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Hickory Dickory Dock, the Racism Will Never Stop: A Critical Race Examination of Activism
within Latina/o Children's Literature and Librarianship, from 1960 to 2000

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Lorena Camargo Gonzalez

2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Hickory Dickory Dock, the Racism Will Never Stop: A Critical Race Examination of Activism within Latina/o Children's Literature and Librarianship, from 1960 to 2000

by

Lorena Camargo Gonzalez

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Daniel Solórzano, Co-Chair

Lindsay Pérez Huber, Co-Chair

Despite the perceived innocence of children's texts, scholars like Donnarae MacCann, Nancy Larrick, and Violet Harris have long documented the history of white supremacy and racism within them. Therefore, this dissertation undertakes a historical analysis of the activism of critical Chicana/o librarians and community organizations to advocate for anti-racism and social justice within children's literature and library services. This study focuses on the time period from 1960 to 2000 to better understand the socio-political environment that led to new efforts within children's literature and librarianship. This dissertation's conceptual framing is informed by the fields of education, library/information science and ethnic studies and is guided by Critical Race Theories in education and Chicana Feminist Epistemologies. Drawing from oral histories with six Chicana/o librarians, personal documents and archival sources from eleven

different collections across the nation, this study answers the following research questions: (1) What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within in Latina/o representations in children’s literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? (2) What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children’s literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? (2a) What is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children’s literature and library services today?

Findings from this study reveal that Chicana/o librarians, seldomly regarded as activists, have indeed transformed librarianship, library services, and literature for their communities. The Chicana/o librarians within this study, all shared how Civil Rights Movements shaped their consciousness of engaging libraries as spaces for connection and relationship building. At the core of their activism and efforts was the care and motivation to connect Communities of Color with libraries by recruiting diverse librarians to field and creating services and collections that reflected the needs of the local communities. The narratives of the Chicana/o librarians within this study highlight the importance of grounding cultural affirmations within the training of future librarians and educators. In addition, while this dissertation brings to light new knowledge surrounding the activism of Chicana/o librarians, it further illustrates the cyclical patterns of racism, censorship, distortions, and stereotypes embedded within literature and librarianship that are present today. Findings from this dissertation reveal that censorship of materials in the 1980’s related to combating racism and sexism were usually grounded on claims of raising “anti-American children,” similar rhetoric is used today to justify the censorship of Critical Race Theory and Ethnic Studies curriculum across the nation.

The dissertation of Lorena Camargo Gonzalez is approved.

David G. García

Lorena Guillén

Daniel Solórzano, Committee Co-Chair

Lindsay Pérez Huber, Committee Co-Chair

DEDICATION

Para mis abuelitas que en paz descansen, Aurea Miramontes y Adalberto Santibañez, yo escribo
y leo porque ustedes nunca tuvieron la oportunidad.

For my great grandmother Aurea Miramontes and grandmother Adalberto Santibañez, who did
not have the opportunity to learn to read and write, and for the young readers and future writers,
may you always find stories that nourish your soul.

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Thank you to the many folks who have supported me at different stages of my life. Not all are mentioned here, however, please know that YOU made an impact on me and my educational trajectory. To conclude, I would like to thank my husband and best friend, Mankaran Singh. You encouraged me every step of the way. You were there for every milestone in my academic trajectory—my first publication, Ph.D. admission applications to endless fellowship submissions, and eventually for every academic job application. For every rejection I received, you were there to remind me that I was deserving, and for every acceptance, you were ready to celebrate me. May we keep celebrating each other at every stage of our lives.

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Pérez Huber, L., **Camargo Gonzalez, L.**, & Solórzano, D.G. (2018) Considerations for using critical race theory and critical content analysis: A research note. *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege Journal*, 8(2), 8–26.

Book Chapters

Camargo González, L., Ramirez, B., Burciaga, R., Pérez Huber, L., & Solórzano, D. G. (2021). Latino educational (in)opportunities: Causes, consequences, and challenges to unequal opportunities to learn. In M. Machado-Casas & K. Espinoza (Eds.), *Handbook of Latinos and education, Vol. 2*. Routledge.

Reports

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University of California, Berkeley, \$30,000
- 2021-22 UCLA Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCLA Graduate Division, \$20,000
- 2021 Dissertation Fellowship, California State University- Office of the Chancellor, \$5,000
- 2021 American Education Research Association (AERA) Division G: Social Context of Education Mini-Grant, Division G, \$3,650
- 2020-21 UCLA Institute of American Cultures Research Grant, \$2,000
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- Camargo Gonzalez, L.** (2022). Archiving the Activism of Chicanx Librarians Through a Critical Race Educational History Methodology, paper presentation at the American Education Research Association (AERA) annual meeting, San Diego, CA.
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- Pérez Huber, L., **Camargo Gonzalez, L.**, & Solórzano, D. G. (2019). A Critical Race Content Analysis of Latinas/os Experiences with Immigration Children's Picture Books, paper presentation at the Critical Race Studies in Education Association (CRSEA) annual conference, Los Angeles, CA.

PROLOGUE

During the summer of 2005, I was introduced to, *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jiménez, published in 1997. I read this novel as part of the Migrant Student Leadership Institute hosted at the California State University, Sacramento campus. During this summer I was transitioning from eighth grade to ninth grade and it is my earliest memory of me liking a book. Like the author's family, my parents also worked in the fields and we immigrated from Mexico. I grew up in Lodi, California surrounded by acres of vineyards. These vineyards have fed my family for over 30 years. From my upbringing in Lodi, I knew the landscapes Francisco Jimenez was describing in his book. When it's harvest time, the whole town rejoices. In May it's the cherry season, and the packing centers are open every day, all day. From mid-August to the end of October, it's the greatest fruit Lodi has to offer—grapes. To this day, my entire family lives for this season. It's a demanding and exhausting season, long workdays, and 80+ hours of work each week. Despite the long days, the grape harvest also leaves the most economic rewards.

Four years after this experience I would attend CSU Sacramento as a college freshman. There I majored in Ethnic Studies and again, I would find texts that spoke to my experiences. It was there too that I had my first Chicana professors. In my graduate school personal statements, I wrote about the importance of representation and cited *The Circuit* as being my inspiration to go to college. In my master's program at CSU Long Beach, I first researched Latinas in advanced degrees. I was interested in learning about the experiences of women who like me, were the first in their families to pursue an advanced degree. During my time there, I became involved in a research project that examined the portrayals of People of Color in children's books with my advisor Dr. Lindsay Pérez Huber. This project reignited my desire to research representations for children who had similar experiences to mine. Consequently, I decided to pursue a Ph.D. in

education and again I mentioned *The Circuit* in my admissions personal statement. I did not realize the impact this book had in my life until very recent. In all of these key transitions in my educational trajectory, I was yearning for something that looked like, sounded like, and understood me. I share this brief testimonio as a student to demonstrate the lasting impact of books, especially ones that are culturally relevant.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Books enrich children's minds while strengthening their spirits. Good literature aspires to more than mere communication of information or just to be an entertainment: Good literature moves the readers. It broadens the readers' horizons validates their experiences, invites reflection, and awakens an aesthetic sense.

—Alma Flor Ada, 2003

Good children's literature, as Alma Flor Ada (2003) suggests, creates magical encounters between the child and the book beyond communicating information. Children's books are a powerful vehicle in a child's life, whether offering paths for positive identification of one's culture, or as paths towards learning about racial injustices in the world. Children's literature serve as mirrors, windows, and sliding doors which allow children to see themselves represented—or mirrored—in the text, a window into which children can learn about different experiences, and a sliding door through which students can walk through in imagination to become whatever the child aspires to become (Bishop, 1990; Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

This chapter starts by discussing the importance of Latinas/os¹ in children's literature and why children's literature in particular is an important area of study. Next, this chapter discusses the significance of the focus on the 1960–2000 period and introduces the research questions that guide this dissertation study. The latter sections of this chapter provide a brief overview of the literature, methodology of the study and findings.

Latina/o and Children's Literature

Latina/o children's literature as a subfield of children's literature blossomed after the 1960s and gained popularity in the early 1990s. In the last thirty years, not much has been

¹ The term Latina/o will be used to refer to people whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish-speaking Central or South American countries, or other Hispanic/Latino, regardless of race. In addition, both letters "a/o" are used together to be inclusive of gender. Given the historical focus of this study, the term Latinx is not used as a gender-neutral and nonbinary alternative to Latina/o.

documented regarding the history of Latina/o children's literature, however there are key events that point to the importance of uncovering the activism within challenging racism and sexism within children's literature. In 1975, the Council for Interracial Books for Children (CIBC), published a special issue bulletin dedicated to Chicana/o literature. Within this issue the CIBC published a comprehensive book review of 200 children's books about Chicanas/os. Among the 200 books reviewed the CIBC found that books scarcely portrayed Chicanas/os positively and instead overwhelmingly emphasized poverty, distorted histories of self-sacrificing Chicano's, and "Chicano's adopting Anglo values" (Council for Interracial Books for Children, 1975, p. 9). This survey and following special editions have been some of the earliest print sources in which an in-depth analysis of books related to Chicanas/os, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans has been conducted. In 1981, Robert P. Haro projected the growing Latina/o population would be significant for librarianship, creating a need for information and library services tailored for Latinas/os as a homogenous group. Haro (1981) also emphasized the creation of specific programming for the various Latina/o ethnic groups, such as Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican.

In 1998, Arlene L. Barry wrote about the lack of Hispanic² representation in children's books despite them being the fastest-growing minority in the United States. Unfortunately, within the last two decades, the same challenge persists today. In 2019, Latinas/os reached nearly 61 million in population, or 18% of the entire U.S. population, and continue to be the nation's youngest racial/ethnic population with a median age of 30 (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Among Latinas/os, Chicanas/os are the largest ethnic group, making up

² The term Hispanic has been used historically to refer to people whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish-speaking Central or South American countries, or other Hispanic/Latino, regardless of race. Although I do not believe this term encompasses the nuanced experiences of Latinas/os, this term is cited given the popularity of this term during the time period under study.

62% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). These data are significant given the growing Latina/o population size and the importance of having more culturally relevant materials for young Latinas/os. Having literature for Latina/o students is not only important for cultural affirmation but can also factor into their future student success (Ada, 2003). Consequently, the academic success of young Latinas/os is extremely important given the significant influence they will have on American society and U.S. economy (Hayes-Bautista, 2014, 2017).

Despite the steady growth of the Latina/o population in the United States in the last decades, they continue to be underrepresented in children’s literature. In 2021, the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC)³ at the University of Wisconsin, Madison reports that out of 3,005 books published in the United States, 177—or 6%—had Latina/o main characters, see Figure 1 (CCBC, 2022).

³ Percentages do not add to 100 percent, due to overlap (e.g., a book may have both a human and an animal primary character), see CCBC Diversity Statistics FAQ for more information: <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/diversity-statistics-faqs/>.

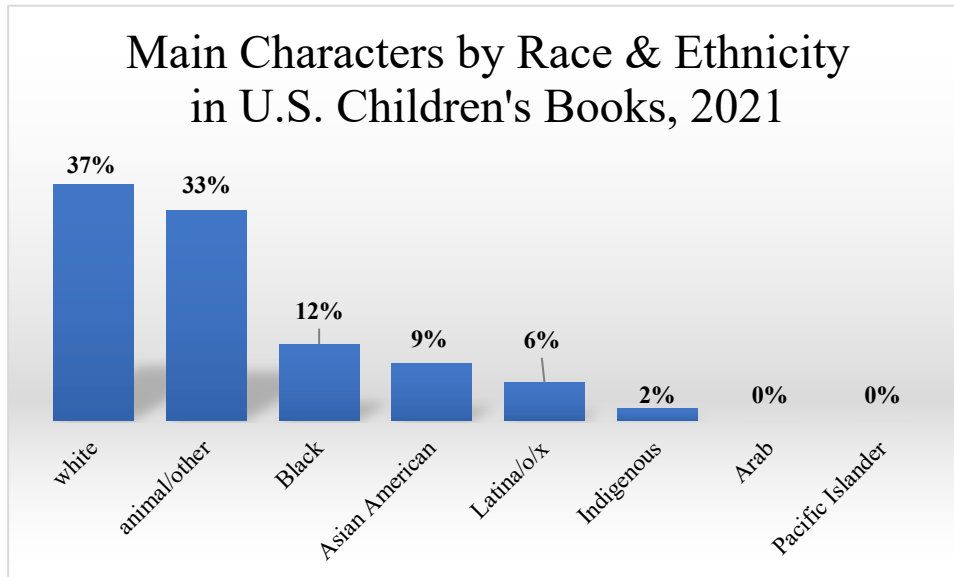


Figure 1. Main Characters by Race & Ethnicity in U.S. Children’s Books, 2021.

* A total of three books with Pacific Islander and 14 books with Arab main characters were published in 2021.

Source: Data on books by and about People of Color published for children and teens compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2022.

On the other hand, books with white main characters were 37% and non-human main characters made up 33% of the books published in the U.S. in 2021. Black, Native American/Indigenous, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Arab American main characters collectively make up 29% of the books published. Considering Latinas/os make up 19% of the U.S., as the second-largest racial/ethnic group following whites, there is a large gap in children’s books available for young Latinas/os. It’s important to note that data on children’s books about Latina/o main characters are not disaggregated among different racial and ethnic groups. Data also reveals that 26% of the total Latina/o population is younger than 14 years old. On the other hand, whites between the younger than 14 years old make up 15% of the total white population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

Taken together, this data demonstrates that books about Latina/o characters are not available in the same proportion as books about whites are in relation to the age cohort representation. There is another important point to note—although these books contain a significant Latina/o character, a positive and accurate representation is not always the case. A more in-depth analysis of the content within each book is needed to uncover whether the current books available to young Latinas/os perpetuate stereotypes or affirm their culture.

Importance of Children’s Literature

Nancy Larrick’s article “The All-White World in Children’s Books,” published in 1965, is canonical for researchers interested in diversity in children’s literature. Larrick (1995) wrote:

. . . the white child learns from his books that he is the kingfish. There seems little chance of developing the humility so urgently needed for world cooperation, instead of world conflict, as long as our children are brought up on gentle doses of racism through their books.

Larrick’s words resound today because as data compiled from the CCBC shows, not much has changed. Children’s literature⁴ includes pictures books, young adult novels, magazines, and it includes different genres such as folktales, fiction, non-fiction, and science fiction. Children’s literature includes various genres and is typically for children ages 3 to 14. Furthermore, children’s literature is separated into three broader sections (ALSC, 2009):

1. Younger Readers – Preschool–Grade 2 (age 7);
2. Middle Readers – Grades 3–5 (ages 8–10); and
3. Older Readers – Grades 6–8 (ages 11–14).

⁴ The Library of Congress defines children’s literature as materials written and produced for the information or entertainment of children and young adults. It includes all non-fiction, literacy and artistic genres and physical formats. See <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/chi.pdf>.

In each of these age transitions, children are introduced to texts that will support their literacy (The Children's Book Reviews, 2019). For example, children's picture books are typically for children ages 4 to 7, which spans preschool to elementary levels, and they rely on pictures to tell a story. In third grade, students are usually introduced to transitional books with less pictures and more text. In sixth grade, students are transitioning to young adult novels and chapter books. With this understanding, we can observe that grades 3 to 6 are a critical period in literacy attrition for students who transition from pictures books to young adult novels.

Although this dissertation does not look at literacy levels for Latinas/os, it is important to point out that by third grade, students have already consumed images and (mis) representations of People of Color. While often considered innocent, children's books are not free of bias. The entire process from authorship to dissemination is political and reflects an "all-white world in children's books" today (Larrick, 1965).

Significance of Latina/o Children's Literature Between 1960 and 2000

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the history of Latina/o children's literature in the United States between 1960 and 2000. This study focuses on this specific time period because of its relevance to the emergence of literature and school materials for Latinas/os and Spanish-speaking communities. Within education, reintegration after the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (U.S. Reports, 1954), was pivotal to creating ethnic and culturally relevant curriculum for Black Children. This time period is also marked by activism on behalf of People of Color who were advocating for equality and justice while challenging racism and sexism across multiple fronts, which led to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In addition, the Civil Rights Movements called for the inclusion of the histories of People of Color in the United States, which resulted in the recognition of Ethnic Studies among universities

(Capshaw, 2014). Across high schools and college campuses, Students of Color led actions, demonstrations, and protests to demand curriculum that reflected their diverse lived experiences (Hu-DeHart, 1993).

In the late 1960s, there was a need for children's literature and curriculum for Latina/o students as a result of the passing of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (Ada, 2003). The urgent need for more materials and library services dedicated for Latinas/os sparked the emergence of organizations such as REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Literacy & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking.⁵ Across the nation, imprints such as Piñata Books of Arte Público Press and Children's Book Press emerged to address the void in diverse books for children and materials for Latinas/os and Spanish-speaking communities. In addition, during this time period many materials were imported from Spanish-speaking countries such as Spain and Latin America to fill the void (Ada, 2003). As demonstrated through key events during this period, the political environment from the 1960s to the early 1980s facilitated the emergence of contemporary Latina/o children's literature in the United States, making this study on Latina/o children's literature an important contribution to understanding the activism on behalf of librarians and community organizations.

Researchers suggest, Latinas/os did not have "strong advocates who were pushing for culturally relevant materials like other racial/ethnic groups" (Barry, 1998, p. 632). Therefore, this study analyzes the efforts of people engaged in challenging racist representations of Latinas/os in children's literature and library services while simultaneously creating materials for the affirmation of Latina/o children. Most importantly, this study recollects the narratives of people

⁵ REFORMA was founded in 1971 in Dallas, Texas, as an affiliate of the American Library Association (ALA) (REFORMA, 2022).

directly engaged with organizing around positive representations for Latinas/os, such as librarians and community organizations, and why their efforts are critical in the fight against racism today.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000?
2. What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000?
 - a. What is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services today?

Brief Overview of Literature Review

There have been plenty of studies that have looked at representations of People of Color within children's literature. However, less research has examined the activism among librarians and community-based organizations to challenge racist depictions and portrayals of Latinas/os. Many contemporary works look at the characters and textual analysis of books. This study is more concerned with the influence of the Civil Rights Movements on the emergence of the contemporary subfield of Latina/o children's literature, and specifically how children's literature and culturally relevant library services for Latinas/os came to be.

To better situate the research questions presented above, this dissertation reviews relevant scholarly literature in chapter two. The first body of scholarly literature reviews presents scholarship on race and racism in children's literature. This includes works that have examined how People of Color are often misrepresented in children's literature and the continued omission from the publishing industry. In the second body of literature, I discuss efforts to challenge negative portrayals of Latinas/os and the activism to create more culturally affirming materials

for Youth of Color. In the third body of literature, I examine the ongoing battle for intellectual freedom among children's literature and how censorship has been enacted in children's literature. Finally, in the fourth body of literature I discuss contemporary efforts to create more positive portrayals for young Latinas/os today.

Brief Overview of Methodology and Findings

This qualitative study analyzes children's literature within a historical context, to highlight the history of activism of people engaged in efforts to combat racism for a more positive identity development for young Latina/o children. Guided by a Critical Race Theory in Education theoretical framework and a Chicana Feminist standpoint, this research projects aims to understand the effects of race and racism in the representations of Latinas/os in children's literature. In a Chicana Feminist tradition, Aurora Levins Morales (1998) states:

My interest in history lies in its medicinal uses, in the power of history to provide those healing stories that can restore the humanity of the traumatized, and not for any inherent interest in the past for its own sake.

Responding to Levins Morales's (1998) medicinal approach to history, I too unearth more narratives of resilience and activism on behalf of People of Color who worked to combat such detrimental portrayals within children's literature and within library services. I gathered three different data sources including, primary sources, oral histories, and personal documents.

Institutionalized archives have not historically preserved or valued the perspectives of People of Color (Garcia & Yosso, 2020; Levins Morales, 1998). Therefore, with this understanding of the limitations of archival research and whose stories have been prioritized, I nuanced archival research by conducting eight oral histories with key collaborators. The collaborators in this study, were or continue to be directly involved in efforts to produce Latina/o children's literature and library services. Coupled, the archival data sources and the oral histories

gave me firsthand insights into key events in the history of Latina/o children's literature and how it has shaped contemporary literature and library services today. I also asked collaborators of the oral histories to share personal documents with me, that could aid me in my attempt to piece together events between 1960 and 2000. These three data sources were collected in two phases. In the first phase I conducted preliminary archival research. Based on the preliminary themes that emerged from this phase, I refined the protocol for the oral histories which were conducted in phase two.

Chapter Three contains a detailed description of the theoretical frameworks that guided my study, and the detailed research design can be found in Chapter Four. Chapter Five discusses findings related to answer the first research question: What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? This chapter discusses findings of racism within librarianship, library services, and children's literature. Chapter six presents findings related to answering the second research question and sub-question: What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? (a) What is the state of efforts to challenge and create depictions of Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services today? This chapter focuses on the activism of librarians to transform librarianship, library services, and literature for Latinas/os. Finally, I conclude this dissertation with Chapter Seven, which discusses implications from my research and future directions of my research.

Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, I introduced my dissertation study and why the history of Latina/o children's literature between 1960 and 2000 is an important area of study. I draw attention to this specific time period and how it is an ideal timeline of study for the questions I am seeking to answer. In addition, this chapter situates children's literature as an important area of study, and focuses on data related to Latina/o children's literature and the continued omission of culturally relevant stories. In the following chapters, I expand on the relevant literature, the theoretical frameworks, the research design of the study, and present findings that emerged from the dissertation project. I conclude this dissertation with chapter seven, a discussion of implications from this research and future directions for practice and policy.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

For that the Golden Age is published: so that the American children know how they lived before, and live today, in America, and in other lands; and how so many things are made of glass and iron, and steam engines, and suspension bridges, and electric light; so that when the child sees a colored stone he knows why the stone has colors, and what each color means; so that the child knows the famous books where the battles and religions of the ancient peoples are told.

– Jose Marti, 1889

In 1889, Jose Marti, a Cuban activist, and revolutionary published the first issue of the magazine, *La Edad de Oro*, which was later translated to *The Golden Age*. This magazine is canonical in Latina/o children’s literature—it “transformed forever the way writing for children would be viewed in the Spanish-speaking world” (Ada, 2003, p. 38). This magazine is one of the earliest materials published for children by a Latina/o writer in the United States, and one which transcended to all parts of Latin America (Ada, 2003). Before the great contributions to Latina/o children’s literature, oral stories “flourished in the lands where the ancestors of today’s Latinos lived” (Ada, 2003, p. 38). Stories and folktales for Latina/o communities and many other Communities of Color have been preserved through oral storytelling and have only been documented in children’s literature since the late 1800s (Ada, 2003; Bishop, 2007).

A working timeline in the history of Latina/o children’s literature is presented in Figure 2. This timeline is not comprehensive, but rather showcases key events in the history of Latina/o children’s literature that are discussed within this literature review. The events presented in this timeline inform my understanding of the emergence of Latina/o children’s literature and how it parallels the 1960–2000 time period under study.

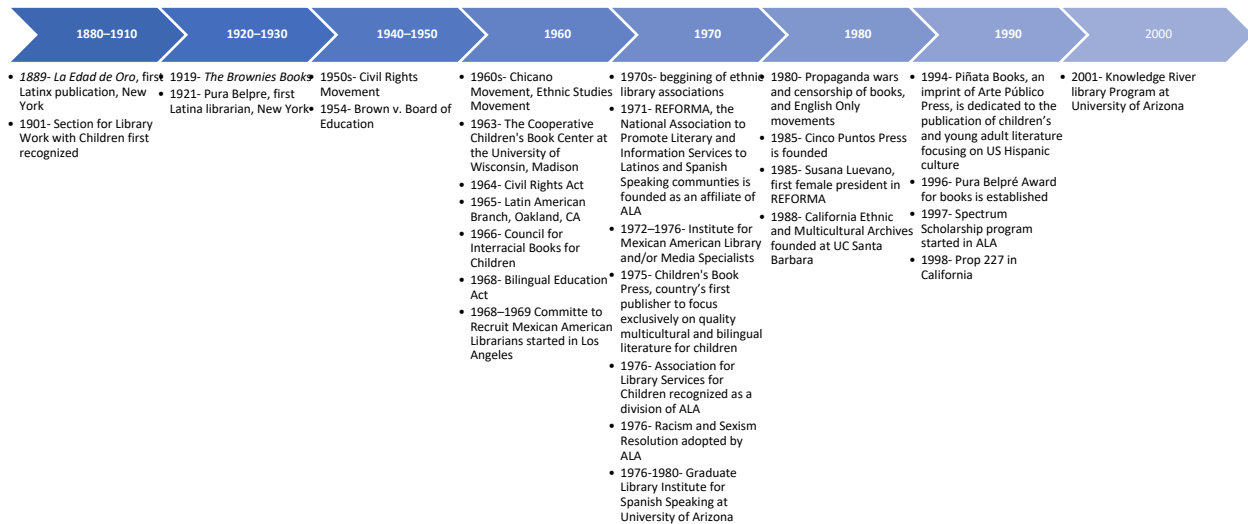


Figure 2. Key Events in the History of Latina/o Children's Literature.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to understanding the history of race and racism within Latina/o children's literature, with a particular focus on the time period between 1960 and 2000. This time period is significant because of the Civil Rights Movements led by Black and Chicana/o activists for racial justice. Capshaw (2014) describes the strengths from the movements as “progressive energies in children's literature not truncated by the Civil Rights classical period” (p. 241) that instead propelled changes within children's literature in the decades to come. Legislation like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 were passed because of the activism of People of Color, which highlighted the need for books for elementary school children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. This time period also mobilized the recognition of racial and ethnic subfields among universities (Capshaw, 2014). The Civil Rights Movements opened the doors for new literature for students in early grade levels and at the college level.

The remainder of the chapter is organized into four larger sections. First, I discuss race and racism in the history of children’s literature through the distortion of portrayals of People of Color and their omission by the publishing industry. In the second section, I review literature on the activism on behalf of librarians and community organizations to challenge race and racism in children’s literature. In the third section, I discuss the battle for intellectual freedom in children’s literature during the 1970s and 1980s, and I discuss censorship in children’s literature. In the final section, I discuss contemporary efforts in Latina/o children’s literature as resistance to negative portrayals.

A Tale as Old as Time: Race and Racism in Children’s Literature

Children’s literature has a long history of being a beholder of white supremacy and racism. Stereotypes about People of Color have permeated children’s books since their inception (Harris, 1990; Larrick, 1995; MacCann, 1998; Nel, 2017). In addition, Nel (2017) argues that “one of the places that racism hides—and one of the best places to oppose it—is books for young people” (p. 1). Despite the perceived innocence of the genre, children’s books are not exempt from racist portrayals. Research indicates children’s literature has also acted as a way to promote “piety, obedience, refinement and morality among children and convince them of the virtues of achieving stable middle-class status and sensibility” (Harris, 1990, p. 543). Despite often being believed to be innocent, children’s books, literature, and librarianship were designed to socialize children into dominant and subordinate ways of living.

According to Terrones (2018), children’s librarianship is also “historically linked to discourse about the egalitarian promise of education access . . . the ideology of universal educational access of fundamental notions of American democracy” (p. 13). Children’s librarianship first gained recognition in 1901 as “Section for Library Work with Children” and

after a few renames and restructuring in 1976, it was declared the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA) (ALSC, 1999). Since its inception, children's librarianship and literature were designed to function as a proxy to assimilation into Eurocentric modes of knowledge. This can be understood through the omission of books and services for and about People of Color (Bishop, 2007; Terrones, 2019). Robert P. Haro (1981) details an example of a white librarian during the Renaissance Harlem years who worked to create services to introduce the mainly Black and Brown communities into literature that depicted Eurocentric ideals. The creation of librarianship for Latina/o communities is nevertheless an important area of study to better understand racist practices among services for People of Color.

Within the field of Black children's literature, scholars have been able to closely examine how racist ideologies have been able to remain intact for many years (Harris, 1990; Larrick, 1995; MacCann, 1998; Nel, 2017). Far less examined is the history of Latina/o children's literature and its relative emergence during the 1960s as a response to issues of race and racism, civil rights activism, and the demand for more ethnic and culturally relevant materials for children and students of all ages. The scholarship on behalf of Black authors is nevertheless a place where this study draws from to better understand how Latina/o communities advocated for materials for children. By employing a race relation lens to unearth the history of Latina/o children's literature, this literature review recognizes "how, when, where, and to what extent groups [histories] intersect and recognizes that there are limits to examining racialized groups in isolation" (Molina, 2013, p. 522). To further clarify, this study does not compare the experiences of Black and Latina/o communities nor suggest they have similar racialized experiences. In the following subsections, I discuss scholarship that has analyzed (mis)representations of Black and

Latina/o communities, as well as the omission of People of Color in the publishing industry and the activism to both challenge stereotypes in children's literature and to create positive representation for young Latinas/os.

Distortions in Children's Literature

Violet Harris (1990) examined Black children's literature from 1890 to 1970 and presented us with the pattern of themes and contents found in the literature published during these decades. For example, books published in the earlier years inevitably perpetuated negative stereotypes about Black people and minimized slavery (Harris, 1990). Harris (1990) also found that books published after the 1970s were more culturally conscious and aimed to positively reflect Black culture. In a similar manner, MacCann (1998) examined white supremacy in the intellectual history of children's books and unapologetically stated, "to deny the passing down process that occurs in children's books is practically to deny the process by which societies are developed and maintained" (xv). The passing down process that MacCann refers to is the act of reproducing social norms and passing these ideologies to children. This serves as a reminder that children's books do indeed have the ability to influence young minds for many generations to come.

Most recently, Philip Nel (2017) has examined the history of anti-Black racism in children's books by looking at the historical origins of mainstream children's books, including the prolific work of Dr. Seuss. Nel reiterates how "race gets displaced, re-coded, hidden and persist in the literature and culture of childhood" (p. 4) as was the case for many of the cartoons in the Dr. Seuss books, which had been adapted from earlier cartoons depicting racist phenotypical stereotypes of Black people. Nel states that one of Dr. Seuss's favorite books was *The Hole Book*, written by Peter Newell and published in 1908. This book is one of the many

examples of the types of racist cartoons published in children's books, even though the story was not explicitly about Black people. Rather, books from this historical context often featured racist images with texts that imitated Black people and Black vernacular language. Figure 3 illustrates the image of a Black woman, three Black children, and a watermelon with a hole in the middle of it. The accompanying text to the images reads:

A watermelon, large and fine,
Was in the kitchen shed,
The bullet drilled a hole through it,
As on its way it sped.
"Who plugged dat melon?" mammy cried,
As through the door she came.
"I'd spank de chile dat done dat trick,
Ef I could learn his name."

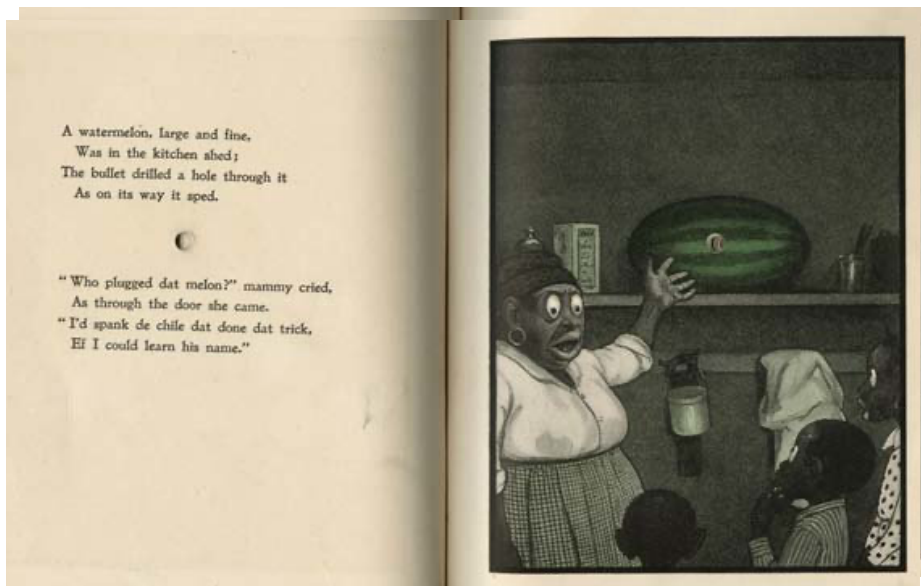


Figure 3. Stereotypes of Black Characters in Children's Literature

Source: From Peter Newell, *The Hole Book* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1908). Image courtesy of Morse Department of Special Collections, Hale Library, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

The language used in this cartoon mocks Black vernacular and is problematic. This is an example of a book that contains problematic and stereotypical portrayals of Black people. In

response to such images published in the early 1900s, critical scholars like W.E.B. Du Bois, responded by creating positive resources for young Black children.

In the early twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois and Jessie Fauset started *The Brownies Books*, a periodical for Black children to challenge the deficit portrayals of Black people in mainstream literature, such as the example above. The magazine aimed to affirm Black culture with the goal of “teaching universal love and brotherhood for all little folk—black and brown and yellow and white” (Du Bois, 1919, p. 286). *The Brownies Books* were seminal to the emergence of contemporary Black Children’s Literature that sought to provide positive representations for Black children. Despite their great impact, *The Brownies Books*, were only available for two years due to financial difficulties (Bishop, 2007). Rudine Bishop (1990, 2007), Violet J. Harris (1990), and Donnarae MacCann (1998) are a few of the scholars that have pioneered scholarship that critically examines the history of Black children’s literature in the United States. Bishop (2007) reminds us that “most of the Black-inclusive children’s literature produced for the first two-thirds of the century were neither written by Black writers nor illustrated by Black artists,” but rather white authors (p. 63). Lorenz Graham and Jesse C. Jackson, both Black male authors, were among the first to write stories for children about “racial conflict in a then-contemporary Northern setting” (Bishop, 2007, p. 60). These authors contributed to new scholarship that centered the experiences of Black people and shifted away from perpetuating stereotypes.

Chicana/o youth also encountered stereotypical portrayals of their culture in children’s books. In 1975, the Council for Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) published a 200-book survey reviewing books published between 1940 and 1973 on Chicana/o culture and found stereotypical themes. One of the overwhelming messages found in the texts were Mexicans

living in the countryside. The images below are an example of the book covers of the stories that emphasized a poor *campesino* [farmer] story. Campesinos were also typically posed wearing a



sombrero and a serape and next to a horse or a donkey.

Figure 4. Stereotypical Portrayals of Chicanas/os.

Source: *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, 1975.

The overwhelming use of the image of the *campesino* is problematic because it does not represent the nuances in the Latina/o/ and Chicana/o experience. Researchers like Martinez-Roldan (2014) and Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2015a) have found that the image of the *campesino* frequently perpetuates the stereotypical Mexican bandit. The stereotypical Mexican bandit also usually wears a sombrero and a serape; therefore, images like these stereotype Mexicans as either *campesinos* or bandits.

The images above are examples of stereotypical images found in children's picture books during the 1970's. However, stereotypes, distortions and omissions of the Mexican American identity also have a long history. For example, in the book *Reading, writing and revolution: Escuelitas and the emergence of a Mexican American identity in Texas*, historian Philis M. Barragán Goetz (2020), writes about *escuelitas* and the grassroots efforts of parents and teachers to create curriculum and schooling that affirmed Mexican American identity from as early as the

1880 to 1960. Barragán Goetz (2020) states, “escuelitas, both before and after the Mexican Revolution, used Spanish-language newspapers for their reading material in place of books... functioning as a form of children’s literature... to teach them [students] about education, patriotism, and moral behavior” (p.12). The newspapers used, printed articles in Spanish and wrote columns specifically for children. Barragán Goetz reveals a history from South Texas that is also central to better understanding historical activism in challenging white and Anglo-centric literature for Chicanas/os. Although this study does not focus on older time periods, it is important to mention, that historians and researchers have documented histories of empowerment through reading, writing and literature for young Mexican Americans. The next section discusses the omission of literature for Latinas/os within the publishing industry.

Omission in the Publishing Industry

Omission in the publishing industry is another way in which race and racism is enacted within the field of children’s literature. MacCann and Woodard (1972) state:

... in the field of children’s literature, adults alone make the decisions about books—about what to write, publish, purchase, award a prize, and make accessible. There is no question of who shall decide for whom, except to determine which group of adults it will be. (p. 9)

Historically the group of adults who get to decide what gets published have been white authors. Data compiled and published annually by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) illustrates the omission of books about People of Color during the last 30 decades.

In 1963, the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC), was established with funding by the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education and by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Division for Libraries and Technology. This book center is a research library based out of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The CCBC (1999) is “committed to identifying excellent literature for children and adolescents and bringing this literature to the

attention of those adults who have an academic, professional or career interest in connecting young readers with books.” One of the most well-known tools provided by the CCBC is data published annually to identify how many children’s books were written by Authors of Color and how many books are about Characters of Color. Data on books published by Black authors and/or illustrators can be found for as early as 1985. For books published by and/or about authors of Asian Pacific American, American Indian, and Latina/o decent, data can be found as early as 1994.

Another notable service provided by the CCBC is information or referrals for consultants on intellectual freedom issues. These services are free of cost and are provided to teachers and librarians in Wisconsin who may be faced with book challenges. The CCBC is still actively operating, and according to the 2019 diversity statistics, further disaggregated data about Asian Americans by including counts about books by and or about Pacific Islanders (CCBC, 2020). Scholars have also uncovered how Scholastic Book Club order forms have served as yet another mechanism to filter out books by and about People of Color (McNair, 2008). About 70% of the books advertised in the order forms are written by white authors which is representative of children’s literature as whole. However, books by Authors of Color tend to be advertised under tokenized labels such as “Celebrate Hispanic Heritage,” “Black History Month,” and “African American Heroes Pack” (McNair, 2008, p. 27). When books about People of Color are published, chances are they are authored by white authors as well. All together data has persistently showed an omission of culturally relevant stories for People of Color.

Activism in Creating Positive Latina/o Representations

As a response to stereotypical portrayals for Communities of Color, librarians and community organizations rallied to create materials for them and by them. My exploration of

scholarship related to activism among librarians for Latina/o materials begins with Pura Belpré, the first Afro-Boricua librarian in the New York Public Library system. Belpré is also believed to be the first Latina librarian in the United States. Her legacy started in 1921 when she first served as a library assistant and went on to attend the New York Public Library School program at Columbia University (Ada, 2003; ALSC, 1999b; Terrones, 2019). Inspired by the omission of Puerto Rican stories and folktales within the library books available to Puerto Rican children, Pura Belpré set out to write her own books and was innovative in library services available to Latina/o children.

In 1996, the prestigious Pura Belpré Award for children's books was established in honor of Pura Belpré, to recognize the work of Latina/o writers and illustrators "who best portray, affirm, and celebrate the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth" (ALSC, 1999b). In a detailed account of activism among Latina children's librarians, Terrones (2018) asserts that Sandra Rios Balderrama and Oralia Garza de Cortes led efforts within the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) and REFORMA: the National Association to Promote Literacy & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA) to establish the Pura Belpré Award in 1996. Pura Belpré's efforts later informed contemporary Latina/o children's literature and inspired many librarians to transform services for Latina/o communities.

The efforts to combat racism and activism on behalf of People of Color during the 1960s to 1980s led to the transformation and emergence of new racial and ethnic subfields within children's literature. Black and Brown communities who were advocating for equality and justice across multiple fronts led to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These victories brought forth an "avalanche of Black children's writers at the moment, spurred by the energies of

the culture as well as by the investment of publishers” (Capshaw, 2014, p. 241). In addition, in the late 1960s, the need for children’s literature and curriculum for Latina/o students intensified as a result of the passing of the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968 (Ada, 2003; Stewner-Manzanares, 1998). The BEA of 1968, or Title VII, was the first federal recognition that students with limited English-speaking abilities have access to bilingual programs (Stewner-Manzanares, 1998). For Spanish-speaking Latina/o communities, this was significant because it incited a demand for “literature in the teaching and language arts, and educational publishers were looking for materials that recognized the Latino population as well as for books in Spanish for the bilingual market” (Ada, 2003). Organizations such as REFORMA, also emerged as a response to the need for more materials dedicated for Latinas/os. Across the nation, imprints such as Children’s Book Press (1975), Cinco Puntos Press (1985), and Piñata Books of Arte Público Press (1990) emerged to address the void in diverse books for children and materials for Latina/o and Spanish-speaking communities.

From this demand grew what we know as Latina/o children’s literature with librarians and community organizations at the forefront of this wave. Terrones (2018), a former librarian herself, urges us to consider Latina/o librarianship and librarians in the United States as “activist imperatives in support of culturally relevant library service” (p. 8). A notable organization engaged in efforts to challenge racist portrayals of People of Color in children’s literature was the Council for Interracial Books for Children (CIBC), founded in 1965. This organization identified problematic portrayals of Black characters in children’s literature and responded by providing “tools for self-affirmation and quality education for African American children” in reading and teaching materials (Banfield, 1998, p. 17). Among the founders of the CIBC were Nancy Larrick, a highly respected educator, and poet Lilian Moore (Bishop, 2007). Based in

New York City, the CIBC was initially operated by volunteers committed to the mission of challenging racism and sexism in children's literature (Banfield, 1998).

In 1966, the CIBC created quarterly periodicals called the *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* for K-12 teachers, educators, parents, and community members interested in materials for addressing racism, sexism, and classism in textbooks and standard curriculum. The *Bulletin*, had similar goals to *The Brownies' Books*—providing anti-racist resources for children, parents, teachers, and community members. Although the *Bulletins* were first established to analyze content related to Black portrayals, within the first couple of years they had gained a large audience of racial and ethnic groups and expanded internationally. The CIBC also created an annual contest for authors of minoritized racial and ethnic groups in an effort to diversify children's literature and support Authors of Color with unpublished manuscripts (Banfield, 1998).

The *Bulletin* produced special issues for Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, to mention a few. In addition to providing rubrics for examining whether a book contained racist or sexist portrayals, the *Bulletins* provided its audience with columns written by librarians, educators, and community activists working directly with the population examined. For example, in 1975, the first special issue on Chicanos was published and it contained a column by Jose Taylor, the Pacific/Southwest Regional Chairman of REFORMA detailing the start of REFORMA, the National Organization of Spanish Speaking Librarians in Dallas, Texas during the 1971 ALA conference (Taylor, 1975). Additional context published within this issue was related to Chicanos and accessing library services, both in California and across the nation (Esparza, 1965).

The CIBC created the Racism and Sexism Resource Center as a response to inquiries from educators and parents seeking tools to challenge racism and sexism in children's books (Banfield, 1998). The research center published books such as *Chronicles of American Indian Protests* (1971), *Human and Anti-Human Values in Children's Books* (1976) and *Stereotypes, Distortions, and Omissions in U.S. History Books* (1977). Despite accolades such as receiving the 1982 Human and Civil Rights Special Award from the National Education Association, the CIBC dissolved before its twentieth anniversary (Banfield, 1998). Similar to *The Brownies Books*, the CIBC aimed to provide tools of affirmation for Children of Color in response to the lack of materials available to children by mainstream publishing houses. CIBC was able to support many librarians, educators and parents who were interested in challenging racism and sexism in literature for young children. Individual librarians across the nation were also key in promoting materials and services for People of Color.

One of the most comprehensive examinations of library services for Latina/o communities in particular, was published by Robert P. Haro (1981) in the book *Developing Library and Information Studies for Americans of Hispanic Origin*. It should be noted that Haro (1981) discouraged homogenous Latina/o library services and instead called for specific services for the following racial/ethnic groups: Chicanos, Mexican Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Hispanics. The author insisted in culture-specific services because "only then would libraries be able to establish rapport among the communities" (Haro, 1981, p. 40). This examination of library services is critical to understanding the history of activism among Chicana/o and Latina/o librarians who were at the forefront of working directly with communities.

Founded in 1966, the Latin American Library Branch, now known as the César E. Chávez Branch Library in Oakland, California was the first library in the nation to offer services

in Spanish and be “exclusively dedicated to the Spanish-speaking community” (Oakland Public Library, n.d.). At first this branch was led by Barbara Wynn, a white woman librarian who worked hard to establish rapport with the Latino community by being “diligent in her conversations with various community groups and informing lay people on the interest and reading habits of the various sub-groups within the Oakland Latino community” (Haro, 1981, p. 34). This library flourished because they produced materials relevant to their surrounding communities and Wynn encouraged library staff to interact with the surrounding community and clients. A notable information source curated by this library branch were printed reading lists that were often used during the 1970s by Chicana/o educators in Northern California and even New Mexico. The educators “relied on these reading lists in preparation of courses and class projects in high schools and colleges” (p. 34) related to Chicano Studies and Ethnic Studies courses. This branch was dedicated to providing rich materials for the Latina/o community and by 1979, the first Chicana librarian was appointed to this branch. This library continues to hold the largest Spanish-language collection of the Oakland system and is currently located in Oakland’s Fruitvale neighborhood.

While the Latin American Branch was successful in servicing its surrounding Latina/o populations, this was not true for many other libraries across the nation. Short-term grants or soft money were often used to fund programming for Latina/o communities, therefore, lack of administrator buy-in to centralize programs became a challenge when federal funding was no longer available (Haro, 1981). This was a common challenge for libraries in the 1970s who had started special programming for Latina/o communities, “resulting in the curtailment of numerous library activities which has beneficially impacted Chicano communities like that in the Los Angeles area” (p. 42). Despite the challenges to establish core services for Latina/o communities,

librarians were at the forefront of finding avenues for creative ways to service the fast-growing population.

Ongoing Battle for Intellectual Freedom, 1960 to 1985

As previously noted, the time period between 1960 to 1985 was key to the development of children's literature as an industry and in establishing librarianship services for People of Color, however, this time period also presented challenges for activists challenging race and racism in children's literature. After *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), segregation was no longer the law of the land and all children—in particular Black children who had been deprived from “equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment” (p. 483)—must now have “equal access” in education. However, integration was far from being accomplished and activists among Communities of Color rose to challenge the racist treatment of People of Color and formed political activist groups to make their claims be heard. Within children's literature, censorship and intellectual freedom became synonymous with challenging racism and sexism. The 1970s and 1980s resulted in ideological quarrels and “cannon wars, resulting in attacks on ethnic curricula and resistance to bilingual education” (Capshaw, 2014, p. 241).

During the early 1980s, there was a propaganda war between the Left and the conservative Right, on what should be taught in the schools. The issue at stake was democracy and the values taught to children. In 1983, in the *American Educator Journal* of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) published a special issue on political extremism from the Left and the Right. While the Left extremism is described as being anti-American and having radical and revolutionary rhetoric, the ultra-Right is associated with nativist bigotry and the scapegoating of minorities (AFT, 1983). Political extremism became a contested issue within education because “young people in the schools were a prime target of extremist groups” (as cited in AFT, 1983, p.

15). For example, the Right was actively recruiting junior and high school students to join the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) by distributing brochures and literature, and the Left would recruit college students with “anti-American ideologies” (p. 15). The CIBC was one of the “Left” organizations met with constant pushback from conservative organizations such as the Heritage Foundation. In 1982, David Asman prepared a report for the Heritage Foundation and argued that the CIBC was using taxpayer money to “mold American children therefore what it did with the taxpayer’s money were matters of taxpayer concern” (Asman, 1982, p. 1). In the AFT special issue, groups like CIBC and the KKK were both described as political extremist groups, yet there is not even a slight chance the CIBC and its goals aligned with hate and enacting violence. For example, the CIBC sought to promote anti-racist and anti-sexist books and curriculum for students. Despite their efforts for more positive representation for People of Color, they were often accused of being censors and of using education materials and children’s literature as tools to reinforce their bias.

Censorship of Racism in Children’s Books

Out of the propaganda war emerged the censorship of books and an ongoing fight on what constitutes freedom of speech under the equal protection clause. The CIBC was an active voice in denouncing censorship. Bradford Chambers (1980), director of the CIBC, always maintained the position that as an organization they never called for the censorship of books, but rather voiced the concern “state bodies like public schools have no right to purchase with public funds and to require children to read texts which in any way belittle the worth of females or minorities, or stereotypes them.” Allies of the CIBC like Holly Knox, Director of Project on Equal Education Rights (PEER), a project of the National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund (NOW LDEF), also wrote on this matter in defense of the CIBC. In

an article published by the newsletter *PEER Perspective*, Knox (1980) indicated that the cries for censorship on behalf of the Right were merely a struggle over “values”:

Education—and the books used in education—can never be “value free.” What some may deem as diverse other may deem anti-American . . . Everyday state and local textbook selection committees make decisions which are then approved by school boards: which books will they buy, and which will they leave to mold in publishers’ warehouses. Parents and taxpayers have every right to a say in these choices.

Scholars like Kevin Kumashiro (2008), Jean Stefancic and Richard Delgado (1996) have written about the conservative Right, and how they are able to successfully and permanently frame political, economic, and educational discourse. In *The Seduction of Common Sense: How the Right has Framed the Debate on America’s Schools*, Kumashiro (2008) writes about how the Right creates institutional power through their funding sources to create legislation that always benefits neoliberal ideologies within schools. From a legal perspective, Stefancic and Delgado’s (1996) book, *No Mercy: How Conservative Think Tanks and Foundations Changed America’s Social Agenda*, details how conservative think tanks led by the Right have shaped all aspects of the United States political agenda. Additionally, Stefancic and Delgado posit, “left has had little to do with setting the country's agenda and seems unable to mount any sort of effective resistance to the conservative juggernaut” (p. 4). This is illustrated in the attacks from the Heritage Foundation on the CIBC, who eventually dissolved shortly after the 1980’s.

Furthermore, the American Civil Liberties Union (n.d.) defines censorship as “the suppression of words, images, or ideas that are ‘offensive,’ happens whenever some people succeed in imposing their personal political or moral values on others. Censorship can be carried out by the government as well as private pressure groups”. With this understanding, equating CIBC and the KKK, or the Left and the Right, is misleading since it assumes both groups have the same institutional power. Within children’s literature, the CIBC was not only advocating for

accurate and culturally affirming representations for People of Color; one of their missions was to create more publishing opportunities for Authors of Color. Children's literature about People of Color were not available in the same quantity as books about white characters. Robert B. Moore, at the time director of CIBC'S Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, responded to censorship charges by stating that "objecting to race and sex bias is not censorship" (Moore & Burrell, 1981, p. 14). Despite the CIBC's efforts to sidetrack claims of censorship, the organization ended right before its twentieth anniversary (Banfield, 1998). It can be argued that the political Right's framing of the CIBC was problematic and used taxpayer money as a scare tactic to establish the discourse of the CIBC as seeking to infiltrate children's minds with left-extremist ideologies. Consequently, the Department of Education stopped funding the CIBC in the early 1980s to avoid any conflict with "taxpayers," inciting the end of the CIBC.

Children's Literature as Resistance: Contemporary Efforts

Despite the challenges faced by activists and community organizations in the latter half of the twentieth century, contemporary efforts in children's literature indicate progress in challenging negative portrayals and omission. Researchers concerned with diversity and representations of People of Color have documented strategies for educators and parents interested in culturally relevant books. In this brief section, I discuss organizations that are working towards challenging dominant narratives in children's literature through various disciplines and outlets. This is not a comprehensive discussion, but rather a brief survey of some of the ongoing efforts to transform children's literature.

Within the publishing industry the following printing presses are dedicated to Latina/o materials and or for increasing diversity for People of Color. First, the Children's Book Press, was founded in 1975 as was the first independent press in the county to focus on publishing

children’s literature by and or about People of Color. Currently, the Children’s Book Press is an imprint of Lee and Low Books (2020) and continues to publish “culturally authentic and award-winning bilingual book for children.”

In 1979, Arte Público Press was founded, and it was dedicated to Hispanic literature. They publish about 30 books per year and strive to have authors from Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban descent, to name a few. Piñata Books was founded in 1994 as an imprint of Arte Público Press and is dedicated to children’s literature for Latina/o culture. Each year, Piñata Books publishes around 10 books—typically bilingual in Spanish and English—for young readers.

Another older press is Cinco Puntos Press. It was founded in 1985 as an independent publishing company in El Paso, Texas. Cinco Puntos Press is committed to publishing diverse stories with the goal of making a difference in the way we see the word. More recently, Reflection Press was founded in 2009 as an independent press that is primarily focused on producing materials for Children of Color, transgender youth, gender diverse and non-binary youth. In addition to publishing books that center queer and Indigenous voices, Reflection Press offers courses to support new authors and illustrators. These are just a few of the publishing presses that are dedicated to publishing more Latina/o stories and supporting Authors of Color.

I have also seen a growth in the social media presence of grassroots organizations that are sharing resources to the public. For example, The Conscious Kid has about 2.1 million followers on Instagram. This organization supports families, educators, and organizations in “taking action to disrupt racism in young children” (Conscious Kid, 2020). This organization has published books lists like “confronting anti-Blackness: books by Black authors ages 0–18” and “children’s books to support conversation on race, racism and resistance.” In 2020, The Conscious Kid was

involved with collecting and distributing donations to Black families who have been affected by the pandemic. Similarly, We Need Diverse Books is another non-profit organization that has gained traction in the last five years and is actively working to transform the publishing industry. Their aim is to “help produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people” (We Need Diverse Books, 2020). We Need Diverse Books also supports new Authors of Color by hosting a plethora of programs, such as grants for unpublished authors and mentorship opportunities.

For Latina/o-specific materials there is the Latinxs in KidLit and Latinx in Publishing. Latinx in Publishing is a network of professionals committed to increasing the number of Latina/o authors in the publishing industry. They also have a mentorship program for unpublished authors, and they curate resources such as information on agents, grants, residences, and scholarships available to new authors. Latinx in KidLit is more concerned with promoting Latina/o literacy and examining the portrayal of Latina/o characters. This collective publishes book reviews, book talks, and interviews with authors and agents. Latinx in KidLit also has a monthly books club and welcomes guest bloggers to contribute as reviewers.

Another notable effort in transforming publishing for People of Color is the podcast “Minorities in Publishing,” hosted by Jenn Baker. The purpose of this podcast is to discuss “diversity or lack thereof in the book publishing industry.” This podcast was started in 2014 and now contains over 100 podcasts with a range of interviews not limited to editors, agents, bookstore owners, and Authors of Color (Appendix E).

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter there is a lot of information related to children’s literature and much more left to uncover. Despite the plethora of scholarship in children’s literature, the

history of Latinas/os within the field is limited. Within this chapter, I discussed key scholarship from fields like ethnic studies, education, and library sciences to better understand the history of Latina/o children's literature. I also introduced a working timeline of key events that led to the emergence of Latina/o children's literature during the 1960s. Although this timeline is not comprehensive, it highlights my current understanding of how the field of Latina/o children's literature came to be as a result of the Civil Rights Movements led by People of Color during the 1960s to 2000s. In the following chapter, I discuss the theoretical frameworks that guided this dissertation project.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Still, by every social indicator, racism continues to blight the lives of people of color.
–Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic, 2017

In order to conduct a study on the history of efforts to challenge racism in Latina/o children's literature, an examination of race and racism is required. This chapter discusses Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education and its tenets as the overarching theoretical framework that guides this study. I start this chapter by reviewing race and racism, my understanding of these concepts and how they inform this project. The second section discusses how education scholars have used CRT to analyze race and racism in educational settings. In the third section I discuss how I draw from a Chicana Feminist Epistemological (CFE) standpoint to guide this research project. I conclude this chapter by discussing how the CRT in education tenets are central to the research in the history of race and racism in Latina/o children's literature.

Race and Racism

Before discussing how CRT guides this study, I will briefly discuss the concepts of race and racism. My understanding of race and racism is informed by scholars in a variety of disciplines including, the law, history, psychology, and education. Chester Pierce (1974), a Black Harvard psychologist who pioneered the work on racial microaggressions, defines racism:

the behavior that results from *mental attitudes about skin color* [emphasis added]. It is not unusual for any white to be permitted, in terms of unwritten as well as written law, to exploit, degrade, abuse, humiliate, minimize, terrorize, and tyrannize any Black. The mental attitude about skin color, not economic status or social status attributes, is what justifies this behavior for the white. (p. 513)

Pierce wrote extensively on the effects of race and racism on Black people and suggests that “mental attitudes” towards skin color are at fault for the racism experienced by Black people. In the commonly cited text, *Racial Formation in the United States*, Omi and Winant (2015) state race is a “practice of distinguishing among human beings according to their corporeal

characteristics [which] became linked to systems of control exploitation, and resistance” (p. 3). Indeed, scholars have concurred that race is socially constructed, however racism as a result of white supremacist ideologies, has very real effects on the lives of People of Color (Gómez, 2018; Omi & Winant, 2015; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Pierce, 1974).

In another seminal text, *The Racial Contract*, Charles W. Mills (1997), discusses the articulation of race and racism as an agreement of “the differential privilege of whites as a group with respect to nonwhites as a group, the exploitation of their bodies, land, resources, and the denial of equal socioeconomic opportunities to them” (p. 11). The racial contract does not assume People of Color are in agreement, but rather that white supremacist ideologies dictate which groups have power and which groups are continually oppressed. Undeniably, race is used as proxy to maintain white supremacy in all sectors of the American life, including children’s books.

Scholars in the law have used CRT to demonstrate how race has been used to advance the interests of whites in the name of racial justice (Bell, 1980). In the canonical piece “Racial Realism,” CRT law scholar Derrick Bell (1992), states that racism is permanent and that no matter how many civil rights victories are obtained, Black people and People of Color will never achieve racial justice. This acknowledgement of the permanence of race and racism serves as a catalyst to enact change and “free us to imagine and implement racial strategies that can bring fulfillment and even triumph” (Bell, 1992, p. 374) rather than entertaining false post-racial discourses. Given this conceptual understanding of race and racism, my research project demonstrates that children’s literature benefits from a CRT analysis to further understand how children’s books serve as a medium that conveys messages regarding ethnic/minority groups for children typically starting as young as 3 to 8 years old. In the next section I describe how race,

racism and CRT inform my research on the history of Latina/o children's literature and how CRT helps me answer the following research questions: (1) What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? (2) What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? (2a) What is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services today?

Critical Race Theory in Education

CRT in education as a theoretical framework allows me to engage with the intellectual contributions to scholarship around race and racism of the above-mentioned scholars to better understand the history of Latina/o children's literature between 1960 and 2000. CRT derived from Critical Legal Studies (CLS), to explore the ways that so-called race-neutral laws and policies perpetuate racial and/or ethnic and gender subordination. In CLS, legal scholars were confined by the hegemonic and juxtaposed messages of the law which ultimately served the interests of the state, and therefore identified CRT and concepts that centered race to make sense of the inequities in American life (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 112). CRT as a subfield then emerged as the work of "progressive legal scholars of color developing a jurisprudence that accounts for racism in American law to work towards the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination" (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1331). Although CRT was first theorized by legal scholars, in one of the first studies that used CRT as a lens for educational research, scholars found educational practices with as much racialized and racist cultural constructs and discriminations as other fields (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) discusses how CRT in education research uncovers the racialized curriculum, instruction, assessment, funding, desegregation, and discipline in the schooling of Children of Color. Despite seemingly hopeless, it allows for instances in which storytelling and counter-narratives become tools and avenues to speak against racism. Daniel G. Solórzano (1997)—another leading scholar of race, racism, and CRT in education—has contributed five central tenets that are relevant to the study of race and racism in education. Table 1 outlines the tenets that guide the perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy of CRT in education as theorized by Solórzano, in a later section I describe how each of these tenets informs this study.

Table 1

Tenets of Critical Race Theory in Education

The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination	CRT starts from the premise that race and racism are endemic, and permanent.
The challenge to dominant ideology	CRT challenges the traditional claims the educational system and its institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity.
The commitment to social justice	CRT strives for social justice education as the curricular and pedagogical work that leads toward: (a) the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty; and (b) the empowerment of under-represented minority groups.
The centrality of experiential knowledge	CRT in education recognizes the experiential knowledge of Students of Color as legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education.
The interdisciplinary perspective	CRT in education utilizes the transdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, and other fields to better understand racism, sexism, and classism in education.

Solórzano (2013) theorized these tenets by drawing on “the strengths of ethnic studies, women’s studies, and Freirean pedagogy by connecting them to the study of race and racism in education” (p. 51). Together they encourage education researchers to be critical of their analysis and avoid analysis which “decenter or de-emphasize race for example in women’s studies, or tend to ignore gender in race and ethnic studies and Freirean pedagogy, and overlook race and gender in class based analyses” (Solórzano, 2013, p. 51). In the last decades, scholars who are interested in uncovering racial inequities in all segments of the educational pipeline have heavily theorized CRT in education (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015b, Pérez Huber et al., 2018; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, 2010).

Chicana Feminist Epistemological Standpoint

In addition to employing a CRT theoretical framework, I draw from Chicana Feminist Epistemologies (CFE) to guide this research project. My epistemological orientation is grounded in CFE, which “allows for the identification of unequal power relations, the development of alternative histories, and the validation of a methodology based on the lived experiences of Chicanas” (Delgado Bernal, 1998b, p. 115). As a first-generation Chicana graduate student, I came to this work acknowledging that Latina/o communities have experienced racist nativist microaggressions in all sectors of life, and unfortunately this is no different in children’s literature (Pérez Huber, 2011). One of the CFE tools I draw from is cultural intuition. Delgado Bernal (1998a) argues that cultural intuition “is achieved and nurtured through our personal experiences, the literature on Chicanas, our professional experience and the analytical process we engage in when we are in the central position of our research and our analysis” (pp. 567–568). I utilized my cultural intuition to carry forth this research project with the goal of enacting a reciprocal process of learning with my collaborators. I argue that my positionality allowed me to

create a hospitable environment during our oral histories rather than it being an obstruction in this study.

In addition, CFE allows for the use of *testimonios* to challenge and “expose human relationships that are not visible from patriarchal positioning or a liberal feminist standpoint” (Delgado Bernal, 1998a, p. 560). Through archival research and oral histories, I (a) nuance our current understanding of how Latina/o/ children’s literature came to be and (b) learn of the less-known activists who contributed to the field. Although CRT as a theoretical framework aims to challenge dominant ideologies, CFE standpoint is explicitly grounded in “the unique experiences of Chicanas” (Delgado Bernal, 1998a, p. 561), who lead lives with significantly different structures than even Men of Color. This is an important distinction to make because in history, stories are usually told through the perspectives of men, and in particular white men. In addition, Delgado Bernal (1998b) nuanced what leadership means in her historical account of the East Los Angeles Blowouts, and how women took various leadership roles in enacting change. Similarly, Emma Perez (1999) unapologetically states, “I am more concerned with taking the ‘his’ out of the ‘story,’ the story that often becomes the universalist narrative in which women’s experience is negated” (xiv). I concur with these Chicana scholars and I aimed to uncover narratives of librarians and community activists who challenged race and racism.

Critical Race Theory in the History of Latina/o Children’s Literature

This study engages all tenets of CRT in education order to critically understand Latina/o children’s literature between 1960 and 1985, as well as the ongoing challenge for accurate representation for young People of Color today. Within the next subsections, I describe how each of the five tenets in CRT and CFE informs this project.

Centrality of Race and Racism and Other Forms of Subordination

Race and racism are central to this study and how it intersects with other forms of subordination. As a Critical Race Theorist, I start with the understanding that race and racism are permanent conditions in the United States. Therefore, an examination of the activism to challenge race and racism in Latina/o children's literature necessitates an understanding of the permanence of racism in the United States and how it adapts over time. Although race and racism are central to this historical analysis, this study is also concerned with understanding how other forms of subordination are at play within the history of Latina/o children's literature.

Challenge to Dominant Ideology

This study aims to challenge dominant ideology by unearthing the stories seldom heard of in the emergence of Latina/o children's literature between 1960 and 2000. Engaging in a revisionist history approach allows me to "reexamine America's historical record, replacing comforting majoritarian interpretations of events with ones that square more accurately with minorities' experiences" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 25). Revisionist history is yet another conceptual tool of CRT that aims to examine "little-known chapters of racial struggle, sometimes in ways that reinforce current reform efforts" (p. 25). To this point, Chicana historian Emma Perez (1999) offers us the decolonial imaginary, a theoretical tool which we can use to break away from colonial historiographies and instead "rethink history in a way that makes Chicana/o agency transformative" (p. 5). My interest in the history of Latina/o children's literature stems from a research project I was a part of that examined portrayals of Latina/o characters in contemporary books (Pérez Huber et al., 2020; Pérez Huber et al., 2018). The more I wanted to know about the history of efforts on behalf of activists and librarians to create culturally affirming materials for young children, the less information I found. However, I have found

documents and archives that have pointed me to organizations like the Council for Interracial Books for Children, which actively challenged racist and sexist materials. Undeniably, the stories of resistance are out there and through this study, I have captured a glimpse into some of those efforts that have shaped Latina/o children's literature into what it is today.

Commitment to Social Justice

One of the ways this project is committed to social justice is by seeking to inform how we can transform literature for young people. Representations of People of Color have been distorted throughout history and therefore there is a need to combat those images. Although picture books about People of Color are increasingly being published, a critical analysis of content within children's literature and materials is needed. Representation measured on the number of books published does not account for the quality within representations of racial/ethnic groups. This study also hopes to nuance the stories of the people involved in challenging racism for children's literature between 1960 and 2000.

Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

This study centers the experiential knowledge of People of Color and in particular the Chicana/o librarians who were involved in challenging racist portrayals in children's books and in creating culturally affirming materials. Although this study is grounded in historical sensibilities and draws heavily from primary and secondary historical documents, I am prioritizing the voices of my research collaborators with whom I conducted oral histories. The oral histories allowed me to ask collaborators about their experiences firsthand and to share their own resources and artifacts. The historical documents aided in piecing together the narratives shared through the oral histories.

Interdisciplinary Perspective

This project naturally draws from an interdisciplinary perspective, including the fields of Ethnic Studies, History, Literature, and Library/Information Sciences to help me answer the research questions. For example, I examine the political climate during the 1960 to 1985 time period, which includes the Civil Rights Movement, in conjunction with the Chicano Movement and the Ethnic Studies Movement. I also look towards Library/Information Studies to examine the materials and services available to Latina/o communities during that time and the role of librarians in making services available to them. Within Latina/o children's literature, narratives and stories about People of Color directly involved with challenging race and racism have been historically omitted; therefore, an interdisciplinary approach helps me better understand the history of whiteness in children's literature, and how these texts are political in the messages and images they convey to young people.

Not only does this project engage multiple fields of study, it also adopts a race relational lens by looking towards the histories of other Communities of Color. "To inhabit, claim or be ascribed a particular racialized identity or grouping is to be located in an assemblage of historical and contemporary relationships" (HoSang & Molina, 2019, p. 7). The authors suggest that the history of racial and ethnic groups and historical moments are experienced in relation to one another. As discussed in Chapter Two, far less is known about the history of activism in Latina/o children's literature, however, documented efforts on behalf of Black scholars and Black children's literature allude to key organizations and people involved on behalf of Latina/o communities.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed race and racism and why a racial analysis is important in the study of Latina/o children's literature. I introduced CRT, the overarching theoretical framework and detailed how I draw from a Chicana Feminist Epistemological standpoint to guide this research project. Within this chapter, I also discussed how each of the tenets of CRT in Education are engaged in this study. The methods and methodology of this study were briefly mentioned however, a full discussion of the research design can be found in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

Activism is engaging in healing with our hands . . . it means creating spaces and times for healing to happen, espacios y tiempos to nourish the soul.

–Gloria Anzaldúa, 2015

Gloria Anzaldúa states that activism, coupled with space and time, can heal. In my research project, I centered on learning more about the activism on behalf of community organizations and librarians to challenge racism in Latina/o children’s literature between 1960 and 2000. In line with Anzaldúa’s words, I too found that Latina/o communities and activists librarians were able to create their own materials, to heal from the wounds of racism. In order to reclaim some of these narratives, I conducted a qualitative research project that draws from archival sources, oral histories, and personal documents from collaborators to examine how community activists and librarians engaged in “healing with their hands.” As briefly mentioned in Chapter Three, this study is concerned with investigating the history of race and racism within Latina/o children’s literature and how Chicana/o librarians responded by challenging deficit representation and by creating culturally affirming materials and resources. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design of my dissertation study. Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Chicana Feminist Epistemologies (CFE) are theoretical perspectives that inform the design of this study to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within Latina/o representations in children’s literature and library services between 1960 and 2000?
- 2) What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children’s literature and library services between 1960 and 2000?
 - a. What is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children’s literature and library services today?

I start this chapter by discussing the activism on behalf of People of Color during the 1960 to 2000 time period that is necessary to better understand the history of Latina/o children’s

literature. I proceed to introduce the collaborators in this study and a summary of the sources collected. Next, I discuss how I gathered data sources for the dissertation project by analyzing archival sources, conducting oral histories and, collecting personal documents from Chicana/o librarians. In the concluding sections of this chapter, I discuss how I analyzed the data using a three-stage data analysis process including: a preliminary stage, a collaborative stage, and a final analysis stage. I conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of the limitations of this study.

Time Period: 1960 to 2000

The period under study spans 1960 to 2000 within the context of the United States. Despite there being a focus on the 40 years following the 1960s, in this study I also briefly draw from contemporary efforts in Latina/o children's literature. Researchers who have focused on the civil rights period have found that student activism has proposed "a paradigm shift in the way we view grassroots leadership" because it allows for the emergence of an alternative history of events and the acknowledgment of different leaders, such as women, within civil rights efforts (Delgado Bernal, 1998b, p. 114). In a similar manner, Aguilar's (2013) study focused on student activism and how their leadership efforts led to the establishment of the Chicano/a/x Studies Department at the University of California, Los Angeles. For this reason, I examined the activism on behalf of librarians and community organizations during this time period that have shaped Latina/o children's literature and librarianship today. This time period is marked by activism on behalf of People of Color who were advocating for equality, justice, and challenging racism and sexism across multiple fronts, which led to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As a result of the activism on behalf of People of Color, this time period also marks the recognition of various ethnic fields of study across universities such as Chicano studies, Asian American studies, African American studies, and Native American studies.

In 1968, students in East Los Angeles organized the Chicano Blowouts to demand quality education and protest against racism. Among their demands were the “implementation of bilingual and bicultural training for teachers, elimination of tracking based on standardized tests, improvement and replacement of inferior school facilities, removal of racist teachers and administrators, and inclusion of Mexican history and culture into the curriculum” (Delgado Bernal, 1998b, p. 117). These high school students decided they deserved better education opportunities and culturally relevant curriculum; therefore, they voiced their disagreement with their current schooling conditions. In 1968, there was a new need for children’s literature and curriculum for Latina/o students as a result of the passing of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (Ada, 2003). Romelia Salinas (2017) has also noted that legislation passed in 1964 like the Federal Government’s Library Services Construction Act and the Civil Rights and Economic Opportunity Acts allocated funding for improving public library services for Communities of Color (p. 2698). These are just a few of the events that point to the importance of examining the history of race and racism in Latina/o children’s literature in relation to social justice and social political movements. In the following subsections, I detail the research design and methodology of this study.

Summary of Sources

This section introduces the collaborators of the oral histories and summarizes the personal documents and archival sources collected. Using archival sources, personal documents, and oral histories to better understand Latina/o children’s literature and library services, my research is centered on the activism of Chicana/o librarians and community organizations who were engaged in anti-racist efforts. The historical sensibility central to my research was inspired by the primary sources I examined related to contemporary research on the portrayals of

Communities of Color in children's literature (Pérez Huber et al., 2020). As I started to examine documents from the early 1960s, I realized that efforts to challenge racism and sexism within children's literature were documented well before my time, and plenty of evidence showed the racism prominent in the fields of children's literature and librarianship. Therefore, the subsections below present the data sources I gathered to write a narrative centered on the activism of Chicana/o librarians.

Oral History Collaborators

I conducted oral histories with Chicana/o collaborators such as community librarians, university librarians, and members of community organizations to construct a better understanding of the history of Latina/o children's literature in the United States. Within this study, a total of eight oral histories were conducted—six were with Chicana/o librarians, one was with a Black children's book illustrator, and one was with a White woman director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Each of these collaborators informed different aspects of this study. For example, the six Chicana/o librarians all spoke directly to their experience in the field of librarianship and library services and advocating for culturally relevant services for Latinas/os and Communities of Color. The Black children's book illustrator, George Ford, is an elder that served as the president of the Council for Interracial Books for Children and has contributed to illustrations within Black children's literature since the 1970s. His interview served as context for better understanding how the Council for Interracial Books for Children worked and their mission to change literature for young students. The director of the Cooperative Children's Books Center, Kathleen Horning, provided a contemporary outlook into patterns of books published by and or about People of Color. For the purpose of informing the activism of librarians, the six oral histories with

Chicana/o librarians are highlighted within this study and the last two oral histories with George Ford and Kathleen Horning are used for context to the data presented.

Oral histories allowed me to move across time and space with the research collaborators. I had read about events and meetings that took place in the 1960s, and now I had the opportunity to conduct oral histories and listen to the narratives of people to nuance the “history” I read about in archives and texts. Historians like Benmayor (1991) argue that oral histories add dimension to the archives or documents collected. Additionally, Delgado Bernal (1998b) concurs that oral histories are a “special opportunity to learn the unique perceptions and interpretations of individuals, particularly those from groups whose history has been traditionally excluded or distorted” (p. 115). In line with critical race theory in education and Chicana/Latina feminist theories, I conducted these oral histories intent on highlighting the history of folks directly involved with challenging racism in children’s literature, while acknowledging that official records have neglected to center the narratives of Communities of Color. I became interested in learning about the efforts that were happening during the time when my collaborators were active as librarians in the late 1970s and beyond. Although primary sources alone can be revealing when we look at what has been documented by institutions, the experience of having a voice to the story is unparalleled. As a listener, the passion and commitment to better library services echoed in my mind for days after each oral history interview. The table below includes information about each collaborator and their areas of expertise. Although only current occupation is listed, each of the retired librarians held important positions within local public libraries and they all also served in administrative roles.

Table 2

Oral History Collaborators

Name	Occupation
Albert Tovar	Retired public librarian
Elizabeth Martinez	Retired public librarian
Evelyn Escatiola	Retired public and college librarian
George Ford	Retired artist and children's books illustrator
Kathleen Horning	Director of Cooperative Children's Book Center
Lilian Castillo-Speed	Head Librarian UC Berkeley Chicano Studies Library
Richard Chabran	Retired university librarian
Romelia Salinas	Associate Dean of library and Learning Resources Mt. San Antonio College, president elect for REFORMA (2022)

Personal Documents

Within this project, I invited collaborators to share personal documents with me. The purpose of this data collection method is twofold, first to engage participants in a *convivencia* praxis (Escobedo & Camargo Gonzalez, 2022), collaborating in the research project by providing items from their personal collections, and to nuance the documents I analyzed. Personal documents can be items such as scrapbooks, letters, home videos, photo albums, calendars, personal blogs, or perhaps journal entries. Education historians like Garcia (2018) and Pak (2002) have used personal documents as data sources, and through them were able to uncover key information that they may have not found otherwise. In *Strategies of Resistance: Race, Residence, and the Struggle for Educational Equality*, education historian David Garcia (2018) used personal documents to recount the story of Oxnard, California and the desegregation case *Soria v. Oxnard School Board*. Garcia conducted over 60 oral history interviews and consulted over 20 different sources, yet pictures from participants proved to be important in identifying names of additional students from the schools. In *Wherever I Go, I Will Always Be A Loyal American: Schooling Seattle's Japanese Americans During World War II*, Yoon Pak (2002)

analyzed letters written between Japanese students and their teachers during a time when Japanese Americans were wrongfully incarcerated in internment camps. The student letters coupled with oral histories allowed Pak to better understand how students made sense of their situation. These two education historians demonstrate the importance of personal documents within their own research and the value personal documents add to the narratives.

In addition, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that “documents are like observations in that documents give us a snapshot into what the author thinks is important, that is their personal perspective” (p. 166). In collecting these documents, I looked to nuance the history of Chicana/o librarians as activists and include their own materials within this research project. Personal documents were collected from Albert Tovar and Evelyn Escatiola. Among the collections, I reviewed photos, correspondence, certificates of recognition, an audio cassette, art, conference programs, resumes, and periodical indexes. Both Albert and Evelyn shared physical documents with me, and was given permission to make scan copies. In addition, Richard Chabran and Elizabeth Martinez both shared web links to online articles and resources they had authored. Richard created a web-based timeline of the activities he had taken part of throughout his career as a librarian. The electronic documents were also insightful because they served as resources for better understanding the history of Latina/o librarianship.

Archival Collections

This dissertation takes an education historical perspective at Latina/o children’s literature and librarianship, therefore archival research was conducted at eleven different collections across the nation. As I engaged in archival research, I considered how “. . . power permeates every aspect of the archival endeavor . . . there is no neutral in archives” (Caswell et al., 2017, p. 3). Researchers have indeed documented extensively how institutional archives have not always

documented the voices of People of Color and in many cases contain distortions of the stories of certain communities (Garcia & Yosso, 2020). With this consideration in mind, I was intentional in selecting the collections I would use for this research, see Table 3. Although the focus within this research is on children's literature, the collections listed below represent a more diverse area of study. For example, the University of California, Santa Barbara is home to California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives (CEMA) collections, which were created as a response to the lack of ethnic studies in the 1970s and, to fill the void of perspectives within the Chicano Movement and history. This is an example of an archive collection that furthered informed the political and social context of the time period under study.

Table 3

Summary of Archival Collections Visited

Collection	RQ	Rationale
Bay Area Radical Teacher's Collective (BARTOC), San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library	1	Organization involved in anti-racist efforts within school curriculum.
Cesar Chavez Library Files, Oakland Public Library	1	The first library in the west coast to focus on Hispanic library services.
California Digital Newspaper Collection, Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research at University of California, Riverside	2	Has newspapers related to censorship and banning of books.
Chicano Studies Institute Records, University of California, Santa Barbara Library, Department of Special Research Collections	2	This collection has documents related to Chicana/o studies.
Council for Interracial Books for Children, Director Files, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library	1, 2	Documents related to the Bulletins and efforts in which the council was involved in to challenge racism and sexism in children's literature.
Division of Library Science, California State University, Fullerton Archives & Special Collections	1	These documents had reports on the library program that was temporarily active at CSU Fullerton, including the institute to recruit Mexican American librarians.
Interracial Books for Children Bulletins, Dallas Public Library- Main Branch & Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles	1, 2	These were hard copies of bulletins printed by the CIBC related to content analysis of sexism and racism within children's literature.
Norma Alarcón Papers, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara Library, Department of Special Research Collections	2	In this collection I saw documents related to the UC ethnic libraries and Chicana/o literature.
MEChA Collection, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara Library, Department of Special Research Collections	1, 2	This collection had copies of some of the demand's students were making related to the legitimizing ethnic studies and Chicana/o studies.
REFORMA The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services for Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles	1, 2	This collection has documents of REFORMA, newsletters, bibliographies, and correspondence from board members.
Rodolfo F. Acuña 1857- 2006, Oviatt Library, California State University, Northridge	1, 2	This collection has copies of Interracial Books for Children bulletins and contains correspondence received from the Council.

Data Collection

Altogether, these three data collection methods nuance the current history of Latina/o children's literature as we know it today and constructs a *critical historical narrative* (Garcia & Yosso, 2020). In constructing a critical historical narrative, this dissertation project aims to uncover how racism as early as the 1960s has shaped children's literature today. In particular, I focused on the activism to challenge negative representations of People of Color. Therefore, guided by Critical Race Theory and Chicana Feminist Epistemologies, this study aimed to serve as:

medicinal histories [that] seek to re-establish the connections between peoples and their histories, to reveal the mechanisms of power, the steps by which their current condition of oppression was achieved, through a series of decisions made by real people to dispossess them; but also to reveal the multiplicity, creativity and persistence of resistance among the oppressed. (Levins Morales, 1998, p. 1)

In line with Aurora Levins Morales, this study aimed to re-establish new perspectives within the history of children's literature, especially ones that speak more to the collective resistance of racist representations of People of Color not only in literature but within library services as well. To achieve this critical historical narrative, in the section below I describe how I gathered the data sources for this study.

Oral Histories

I conducted eight oral histories to learn about key events found in the archival documents.⁶ Given the focus on a specific time period, I used purposeful sampling to recruit and select key participants for the oral histories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) (Appendix A). In addition, I used networking sampling and asked initial participants to refer me to people they

⁶ Researchers like Rina Benmayor (2016) and Valerie Raleigh Yow (1994) use oral histories synonymous with life histories, personal narrative, and testimony.

believe would fit the scope of my research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Due to COVID-19 precautionary measures, five of the oral histories were conducted via Zoom. The oral histories with Albert and Evelyn were conducted in person once we both had determined it was safe to meet, and my conversations with George Ford took place via phone calls. Oral histories ranged from 2 to 6 hours. With Albert, Elizabeth and Richard, we meet about three times for about 1.5 to 2 hours each session. Each oral history was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim using either GMR transcription services or Rev.com transcription services. Each oral history was guided using a topical open-ended protocol [Appendix B]. The protocol contained the following five themes: Background, Education, Employment Activity, Challenging Race and Racism, Creating Culturally Relevant Materials, and Personal Documents. Within each of the larger themes, I had a list of questions to guide each topic of conversation. Given the nature of oral histories in prioritizing the participant, “the ‘truth’ in their experiences is not the aim, but rather how they construct the past through their perpetual lens” (Pak, 2002, p. 114). The protocol was a semi-structured guide in our conversations, rather than a rigid outline to follow. This approach allows for what Valerie Raleigh Yow (1994) describes as the “flexibility” by allowing the interviewee to take the lead in the conversation and teach the interviewer [me] new things I might have not anticipated, “while ensuring that the information the interviewer sought also is obtained” (p. 36).

Personal Documents

Personal documents from collaborators were also collected as data sources. Once I scheduled an oral history with collaborators, I sent them the protocol in which I asked them to share personal documents with me. I indicated that personal documents could be photos, correspondence, or any documents they deemed important to our conversation. Personal

documents collected consisted of resumes, photos, correspondence, recognition certificates, and conference programs. In addition, librarians usually shared further readings and links to their own published works that detailed more of their efforts to transform librarianship. As briefly mentioned above, Albert and Evelyn both shared physical collections with me. Since their oral histories were conducted in person, Albert and Evelyn both had a folder of documents prepared for me. I borrowed the collections to digitally scan the documents and uploaded them to MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software for review. I returned the documents to each of them and had a conversation about themes that were emerging from the oral histories and the archival data collection I had conducted. In the next section I discuss my approach to archival data collection.

Archival Documents

Archival research was collected in two phases. During the first phase I analyzed files from the following collections: Council for Interracial Books for Children Director Files, Rodolfo F. Acuña Collection 1857–2006, and the Interracial Council of Books for Children Bulletin. These files became the intellectual seed of using primary sources to examine the history of Latina/o children’s literature in particular the *Interracial Book for Children Bulletins*. In the past seven years, I have been involved in a research project that examines the portrayals of People of Color in children’s literature (Pérez Huber et al., 2020; Pérez Huber et al., 2018). Through this project, I came across the Council for Interracial Books from Children (CIBC), whom I introduced in Chapter Two. In the *Bulletins*, I read columns about librarians who were active in their local communities and were creating programming for Communities of Color. The *Bulletins* were the reason I started an exploration of archival sources related to the history of children’s literature. Therefore, in this phase one of data collection, I analyzed the sources

collected related to the CIBC which helped me map out themes that guided the data collection process for this study.

Given the current political environment of propaganda against Critical Race Theory and books related to racism, I was finding similar rhetoric from the 1980s in the archives. During this process, I was actively engaging in what educational historians refer to as “a balance in speaking simultaneously about the past and about the present” (Donato & Lazerson, 2000, p. 5).

In the second phase, I accessed the majority of the archival collections whether in person or by requesting digital copies. Once I got ahold of the findings aids, I was able to identify which boxes and folders I would request. Primary sources served as a chronological account of events that guided the oral histories. Although I found a plethora of information within the archives, they alone did not provide me with all information needed to construct this study together.

Chicana historian Emma Perez (1999) states:

I want to warn you that I do not believe in a beginning, a middle, and an end of history. I do not ascribe to a linear temporality as the only means for speaking and writing history . . . My imagination has proposed an order so that we may have a dialogue as you read . . . I will submit more questions, more interventions, as I continue to speak from the margins, as I continue to experiment with my own “*sitio y lengua*,” never forgetting that I am simulating voices that lived and thrived long before me, before you, before many of us.
(xix)

I too was not just interested in a chronology within the history per se; rather, I regarded this historical account of Latina/o children’s literature as a conversation between data sources, the collaborators of the oral histories, and my cultural intuition. Therefore, as I moved forward with each phase of data collection, I was flexible with the order of gathering data sources. Although I anticipated having a better understanding of the history of Latina/o children’s literature through this research project, I acknowledge that I had limitations with the information I was able to collect.

Data Analysis

To analyze the three data sources, I used a three-phase qualitative inquiry to analyze the data, consisting of three stages: (a) preliminary, (b) collaborative and (c) final data analysis (Pérez Huber, 2009). Using this three-phase data analysis approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed me to engage in multiple rounds of analysis. This was especially important since I was collecting different data sources at different times. Another important step within this data analysis is the collaborative approach. Centering my cultural intuition to communicate with collaborators in this study, I was also keen about prioritizing a relationship with the collaborator. In the following subsections, I also discuss how a Critical Race Theory in Education theoretical framework and Chicana Feminist Epistemologies guided my analytical approach at each step of the way.

Preliminary Stage

Within archival research there are a couple of ways in which I was engaged in a preliminary analysis. I spent time familiarizing myself with archival collections and their findings aids and was engaged in a selective process of deciding which archival collections to visit. When sifting through the contents in the finding aid, researchers are not always able to determine whether the collection will help us answer the research questions. In reality, we won't know what we find until we arrive to the site and start to review the documents. I started my search for collections on the Online Archive of California.⁷ This is a public website which can be used to search for finding aids. Given my familiarity with the Council for Interracial Books for Children, I used the organization's name on the search bar to find other collections that contained contents in their name. For example, using the Council's name alone I was able to find the

⁷ See Online Archive of California, <https://oac.cdlib.org>.

Rodolfo F. Acuña Collections, and the Bay Area Radical Teachers Collective Collection. When I visited these collections, I made sure to request the folders that contained documents about the Council for Interracial Books for Children.

In addition, since archival research requires of a lot of planning and time, the process leading to the site visit also consists of sorting data. When I was ready for a visit, I reached out to the appropriate archivist and gave them a list of folders to view. Garcia and Yosso (2020) state “protocols within many institutional archives add to their mystification.” Indeed, each library I visited differed in their set of regulations and protocols. This is important to mention, because depending on the collection, I had to prepare according to the regulations. For example, at the Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture in New York, I had to submit and get an application approved in advance. I also had to apply for a library card from the New York Public Library system and upon arrival I could only view six boxes in each day. On the flip side, to view the Interracial Books for Children Bulletins at the Dallas Public Library, I could walk in any business day, and they would roll out a cart with all the materials I requested. Therefore, within archival research, preliminary analysis included the filtering of finding aids and the identification of documents to scan or take notes during the visit.

In a similar manner, with each of the oral histories I conducted, I would take analytic memos, jotting down key points from the conversations. In this study, analytic memos were used to document general themes and patterns of ideas that were being shared across the oral histories and that emerged within the archival research. At this point, I engaged in an open coding process. Open coding is an analytical process in which I identified broad patterns as suggested by events described in my data sets (Emerson et al., 2011). These analytic memos documented the earliest iterations of the codes used in later stages of analysis. Some initial themes and codes

from the oral histories included: serving the community, mentorship relationships, need to diversify the field, lack of diversity in books. In addition, immediately after each oral history, I solicited external transcription services to transcribe the audio recordings verbatim. Once I had the transcription, I uploaded each document to MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software. Each transcription had time stamps, which allowed me to sync the audio to the transcript. Upon successfully uploading each transcript, I conducted listening sessions to make sure the transcripts were accurate. This process allowed me to recollect the conversations I had with the collaborators and consider how each transcript starts to answer my research questions.

Collaborative Stage

During the collaborative stage, I drew from CFE tools to guide my interpretations of the research. Dolores Delgado Bernal (1998a) describes CFE as a methodology that allows for both theory and analysis and one that values the experiences and realities of narratives as “foundations of knowledge” (p. 558). In order to invite each collaborator in the review process, I provided each a copy of their transcript for review. In addition, I had the opportunity to meet in person with Evelyn, Elizabeth, Richard and Albert at least one more time after their oral history to discuss the progress of my study and what I had gathered so far. In this stage, I also invited collaborators to share documents from their personal collections. I see this sharing of knowledge as evidence of a *convivencia* praxis in the research process. Collaborators offered personal documents such as resumes, pictures, and correspondences. Each of these documents also form part of the narrative. Personal documents are not only valuable and serve to further center the knowledge and memories of the collaborators, but they also allow for collaborators to truly embody their identities as creators of knowledge. As I have conducted oral histories and engaged with personal documents, my cultural intuition instructs me to first and foremost make sure the

collaborators are comfortable with sharing and not to engage in interviews or document collecting in ways that feel extractive. For this *convivencia* praxis to be enacted, I spoke to each collaborator prior to meeting in person or in a video call to share my intent to document their oral histories. Being transparent about my research goals and my commitment to social justice within Latina/o children's literature and library services has allowed me to establish a sense of rapport and *confianza* with the collaborators of the research. Fostering a sense of *convivencia* with my collaborators meant we were disrupting traditional educational research that positions the researcher as the sole expert. I grounded my approach to educational history in anti-racist and community centered frameworks such as CRT and CLFT to collectively produce a narrative about the experiences of Chicana/o librarians engaged in culturally relevant opportunities for Communities of Color.

Final Data Analysis

To achieve the final data analysis stage, a second coding cycle was performed to the oral histories, the personal documents and archival documents. During this step, I used the excerpts that were originally coded on MAXQDA and created a new set of parent codes to conduct focused coding. Focused coding allows for developing themes or larger categories from the first coding cycle. Charmaz (2014) adds that focused coding "means using the most significant earlier codes to shift through large amounts of data and deciding which make the most analytical sense for categorizing the data inclusively" (p. 138). In this stage, I focused on refining my codes through a categorization process and I also incorporated feedback or additional information provided by the collaborators. For the archival documents and the personal documents, I also used focused coding to code the text and images. For example, I coded text and images related to understanding race and racism such as activities undertaken to challenge racist portrayals in

children's literature.

Limitations

One of the greatest limitations within this research project, is the inability to visit archival collections in person. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many libraries and research centers were closed to the public for almost two years. While I was able to visit collections prior to the pandemic, there are still some important collections I have yet to visit. For example, the American Library Association Collection at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the Pura Belpré Papers in Hunter College, and Elizabeth Martinez's Papers at Stanford University, to name a few. A second limitation to this research is having to rely on a few documents available solely online. I reached out to centers and libraries to request as much information as I could. When archivists and librarians were able to send documents, I was relying on a secondary person to select documents for me based on the information I provided via email or via phone. By requesting documents solely based on a finding aid, I may have also missed important information since finding aids are not always updated.

Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter discussed the research design and methodology of this dissertation study. I started with the time frame understudy, 1965-2000 and why it is an ideal period of study when examining the history children's literature. The importance of this timeframe will become more clear in the next two findings chapters, as Chicana/o librarians share key events. I also introduced the collaborators within this study and detailed the three sources collected to inform the findings within this study: oral histories, archival documents and personal documents. I also presented how data collection was conducted across the three sources, and how each informed the entire process. The second half of this chapter discusses how the data

was analyzed using a three-part qualitative analysis process on MAXQDA [qualitative data analysis software]. Last, I shared a few of the shortcomings of this study given the limitations imposed by the COVID pandemic and the global shift to online communication in the last few years.

CHAPTER FIVE: CHALLENGING RACISM, OMISSIONS, CENSORSHIP, AND DISTORTIONS WITHIN LIBRARIANSHIP, LIBRARY SERVICES, AND LATINA/O CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND LITERATURE

The Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s often denote this decade as a triumph within social justice in U.S. history. With the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this period often alludes to the “end” of racial discrimination and racist practices within the country. Civil Rights leaders organized peaceful protests on the ground, scholars across the nation began to pose scholarship related to the intersection of race, gender, and socioeconomic status, and Communities of Color showcased a more culturally accurate livelihood of their literature, art, music, and culture. Even with the tireless efforts of activists demanding racial and social justice, they continued to face resistance. Within schooling, children’s literature, librarianship, and library services, racist practices have survived for decades and are still intact today. Despite the reluctance to accept racist practices within librarianship, librarians, educators, parents, and community organizations led efforts to combat sexist and racist representations within children’s literature and curriculum.

In this chapter, I discuss findings from this study on efforts to challenge race and racism within children’s literature, librarianship, and library services during the 1960s to early 2000s, as well as how librarians—seldom seen as activists—have led efforts to change such practices. The following subsections answers the first research question: What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within Latina/o representations in children’s literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? The first theme countering racism within librarianship discusses racist practices within the library profession. It sets the tone to better understand the conversations around racial equity, or lack thereof, within librarianship. The second sub-theme discusses findings of efforts to challenge

omissions and stereotypes within library services. The subsequent sub-themes discuss efforts to challenge omissions, censorship, and distortions within Latina/o children's books and literature.

Countering Racism within Librarianship

The American Library Association (ALA) is the largest standing library association in the world, founded on October 6, 1876 in Philadelphia with the mission “to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all” (ALA, 2022a). As a longstanding institution in the United States, ALA has indeed contributed to both the development of librarianship and library services throughout the decades since its founding, while simultaneously struggling to address racial inequities within its organization and profession at large. Librarianship is a profession concerned with acquiring and organizing collections of books and related materials in libraries and servicing readers and others with these resources. In addition, according to the American Library Association (ALA), the core values of librarianship include access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, the public good, preservation, professionalism, service, social responsibility, and sustainability (ALA, 2022c). Although this study is not centered on the history of ALA as an organization, starting with ALA serves as a foundation to understand the context of the history of racism within librarianship and library services, and in particular as it relates to the 1970s given the focus of this time period within this study.

During the last 200 years, the U.S. has failed to equalize the status of racial minorities and of women. For 100 of these years the American Library Association has professed belief in the principle of equality, yet has failed to address the racism and sexism within its own professional province, which perpetuate inequality. Therefore the CIBC urges the ALA to actively commit its resources and prestige to a program combating racism and sexism in the library profession. (Moore, 1976)

This was the introduction to “An Action Program for ALA,” published in the 1976 special issue titled “A Centennial Challenge for ALA” of the *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*. This article was published by the Council, and would eventually succeed in becoming an action plan within ALA. In their action plan, the Council outlined five action items that ALA should consider to address racism and sexism in the field, which included the following:

- 1) Pre-service training that included courses that examined racism and sexism in children’s literature and in the library profession.
- 2) Racism and sexism awareness workshops for in-service librarians led by ALA.
- 3) The intellectual freedom committee seek to reconcile its position in civil liberties and that they work with the Children Services Division to issue a statement on problems posed by racism and sexism in children’s books and the responsibilities of which these entail children’s librarians.
- 4) The Children’s Services Division create guidelines on how to use offensive books in discussion of racism and sexism with children and that they promote multicultural literature.
- 5) ALA adopts a cataloging standard that ensures fair treatment of women-related and multicultural materials and replace demeaning inexact subject terms.

Given the Council’s mission to challenge sexism and racism within children’s literature, they saw it necessary to look towards the field of librarianship and library services and demand that practices within ALA changed. Therefore, in addition to raising awareness about ALA’s Centennial Challenge in their *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, the Council recruited librarians and attendees to the centennial ALA conference held in Chicago, Illinois, to join them in a Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT).

The SRRT roundtables were formed in 1969, as a unit of ALA that aimed to “make ALA more democratic and to establish progressive priorities not only for the Association, but also for the entire profession . . . SRRT has provided a home within ALA for progressive librarians, library workers and supporters who agree to promote social responsibility as a core value of librarianship” (ALA, 2022b). These SRRT roundtables are among the earliest documented spaces created from the need for diversity within librarianship and literature. These roundtables

were important spaces within ALA because they allowed organizations like the Council to present their resolution and bring up conversations that centered specifically on racism and sexism within the field of librarianship despite not being formally on the ALA program. Printed on a Council for Interracial Books for Children letterhead and dated July 2, 1976, Bradford Chambers, the director of the Council, wrote:

Dear Friend:

We need your help at ALA. While the Council is not formally on the ALA convention program this year, we are very much concerned about issues at stake, particularly intellectual freedom, censorship, and children's book reevaluation criteria. We hope to give our proposal for dealing with these issues (an advance copy is enclosed) the widest possible distribution at the centennial convention in Chicago July 18–24 . . . We will be sharing a suite at ALA with the Social Responsibility Round Table (SRRT) in the Pickcongress Hotel (the room number is not yet assigned) . . . If you are not going to ALA, please inform persons who you think will be interested in contacting us. And if you are not a librarian, please show the attached proposal to the librarian in your community and urge support. (Chambers, 1976a)

This letter was signed “Hope to see you there” by Bradford Chambers, the director of the Council. Although the Council did not have a presentation slot by ALA, they were active in recruiting supporters and librarians to join their efforts at the association meeting. Despite the setbacks, the Council was key in the passing of a resolution to address racism and sexism within the profession, including children's librarians, public librarians, school librarians, and university librarians.

The final resolution was adopted by ALA Membership and approved by the Council on Friday, July 23, 1976. A segment of the resolution reads:

THE ALA WILL SURVEY LIBRARY SCHOOLS TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH RACISM AND SEXISM AWARENESS TRAINING FORM A PART OF THE CURRICULA AND URGE THAT SUCH TRAINING BE ADDED TO THE CURRICULA IN EVERY LIBRARY SCHOOL WHERE IT IS NOW NOT INCLUDED.

THE LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION-PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION SECTION WILL DEVELOP A MODEL IN-SERVICE PROGRAM PROVIDING RACISM AND SEXISM AWARENESS TRAINING FOR LIBRARY PERSONNEL.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS, THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION, THE YOUNG ADULT SERVICES DIVISION, THE REFERENCE AND ADULT SERVICES DIVISION, AND THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES WILL BE URGED TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO RAISE THE AWARENESS OF LIBRARY USERS TO THE PRESSING PROBLEM OF RACISM AND SEXISM.

THE RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION WILL DEVELOP A COORDINATED PLAN FOR THE REFORM OF CATALOGING PRACTICES THAT NOW PERPETUATE RACISM AND SEXISM.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the President and Executive Board access the extent and implementation of these steps and report on the progress by the 1977 Annual Conference. ("Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness")

The final resolution was rewritten from the draft presented by the Council, however a lot of the original action items put forth by the Council are still evident in the approved document. The initiative and the organizing to get this passed was an effort led by librarians and a community organization who were invested in changing the racial and sexist landscape of literature for children. It was not an ALA-led initiative. Racialized and gendered discussions of this nature rattled ALA, and the organization at large struggled to respond to the pushback they were receiving from librarians and educators who were ready to engage in these topics. This resolution was written by members of the Council, and they were also key in organizing librarians from the Asian American Caucus; Black Caucus; Board of Directors of REFORMA; Social Responsibilities Round Table Action Council; and SRRT Chicano Task Force to support the resolution.

These conversations were important for the years to come, because the late 1960s and early 1970s was key for the formation of ethnic library associations. "ALA's passive response to civil rights of the 1960s set precedence for the formation of the ethnic library associations"

(Ayala, 2012, p. 213). Interracial coalitions and ethnic librarian organizations would radically change librarianship for decades to come. Programs would be instituted, and hard money would be made available to recruit librarians to serve underrepresented backgrounds. These efforts were led mainly by librarians invested in challenging racism and sexism within librarianship.

Following the successful passing of this resolution, correspondence reveals some of the pushback from conservative librarians to challenge the resolution. Librarians against the resolution claimed their first amendment was being challenged by it. Bradford Chambers cited some of the dialogue that took place during the discussion of the resolution:

I and my staff have the right to our beliefs. We have the right to be racist or sexist.” Pat Schuman, a former School Library Journal editor turned publisher, shot back, “Not as librarians paid by public funds, you don’t have the right.” Then she added: “there happens to be a law against racism and sexism.” (Chambers, 1976b)

This dialogue was an exchange between a member from West Virginia, who was against the resolution, and a publisher who supported the resolution. In the first sentence, the opposing librarian expressed they had the right to their belief and to be racist if they choose to. Given the resolution presented above aimed to have librarians aware of racism and sexism, the librarian’s comment of “choosing to be racist,” is an example of how censorship is used to declare one’s first amendment is being challenged or revoked. The Intellectual Freedom Committee of ALA was the most outspoken opponent of the Racism and Sexism Resolution—they declared the resolution was censoring materials deemed racist and sexist that perpetuated white supremacist ideologies. However, when close examination of the Council’s original draft of the resolution, there is language that clearly reads “the Children’s Services Division create guidelines on how to use offensive books in discussion of racism and sexism with children and that they promote multicultural literature.” The Council never mentions that librarians must omit “offensive books,” but rather they should create guidelines of how to engage with such books with the goal

of advancing multicultural literature. Statements like these were the norm when it came to raising issues of racism and sexism within the field of librarianship, which is why Bradford Chambers seemed skeptical of how the resolution would be carried out. He wrote:

For the first time, a large and important U.S. institution has acknowledged the existence of racism and sexism within its domain and has pledged to take aggressive steps towards their elimination. Needless to say, the pledge is only as good as its implementation, and the hard work of concretizing the provisions of the resolution ahead.

Bradford Chamber's words from 1976 echo today as many institutions continue to pledge towards enacting equity, diversity, and racial justice via action plans, resolutions, and statements. However, within ALA, it is well-documented they would continue to perpetuate racist practices in the profession and be unsuccessful in implementing the resolution.

Findings from the oral histories with Chicana/o librarians reveals the importance of passing the resolution to enact change within the training of librarians. Many shared that their programs in librarian science did not prepare them to engage issues of racism and sexism within children's literature and library services. Elizabeth Martinez, now a retired librarian, reflects on her Master's in Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at the University of Southern California during 1967 through 1968, and on the racism within the history of ALA.

I remember very little about it [MLIS program], because all I wanted to do was get through it—the foundation course on libraries—even today, look at the foundation course in the development of history of libraries. You don't read anything about how libraries were segregated until the '60s, how the southern libraries had back doors for Black people and front doors—that ALA was segregated, and Black people, People of Color couldn't live in the same hotels, that they sat on different sides of the conference room. You don't find that in library history. In foundation courses across the country, they don't teach it. They teach Dewey and all this stuff, but they don't tell you the history of racism and discrimination that occurred. So, we never got that. We did cataloging, and it was all these Anglo cataloging rooms where they put Native people next to dinosaurs because they're supposed to be extinct, you know?

Elizabeth pursued her MLIS degree at USC, a one year program, where although she remembers very little about it, she recognizes that there was a lack of acknowledgement of segregation

practices within ALA. Shortly after completing her MLIS program, Elizabeth would become the first Chicana librarian in the Los Angeles County Public Library System. In addition, this vignette reveals that not only did librarians in training not learn about the racist practices in places like ALA, but cataloguing practices reinforced distortions of Native and Indigenous People by placing their subject materials next to dinosaurs due to their perceived “extinction.” Elizabeth Martinez mentioned that in response, librarians have organized and have been successful in changing some subject headings and cataloging practices. In the following section, I discuss findings that further contextualize the omissions and stereotypes within librarians and the profession as it relates to library services.

Challenging Omissions & Stereotypes within Library Services

Traditionally, libraries in the Chicano community are either non-existent or at best, solitary enclaves that constantly decry their lack of rapport within the community they purport to serve . . . There is hardly a time when Chicano leaders, expressing their disapproval of the educational system in this country, do not refer to libraries as one of the places where the divorce between the institution and the community is most evident.
–Nelly Fernandez (1973)

As illustrated by Nelly Fernandez, libraries have not always succeeded in serving all their communities. Libraries have the power to serve as sites of connection and transformation for an individual and librarians play a critical role in helping foster this sense of community by developing library services relevant to the communities they serve. Public librarians’ efforts are significant because they can create opportunities for children and their families to gain access to books, and information services denied to them at schools. However, when there is a disconnect with the community, as Nelly Fernandez suggests was common in the early 1970s, libraries become un-welcoming spaces. As established in the last section, the professions’ failure to accept fault in perpetuating racist practices within the field resulted in the perpetuity of negative perceptions and stereotypes of Latinas/os/ and Chicanas/os among librarians.

Joe Salazar, a librarian in the Denver Public Library system circa 1973, illustrates this further in his essay titled, “The Chicano Community Liaison: A Personal View,” printed in the *California Librarian*, Chicano Library Service special issue:

When the people of the United States can relinquish this myth and can work to eradicate the fear of differentness that is the basis of racism, then can the myth and fear be supplemented by a recognition and acceptance of the valuable contributions of each ethnic group. Moreover, when no one person in this country is suppressed or discriminated against because of his color, religion or cultural background, then can people truly be free. The Spirit of the Chicano movement comes from a dedication and determination to achieve a life full of equality for all people. Libraries can truly contribute to such a goal in American life.

Joe Salazar, starts from the basis of recognizing that racism is embedded within our nations consciousness and only when we accept it and challenge it, can there be change. Unlike Joe, not all librarians and community liaisons have this consciousness about racial justice and therefore do not embody this practice in the profession. This excerpt also highlights the activism and “spirit” of the larger Chicano Movement and other racial and ethnic movements of the 1960s and 1970s that aimed to challenge racism in all institutions within the United States.

As it relates to changing the culture within libraries, Joe added:

A majority of Chicanos are not aware of libraries and their function or of the helpful materials available to all. In order to draw these people to the library, more materials that relate to them, their everyday lives, jobs, education, cultural heritage and traditions are needed. The biggest help in reaching the Chicano community is to have persons who understand its people working in the library . . . Books by and about Chicanos are not readily available. Because Chicanos’ contributions have not been recognized, libraries need to collect materials which may be considered ephemeral, cursory, dated, or biased if they related the ethnic experience. Most libraries are not aware of the existence of these important resources. The Community Services Assistant can help identify and locate these special materials.

As the Chicano community liaison, Joe was well aware of the lack of materials available during this time and also mentions that the lack of recognition of Chicano contributions added to the omission of resources and materials for Chicanas/os. To help with the disconnect of librarians,

libraries, and the Chicana/o community, Joe suggests that it's important to have people who understand the community work in the local libraries. Within the oral histories, Chicana librarians Evelyn Escatiola and Elizabeth Martinez highlight the importance of having people identified with the community, serving the community and their needs. First, Evelyn shared about her MLIS program:

Because it isn't what you learn in school, it's what you learn on the job. I felt like the profession wasn't about how you kept the books on the shelves, it was about how you treated people and what did they need and meet their needs. And if their need wasn't to read a novel or something then, what was it and what would you do? That was the changing face of librarianship in the '70s, because we were more than just people sitting at a reference desk and being quiet, the stereotype, right. It was more than that. So, what was it? Our goal was to work in communities where we grew up or communities where they needed us. That was a whole different view of the world through our eyes, not through the traditional librarian—the 1800s or whatever it is. What was the public library about? What did it mean—I had some good instructors. But for the most part, it [MLIS program] was pretty just, ehh—I learned the cataloging rules and that kind of stuff. But I was not and I am not [emphasis] a person who pays attention to these particular things like cataloging and stuff. I can't do it. I can't stand it. Give it to somebody else. I was more of a person who had the ability to meet people where they were, to have a conversation and then, to say what is it you need, how can we help you? Let's work on this and that kind of thing. So, it's building the relationships.

Born and raised in East Los Angeles, Evelyn, completed her MLIS program at the University of Michigan in 1977. Upon completing her program, Evelyn returned to East Los Angeles and began her career as a children's librarian in East Los Angeles County Library. Although Evelyn completed her program almost a decade after Elizabeth, she shared much of the similar sentiments about her program being centered on information, organizing, and cataloguing. Evelyn made clear that she was always more interested in working with and for her community in East LA and serving their needs. Evelyn also pointed out that although she was not a traditional librarian, she prioritized building relationships. Evelyn's approach as a librarian speaks to her not conforming to the stereotypical librarian; rather, she was always motivated to serve the community in which she grew up, to develop services that best fit their needs. This

approach would prove successful in Evelyn's career as a librarian who worked to create more culturally relevant services for her community.

It was not easy to go against the grain of the profession. Elizabeth, as one of the first Chicana librarians and among a low number of Women of Color who held master's degrees during the early 1970s, faced a lot of pushback. In the following vignette from Elizabeth's oral history, she explains the culture of the libraries as she started her career:

I got my master's degree in one year and I had [a] run in with the administrator because she was a very formidable woman who was very much involved in ALA. She was a member of the accreditation committee, which accredits, all the library schools. I wanted to know why they weren't—why the Americas or Spanish literature wasn't covered in the courses. And she didn't care. She just thought I was complaining, but I did graduate, and I was hired at LA county. I had done an internship for one year at Pomona Public Library. And that got me in trouble because —Pomona, they got a new library and they built it on the south side of town, near the city center, which is the south side of town, where all the Mexicans live. And so, the staff were saying things like, well now the Mexicans, the barefoot Mexicans are going to come into the library. What are we going to do? And I heard that and when, a newspaper reporter came in to talk about the new library and how important it was. They asked me and I told them what I have heard, and it made everybody crazy, and I was sort of boycotted for quite a while.

As Elizabeth reflected back to her early years as a librarian, she recalled the interactions with an administrator of her MLIS program—who had also been involved with ALA—that dismissed her questions on the lack of diverse materials by saying Elizabeth was just complaining. Like Evelyn, who was committed to serving her community, Elizabeth started her career as a librarian in Pomona, the city in which she grew up. There she became aware of racist comments from librarians, who apparently feared “barefoot Mexicans” going to the library. These racist and stereotypical ideologies are the basis of librarians making libraries unwelcoming and inaccessible for Communities of Color. It was precisely such stereotypes and racist ideologies that the Council aimed to challenge within the profession with the Racism and Sexism Resolution. Given the larger ALA and librarianship field's reluctance to racial justice, however,

librarians across the nation further contributed to the lack of services and programming for Latina/o communities.

In the following vignette, Elizabeth recounted what the environment of libraries in East Los Angeles were like in the early 1970s:

All we needed was a place to hold a meeting and a library. They [library users] wanted people to speak Spanish in a library. They wanted a librarian who speak Spanish to them. They wanted books about Latinos and Spanish language books. That's all they wanted [emphasis], which is what white people got in their libraries. That's what was normal about libraries. They just wanted it for Chicanas and in Spanish or bilingual. And that was very—that was not allowed at the time. You couldn't speak Spanish in a library. So it was a different world. The librarians today don't get it because they have it all now. They can speak Spanish; they do classes in Spanish. They can write things in Spanish. We couldn't do any of that.

Elizabeth spoke to the needs of her community and how libraries were denying them to Chicanas/os. Her community needed librarians who spoke Spanish, Spanish-language services, and books in Spanish, but there weren't librarians who could deliver such services. As portrayed by Joe Salazar, libraries did not even acknowledge or failed to prioritize Chicano materials. In addition, Elizabeth compared how librarians of today are able to engage in Spanish services within the library, an opportunity she had to advocate for. The lack of culturally relevant materials for communities contributed to what Nelly Fernandez (1973) called the “divorce between the institution and the community.” Omissions and distortions within library services were not the only challenge that contributed to the disconnect with communities. In the next sections, I discuss omissions, censorship, and distortions within Latina/o literature for all ages, and how librarians aimed to challenge them.

Challenging Omissions within Latina/o Children's Books and Literature

Findings also reveal there was systemic omission of children's books and Latina/o literature, and there were distortions within portrayals of Latinas/os in the literature readily

available during that time. This sub-theme discusses findings regarding the omissions of Latina/o children's books and literature. In 1973, Elizabeth Martinez published an article titled "Pensamientos" in *California Librarian*, the Chicano Library Service special issue. In it, Elizabeth spoke to the omission of Chicano materials within libraries:

A tradition of libraries had existed for 100 years or more. It has worked. Librarians have done a good job... for middle class gringos. During those 100 years or so, librarians professed to have something for everyone and to provide material on all points of view. After all, most libraries have the John Birch Blue book, no? National Review? Nation? What do libraries have on the Chicano viewpoint? Do we rule this out because we don't agree with the philosophy? Is it true that libraries reflect the interests of the librarian? How do we justify to the Chicano people that their lives and thoughts are not in libraries? Are they insignificant? Too radical? Too nationalistic? The fact remains that regardless of the number of books in the library with the word CHICANO in the title, the day-to-day Chicano thought, and struggle is still only available through publications of Chicano presses, and especially, in Chicano periodicals: *La Raza*, *Con Safos*, *El Grito*, *Aztlan*. All are slick, literate productions whose format will pass with even the most scrutinizing librarian.

Elizabeth made clear that the library field has succeeded in providing materials and information services—albeit catering only to a White middle-class audience—and has failed to provide access and information on “all points of view.” This statement further illustrates what Nancy Larrick called in 1965, “an all-white world” for children's literature. There was a clear omission of literature for Chicanas/os and Latinas/os of all ages. The fact is that during the early 1970s, a lot of Chicano independent presses were creating their own materials and were not yet recognized in the larger library databases. Elizabeth also made clear that even if there were books in the library that contained the word Chicano, the more accurate accounts of Chicano thought and the everyday lived experiences were found only in Chicano presses. For example, *Con Safos Magazine* was a leading Chicano literary journal that emerged out of East Los Angeles during the 1960s (Museum of Social Justice, 2022). This magazine was started by a

group of activists who sought to bring attention to the Mexican American life, El Movimiento, and El Moratorium.

Within Latina/o children's literature, there weren't a significant number of books, as Elizabeth recalled her time as a children's librarian:

. . . there were no books. There was one bookstore, downtown LA . . . Libreria Mexico, was the biggest source of books in Spanish, and there was one bookstore in Monterey [Park, Bookstore]. I can't remember the name of it, but it was run by a Jewish man named Sy, and he had come from New York, and fought all the battles there, and discrimination, and he would find all the Chicano books I could possibly want. He searched them out, bought them, and then I could buy them for the library.

Like Elizabeth, all the librarians shared that there were little to no books in Spanish, and many mentioned Libreria Mexico, which was also Sy's bookstore, as the supplier of many of their Spanish books. Librarians also shared that they didn't have books that were translated in English and Spanish, so they often had to venture out to Tijuana, as well as other international books fairs to purchase books for their Spanish-speaking library users. Evelyn described:

I just remember that when I started in the late '70s, there was already an awareness . . . we need to provide better options for our kids and people, in general. Either monolingual users or bilingual, English and Spanish. And some were learning English. But we didn't have the resources. We didn't have enough. There was always a process to buy books. We would go and look for books. A number of librarians would go to the Guadalajara Book Fair and look for stuff there that would be applicable to bring to the libraries and children. They would look through all of the catalogs and everywhere they could look to see what kind of books they could purchase that were more, how can I say, culturally relevant or more useable in the libraries where we were working. A number of librarians who would go, got permission to go and buy books and make connections with publishers so then, the publishers could work with us here and get us the books and stuff like that. That was years ago. Wow, a long time. We'd scour the publications. We'd talk to other librarians.

In this vignette, Evelyn encapsulated what librarians shared across their oral histories regarding the omission of literature and books for young Latinas/os. First, she highlighted there was an awareness of having "better options for kids" than when she started in the late 1970s, however, the challenge was a lack of resources. Although Evelyn never went to the book fairs,

her librarian colleagues did travel to places like Guadalajara or Tijuana, Mexico to obtain books that were either bilingual or in Spanish. When Evelyn referred to finding culturally relevant books that were “usable” in the libraries she was working with, she also alluded to the importance of making connections to the community she served through books. She also mentioned that there was always a process to buy books, which for Evelyn and her colleagues meant traveling to international books fairs to find books, scouring publications, and/ or talking to other librarians to identify books for their library. Since she served the East Los Angeles area, her library imported books from Mexico that were in Spanish or bilingual. The lack of adequate literature for Latinas/os was evident not only in the number of books available, but there was also a lack of accurate representation of Latina/o culture. Therefore, to find books that best served their communities’ needs, librarians found themselves having to develop close relationships with publishers and bookstores. Elizabeth Martinez also shared her experience in having to develop relationships with local bookstores. In her oral history, Elizabeth highlights Libreria Mexico, a bookstore in Monterrey Park [East Los Angeles], owned by Sy, an Jewish immigrant, who would ensure he gathered books pertaining to Chicana/o/ Latina/o topics for the local libraires to purchase. This bookstore in particular served as a hub for educators and librarians looking for culturally materials for young Latinas/os during the 1970s and 1980s. Despite these nascent relationships and networks of support, librarians could not eliminate the persistence of censorship for some topics and themes. The next section highlights how social and political climates also impact literature for students beyond the classrooms.

Challenging Censorship within Latina/o Children’s Books and Literature

Further, it cannot be ignored that educational policies and politics of the early 1980s also contributed to the continued omission and censorship of literature for Latinas/os of all ages. For

example, educational policies that espoused negative rhetoric passed in the 1980s further incited librarian activists and community organizations to take strong political stances. For example, the national “English Only” movement of the 1980s aimed to declare English as the sole language in the U.S., demanding that institutions provide English-only materials. Within librarianship, librarians took a hard stance against the movement and continued to design multilingual programming. Although it can be argued that most of the programming was already English-only, as Elizabeth highlighted earlier, hence the disconnect with communities. “English Only” rhetoric went against the goals of REFORMA, which was to serve Spanish-speaking communities, and to cater library services to them. Protected by intellectual freedom, REFORMA announced to the larger ALA organization that they indeed would not be adhering to English-only rhetoric, and would continue to provide multilingual services. An example is illustrated in 1998, when California passed Proposition 227—English Language in Public Schools, which nearly eliminated bilingual instruction and instead required public schools to teach English only. The connection of such education policies affects curriculum and literature beyond the school instruction.

Although this study does not examine school curriculum and children’s books within classrooms, there is a clear connection between politics and children’s literature. Romelia Salinas recalled her experience as president of the Los Angeles REFORMA chapter from late 1990s and early 2000s:

. . . I was president, when Proposition 227 passed, which ended bilingual education in California, you had a lot of school districts that had bilingual materials that they had to get rid of. So, we partnered with a number of schools because they had boxes and boxes of new books basically that they had bought and had been stamped already. They couldn’t return them back to the publisher. So, we worked with them. I organized this distribution where we collected all these books and we used El Dia de Los Libros, El Dia de Los Niños [Day of Books, Children’s Day] event, which happens in April. And through the network we have of the LA [Los Angeles] chapter, different libraries came

and picked up these boxes of brand-new bilingual books. And we gave them away as part of the Dia de Los Niños event. So, it was a very nice, collaborative event through different library systems across the city.

This vignette, signals first, the importance of public library and school relationships when it comes to curriculum and literature. Having strong relationships among schools and public libraries can lead to strong cooperation in further serving the needs of young readers beyond the classroom. Second, California Prop 227 is an example of a racist nativist policy (Perez Huber et al., 2008). Although Prop 227 does not mention race or ethnicity of a specific ethnic group, by eliminating bilingual education in state with a high percentage of Latinas/os who are Spanish speaking, this policy targeted the access of materials for Latinas/os and bilingual communities. One can argue that educational policies also impact the books available to students in a public place, such as local libraries. Political rhetoric has a direct effect on the intellectual freedom of students, whether that be through books or curriculum. The 1980s propaganda wars signal the cyclical ways in which children's books are the center of attacks, and how curriculum—especially for K-3 students—is used as a tactic to move conservative agendas forward [i.e., right extremism, “anti-American” rhetoric].

In the following vignette, Richard Chabran, a retired university research librarian, further reflects on the impact the “English Only” movement and racist policies on librarians, and how he and fellow activist librarians took a stance to oppose the banning of books. Chabran explained:

Immigration during that period . . . had different ramifications, to the point where libraries were getting threatened about who they serve and what services they do and all that kind of stuff. So it was pretty intense that way. And then that continued in different ways, I guess ultimately, they tried to take away Ethnic Studies and Chicano studies was being taught in the high schools in really successful ways . . . At the same time there's a lot of resistance where people were doing really positive things. So it's not like they succeeded in stamping out the positive things that were going on in communities, and the communities were going to defend themselves and continue to do creative things, cultural things . . . Like if you're going to restrict who's going to have access to books, then one of the responses were, “We're going to collect books and give them to people” [laughs].

REFORMA did that and we did it at our local level. One time a school system had actually purchased all these books to give for the bilingual programs that were going on in school. And then the school board said, “You can’t do that, you can’t teach it.” So they gave us all the books and then we went to school and redistributed them ourselves [laughs].

Richard speaks to a few events related to the censoring of literature and books across different time periods. In the beginning, Richard was referring to 2010 when Arizona passed Senate Bill 1070, Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, and House Bill 2281 which banned the Mexican American Studies program. Both SB 1070 and HB 2281 were Republican-led, racist policies that aimed to antagonize immigrants and eliminate the curriculum for students in the Mexican American Studies program by claiming it promoted ideologies to “overthrow the U.S. government.” In light of this racist political environment, though, there was resistance. Richard shared there were “positive things” during this time, one being the response of REFORMA, whose members organized to distribute books themselves. Similar to what Romelia shared, Richard further highlighted how local REFORMA chapters in the late 1990s took it upon themselves to redistribute books related to bilingual education when Prop 227 in California was passed. As a direct response to the censoring of banning of bilingual books in schools and curriculum, librarians like Richard and Romelia, who were each part of the larger REFORMA organization, found ways to create library programming to distribute books back to the community. Efforts like this highlight how communities found creative, cultural ways to defend themselves and their access to information amidst the censorship.

Challenging Distortions within Latina/o Children’s Books and Literature

As illustrated in the last sections, there was a lack of culturally relevant literature available to Latinas/os of all ages. In addition, the literature available was not always quality content that affirmed the everyday lives of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. This sub-theme discusses

ways children's books and literature perpetuated distortions of Latinas/os. Starting with the publishing industry, an institution that seldomly supports critical perspectives in children's literature. Within the 1976, in "Centennial Challenge for ALA"—an entire special issue of the *Interracial Books for Children's Bulletin*—the Council stated:

When a publishing firm continually selects for publication, without meaningful counsel or input from minority group members, manuscripts that include certain facts and viewpoints and exclude others, and when the selections and rejections are determined by the publisher's own unconscious racist and sexist attitudes, then racism, sexism and censorship can be said to have joined hands. Through covert censorship, racist and sexist stereotypes and attitudes have passed from generation to generation. Consider, too, that no malicious intent need be involved. It is primarily a matter of orientation—a white male, middle/upper class, ethnocentric orientation. Most of the books that fill our libraries came into print via the process described above. That process is further reinforced by the book selection policies of libraries—also conceived and implemented primarily by whites. Our libraries are, therefore, racist and sexist institutions.

In this vignette, the Council is scrutinizing the white male middle- and upper-class orientations in the publishing process and industry. They argued that the lack of counsel from minority group members results in the perpetuation of racist and sexist stereotypes in the books available via libraries. The Council goes on to make connections to the mainly white librarians who are in charge of selecting the books in the libraries. This problem was yet another reason the Council pushed to pass the Racism and Sexism Resolution among ALA, given how at each stage of the process, books were overwhelming white-centered and did not include perspectives of Communities of Color. This is yet another example of the omission of literature that culturally affirms Communities of Color, this omission also further perpetuates stereotypes and distortions. For example, in the article "Pensamientos," published in the Chicano Library Service special issue of the *California Librarian* in 1973, Elizabeth Martinez illustrates this further:

An example of a reoccurring stereotype found in children's books is the happy, humble Mexican family with an idyllic peasant background living in a nice clean migrant camp or barrio. The "white savior" appears—the good cop, the bilingual teacher, the helpful librarian—and the process of acculturation and assimilation begins. Soon it is evident that

to succeed in Anglo terms means becoming as Anglo-like as possible, with the end result always the same—the Chicano gives up his language and culture for Anglo success.

This paragraph illustrates how stories of Chicanas/os usually portrayed the typical humble poor family who had a white savior help them assimilate into the Anglo way of life. In a later section of the article, Martinez asks, “What do these stories these tell young Chicanos?” Essentially, that in order to participate in the American social life, one must conform to white middle-class ideologies. The Council reported similar stereotypes in literature for children in their 1976 survey on 200 picture books about Chicanos.

In addition, the Council conducted an analysis on children’s books on Central America and also revealed omissions and stereotypes. In the 1982 *Central America: What U.S. educators need to know* special issue, the Council examined a total of 71 books with input of Latin American scholars and found the following major themes:

1. Books suggest that Central America is not important;
2. Most of the books contain racial and ethnic stereotypes;
3. Books lead students to conclude that the major causes of underdevelopment and poverty are climate, physical terrain and the shortcomings of Central Americans. Exploitation is rarely mentioned;
4. Books communicate that Central American countries are important only insofar as they directly affect U.S. economic or strategic interests. Books distort the role of the U.S. in Central America, portraying it only as the perennial “helper”;
5. Books emphasize “exotic” differences, creating an obstacle to the fullest understanding of Central America; and
6. Books often convey one of two distorted images: Central America is either a lush, tranquil backwater with rural peasants and no problems, or it is a violent, politically unstable, trouble-torn area where governments topple swiftly at the hands of machine-guns toting guerrillas.

The analysis conducted by the Council, further highlights how Central Americans were also negatively portrayed in children’s books. This distortion of Latina/o ethnic and racial groups only further perpetuated mediocre and inaccurate single-sided narratives about Communities of

Color. At fault are publishers who produced these narratives, and failed to nuance the diverse experience of Latinas/o in the United States.

Conclusion

This chapter presented findings related to the efforts to challenge racist and sexist portrayals in librarianship, library services and children literature by answering the first research question, what is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? Organized into five themes, this chapter serves as the foundation for better understanding the efforts to challenge the racist practices embedded within the field. As documented through archival records and oral histories, the history of white supremacist ideologies within the field of librarianship has shaped library services and literature today. A historical approach, therefore, allows us to see the original texts and claims within librarianship, library services and children's literature of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The first theme for example shares evidence of how the Council for Interracial Books for Children was pivotal for shaping discussions of addressing racism and sexism within the American Library Association. The second theme shares findings that illustrate how librarians and organizations challenged omissions and stereotypes within library services, as it relates to servicing Latinas/os and People of Color. The third theme focused on challenging omissions within Latina/o literature, for example one finding illustrated the lack of books for Latinas/os of all ages. Librarians took it upon themselves to network with bookstores, or small presses to find books that were relevant for Latinas/os.

The fourth theme discussed how librarians challenged censorship of Latina/o children's literature. For example, one common thread was the English Only Movement, in which librarians

stepped up to fill the need for Spanish speaking communities. Last the fifth theme discusses how librarians and organizations like the Council countered distortions of People of Color within children's literature. All together these findings speak to the great need to challenge racist practices within librarianship, library services and literature. As mentioned above, this chapter sets the tone for understanding the importance of why this time period denotes a shift in Civil Rights activism to transform all racist intuitions for People of Color. In the next chapter, I discuss findings of the ways in which Chicana/o librarians transformed the field, and how they responded to their communities with care.

CHAPTER SIX: LIBRARIANS AS ACTIVITSTS RESPONDING TO THE NEED

In addition to organizations like the Bay Area Radical Teachers Organizing Collective and the Council for Interracial books for Children that worked to challenge racist and sexist curriculum and literature, other efforts within librarianship sought to transform library services to better serve local communities. This chapter discusses findings from this study on efforts to support the creation of culturally relevant children's literature and library services during the 1960s to early 2000s and how librarians, seldom seen as activists, have led efforts to change such practices.

The following subsections answers the second research question and sub-question: What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? And, what is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services today? This chapter is organized into three major themes: librarians as activists, engaging in librarianship with community in mind, and current efforts to transform librarianship. The first theme, librarians as activists discusses efforts created to recruit Latina/o librarians into the profession and the mentorship relations that made it possible to sustain Latina/o librarians in the profession. The second theme shares findings related to how librarians engaged with their communities with care by responding to their need. This themes also highlights the interracial coalitions the librarians in this study were a part of, to transform librarianship for all Communities of Color. Last, the third theme briefly discusses current efforts within librarianship and children's literature that seek to diversify literature for children of all ages.

Librarians as Activists

Chicana/o and Latina/o Librarians are activists. The librarians in this study all shared they were mentored or recruited into library school, and they all shared about their passion for social justice and desire to serve their communities. The first subsection examines efforts to create opportunities to recruit Latina/o librarians. The second subsection discusses mentoring relationships among Latina/o librarians that led to institutional change within librarianship. Across both subthemes, I elaborate on how Chicana/o and Latina/o librarians are activists and continue to be engaged in efforts to transform librarianship today.

Recruiting Latina/o Librarians, 1970 to 1980

REFORMA has become a well-recognized, vital player in its profession. Although starting as a small group of devoted librarians, REFORMA has evolved into an influential national organization that has brought about a great deal of societal change.
–Refugio Ramirez, 2012

Today REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Studies and the Spanish Speaking, is one of the longest standing organizations started by Latina/o librarians (REFORMA, 2022). It was founded in 1971 as an affiliate of the American Library Association (ALA), because there was “a need for an organization which would serve as an outreach to the Latino population of the U.S. and a forum for information and resource sharing” (Ramirez, 2012, p. 217). In the beginning the organization was just known as the National Association of Spanish-Speaking Librarians, until co-founder Arnulfo D. Trejo, inspired by the name of Mexican newspaper, *Reforma*, realized that his vision for this organization also signified reform and change. Therefore, REFORMA is not an acronym, but rather part of the larger title, which means change within librarianship.

In 1975, when Jose G. Taylor, the Pacific/Southwest Regional Chairman and editor of the REFORMA newsletter, published the article, “Library Reform Sought by Bilingual Group” in

the *Interracial Book for Children's Bulletin*. Jose stated there were already 12 million Spanish-surnamed citizens at that time [1975] and the group was only growing, therefore signaling the importance of REFORMA and its chapters. In 1975, REFORMA members recognized the need of supporting librarians across the nation who were serving the diverse Latina/o racial and ethnic groups. Jose wrote:

REFORMA members decided to reorganize the association into four regional chapters—Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and Pacific Coast/Southwest—for more effective functioning. It was felt that local groups- such as the Puerto Ricans in New York, Cubans in Florida and Chicanos in the Southwest- know best how to tackle the problems peculiar to their areas.

–Jose G. Taylor, “Library reform sought by Bilingual Group”

As an organization, REFORMA sought to validate the diverse experiences within the fast-growing Latina/o population and Spanish-speaking community in the United States. Within the same article, Jose stated that when REFORMA had just begun, only a handful of Chicanas/os were members. Then, he reported that in 1975, 150 Chicanos were part of the organization; in just four years, there had been a significant increase in Chicana/o members of REFORMA. The fast growth of the organization and its members began to signal the immense importance of librarianship and library services for Latinas/os and Spanish-speaking communities. To date, REFORMA has made one of the most consistent efforts to support Latina/o librarians, and to recruit librarians to better serve Spanish-speaking communities. In November 2021, the organization celebrated its fiftieth anniversary since its founding. In the latter section of this chapter, I revisit efforts of the organization to transform librarianship today.

Within librarianship, findings indicate that there have also been short-lived programs that aimed to recruit Latina/o and Spanish-speaking librarians to serve the fast-growing Latina/o community. These short-lived programs were all initiated by Chicana/o/Latina/o librarians in the early 1970s, who were determined to open avenues for future Librarians of Color. Unlike

REFORMA, these short-lived programs that aimed to recruit Latina/o librarians were less overtly successful in their trajectory. It remains important that we discuss them, though, because together, they recruited and graduated about 100 Latina/o librarians during a 10-year period.

Central to this history is Elizabeth Martinez, who was a part of the founding of REFORMA and the Committee to Recruit Mexican American (CRMAL) librarians. During her oral history, she recalled:

When we started, the Committee to Recruit Mexican American librarians [CRMAL] in LA [Los Angeles], it was actually started by the human resources person at Los Angeles City, and he asked me to help him, because at the time, I was the only visible Chicano librarian in the area. We started that. We started finding people. So, at one point, I think we had eight of us for a while, John Ayala, José Taylor, Daniel Duran, mostly men who were . . . That's the other thing. Look at REFORMA. Dr. Trejo, that was his vision, but I was co-founder because we set it up together the following year. Every president of REFORMA for the first 12 years was a man. I used to make fun of them and say, "Well, hurry up and get your presidency so that we can get women [laughs]. Just hurry up. How many more of you are left, so that we can put a woman president?" That was the norm. If we found librarians who were either Mexican American or Latino from another country, like Roberto Cabello was from, I think, Argentina. If we found people, they were men. There weren't women librarians, Chicanos, in LA.

Elizabeth Martinez is a foundational piece in the larger history of activism among Chicana/o librarians. As the first Chicana librarian in the Los Angeles area, Elizabeth shared details about how she was among the very few women Chicana librarians. Therefore, both the human resource person seeking to start CRMAL and Dr. Trejo, who had aimed to start REFORMA, sought her support. CRMAL formed one year before REFORMA in Los Angeles and was pivotal to Latina/o librarianship at that time:

The Committee to recruit Mexican American Librarians, a volunteer organization of the greater Los Angeles area, has been actively seeking Chicano students as potential librarians for three years, primarily speaking to career information groups in the community colleges.

—Plan of Operation for an Institute for Training in Librarianship, 1973, CSU Fullerton files

Although CRMAL started as a handful of volunteers, the members were key in organizing one of the first institutes that aimed to recruit Mexican Americans into the library profession during the 1970s. CRMAL was passionate about changing librarianship and they knew they had to recruit more Mexican American librarians in order to transform services for the community. Given that many of CRMAL members were also part of REFORMA—namely Pat Sanchez, Elizabeth Martinez, and Jose Taylor—they all supported the new California State University (CSU), Fullerton library science program and regarded it as an opportunity to recruit Mexican American librarians.

The graduate program in Library Science at Fullerton began in 1970 after some ten years of preparatory work by local librarians, library employees and professional associations in Orange County. The rapid population growth in Orange County and the need for expanding library services of all types were undoubtedly instrumental in the movement to develop the graduate program at Fullerton.

—Report to the Committee on Accreditation American Library Association by the Division of Library Science, Spring 1975

In 1970, CSU Fullerton (CSUF) started a Division of Library Science and with it emerged the Institute for training in librarianship, for Graduate Education for Mexican American Library and/or Instructional Media Specialists. From 1970 to 1976, CSUF had a library program that was starting out and was looking to get accreditation from ALA, after three years of reports and audits, the CSUF library science program failed to receive accreditation and it was dissolved. However, during this time, 45 Mexican American librarians graduated from the program, and even though they did not have a certified accredited MLIS degree, they went on to work in libraries. This was unheard of during the early 1970s, however it was possible due to the funding of a national grant. The grant was used to recruit Mexican American students and support them by providing financial aid and tuition. The grant was funded by Title II-B Higher Education Act,

U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health Education and Welfare.⁸ Within the 1973 “Plan of Operation for an Institute for Training in Librarianship” proposal for funding, CSUF made the following case:

There is very little concentrated effort and no support to implement recruitment to librarianship including instructional media specialists among Mexican Americans, even though many Mexican American students are seeking out education which is relevant to the improvement of the social ills of today’s society. Unfortunately, few librarians are Americans of Mexican descent. Although Mexican Americans are the largest as well as the fastest growing minority group in the Southwest, and there are 11,000,000 in the nation, less than fifty Mexican Americans were working in libraries in the United States in 1972, and less than twenty-five in the Southwest. There were also approximately thirty-three identified Mexican American students enrolled in library schools, including sixteen in California State University, Fullerton’s Graduate Institute, even though there is evidence that public libraries and school libraries are actively seeking Mexican Americans to fill positions. Studies in the Library Science Graduate program at California State University, Fullerton have determined that present library materials do not satisfy the reading needs of the Mexican American.

–Plan of Operation for an Institute for Training in Librarianship, 1973

Within the proposal of the plan to implement the institute to recruit Mexican American librarians, the Fullerton library program illustrates how vastly underrepresented Latina/o librarians were. The proposal made clear, there was need a need to train and support Latina/o librarians who could serve local communities. In addition to the underrepresentation, CSUF recognized that present library materials did not serve the needs of Mexican Americans. The plan further stated:

Because of the lack of those materials, Mexican Americans do not use libraries. In some cases, Mexican Americans must travel great distances to find relevant materials needed. Cultural programs directed toward or about Mexican Americans are non-existent in most public and school libraries as is the case with educational materials about Mexican Americans. In most instances, libraries situated in the barrio do not employ Spanish-speaking personnel. In order to improve library collections and develop services which are inviting and relevant to minority communities, realistic cultural understandings must become available to library administrators. Mexican American graduate students presently enrolled in the program can add to the collection of materials needed in the Mexican American community.

⁸ Renamed in 1979.

–Plan of Operation for an Institute for Training in Librarianship, 1973

While the case was strong, there was a need to establish not only a library program in Orange County, but to recruit Mexican American librarians in particular, the Fullerton library program failed to receive accreditation. Elizabeth Martinez, recalls some the events that occurred while the institute was active:

That was credited to Dr. Doris Banks . . . I wish I had known her better . . . but somehow, she connected with me and with this committee, and said, “I want to write a grant. I want to recruit Mexican American librarians.” It was called the Institute for Mexican American Librarians. And she, it was her deal. She did it all, but a couple of things she wanted faculty to be Mexican American or Latino, and there weren’t any, so she let us teach. We became lecturers. So, I taught for the two, three years there. She didn’t care if we didn’t have a Ph.D. She just wanted the subject matter covered.

During Elizabeth’s oral history, she recalls Doris Banks and her initial proposal to start recruiting Mexican American librarians. Although Elizabeth says it was all Doris Banks, in this narrative we learn that CRMAL members, played a key role in getting the content covered within the classes. Because there was a lack of faculty who could teach Mexican American librarians to serve their communities. Librarians like Elizabeth who were familiar with serving Chicana/o/Latina/o communities taught the classes. Elizabeth also shared why the program never received accreditation:

The other thing was that she didn't have a chance of getting accredited, not a chance, because ALA had to accredit you, and the ALA head of the committee was the dean at USC. She didn't like the fact that there was a UCLA [library] school, much less would she allow another school, so she squashed it. It never got accredited, so it folded after three years, but the librarians who went through that program, there were about 20-some of them. That’s the first nucleus of a group. Even though, they got their degree, but they weren’t accredited by ALA, in California especially, institutions allowed for that. Doris Banks went to bat for them, so that group of librarians . . . That’s Roberto Cabello. That’s Roberto Trujillo. That’s Carmen Martinez in Oakland . . . That’s Paul Fortunato. That group of people became the first, you know, colleagues that we had, so . . . They made it. They were good.

Elizabeth reveals that there were politics at play when it came to accreditation of library programs. Since the Dean at USC during that time also served in ALA, she had the power to decide whether another library school was established or not, eventually she decided she wouldn't accredit Fullerton. In addition, within this history we learn that the first cohort graduated 20 Mexican American librarians, and even though they received a degree that was not accredited, they were able to find jobs because the state of California allowed it. However, in the years to follow, the program would continue to recruit and graduate librarians, and not all were as successful in securing a job within librarianship. Elizabeth shares her reflection,

. . . a lot of us failed those students, because we didn't—the cohorts were strong, and they bonded, and they had weekends together, and they'd travel together, and they'd speak, and they'd had the courses. It was just wonderful to watch them grow, and expand, and be so involved, but we didn't help them once they got a job. They got jobs in institutions where they were a fish out of water. They did not “fit.” I used to hate that term. Academia does that. You woo a new faculty member, and everybody wines and dines, and you hear them speak, and all. Then, you say, “Do they fit in our community?” I hated that, because that, to me, meant we had to be like them. And we weren't. We weren't. So, about half of the group left the profession. They lasted a year, maybe, in some organization, and they were not welcomed, they were not supported. We didn't offer any kind of mentorship, and we should have, and they left . . . They were the first. Once we had that, then we had some colleagues. We could meet. We could talk. We were a group. But, that was it. Up until then, it was just a handful of us.

Elizabeth speaks to feelings of having “failed” those students, however it can be argued that it was ALA, and the racist ideologies embedded within the field of librarianship that failed to support a more diverse librarian workforce in the early 1970s. Given the strong case made about the community needs within Orange County, and the importance of having Mexican American librarians who identified with the communities they were serving, ALA failed once again. ALA failed to enact change within the profession by not accrediting and supporting the CSU Fullerton Library Science Program. Librarians like Elizabeth Martinez, John Ayala and Jose Taylor, excelled in their role to recruit, educate, and graduate librarians, however the

challenge presented itself, once the graduates would go into the white dominated field, and they were not well received, which is what Elizabeth was referring to about “not fitting.” Towards the end of the vignette, Elizabeth also highlights how important it was for CRMAL and other organizations, because then they had more than a “handful” of colleagues, they could talk to. Slowly, the efforts started by CRMAL and librarians across the nation engaged in transforming librarianship would begin to bear fruit.

While the Fullerton institute, was a short-lived effort, it served as the precursor to the Graduate Library Institute for Spanish-Speaking Americans (GLISA) at the University of Arizona. In 1976, Dr. Arnulfo Trejo, a professor of library science at the University of Arizona started the program by also using federal funding. GLISA was active from 1976 to 1980 and graduated 59 Latino librarians. Elizabeth Martinez, who was familiar with the program and worked closely with Dr. Trejo, shared:

They lasted maybe five years . . . Dr. Trejo graduated maybe 30-some librarians, most of them Mexican American . . . the next tier of librarians. That’s Luis Herrera and José Abointe, and who else was in there? He’s the one that he followed through, and he did have accreditation. He did get accredited, so they had a successful run. After that one ended, there were certain programs like grants to the library schools for two scholarships, or three fellowships, or a doctoral . . . They were scattered. They were all federally funded. That’s what existed until Knowledge River, and Knowledge River is in its 16th year. The longest-running program for Latinos and Native American librarians, and Carla Stoffle was instrumental in getting that started. She brought in a lot of students and a lot of faculty. I mean, Doris Banks at Fullerton, Carla Stoffle at Arizona, White Deans who started these programs, only ones. Even today, Knowledge River is the only one.

GLISA eventually dissolved and morphed into the contemporary Knowledge River Program⁹ at University of Arizona. Today Knowledge River’s mission is to “support the education, recruitment, and retention of information professionals dedicated to serving the needs

⁹ For more about the Knowledge River Program at the University of Arizona, see <https://ischool.arizona.edu/knowledge-river>.

of BIPOC communities.” Additional discussion of this program will take place in the latter section of this chapter, where I discuss more at length contemporary efforts to change the field of librarianship. The recruitment of Latina/o librarians was just the beginning of a new era within librarianship. Across racial and ethnic caucus groups, critical librarians were being recruited into changing the profession to better serve Communities of Color. In the next theme, I discuss the importance of mentorship relationships among Latina/o librarians and more efforts aimed at supporting them.

Mentorship Relationships Among Latina/o Librarians

Mentorship relationships among librarians have also been critical to the continued activism in transforming librarianship. Throughout the oral histories, librarians identified who had recruited them into the field and the names of librarians who had also nurtured them along their career. Although the initial recruitment was centered on librarians or folks who worked with children’s literature and library services, the conversations with librarians signaled a pattern of names of librarians who were pivotal in the field. One common name that came up across oral histories was Elizabeth Martinez. As evidenced in the last chapter, she was a leader in the public library services field. Another name that was mentioned quite a few times was, Richard Chabran, who served as a mentor for university librarians Lillian Castillo-Speed and Romelia Salinas. Richard also remains a key figure among Chicano research librarians. Throughout this sub-theme, I discuss additional names of educators, scholars, and librarians who have served as mentors for generations of librarians to come and form part of a web of relationships. I begin with Evelyn Escatiola, who was raised in East Los Angeles and calls herself a non-conformist and non-traditional librarian. Growing up, she was involved in the Centro Joaquin Murrieta De Aztlan, a non-profit that supported her in applying to college. She eventually went to California

State University, Northridge (CSUN), and here she shared how she was introduced to library school:

. . . I made my decision pretty much based on the 1970 Chicano Moratorium and the whole Chicano movement. And that's why I chose Northridge . . . I was involved in MEChA and that kind of thing. But the reason why I got into library science, at the time it was called library science, is not because I chose it or because I was an avid reader because that's the whole stereotype of librarian, right. We didn't even have books in my house. We didn't have encyclopedia, nothing. We had nothing. I would go to the elementary school and join the reading club. But I wasn't an avid reader. I'm not the stereotypical librarian. And that's the stereotype that I felt like I had to fight for most of my librarian career... But Dr. [Rodolfo] Acuña was my mentor . . . There was a lack of diversity in librarianship. And this was in '76 . . . I can't remember her name; she came in to make a presentation. And then, Rudy said, "I think you should go into this program, they'll pay your way." They even pay you to get there. You don't have to work. They give you a Title 2B fellowship. And you just go through the program, and you get your master's degree.

Since the beginning, Evelyn related her interest in college to the 1970s Chicano Movement including the Chicano Moratorium¹⁰, which featured activist-led demonstrations in 1970 in opposition to the Vietnam War and the disproportion amount of Mexican American soldiers drafted and/ or injured and killed. The Chicano Movement was also a large civil rights and activist-led movement that sought to affirm Chicanos and Chicanas and resist structural racism in the U.S. Evelyn, shared that she purposefully chooses to attend CSUN, due to its history in advancing Chicana and Chicano studies, and the importance of learning about the resistance of Chicanas/os. In 1969, CSUN established its Chicana and Chicano Studies Department.¹¹ Faculty like Dr. Acuña taught at CSUN and were instrumental scholars within the development of Chicana and Chicano studies across the nation. Dr. Acuña is the author of the canonical book, *Occupied America: The History of Chicanos*, and due to his expertise within the history of

¹⁰ 1970: Chicano Moratorium, see <https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/national-chicano-moratorium>.

¹¹ About the Chicana and Chicano Studies Department at California State University, Northridge, see <https://www.csun.edu/humanities/chicana-chicano-studies>.

Chicana and Chicano studies, he also served on the editorial board for the Council for Interracial Books for Children. Within Evelyn's narrative, we also learn how Dr. Acuña served as a mentor for her and introduced her to library school. In later parts of the oral history, Evelyn mentioned how she had always been interested in becoming an educator, but did not picture herself in a classroom. For Evelyn, becoming a librarian gave her the opportunity to still teach her community about information through public libraries. Evelyn shared:

It was Elizabeth Martinez who told me, "You have to leave. You can't stay here." She goes, "You need to go. You need to—there is nothing for you here at East LA Public. You need to be in charge somewhere. You can do it." And I cried and I cried [emphasis]. I said, "No, I don't want to leave and I don't know why." I was just crying and crying. She goes, "You're going to go" . . . I applied for the El Monte, librarian in charge or whatever they used to call it and I got that position. And then, from there, I went to Huntington Park. So, my career, which was 17 years and 9 months in the county, was split between 3 libraries. Yeah, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me really that she did that. It was the best thing. I don't know what I would have done. I probably wouldn't have lasted at East LA as long as I thought I wanted to . . . I've only been in two systems. LA County and the Los Angeles Community College District.

As a retired librarian, Evelyn reflected on how she was able to obtain multiple positions within two different library systems in the Los Angeles area. She mentioned that Elizabeth Martinez had encouraged her to find a position where she could be in charge. Elizabeth was always looking to support new librarians and encouraged them to pursue leadership roles within librarianship. Albert Tovar also worked with Evelyn Escatiola, Elizabeth Martinez, and Flora Bailes, a Jewish librarian, who supported diverse efforts within librarianship. During high school, Albert was an avid reader who remained focused on his academics and started his career within librarianship as a high school junior, when he worked as a library page in 1968 at the El Camino Real Library. Albert was a senior at Garfield High School that same year when the East Los Angeles student walkouts took place. He vividly recalled these events:

I had perfect attendance at Garfield high school. All the years that I was there, 100 percent perfect attendance, and every day, I went to school. And the teacher, when we did the walkouts, she said, "I'll mark you present today, Albert," because she knew that was

important for me . . . But what I do remember about the walkouts,—even high school, more activists in the high school. And I was not part of that group. And these were the ones that were the planners, the ones that were actually carrying out the walkouts, working, communicating with the other students at some of the other high schools, at Belmont, Roosevelt High School, and some of the other schools that participated. I thought it was just Garfield that was doing it, but actually, it was a lot of other schools. That whole effort kinda got me out to be more proactive and more—develop more of identity of who I was in terms of being Chicano. And I was becoming more proud of being Chicano and not afraid to say, I am Chicano. These other students, they were already “Chicano power” and all that . . . I guess, I was a late bloomer, if you wanna look at it that way. I’ll never forget one day in the hallways, this was during the walkouts, I remember coming down the steps, and I just screamed as loud as I could, “Chicano power”—and I felt free to say it because I knew no one was in that hallway, and I just screamed it out loud. But it was like oh man, that felt good. And that was my moment to recognize myself, who I was, and my identity.

Within this vignette, Albert confided how he felt participating in the student walkouts as a high school senior. Although Albert explained that he was not too involved in the planning of the walkouts, he recognizes the effect the movement had on his own identity development as a Chicano. Albert stated that when he yelled “Chicano power” in the hallways, it served as a moment of reflection to recognize himself. Indeed, the activism of students from the East Los Angeles walkouts and activists of the Chicano Movement would raise critical consciousness among many seeking social justice. Like Evelyn who had been influenced by the Chicano Moratorium, Albert too would bring to librarianship a sense of pride in serving local Communities of Color. As a high school student, Albert loved to read science fiction, and his regular library visits would eventually result in Flora Bailes offering him a position as a library page, which he recalled:

She offered me a job because she knew I lived nearby. So I could walk to work real easy—almost crossing the street. So, she gave me a job as a page, library page, just putting books away. And that really opened up my eyes to libraries and what they can do. And at that time, the library was predominantly books and magazines, nothing else, just books and magazines. And then, I remember, when we first started getting record albums, vinyl records, oh my gosh, we were so excited about them.

Although Albert was an avid reader enjoyed the library, his job as a library page introduced him to the larger field of librarianship and the possibilities within it. He also mentioned that the library was close to where he lived. In a later part of the oral history, Albert acknowledged that for him, it was important to serve his community where he had grown up. Albert pursued his master's in Library and Information Science at the University of Southern California and went on to have a successful career as a librarian.

At a point in his career, Albert was a finalist for a position as the Los Angeles County Librarian Director, a position that reports to the County Board of Supervisors. Albert did not get the position, but he shared:

I proved to everybody else I can do this job. After this, I could do anything. And that was a culmination of all of this, all of this work paying off to say, "You see?" A guy from East LA, can become, you could become whatever you want. But it was through all the mentoring, through all of the support. Elizabeth's story is similar, but even more dramatic because she reached even higher, higher sights, higher levels, higher heights. But that's what it feels like in terms of, being a librarian and being Chicano, Latino . . . I never imagined that then. But you know what? Even when I went to Rosemead, one of the clerks there said, "You know what? You're going to be the next county librarian." And that was 10 years before, and in San Fernando when I was in San Fernando, one of the ladies there told me too. "Albert, you're going to be the next county librarian." It's funny how you recognize it in other people, but you don't always see it in yourself.

Albert was the top contender for the position of county librarian and reflects on how he sees the achievement as a culmination of all his work. Reaching that stage in his career gave him satisfaction because he knew he had done the best he could, and the outcome did not reflect negatively on him. He further reflected on the sense of pride of being a Chicano from East Los Angeles and the mentorship that helped him reach a position where he was a finalist for the highest position as a librarian in Los Angeles County.

Romelia Salinas, on the other hand, shares a similar story to Evelyn. She was introduced to librarianship as an undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara

(UCSB). As a senior at UCSB, Romelia was preparing to take the LSAT because she had wanted to become a lawyer, however, she changed her career after taking a class in Chicano Studies with archivist, Salvador Güereña, who directed the Center for Ethnic and Multicultural Archives (CEMA) and served as the Chicano Studies librarian at UCSB. The class Romelia took was related to Chicano Studies research methodologies, and there she was introduced to CDROMs and searching offline catalogues. Romelia added:

I thought it was amazing that you could do all these online searches and learning how to use the print indexes and how they were organized. I was amazed just how these search tools were organized and how clever it seemed to put them together, to have a way of pointing to the literature. I was just fascinated by the way people looked for information and how the librarians were really so organized in what they did. So, Sal, in his class had a lecture where he talked about librarianship as a career. And I was like, “You know what, I think I wanna be a librarian,” and so, I talked to Sal, I said, “Hey, Sal. I’m kind of thinking that I wanna be a librarian. Would it be possible for me to work with you to get a better sense of what it is to be a librarian, just to help me make the decision” . . . So, he hired me as a student assistant to work with the California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives. So, that was my entry into library science. So, I worked with him and the more I worked with him—it was amazing, the stuff that I had access to through the archives. Like, [UC] Santa Barbara has the Ana Castillo Papers. So, I was able to look at her personal journals. Those are not gonna be available until ten years after she passes . . . But there I was processing them and having access to them and touching them and I just worked on different special collections . . . So, I decided I was going to go to a library school to become an archivist. And Sal really helped me. He introduced me to REFORMA. He helped me with the application process. He helped me get scholarships. So, I had a lot of mentoring from him in that process.

Romelia’s narrative further highlights, the impact Chicano studies had on librarians within this study. Across the oral histories with Chicana/o librarians and their introduction to librarianship is Chicano Studies, Chicano identity, and the larger Chicano Movement.

Although Romelia was set on becoming a lawyer, she became fascinated by the field of information studies. Sal [Salvador] Güereña was both president of REFORMA and an influential

librarian within REFORMA and Latina/o librarianship more broadly.¹² Romelia credits Güereña's mentorship and working with him in the CEMA archives as the reason she decided to become a librarian. I discuss the CEMA collections and their history more in-depth in the next section, however, it can be noted that they began to preserve the history of racial and ethnic groups of color. Like Albert, Romelia described how she gained a new awareness of information and how it could be used within literature at a university library. Romelia went on to complete both her master's degree in Library Science and a Ph.D. in Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. She currently serves as the Dean of Library and Learning Resources at Mt San Antonio College and is president-elect for REFORMA. Romelia's career as a university librarian differs slightly from the careers of public librarians, however, within her narrative she further highlights the importance of mentorship across her trajectory. For example, Romelia also worked with Richard Chabran on projects related to closing the digital divide among Latinas/os as the internet was introduced into libraries in the early 2000s.

This section has highlighted the ways mentorship relationships have been key in the recruitment of Latina/o librarians into the field and how all collaborators in this study were mentored and connected by a larger web of librarians invested in changing librarianship. In addition to having mentoring relationships among librarians, the next theme describes how these librarians engaged in efforts that invited their local communities into the libraries.

Engaging in Librarianship with the Community in Mind

At the core of all the efforts of these librarians, was the knowledge that they wanted to change librarianship and they wanted to serve their communities. Across the oral histories, there

¹² For more about Salvador Güereña, see <https://www.library.ucsb.edu/special-collections/cema/salvador-güereña-professional-biography>.

was a shared sense of passion to make a difference in the community. In the following subsections, I discuss findings of how librarians responded to the needs of their communities with care and their involvement with interracial and community coalitions to transform literature and library services.

Responding to the Need with Care

During an oral history interview, Albert Tovar said, “Lorena, we didn’t know we were creating history, we were just responding to the need.” Different iterations of this line resound in my mind as I reflect on the oral histories with librarians, because at some point within their oral histories, all the librarians indicated they were just serving the community and responding to the need. As stated throughout this dissertation, the librarians within this study are activists and positively impacted librarianship for future librarians. Albert Tovar was one of the librarians that shared personal documents with me. Within his resume Albert had a statement titled “Community Service Commitment,” which read:

COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITMENT

As a professional librarian, I have always held a responsibility to serve both the community in which I work and the greater library community. For me, this has meant serving on various community councils, community-based organizations, boards, library associations, and/or initiatives for the betterment of the community at large. I believe that libraries change lives and have the power to build community.

This statement demonstrates the multiple roles that Albert was involved in as a librarian. He starts by making clear his intention to serve his local communities through multiple organizations. He also makes clear his belief of libraries being a space to build community. This outlook within librarianship was important to Albert because he was invested in providing services and resources that best served his community. Now as a retired librarian, he reflects on his career:

It is a drive, a drive [emphasis] and part of it comes from something way deep inside too, to care and to really want to make a difference, and you're just moving and moving. I don't know. I'm still like that [laughs]. Even though I'm older, I'm still inside—I want to do a lot still. I'm not done.

Albert mentioned having a drive and care, as central to his work both as a librarian and now as a retired community member still involved in multiple organizations. Albert worked closely with Evelyn Escatiola, together they conducted a lot of programming at Los Angeles County. For example they both co-founded the Los Angeles chapter of REFORMA, they conducted workshops on children's literature and sometimes were invited to different counties to conduct workshops on how to better serve the Latino child. Albert and Evelyn also had "*Cuentos por telefono*"—Albert and Evelyn pre-recorded books in Spanish, so library users could dial a phone number and have a story, a poem, and riddles read to them. For both Albert and Evelyn, they always looked for ways to get creative with the resources available, because as established in the last chapter, books and funding were not always readily available. In one instance, Albert shared that he would do the translations of books that were either all-Spanish or all-English by using tape or sticky notes. Serving the community with care was a central value of the librarians that collaborated in this study, and community members within the library responded positively.

Elizabeth shared an experience:

I started out as a children's librarian, where I used to have a cooking class in the library. And every month we took from a different culture and read their literature and the kids learned. . . One day, this little girl comes in, and she always liked me. She would come in every day after school, and say hi. I'd help her read books and stuff. One day, she brought her mother, and she said, "*Mama, es como nosotros, mira, es como nosotros,*" [Mom, she's like us, look, she's like us] you know? People recognized that, and it was my way of, in this white library institution, acknowledging other people. Every month, I'd have a different coach, or I'd ask somebody from the community to come in. Somebody would come in, and tell a story about their culture, and speak their language, and make a dish, and we'd all eat it, and have fun, and it was innocuous. It was easy. It was allowed because it wasn't threatening. It was expanding culture.

In this example, Elizabeth detailed her programming as a children's librarian and engaging children in diverse cooking classes. Elizabeth invited folks from the surrounding community to highlight their cultures, which brought awareness of the diversity within their community among young children. Elizabeth also shared that her presence as a Chicana children's librarian was affirming to young library users. To Elizabeth, it was important that she identified with community members because it also affirmed them—that they were welcomed into the library. All librarians shared that one of the biggest rewards was having children come back as adults and share with them the impact libraries had on them. Similarly, during Lillian Castillo-Speed's oral history, she also mentioned her approach to serving students. Lillian shared,

I didn't think about being a librarian, being the woman with the office that has the door that can close [laughs]. And when I think about that office door being closed, I think it's kind of ironic now because I've never had a job on Berkeley where I actually could close the door [laughs]. My door's always been open . . . but I like the way it is with an open door.

Lillian was also born in East Los Angeles and completed her library training at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently the head librarian of the Ethnic Studies Library and is the Chicano Studies librarian at UC Berkeley and has worked with Richard and Evelyn to create resources like the Chicano Periodical Index. In the vignette, she shares this idea of having her door open. This is a metaphor of literally having her office door always open, which also serves as a symbol of always providing opportunities for students to approach her. In an earlier section of the oral history, Lillian shared that when she started volunteering in a library, the librarian who she worked with always closed the door to her office. Leaving Lillian to figure out ways to serve the high school students that went into the library, despite not having formal training. Therefore, as the head librarian now, Lillian reflected on not being like that first librarian she worked with and instead expressed her passion in serving students. For all the Chicana/o

librarians that participated in this study, being a librarian was always about serving their community. In the next sub-theme, I present findings of how public librarians in the Los Angeles area engaged in interracial and community coalitions to transform librarianship.

Interracial and Community Coalitions

Chicana and Chicano librarians that participated in this study always mentioned additional key librarians that supported their work in the Los Angeles area. In this section, I talk about specific efforts within the Los Angeles County Library. Given that a majority of the public librarians that collaborated in the study worked in this geographical region, I acknowledge these coalitions as examples of the activism librarians were engaged in, and that these are not representative of all the efforts of librarians across the nation were engaged in. I start by describing how Elizabeth Martinez started the Los Angeles County Library Racial and Ethnic Resource Centers. Elizabeth shared:

This was '70, 1970 to '75, I think. I was the first one promoted out of that group and then to a regional librarian. And that's when I started the ethnic resource centers in LA. The Chicano was the first, Chicano research center library. And then it was the Black research center, the Asian American, Native American and Asian Pacific Islander. So I started all of those in the mid-seventies with a thousand dollars that I took from everybody's book collection and they were mad. But with that money, I could create what I call the center and, I could hire librarians who could buy and acquire books on those subjects. The Chicano resource center was the first, and initially it was to collect community information. The Chicano Moratorium was happening, the community flyers, books that were written, magazines, La Raza, and all of those. They were acquiring everything, posters, newsletters, anything about East LA and Chicanos. And then it gradually expanded . . . in building a new library at East LA and including a Chicano research center room. So they have their own room and collection now. That tells you how supportive that community was of those collections. And they still exist. And I'm really glad, they all have a Black librarian at the Black Center, a Native librarian, at the Native Center . . . they all have librarians that are of the culture that can build those collections. That's one of the reasons they are able to serve some of their communities because they had a center and they had money but that was the mid-seventies. And probably the most exciting time was the whole Chicano movement there. It was important, there were people getting busted . . . police brutality was a big issue.

In this excerpt of Elizabeth's oral history, she expanded on how she was able to get the racial/and ethnic resources center started with a very limited budget. In the beginning, she said she was the first in the group to be promoted, she was referring to other Librarians of Color whom she worked with, and who also supported her vision for the centers. Although the centers started as small collections, they eventually grew and now have their rooms. Elizabeth is especially proud of the fact that the multiple racial and ethnic resource centers are staffed by librarians who represent each group. These resource centers are an example of collections and efforts that were created by Librarians of Color to counter ahistoricism within Los Angeles history and aimed to collect documents that more accurately depicted the stories of People of Color.

The East Los Angeles librarians did not just create new collections, they also found ways to go into the communities. For example, Joyce Sumbi, a Black librarian who was the first Black administrator in Los Angeles County, and Elizabeth Martinez, a Chicana librarian, worked together on a grant to fund "The Way Out" Project. This program was hosted by the library and was an effort to get books directly to the hands of the community. This project was unique because they loaned books to patrons without a due date, and instead labeled with a sticker that said, "Return to your nearest Los Angeles County Library Branch." The purpose of this was to have borrowers actually step foot in a library when returning the books, with the hope that they would access other services at the library. During Elizabeth Martinez's oral history, she mentioned there was nothing to lose by providing an alternative way to loan books. Either the children kept the books, or they eventually made their way back to the library. Albert Tovar also had the opportunity to work in this project, which he recalled:

They [Elizabeth and Joyce] ran The Way Out Project, and it was an outreach project to introduce communities to libraries. I got to work on that book mobile with Elizabeth and we would go out into the East LA community. We had with us paperbacks in that book mobile. Paperbacks because these were expendable items. So, if they got lost, and we

never saw them again, that was fine. And we made it easy, real easy lending. All they had to do was register for a library card, and then they would check out the materials, and there was no due date. And we would tell them, return it to your nearest county library. So, we gave them a list, and this was a way of getting them into a library. This Way Out Project showed me the power of—because I also was working in the library. So, I could see when these little paperback books would come back because we would put them in a special box, and that was a way of tracking how many of those came back. And I began to see the connection and the power of getting the message out to the people, and then seeing the dedication of people like Elizabeth, and her spark, and energy, and compassion for the community, and all that. That was so addictive, so addictive that I said, I wanna do this. I wanna do this because it's meaningful. And that was what won me over in terms of wanting to work in public libraries, it was not because of reading. It was more of connecting people and empowering people. That was really the main thing.

As this point of his career, Albert was still new to librarianship and through his involvement in “The Way Out Project,” he became further committed to serving his community of East Los Angeles. “The Way Out Project,” was a federal grant awarded to the Los Angeles County Public Library which the goal of providing services at four Mexican-American and Chicano communities in East Los Angeles and at seven libraries that served African American communities in South Central Los Angeles. This project is another example of how librarians organized efforts to reach their communities via library services that would serve their needs. As Albert explains, the books would go back into the libraries, which was a testament to the fact that it worked. They were able to get community members into the library. Albert recalls taking the book mobile to community events to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, and to start programming that would engage the community's interests. For Albert being involved in “The Way Out Project” influenced how what kind of library administrator he would be in the future, he recalled:

But there was also the administrative side, and the funding side, which I became later. After I worked in branches— after I got into management, that's when I had the power to move money, and move people around, and allocate monies. And that's when I could really make a difference. Plus, I could hire. I could go out and recruit and hire librarians. So, that's when I felt I could really make a difference now, but that's what got me into libraries. I saw the value. The other thing too, this Way Out Project, there was also an audio-visual component where we would bring programming to the libraries. So, we would bring special shows, events to the libraries, special performers to the libraries, but

we also had a film series, where we would show movies like *I Am Joaquin* . . . That's such a powerful movie.

As an administrator, Albert felt he was able to have a more direct impact because he managed the budget for libraries. So he could decide what programming to fund and what services would best serve the community the library was serving. As a young librarian, he was able to witness the impact the book mobile had on Black and Brown communities, and how adding audio-visual components further impacted on the young children. Just like when he was a high school student who participated in the student walkouts, he felt that by showing films about Chicano power and identity like *I am Joaquin*, he too was contributing to the development of an affirming Chicano identity among his community. I conclude this section with a reflection Albert shared:

I began to see how in doing all this, you are changing people. In the same way that I came out and said Chicano power, I was doing the same thing to them. And the real coup de grâce, if you wanna call it that was—this must have been about 20 years ago. I was at a Trader Joe's, this couple approached me, and they said, "You're Albert from the library, aren't you?" And I go, "Yeah." And they said, "Well, we're the Contreras." "Oh yeah. I remember you." They used to come to the library in East LA in the '80s. Their son, I'll never forget because I used to love to do impromptu story time. I was the manager of the library, but when I saw an opportunity, and I saw kids, two or three gathering, I'd say, "Hey, you guys wanna hear a story?" . . . And they'd go, "Yeah, yeah." I would do it bilingual or all in Spanish. And I'd ask them, "How do you wanna hear it, in English or in Spanish?" Anyway, they loved it, but this one kid, he would always come in, and he'd run. I could see him because my windows were all glass in my office. And I could see him coming in, and he'd run right to my office. He'd go behind my desk, which he had permission, and he would grab a book. And he knew, he would say, "I want you to read this one to me." And I would read it to him. These parents, this Contreras family, they remembered. They go, "You know, it's because of you that he's graduating from UCLA."

Within this vignette, we get a glimpse into Albert's everyday interactions that fostered welcoming environments for families and young readers. As a manager, he continued to prioritize the children and their needs, and most importantly, the children knew they could read books with Albert. Albert's impact was highlighted by the family that credited their son's educational success to him. It is difficult to conclude a section that discusses the impact these

librarians had within their communities. This chapter merely scratches the surface of examples of the ways librarians engaged in activism to challenge racist practices within librarianship, literature, and library services. However, it can be noted that a lot of the efforts of the librarians, whether they were engaged in mentorship, recruiting Latina and Latino librarians or developing literature and programming, are still reminiscent today. The next theme discusses contemporary efforts within librarianship.

Current Efforts to Transform Librarianship, 2001 to Present

This theme discusses contemporary efforts to transform librarianship, library services and children's literature post 2001. Therefore, this theme answers the sub-research question: What is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services today? I present current efforts of racial and social justice within librarianship, library services, and children's literature. I focus on key efforts post-2001 that emerged from the oral histories and archival research. Efforts presented are not exhaustive, however, they illustrate a few of the continued efforts to transform librarianship today.

Institutional Organizations

A key organization that has remained engaged in their efforts to recruit and support Latinas/so and Spanish speaking librarians is REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking. As established in the beginning of this chapter, REFORMA has been pivotal to the recruitment and support of Latina/o librarians since its inception in 1971. While this study is not centered around this organization, and does not offer a comprehensive history of REFORMA, I highlight some of the contemporary efforts within librarianship today. In 2021, REFORMA celebrated its fiftieth

anniversary and held a conference virtually, due to the pandemic. In addition to having annual conferences for its members, REFORMA has a newsletter that has been in press since 1973. Recently the REFORMA archival collection was acquired by the California State University, Los Angeles, and their team of archivists and librarians digitized a portion of the newsletters for public access.¹³ In addition to serving as a national platform for resources, REFORMA has been involved in local communities' efforts. For example, in 2014, the REFORMA Children in Crisis (CIC) Project¹⁴ was established by Oralia Garza de Cortes and Lucia Gonzalez. This project was started by these two librarians as a response to the large number of immigrant children, and in particular unaccompanied minors, who have arrived at the U.S.-Mexican border seeking asylum. The project aims to provide books to children on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. CIC members work with shelters and various organizations to fundraise funds and deliver books to children.

The impact of CIC has been well-documented in local news outlets since its inception, however in 2021, when unaccompanied minors were being housed in shelters across the U.S. amidst the pandemic, a new reality of the importance of books for children and efforts by librarians resurfaced. For example, the School Library Journal, reported librarians from the San Diego area, were volunteering at the San Diego Convention Center while it served as a shelter for unaccompanied minors (Yorio, 2021). The librarians would read books in both English and Spanish to over 1,000 children ranging from ages 5 to 17. Across the United States, librarians and REFORMA's CIC project, were coordinating donations to the multiple temporary shelters

¹³ REFORMA Digital Archive: <https://digitalcollections.calstatela.edu/luna/servlet/CalStateLA~4~4>

¹⁴ REFORMA Children in Crisis Project: <https://refugeechildren.wixsite.com/refugee-children>

that popped-up as a response to the large number of children arriving at the U.S.-Mexican border.

In addition to community efforts, another way REFORMA has tried to increase Latina/o librarians is by providing scholarships. On November 15, 1985, in a letter written generally to vendors and distributors of books and audiovisual materials, Ron Rodriguez, Chairperson of the REFORMA Scholarship Drive, requested funds for scholarships for the 1986–1987 academic year. Rodriguez explained:

The REFORMA scholarship fund is designed to facilitate access to Library training programs for Hispanics interested in pursuing careers in Librarianship. We are convinced that Hispanics Library professionals do make special contributions which make library services more effective and meaningful for Spanish-Speaking communities. Unfortunately, recent figures indicate that Latino participation in library schools across the nation has been declining steadily. We are convinced that the high costs of vocational and professional training has much to do with this decline. For this reason, we hope to step up our efforts to assist deserving students from Hispanic communities who will make up the next generation of Latino librarians.

This letter represents the challenges that librarianship was facing in the mid-1980s, recruiting and supporting Librarians of Color into the profession. REFORMA, was seeking support to incentivize the recruitment of Latina/o librarians. Today, REFORMA has continued to provide financial support to Latina/o librarians in library schools. For example, Romelia Salinas a collaborator in this study, mentioned she was a recipient of a REFORMA Scholarship and participated in their mentoring program as a library science student at the University of California, Los Angeles. The current REFORMA Scholarship is available to current and new masters and doctoral students in library and information studies who demonstrate a commitment to a career in librarianship (REFORMA, 2022c), and the Rose Treviño Memorial Scholarship is for those interested in children and young adult librarianship. Rose Treviño was a distinguished

children's librarian from San Antonio, Texas and dedicated her career to servicing young Latinas/os in Texas.

REFORMA, also has three awards to recognize the contributions of librarians, the Dr. Arnulfo D. Trejo Librarians of the Year Award, the Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Pura Belpré Award. Each of these awards was named after a librarian who has made significant contributions to the field, and whose names have been mentioned multiple times within this dissertation. More recently, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Pura Belpré award, coincided with the naming of Pura Belpre Way in New York's East Harlem Neighborhood (REFORMA, 2022b). This street co-naming is a recognition to Pura's legacy as a librarian who dedicated her career to serving the East Harlem Neighborhood, and the young Puerto Ricans and Latinas/os within the community.

REFORMA, also has additional grants and partnership grants that aim to recognize and support efforts of current librarians who are supporting bilingual and Spanish-speaking communities [i.e. Dia de Los Niños/Dia de los Libros grant]. Throughout all the oral histories, the collaborators in this study mentioned REFORMA multiple times, which further indicates the impact this organization has had in advancing Latina/o librarianship across all library sectors.

Albert Tovar shared that one of the greatest resources of REFORMA was the network:

We traditionally would network with—Southern California chapters, we would get together with the LIBROS chapter in San Diego, the Orange County chapter, the LA chapter—we would network and talk to each other . . . We would meet, I think monthly, we would look at requests that some people would send us sometimes—I remember we had one request from somebody where they wanted to set up a library reading environment in the home. And I remember, I was the one that did that. I remember talking to that family, and I was telling them how they can set up a reading environment in the home, what to do. I remember telling the parents, “Well, they need to see you reading as well. And you need to set aside the time, and set a library, and take them to the library. You have to read, you have to read [emphasis] to them as well.” We would also talk about planning workshops at state or national conferences . . . Yeah, and we'd network about jobs that are available or introduced new librarians. I think we had a

mentoring program too. We would just assign a student to a mentor, one of our members, and that was it.

Albert Tovar and Evelyn Escatiola co-founded the Los Angeles REFORMA chapter. Therefore, in this reflection, Albert elaborated about the power of the larger and local networks and how each local chapter would meet to plan out the larger REFORMA conference. We also get a glimpse into the additional services they were involved in, such as answering public requests to starting home libraries. Albert also mentioned the mentoring program and introducing new librarians to the larger network. In a later part of the oral history, Albert shared about the REFORMA meetings serving as a space to (a) motivate one another to apply to higher-level positions and (b) mentor each other.

Within the larger American Library Association (ALA), Elizabeth Martinez and Dr. Betty J. Turock were the visionaries for the contemporary Spectrum Scholarship Program, which was first adopted in 1997. As evidenced in Chapter Five, past initiatives to support Librarians of Color ended due to the lack of hard money funds. Therefore, this initiative is key because it was able to garner full support and funding to keep the program active today. During her oral history, Elizabeth reflected on her experience as an executive director within ALA, from 1994 to 1997, and how the Spectrum Program began. In 1996, Elizabeth recalled reaching out to the Pasadena Public Library director, Luis Herrera, and organizing a meeting to propose they establish a program to diversify librarianship—they went on to establish the program through ALA. About a dozen librarians attended, from various racial and ethnic backgrounds such as Black, Native American, Asian, Latino, and one white librarian. They spent over a day of planning, which Elizabeth recalled in detail:

. . . We spent a whole day and half there and they mapped out a program. They had all the ideas... how to get it through library schools, how to get publicity, how to recruit . . . and there was a librarian there, the same librarian that I had hired at the Chicano Resource

Center—her name is Patricia Tarin . . . She’s the one that came up with the name Spectrum— all the colors. She did it within a month because I knew I had to get it before the executive board. And I got a lot of support, and a big question was how are you going to fund it? . . . So, I wanted \$2.5 million, and I knew because I’m the executive director of ALA . . . you always have to know not only where your operating budget is, but all those other accounts that exists that are for specific projects or their investment accounts . . . I knew that there was a fund that had at least \$2.5 million in it . . . and I had asked, what is this money for? And the response was, oh, it’s for a rainy day. And I said, well, what’s that look like? What’s a rainy day look like? And they didn’t know, it was just a contingency fund, but they didn’t even say that. They just said it’s a rainy day. So, when I proposed it to the board, I said, here’s the money, it’s right there. And all I need is your approval to start this program. The whole board was for it, but half of it didn’t want to spend that money . . . One of the librarians from the association, the one that really managed it . . . she opposed it. “Elizabeth, you know I’m for this. You know I want to diversify the association. We just can’t use this money. We can only spend the interest of the money, not the principal of the money” . . . I needed three times as much as the annual interest. One time investment, we’ve been talking about this for 25 years, let’s put our money where our mouth is and let’s do it. Nope, she would not agree. The board finally passed it. We had to go to council, and she spoke against it. A lot of people spoke against it. It was a very—narrow vote to get it passed. Within six months, I was gone. But they ran with it. There were people in there that believed in it, and they established a committee. Within a year they were giving out the scholarship, they had an institute, and they had training. It is now the only national scholarship for Librarians of Color.

As executive director of the ALA, Elizabeth was clear about her mission to make a difference within librarianship and recruit more Librarians of Color. Therefore, the Spectrum Scholarship Program was her attempt at institutionalizing a pipeline to recruit and support diverse librarians. She had enough support to get it passed despite the hesitance from the ALA board to allocate hard money for the program. Elizabeth mentioned that the rationale behind the \$2.5 million was because she envisioned a 10-year program in which 50 scholarships at \$5,000 each would be awarded. Although Elizabeth left her executive director role within the larger ALA shortly after presenting to the board, Spectrum, garnered enough support to make it a sustainable program today.

Another key organization that seeks to address diversity within librarianship is the Joint Council of Librarians of Color (JCLC), founded in 2015 “to promote librarianship within

communities of color, support literacy and the preservation of history and cultural heritage, collaborate on common issues, and to host the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color every four to five years” (JCLC, 2022). JCLC consists of the American Indian Library Association (AILA), the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking. These racial and ethnic library associations make up JCLC and together seek to discuss diversity within libraries and how it informs services for their communities. JCLC will host its fourth national meeting in October 2022.

Within library school and information science education, the Knowledge River Program at the University of Arizona is one of the few programs that was founded with the purpose to recruit Latina/o and Indigenous librarians. Since its inception in 2001, Knowledge River has graduated over 230 students and continues its commitment to train information professionals who will serve Latina/o, Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color. The organizations and names of programs shared within this section exemplify efforts in which activist librarians were at the forefront of changing the field. In the next section, I briefly discuss contemporary efforts to transform children’s literature.

Children’s Literature

Within children’s literature, there are multiple presses invested in producing culturally affirming literature for young Latinas/os, recently Lil Libros, has been highlighted as a successful small press that has grown exponentially since its start in 2015. Lil Libros was founded by two Latina mothers who recognized the void in bilingualism and Latin American culture in children’s books. Among their most recent publications, they celebrate Pura Belpré’s

legacy through the publication of *The Life of Pura/ La Vida de Pura*, a bilingual children's board book released in May 2022. A bookstore that aims to fill the void with bilingual books is LA Librería, based in Los Angeles, California. They were founded in 2012 and promote Spanish children's literature within libraries, districts, and schools across the United States. In addition, LA Librería also imports books from Spanish-speaking countries to support U.S. institutions in their building of Spanish and bilingual book collections. Additional bookstores that offer diverse literature include: Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural in Sylmar, California; Libélula Books & Co. in San Diego, California; and La Casa Azul Bookstore in East Harlem New York (see Appendix F).

Last, although the Council for Interracial Books for Children is no longer an active organization, their resources continue to be pivotal today. In 2019, Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, a professor of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina, led a project funded by the American Library Association's Carnegie-Whitney Grant to digitize the Interracial Books for Children Bulletins. The print resources were pivotal within the initial phase of my own research. Now, the Bulletins have been digitized and the information is more accessible to educators and the public. CIBC's "10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism," first published in 1980, is a nationally recognized resource among librarians and educators today. More recently, these 10 quick ways, have been adapted. For example, Chloë Myers and Hank Bersani Jr., professors at Western Oregon University in Monmouth, created the "10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Ableism." Within this resource, the authors present ten points of analysis for selecting texts that challenge prejudice by able-bodied and able-minded people toward people with disabilities. In addition, Louise Derman-Sparks has also adapted the CIBC's 10 quick ways to "Selecting Anti-bias Children's Books." Within Derman-Sparks' list of analysis, examples are provided to help guide the reader. For example, in the first

point, check the illustrations—the author provides a list of examples of common stereotypes about People of Color, to make clear that they are oversimplified generalizations and do not present an accurate account of the groups being portrayed. These are just two examples of how the original “10 Quick Ways . . .” has been adapted to nuance conversations about stereotypes and negative portrayals within children’s books. Resources like these are important tools within the analysis of children’s books today because they provide such important content in concise and accessible ways.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter presented findings that answered research question two and its sub-question: What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children’s literature and library services between 1960 and 2000? and What is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children’s literature and library services today? This chapter began by describing the activism of librarians to start programs to recruit Latina/o librarians. During the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a push to diversify library schools, therefore Latina/o librarians started programs like the Institute to Recruit Mexican American librarians at CSU Fullerton in the early 1970s. Although there was enough evidence to support the recruitment of Latina/o and Librarians of Color within CSU Fullerton, the efforts to accredit the program did not sustain and the program was dissolved. Despite some efforts being short lived, while they were active, they were successful in their mission to recruit Latina/o, as evidenced by the narratives of the Chicana/o librarians who collaborated in this study.

Findings also demonstrate the importance of the continued network of mentorship in which Latina/o librarians were engaged in. Mentorship in the form of institutionalized and

personal relationships were equally important to each of the librarians I spoke too. Each of the librarians often repeated names of folks who had mentored them or who had worked alongside them to design new resources or programs. As the oral histories progressed, each librarian shared how exciting it was when they had more people to dialogue with and to create services that directly connected Latina/o communities with the library. In addition, all the librarians shared their motivation to serve their communities with care and to provide services and resources that reflect the needs of their communities. Central to their work, is a passion to bridge librarianship and the communities they serve.

Last, this chapter discusses contemporary efforts to transform librarianship today. Findings have revealed the persistence of activism to challenge whiteness within librarianship and library services. Much of the activism of librarians within the earlier years served as the precursor to contemporary efforts. It further became clear that librarians are activists, and have paved much of contemporary resources, literature, library services, and librarianship today. Given the historical focus of this dissertation, the latter section of the chapter focuses on key efforts post-2001 that emerged from the oral histories and archival research. Efforts presented are not exhaustive, however, they illustrate a few of the continued efforts to transform librarianship today. In the concluding chapter I share implications from this research and share recommendations for practice for the fields of librarianship, library services, and children's literature.

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

. . . when I think of my career in terms of what all this has done for me—a lot of good memories . . . This is what I could find, but it’s a small fraction. There’s more, much, much more. And as I look at it, I’m amazed by it myself. I go, “How can I have done all this?” I’m amazed, it amazes me. I get a lot of satisfaction from it. A lot of memories, a lot of joy, and no regrets because I feel I did something. And I used to feel guilty after I retired that I’m not working as closely in libraries anymore, but I think I’ve left something there. And there’s so much to say in that, you did your part.

—Albert Tovar

In concluding this dissertation, I find myself empathizing with Albert’s reflection on his career as a retired librarian. I think back to the year 2015 when I formally began conducting research related to children’s literature. While my work as a scholar does not necessarily align with Albert’s fulfilling career as a librarian, I think back to each of the oral histories collected that inform this study. I ponder on each of the archival collections I visited and recall the memories I crafted alongside the collaborators in this research. I also ask myself, how could I have done this? What an honor it was to conduct these oral histories and informal *platicas*, conversations, with activist librarians. How did I get so lucky so as to earn their trust in sharing parts of the lives with me. Across our stories and oral histories, I maintained a genuine interest to learn from them, and they acted selflessly to share space. Therefore, I would like to start this concluding chapter by expressing appreciation and thanks to my research collaborators. Your insights and expertise largely inform the implications and recommendations in this chapter. Your motivation and *ganas*, drive, to better service your communities is another quality that I look forward to embodying in future research and community projects. *Muchas gracias*, thank you.

Within this study, I undertake a historical analysis of how civil rights movements shaped the activism of Chicana/o activist librarians, educators, and community organizations to advocate for anti-racism, anti-sexism, and social justice in children’s literature, library services, and Latina/o literature. This interdisciplinary project draws from archival documents, personal

collections, and oral histories to demonstrate the critical timeliness of protecting intellectual freedom within Latina/o children's literature and library services as it relates to informing culturally relevant literature. Most importantly, this study highlights how an interdisciplinary lens across Latina/o and Chicana/o studies, Library/ Information Studies, and Education resulted in librarians sharing a new perspective on activism to challenge racism and sexism. The use of historical methods to interrogate the history of Latina/o children's literature helps us better understanding contemporary activist efforts. Today, we find ourselves grappling with challenges related to racism and censorship akin to those the activists in this study confronted as early as the 1960s. Within this final chapter, I start by revisiting each research question with a summary of findings. Second, I offer a discussion on the theoretical, methodological, and empirical implications emergent from this research. Last, I share recommendations for practice, policy, and future research as it relates to challenging omissions and distortions in children's literature and within librarianship and library services.

Research Questions

Within this section, I start by restating each research question, and I follow-up with a brief summary of the findings that helped answer each question. A more thorough discussion of findings can be found in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

1. What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to challenge race and racism within Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000?

This research question was addressed in Chapter Five: "Challenging Racism, Omissions, Censorship, and Distortions Within Librarianship: Library Services and Latina/o Children's Books and Literature." To answer this question, I draw from both archival sources and oral histories to lay the foundation of the history that documents how community-based organizations

and librarians challenged race and racism. Findings from this chapter set the stage for understanding how the field of librarianship and library services has grappled with race and racism for decades. Archival documents reveal past resolutions from the American Library Association, that aimed to address racism and sexism in the 1970's. Coupled with the narratives of the Chicana/o librarians, we learn that indeed not much has changed within the profession. This chapter also shares examples of omissions, censorship and distortions of Latinas/os within literature, and library services. Findings make it clear that organizations like the Council for Interracial Books for Children and activist librarians have played seminal roles in leading efforts to challenge racism.

2. What is the history of efforts by community-based organizations and librarians to support the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children's literature and library services between 1960 and 2000?
 - a. What is the state of efforts to challenge and create accurate depictions of Latina/o representations in children's literature and library services today?

In Chapter Six: "Librarians as Activists Responding to the Need," I explore research question two and its sub-question. In the first half of Chapter I articulate how community-based organizations and librarians supported the creation of culturally relevant Latina/o children's literature and library services. This was achieved by recruiting librarians that could serve Spanish-speaking and Latina/o communities and engaging in mentoring relationships to support critical librarians once they entered the field of librarianship. Support in the form of institutionalized support, has been pivotal to continued recruitment of Librarians of Color. Some of these efforts, included initiatives to first diversify library programs, and scholarships to financial support librarians in their programs.

In this chapter I also share on the importance of mentorship relationships that emerged between the Chicana/o librarians in this study. Mentorship and collaboration were key to each of

the Chicana/o librarians' success in navigating an overwhelmingly white profession that did not train them to serve and preserve the histories of Communities of Color. The third major theme within this chapter—engaging in librarianship with the community in mind—speaks directly to the efforts of librarians who were motivated to engage their communities within their local libraries. All the librarians shared a passion for transforming library services that reflected more of the needs of the communities they were serving. This is true for all the librarians whether they worked in community libraries or in college and university settings.

Finally, the last theme within Chapter Six answers the second sub-question. What are the contemporary efforts to challenge the lack of diversity within children's literature and library service today? Contemporary efforts include current initiatives led by librarians to provide books for immigrant children, publishing presses providing books that affirm Latina/o stories and new scholarship that is being adapted to fit the needs of diverse identities of young readers. As a reminder, this section is not a comprehensive review of all current efforts. Rather, I offer a survey of those efforts mentioned within the oral histories that are active today. Now that we have reviewed each of the research questions guiding this study, the next section discusses research implications. Recommendations for practice and policy are also presented in the subsequent sections.

Research Implications

This dissertation project yielded important contributions for research implications in three areas: theoretical, methodological, and empirical. In the following subsections I discuss how findings of this study can inform future scholarship.

Theoretical Implications

Employing Critical Race perspectives and Chicana Feminist Epistemologies in this dissertation resulted in implications for education research that aims to challenge ahistoricism, race, and racism. Critical Race educational historians (Aguilar-Hernandez, 2013; Alonso, 2015; Mares-Tamayo, 2014; Partida, 2021; Santos, 2016) affirm the importance of recovering community memory alongside Communities of Color to highlight educational histories traditionally silenced within institutionalized records. As is the case within this research, librarians are seldom seen as activists, yet through this project, we have learned how many have led efforts to transform children’s literature, librarianship, and library services today. My collaboration with librarians inspired my co-author Cindy R. Escobedo and me (2022) to write, “Nurturing a critical race feminista praxis: engaging education research with a historical sensibility” in which we share how critical race and Chicana feminist theories allow us to use historical methods in education to challenge contemporary practices.

In line with this piece, I propose that educational researchers employ a Critical Race Feminista Praxis (CRFP) when centering the experiences of Communities of Color. I argue, employing a Critical Race Feminista Praxis within the research process transforms the types of questions we ask, the types of methodologies we employ, the way we analyze data, and most importantly, the very purpose of our research. I assert that the very act of centering CRT [and CLFT] in the research process can give us new perspectives of activists engaged in anti-racist and anti-sexist work (Escobedo & Camargo Gonzalez, 2022). Moreover, I contend that leaning into the tenets of CRT in Education and drawing on Chicana/Latina tools like cultural intuition and engaging a *convivencia* praxis allows researchers to invite collaborators to co-create a narrative of resistance. As a social justice advocate, I similarly invite scholars to be intentional

about their decision to lean into a research praxis that situates Communities and Women of Color histories of resistance, community memory, and agency as integral components of revisionist narratives. In conclusion, I encourage scholars to be intentional about drawing on a theoretical frameworks that transforms the research process.

Methodological Implications

Within children's literature there is a silo in which the discipline operates. Scholars have noted the importance of engaging children's literature within Ethnic Studies perspectives (Capshaw, 2014). I would also add that field of education in general has neglected to include information and library sciences. The skillset of librarians is essential to all parts of education and schooling, yet there is a disconnect. Therefore, by looking towards methodologies within information studies and history, such as archival research, this project was able to nuance data sources to better capture the history of activism on the behalf of Chicana/o librarians within Latina/o children's literature and library services.

In addition, through the oral histories with each collaborator, I invited them to share documents from their personal collections. I see this sharing of knowledge as evidence of *convivencia* in the research process. Collaborators shared personal documents such as resumes, pictures, and correspondences. Each of these documents also formed part of the narrative. Personal documents are not only valuable and serve to further center the knowledge and memories of the collaborators, but they also allow for collaborators to truly embody their identities as creators of information and knowledge within the research process. An implication is the fostering of a sense of *convivencia* with my collaborators, which means we disrupt traditional educational research that positions the researcher as the sole expert. I ground my approach to educational history in anti-racist and community centered frameworks such as CRT

and CFE to collectively produce a narrative that counters traditional history. In future manuscripts, I also intend to write about each of these librarians' experiences and efforts as counterstories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, through my methodological approach for researchers, I recommend that we engage collaborators in the process by inviting them to share artifacts and personal collections.

By collecting multiple data sources such as oral histories, primary documents, and personal collections, this study demonstrates the importance of adding new perspectives to educational research methodologies. This study has demonstrated how unique perspectives emerged as I triangulated sources from archival documents and put them in conversation with the activist librarians today. As the Chicana/o librarians were able to recall events I shared with them from the oral histories, new ideas emerged.

Empirical Implications

This dissertation project is the intellectual seed of many future projects to come. Future empirical research should consider questions related to the banning of books. Scholars have documented how ideological attacks impact books and literature (Kumashiro, 2008; Stefancic & Delgado, 1996). A future study can explore intellectual freedom more depth from the perspectives of librarians and how it differs, if at all, from the way schools and educators alter their curriculum. In addition, while there is a slight increase in the number of books published about People of Color (CIBC, 2022), future research should include the content analysis for contemporary books for young Children of Color. Colleagues and I started this work by theorizing a Critical Race Content Analysis (Pérez Huber et al., 2020). Within this tool, we pose questions for educators to consider as they select books for children.

Future empirical research might also engage contemporary librarians to give us a better understating of efforts today. The narratives of Librarians of Color and how they engage their communities with care are also missing. For example, within this project, librarians shared a number of times the names and stories of young children whom they remembered from the library. Certainly, there is research on teachers and their relationship building with students (Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004). In a similar manner, future research can examine how librarians also serve as educators for young students and how they impact their educational success. This dissertation does not have perspectives from school librarians, therefore, there is also something to be said about distinguishing community children's librarians and school librarians and how they both provide library services for children. However, an in-depth examination of how they are both servicing young children can result in a better understanding about implications for children's services and literature.

Finally, future empirical research should be explicit about exploring how Chicana/Latina women played particular leadership roles in transforming the field of librarianship. In particular, a historical representation of various racial/ethnic groups should examine how gendered representations are distorted or omitted. Along these lines, future research should also consider the roles of library pages, interns, or additional staff—not just the librarians, but everyone involved in servicing the communities of libraries.

Recommendations for Practices and Policies Related to Librarianship, Library Services, and Children's Literature

The following recommendations are organized into the following two categories a) practice for librarianship and library services and b) practice and policy for children's literature. Each of these areas of recommendations aims to continue efforts that will challenge omissions

and distortions in children’s literature, librarianship, and library services. In addition, each of these subsections illustrates how engaging in historical perspectives further informs our understanding of contemporary and future librarianship and library services.

Practice within Librarianship & Library Services

. . . Do you know how amazing that is? That they actually said, “We’re against racism.” That they put it in writing, and put it on their website, and it blinks like this all the time? I mean, imagine for us, it’s like we’re on another planet. That would never [emphasis] have happened. Never [emphasis] have happened. So times have changed. They’ve improved. We just have to change the profession.
–Elizabeth Martinez

In 2020, like many institutions reckoning with racial and ethnic disparities and anti-Blackness, the American Library Association (ALA) issued a statement, indicating once again their commitment to changing practices that have perpetuated inequities. This call came out amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and the nation’s uprisings demanding racial equity following the murder of George Floyd Jr., Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the continued murdering of Black people at the hands of police and state sanctioned violence. In 2021, ALA and the Association of American School Libraries (AASL) passed the “Resolution to Promote Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Efforts in AASL While Addressing Historical Effects of Racism,” among the resolution the ALA made the following apologies:

- Apologizes to Black school librarians for wrongs committed against them and for AASL’s inactions on behalf of segregated school libraries and school library state associations.
- Apologizes to all Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) school librarians for AASL’s part in historical racism and segregation in the school librarian profession.

The resolution outlines a total of six commitments in which they seek to be more diverse, inclusive and, equitable across all segments of librarianship. In the quote above, Elizabeth Martinez expressed her amazement with the ALA’s decision to assume “responsibilities for past racism, and pledge a more equitable association” (ALA, 2020). Though the ALA made this

pledge several years post Elizabeth's time as a librarian, as is discussed in Chapter Five, it is not the first time ALA as an organization took such a stance and promised to enact change within librarianship. Findings throughout this study have demonstrated the importance of conversations within librarianship regarding racial justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Therefore, this dissertation recommends that the fields of Education, Library Science, and Ethnic Studies must be in conversation with community members and community educators who engage in social justice work "on the ground." Community members, educators, and librarians interact with students in the everyday and they are well equipped to address challenges by leading community efforts that yield positive changes for challenging racism at the practice level. As is expressed in Chapter Five, librarians were influenced by a willingness and drive (a) to serve their communities because of their own exposure to Chicana/o studies and (b) to affirm their identity. It is at this point where we see how theory and practice merge: academicians (especially Ethnic Studies scholars) play critical roles in training the next generation of librarians, and librarians are central to enacting the praxis changes the academicians call for in their work.

Another recommendation emergent from this research relates to efforts directed at training librarians. Findings from this research affirm that as a profession, librarianship has not trained librarians to serve Communities of Color. Readers will recall how the librarians who I collaborated with as part of this study all shared that their library programs did not train them to serve their communities in culturally meaningful ways. To remedy the disconnect and to augment librarianship training, I recommended that the field begin enacting curriculum that aligns with some of the resolutions outlined in Chapter Five which are related to challenging racist perspectives among librarians. Second, I recommend that the ALA dedicate funds to successfully recruit, support, and retain Librarians of Color across all library institutions

including, but not limited to public, university, museums, schools, and law. Last, I recommend that we all contribute to diverse perspectives that will impact young Children of Color, and all children, by taking our own initiative to inform ourselves and read about diverse perspectives, no matter what field we find ourselves in.

Practice and Policy within Children’s Literature

One of the timely conversations to which my dissertation responds in the present day relates to intellectual freedom. While librarians aim to protect all perspectives and to provide access to all information (whether it be racist or sexist), there are states across the nation that are banning books. Engaging in anti-racism conversations are often equated with liberal politics since there is a huge push from Republican politicians to censor Critical Race Theory within K-12 curriculum (Morgan, 2022). I contend that the current rhetoric for banning social justice and Critical Race Theory today is misinformation and reveals a lack of understanding of the fields of study. Instead, propaganda and claims of raising “anti-American children” are used to alarm mainly white parents into thinking the curriculum should be removed (Casey, 2022). When truth be told, though, in the last two years horrific hate crimes have demonstrated how important it is to have conversations about racism and diversity and inclusion with children of all ages. In March 2022, Texas Senator Ted Cruz attempted to wrongly demonstrate how a children’s book taught children about Critical Race Theory (Placido, 2022). He insinuated that *Anti-racist Baby*, by Ibram X. Kendi, claims babies are racist, this further demonstrated how politicians clearly do not understand what they are challenging. Despite this ignorance and lack of actual reading, though, there is still a continued banning and censorship in literature and curriculum. According to World Population Review (2022), seven states have banned Critical Race Theory in the United States, and 16 more states have bans in progress.

Moreover, the Florida senate recently voted in favor of HB 1557, also known as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, which directly bans the word “gay” and targets issues of gender equity within the curriculum and learning of students in K-3. This is also the target age groups for picture books, and within my dissertation, bans like these often result in children’s books related to gender being pulled from the shelves. This attack on intellectual freedom matters not only in the representation of diverse characters and identities within children’s books, but is also impacting curriculum for students across all U.S. schools. All curriculum is under attack, and it’s not the first time.

Racist nativist ideologies (Peréz Huber, 2011) have been well-documented in curriculum before. For example, the racial climate of 2010 in Arizona showcases how rhetoric has the power to materialize in a ban or policy to remove something that is “threatening” to American life. In Arizona, Senate Bill 1070 was an anti-immigrant bill and House Bill 2281 banned the Mexican American Studies program. Both policies espoused racist rhetoric and exemplify how ethnic studies and diverse perspectives within curriculum and literature have been a long contested intellectual feud. In the state of California, high schools, California Community Colleges, and the California State University system have recently passed policy changes that will make ethnic studies a part of graduation requirements. While programs across universities and colleges are growing due to this new demand, work still needs to happen at younger ages. To note, the banning of books in K-3 curriculum is troubling. It is clearer than ever that the cyclical way racist and negative rhetoric is being used today to censor “left” “anti-American” curriculum and literature. Therefore, a recommendation for policy is to immediately remove bans on critical race theory and social justice curriculum across the nation.

Findings from this dissertation reveal that censorship of materials related to combating racism and sexism are usually grounded on claims of “anti-American,” and “teaching children to hate white people.” As also demonstrated in this study, however, librarians who identified with their communities were able to connect with communities and served them in a way that best fits their needs. The Chicana/o activist librarians in this study that were looking to create culturally relevant resources for young students, instead embraced diversity and aimed to be inclusive rather than perpetuate whiteness and divisiveness within the field. Therefore, a recommendation for challenging omission and distortions within children’s books is to recruit authors who can write culturally relevant stories where diverse perspectives are celebrated. Part of this recommendation is also for the multiple stakeholders within the publishing process to work directly with parents and educators interested in advancing multi-lingual stories. In California, the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) is one of the largest associations focusing specifically on bilingual education. CABE (2022) convenes educators from across all sectors within education and can be a great resource and space to more intentionally engage children’s book authors and librarians. Given that bilingual education has been banned in California in the past, I recommend that educational stakeholders work collaboratively to challenge policies aimed at censoring diversity within the classrooms. Sharing diverse perspectives designed to challenge racism and sexism within the curriculum and literature helps to foster intellectual freedom and should be readily available in all states across the nation.

Conclusion

While this dissertation brings to light new knowledge surrounding the activism on behalf of Latina/o librarians, it further illustrates that in fact the racism will never stop. This is evidenced in the cyclical patterns of racism, censorship, distortions, and stereotypes embedded

within literature and librarianship that are present today, as they were at each of the decades under study. Most importantly this study also raises new questions for further consideration. The greatest question I am left pondering is: How can we stop this cycle of misinformation that attacks the very acknowledgement of diverse histories, literature, and voices? How can we stop history from repeating itself? While I cannot provide a concrete answer at this time, I am choosing to look towards the oral histories and the past efforts of the collaborators, which ignites hope. Despite some of the cyclical racist and sexist patterns in U.S. history, Librarians of Color have been able to challenge negative perceptions before and were successful in starting many of the initiatives and programs that support Librarians and Educators of Color today. The legacy of many of the firsts in their area of work will be immortalized in this dissertation, and in future projects to come. Moreover, the collaborators in this study have indeed shifted literature for Latinas/os of all ages and have also created resources that have preserved the nuances in the livelihoods of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in this country. Future librarians and social justice advocates are in our classrooms today, learning how to read, may we find solace in their renewed energies and hope for the future! In the meantime, to conclude this dissertation, I yield the last words to the Chicana/o librarians who shared with me their reflections and hopes for the field.

I think it's morphing. I think it's changing, and it's slow to change, but I think it'll be a while before we actually get out of print, the old and the new. We're still transitioning with new technology. Libraries, I think, are still confused in terms of what they mean to a community . . . I think we need to decide and determine what are the old values and things that we're going to keep. I hope they never get rid of story time. Never get rid of that because your kids learn so much from them. Listening skills, reading skills, visual skills, attention, patience.. I think it'll be a while before we totally change into a paperless society, even in libraries because probably 50% of what you find in a library you cannot find anywhere else on the internet. That you see changing, but it's still the same thing, it's connecting people with information. You're still going to have mentoring . . . That hasn't gone away, and I don't think that will ever go away.
—Albert Tovar

. . . you are in a setting where you're an educator and you could have these people in front of you for as long as you want or as long as they want. And you also change lives, and you also address their personal needs—It's like a university without walls. You've heard that saying? The library is a university without walls for anybody who comes in and puts the effort into using the resources.

–Evelyn Escatiola

I'm always interested in pushing the boundaries. So, always looking at how—libraries are a place people go to get help. Oftentimes it's for research help. But other times, it's not. They go there because they [students] have nowhere else to go. They don't have other networks to tap into. And I understand what that feels like. It's going back to me applying for college. I didn't have anyone to help. So, there's different kinds of help that people need that aren't necessarily about finding books . . . It's about other kind of information people might need, whether it's how to apply for a job, how to apply for college, how to find food, how to find housing . . . I don't think the general communities understands that those are the roles the library plays. I do think that the libraries do have a lot of work in terms of developing more inclusive programming and spaces, and that comes with recruiting more diverse workforce. So, I hope that eventually we do get to the place where we do have a workforce that's representative of the communities that they serve and that the programming is inclusive of the needs of the communities that they serve. And that the community feels welcome because they see themselves in the spaces, they see themselves in the collections. They see themselves in the programming. That's when people are going feel welcome and included in that space.

–Romelia Salinas

But I think that internship is important because that could bring you mentors or bring you into contact with people that are working in the field already. But it really depends if you make that connection... There's gonna be different opportunities to meet different people, like going to conferences or going to something like Bibliotecas [Bay Area REFORMA chapter] . . . I think they [new librarians] need mentors. Boy, I can't imagine what I would be like without a mentor, I had several. And I count my colleagues as mentors as well.

–Lillian Castillo-Speed

I think that was really important for me [being a mentor], but I think I learned more from them than they learned from me. It was just like a gift that I was able to nurture them and to provide a space, to make sure they had some money to do what they had to do. They established their own career, their own identity, their own success. And that's been for me really great that they've done that. I've mentored a lot of other people . . . they [mentees] tell me sometimes what they learned . . . that it can be done and don't take no, just do it. But they're probably a little bit more cautious than I was. I got more in trouble than they did.

–Richard Chabran

I always am grateful that my work with Los Angeles County brought me together with a group of two Black librarians, a white librarian, a Jewish librarian, a Chinese librarian and me . . . And I'm grateful for that opportunity because it's influenced everything. I don't see myself as just someone who's just pushing Latino [services] . . . that made a big impact with me throughout my career the people, I always wanted to include them, bring them in. Hope. I do [have], because I see people like you, you're making an impact, your education, your expertise. You're going to make an impact, what you write, what you do . . . And I see people like that throughout the profession. So I have a lot of hope. It's good. We'll get there. It'll change. It's just going to take longer than I hope, than I wish for because they're not in a hurry, but I am. I want to see People of Color, especially Latinos in this profession, leading it, serving it, being in key positions, working throughout the community, being the leaders of the teachers and the ones who make those changes happen. It's just so tough that you get tired. I know that I've experienced it myself. So I understand it's a rough road, but every time I get a newsletter from like the REFORMA Chapter of LA, it's exciting. They're tackling things, they're addressing issues, they're having programs.

–Elizabeth Martinez

APPENDIX A: EMAIL RECRUITMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS FOR ORAL HISTORIES

IRB: 20-002042

Re: You're invited to share your expertise related to Latina/o children's literature

Greetings NAME,

My name is Lorena Camargo Gonzalez, a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies within UCLA under the supervision of Dr. Daniel Solórzano. I am emailing you, to invite you to participate in an oral history interview with me as part of my dissertation study given your expertise and invaluable contributions to Latina/o/s children's literature and/or library services.

My study is a critical race examination of activism within Latina/o children's literature during the 1960-2000 time period. This research project examines the history of activism among librarians and community organizers to challenge race and racism within Latina/o children's literature and aims to contextualize these histories by examining how they might inform the fight against racism today. In addition, this study draws from archival research to examine the efforts of librarians and community activists during 1960-2000 to create culturally relevant materials for Latinas/os.

If you agree to participate in an oral history interview with me, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in an audio and/or video recorded oral history interview with the researcher for about 120 minutes (via phone/video call);
- Answer questions about your involvement with creating opportunities to increase Latina/o children's literature;
- Answer questions about your involvement with challenging negative portrayals of Latina/o in children's literature during 1960-2000;
- Share documents, notes, photos from your personal collection related to your work and efforts on Latina/o children's literature;
- Answer follow up questions that the researcher may have about your experience.

I hope you are interested in being part of this research project, as part of your participation you will be compensated with a \$50 gift card. If you are not able to participate, could you perhaps connect me with someone who may be interested?

Please contact me at lcamargo@ucla.edu. Thank you in advance for your collaboration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Lorena Camargo González

Doctoral Candidate

Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, UCLA

APPENDIX B: ORAL HISTORY OF LIBRARIAN ACTIVISTS PROTOCOL

Date & Time:

Interviewee:

I. Early Background

a. Family

- Family background
- Ethnicity
- Exposure to reading/learning in the home
- Languages family knew
- Connection to Latin American languages and cultures

b. Community grew up in

- Ethnic diversity and presence of other ethnic groups, languages and cultures
- Can you tell me about yourself and where you grew up? What do those roots mean to you?
- Contact with Black, Indigenous, Latinx and/or People of Color

II. Education

- Tell me a little about your educational background.
- Any literature you were exposed to?
- When did you decide you wanted to become a librarian?
- What institution did you receive your Information Studies degree from?
- What was the curriculum and/or training like in your program? Professors?
- Exposed to BIPOC authors? Council for Interracial Books for Children Bulletins? Race discussed in your program. Ethnic Studies classes? Political alliances? Involvement during this time with ethnic studies?

III. Employment Activity

- What employment positions have you held? Internships?
 - When did you begin your position?
 - What were your responsibilities?
- What communities did you serve?
 - Demographics? Library interaction/relationship with the community?
- What influenced you to do this work?
- What did support look like from colleagues?
- Funding sources for library programs?
- Describe the work environment, were administrators supportive?
- Professional development or opportunities to join organizations if interested? If so, what conferences or organizations were you involved with?
- How did get involved in children's literature and/or ethnic representation?
- Where there any laws and or acts that impacted your work? Negatively or positively?
- What do you remember about censorship of books? What were conversations in the library like?
- What was the library programming like for Latina/o/x communities?
- Do you remember discussions of Latina/o/x library services in national convenings? Conferences [e.g. ALA, REFORMA, CLA, ChLA]?

IV. Representation of Latinas/os/x

- What materials were available for Latina/o/x students during this time? Any grade level.
- Are there any particular books that you recall?
- Were there racist and or stereotypical portrayals of Latina/o/x people in books?
- Was there anything missing in library services for underrepresented populations?

V. Creating Culturally Relevant Materials

- What were the conversations around children's literature?

- What were your goals for being involved?
- What were the challenges you faced?
- What type of resources/materials were you able to create?
- Did you get opportunity to curate any materials as part of your role or in other places?
- Can you identify other people who played a significant role in these events?

VI. Personal Documents

- Personal documents to share with me from your personal collections [i.e. photos

APPENDIX C: INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS & PUBLISHER RESOURCES

Arte Público Press, <https://artepublicopress.com/>

Children's Book Press, <https://www.leeandlow.com/imprints/children-s-book-press>

Cinco Puntos Press, <https://cincopuntos.com/>

Conscious Kid, <https://www.theconsciouskid.org/>

Interracial Books for Children Bulletins: <https://www.ibcbulletin.info/keywords/>

Latinx in KidLit, <https://latinosinkidlit.com/>

Latinx in Publishing, <https://Latina/oinpublishing.com/>

“Minorities in Publishing,” <https://minoritiesinpublishing.libsyn.com/>

Reflection Press, <https://reflectionpress.com/>

We Need Diverse Books, <http://weneeddiversebooks.org>

APPENDIX D: INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES

La Casa Azul Bookstore: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/la-casa-azul-bookstore#/>

Libélula Books & Co.: <https://bookshop.org/shop/libelulabooksandco>

Lil Libros: <https://lilibros.com>

LA Libreria: <https://www.la-libreria.net/about-us/>

Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural: <https://www.tiachucha.org>

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