***States of Exception and the Formulation of Collectivity in Tijuana***

In the context of Mexico’s “War on Drug-Trafficking,” the argument has been common that a de facto state of emergency prevails. This paper explores how everyday talk in Tijuana – one of the early hotspots of the “War” – performatively institutes exceptionality. Efforts to periodize the violence, I argue, have transformed old boundaries of safety and community, paradigmatically, the split between “we *tijuanenses*” and “they” who “kill each other amongst themselves.” Post-crisis, the effect has been to normalize an unprecedented level of homicides and to establish a new category of killable young men, *homo sacer* of sorts. After sketching these shifts, I turn to hearsay as an alternative mode for formulating collectivity that does not rely on the opposition between “we” and “they” and the logics of exceptionality it supports. A political conversation with a working-class housewife provides an example of how the communicative and ethical infrastructure of Tijuana’s hearsay public can be mobilized to confront the act of killing in the context of the “War.”