutionary action toward the system in order to get a response to the Mexican community’s structural problems.

The protest surrounding the beatings sparked a politicalization and radicalization within the group members. While some of the original members left the group, others were provoked into action after learning of these injustices. To reflect the politicalization of the group, in 1968, David Sanchez began changing the appearance of the group. He demanded attire that consisted of khaki style clothing, military fatigue jackets and the use of a brown beret in order to appear more like a militant group, such as the Black Panther Party, who also wore black berets and khaki military style jackets (Lopez 2003). The brown berets had an emblem in the front which depicted a “...yellow pentagon with two bayoneted rifles behind a cross and the words *La Causa* (The Cause) above them” which was designed by a new recruit at the time named Johnny Parsons (Chavez 2002: 45). Cruz Olmeda Becerra a former Brown Beret was interviewed regarding Parson’s idea of the Brown Beret symbol, in which he stated,

We asked him why are you designing an emblem? He said, ‘Look, it’s like an emblem for guerillas...a symbol of guerillas, and in this case like

urban guerillas.’ He started telling us how they were green berets, how the French guerillas and the Spanish guerillas had worn it during the Spanish Civil War and that we should wear a brown beret. So, we thought it was a good idea. So we started wearing the brown beret and the khaki jacket – the bush jacket. But we didn’t call ourselves the Brown Berets. Those who started calling us the Brown Berets were the East L.A. Sheriff’s...and we got pissed off. We would hear it because every time they had us up against the wall we’d hear all the radio messages from the patrol cars, ‘Brown Berets here’ and Brown Berets over here,’ and so then it stuck. So, then we just stayed with it (cited in Chavez 2003: 46).

Since the picketing in front of the Sheriff’s office in 1967, the YCCA had become known as the Brown Berets by local police. They Young Chicanos for Community Action (YCCA) were labeled by police officials as the “Brown Berets” because of their unique attire. In time, YCCA members proceeded to recognize each other collectively as the Brown Berets of East Los Angeles.

The Brown Berets were comprised of college students, non-students, ex-convicts, gang members, and high school students ranging in ages from 18-24 (Chavez 2002). Former Minister of Information, Carlos Montes commented that the majority of the Brown Beret members were in their early twenties. He described the family background of the youths as working class and blue collar. The majority of the youths were not attending college and the foundation of the group consisted of high school students (Montes Interview by author 2006).

In 1969, the Brown Berets created and utilized their own local newspaper called *La Causa* (The Cause) to garner support for their cause, recruitment purposes and to depict the unjust practices of local police officials. In order to try and catch the attention of youth in the community, the Brown Berets drew a Mexican-American male cartoon dressed in baggy pants and he was holding a bottle of liquor while smoking a cigarette. In the next cartoon, a clean-cut Mexican-American male is dressed in a khaki military-

type jacket and pants while wearing a brown beret. The male had his arm “outstretched and his fist clenched in the power symbol” (Chavez 2002: 57). The banner above the first cartoon stated, “Bato Loco Yesterday.” “*Bato Loco*” designated a male who was involved in drinking, drugs, and was a part of the pachuco subculture. The second cartoon “Revolutionist Today, Be Brown, Be Proud. Join the Brown Berets Today” (cited in Chavez 2002: 58).

The Brown Berets wanted to turn the lives of these Batos Locos around by introducing them to something that would make them feel proud. In addition, they wanted them to take part in a positive role in their community. These cartoon drawings depicted the Brown Beret ethic amongst its male members and potential recruits. The Brown Berets wanted to represent a clean-cut, revolutionary, cultural- nationalist, significantly different from the violent gang subculture in their neighborhoods. Most importantly, they wanted to serve and protect their communities.

In an effort to increase their visibility and enhance the recruitment of new member, the Brown Berets decided to build their own coffee house in the fall of 1967. The coffee house, which they called “*La Piranya*” was built with the help of Father John B. Luce and a grant from the Volunteers in Service to the America Program (Lopez 2003: 180). The establishment of La Piranya gave a venue to hold meetings and discussions about a wide variety of community concerns, including police brutality and harassment, Vietnam and community improvement. Famous speakers came to La Piranya coffee house, including as Cesar Chavez of the *United Farm Worker’s Movement*, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzalez leader of the Denver based *Crusade for Justice*, Reis Lopez Tijerina leader of the *New Mexico Alianza Federal de Mercedes* (Alliance of Federal Land

Grants), Stokley Carmichael and H. Rap Brown from the *Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee*, and Ron Karenga leader of United Slaves (Chavez 2002: 42). The Brown Berets maintained a dialogue with several movement leaders and learned more about how to construct an agenda that would improve the communities and the unjust practices of the police department. However, these efforts proved to be fruitless, as police officials continued to mistreat Mexicans in their communities.

Eventually, police officials began to harass the people at the coffee house because they felt that the group possessed Communist ideologies. While at the coffee house, the Brown Berets discussed various topics and agreed that their primary duty should be to watch over the police and make sure that they did not use excessive force; protest against educational neglect in the local school system; protest in opposition towards the Vietnam War; and making the public aware of the police brutality and harassment that was occurring in their neighborhoods. Not only was awareness of police harassment and brutality on their agenda, but also most importantly putting a stop to it (Rosales 1996).

In summary, the Brown Berets formed around a number of grievances. First, group members had experienced racism in their communities directly and indirectly. Members were fed up with the racist conditions of their communities. Secondly, they were aware of the exploitation that was taking place against the Mexican people economically. Third, the group desired a change in the living conditions of their communities and/or barrios. The barrios (Mexican ghettos) consisted of poor housing; paltry jobs, which caused high unemployment rates. Fourth, they were concerned about crime and the availability of drugs and the high drop out rates in high schools. As

Chavez (Interview with Author 2006) noted, “There was a 30 % drop out rate for high school students during that time.” This was a major concern for the Brown Berets because without education Mexican-Americans are not able to attain a decent job or have mobility within a job. Fifth, group members were also becoming aware of the disparities in the Vietnam War and the increasing Mexican-American casualties. Furthermore, the Brown Berets were angered about the hypocrisy involved in the war regarding the soldiers endangering their lives in another country; however, when they came back to their homes in the United States, they were treated like second-class citizens (Montes Interview with Author 2006).

In the next section, I examine police harassment and brutality among the Mexican community and the role the Brown Berets played in trying to stop these discriminatory and unjust practices. The group encountered many difficulties and brutal experiences with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Office (LASO). Ultimately, this type of brutal harassment proved to be a major factor in the group’s inability to continue as a movement.

Police Harassment and Brutality

Due to increased visibility within the community the Brown Berets became an instant target for local police officers. Police officials harassed the group by constantly shining their lights into the *La Piranya* coffee house. They would give Brown Beret members tickets for leaving the building at night for no reason. The police would also stop known Brown Beret members on the street and question them about their organizational plans. In many instances, the group experienced the use of excessive

physical force by police officials. This section will depict the experiences that the Brown Berets had with local authorities.

La Causa (The Cause)

The Brown Berets were brutally beaten, arrested, and harassed by local and state authorities, mainly, the Los Angeles Police Department and the Sheriff's Department.

After the Brown Berets protested the beatings of the Mexican couple and their daughter at the Sheriff's sub-station in 1967, the Brown Berets became a target for police repression and control. When *La Piranya*, the Brown Berets coffee house, opened up in 1967 police officials began harassing the group, as the editor of *La Raza* newspaper Eliezer Risco recalled,

The sheriff decided the coffeehouse was a bad place, because the kids drew a picket line in front of the sheriff's station where there had been a case of police brutality. So, the police went at it – every night, every night, every night. They would shine their lights into the coffee house, they would come in and pick up people for selling coffee without a license; the band that was playing there for nothing would be given a ticket for entertaining without a license, and anybody under eighteen would be picked up and held for six hours before they would release them, and they would tell their parents not to allow their kids to go there because they were Communists, they were dope pushers, they were addicts (cited in Lopez 2003: 181)

Ironically, *La Piranya* was located right next door to the Sheriff sub-station on Olympic Boulevard. From this point forward, the Brown Berets became more visible within the community and they felt that they had to make their community aware of the inequities and the police harassment and brutality that were occurring in their neighborhoods. The Brown Berets felt that it was part of their duty to expose the police and the injustices they participated in against their people. According to Carlos Montes (Interview with Author 2006), former Minister of Information for the Brown Berets declared, “Group members

would be ticketed, followed, and harassed for no reason by police officials only because of their attire and its symbolism. The police used opinion control in order to damage the reputation of the Brown Berets within their own community. In the late 1960's, people had a strong negative feeling toward Communism and the police used every vicious rumor they could concoct to make the community hate the Brown Berets and not support them in their agenda. In regard to opinion control, Former Minister of Information for the Brown Berets Carlos Montes (Interview with Author 2006) explained,

What they also did, the LAPD and the Sheriffs, they had these Community Relations People and they would go out and lie about us to youth groups and community groups. What did they with us, with the Brown Berets, during the Walkouts, they said we were outside agitators and they said we were marijuanos (marijuana users), outside agitators, and we would hear about this in the community and we were like, 'outside agitators,' first of all, we live here, we grew up here, we go to these schools, you know. We found out this one guy, his name was Sergeant Castellanos, he was in charge of the Community Relations for the Sheriffs'. He would go to the car clubs and meet with them and tell them that we were Communists. That was another common thing they would say, that we were Communists.

Another incident was a raid that took place in La Piranya by the Sheriff's department and the highway patrol in which they came in the coffeehouse and pushed all the youngsters up against the wall and proceeded to search everyone. When the police did not find anything, they just left (Montes Interview with Author 2006). They had no probable cause to engage in such behavior. Montes, former Minister of Information for the Brown Berets noted,

So, they would always typically violate that in the barrio, you know. They don't need probable cause. They would cuss you out and say they didn't need probable cause. 'Here is my probable cause, right here,' they showed us their club or their gun. It's because we were politically active and we were wearing the Brown Berets, we also put out criticisms of police brutality, about racism, we were visible. We were criticizing the

police and the system and the educational system, right. So, the Sheriffs, first of all, started to harass us (Interview with author 2006).

On various occasions the police confronted the Brown Berets. For example, *La Causa* (May 1969: 5) had reported that seven Brown Berets were walking down a street carrying a television set and were suspiciously approached by an unidentified plain clothed police officer. The article stated,

In the ensuing struggle that followed plain clothes perro [dog] Brodnik was killed. This case raises many questions. First, to what extent can the police state in San Francisco go in stopping Chicanos on the street because they are carrying property. Can only gabachos [Anglos] walk the streets with a T.V. set? (*La Causa*, May 1969: 5).

The Brown Berets were outraged that the blame was placed on their members rather than the police department. The members felt that they were part of a larger conspiracy by the government, whom they felt was trying to destroy and exploit them. The Berets and the Mexican community in general had intense feelings of distrust against the authorities and felt that they handled matters unjustly. According to the Brown Berets (*La Causa*, March 1971: 1)

The official policy of Police Agencies in Los Angeles County is shoot to kill when any minor disturbance or alleged minor disturbance occurs in a Chicano community. No attempt is made to give a warning to disperse either by verbal order by tear gas, or by shooting up into the air. Instead people are singled out...and are shot.

In response, the Brown Berets set out to form their own mechanism of defense. The group went on to state, “Know this, we must do something to defend ourselves. *La Causa* proposes that each block or barrio begin immediately to form block or barrio defense systems...You should meet to discuss the pooling of resources (guns, ammo, reloaders, etc.)” (*La Causa*, March 1971: 1). The Berets were ready to take action against the police, if physically provoked. The group had plans to mobilize as an

organization and community in order to retaliate with every force necessary to win. Another example of police harassment was illustrated in a local newspaper called *La Raza*, which stated,

Last Friday night as four members of the Brown Berets were leaving the Piranya, they were stopped by a Sheriff's Deputy who called on his radio for backup...The patrol officers rushed around the corner with their hands on their guns and their riot sticks drawn. They illegally searched the youth's cars. They took the keys from the driver and opened the trunk even though the Brown Berets warned them that this was a violation of their constitutional rights. The cops said fuck the constitution and they spent twenty minutes searching the whole car. When one of the Brown Berets attempted to take a picture of the highway patrolmen, one of the said, 'Take a picture of me, Mexican, so I can shove that fucking camera up your ass.' (Cited in Lopez 2003: 182).

The Brown Berets were angered by the police department for their discriminatory action, unjust use of authority, police brutality and harassment. They used *La Causa* to raise awareness of these types of issues to the Mexican community. When any member of the Brown Berets discussed a situation involving police officers, they used the word "pig" to describe them. The word 'Pig' depicted the corruptive and unjust practices of the police officers. For instance, *La Causa* (March 1971: 6) asserted,

Remember, you have a right to shoot in self defense and a pig can only use such force as is necessary to effect an arrest. He cannot use deadly force unless his life is in danger...He may not kill out of vengeance or prejudice. But yet, this happens...Remember – Shoot To Kill...

On that same page of *La Causa*, there is a picture of a Chicano and Chicana Brown Beret and the male is holding a gun and they are both stepping on a pig. The pig has a written message that states, "Police Genocide: Continuous Killing, Physical and Mental Denial of Human Rights and Civil Rights. Oppressor of Chicanos." This message expressed the militancy of the Brown Berets and their animosity toward police officials. Ironically, the

police were supposed to protect and serve the community. However, the Brown Berets viewed themselves as the new police for the Mexican community.

Members of the Brown Berets reported routine harassment by the police department. For example, a female member of the Brown Berets reported this story in *La Causa*,

We were on our way home when all of a sudden rifles were cocked and pointed at our heads, we were grabbed and thrown out of the car...One of our brothers asked, 'Could I see a search warrant or any kind of identification?' The pig replied, 'This is enough' and pointed the rifle to his head...We were enraged, but in our position what could we do?...The pigs don't have anything else to do but to harass and kill our people...(cited in Lopez 2003: 190).

The Brown Berets felt that the police used "racial profiling" as a method of approaching them and would use excessive force unnecessarily when questioning them based on their preconceived notions or suspicions. The group had no power or authority and because they were Mexican-American, superiors within the ranks of the police department did not pay any attention to their complaints. Police officers were rarely reprimanded or fired for their excessive use of force (Lopez 2003; Chavez 2002).

The 1968 High School Walkouts

Prior to the Walkouts of 1968, the *La Raza* (December 1967: 8) newspaper confronted parents and most importantly school board members with the following questions about the increasing problems in the East side schools, "Why is there a 40 to 50% chance my child will not graduate from high school? Why is there a chance my child will be among the lowest in the nation in reading ability? Why is there a chance my child will never know the language, culture and history of his own people? Why is there a chance my child's abilities and talents will never be discovered and developed in our

schools?” These issues helped raise awareness to the problems confronting the Mexican-American community.

In the fall of 1967, Sal Castro, a teacher at Lincoln High School located in the neighborhood of Lincoln Heights, came up with an idea to organize a series of high school walkouts (Munoz 1989). A number of high schools participated in the walkouts, including Lincoln High School, located in the Lincoln Heights, Wilson High School in Northeast Los Angeles, Roosevelt High School in Boyle Heights and Garfield High School, in the southern part of East Los Angeles (Chavez Interview with Author 2006). As former president of United Mexican-American Students (UMAS) Carlos Munoz (Interview with Author 2006) noted, “UMAS and the Brown Berets worked close in hand on the Walkouts. Those of us on the steering committee of the organizing of the Walkouts put them in charge of security of the Walkouts...”

Sal Castro began collaborating with United Mexican-American Students (UMAS), the Brown Berets and a score of high school students, parents and other community activists in planning of the walkouts. They had decided to enlist the aid of the Brown Berets to protect the students from police misconduct. All the participants believed this would be the only path for the students to take in order to make the school board recognize the intolerable issues regarding the education of Mexican-Americans. The students had created “strike committees” at each high school and then there was a central committee that drafted demands for the school boards and that dictated when the strikes would actually occur.

The central committee had drafted thirty-six demands for the school board to review and if they chose not to positively respond to the demands, the students would

take to the streets (Lopez 2003: 20). Some of the demands consisted of building better school facilities, hiring of more Mexican-American teachers, reducing class sizes, and adding bilingual programs and a Chicano studies program that would teach students about their heritage, culture, and history. The majority of the teachers were Anglo and they constantly ridiculed the Mexican students about their race calling them “dirty Mexicans” and did not encourage them to attend college (Chavez 2002: 47). Instead, the teachers and counselors would persuade them to go into the workforce and learn a trade.

The walkouts were organized by Sal Castro with the help of United Mexican-American Students (UMAS) and the Brown Berets were scheduled to take place in the spring of 1968. Months passed and the central committee continued to meet with administrators about their demands. Finally, the event that “sparked” the high school walkouts occurred on March 1, 1968, when the Assistant Principal at Wilson High School canceled a very important play for no apparent reason. Students were angered by this decision and at around lunch time they began to walkout of the school by the hundreds (Chavez Interview with Author 2006).

On March 5, two-thousand students “stormed out” of Garfield High School before the central committee could convene and make a decision about the strikes (Lopez 2003: 20). Meanwhile, students were holding up signs that stated, “Education, Not Eradication,” “Walk Out Today, Or Drop Out Tomorrow,” “We are not ‘Dirty Mexicans,’” and also “Teachers, Si, Bigots, No” (*La Raza*, March 1968: 1). In addition, the students were shouting, “Chicano Power” to demonstrate their pride in their race and political awareness. The next day, March 6, 1968 over two-thousand students walkout of

Garfield High and another five-hundred students walked out of Roosevelt High, despite locked gates and the fence around the school (Lopez 2003: 21).

The students were to meet at Hazard Park at 9 a.m. for a rally. United Mexican-American Student (UMAS) members and the Brown Berets were walking with the students on the streets. As the walkouts were occurring, UMAS member Carlos Munoz, Jr. had spoken previously with police officials to make sure that the students were aware of the policy regarding a peaceful walkout. Police officials expected the students to walk along the sidewalk and not on the street. In addition, the students were not to cause violence. The students proceeded to walk out in a lawful and orderly fashion. Prior to the walkouts, Munoz made sure that all the students were aware of these policies. As Munoz (Interview with Author 2006) explained,

I, in particular, had the role as part of the Walkout leadership to work with the police in particular to make sure that everything we were doing was lawful. So, I was the liaison with the police liaison and as the Walkouts were taking place we consulted with this cop and I said 'Is this okay? Are you sure this is legal?' And he said, 'Yeah, you're doing okay. You're doing fine. Make sure you keep people off the street and on the sidewalks and make sure they don't break any windows and all that.'

Throughout the process, police officials were visible, pressuring students to quickly disperse from the schools. Eventually, police officials became impatient with the students and started harassing them and ultimately beating them with their clubs (Munoz Interview with Author 2006). United Mexican-American Students (UMAS) and the Brown Berets were being harassed by police officials throughout the entire student strike. As Munoz (Interview with author 2006) recalled,

We noted that when we were organizing and doing the walkouts, actually, when it took place, when the kids walked out of schools, that we were being recorded and watched and photographed by men in suits, you know, an of course by police in uniform. But, we always thought that they were

detectives or cops that were part of the L.A. police force. The violence that did emerge eventually was police violence and not our violence because we addressed the issue of violence and we proclaimed ourselves to be like Dr. King's movement in the South, non-violent as well. We always tried to do the best we could to prevent violence.

The Brown Berets tried to protect the students from police officials and in the process various Brown Berets and other activists were arrested, jailed and charged with conspiracy to disrupt the schools (Chavez 2002: 48). Former Prime Minister of Information Carlos Montes (Interview with Author 2006) stated, "If it was conspiracy and most of these are misdemeanor cases, right, like you go and disrupt the peace at the school, it's a misdemeanor. But, if you conspire to do it, it becomes a felony." These charges were later declared to be unconstitutional.

After the Brown Berets participated in the walkouts they won the approval of many students. One student newspaper, *The Chicano Student News*, asked the question, "Who are the Brown Berets?" and they answered,

When the cops moved in, it was the Berets that were dragged behind bars. THE BROWN BERTS became a target for the PLACA [the police], and anyone wearing one [a brown beret] was suspect to be picked up. It is the BROWN BERETS who are presently behind bars or have warrants out for their arrests. You know, ese, when you lay it on the line, there are people who mouth about taking care of business, and there are people who TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS. The BROWN BERETS take care of business and leave the 'politicking' and mouthing to others. The BROWN BERETS are strictly a defense organization but reserve the right and duty to defend themselves, Chicanos and La Raza wherever and by whatever means necessary. Already many community organizations have found this out and are in full support behind these young Chicanos who stand ready. Their numbers are growing, growing, growing. BUENO YA...NO SE DEJAN [the Brown Berets always defend themselves] (cited in Chavez 2002: 48).

The walkouts marked an end to silent compliance among Mexican-American youth. Students, along with other Mexican-American activists protested the deteriorating

conditions in their schools. The Mexican community, including the parents of these students, felt a sense of pride that their sons and daughters had fought for social justice.

However, the Brown Berets continued to experience harassment and brutality by local law enforcement officials. The group's increased visibility within the community during the 1968 Walkouts caused them to become a prime target for police officials. Local police took advantage of this visibility and tried to repress the group's activities by stifling the Brown Beret's focus. The police engaged in unjust practices and used excessive physical force toward the group. In the next section, I discuss the National Chicano Moratorium conference in which police officials used violent tactics against Brown Beret members and the Mexican community.

The Brown Berets and the August 29th National Chicano Moratorium

The Brown Berets also took part in the National Chicano Moratorium Conference (NCMC) on August 29, 1970 (Chavez 2002; Rosales 1996; Lopez 2003). The National Chicano Moratorium Conference was composed of various Chicano factions that ultimately dropped their regional names and adopted a single name known as *El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlán* (MEChA) demonstrating their organized structure and solidarity (Munoz 1989). Other community activists participated as well as activists from other parts of the Southwest, such as the Denver based *Crusade for Justice*.

The National Chicano Moratorium was headed by Rosalio Munoz, who had formerly been student body president at the University of California-Los Angeles and one of the first persons of Mexican descent to resist the Vietnam draft (Munoz 1989). Co-chairing the committee with Munoz was the Prime Minister of the Brown Berets, David Sanchez. The National Chicano Moratorium was created to protest the Vietnam War.

The National Chicano Moratorium had agreed on meeting for a conference at Belvedere Park for all the Mexican community of East Los Angeles, in which 20,000 people were present to protest the war and to discuss other issues of social injustice (Chavez 2002: 68). Rosalio Munoz had spoken with police officials, including the Department of Justice, regarding the theme of the march and he made it clear that it would be peaceful (*Los Angeles Times*, January 1971: 3).

People began making their way through Whittier Boulevard down to Laguna Park where the actual conference would take place at 1 p.m. (Chavez 2002: 68). Throughout the conference there was a calm and in some instances festive mood among the participants (Munoz 1989). The participants were dressed casually and they participated in the march in a “family unit with children including tiny infants” (*Los Angeles Free Press*, September 1970: 1). They also brought lawn chairs and ice chests with refreshments (Chavez 2002). However, police officials, were dressed in full riot gear with guns, clubs and shields monitoring the entire march. The Brown Berets were also monitoring the march and protest making sure that police officials did not provoke any negative reaction from participants (Lopez 2003).

The topics of the night were the Vietnam War and issues of discrimination and social injustice. Thirteen speakers were to address the crowd including Rodolfo Gonzalez from the Denver Crusade for Justice, California attorney Oscar Z. Acosta, and finally Rosalio Munoz. The peaceful protest was going smoothly when a group of people from the conference decided to buy soft drinks and beer and a local store called the Green Mill Liquor Store. That was the only store that was close to where the demonstration was taking place and several participants decided to go inside. The storeowner panicked due

to the amount of people inside his store. He then decided to lock the door so that no more people could walk in and the people inside could make their transactions and leave. People outside the store as well as inside became restless because they had been waiting for half an hour. Finally, the storeowner called the police to help him get some people out. Police officials came to the store and began dispersing the people (Chavez 2002).

There are slightly different accounts as to what actually happened at the store and how it progressed to a violent point. Lopez (2003) stated that the sheriffs' showed up in their patrol cars with their lights on as if a burglary had occurred and began using excessive force in dispersing the crowd. At that moment, some of the people began retaliating to that unwarranted force and a struggle ensued. The police thereafter used tear gas and riot sticks to disperse the entire crowd. Chavez (2002) noted that the storeowner had called the Sheriff's department to help disperse the crowd inside and outside the store. Three officers arrived at the store at 2:34 p.m., two were carrying clubs and one a riot gun (Chavez 2002: 69). At this point, someone had thrown an empty can at the sheriff's car that had been parked in front of the store. Officers responded by calling twenty-five more Sheriffs' officers to the scene (*Los Angeles Free Press*, September 1970: 12).

The commotion at the liquor store prompted a strong reaction by the police. Police officials used excessive physical force in dispersing the entire crowd at Laguna Park (Lopez 2003). The Brown Berets had the responsibility to be the informal monitors protecting the participants from possible police misconduct. Once the Brown Berets lined up against the Sheriff's officers, to shield the participants, LAPD were summoned

to Whittier Boulevard as reinforcements. Officers drew their riot sticks to beat people if they demonstrated any vocal resistance.

Many of the protestors began using physical resistance in retaliation to shield themselves from the unnecessary force. The police utilized brutal and excessive tactics in ending the demonstration. People were scared and were trying to flee the area and get into nearby homes for safety since many of them had brought their families along. Shockingly, police officials followed people into their yards and inside their homes and started beating them. Some participants tried to get on to the city buses to flee the riot and were chased by police officials and beat up inside the buses (Chavez, Interview with Author 2006).

The National Chicano Moratorium Conference ended in three deaths. One of those killed was Ruben (Robert) Salazar, who was a renowned columnist for the Los Angeles Times (Escobar 1993). Salazar was loved by the Mexican community, but despised by the local police department. He wrote articles and reported stories about various activist organizations, including the Brown Berets and gave a voice to the people regarding police brutality, violence, and harassment. Salazar covered stories surrounding the unjust and discriminatory practices of local police officials. The police hated Salazar because he would inform the public about the mysterious deaths that were occurring at the Sheriff's County Jail House. Despite the suspicious evidence, the police were never able present legitimate explanations as to why these youths committed suicide. For instance, parents of these victims insisted that their sons were not suicidal. The deaths of many detainees were simply ruled as suicide by the Sheriff's Department. The Mexican

community felt that these young Mexicans had been murdered by police officials inside the jailhouse (Lopez 2003).

The community felt that Sheriff's Deputies had intentionally killed Salazar. Various eyewitnesses had seen Salazar inside a local bar during the August 29th demonstration. By this point, the riot outside near Laguna Park was intensifying. Additionally, many witnesses had later seen Deputy Sheriff Thomas Wilson shoot a tear gas missiles through the curtain-like open door of the bar about fifteen feet from Salazar. The shot by Deputy Wilson hit Salazar right in the head instantly killing him right on the spot (Escobar 1993: 1503). These tear gas missiles were "ten inch long, high velocity projectiles designed to pierce barricades and were capable of penetrating inch-thick pine boards at one hundred yards" (Lopez 2003: 194). This event demonstrated the brutality by police against innocent citizenry participating in various non-violent protest activities. There were a total of 70 injured people and 185 arrested during the event (*Los Angeles Free Press*, September 1970: 3).

The other death was Angel Gilberto Diaz, who had been shot at multiple times by police while driving past passed a barricade set up by police officials. Diaz was wounded in the shootings crashed into a telephone poll and died. The third death was Lyn Ward, a fifteen-year old Brown Beret, who had been shot by a tear gas missile. The missile exploded and hurled Ward through a store window and killed him instantly. Police officials later claimed that Ward had died to due a bomb that was set up by the participants at the demonstration (Lopez 2003; Chavez 2002).

Lyn Ward's unfortunate and tragic death radicalized the Brown Berets. Prior to Ward's death, there was another youth who had died at the hands of police. The youth,

Danny Rodriguez, had been shot unnecessarily by police just as Ward had been (Lopez 2003: 196). Both Ward and Rodriguez were considered martyrs by the Brown Berets because of their bravery, their resistance to police brutality, and their loving devotion to their race (*la raza*). The *La Causa* newspaper illustrated a eulogy for Ward and the article also included pictures of Rodriguez's funeral. The newspaper depicted pictures of Ward's coffin draped with the Mexican-American flag surrounded by other Brown Beret members (*La Causa* 1970: 9-10).

In the last page of the paper, both Ward and Rodriguez's names were positioned by the Brown Beret symbol, rifles with bayonets over a crucifix and the words "Soldados Del La Raza" (Soldiers of our Race) read across the top (*La Causa*, December 1970: 20). The tone of the newspaper demonstrated an intense resentment and hostility for law enforcement officials, which the Brown Berets now were considered to be the enemy. In addition, the first page of *La Causa* illustrated a picture of the August 29th Chicano Moratorium, in which a police car was burning. On top of the car was a painted statement by the revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, "Seek Justice...with a Rifle in Your Fist" (*La Causa*, December 1970: 1). Another page indicated a Brown Beret with a rifle aiming at a police officer with a target on his chest. The caption read, "To Protect and to Serve...Who Says Chicanos Can't Shoot Straight" (*La Causa*, December 1970: 3).

The Brown Berets began advocating the eradication of police officials by whatever means necessary. The Brown Berets developed open hostility toward police officials and the Anglo establishment, there was also a more general feeling of distrust among all Anglos in general. For example, another article by *La Causa* (December 1970: 3) entitled, "Destroy the White Mind," asked the major question: "Was it all White men

that kept us down or was it only some of the White men?” The Brown Berets were feeling increasing frustration with the White establishment and they were feeling empowered. The Chicano Moratorium Conference marked a distinctive for the Brown Berets. It would be one the last major event the Brown Berets participated in publicly. Importantly, from this point forward, the Brown Berets experienced heightened (or increased) harassment by police officials.

In the following section, I discuss the legal harassment experienced by the Brown Berets during the 1968 Walkouts and the Biltmore incident. During the 1968 Walkouts, five Brown Berets members were indicted for conspiracy to disrupt the school system. In the Biltmore Hotel incident, two Brown Beret members were indicted for charges stemming from the fires that erupted in the hotel. The Brown Berets narrowly avoided prison sentences for these charges.

Legal Harassment

The Brown Berets were establishing a reputation for standing up to the police and as a result they were asked by different groups during various demonstrations. For example, the Brown Berets gained notoriety during the March 1968 “walkouts” of four East L.A. high schools. Students were angered by the educational neglect they were receiving. In addition, the facilities were in horrible conditions. Most importantly, there was a lack of encouragement to attend college. The Brown Berets did were not the sole coordinators of the walkouts, but they did have input on the preliminary plans. In addition, they were there to protect the students from police brutality and harassment. A total of 13 individuals were indicted for involvement in the walkouts. Five of those individuals were Brown Berets (Lopez 2003). This court case became known as the East

L.A. Thirteen (Chavez 2002). The next court case I will discuss is known as the Biltmore Six. In April 1969, former Governor of California Ronald Reagan had planned to speak at the Biltmore Hotel when his speech was cut short by fires that had erupted in the hotel. Two Brown Beret members were indicted by a secret grand jury for conspiracy to commit arson among a list of other charges. In the following sections, I will discuss both cases in detail.

The East L.A. Thirteen

Immediately after the 1968 Walkouts, thirteen Mexican-Americans were indicted and arrested by a secret grand jury. They were charged with conspiring to disrupt the peace in the area schools. Other charges brought forth were failure to disperse and trespassing on school grounds (Lopez 2003: 24). These charges are generally misdemeanor charges; however, prosecutors were set on convicting them for conspiracy. If the defendants had been convicted, they would have faced a 45-year sentence in prison (Chavez 2002: 48). Ultimately, this case was known as the East L.A. Thirteen.

On a Friday night in May of 1968, police officials began their arrests of the thirteen individuals accused of conspiracy. The accused were Sal Castro, a teacher at Lincoln High; Eliezer Risco and Joe Raza, both editors for the *La Raza* newspaper; David Sanchez, Prime Minister of the Brown Berets; Carlos Montes, Brown Beret Minister of Information; Ralph Ramirez, Brown Beret Minister of Public Relations; Gilbert Cruz Olmeda, Brown Beret officer; Moctezuma Esparza, UMAS leader; Carlos Munoz, Jr., UMAS President; Henry Gomez, activist; Fred Lopez, Brown Beret Minister of Communication; Patricio Sanchez, activist; and Richard Vigil, activist (Lopez 2003: 26).

Six individuals were not present in their homes during the arrest raids over the weekend. On Monday, Gomez and Lopez turned themselves in. Two days later, Vigil and Sanchez turned themselves in to police. At the time of the police raids, Montes and Ramirez were in Washington D.C. protesting with the Poor People's Campaign sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). They were arrested as soon as they arrived back to Los Angeles (Rosales 1996).

In addition, during the arrest of David Sanchez, police ransacked the headquarters and took membership lists, agendas, and other personal materials before they were done with the arrest. The bail was set for 10,000 dollars ensuring that the defendants would stay in jail. However, the bail was later dropped to 250 dollars, with the exception of David Sanchez, whose bail was 1000 dollars. In regard to the 10,000 dollar bail, Lopez (2003: 27) explained, "That sum greatly exceeded normal bail amounts; it represented ten times the bail usually imposed on those charged with burglary and twice the sum typically required in cases of assault with a deadly weapon." The defendants were soon released on bail and they began helping with the protests regarding their conspiracy charges.

The Mexican community was infuriated by the conspiracy charges. They began protesting in front of the courthouse and the police department. The defendants enlisted the aid of Chicano Lawyer Oscar Z. Acosta to represent them in court. Lopez (2003: 31) described the three defense strategies used by Acosta and the defendants,

First, that insufficient evidence existed to sustain the conspiracy charges; second, that the charges violated their First Amendment rights of free association and free speech; and third, that the absence of Mexicans on the indicting grand jury resulted from discrimination and thus violated the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Acosta was successful in pursuing these three strategies in court. He was also able to prove that the judge was biased against Mexicans. Ultimately, the case lagged on for two years. The case was eventually found to be “unconstitutional” and the defendants were acquitted. Despite the outcome, the East L.A. Thirteen trial had a tremendous impact on the Brown Beret. Former Brown Beret, Carlos Montes (Interview with Author 2006) explained,

That forced us to spend time in raising money, in going to court, and raising bail money. It was stifling our ability to continue organizing because now you become defensive.

Gradually, instances such as these began taking its toll on the Brown Beret organization. Members were beginning to become fearful of reprisals by law enforcement officials. It also affected the potential to recruit new members. The foundation and structure of the Brown Berets was slowly being crippled by the criminal justice system.

The Biltmore Six

On Thursday April 24, 1969, California governor Ronald Reagan was to give a speech at the Biltmore Hotel regarding the education of Mexican-Americans sponsored by the California Department of Education (Lopez 2003: 35). It was formally known as the *Nuevas Vistas Conference*. Many Chicanos were present for the conference and began chanting, shouting, and clapping drowning out Reagan’s voice. Brown Beret members were also present and had planned to disrupt the governor’s speech by conducting protests (*La Raza*, April 1969: 3). As the disruptions were occurring “fires had broken out in the mezzanine and the second, fourth, ninth, and tenth floors. The blazes remained small and confined to linen closets, where they had been started with highway-type flares” (Chavez 2002: 52). Some guests had to be removed from their

rooms, but no one was evacuated from the hotel. During the Reagan's speech, someone had cut the wires of the microphone with the intent to completely disrupt his speech.

After the Biltmore incident, ten Chicanos were indicted by the Los Angeles County Grand Jury. These individuals were indicted by a key witness for the prosecution, Fernando Sumaya. Sumaya was with the Los Angeles Police Department who had infiltrated the Brown Berets since 1968 and was present during the Biltmore incident (Chavez 2002). Fernando Sumaya's role in the Biltmore fires was described by Carlos Montes (Interview with Author 2006),

You know, what Fernando Sumaya did was he went into the bathroom and set fires in the bathroom. And there were fires in the hotel and the issue that came out in trial was how could we have done it, you know, because we didn't have access to the upper floors. They were all secured by Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and State Police... So, what they did at the hotel, was a classic agent provocateur.

Eventually, four people had the charges dropped, leaving six to be charged. The individuals were charged with conspiracy to commit "arson, burning personal property, burglary, and malicious destruction of electrical lines" (Lopez 2003: 36). Brown Beret members Carlos Montes and Ralph Ramirez, as well as United Mexican-American Students (UMAS) leader Moctezuma Esparza, were indicted for conspiracy charges. However, Carlos Montes, Brown Beret Minister of Information, feared for his life and went into hiding and left the country before completion of the trial. Ultimately, five persons faced court trials for the Biltmore incident (Montes Interview with Author 2006). The defendants would face life imprisonment if convicted.

Again, attorney Oscar Z. Acosta represented the Biltmore Six in the trial. He attempts to use the judicial discrimination strategy as in the East L.A. Thirteen case. Only this time, it was much more difficult because both the state's star witness, Fernando

Sumaya, and the trial judge were Mexicans. However, Acosta was determined to prove that there was judicial discrimination. Acosta pressed this issue by interviewing Superior Court Judges on the witness stand and interrogating them about their composition of the grand jurors. An article in *La Causa* (March 1971: 9) described the trial,

The main issue is the fact that we Chicanos, as a group of people, are being excluded from the workings of what is purported to be to be 'our country's system.' The importance of our trial reveals how we are intentionally excluded from the Grand Jury. According to the Constitution of Amerikkka, we are supposed to be tried by a jury of our peers, but instead, our peers come from Hollywood, Bel-Air, and there aren't very many Chicanos living in those barrios.

As in the East L.A. Thirteen case, there were no Mexican-Americans in the jury panel. Nonetheless, Attorney Acosta was not able to prove that the judges had engaged in judicial discrimination when selecting jurors for the jury panel (*Los Angeles Times*, April 1971: 1-3). Next, Acosta also faced a difficult task of protecting the defendants with the Equal Protection clause and the right of free speech because setting fires and committing burglary were not a part of the First Amendment (Lopez 2003). Fernando Sumaya had blamed the fire setting on Brown Beret member, Carlos Montes. Montes testified in court that it was impossible for him to have started the fires in the top floors because the LAPD and state police had completely secured access to the top floors where the fires had erupted (Interview with Author 2006). Carlos Montes testified Sumaya was completely responsible for the fires that erupted in the Biltmore Hotel.

After three years, all five defendants had been acquitted due to the prosecutions' lack of evidence. Acosta was also able to prove that Fernando Sumaya, the agent provocateur, had started the fires in the Biltmore hotel and tried to entrap other Brown Beret members. In January of 1970, before the trial was over, Montes fled the country to

Mexico and returned in 1979. He was then arrested and later acquitted for the Biltmore incident (Lopez 2003: 39). This trial had also created several difficulties for the Brown Beret organization because they were having trouble coming up with monetary resources for the organization. In addition, their focus was shifted from their organizational goals to defending their freedom. The lives of the defendants were affected by the trial for several years causing a gradual decline for Brown Beret membership.

Informants and Agent Provocateurs

The Brown Berets had a total of five infiltrators who were sent by local police officials. These police officers were sent to gather as much information as possible regarding their membership, current activities, and plans. At the time, it was very difficult for the Brown Beret organization to identify these infiltrators because there were many members coming in and out of the group. The group included people from all walks of life and the Brown Berets were not aware of all the member's backgrounds. Montes (Interview with Author 2006) discussed this issue,

They were people that would come and go. People that would come and would be hanging out with us, but they wouldn't do any work, or they would leave and we would say, 'where is that guy?' 'Who was he?' I mean we couldn't find out about everyone, we grew real fast after the Walkouts, you know. And people joined up and of course we wanted people to be involved. I remember individuals that we always suspected of being snitches and informants, you know, but we never discovered them because they never came back.

In May of 1968, Robert Acosta was planted by the Sheriff's Department to monitor and inform on Brown Beret activities. He was advised by his superiors to gather as much information as possible on the Brown Berets. Acosta was recruited for this assignment right after he graduated from the Sheriff's Police Academy. On the other hand, the Los Angeles Department (LAPD) had actually developed an intelligence group

called the Special Operations for Conspiracy (SOC) in order to investigate the Brown Berets (Montes Interview with Author 2006). The Special Operations committee sent in Sgt. Abel Armas to infiltrate the Brown Berets despite the lack of criminal activities on the part of the Brown Berets. However, police officials were determined to “find” criminal activity by planting agent provocateurs in social movement organizations and permitting them to cause intentional violence (Vigil 1999).

Another LAPD infiltrator was police officer Robert Avila in 1968 (Lopez 2003: 190). Avila had been gathering information on the Brown Berets for a year. Police officials used infiltrators as a technique to find out if the Brown Berets were engaging in illegal activities. The Brown Berets had become suspicious of Avila and they conducted an undercover investigation on Robert Avila’s background. The Brown Berets, in using their own intelligence gathering, called the high school where Avila said he had graduated from and they found out that Robert Avila had not graduated from that specific school.

Since the beginning, Robert Avila had used a fake name to gain acceptance into the Brown Beret organization. Avila’s real name was Robert Avina (Montes Interview with Author 2006). When the Brown Berets became aware of his true identity they kicked Avila out of the group because they suspected he had ties with police officials (Montes Interview with Author 2006). The Brown Berets later spotted Avila on the street dressed in his police uniform. The *La Causa* (May 1969: 5) described the group’s discovery of the informant,

Through Brown Beret Intelligence, we discovered Robert Avila dressed in the black uniform of a marano (pig), packing his 38 caliber white solution piece, and wearing the badge of the Los Angeles Police Department...Avila is 23 years old. Because of his young 14 year old

appearance, he was sent by the (L.A.P.D) to infiltrate and spy on last year's walkout.

Another member of the LAPD, Fernando Sumaya, who was a police officer had infiltrated the Brown Berets in November of 1968. Sumaya was a rookie who had just graduated from the Police Academy. The day after his graduation, Sumaya's superiors gave him orders to infiltrate the Brown Beret organization with the intent to destroy the group and its members (*Los Angeles Times*, August 1971: 3). As in Avila's case, the Brown Berets conducted their own security check on Sumaya and discovered that he had indeed graduated from the local high school he had indicated. Montes (Interview with Author 2006) explained,

So, the next cop came and he used his real name, Fernando Sumaya. So, when we checked it and we asked him about it he said, 'I went to this high school' and we checked the high school records and, 'yeah, he did graduate.' Oh, okay, it's the real thing, you know.

The Brown Berets had no further suspicions since Sumaya's background was exactly as he indicated to the group. Sumaya's physical appearance was similar to the other members. He had long hair and a mustache and he was also a self-proclaimed radical. As a result, the group ceased their intelligence gathering on Sumaya. This allowed Sumaya access to the Brown Berets and he was reporting on the group's activities to his LAPD superiors. Though his infiltration, Sumaya informed the LAPD of the Brown Beret's intention to disrupt Governor Ronald Reagan's speech at the Biltmore Hotel in April 1969.

During the Biltmore trial, Sumaya described how he reported on the group's activities during every possible opportunity (*Los Angeles Times*, August 1971: 3). Throughout the trial, Sumaya had implicated various Brown Beret members including,

Carlos Montes. Sumaya explained in court, “Carlos Montes, 23, who jumped bail and is being sought planned to set fires. Others were to break windows, pull fire alarms, and disrupt electrical lines” (*Los Angeles Times* August 1971: 3).

As member of the Brown Berets, Fernando Sumaya met up with Carlos Montes before the *Nuevas Vistas Conference* began. Sumaya was placing the blame on Montes and the other members for starting the fires in the hotel during Reagan’s speech. During the trial, the Brown Berets had a Chicano lawyer, Oscar Acosta, who was able to prove that Sumaya was an “agent provocateur” that had actually planned and single handedly *started* the fires in the hotel. During the cross-examination, Acosta interrogated Sumaya about starting the fires. Finally, the jury was convinced that the officer had lied and tried to entrap members of the Brown Berets.

Seven years passed before the trial was completely over and the charges were dismissed. Montes during the time of the trial went underground and hid from authorities. He escaped to Mexico and changed his name to begin a new life. However, nobody really knew what had happened to him. The Brown Berets thought that perhaps the CIA had kidnapped or killed him (Lopez 2003). Several years later in 1979, Montes returned to California and faced the charges. However, the charges were dropped due to a lack of evidence.

Eustacio (Frank) Martinez was the last person to infiltrate the East Los Angeles Brown Beret organization. Martinez was originally from Texas, where he had been arrested in July 1969 for an illegal weapons charge during a gang bust in Houston. Martinez was offered a deal by the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agency (ATF). The

deal entailed that ATF would eliminate the federal charge as long as he would become an undercover agent for the ATF (*The Militant*, February 1972: 19).

The ATF wanted to gather information on Chicano activist groups and they planted Martinez in the Mexican-American Youth Organization (MAYO) in Houston, TX and the Brown Berets in Kingsville, TX (*The Militant*, February 1972: 19). Martinez was transferred from Texas to East Los Angeles in 1970 prior to the August 29th National Chicano Moratorium conference. He quickly joined the Brown Berets and then took over Rosalio Munoz's position as Co-Chairman for the National Chicano Moratorium Committee (Vigil 1999: 152). Martinez recounted his role as an informant and agent provocateur specifically on November 13, 1970,

They told me, you know, that ... the main reason they wanted me [in Los Angeles] was because they wanted me to get the information and everything – in other words – the purpose was to eliminate all the organizations. So in order to cause confusion within the organizations, to provoke incidents... I had pressure [from the ATF]... I was being pressured, and how come I wasn't givin' them information, and how come there were no bursts, you know?...So I was under pressure, so in order to get them off my back...by walkin' out with the rifle so the pigs could see it, so that was the purpose, to get raided (cited in Vigil 1999: 152).

Martinez was holding a shotgun outside of the Chicano Moratorium Committee office. Police officers arrived at the scene with their “weapons drawn and their clubs swinging because someone had paraded with a shotgun on the sidewalk in front of the office. The person with the gun was Eustacio Martinez. Three people were hospitalized in the aftermath of the raid” (Vigil 1999: 152). As an agent provocateur, Martinez's assignment was to intentionally cause violence in order for police officials to have an excuse for raiding and arresting group members. Martinez was also responsible for inciting violence

at the Chicano Moratorium Conference held on January 31, 1971, where one person was shot to death and 13 to 24 others were wounded by gunfire (Vigil 1999: 153).

Moreover, Montes (Interview with Author 2006) also asserted that these agent provocateurs would intentionally incite and cause violence amongst group members or toward the authorities. In doing so, they would please their superiors and move up in rank. In turn, their superiors would then persuade the public that the Brown Berets were a group of subversives who were espousing Communism and inciting violence (Chavez Interview with Author 2006).

In the next section, I examined the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) file on the Brown Berets. Starting in 1968, the FBI began their surveillance on the Brown Berets. The FBI perceived the group to be a threat to national security and enlisted the use of informants and other “sources” to assist in gathering information about the Brown Beret’s activities. FBI officials garnered personal information about Brown Beret leaders in order to be well informed about their motives.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): Surveillance of Brown Berets 1968-1973

The Brown Beret file consisted of over 1,200 pages, but included multiple chapters. My specific focus was the East Los Angeles chapter, which was headed by David Sanchez, former Prime Minister for the Brown Berets. The files offered an opportunity to delve into the social control lens of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Throughout several points within the files, there are short time gaps in which there was no information regarding a specific issue. Since the files are over 40 years old, there may be loss of pages or possibly some events were not for public view through the Freedom of

Information Act. However, I have done my best to present the files in a chronological fashion identifying the events that the FBI was able to investigate.

For five years, the Federal Bureau of Investigation had been closely monitoring the organization under the assumption that the Brown Berets were subversive and had Communist ideologies (Chavez 2002). The Brown Berets had much familiarity with this type of tactic used by authorities. The *La Causa* (May 1970: 14) reported,

They are constantly under surveillance. The more important members are followed by secret service agents wherever they go. Police stop them often for false reasons and give them tickets and insult them in the hope of provoking an assault. Their phones are tapped and their offices are bugged. Their lives are one of continuous hell of trying to stay out of jail, help the community, and maintain the organization.

The authorities used information-gathering techniques to try and prove their assumptions about the organization and tried to garner ample evidence to arrest and indict or legally harass the group in hopes of disintegrating it. The legal social control by authorities was a major factor that led to the demise of the Brown Berets in 1972 (Chavez 2002: 60).

In the evening of February 25, 1968, two men were stopped in the East Los Angeles area by the LAPD because police had noticed that the driver of the car had blood on his face. Earlier that evening there had been an alleged gang fight in the area. As the officers approached the car, they noticed a machine gun protruding out from under the seat with the inscription "Property of U.S. Government" (FBI File # 52-11746: March 8, 1968). LAPD took the two men down to the county jail for further questioning.

The authorities later called the Marine Base and spoke with a Marine official about the gun and its serial number. The Marine official stated that the machine gun had been stolen from the Marine Corps Base in Camp Pendleton, CA on July 20, 1967. The police questioned the two men about the origins of the gun. One of the men stated that it

was given to him by a man in the East Los Angeles area and had no idea the gun was stolen. At this point, police officials asked the two men if they were a part of the Brown Beret organization and both men stated they were not members of any such organization (FBI File # 52-11746: March 8, 1968). The file continued to state, "Sources contacted and advised subjects not known to be members of Brown Berets, as had been reported by local press" (FBI File # 52-11746: March 8, 1968). The police could not charge the two men with stealing government property because one of the men had been in jail during the time that the gun was stolen in July 1967 and the other was not aware it was stolen. The Assistant U.S. Attorney decided not to prosecute and instead charged the men with possession of an automatic weapon (FBI File # 52-11746: March 8, 1968).

It is apparent that local police had been monitoring the Brown Berets through the use of informants prior to 1968. During the interview of both men, police officials had asked the men if they were a part of the Brown Berets. Essentially, the police knew about the group before the arrest of the two men with the machine gun. The police already knew of the Brown Beret's existence. By March 1968, local police had begun to correspond with the FBI on a regular basis on the issue of the Brown Berets. This would signify that the police had been investigating the Brown Berets when they were still known as the *Young Chicanos for Community Action (YCCA)*.

As mentioned before, the YCCA did not become radicalized until Vicki Castro had left the group as President and David Sanchez took over the position. Unlike Sanchez, Castro was not a radical and militant leader. The YCCA had only been involved in civic duties, but, the police perceived them as a threat. Once the FBI had received written communication from local police about the machine gun incident,

Hoover decided to fully investigate the Brown Berets in order to find out if they were a “threat to national security of the United States” (FBI File # 105-178715: March 27, 1968).

On February 28, 1968, FBI agents interviewed the two men regarding the machine gun and also asked them if they were a part of the Brown Beret organization. The two men stated they were not members of the group. However, one of the men stated he had heard of the Brown Berets (FBI File # 52-11746: March 8, 1968). On March 18, 1968 J. Edgar Hoover sent a letter to both the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in Los Angeles and San Diego reprimanding them for not gathering sufficient evidence in the case of the two men with the machine gun. Hoover declared, “The handling of this matter thus far by the Los Angeles and San Diego Offices leaves much to be desired. A new Mexican-American Nationalist organization, the ‘Brown Berets,’ allegedly exists and two members of this organization were found to be in possession of a machine gun stole from Camp Pendleton, CA. This raises a serious question of how this organization acquired a weapon from a military base” (FBI File # 52-11746: March 18, 1968). Review of the FBI files does not clarify how the FBI determined that these two men were members of the Brown Berets’ since their files indicated that neither were members of the group. Prior to the machine gun investigation, the FBI had not known about the Brown Beret organization. Only local police had known about the group’s existence. Once the arrest of the two males occurred, local police enlisted the aid of the FBI and notified them about the existence of this organization.

The investigation over the machine gun sparked a strong reaction from the FBI. In March 1968, the FBI field office in Los Angeles asked for permission from the

headquarters in Washington, D.C. to initiate a full investigation on the Brown Berets (FBI File # 105-178715: March 26, 1968). In a memorandum dated March 26, 1968, FBI headquarters were seeking permission to let the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in Los Angeles investigate the Brown Berets. The memorandum stated,

Memorandum is to recommend authority to be granted for Los Angeles to conduct active investigation of captioned organization [Young Chicanos for Community Action, a.k.a Brown Berets, Internal Security]... Investigation of organizations in southwest United States oriented toward mobilization of Mexican-American ethnic groups has uncovered several strongly militant organizations all professing betterment of social and economic conditions of Mexican-Americans as their objectives. Los Angeles has reported information regarding captioned group which was originally composed of high school and college students of Mexican-American origin who claimed as their objectives better conditions for students of their ethnic group and insisted that greater attention be given in educational systems in Los Angeles... Los Angeles has requested authority to investigate the group to ascertain identity of its leaders and members (FBI File # 105-178715: March 26, 1968).

The FBI field office in Los Angeles was granted permission by J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI to fully investigate the Brown Berets (FBI File # 105-1787715: March 27, 1968). The head office in Washington perceived the Brown Berets to be a threat to internal security and would ultimately lead to violence against the government. It was also noted in this same memorandum that the Brown Berets had its headquarters raided by local police due to alleged reports of illegal drug use. However, no further reports confirmed the alleged drug use in their files.

As the Brown Berets were assisting with the 1968 High School Walkouts informants or "sources" were used to alert the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in the FBI field office of their plans. In a memorandum from the SAC, Los Angeles to the Director of the FBI, agents alerted local military agencies, the U.S. Secret Service, and the U.S. Attorney of Los Angeles about the "school disturbances" (FBI File # 157-2163: March 7,

1968). The subject of the memorandum was “Racial Matters” concerning the student walkouts at Lincoln High School, Roosevelt High School, Garfield High School, Jefferson High School, Wilson High School, Banning High School, and Venice High School. The Special Agent in Charge (SAC) explained that the students were throwing rocks, bottles, and eggs at local police officials (FBI File # 157-2163: March 12, 1968). In April 1968, the FBI described the Brown Berets as being a Mexican militant organization who “demand immediate action to improve the economic standing of the Mexican-American people by city, state, and Federal Government. The Brown Berets have publicly stated that if action is not taken by the ‘establishment,’ then the Brown Berets will make forceful demands” (FBI File # 100-71172: April 17, 1968).

The headquarters of the Brown Berets, *La Piranya* coffee house, was permanently shut down by the Sheriff’s Department in February of 1968 (FBI File # 100-7112: April 17, 1968). Despite the fact that David Sanchez had a permit license to have the coffee house open, police officials managed to get it shut down. The FBI managed to find out through the use of surveillance and informants that the Brown Berets had moved their headquarters from La Piranya to the basement of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, which was headed by Reverend John B. Luce. FBI files indicated that officials observed members of the Brown Berets entering and leaving on a daily basis (FBI File # 100-7112: April 17, 1968). During this process, FBI officials are also keeping record of newspaper accounts of the Brown Berets in the local newspapers.

The Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in Los Angeles reported to the Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover that the Intelligence Division of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) had been keeping an eye on the Brown Berets also known as the

Young Chicanos for Community Action (YCCA) since January 1, 1968 (FBI File # 100-71589: May 8, 1968). A “source” advised that the group had been “formed within a low income area of the city with a membership of young Mexican-Americans who wish as their purpose to focus city-wide attention upon the economic problems concerning the Mexican-Americans” (FBI File # 100-71589: May 8, 1968).

In June, 1968, nearly one-hundred Mexican-Americans, African-Americans and several Caucasians were protesting outside of the LAPD building in regard to the indictments and arrests of the Walkout participants. They were angered and felt that it was unconstitutional based on the participant’s free speech rights. The FBI and the LAPD were keeping close watch of the protestors. Informants were also in the crowd advising officials of the individuals involved in the protest. As the memorandum stated, “The letter head memorandum is classified confidential due to the use of sources who have future value, which would be jeopardized if their identity were not concealed” (FBI File # 100-71172: June 5, 1968).

On June 3, 1968, Carlos Montes and Ralph Ramirez had been protesting in Washington, D.C. over the arrests of the people involved with the high school walkouts. At the time, those individuals were sitting in jail because of the walkouts. The protestors were charged with conspiracy to disrupt public schools. Montes and Ramirez were at the steps of the Department of Justice and had demanded to speak to the Attorney General Ramsey Clark about the indictments along with the aid of Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales from the Denver based Crusade for Justice and Reis Lopez Tijerina from the New Mexico Land Grant organization. Montes and Ramirez learned of their grand jury

indictments from Gonzales on June 3 while protesting at the Department of Justice (Vigil 1999).

The next day, June 4, 1968, J. Edgar Hoover wrote a memorandum to the Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Los Angeles field office about the discrepancies and the delayed notification of the arrest indictments of the members associated with walkouts (FBI File # 105-178715: June 4, 1968). Attorney General Ramsey Clark did not have any furnished information about the arrests from the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in Los Angeles and Hoover was upset by the major delay of the entire ordeal. On that same day in June 1968, the SAC in Los Angeles was also making a report for Hoover on the latest news of the 1968 Walkouts members who had been indicted and arrested for conspiring to disrupt public schools. It was known that nine of the thirteen individuals had been arraigned before a Superior Judge on June 3 and that the judge had lowered the bail for all the participants except David Sanchez (FBI File # 100-71172: June 4, 1968).

Once the bail was lowered, all nine posted bond and were released later that afternoon. However, local police officials did not want Carlos Montes and Ralph Ramirez to be detained in Washington, D.C. because they were afraid it would cause a riot back in Los Angeles or again at the Department of Justice. Police officials planned to arrest the two men once they returned to Los Angeles. The lawyers for the Walkout defendants included Chicano lawyer Oscar Z. Acosta and three other men, Michael Hannon, Paul Posner and A. L. Wirin. In this case, Wirin questioned the charges based on the constitutionality of the charges. The defendants were assisting and urging the students to leave the schools. Wirin believed that the defendants could have been

protected by the freedom of right provisions in the constitution (FBI File # 100-71172: June 4, 1968).

Carlos Montes and Ralph Ramirez are apprehended by LAPD a month later in July 1968 regarding the high school walkouts and are arraigned for conspiring to disturb the peace and with “interfering with the Los Angeles school system” (FBI File # 100-71172: July 2, 1968). The two Brown Berets had their bail set by the judge for a thousand dollars each and were to meet in court for their plea on July 16, 1968 along with the other eleven defendants (FBI File # 100-71172: July 8, 1968). By August, the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in Los Angeles reports to Hoover that the trial will be delayed until September 6, 1968. Meanwhile, the SAC planned to keep the FBI fully aware of what will be occurring with the court case as well as keeping them up to date on the overall Brown Beret organization (FBI File # 100-71172: August 7, 1968). In this same memo, FBI officials included informative notes in which they describe the Brown Berets as anti-white. The FBI also stated that the Brown Berets were closely associated with the Black Panther Party.

Four days later, on August 12, 1968, the FBI indicated that about 25 Brown Beret marchers were protesting at the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department over the constitutionality of the East L.A. Thirteen trial (FBI File # 100-71172: August 12, 1968). The protest ended peacefully after two hours of marching around the perimeter. The marchers were holding up signs that read, “End Police Harassment,” “Everyone Loses in a Police State” and “Kill Hunger, Not People” (FBI File # 100-7112: August 12, 1968). FBI agents were at the Four days later on August 12, the FBI indicated that about 25 Brown Beret marchers were protesting at the Los Angeles Sheriff’s office over the

constitutionality of the East L.A. Thirteen trial (FBI File # 100-71172: August 12, 1968). The protest ended peacefully. However, FBI agents were watching the marchers and taking pictures of the protestors with their signs. No violence occurred during the march and there were no arrests.

As the East L.A. Thirteen trial dragged on through the months, the defendants were in court on September 23, 1968. The LAPD advised the FBI that the East L.A. Thirteen appeared upon the Grand Jury and the next court date was set for October 21st (FBI File # 100-71172: September 23, 1968). Informants working for the FBI reported about thirty supporters outside of the Los Angeles County Hall of Justice protesting the case. The memorandum stated, "There were eleven unidentified members of the Brown Berets in the courtroom along with twenty-five supporters from the Mexican-American community. Source advised ten to twelve demonstrators marched on the south side of the Hall of Justice demanding justice for thirteen indicted..." (FBI File # 100-71172: September 23, 1968).

It is evident that informants were being used throughout the entire East L.A. Thirteen trial in order to keep local police authorities and FBI officials up to date on what was occurring. Sources (also known as informants) were being used to garner information about all Brown Beret members and participants involved in protests. FBI officials wanted to make sure they knew the names and any other identifying information of the people who were supporters of the East L.A. Thirteen defendants. Sources reported on demonstrations and protestors and were expected to find out as much information as possible about the people involved. The FBI considered the Brown Berets to be a threat to national security and were also suspicious of their supporters.

On November 5, 1968, a source advised the FBI field office of a Brown Beret manual called the "Birth of a New Symbol," which was written by David Sanchez, Prime Minister of the group. The manual was then disseminated to Washington, D.C. (FBI File # 100-71172: November 5, 1968). At the time, the booklet depicted the suffering and struggle of the Mexican-American in the United States. Sanchez explained,

For over 120 years, the Mexican-American has suffered at the hands of the Anglo establishment. He is discriminated against in schooling, housing, employment, and in every phase of life...Because these injustices have existed and the Anglo establishment shows no sign of changing them, and because the cries of individuals have gone unheard and fallen upon deaf ears, a group of young Chicanos have come together under the name of the Brown Berets to demand an immediate end to the injustices committed against the Mexican-American (FBI File # 100-71172: November 5, 1968).

The FBI tried to convey the Brown Berets as a violent militant group in order to cause fear and anger among the public. In the memorandum, the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) also noted that the Brown Berets were there to serve and protect the community by any means necessary. Additionally, the manual noted, "If those Anglos in power are willing to do this in a peaceful and orderly process, then we will be only too happy to accept this way. Otherwise, we will be forced to other alternatives" (FBI File # 100-71172: November 5, 1968). By this point, the Brown Berets felt disenfranchised, neglected, and discriminated against by the U.S. system.

In a memorandum dated February 25, 1969 the FBI described the Brown Berets as a "protective-type group for Mexican-Americans, established to attempt to better the living standards, employment opportunities and quality of education in its communities. Now it is developing into an organized, armed group..." (FBI File # 105-178715: February 25, 1969). Hoover was adamant that the Los Angeles FBI field office keep the

Brown Berets under “continuous and aggressive investigative attention” (FBI File # 105-178715: February 25, 1969). All information from the local authorities had to quickly be disseminated to the FBI field office in Los Angeles and then to J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover perceived the Brown Berets to be a threat to national security and wanted all field offices to investigate possible Brown Beret chapters within their jurisdictions. Offices around the region were also contacted to ensure an investigation of potential Brown Beret chapters in their area. Hoover stated, “Other offices receiving this communication are to aggressively investigate Brown Beret chapters and submit appropriate organizational reports” (FBI File # 105-178715: February 25, 1969).

Five months later, the SAC in Los Angeles reported to Hoover that the Brown Berets had a “propensity for violence” (FBI File # 100-71172: July 21, 1969). Despite, the description by FBI officials about the Brown Berets, they noted later in their appendix that the group mainly concentrated on protest against the Los Angeles City School System, claiming discrimination against Mexican-Americans. Conversely, the FBI also mentioned the Brown Berets had only been arrested for disruption of the Los Angeles City Schools demonstrating the dramatization of the Brown Berets.

Since J. Edgar Hoover believed the Brown Berets were a threat to national security, he authorized all law enforcement officials in cities such as Albuquerque, Denver, Kansas City, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco to investigate potential Brown Beret chapters in their areas (FBI File # 105-178715: August 13, 1969). All information had to be sent to the FBI field offices in their region. In turn, these FBI field offices had to report to Hoover.

Months later, the Biltmore incident had occurred in April 1969 and in a memorandum to Hoover, the SAC stated that local authorities are keeping them informed on the case and of those indicted, which included Brown Beret members Carlos Montes and Ralph Ramirez. There was a court hearing in which the defense lawyer for the Biltmore Six, Oscar Z. Acosta had filed for “a motion...charging that Los Angeles County Grand Jury, which returned indictments...was not comprised of members of minority races” (FBI File # 100-71172: October 22, 1969). Outside of the courthouse there were supporters of the Biltmore Six protesting the indictments of the group. Standing near the protestors were FBI informants who were watching the demonstrator’s every move.

The Chicano Moratorium held a number of moratorium demonstrations, but, none were as violent and as large as the August 29, 1970 demonstration in which over 20,000 Chicanos marched and protested the social inequalities in the United States and the Vietnam War. In December 1969 the FBI received a tip from an informant that the Chicano Moratorium was going to have a demonstration during the month. The memorandum noted, “Los Angeles will maintain contact with the active sources for further information concerning the Chicano Moratorium” (FBI File # 100-71172: December 10, 1969). The memo had also been disseminated to the Secret Service and Air Force because the FBI perceived the Brown Berets to have a propensity for violence. The Chicano Moratorium was held on December 20, 1969. During that time, FBI agents and informants were observing the demonstration (FBI File # 100-71172: December 20, 1969). Approximately, 1,200 to 1,500 people protested on that day, but no violence occurred and there were no arrests by police officials.

Seven months later, on July 1970, the Brown Berets, *El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlán* (MEChA), and the Barrio Defense Committee all protested outside of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department over the treatment of the detainees. They were upset over the number of young males that were dying in their cells. The Sheriff stated it was suicide, but, most people in the Mexican community believed that it was murder (Montes Interview with Author 2006). There were about two-hundred people peacefully protesting the treatment of the young detainees. The FBI made sure that the Secret Service and the local military were aware of the event in case violence erupted (FBI File # 100-71172: July 4, 1970).

The Chicano Moratorium was held on August 29, 1970 and a month later on September 2, 1970 SAC Wesley G. Grapp of the Los Angeles office telephonically advised that the L.A. Attorney General had requested a briefing with the President concerning the anti-war demonstration (FBI File # 105-178715: September 2, 1970). The Attorney General was worried that there might be another demonstration later that month because the President of the U.S. was scheduled to meet with the President of Mexico. The FBI reported that there were 152 arrests and one individual was killed when the police fired a tear gas projectile into a bar. In addition, there were twenty-five civilians and twenty-eight officers injured during the August 29th demonstration. However, the FBI neglected to note the deaths of Lynn Ward, the fifteen-year old Brown Beret who was shot by Sheriff's police officials using a tear gas projectile, Angel Gilberto Diaz, and the renowned journalist Roberto (Robert) Salazar.

A memorandum between two FBI officials stated the Brown Berets had engaged in various militant activities resulting in violent confrontations with police (FBI File #

105-178715: November 18, 1970). The FBI believed that the Brown Berets had chapters in other areas. An FBI memo reported, "The Director has approved initiation of security investigation of leaders and members of captioned group [Brown Berets] because of its potential for violence" (FBI File # 105-178715: November 18, 1970). Further communication would be needed from other field offices advising Hoover if there were established Brown Beret chapters in their area. If so, the SAC's would compose a list of names, addresses, and any other identifying information in order to stifle the group.

J. Edgar Hoover wrote to the Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Los Angeles regarding the Brown Berets and their activities. He wanted for the SAC to provide a survey relative to the Mexican-American population and an indication of the total number of violent militant groups (FBI File # 105-180564: December 1, 1970). The SAC illustrated that there were over a million people in the Los Angeles area with Spanish surnames. Hoover wanted to know exactly how many Mexican-Americans there were in the area. The Special Agent in Charge (SAC) had also indicated to Hoover that the Brown Berets were known to possess weapons. Therefore, further exacerbating Hoover's negative perception of the Brown Berets.

Three months later, FBI officials, decided to include several Brown Beret members into their "Security Index" also known as the "Agitator Index" for the Los Angeles area (FBI File # 105-178715: March 8, 1971, Los Angeles Division Report). A number of Brown Beret leaders were being investigated by the FBI. Also in 1971, the FBI contacted the Secret Service in Los Angeles to inform them that the Brown Berets no longer had a headquarters (FBI File # 100-71172: March 8, 1971). Additionally, the FBI received information regarding the free health clinic which had been established by the

Brown Berets for the city of Los Angeles with the help of the Ford Foundation (FBI File # 100-71172: March 8, 1971).

In October 1971, the Brown Berets had proposed to hold rallies in Tucson, Arizona and in New Mexico. However, the group was stopped by Phoenix police for a minor traffic violation. The leader of the group identified himself as David Sanchez, Prime Minister of the Brown Berets (FBI File # 105-New: October 21, 1971, Phoenix). Police officials noted that the members were dressed in khaki fatigues and were wearing Brown Berets. Later that day, a source had tipped off Phoenix police about where the Brown Berets were going to spend the night (FBI File # 105-New: October 21, 1971). The police were also told that there was no indication of violence expected to occur at the rally.

In the summer of 1972, the Brown Berets were traveling to several states such as Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The group marched in Las Cruces, NM on June 22, 1972 to protest the inhumane treatment of illegal immigrants by border patrol agents, Immigration and Naturalization Services, and other law enforcement personnel. A source informed the Las Cruces Police Department that the group had proposed to march in El Paso, TX on July 1, 1972 (FBI File, June 26, 1972. From: El Paso, TX To: FBI, Acting Director). Police officials are keeping the FBI posted on the events of the rally and any other information regarding the identities of the marchers.

Two days later on June 24, 1972, El Paso police officials contacted the FBI about the proposed rally that was going to be held on July 1, 1972 (FBI File, June 29, 1972. From: El Paso To: FBI, Acting Director). Another source indicated that the group was going to march in front of the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in La Tuna, TX on

June 29, 1972 to protest the treatment of illegal immigrants who were detained in the facility at the time. By mid-morning on July 1, 1972 FBI agents had the Brown Berets under surveillance in Anthony, NM as they were marching along the highway to the FCI in La Tuna. FBI agents along with local police in El Paso, TX are keeping an eye on the marchers. There were about thirty Brown Berets and other participants totaling one-hundred protestors (FBI File # 105-2481: July 3, 1972). Once again, the rally was in reference to the treatment of illegal immigrants and discrimination against Mexican-Americans.

Two months later, in September 1972, the SAC in Los Angeles advised the FBI Acting Director that the Chicano Moratorium had not been active for nearly a year (FBI File # 100-71589: September 15, 1972). However, the Brown Berets still had various active chapters in the area including, El Monte, Riverside, San Gabriel, San Pedro, Santa Maria, and Santa Paula (FBI File # 100-71589: September 15, 1972).

It was clear for the FBI that the Brown Beret's organization was gradually being stifled by the constant social control efforts of all law enforcement agencies. In time, the FBI suspected the movement would dissolve and their investigative efforts never dwindled. In November 1972, a Denver, Colorado newspaper released information that David Sanchez, Prime Minister of the Brown Berets had stated the group was disbanding all the Brown Beret chapters across the country (FBI File # 105-178715: November 27, 1972). Sanchez also told the newspaper that, "The Brown Berets, in the forefront of the Chicano Movement in the late 1960's, were destroyed by police harassment and infiltration, internal squabbles and 'hippie-ism' among members which ruined the discipline..." (FBI File # 105-178715: November 27, 1972). A few days later, FBI

officials were still wondering if the group was active or if it had dissolved as Sanchez had stated (FBI File # 100-71172: November 30, 1972). FBI sources would be used in order to try and find out what the plans were for the group, they were concerned that possibly another leader would arise and take over the Brown Berets.

Eventually, the FBI declared the Brown Berets as no longer in existence and referred to David Sanchez's public statements to a New Mexico newspaper which indicated that the group had disbanded on November 1, 1972 (FBI File, January 22, 1973, Los Angeles Division). The next month, FBI officials in Los Angeles were notified by local authorities that there was no further Brown Beret activity. Sources and informants also confirmed to local police that the group no longer existed. The FBI was later informed by sources that the Brown Berets had actually terminated David Sanchez, former Prime Minister of the group (FBI File # 100-71172: March 29, 1973). Sources were used to find out more information about the group and its proposed plans. Finally, in July 1973, after six months of no Brown Beret activity, FBI officials decided to let the investigation proceed for another sixty days before dropping the case (FBI File # 100-71172: July 9, 1973). The FBI was notified by informants that the Brown Berets had no established leadership and had become more of a social club instead of its former paramilitary fashion. The FBI finally dropped the investigation after no further activities were reported.

The Brown Berets Disband in 1973

After years of fighting for positive social change, the Brown Berets disbanded in 1973. The group was comprised of young males and females who were committed to changing the plight of Mexican-Americans in society. The group became highly visible in the community and quickly gained notoriety among the Mexican people. Despite their efforts, the goal of becoming a rising movement for positive social change was shattered by the legal social control efforts of authorities at the local, state, and federal levels. Largely unaware of the social control tactics being utilized against them, the organization became a prime target for law enforcement officials.

In addition to government social control, the organization was plagued with internal conflicts over leadership. David Sanchez, Prime Minister of the Brown Berets, stated publicly to a Denver newspaper that the group was disbanding due to police harassment and internal conflicts. As indicated in the FBI files, David Sanchez was not completely honest about the reasons for the break up. Later, Brown Beret members admitted to terminating Sanchez because of his egotistical leadership skills (Chavez Interview with Author 2006). It is obvious that there were various internal conflicts that hindered the life span of the Brown Berets. Moreover, internal conflicts juxtaposed with the backdrop of severe social control by law enforcement proved to be the final destructive “blow” to the group. In chapter five, I provide a brief overview of the research. I also discuss how this research contributes to legal social control. In addition, I bring forth the limitations of the study, followed by contributions and implications for future research.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

During the late 1960's, the Chicano Movement was gaining momentum in several southwestern states. The movement was made up of college and high school students, non-students and youths. The goal of the movement was to enhance the position of Mexican-Americans in the areas of education, economics, and politics. This study examined the legal social control strategies and tactics used to destroy a faction of the Chicano Movement known as the Brown Berets.

Initially, the Brown Berets were known as *The Young Citizens for Community Action* (YCCA), which was headed by a high school student named Vicki Castro. The YCCA emerged in the fall of 1967. The organization participated in civic duties such as assisting with mayoral and school board elections. In addition, the group espoused Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" programs and participated in various philanthropic activities.

The YCCA were a group of individuals from East Los Angeles who shared common experiences and social injustices. Group members numerous social injustices. Notably, the schools they attended were in horrible condition and they believed that many of their teachers were racists. Many of their high school instructors discouraged them from attending college by advising the Mexican-American students that they were not mentally capable of obtaining a college degree (Chavez Interview with Author 2006; Lopez 2003).

By 1968, the group's focus and leadership changed as they experienced issues of police brutality and harassment. David Sanchez took over Castro's position and became Prime Minister for the YCCA. Sanchez decided that the *Young Citizens for Community Action* (YCCA) should focus on the term "Chicanos," rather than on "Citizens." Chicano engendered a meaning of self-determination and an awareness of Mexican-Americans' indigenous roots. Through this transformation, the group became radicalized and militant in its orientation. David Sanchez instructed the members to wear khaki military fatigue jackets, boots, and brown berets.

As the *Young Chicanos for Community Action* (YCCA) gained visibility within the community by participating in protests and rallies they became a prime target for local police officials. Ironically, the YCCA were called "Brown Berets" by the police. In time, the group began to collectively recognize themselves as the Brown Berets. The group quickly gained notoriety within the East Los Angeles community which led to a dramatic increase in membership.

Unfortunately, due to the increased visibility and notoriety, local police officials began a full investigation on the Brown Berets. Local police perceived the Brown Berets as a subversive group possessing Communist ideologies (Chavez 2002; Lopez 2003). The police then enlisted the aid of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the Brown Beret case. Local police officials and the FBI began using informants and agent provocateurs to infiltrate and spy on the Brown Berets. These informants were ordered to gather information on the Brown Berets regarding the group's agenda and membership lists. J. Edgar Hoover perceived the Brown Berets as a threat to national security and

ordered a full investigation on the Brown Berets in 1968. FBI informants were monitoring the Brown Berets at every known activity and protest.

In March 1968, the Brown Berets participated in the walkouts of five predominantly Mexican high schools. The organization was asked to protect the students from police brutality and harassment. Despite the group's efforts, police officials managed to engage in unnecessary excessive force by beating the students. A total of thirteen individuals were indicted for conspiring to disrupt the school system, including five Brown Berets. The defendants would have faced up to sixty-six years in prison (Munoz 1989). However, a Chicano attorney, Oscar Z. Acosta, represented the defendants in court and the case was declared "unconstitutional" by the trial judge.

A year later, in April 1969, two Brown Beret members were indicted for conspiring to commit arson and disrupting President Reagan's speech at the *Nuevas Vistas Conference* at the Biltmore Hotel. Once more, defense lawyer Oscar Z. Acosta represented the defendants in court. A police infiltrator named Fernando Sumaya testified in court that Brown Beret Minister of Information Carlos Montes had intentionally set fires on the top floors of the hotel. However, witnesses testified that the top floors of the hotel were completely secured by law enforcement officials. Acosta was able to prove that Sumaya was lying because only police officials were able to gain access to the top floors. Montes testified that it was actually Sumaya who had intentionally started the fires in the tops floors, but tried to blame him for the incident. The defendants were eventually found not guilty.

In August 1970, the Brown Berets participated in the largest anti-war demonstration in the nation. Over 20,000 marchers took to the streets to protest

numerous social injustices, primarily the Vietnam War (Chavez 2002; Lopez 2003; Rosales 1996). The duty of the Brown Berets was to protect the protestors from police misconduct. Many people flocked to a nearby convenient store and the owner panicked and called the police. Once the police arrived, unnecessary force was used and the people fought back. The demonstration turned into a major catastrophe, in which hundreds were injured and three beloved individuals including a Brown Beret, died at the hands of law enforcement.

Through a variety of strategies and tactics, law enforcement officials were able to stifle the membership of the group by instilling fear in potential recruits. They were also able to drain monetary funds as Brown Beret members were arrested and had to post bail to get out of jail. Police officials arrested members for trumped up charges and exposed the group to brutal harassment. These tactics “knocked” the Brown Beret focus because they had to worry about their lives instead of the group’s goals (Montes Interview with Author 2006). Legal social control at the local, state, and federal levels eventually caused such internal dissension that the group disbanded in 1973.

After analyzing the data, it appears that law enforcement officials exaggerated the Brown Beret’s “propensity for violence.” J. Edgar Hoover tried to exacerbate the problem by describing the Brown Berets as a “threat to national security.” The movement’s goal was to initiate a positive social change for the Mexican community without having to resort to violence. Throughout its limited lifespan, the Brown Berets never engaged in predatory violent behavior. However, the government characterized them as a violent subversive group. Clearly, there was no evidence to prove this perception. In fact, the FBI described the Brown Berets as a Mexican-American

organization fighting for the civil and equal rights of Mexicans in the community. The FBI files indicated there was no violence between the Brown Berets and law enforcement. However, there were numerous injuries and deaths suffered by the participants of the movement at the hands of law enforcement agents.

By referring back to the central research problem for this study, I was able to demonstrate evidence that the U.S. Government does suppress social movements it deems to be a “threat.” Government officials resort to various tactics and strategies in order to disintegrate movements. For example, the Black Panther Party, Dr. King’s Civil Rights Movement, American Indian Movement, and the Communist Party all experienced police harassment and brutality, infiltration, and legal harassment by government officials.

These groups were not able to establish long-term continuity because law enforcement officials perceived them to be subversive and threatening. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the government created the Sedition Act of 1940 (also known as the Smith Act), which prohibited individuals from advocating, publishing, or organizing the overthrow of the government (Title 18 U.S.C. Section 2385). The government can impose this act on movements or organizations that it deems to be *threatening* and “subversive.”

Despite the evidence supporting legal social control against the Brown Berets, there were some limitations in this study. First, the time frame of the Chicano Movement occurred in the late 1960’s, making it extraordinarily difficult to contact other members of the Brown Berets. Despite these difficulties, I was able to contact other activists/scholars who were connected or associated with the Brown Berets through

immediate family members. Second, I conducted a document analysis of various resources such as the Brown Beret newspaper and other local Los Angeles newspapers. The Brown Beret newspaper, *La Causa* was written over thirty-five years ago, which inevitably led to missing monthly issues within the 1968-1973 time frame. In addition, I examined the Federal Bureau of Information (FBI) Brown Beret file. However, due to the confidentiality of the FBI, there were many memorandum pages that were censored from the public eye. Third, I provided a historical analysis in order to supplement the bulk of the data (telephone interviews and document analysis) by examining books, articles, and journals regarding the Brown Berets. Unfortunately, there was limited information and research on the Brown Berets, particularly their brutal experiences with law enforcement.

This study contributes to social movement theory by enhancing our understanding of legal social control. It also contributes to our understanding of the Chicano Movement, which has been understudied in academic literature. In particular, I highlight the importance of one faction of the broader movement, the Brown Berets. Many authors have briefly examined and discussed the Brown Berets (Lopez 2003; Chavez 2002; Vigil 1999; Munoz 1989), but most have focused on internal dynamics and group identity. This research offers an in-depth examination of the external mechanisms (repressive legal social control strategies and tactics) and their impacts on the lifespan of the group.

There is a long history in our nation of repressive legal social control against various social movements and it has continued as indicated in several of the research findings presented in the previous literature (see Chapter Two). By examining these

repressive tactics, scholars are able to create an awareness of the types of techniques used against social movement organizations. As technology evolves, organizations and members are subjected to modern types of repressive tactics. In addition, these external mechanisms can potentially cause internal dissension among members of a movement. Thus, it is imperative that future research be conducted regarding these external mechanisms (legal social control) and how they impact the internal dynamics (group dissension) of a movement.

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APPENDIX A

I. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

1. How many years were you involved in the Brown Berets?
2. What position did you hold within the organization?
3. What were the duties that consisted of that position?
4. How many members comprised the Brown Berets in East Los Angeles?
5. What was the age range of the people involved in the Brown Berets?
6. Can you describe the background of the other members?
7. Did women participate or belong to the group?
8. Can you explain the duties of the women in the group?

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF BROWN BERETS

1. How did former members of the Brown Berets meet?
2. What caused the group to come together?
3. Did the political climate at the time serve as a catalyst for the emergence of the group?
4. Can you describe exactly what was going on during that time frame? (i.e., The late 1960's and early 1970's) Please describe in detail.

III. BROWN BERET INITIATIVES

1. What were the primary goals of the group?
2. What steps were taken to access or ensure those types of opportunities?
3. What activities did the organization participate in? Please describe in detail (e.g., programs and rallies)

IV. REASONS FOR DISSOLUTION OF THE BROWN BERETS

1. In your opinion, what was the cause of the Brown Berets demise?
2. Did the Brown Berets encounter any legal harassment? Please describe in detail.
3. Did the Brown Berets have any trouble with infiltration? (i.e., members of other groups, law enforcement officials, etc.)
4. Can you describe how many times that happened during the life span of the group?
5. In your opinion, what could have made the group survive?
6. If you had a chance to organize this group again what would you do differently?

APPENDIX B

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Monday, December 19, 2005
IRB Application No AS0635
Proposal Title: Chicanon Nationalism: The Brown Berets and Legal Social Control

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 12/18/2006

Principal Investigator(s)

Jennifer Correa 121 Brumley, Apt. 9 Stillwater, OK 74078	Thomas E. Shriver 006 CLB Stillwater, OK 74078
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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Jennifer G. Correa

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CHICANO NATIONALISM: THE BROWN BERETS AND LEGAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Major Field: Sociology

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Dilley, Texas, on July 3, 1981, the daughter of George and Irma Correa.

Education: Graduated from Dilley High School, Dilley, Texas in May 1999; obtained an Associate of Science in Criminal Justice from Coastal Bend College in Beeville, TX in May 2002; received a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminology from Texas A&M University, Kingsville, Texas in August 2004. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Sociology at Oklahoma State University in July 2006.

Experience: Counseling Office, Student Ambassador, Coastal Bend College, Beeville, TX Fall 2001- Spring 2002; Enrollment and Student Support Services, Recruiter, Texas A&M University, Kingsville, TX Fall 2003- Spring 2004; Sociology Department, Teaching Assistant, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK Fall 2004 to present.

Professional Memberships: Member of the National Criminal Justice Honor Society – Alpha Phi Sigma, Lifetime Membership since 2002; Ronald E. McNair Scholar 2004; Sociological Graduate Student Association, Oklahoma State University, 2004 to present.

Name: Jennifer G. Correa

Date of Degree: July 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: CHICANO NATIONALISM: THE BROWN BERETS AND LEGAL
SOCIAL CONTROL

Pages in Study: 115

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Sociology

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the legal social control strategies and tactics that were used by law enforcement officials at the local, state, and federal level to suppress a faction of the Chicano Movement known as the Brown Berets. The movement was made up of high school and college students, non-students, and youths. The goal of the movement was to enhance the position of Mexican-Americans in the areas of education, economics, and politics. Initially, the Brown Berets began assisting with mayoral and school board elections. In addition, the group supported Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" program. Ultimately, the Brown Berets became radicalized in orientation. The Brown Berets began to address many community concerns such as police brutality and harassment. As the group gained visibility and notoriety, they also became a prime target for police. The movement experienced violence, infiltration, and surveillance at the hands of law enforcement officials. The Brown Berets disbanded in 1973. This research project utilized a qualitative methodological approach. The research methods included telephone interviews with activists/scholars, document analysis of local newspapers and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Brown Beret file. Finally, I conducted a historiography of several books in Mexican-American history depicting instances of legal social control.

Findings and Conclusions: The research findings provide further evidence that legal social control by the government can suppress and ultimately destroy social movement organizations that they deem to be too threatening. For example, there have been numerous movements that have been suppressed by law enforcement officials such as, the American Indian Movement, Communist Party, and the Black Panther Party. Once a movement has been characterized as threatening by the government, law enforcement officials at the local, state, and federal level are utilized to curtail the organization's activities. As scholars examine past movements, it can bring awareness to the types of legal social control strategies and tactics that are used by law enforcement officials to dismantle social movement organizations.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Thomas Shriver
