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2013

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

*Sin Fronteras: Activism, Immigration, and the Politics of Belonging in Mexican
Chicago, 1968-1986*

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

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Myrna Garcia

Committee in Charge:

Professor David G. Gutiérrez, Co-Chair
Professor Lisa Sun-Hee Park, Co-Chair
Professor Yen Le Espiritu
Professor Alejandro Lugo
Professor Natalia M. Molina
Professor K. Wayne Yang

2013

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Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California, San Diego

2013

DEDICATION

Para mi familia—especialmente a mi papá, mamá, mi hermana Marie, mi hermano Víctor, y mis abuelitas/os. Gracias por el apoyo y la fuerza para seguir adelante.

To my family—especially my dad, mom, my sister Marie, and my brother Victor and grandparents. Thanks for giving me the support and strength to push forward.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words do not suffice to describe this rewarding, challenging, and, at times, painful doctoral journey. What began as research inquiries at the undergraduate level trying to uncover the social world of my Mexican immigrant parents when they first came to Chicago during early 1970s, has led me to a life-long academic endeavor. Thank you Alejandro Lugo, Arlene Torres, Ronnie Kann, Bill Berry, and Matt García for introducing me to the enterprise of academic knowledge production. I am grateful to the students fighting for Ethnic Studies at UIUC: Maricarmen Moreno, Angélica Rivera, David O. Stovall, Susan Rivera, Cynthia Nambo, María Rejdukowski Torres, Chuy Chávez, Mérida Rúa, and Julio Villegas. *Gracias* also to Nancy, Gaby, and Laura Ibarra, Cesar Garza, Gabriel A. Cortez, Lorena García, and especially Isaura B. Pulido. Isaura, I appreciate our warm friendship and express gratitude for providing support through the difficult, ambivalent, and exciting moments in my doctoral journey. *Gracias!*

I am grateful to my support system at UCSD. I give thanks to Martha D. Escobar for being *un gran amiga*. *Mujer*, no me puedo imaginar este proceso sin tu apoyo. *Gracias!* The *mujeres* of Raza Graduate Student Association—especially *mi comadre* Lorena V. Márquez and advisor Yolanda Escamilla. I would like to express deep gratitude to Rebecca J. Kinney and Angela W. Kong. I enjoyed walking side-by-side with both of you very much. Angela, thank you for running with me, especially when I needed that extra push. I give special thanks to Daisy Rodríguez who also participated in a last minute sprint with me. Thank you Monika Gosin for your support. I am grateful to Jimmy Patiño for your helpful advice and feedback. Others have also cheered me on:

Edwina Welch, Nancy Magpusao, Agustín Orozco, Juan Astorga, Katherine Arias, Jessica Pérez, and Stevie Ruiz. Rosiangela Escamilla, thank you for listening. *Gracias* Laura Y. González for your support, especially when I was in Los Angeles. I also wish to thank my friends in the San Diego community: Breca Griswold Rodríguez, Delia Arreola, Rosa Gallegos, Stephanie de la Torre, Cynthia Pulido, Ildifonso Carillo, and Rene Guzmán. I wish to give thanks to Michelle Téllez. *Gracias amiga* for your love and attention throughout the years in New York, San Diego and Chicago.

This dissertation project would not be possible without the grants and fellowships I was awarded. Support from the Institute for International, Comparative, and Area Studies, Travel Grant, 2008, the California Cultures in Comparative Perspectives, Graduate Summer Fellowship, 2008, the Ethnic Studies Research Grant, 2008, and the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity Summer Fellowship, 2007 were critical for the data collection. I am grateful for the support provided by the UC President's Dissertation Year Fellowship. This project was made possible in part by financial assistance from the Ruth Landes Memorial Research Fund, a program of The Reed Foundation .

I also acknowledge the intellectual spaces of support in Chicago, especially at the Latin American and Latino Studies Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Conversations in the classroom with my students were invaluable. I would like to express deep appreciation to Kathleen Belew for pushing my thinking. I enjoyed our weekly meetings at different cafes throughout Chicago. I also extend my gratitude to Gissel and Minelly Escobedo for their research assistance. Advice given by colleagues Antonio

López and John H. Flores was very useful. I also wish to acknowledge the support of Professor Juan Mora-Torres.

I give special thanks to the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin for the valuable resources and support, especially *profesoras* Domino Pérez, Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, Gloria González-López, Anne M. Martínez, and Cecilia Ballí. Nicole, thank you for warm guidance and pushing me to do my best. Gloria, thank you for providing insight and strength.

Having thoroughly enjoyed the countless hours of conversations, I am humbled by the opportunity to learn from the people who shared their stories of struggle, resilience, and triumphs. Some of my participants did not have the opportunity to see the fruition of my research—some sadly passed on prior to the completion of the project. I acknowledge Catherine Archibald who encouraged me to push forward with this project. I am deeply grateful to the Lozano family—Lupe, Rudy, Jr., Pepe, and David—as I narrate a part of Rodolfo “Rudy” Lozano’s life, a story that I believe is critical to Chicago’s history of immigrant and labor rights activism. I am also indebted to the people who shared their life stories with me. In order to protect their identities I cannot name them, but hope to do justice to their words and stories.

I like to express gratitude to my doctoral committee for their confidence in me and my project. *Gracias, profe* David G. Gutiérrez for your insightful comments and support for my research endeavors. Thank you Lisa Sun-Hee Park for your unconditional support throughout all these years. I am grateful to Yen Le Espiritu for your encouragement and feedback. I give thanks to Natalia Molina for providing great advice. K. Wayne Yang, thank you for taking the time to meet with me and for breaking it down,

especially when I lost sight of the bigger picture. I express great appreciation to Alejandro Lugo for believing in my project since its inception. I especially enjoyed meeting at the Café Jumping Bean to discuss my research.

Lastly, but just as importantly, I would like to thank my *familia* and *amistades*. Tío Héctor García, Isela Estrada, and Brenda Meza have cheered me on and checked in on me. Others have provided support, Mario González, Vaughan Smith, Héctor González, Caro Gaete, Margarita Paredes, Matt Katz, and Mayarí Guzmán. And with the last and final push, I am truly blessed to have the support of Lucille Martinez Schurman and *familia*, Elvia Mendoza (as well as Valerie and Joakin), Nancy Preciado, Arleen E. López, Itzel A. Martínez, Katie V. Noriega, Marcela Espinoza Gallegos, and Jeanette del Carmen-Trejo. Arleen, Itzel, Katie, Marce, and Jeanette, your care and attention to detail was fantastic. I express gratitude to José I. Fusté as well as to Jade and Amaury for your warm hospitality, assistance, and encouragement. Sherron A. Cook-Bey, thank you so very much! I appreciate your unwavering support throughout these last few years, especially during the most intensive and stressful moments. I cannot imagine what it would be like without your love. Lastly, I am also blessed for having the incredible support of my immediate family, *mi hermana* Marie for listening to my stories, *mi hermano* Víctor for your enthusiastic interest, *mi mama* for the strength you have given me, and *mi papa* for sharing your migration stories, stories that have sparked my academic inquiries on questions of migration. *Familia, amigas/os, estudiantes, and colegas* you have beautifully helped to pave the way for me to complete this project. *¡Si se pudo!*

VITA

EDUCATION:

2013	Doctor of Philosophy, Ethnic Studies University of California, San Diego
2005	Masters of Arts, Ethnic Studies University of California, San Diego
2001	Masters of Science, Education: Administration & Supervision Fordham University
1996	Bachelor of Arts, Latin American Studies University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

PUBLICATIONS:

Book Review: Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago by Ramírez, Leonard G. with Yenelli Flores, María Gamboa, Isaura González, Victoria Pérez, Magda Ramírez-Castañeda, and Cristina Vital. Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000, edited by Thomas Dublin and Kathryn Kish Sklar, Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, March 2013.

SELECTED AWARDS:

2011-2012	The Reed Foundation, Ruth Landes Memorial Research Fund
2008-2009	UC President's Dissertation Fellowship
2008	University of California, San Diego, Institute for International, Comparative, & Area Studies, Travel Grant
2007	University of California, San Diego, California Cultures in Comparative Perspectives, Research Grant
2006, 2008	Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Scholarship Award

ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

2012-2013	Visting Lecturer, Center for Mexican American Studies University of Texas at Austin
2012	Adjunct Professor, Anthropology Department Northwestern University
2010-2012	Adjunct Professor, Latin American & Latino Studies Department University of Illinois at Chicago
2010-2011	Adjunct Professor, Justice Studies Department and Political Science Department Northeastern Illinois University
2010	Adjunct Professor, Social Sciences Department Harold Washington City College
2010	Lecturer, Ethnic Studies Department University of California, San Diego
2004-2007	Teaching Assistant, Ethnic Studies Department University of California, San Diego

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sin Fronteras: Activism, Immigration, and the Politics of Belonging in Mexican Chicago, 1968-1986

by

Myrna Garcia

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California, San Diego 2013

Professor David G. Gutiérrez, Co-Chair

Professor Lisa Sun-Hee Park, Co-Chair

This dissertation examines the alternative ways Chicago's Mexicans and Mexican Americans created a sense of belonging in the United States, ways that reflected a changing social reality on the ground and the emergence of a sense of imagining and a community not strictly tied to or bounded by the juridical rights of U.S. citizenship. During the 1970s, Mexican and Mexican American community leaders learned of the non-citizen status of many residents and their anxieties about INS harassment through their community involvement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1974, Mexican and Mexican American activists co-founded the Chicago chapter of El Centro de Acción Social Autónoma-Hermandad General de Trabajadores [Center for Autonomous Social

Action- General Brotherhood of Workers] or CASA, a Marxist-Leninist immigrant rights organization. This organization demanded rights for Mexicans regardless of citizenship or immigration status. By stressing a “sin fronteras” [beyond borders] ideology, CASA pushed the terms of belonging in the United States, stressing connections between the ways in which Mexicans on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border experienced exploitation fueled by American capitalism. I argue that CASA Chicago activists’ rejection of hierarchal citizenship as a means to claim rights and belonging proved necessary in order to articulate and practice an expansive strategy of gaining rights and belonging in the United States for Mexicans and Mexican Americans alike. My conceptualization of sin fronteras concept refers to the idea of transcending dominant discourses of belonging, primarily based on the boundaries of the nation-state. Ethnic Mexicans, regardless of birthplace, generation, or citizenship status, engaged with and practiced a sin fronteras imagining.

Chapter One: Introduction

When we look back at all the events that occurred in the last two years [2006, 2007] with regard to the immigrant rights movement [...] some of us sitting around here can say that these were like the marches that we participated in, in the seventies. I was pretty dumbfounded when I heard the mayor of the city of Chicago [Richard M. Daley] say how important immigrants, especially the undocumented were to the fabric of this city and to this country. This was a seam that was sewed years ago by CASA.

-Linda Coronado, CASA Chicago co-founder, June 22, 2008

On the morning of June 8, 1983, someone fatally shot Mexican-American Rodolfo “Rudy” Lozano—a key community leader—in his Little Village home.¹ The tragic news of Lozano’s startling death shocked, outraged, and disillusioned many residents throughout the city of Chicago and beyond. Over 2,000 people attended Lozano’s funeral. To honor Lozano, anthropologist Dr. Jorge “Chuy” Negrete composed a special corrido entitled “Compañero Rudy Lozano” [Comrade Rudy Lozano] and sang it at the burial services.² The lyrics included, “Your death is not in vain, for we have your ideas in our hand. It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees” to remind his listeners of Lozano’s unwavering commitment to social justice and the need to move forward with community organizing. Following his death, signage with a picture of Lozano and the phrase “Un Hijo del Pueblo” [The Community’s Son] adorned many

¹ Pilsen is the first Chicago neighborhood to have an ethnic Mexican majority. Its main corridor is 18th Street. Little Village is a Mexican neighborhood on Chicago’s southwest side. The heart of Little Village is 26th Street, bounded by Western Avenue on the east and Cicero Avenue on the west. It is part of the Lawndale neighborhood: South Lawndale. Little Village is to the west of Pilsen. More and more Mexicans moved into the Little Village community in the mid to late 1970s as white European immigrants moved out due to urban renewal efforts.

² A corrido is a special song that tells a story of resistance, mourning, and struggle. For more information, see Américo Paredes. “The Ancestry of Mexican Corridos: A Matter of Definition.” *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 1976, No. 301 (1963): 231-235. I use the Spanish words without quotation marks or italics. Following Alicia Schmidt Camacho, I chose this strategy as a way to ensure that Spanish does not become “the lesser language” in this project; see, e.g., xiii in *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

business windows along 26th street, the main corridor in Little Village. Local schools and community centers commemorated Lozano. For instance, Latinos United, a student organization from Little Village's Farragut High School organized a rally in June 1983 where hundreds of people wearing white-ribbons with the words "In Memory of Rudy Lozano," gathered to lament Lozano's death.

Lozano's untimely death deeply impacted the local community: Chicagoans participated in collective, wide-ranging homages to Lozano.³ The *Chicago Tribune* article "Lozano: 'A loss to the future'" on June 12, 1983 discussed how many grieved the loss of the charismatic leader who had great potential for local change, and perhaps national change as well.⁴ Lozano's death is part of a larger history of mourning and loss within the Mexican community and other racialized and aggrieved communities.⁵ Lozano's activism threatened the status quo so much so that he was murdered, and to this day it is not known what parties are responsible for his death.⁶ Chuy Negrete continues to play the "Compañero Rudy Lozano" corrido at special events, ceremonies, and conferences dedicated to Rudy Lozano, often bringing listeners to tears.

³ Heroes are romanticized. Still, this outpouring of support indicated how Lozano profoundly impacted his community.

⁴ "Lozano: 'A loss to the future,'" *Chicago Tribune*, June 12, 1983.

⁵ For example, the violent raid Black Panther leader Fred Hampton's home in Chicago resulted in his death or what some activists would argue a political assassination. Key CASA leaders Carlos Arango witnessed the violent treatment of many friends during the Tlateloco Massacre in Mexico City 1968. The ethnic Mexican community in the United States has endured (and continues to do so) state violence, such as police brutality, poor public schooling, poverty, and racial discrimination.

⁶ In 1984, Gregory Escobar, a Little Village teenager, was convicted for Lozano's murder. See Oscar Avila, "Latino activist's spirit lives on, Backers say you can kill a man but not his ideas," *Chicago Tribune*, June 8, 2003.



Figure 1.1: Rudy Lozano speaking at a CASA Meeting (on left)
Chicago, IL
Photograph courtesy of Guadalupe “Lupe” Lozano

Lozano’s story, as *el hijo del pueblo* [the community’s son], demonstrates how and why he included the needs of non-citizens in his community activism. The idea of the “*hijo del pueblo*” exemplifies how he was cast as a local hero and warmly embraced by a broad spectrum of community members—even in cases where individuals did not agree with them. He exemplified an unwavering commitment to immigrant rights, especially for the undocumented. He stressed the importance of developing a collective, *sin fronteras* [beyond borders] imaginary that included Mexicans and Mexican Americans. He also pushed for building coalitions across racialized and aggrieved communities. In 2002, the Chicago Tribute Markers of Distinction, an organization that documents the history of famous Chicagoans, placed an honorary plaque in the front of the Lozano home. It reaffirms the ways Lozano was characterized as local hero, and a city hero. Lozano’s life as a *casista* [CASA activist] provides a snapshot of the social and political

context that gave rise to the immigrant rights movement of the 1970s in Chicago's ethnic Mexican community.⁷

In 1974, Lozano co-founded the Chicago chapter of El Centro de Acción Social Autónoma-Hermandad General de Trabajadores [Center for Autonomous Social Action-General Brotherhood of Workers] or CASA, a Marxist-Leninist immigrant rights organization.⁸ Many other community organizers, including Guadalupe "Lupe" Lozano, Felipe Aguirre, Linda Coronado, and Bernardino Echeverría also co-founded the Chicago chapter of CASA. This organization demanded rights for ethnic Mexicans regardless of citizenship or immigration status. CASA, as historian David G. Gutiérrez has stated, "was the first Chicano-era organization to explore systematically the significance of the relationship between immigration, Chicano ethnicity, and the status of Mexican Americans in the United States."⁹ By stressing a "sin fronteras" ideology, CASA pushed the terms of belonging in the United States, stressing connections between the ways in

⁷ Following David G. Gutiérrez, I use ethnic Mexicans to refer to Mexicans and Mexican Americans alike. I use Mexican to refer to Mexican immigrants. I use Mexican American to refer to U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, that is, residents with birthright or naturalized citizenship. My usage of Mexican American does not privilege an assimilationist sense of belonging in the United States. Instead, I use it to denote a juridical citizenship status; see, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁸ In 1968, Bert Corona and Soledad "Chole" Alatorre co-founded CASA in Los Angeles to serve as a community-based organization to meet the needs of the growing immigrant population in the United States. Many CASA chapters operated throughout the American Southwest and beyond, including California (Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland), Colorado (Greeley), Texas (El Paso), New York (New York City), and Washington (Seattle). Ernesto Chávez, *¡Mi Raza Primero! My People First!: Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002), 99. In 1987, Emma Lozano, Rudy Lozano's sister, founded Centro Sin Fronteras, a community organization dedicated to continuing Rudy Lozano's social justice work. The organization has played a major role in the struggle for immigrant rights, locally and nationally.

⁹ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 190-191.

which Mexicans on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border experienced exploitation fueled by American capitalism.¹⁰

With a focus on 1968-1986, this project documents the alternative ways Chicago's Mexicans and Mexican Americans created a sense of belonging in the United States, reflecting a changing social reality on the ground and the emergence sense of imagined community not strictly tied to or bounded by the juridical rights of U.S. citizenship. I argue that CASA Chicago activists' rejection of hierarchal citizenship as a means to claim rights and belonging proved necessary in order to articulate and practice an expansive strategy of gaining rights and belonging in the United States for Mexicans and Mexican Americans alike. It investigates how and why ethnic Mexicans created and engaged in what I call a *sin fronteras* ideology. By building on CASA's *sin fronteras* slogan, I conceptualize *sin fronteras* in my project to describe the idea of transcending the dominant discourses of belonging, primarily based on the boundaries of the nation-state.

By looking at Chicago as a case study, I demonstrate how ethnic Mexicans practiced this ideology in the United States through an alternative politics of belonging, attentive to citizens and non-citizens. In addition, ethnic Mexicans practiced a *sin fronteras* ideology, one deeply intertwined with community building. A *sin fronteras* Mexicanidad [Mexican-ness] operated as a transnational and inclusive imagining bringing Mexicans and Mexican Americans together. Ethnic Mexicans, regardless of birthplace, generation, or citizenship status, engaged with and practiced a *sin fronteras* Mexicanidad. *Sin fronteras* served as a political strategy, that is, a way to come together

¹⁰ Juan Gómez Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality & Promise 1940-1990* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 15; Alejandro Lugo, *Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts: Culture, Capitalism, and Conquest at the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2008), 2-3.

as a community and not let the nation-state differentiate between those who were born in the United States and those born in Mexico. Cognizant of the ways people affirm, navigate, negotiate, and resist a multiplicity of social, cultural, political, and linguistic borders, I purposefully translate *sin fronteras* as “beyond borders” rather than “without borders.” I do so to highlight the material realities and consequences of borders in everyday life. Using “beyond” is an explicit move to underscore how we cannot transcend borders. We work with (and against) borders, around them, and name its violence. The political positions staked out by local CASA chapters in the 1970s anticipated and in many cases foreshadowed many of the political claims later generations of immigrants’ rights activists would make against the state in the first decade of the twenty-first century.¹¹

I argue that this creation, practice, and engagement of a *sin fronteras* imagining marked the 1970s as a critical moment in the history of community formation for Chicago’s ethnic Mexicans. My project also considers the development of immigrant rights activism during that period. I maintain that *sin fronteras* politics became an important tool for community building joining citizens and noncitizens. Drawing on a *sin fronteras* politics also provided the political language to draw attention to the transnational dimensions of U.S. capitalism that has spurred Mexican migration to the United States. In this dissertation I argue, following the argument laid out by historian Mae Ngai, that the undocumented tested the limits of national citizenship and state

¹¹ John H. Flores, “A Migrating Revolution: Mexican Political Organizers and their Rejection of American Assimilation,” in *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History*, ed. Leon Fink (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); In his work discusses how Mexicans living in Chicago worked to orient Mexican immigrants in Chicago towards Mexico. They resisted efforts of assimilation.

sovereignty.¹² The undocumented, in many ways, enjoyed and participated in the local community through school, work, church, business, and leisure activities. However, the fear of detection and deportation produced anxieties and, at times, limited their actions.¹³ Sin fronteras activists, primarily but not exclusively Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, but not exclusively, moved beyond citizenship as the terms of belonging in the United States by organizing citizens and non-citizens alike in the fight for equal rights.¹⁴ To reconcile these questions of citizenship, rights, and belonging, sin fronteras politics amplified and challenged the traditional civil rights framework that privileged citizenship by providing new possibilities of inclusion in the nation for non-citizens. Casistas complicated and challenged the currency of citizenship by centering the focus of self-determination on Mexican immigrant communities.

By analyzing CASA's sin fronteras imaginings, this dissertation documents the particularities of the social and political dynamics in Chicago. It will also highlight how sin fronteras politics in Chicago took shape and differed from the Chicano politics and nationalism in Los Angeles, and in the American Southwest more generally. Neighborhood leaders including Rudy Lozano learned of the non-citizen status of many residents and their anxieties about Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) harassment through their community involvement in the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁵

¹² See Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 6-7.

¹³ Nicholas P. De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 419-447.

¹⁴ Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 25.

¹⁵ *Oral History with Guadalupe Lozano*, Interview, Dr. Louise Año Nuevo Kerr Papers, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 1, Folder 8. (1996).

This dissertation demonstrates how immigration legislation, the popular discourse of anti-immigrant sentiment and the overlapping structural forces of capitalism, globalization, and racism unevenly shape the everyday lives of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. This project provides a local snapshot to understand how Mexicans and Mexican Americans came together and mobilized collectively to expand the terms of belonging in the United States, an understanding infused with a transnational politics. With respect to the history of Mexican immigration to Chicago, the focus of my investigation concludes in 1986 when the Immigration Reform and Control Act granted amnesty to select groups of undocumented people. CASA was no longer in existence and activists engaged electoral politics focused more and more on gaining local and national representation. Though CASA as an organization no longer existed, employing a *sin fronteras* politics proved useful in the subsequent chapters of these community leaders' lives.

Mexican Migration and Creating Home in the Windy City

The formation and growth of Chicago's Mexican and Mexican American community is one predominately shaped, and reshaped, by a legacy of migration, labor exploitation, and racism. Mexicans have navigated a rugged social terrain in a country that clearly welcomed their labor, but not their personhood. In contemporary times, Mexicans and Chicanas/os, particularly those in the American Southwest, often rally around the slogan "We Didn't Cross the Border; the Border Crossed Us!" Referring to the U.S. Conquest of Mexico's northern territory, this slogan was popularized by Chicanas/os during the Chicano Movement and served as a reminder of the conquest of

the Mexican land annexed by the United States with the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Posters, t-shirts, and banners carry this slogan (among many others) during protests, rallies, and marchers for better social conditions. Chicago's Mexicans and Mexican Americans, however, cannot necessarily make these claims of living in an "occupied Mexico" Instead, many Mexicans and Mexican Americans living in Chicago have a history of migration as generation of laborers have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border to find work. Mexicans laborers created a home away from Mexico and formed families in the City of Big Shoulders hundreds and hundreds of miles away from the American Southwest and Mexico.

Mexican-origin residents in the Midwest have a lengthy historical record. In Illinois, it officially dates as far back as the mid-nineteenth century when the 1850 census data documented 50 ethnic Mexicans.¹⁶ In 1884, the Mexican consulate in Chicago was established. In 1900, 156 Mexicans lived in Chicago, 672 in 1910, and the populations nearly doubled to more than a thousand in 1920.¹⁷ After this point, however, Illinois eventually became a major site for Mexican migration. Following Texas (42,014), California (13,509), and Arizona (4,697), Illinois (1,960) ranked fourth in the destination reported to government officials by Mexicans crossing the border by end of the 1920s.¹⁸ Since the early twentieth century, the Mexican-origin population in Chicago, for the most part, has grown significantly over time. According to census data, Mexicans constituted

¹⁶ United States census data (1900) documents 156 ethnic Mexicans living in Chicago. See Louis Año Nuevo Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago: 1920-1970" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1976), 8.

¹⁷ See Anita E. Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans in Chicago" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1928) 29; Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 4th ed., (New York: Longman, 2000), 201.

¹⁸ Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans," 25.

less than 5% of immigrants that arrived to Chicago before 1940, 10% in the 1940s, 14% in the 1950s, 25% in the 1960s, and 43% in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.¹⁹ Mirroring national trends, the numbers of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Windy City has continued to grow in the new millennium.

In 2000, Chicago had 530,000-625,000 Mexican-origin residents, and constituted the second largest ethnic Mexican community after Los Angeles, and over 1.1 million in the Chicago metropolitan area.²⁰ In 2010, Cook County had the fourth largest Mexican-origin population (1.42 million) in the country.²¹ The Mexican and Mexican American community will continue to grow, but this time for a different reason. The growth of Mexican-origin population is now mainly attributed to births in the United States (and not immigration) while the white population is aging and has begun to diminish as a percentage of the total U.S. population.²² Still, immigration played a major role in the growth of Chicago's Mexican-origin community in the twentieth century, and continues to inform ethnic Mexican community formation into the twenty-first century.

The earliest Mexicans usually lived around their places of employment. They settled on the Near West Side, Back of the Yards/Packingtown (railroads, meatpacking), and South Chicago (steel mills). The vast majority of Mexican-origin residents have lived

¹⁹ *Mexican Women in Chicago: A Report to the Secretaría de Desarrollo Social de México, Departamento de Estudios Internacionales, Instituto Tecnológica Autónomo de México*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Institute for Latino Studies, 2005), 4; U.S. Census Data, 2000.

²⁰ The Chicago metropolitan area includes the following counties: Cook, Du Page, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will.

²¹ After Los Angeles County, Harris County (home to Houston), and Maricopa County (where Phoenix is located). I also give thanks to Cynthia Duarte, Associate Director of Research, Institute of Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame, 2012 and Juan Carlos Guzman who is currently the Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist at the Institute for Global Development, University of Notre Dame.

²² Kenneth M. Johnson and Daniel T. Lichter, comp., *Population Growth in New Hispanic Destinations* Policy Brief No. 8 (Durham, New Hampshire, Carsey Institute, Fall 2008); Haya El Nasser, "Minority Babies Almost the Majority" *USA Today*, August 24, 2011.

throughout the city. Today, they are most heavily represented in South Lawndale, popularly known as Little Village, Pilsen, Brighton Park, Belmont Cragin, and Gage Park. Mexicans have also lived in many suburbs, such as Arlington Heights and Bensenville, for several decades. In recent decades, in particular, the Mexican-origin population in Cook County has doubled from 465,765 in 1990 to 922,410 by the end of the decade.²³ In the twenty-first century, however, Mexicans have migrated directly to the suburbs or moved there from Chicago in greater numbers. Large Mexican populations now live in suburban Cook County communities, including Berwyn, Cicero, Leyden, and Proviso Township. Large concentrations of Mexicans also live throughout the Chicago metropolitan area: Kane County (Aurora, Elgin, and Carpentersville), Lake County (Waukegan), Will County (Joliet), and Du Page County (Addison and West Chicago).

Generally, the expansion of the U.S. economy has spurred labor migration and thus also has propelled the growth of Mexicans in the United States. In contrast, when the economy has contracted, this has tended to slow or even stymie that increase. Large-scale Mexican immigration to Chicago has come in distinct waves, usually to fill labor shortages in the United States. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Mexican railroads connected with ones in the United States, which many Mexicans had helped to build in the 1880s and 1890s. This transnational transportation system facilitated Mexican migration to Illinois and other areas in the interior of the United States. Chicago's railroad terminal, a central hub, linked many cities in the American Southwest, Midwest, and East Coast.²⁴ Chicago, the second-largest U.S. city in 1910, was known as

²³ American Community Survey, 2007-2009.

²⁴ Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: a History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 5, 92; Nicholas De Genova *Working*

the Second City because of its rank as the second largest populated city in the United States, after New York City. Chicago drew many Mexicans who first found their way to the United States in large numbers during the Mexican Revolution (1910-20) when many left home to escape political turmoil.²⁵ The thirty-one year tyranny of President Porfirio Díaz greatly widened the gap between rich and poor. Francisco I. Madero, who briefly served as President (1911-1913), led the movement to protest the Díaz administration. To escape this political unrest, many Mexicans migrated to el norte [the United States].

During the United States' participation in World War I (1917-1919) and after, Mexicans migrated in larger numbers. Enganchadores [job recruiters] traveled to Mexico, mostly in Northern Mexico, and in the American Southwest to enlist workers, including some women, on behalf of the U.S. agribusiness and industry (railroads, steel mills, packing houses).²⁶ The U.S. agribusiness and industry recruited trabajadores [Mexican workers] to fill the labor shortages during the wartime era.²⁷ Employers relied on Mexican labor even more because the Immigration Act of 1924 limited the migration of European immigrant groups, particularly Southern and Eastern Europeans, through the

the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005) 113.

²⁵ John J. Betancur et al., "Economic Restructuring and the Process of Incorporation of Latinos Into the Chicago Economy," In *Latinos in a Changing U.S. Economy: Comparative Perspectives on Growing Inequality*, Rebecca Morales and Frank Bonilla, eds. (California, Sage Publications, 1993) 109. Since Chicago was the second-largest city in the United States, it was popularly known as the Second City.

²⁶ Gabriela F. Arredondo and Derek Vaillant. "Mexicans," *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago Historical Society, 2005), see <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/824.html>; Gabriela F. Arredondo. "Mexicanas in Chicago," *Illinois History Teacher*, 10:2 (2003): 57-62. <http://www.lib.niu.edu/2003/ih1020357.html>

²⁷ Paul S. Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States: Chicago and the Calumet Region* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in Economics, 1932); Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: a History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-1939*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Patricia Arias y Jorge Durand, *Mexicanos en Chicago: Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925* (Guadalajara: Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades 2008), 29.

institution of a national origins quota system.²⁸ Immigration law excluded Asian groups from legal migration to the United States because the state classified them as “racially ineligible for naturalized citizenship.”²⁹ The National Origin Quota Acts of 1921 and 1924 (as did the Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882) drastically diminished the available supply of Asian workers. Given powerful corporate interests, and the continuing demand for labor in the still expanding U.S. economy, Mexicans were exempted from most of the new immigration restrictions.³⁰

Moreover, the U.S. Congress established the Border Patrol in 1925 whereas government officials were brought in to guard national borders.³¹ Racial anxieties informed the practices, procedures, and tactics of the Border Patrol as agents questioned and inspected Mexican workers crossing the border.³² The nature and scope of border inspection practices involves the interplay of competing nativist and capitalist interests and the larger socio-political context.³³ In light of racial preoccupations, capitalist interests in the United States depended on a Mexican labor force. Mexicans gradually

²⁸ Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 7; Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, (New York: New York University Press, 200).

²⁹ The Japanese did not face the same exclusion as the Chinese did because of the United States’ interest in maintaining a benign political relationship with Japan. The Gentlemen’s Agreement Act of 1907 forbade Japanese laborers from migrating to the United States while encouraging the migration of Japanese business men and professionals.

³⁰ The U.S. government’s foreign policy interests in the Western Hemisphere conflicted with the economic interests of powerful groups and lobbying efforts led Congress to exempt Mexicans from immigration restrictions.

³¹ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, xx, 17.

³² David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*.

³³ Alejandro Lugo, *Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts: Culture, Capitalism, and Conquest at the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 115-150.

filled the labor vacuum created by diminishing numbers of Asian workers and the subsequent labor shortages brought on during World War I (1914-1919).³⁴

The fluctuating population growth in the Midwest paralleled the high- and low-peak periods of work availability. In 1927, the Midwestern Mexican population numbered 63,700 to 80,000, reaching its peak with the influx of *trabajadores* during the agricultural season.³⁵ Mexicans moved across multiple regions following work.³⁶ During non-peak seasons, some workers returned to Mexico, while others stayed and migrated to other parts in the United States. Over 20,000 Mexican *betabeleros* [sugar beet workers] worked in the fields in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, and Minnesota by 1927.³⁷ The sugar beet industries tended to recruit entire families to work in the fields, pulling in small numbers of Mexican women and children to the Midwest.³⁸ Sugar beet company employers failed to provide off-season housing (winter season). Instead, they encouraged *betabeleros* to find work in Chicago and other neighboring communities in the Midwest.³⁹ Some *trabajadores* abandoned their identities as *betabeleros* and pursued jobs in foundries, railroads, meatpacking, and other work in the Second City. In anticipation of the picking season, labor agent representatives of the American Beet Sugar Company,

³⁴ In contrast to Asians, what also made the Mexican labor desirable is that Mexicans could easily return to their homeland or could be easily and cheaply deported when U.S. capitalists no longer needed them.

³⁵ Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 21.

³⁶ Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 5; Patricia Arias and Jorge Durand, *Mexicanos en Chicago: Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925* (Guadalajara: Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, 2008), 31.

³⁷ See Anita E. Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexican in Chicago" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1928), 36; Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams: Latino Immigration to Chicago* (Lanham: Maryland University Press of America, 2007), 10.

³⁸ Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-1939* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 24.

³⁹ Dionicio Nodín Valdés, *Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000) 29; Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 24.

Michigan Sugar Company, and Rock County Sugar Company traveled to Chicago to enlist betabeleros.⁴⁰

The early generation of Mexican trabajadores in Chicago, the Mexican Midwestern capital, consisted mostly of single young men between the ages of eighteen and thirty.⁴¹ Most came as contract workers recruited by U.S. companies. Some Mexican workers migrated directly from Mexico, predominately coming from the central-western Mexican states, including Michoacán, Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas.⁴² Other trabajadores migrated from other parts in the United States. Mexicans undertook labor intensive and often dangerous jobs; they received very low wages, one of the lowest among the city's racial/ethnic groups.⁴³ Given the power relationships with employers and enganchadores, Mexicans experienced widespread deception in their search for work. For example, recruiters would promise job assignments in other parts of the Midwest and United States, including transportation and housing, in exchange for a fee. Trabajadores made payments in advance, but to their dismay, often no job was provided.⁴⁴

Chicago experienced a railroad, steel, and meatpacking boom in the early twentieth century, transforming the city into a major destination for Mexican job seekers, and as a consequence, the Mexican-origin population grew between 21,000 and 25,000

⁴⁰ Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans," 67.

⁴¹ See Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 21; In her book *Mexican Chicago*, Gabriela F. Arredondo discusses the heterosocial relationships Mexican workers established, encountered, and negotiated in Chicago, see 70-75. Similarly, Dionicio Nodín Valdés discusses how Mexican Midwestern communities were predominately comprised of young-adult, Mexican laborers, *Barrios Norteños*, 26.

⁴² Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans", 37; Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 21; Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 20.

⁴³ Felix M. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 25; Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 26.

⁴⁴ Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 25.

by 1930.⁴⁵ In addition, Mexican women also worked in these industries, but in smaller numbers.⁴⁶ Mexicans, particularly women, participated in the service sector, including domestic work, child-care, laundry services, and room and board. The railroad industry paved the way in hiring Mexican laborers on a full-time basis.⁴⁷ Mexican *traqueros* [railroad workers] comprised 40% of the total railroad maintenance crews during the 1920s.⁴⁸ Companies included Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Ry. Co, Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Ry. Co, Chicago & Northwestern Ry., Burlington Railroad, Belt Railroad Company of Chicago, Illinois Central System, and Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company.⁴⁹ In addition, Mexicans worked in various meatpacking companies, including Armour Packing Company, Swift, and Wilson Packing Company. By 1928 Mexican workers comprised nearly 6% of Swift and Armour's employees.⁵⁰ Additionally, the steel mill industries (Bethlehem Steel Works, Illinois Steel Mills, Wisconsin Steel Works, Inland Steel, and U.S. Steel South Works) employed many foundry workers in South Chicago and in Gary and East Chicago, Indiana, over 6,000 Mexicans in 1926.⁵¹ "Steel

⁴⁵ See Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 15. Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied American: A History of Chicanos*, 4th edition, (New York: Longman, 2000), 201. For a labor history of Mexicans in Detroit, see Vargas *Proletarians of the North*; Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*, 114.

⁴⁶ Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 70-71, See <http://www.lib.niu.edu/2003/iht1020357.html>

⁴⁷ Louis Año Nuevo Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago: 1920-1970" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1976), 24.

⁴⁸ Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied American: A History of Chicanos*, 4th edition, (New York: Longman, 2000).

⁴⁹ Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexican in Chicago," 55; Patricia Arias y Jorge Durand, *Mexicanos en Chicago: Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925* (Guadalajara, Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, 2008), 29.

⁵⁰ Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams: Latino Immigration to Chicago* (Maryland; University Press of American, 2007).

⁵¹ Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexican in Chicago," 42; Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams*, 15-16. For a history of Mexican South Chicagoans, see Michael Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrios: The Great Mexican Migration to South Chicago, 1915-1940* (New York; New York University Press, 2013).

production,” writes historian Zaragosa Vargas, “helped transform Chicago into a mecca for Mexicans migrating to the Midwest.”⁵²

Since the early twentieth century, large industries have brought in *trabajadores* (and African Americans) to serve as strikebreakers or short-term workers. This is not to say that early generations of *trabajadores* did not participate in union organizing in the steel, meatpacking, and other industries. Some joined the strike; many others crossed the picket line to work.⁵³ Local steel companies recruited Mexicans (along with African Americans, especially those from the Great Migration) to keep production alive in 1919 as union-workers were organizing large-scale strikes locally and nationally.⁵⁴ Although some Mexicans continued to work as *traqueros*, “the steel strike of 1919 marked the starting point of a significant Mexican presence in Chicago,” writes historian Michael Innis-Jiménez.⁵⁵ Sociologist Felix Padilla, explains, *trabajadores* kept production functioning in 1921 during the packinghouse strike, and but were immediately fired at the end of the strike.⁵⁶ Mexicans, approximately 25% of the strikers, also participated in the mobilization against Republic Steel in 1937. Just as importantly, Mexican women also participated; they joined the women’s auxiliary of the Steel Workers Organizing

⁵² Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 47.

⁵³ Patricia Arias y Jorge Durand, *Mexicanos en Chicago: Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925*, (Guadalajara, Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, 2008), 37.

⁵⁴ Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams*, 11; Felix Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, 24; Gabriela F. Arredondo and Derek Vaillant. “Mexicans,” *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago Historical Society, 2005), <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/824.html>; Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 3, 43. The Great Migration of African Americans (1916-1970) refers to the 7 million African Americans who migrated from the South to urban centers in the North (half a million came to Chicago). For more information, see James Grossman, “Great Migration,” *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago Historical Society, 2005), 545 <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/545.html> 1919 also marked a time period of racial riots following the death of Eugene Williams, an African American youth. On July 27, 1919, racial riots spanning several days erupted when white youth began throwing stones to a group of African American swimmers at a beach on the south side of Chicago.

⁵⁵ Michael Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrios*, 44.

⁵⁶ Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, 23.

Committee. The industries responded with violence. The strike on Memorial Day of 1937 resulted in 10 deaths and many more injured: 125, including 11 Mexicans.⁵⁷ As the Second City transformed into an industrial powerhouse, it pulled in Mexican labor to meet its demand and capitalist interests.

The earliest Mexican communities settled alongside their places of employment. Traqueros lived in housing camps under the supervision of railroad companies.⁵⁸ Railroad companies often used boxcars as makeshift housing units in the Blue Island Area.⁵⁹ Some lived in Brighton Park. Traqueros faced horrible conditions in these camps. Chicago's harsh winters froze these wooden and metal boxcars; the summer months made the boxcars sweltering and unbearably hot.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, Mexican meat-packers generally resided in the Back of the Yards, Brighton Park, and near the University of Chicago.⁶¹ Mexicans living near the University of Chicago comprised about 12.5% of the city's Mexican population.⁶² Foundry workers resided in South Chicago and in neighboring areas.⁶³ In the 1930s, Mexicans concentrated most in South Chicago.

Mexicans and Mexican Americans faced overcrowded, unhealthy, structurally poor housing, sometimes deplorable conditions. "For Mexicans in Chicago," writes historian Zaragosa Vargas, "the noise from the rail yards, the stench of slaughtered animals, and the noxious fumes from the steel mills were constant nuisances."⁶⁴ Like African American workers, many Mexican workers paid more for housing and received

⁵⁷ Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams*, 16.

⁵⁸ Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans in Chicago," 55.

⁵⁹ The Blue Island area is the area just south of Chicago. It begins on 125th Street.

⁶⁰ In 1920 the Illinois Immigrant's Commission cited the Blue Island Camp with horrible conditions.

⁶¹ Back of the Yards is a neighborhood on the south side of Chicago.

⁶² See Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans," 39.

⁶³ Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans," 42; Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams*, 16.

⁶⁴ Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 63.

poor quality living arrangements. They shared—sometimes 4 or more people per bedroom—often overcharged living spaces (rooms, apartments, and houses) to save money.⁶⁵ Decrepit living conditions also lead to major health issues, such as tuberculosis. Mexicans had a high rate of tuberculosis, eight times greater than most other Chicago residents, except for African Americans who had an even higher rate.⁶⁶

Despite these ghastly living conditions, early generations of Mexicans created and participated in various political, cultural, religious, and social customs, celebrations, and traditions. They celebrated important Mexican holidays, such as El Grito de Independencia [The Cry for Independence] on September 16, Mexico's cry of independence against Spain in 1810. They formed their own ethnic clubs, sports teams, and special interest groups. By 1928, at least twenty-three Mexican societies existed in Chicago, mostly mutual-aid societies. Like most organizations, class divisions, political ideologies, and other factors produced internal tensions that sometimes led to the demise of a particular group. The Sociedad Benito Juárez [Benito Juárez Society], founded in 1918 by employees of the Rock Island Railroad Company, provided support, such as health benefits, for its members.⁶⁷ The Cruz Azul Mexicana [The Mexican Blue Cross] assisted the unemployed and ill. Sociedad Femenil [Women's Society] catered to the needs of mujeres [Mexican women].⁶⁸ South Chicago Mexicans formed La Sociedad

⁶⁵ Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 129; Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 32.

⁶⁶ Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 129.

⁶⁷ Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, 29.

⁶⁸ Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 150.

Mutualista de Obreros Libres Mexicanos [Mutual Aid Society of Independent Mexican Workers], an organization comprised of steel and foundry workers.⁶⁹

Early ethnic Mexican communities also participated in local religious life. Ethnic Mexicans attended Roman Catholic masses in church basements and in storefronts. Still, Protestants and Pentecostals influenced religious life for Chicago's Mexicans—and competed with the Roman Catholic Church for parishioners.⁷⁰ Segregated from European ethnic Catholics, Mexicans and Mexican Americans had to create their own parishes. Built by the Inland Steel Company for workers in South Chicago, Reverend William T. Kane established Our Lady of Guadalupe, the first Mexican parish in 1924. In the Near West Side, an independent congregation of Roman Catholics emerged in response to racial exclusion by European ethnic parishes. By 1928, the congregation became part of St. Frances de Assisi, a Roman Catholic Church.⁷¹ Located on West Roosevelt Road near Halsted Street in the Near West Side, the church played a significant role in the Mexican community, and continues to do so for many today.⁷²

Settlement houses and others centers, such as the Immigrants' Protective League and the Chicago Area Project, provided social, educational, and health services to the varied immigrant communities in the Second City. In the late nineteenth- and early

⁶⁹ The group faced resistance by the Catholic Church and others because the organization was labeled communist. Historian Rodolfo Acuña writes that the Church became more conservative because of the cristero revolts in Mexico; it then opposed any hint of "militant unionism." Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 50.

⁷⁰ The only church was run by and for Mexicans who practiced Pentecostalism. See Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans," 90; Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 58.

⁷¹ Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans in Chicago," 92.

⁷² It provided culturally relevant and Spanish-language religious and social services. Angélica Rivera, "Re-Inserting Mexican-American Women's Voices into 1950s Chicago Educational History." (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2008), Chapter 3. In 1921, Carmen Serrano founded the Cordi-Marian sisters in Mexico. The Sisters fled religious persecution and arrived in the United States in 1929.

twentieth century, settlement houses played an active role in fostering what social activists considered to be the “Americanization process” by which they meant the dominant expectation and practices of replacing one’s own cultural practices, values, and behaviors with so-called American ones. Immigrants enrolled in English-language classes and received U.S. history, literature, and civics education. Settlement houses in neighborhoods with a sizable Mexican concentration included: Hull House in the Near West Side, the University of Chicago Settlement House in the Back of the Yards and Packingtown neighborhoods, the Bird Memorial Center in South Chicago, and Howell House in Pilsen.⁷³ Though the settlement houses promoted Americanization, such as English-language instruction, American-style cooking techniques, and other dimensions of the “American way” of doing things, Mexicans kept alive many of their own cultural traditions and practices within and beyond the auspices of the centers.⁷⁴

Chicago’s Mexicans engaged with different forms and manifestations of a collective Mexican identity—sometime with or against the formation of an American identity. Historian John H. Flores discusses how the “revolutionary generation” a diverse cohort of Mexican political activists in Chicago united by an ideology shaped by their experiences and understanding of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) actively mobilized to orient Chicago’s Mexicans toward Mexico, away from Americanization and

⁷³ Hull House was co-founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889. In 1894, Mary McDowell founded the University of Chicago Settlement House. McDowell’s eulogy acknowledged her dedication and advocacy for Mexicans. Bird Memorial was founded by the Congregational Church. Howell Neighborhood House, established in 1905, originally served the Bohemian community.

⁷⁴ For example, the Mexican Social Center in the Near West Side generated the participation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

naturalization as U.S. citizens.⁷⁵ For example, some of these leaders joined the El Frente Popular Mexicano [The United Mexican Popular Front], a leftist organization. Providing a nuanced understanding of Mexicans in Chicago, historian Gabriela Arredondo in her foundational book *Mexican Chicago* writes that ideas of Americanism held by Mexicans during the 1920s was not necessarily bound by a juridical status. Additionally, she discusses an American identity was not limited by nation-state boundaries.⁷⁶ Adopting cultural (American) citizenship practices or securing juridical U.S. citizenship offered little or no protection from racial discrimination in everyday life. Instead, many Mexicans continued to endure labor exploitation, racism, and social exclusion regardless of their formal citizenship status. Historian Lilia Fernández notes that “In the Midwest, white Americans had limited encounters with ethnic Mexicans in the early twentieth century and thus also struggled to locate them in relation to African Americans and European immigrants.”⁷⁷ Certainly, Mexicans were not just another immigrant group in the city.⁷⁸

Especially by the end of the 1930s, Arredondo demonstrates how Mexicans were racialized as an inferior other. The flow of *trabajadores* to Chicago nearly ceased when the Great Depression, which began in 1929, left numerous people without jobs.⁷⁹ Companies heavy-handedly slashed workforces producing high unemployment rates.

However, Mexican South Chicagoans fared the Great Depression in better strides

⁷⁵ John H. Flores, “A Migrating Revolution: Mexican Political Organizers and their Rejection of American Assimilation,” in *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History*, ed. Leon Fink (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 329-354.

⁷⁶ Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-39*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 81; Lilia Fernández, “Of Immigrants and Migrants: Mexican and Puerto Rican Labor Migration in Comparative Perspective, 1942-1964,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 12.

⁷⁸ Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 7.

⁷⁹ By 1930, approximately 20,000-25,000 Mexicans resided in Chicago. See Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 16; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933) in Kerr, “The Chicano Experience,” 98.

compared to other ethnic Mexicans in the city; the steel industry did not experience as heavy of a hit during the Great Depression.⁸⁰ More than 30% of Mexican workers had no employment in Chicago in 1930, a rate higher than any other racial/ethnic group, except African Americans.⁸¹ In 1940, Chicago's Mexican-origin population dropped to 16,000, an estimated reduction between twenty-five percent and fifty percent.⁸² In Illinois, the Mexican-origin population decreased by a third.⁸³

The massive repatriations and deportations of Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression clearly reminded ethnic Mexicans of their inferior place in the racial hierarchy.⁸⁴ Historian George Sánchez's idea of "ambivalent Americanism" based on his research on ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles (1900-1945) explains how Mexicans and Mexican Americans who remained in the United States experienced "contradictory feelings about their place in society."⁸⁵ Possession of U.S. citizenship provided little to no protection for many Mexican Americans in the United States. The Herbert Hoover administration (1929-1933) authorized government agents to purge the nation of unauthorized immigrants. Congress passed a legislation to bolster deportation procedures. Government officials across the country rounded up Mexican immigrants,

⁸⁰ Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago", 28; Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 317.

⁸¹ Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 70, 72.

⁸² In sum, by 1939, more than 25 percent of no longer resided in the city. See Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*. See Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago."

⁸³ Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago", 20; Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America*, 317. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*; Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration*, (New York: Russell Sage, 2003).

⁸⁴ Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Patricia Arias y Jorge Durand, *Mexicanos en Chicago: Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925* (Guadalajara, Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades 2008) 49. See also Vincente Serrano, *A Forgotten Injustice*, MeChicano Films, 2009.

⁸⁵ George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 210.

too often at the expense of Mexican Americans, en route to stores, churches, parks, or work. Under Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945), however, the number of deportations decreased and seemingly less terrorizing.⁸⁶ Forced or coerced repatriation continued through the 1930s, however, and as late as 1940, some communities were still plotting ways to rid themselves of Mexican residents.

Chicago's ethnic Mexican communities felt the local effects in varied ways of these national campaigns to rid the country of Mexican immigrants. During this time of economic crisis, the *Chicago Tribune* published anti-Mexican material supporting their removal from the country.⁸⁷ The American Legion, a national organization with several chapters in the Chicago area, helped to organize sweeps of ethnic Mexicans, failing to acknowledge the collateral effects of this kind of forced displacement on Mexican American families. These unjust government-supported campaigns led many Mexican families to return to Mexico, a period of so-called "voluntary" repatriations, than to endure the intense anti-Mexican sentiment in the city and in the country.⁸⁸ In Chicago, some took advantage of the Mexican government-sponsored repatriation programs as a "relief measure" for its near bankrupt status.⁸⁹ The government aimed to adjust the

⁸⁶ Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*, 64. The authors discuss a number of reasons that have contributed to less draconian practices: major reduction in Mexican immigration; decreased likelihood of separating family members.

⁸⁷ Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 54.

⁸⁸ Government officials, sometimes with support from the Mexican government, as well as civic organizations, such as the American Legion, drove both Mexicans and Mexican Americans out of the country. They encouraged families to return to Mexico; they provided free transportation and promised work and support. The Immigrants' Protective League also handled many repatriations cases. During this climate of economic crisis, immigration enforcement moved from the border to the nation's interior. Agents made no distinction between citizens and non-citizens as they placed Mexicans on trains bound to the U.S.-Mexico border.

⁸⁹ Some Mexican families took advantage of Mexican government supported efforts just to discover that the Mexican government did not (fully) fulfill its promise with readjustment in Mexico.

budget by removing Mexicans from “welfare rolls.”⁹⁰ This anti-Mexican atmosphere also dissuaded trabajadores from involvement in union or labor organizing. The state-sanctioned persecution of Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression elucidates how race trumped citizenship at this historical juncture. The fact that uncounted thousands of the U.S. citizen children of the repatriates were also forced to leave U.S. jurisdiction at this time underscores this point.⁹¹ This, furthermore, reaffirmed the ambiguity many Mexicans felt toward the “permanency of their lives in Chicago.”⁹²

Mexicans and Mexican Americans who lived through the sweeps certainly understood the dominant terms of belonging in the United States fueling a collective sense of “Americanism.”⁹³ During the 1940s, many Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Chicago made a conscious effort to adopt what they have considered to be “American” behaviors and practices and distanced themselves from Mexican traditions all in the name of improving their local social conditions and becoming (full) social members of U.S. society.⁹⁴ Expressing a preference for baseball in order to appear more “American” during this hostile social climate serves as an example. This is not to say that early generations of Mexicans in Chicago did not play baseball prior to the Great Depression; they certainly did. Some even formed their own teams, such as the Aztecas, Mexicanos,

⁹⁰ Felix Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, 27.

⁹¹ It highlights how Mexican Americans strongly questioned the legitimacy of their U.S. citizenship during the widespread repatriation and deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. See George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 210.

⁹² Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago*, 8.

⁹³ Mario T. García *Mexican Americans: Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 2; Historian Mario T. García in his book *Mexican Americans* introduced the characterization of the “Mexican- American generation” to refer to the diverse cohort of Mexican Americans, mostly left-leaning reformers, who lived through the Great Depression, World War II, and the cold war. “Together,” García writes, “this generation forged a spirited and persistent struggle for civil rights, for first-class citizenship, and for a secure identity for Americans of Mexican descent,” 2. This concept of the Mexican-American generation also has currency to the case in Chicago.

⁹⁴ Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago,” 83.

Los Reyes, and the Moreloettes, the all-women's baseball team.⁹⁵ Instead, it is to highlight the significance of American preferences during this historical moment.

When the United States joined the Allied Powers in 1941 to participate in World War II (1939-1945), many, including Mexicans and Mexican Americans, warmly embraced a renewed, if not entirely monolithic, sense of American patriotism⁹⁶ Soldiers fought in the war to defend democracy. Some of those remaining, including women, worked in factories that produced weapons and materials for war, but this was not enough. So, once again, labor needs pulled Mexican laborers into the United States. This time under the auspices of the Mexican-United States Program of the Loan of Laborers—popularly known as the Bracero Program (1942-1964)—governments and corporations recruited Mexican workers to work in the United States. However, 19 years after the war ended, the program continued to welcome a cheapened, undocumented Mexican labor force. This contributed to the rise of undocumented Mexican migration during this time and after the program ended.⁹⁷ Although many Mexican Americans sympathized with the newcomers, others tried to distance themselves from the Mexican immigrant laborers—

⁹⁵ Rita Arias Jirasek and Carlos Tortolero *Mexican Chicago (Images of America)*; See Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 94; For a broader discussion on questions on equality, belonging and the inclusion of Latinos in baseball, see Adrian Burgos, Jr. *Playing America's Game: Baseball, Latinos, and the Color Line*, (University of California Press, 2007); See also Alan Klein, "Borderline Treason: Nationalisms and Baseball on the Texas-Mexican Border," *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, 10, no. 6, (2007): 961-978; Lilia Fernández, "Of Immigrants and Migrants: Mexican and Puerto Rican Labor Migration in Comparative Perspective, 1942-1964," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 14; Alan Klein, "Baseball Wars: The Mexican Baseball League and Nationalism in 1946," *Studies In Latin American Popular Culture [serial online]*, 13: no. 33 (January 1994); Noe Torres, *Baseball's First Mexican American Star: The Amazing Story of Leo Najo*, (Coral Springs, FL, Llumina Press, 2006); Francisco E. Balderrama and Richard A. Santillan, *Mexican American Baseball in Los Angeles*, (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishers, 2011).

⁹⁶ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 118.

⁹⁷ The Bracero Program, formally known as the Emergency Farm Labor Program was a bi-national labor agreement that recruited laborers from Mexico to work in much-needed agricultural positions (1942-1964). Following Yen Le Espíritu, I use cheapened to signify the process of being made cheap versus Mexican labor being inherently cheap.

and some went so far to call for strict enforcement of the border and deportation of unauthorized workers already in the country. During the 1950s, Mexican Americans in Chicago formed local chapters of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the American G.I. Forum.⁹⁸

During the height of the Bracero era between the 1940s and 1950s, more and more Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Tejanas/os [Texans of Mexican descent] began to move to the Near West Side, an important port of entry for Mexican-origin people.⁹⁹ They opened stores, restaurants, and other businesses. Its commercial corridor on South Halsted Street between 7th and 15th Street was popularly known as Mexican Boulevard.¹⁰⁰ Alongside ethnic Mexicans, Puerto Rican laborers were also moving to the Near West Side.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the African American population in Chicago grew by 77 percent between 1940 and 1950, making Chicago the second largest African American city in the country.¹⁰²

Trabajadores encountered a different socio-political climate post World War II, one profoundly shaped by the cold war. The United States government undertook great

⁹⁸ Mexican Americans formed civic organizations, such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in 1929, emphasizing assimilation and the promotion of American identities among its U.S. citizen-only membership. It focused on advocacy for American citizens. In the 1930s and 1940s, LULAC aimed to alleviate racial discrimination through efforts to desegregate schools, encourage civic participation, and other related campaigns. The underlying assumption is that assimilation, which in the U.S. context equates with Americanization, is a necessary condition for invoking equal treatment as U.S. citizens.

⁹⁹ Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 28; See Jones, "Conditions Surrounding Mexicans," 39, 42; Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 2.

¹⁰⁰ Patricia Arias y Jorge Durand, *Mexicanos en Chicago: Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925* (Guadalajara: Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, 2000), 40. Alongside ethnic Mexicans, Puerto Rican laborers were also moving to the Near West Side.

¹⁰¹ See Gina Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story*; Mérida M. Rúa, editor, *Latino Urban Ethnography and the Work of Elena Padilla*, (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2010); Lila Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, Mexican and Puerto Rican laborers, Fernández states, came from "similar backgrounds and with similar aspirations," 2.

¹⁰² Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 3.

efforts to make sure no forms of communism would take root in the country.¹⁰³ Hysteria over the threat of communism in the United States led to the rise of McCarthyism, the massive witch-hunt to identify so-called communists. This led to the passage—despite President Truman’s vocal opposition—of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, popularly known as the McCarran-Walter Act. It instituted new procedures and criteria to stiffen and block entry into the nation, deny naturalization, and in some extreme cases, revoke U.S. citizenship.¹⁰⁴ The red baiting, the government harassment of alleged subversives i.e. anarchists, socialists, and communists, besieged and disciplined labor organizers. Since the legislation broadened the conditions for deportation of any non-citizen who had entered the country after 1924, this government frenzy was especially damaging to immigrant activists as it set the grounds for the persecution and deportation of many immigrant activists.¹⁰⁵

In Chicago, prominent labor organizer Refugio Ramón Martínez, a Mexican immigrant who migrated to the Windy City in 1924 was served with deportation orders in 1953. He had formed a family in the United States, including two daughters born in the United States. Martínez had a lengthy record of labor organizing in Chicago, but cold war politics prompted the conditions to discipline him for his political activism. Despite major health problems, he was deported. Martínez died in Mexico shortly thereafter.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ The U.S. military intervened to manage, weaken, and eradicate communism at the global level. For example, the United States intervened in the Korea conflict (1950-1953) when North Korea (communist) invaded South Korea (capitalist). It sided and aided South Korea against North Korea, supported by China and the Soviet Union.

¹⁰⁴ Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 118.

¹⁰⁵ Luisa Moreno also advocated for the inclusion of the undocumented in labor organizing. Furthermore, she believed that the pursuit of civil rights should not come at the expense of undocumented people. See Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 115-116.

¹⁰⁶ John H. Flores, "On the Wings of the Revolution: Transnational Politics and the Making of Mexican American Identities." (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2009); Martínez was affiliated with

Historian John H. Flores analyzes how cold war politics shaped the nature of harassment that Refugio Ramón Martínez and other leaders of the industrial labor movement faced in Chicago.¹⁰⁷ Witnessing these varied forms of persecution of immigrant labor activists, Flores suggests, led many Mexican Americans to foster claims of national belonging vis-à-vis Americanism.¹⁰⁸

Certainly, these notions of Americanism were fraught with mixed feelings as Mexican Americans experienced continued forms of racial discrimination. The moments following World War II seemingly provided a crucial leverage with which Mexican Americans could fight for equal rights. Mexican American veterans, for example, drew on their military service to advocate for acceptance in the United States (like African American did). Instead, many Mexican Americans were disgusted by contradictory U.S. government practices. Soldiers fought fascism abroad and yet faced continued discrimination when they returned home.¹⁰⁹ Racism has deeply challenged the assumed privilege of an American citizenship status. At the same time, with the growing influx of braceros Mexican Americans worried that the large influx of immigrants would threaten economic, educational, and political advancements.¹¹⁰ In some cases, it went as far as Mexican American groups taking anti-immigrant stances. For example, the American G.I. Forum and LULAC supported the provision for strict border control.¹¹¹ While

various organizations, including the Congress of Industrial Organizations, Frente Popular Mexicano, and the Communist Party.

¹⁰⁷ John H. Flores, "On the Wings of the Revolution: Transnational Politics and the Making of Mexican American Identities." (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2009).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 106, 134.

¹⁰⁹ Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 40; Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 13-14.

¹¹⁰ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 135.

¹¹¹ The American G.I. Forum was founded in 1948 by army veteran Dr. Héctor Pérez García in Corpus Christi, Texas; Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 42.

Mexican immigrants faced social exclusion by Mexican Americans, others received support as Mexican American groups voiced concern about worker exploitation.¹¹² Only to be exacerbated by Operation Wetback (1954-1957), immigration issues represented a larger community problem because the majority of Mexican families came from mixed-status backgrounds.¹¹³ According to historian David Gutiérrez, at least some Mexican American activists began to see the immigration question in a new light during the 1950s and 1960s.

During the 1950s and 1960s, many ethnic Mexican residents relocated from the Near West Side to Pilsen because of urban renewal efforts during the 1950s and 1960s. The 1954 construction of the Eisenhower expressway, in particular, displaced many Near West Side residents. The construction of the University of Illinois campus on Halsted and Harrison Street in 1963 forced an additional number of residents to relocate.¹¹⁴ In 1970, Pilsen became the first neighborhood in Chicago with an ethnic Mexican majority.¹¹⁵ Popularly known as la dieciocho [Eighteenth Street], Pilsen takes its name from the main corridor, 18th Street. La dieciocho was, and remains, a vibrant Mexican neighborhood filled with social services and businesses that cater to the needs of ethnic Mexicans. In this neighborhood, ethnic Mexicans of diverse immigrant backgrounds interacted with

¹¹² Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 66; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

¹¹³ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 162.

¹¹⁴ Lilia Fernández, "Latina/o Migration and Community Formation in Postwar Chicago: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Gender, and Politics, 1945-1975" (Ph.D. diss, University of California, 2005), 79-141.

¹¹⁵ John Betancur, comp. *Gentrification Before Gentrification?: The Plight of Pilsen in Chicago*, (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, Urban Planning and Policy Program, Summer 2005). <http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/voorheesctr/Publications/Gentrification%20before%20Gentrification.pdf>
 Mexican Women in Chicago: A Report to the Secretaría de Desarrollo Social de México, Departamento de Estudios Internacionales, Instituto Tecnológica Autónomo de México, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Institute for Latino Studies, 2005); See also William J Adelman, *Pilsen and the West Side* (Chicago: Illinois Labor History Society, 1983).

each other; Mexican Americans with a history of immigration ranging from the early twentieth century intermingled with newly arrived Mexican immigrants.¹¹⁶

In addition, Chicago's Mexicans engaged with a collective *Latinidad*. Scholars Lorena García and Merida Rúa define the term "as an ethnoracial configuration and sociocultural practice in placemaking, where a shared sense of being Latino transpires within diverse social settings and associations."¹¹⁷ Unlike other urban concentrations of ethnic Mexicans in the United States, Chicago had, and continues to have, a diverse population of Latinas/os.¹¹⁸ In 1970, Latinas/os numbered 247,857 comprising the second largest racial/ethnic (non-white) group in the city with 83,000 Mexican Americans (43%), 79,000 Puerto Ricans (32%), 15,000 Cubans (7%).¹¹⁹ In the late 1960s and 1970s, many Mexican-origin youth certainly self-identified as Chicana/o (and some continue to do so) to underscore their conscious political commitments to self-determination and community empowerment. However, drawing on a Mexican and/or pan-ethnic Latina/o identity resonated with many more youth then and now in part because of Chicago's rich and heterogeneous Latina/o population and the history of multi-ethnic and multi-racial interactions and collaborations. Mexicans and Mexican Americans organized to establish and protect their rights, formed coalitions with other Latinos, especially Puerto Ricans (the second largest Latina/o group in Chicago). So, even though this study is

¹¹⁶ Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago," 7.

¹¹⁷ Lorena García and Mérida Rúa, "Processing *Latinidad*: Mapping Latino Urban Landscapes through Chicago Ethnic Festivals," *Latino Studies*, 5(3) (2007): 317-3.

¹¹⁸ See Gina M. Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Merida Rúa, *A Grounded Identity: Making New Lives in Chicago's Puerto Rican Neighborhoods* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Nicholas P. De Genova and Ana Yolanda Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge Press, 2003); Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*.

¹¹⁹ Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, 56.

predominately about Mexicans, it is also a comparative Latina/o Studies project because sin fronteras politics also provided a process to unite as Latinas/os. The Mexican community has also historically developed side-by-side with Puerto Ricans and other Latinas/os. Indeed, Latinas/os also worked together with other racial/ethnic groups, especially in the African American community (South and West Side) to create better conditions and opportunities for themselves in the Chicago metropolitan area.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, the social justice activism undertaken by community leaders in Pilsen and Little Village resulted in a proliferation of community-based organizations, bilingual services, and culturally sensitive educational programs.¹²⁰ Historian Lilia Fernández characterizes 18th Street as the heart of the Movimiento (Chicano Movement) in Chicago during this time.¹²¹ However, my project complicates this claim by providing a new understanding of the movimiento infused with a sin fronteras ideology that was attentive to the pressing immigration concerns in the community. Otherwise, specific immigration issues would be subsumed within a larger discourse on Chicana/o issues. The growing Mexican immigrant population and intense INS harassment inevitably pressured community activists in Chicago and elsewhere to

¹²⁰ For example, in the late 1960s, *Asociación Pro Derechos Obreros* [Association for Workers' Rights] (APO) members and other supporters protested the discrimination by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) against Latina/o CTA workers. News coverage in the *Chicago Tribune* from the late 1960s and 1970s related stories of Latina/o activism of student walkouts, unjust INS harassment, protests for educational equity and fights for equal rights and representation in the city council. See Ruth Moss, "Spanish Spoken Here," *Chicago Tribune*, September 18, 1974; Lilia Fernandez "Latina/o Migration and Community Formation in Postwar Chicago: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Gender, and Politics, 1945-1975," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 2005), 237. Leonard G. Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 107-111.; Louis Año Nuevo Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago: 1920-1970" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1976), 195-196.

¹²¹ See Fernández, "Latina/o Migration and Community Formation in Postwar Chicago: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Gender, and Politics, 1945-1975," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 2005), 79-141; Leonard Ramirez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*.

address the needs of the undocumented to varying degrees.¹²² Previous scholarship (Gabriela Arredondo, Michael Innis-Jiménez, Louise Año Nuevo Kerr) has examined the experiences of racial discrimination experiences of Mexicans and Mexican Americans and has clearly demonstrated that Mexicans were “not just another immigrant group” in Chicago. These scholars have situated the experiences of Mexicans and Mexican Americans against the backdrop of assimilation narratives. However, my work centers on transnational belonging in a way that complicates our understanding of juridical citizenship and directs further research to consider alternative forms of social membership, that is, Mexican and Mexican American efforts to expand the terms of belonging in the United States.

Between 108,000 and 250,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans lived in Chicago in 1970.¹²³ By then, the city had the fourth largest urban concentration of Mexicans, and as a group ranked first among the city’s immigrant population.¹²⁴ Many Mexican Americans developed and embraced an immigrant sensibility for newly arrived trabajadores and families, albeit in varying degrees. An influx of Mexicans to the United States during the 1970s ushered in an increasing undocumented immigration, which has continued to rise. The immigration acts of 1965, implemented in 1968, legally restricted

¹²² In this project, I use immigrant over the usage of migrant to highlight what Yen Le Espiritu called the “permanency of immigrant settlement” in the United States; see, e.g., 3 in *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Most of the people I interviewed for this project now have a family history of at least two generations in the United States. However, scholars, such as Nicholas De Genova uses the term migrant instead of immigrant to disrupt the power of the U.S.-Mexico border. He states that the term immigrant invokes “a one-directional and predetermined movement of outsiders coming in and thus are conceptional categories that necessarily can be posited only from the standpoint of the (migrant-receiving) U.S. nation-state.” See, *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and “Illegality” in Mexican Chicago* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005), 2-3.

¹²³ Louis Año Nuevo Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago: 1920-1970” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1976), 1.

¹²⁴ Louis Año Nuevo Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago: 1920-1970” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1976), 7; In 1973, Mexican ranked first of the city’s immigrant population.

Mexican immigration to the United States; with this new legislation, the initiation of hemispheric quotas sharply reduced the legal stream of Mexican migration.¹²⁵ Indeed, established family and social ties in Chicago also played a greater role in fueling Mexican migration to the city. Through the widespread usage of “illegal” in mainstream news accounts, the undocumented were dehumanized with alarmist headlines, such as “Illegals Live Among Us,” “Coping with Illegal Aliens,” “Mexicans Flock Illegally to U.S.-‘Promise Land’,” and “Danger from Illegal Aliens.”¹²⁶ As with previous moments throughout the twentieth century, during the 1970s, the state and mainstream media rendered Mexicans as the cause of economic instability in the United States.¹²⁷ This anti-immigrant context prompted intense surveillance of Mexican communities by immigration agents. Indeed, INS harassment and the ongoing influx of Mexican immigrants not only characterized this local context, but also described the national context in the 1970s and beyond.¹²⁸

Sin Fronteras, Militant Immigrants, and CASA in Chicago

Casistas branded the political slogan “Somos Un Pueblo Sin Fronteras” [We are Community Without Borders] as a claim for political rights. This term draws attention to the global economic factors that have fueled Mexican labor migration to the United

¹²⁵ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

¹²⁶ “Illegals Live Among Us,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 18, 1978; Author Unknown, “Coping with Illegal Aliens,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 23, 1976; Barry Bishop, “Mexicans Flock Illegally to U.S.-‘Promise Land’,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 3, 1972; Author unknown, “Danger from Illegal Aliens,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 1974.

¹²⁷ Leo Chávez, *Covering Immigration*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); See Myrna García, “Mexican Labor Migrants (Re)Constructing and Contesting Mexicanidad in Chicago,” (M.A. diss., UCSD, University of California, 2005).

¹²⁸ See David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 188-190; Leo Chávez, *Covering Immigration*, Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*.

States. By invoking a transnational community of *trabajadores* [Mexican workers], CASA activists directed those working in the United States towards Mexico. CASA did not, however, summon a benign Mexican nation. Instead, a *sin fronteras* politics was deeply informed with Marxism-Leninism, a Soviet communist ideology articulated by revolutionary Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) that criticized the Mexican nation-state for its adoption of capitalism and opening itself to foreign investment. Building on this idea, I have developed my conceptualization of *sin fronteras* as a key political imaginary to claim rights in the United States that rejects juridical U.S. citizenship as the means of (full) inclusion. I do so to capture how and why Mexicans and Mexican Americans articulated an alternative means of belonging in the United States. Certainly, my conceptualization of *sin fronteras* recognizes how the differential hierarchal immigration and citizenship status of ethnic Mexicans matters in their daily lives. It captures the ways ethnic Mexicans recognized these legal distinctions while moving beyond them.

I investigate how ethnic Mexicans, on an everyday basis, engaged with and practiced Mexicanidad, a transnational and inclusive Mexican imagining created in the United States that included U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike by drawing on a collectively imagined Mexico.¹²⁹ This imagining shared an understanding of the United States as a nation that historically, and routinely, denied ethnic Mexicans full U.S. social membership regardless of immigration or citizenship status.¹³⁰ During the 1960s and 1970s, many ethnic Mexicans in Chicago, including Mexican Americans, drew on

¹²⁹ Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-39*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

¹³⁰ Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*; Yen Le Espiritu, *Homebound*; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 2; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Mexicanidad to cope with the racism and economic segmentation in the United States. By drawing on a *sin fronteras* imagining, *casistas* highlighted the historical legacy of Mexican labor migration to the United States. They articulated political claims for workers' rights mindful of the undocumented status of many *trabajadores*. Drawing on a *sin fronteras* politics brought Mexicans and Mexican Americans together—certainly not without tensions, divisions, and conflicts—to fight against the racial discrimination enacted by state actors, namely immigration agents. Familial and social interactions at neighborhood schools, churches, businesses, community centers, and other places fostered intimate relationships between Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and other Latinas/os. Mexican Americans developed an immigrant sensibility, an awareness of immigration issues, and even solidarity with immigrant populations, especially in light of the anti-immigrant sentiment that the community faced locally and globally.¹³¹

During the 1970s, at the local and national level, both Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans grew particularly concerned with this issue of immigration because of the steadily growing population of both legally admitted and unauthorized Mexican immigrants and the increased anti-immigrant hysteria that accompanied this demographic shift.¹³² Consequently, a *sin fronteras* imaginings based on wider inclusion marked the 1970s as a critical moment in the history of ethnic community formation for Chicago's Mexican populations.

¹³¹ Historian David G. Gutiérrez writes, "Mexican Americans have discovered throughout their history that the realities of their strong links to Mexican immigrants will continue to compel them to make decisions about who they are, how they want to be perceived by others, and who they want to be as citizens of this society." Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 216.

¹³² De Genova, *Working the Boundaries*, 127.

CASA Chicago activists brought community members together; it was a monumental task given the heterogeneity and complexity of the ethnic Mexican and larger regional Latina/o population. Drawing on *sin fronteras* as a political strategy created tensions, frictions, and conflicts within the larger ethnic Mexican and Latina/o community. For example, some Mexican Americans supported state-sanctioned deportations, as did previous generations of Mexican Americans. Motivated by a complex web of assimilationist forces, some Mexican Americans and other Latinas/os distanced themselves from newly arrived Mexicans. This segment of the population often bought into the dominant cultural features of “American-ness” that patriotically privileges English-language speakers, middle-class status and aspirations, as well as other markers and practices. Many were heavily invested in a notion of citizenship as a hierarchal category with special privileges and rights. To them, the undocumented threatened the superior standing of Mexican Americans as U.S. citizens. However, as Gutiérrez has noted, during the moment of intense self-reflection that accompanied the Chicano Movement, Mexican Americans increasingly grappled with questions of race and immigration as the undocumented became more deeply enmeshed in their everyday lives.¹³³ The influx of immigrants, for instance, created many more mixed-status ethnic Mexican families—that is, families with citizen and non-citizen members. Indeed, escalating INS activity at the local and national levels, as well as the continuing influx of newly arrived Mexican immigrants into their neighborhoods, challenged the political

¹³³ When I use Chicano in lieu of Chicana/o, it is to demonstrate how Chicano nationalism has also marginalized the experiences of Chicanas and queers.

ideologies of Mexican Americans who invested in the presumed currency of U.S. citizenship.¹³⁴

Another segment of the ethnic Mexican Chicago population self-identified as Chicana/o, in this project, I illustrate the limitations of Chicano nationalism in its lack of attention to, or outright exclusion of immigrant rights, particularly the rights of the undocumented. Chicano nationalism reproduced real and imagined borders with the master narrative of the nation of Aztlán. Mexican populations in Chicago did not have the same ties to the land that Chicano nationalism, especially pervasive in Los Angeles, privileges because the city is situated outside the imagined geo-political borders of Aztlán, the mythical Chicano homeland of the American Southwest. This is not to say that Mexican Americans in Chicago did not identify as Chicanas/os in the context of the Aztlán imaginary; some did.¹³⁵ This dissertation, instead, argues that shared experiences of immigration shaped by racism and imperialism, rather than Chicanismo, have overwhelmingly characterized the activist history of Chicago's ethnic Mexican populations from 1968 to 1986. Ultimately, this study explores key questions about race, immigrant rights, belonging, and identity formation among Chicago Mexicans. Beyond implications for Chicago, my project outlines the ways everyday people draw on transnational identities to illustrate the politics of belonging in the United States. I am not suggesting that the formation of CASA Chicago initiated immigrant rights organizing or served as the sole force in immigrant rights activism; instead, I contend that it gave

¹³⁴ Organizations, such as League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), founded in 1929 focused on the rights of American citizens.

¹³⁵ Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*.

community leaders a structure from which to organize. CASA focused on the rights of the immigrant worker during a hostile time for Mexicans, especially the undocumented.

CASA organizers, through *sin fronteras* activism, drew on space-making politics. According to ethnic studies scholar Monisha Das Gupta, organizations participate in space-making politics when they “create structures and resources that transform daily life into an arena of political contest.”¹³⁶ Casistas (sometimes undocumented immigrants themselves) engaged in myriad strategies to hold the state accountable for racist practices directed toward ethnic Mexicans.¹³⁷ CASA believed that even though the undocumented did not have papers, they could and should fight for rights as public acts. During immigration marches, CASA activists and supporters displayed banners stating “With or Without Documents, We Are Workers. We Create the Wealth. We have Rights.” Figure 1.2. By bringing public attention to the conditions that have fueled migration to El Norte [the United States], CASA complicated and challenged mainstream understanding of undocumented migration. CASA fought for the equal rights and fair treatment of immigrants; CASA believed that even though immigrants may not have “papers,” they certainly participated in space-making politics. Not having a state-sanctioned legal category would not foreclose the advocacy for human dignity and fair treatment as social

¹³⁶ Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 9.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

members of the United States.



Figure 1.2: Immigrants' Rights March, Kinzie Street, Chicago, IL
September 16, 1976 or 1977
Photograph courtesy of Guadalupe "Lupe" Lozano

Sin fronteras activists carved out a space for themselves in a place and time that did not welcome their personhood only their labor. Cultural theorist Mary Pat Brady writes, "Interactions with space are not merely schematic but also affective; places are felt and experienced, and the processes producing space therefore also shapes feelings and experiences."¹³⁸ Activists created a space within the U.S. national imaginary to state that they do belong; the undocumented will no longer "live in the shadows."¹³⁹ Given the weeks and weeks of planning, CASA activists garnered political support from various fronts in order to stage these public acts of protest for belonging. In doing so, activists also carved out physical spaces A wide variety of left-leaning groups joined in, such as the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, the Organization of Latin American Students,

¹³⁸ Mary Pat Brady, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space*, (Durham: North Carolina Duke University Press, 2002), 8.

¹³⁹ Leo R. Chavéz, *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998).

Asociación Pro Derechos Obreros [Association for Workers' Rights], and many others. The National Lawyers Guild, a left-leaning collective of lawyers and law students, provide free counsel. Careful planning to build a wide spectrum of supporters provided the necessary conditions to publically showcase undocumented bodies claiming rights. Furthermore, the diversity of participants (along racial, gendered, and class lines) provided the supportive space for noncitizen participants, again, especially the undocumented, to declare their demands.

To tackle these immigration concerns at the height of the 1970s debate on Latino immigration and citizenship, Lozano and other activists organized an immigrants' rights conference, "Raza Si, Migra No" "[Community Yes, INS No]" held at a community center in Pilsen in January, 1974. The organizers brought immigration activists from all over the country, including CASA co-founder Humberto "Bert" Corona and Antonio Rodríguez, another CASA leader from the national headquarters in Los Angeles. There, conference participants developed the idea of the militant immigrant, "a conception that the immigrant worker was not only someone who was looking up for direction or a solution to his [or her] problems, but also someone who has the capacity to be part of the struggle."¹⁴⁰ This creation of the militant immigrant challenged the salient features of Chicano politics and nationalism that invoked familia [family], hermandad [brotherhood], and Aztlán. It focused on the conditions of la raza [community] around second-class citizenship treatment and the colonial legacy of the American Southwest. Instead, the idea of the militant immigrant centered the focus of self-determination on the Mexican immigrant person. Many Mexicans migrated, both legally and illegally, to the United

¹⁴⁰ "Struggles on Both Sides of the Border: An Interview with Jose "Pepe" Medina." *Keep Strong*, April 1977, 35, Catherine Archibald Personal Collection. Chicago, IL.

States to work, but militant immigrants fought to highlight the idea that the state actors and capitalist interests cannot dehumanize Mexican workers, that is, separate and disembodied laborers from their personhood. Sin fronteras activists organized to create a space draw attention to their humanity and claims for political rights and belonging. At the same time, CASA leaders educated the community and public on the negative impact of global capitalism on the lives of workers, particularly undocumented ones. Organizers sketched how capitalism and immigration law systematically produced a vulnerable undocumented worker in the interest of enhancing profits. CASA created the conditions of possibility from which the “militant immigrant” may emerge in local spaces in Chicago and in the national imaginary.

Methodology

Drawing on varied sources and interdisciplinary methods, I investigated the experiences of Mexicans and Mexican Americans who lived through particular events, contexts, and times of local and national anti-immigrant hysteria during the 1970s.¹⁴¹ Employing methods from the fields of anthropology, ethnic studies, history, and sociology, this interdisciplinary project contributes to what sociologist John Lie has described as tying “together the personal with the historical and the structural.”¹⁴² I incorporated multiple qualitative methods in order to situate the interview material within

¹⁴¹ See Dorothy E. Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 22; Vicki L. Ruiz “It’s the People Who Drive: A View of from the West,” *American Quarterly* 45.2 (June 1993)243-248.

¹⁴² John Lie, “From International Migration to Transnational Diaspora,” *Contemporary Sociology* 24, no. 4 (1995), 303- 306; Yen Espíritu, *Homebound*; Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Gina M. Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

the political climate of the 1970s.¹⁴³ In addition, for this investigation, I studied ephemera in various archival collections.¹⁴⁴ I examined archival sources such as flyers, position papers, reports, minutes, letters, newspapers, articles, photographs, and conference agendas.

The research strategy of incorporating mixed methods provides context in the interviews for details and further clarification on the archival material. Additionally, the archival material provided information that sometimes my participants could not easily recall. Interviews that query lived experiences of the past often draw on memories shaped by the present. As cultural studies scholar Juan Flores has noted,

Remembering thus always involves selecting and shaping, constituting out of what was something new that never was, yet now assuredly is, in the imaginary of the present, and in the memory of the future. And the process of memory is open, without closure or conclusion: the struggle to (re)establish continuities and to tell the “whole” story only uncovers new breaks and exclusions.¹⁴⁵

My participants shared meaningful experiences that were most striking in their lives. Sometimes informed by life-changing situations, my interviewees decided what experiences to share and how to frame them. The ability to tell specific details was also shaped by the follow-up questions I posed largely shaped by the historical knowledge I acquired through documents, photographs, and other ephemera. Participants sometimes shared stories that I could not necessarily find in the archives, such as their

¹⁴³ See Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum, and Gideon Sjöberg Eds., *A Case for the Case Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Dorothy E. Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990); Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003).

¹⁴⁴ I reviewed the Bert N. Corona Papers, 1923-1984 and the Centro de Acción Social Autónomo Papers, 1963-1978 both housed in Special Collections at Stanford University. The documents in these collections illuminated my study because they provided substantial information on CASA's ideologies and strategies in regards to immigrant rights.

¹⁴⁵ Juan Flores. *From Bomba to Hip Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 49.

interpretations, emotions, and reflections. In some cases, interviewees themselves had archival materials that contextualized salient memories in their lives. Furthermore, the depth of the interviews rested on our rapport and my community participation.

Sometimes participants chose not to (fully) disclose troubling or painful memories. The archival and interview material together provide a fuller and nuanced understandings of the politics of belonging in everyday life at the local level.

Initially, I identified interviewees for my study through contacts from a previous project.¹⁴⁶ Already familiar with my research interests, these participants agreed to my follow-up interviews and also gladly provided me with additional leads. My community participation in Pilsen and Little Village facilitated the collection of interview material and the depth of my study. Attending various neighborhood events, such as Pilsen Open Studios (October 2008, 2009, 2010), Fiesta del Sol (July 2008, 2009), and Villarte (October 2008, 2009) exposed me to a broader range of contacts and familiarity with local conditions, which in turn, allowed me to broaden the scope of my dissertation project to a larger base of people. At these events, I'd sometimes meet prospective interviewees when previous participants introduced me to them.

The academic, political, leisure, and community activities brought together different generations of attendees. They also fostered relationship building. On July 20, 2008, I participated in the *First Annual Rudy Lozano Concert* in Pilsen, organized by Jammin' for Justice and Centro Sin Fronteras.¹⁴⁷ At Casa Aztlán, I participated in a panel

¹⁴⁶ Myrna García, "Mexican Labor Migrants (Re)Constructing and Contesting Mexicanidad in Chicago," (M.A. diss., UCSD, University of California, 2005).

¹⁴⁷ In 2005, David Lozano, Rudy Lozano's youngest son, founded Jammin' 4 Justice. It is a "socially conscious Music Entertainment and Production organization that delivers consciousness with cool." E-mail

discussion of former CASA Chicago member Víctor M. Cortes' book, *La Marcha* (December 2008) a commemoration to Rudy Lozano event (June 2009), the *Oral Histories of Activism in Mexican Chicago* (February 2008 and April 2011) lectures, and participated in dances, forums, and press releases.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, at Casa Michoacán, I presented and participated in the *Migración e Identidad Cultural en las Relaciones México-Estados Unidos* [Migration and Cultural Identity in U.S.-Mexican Relations] conference (June 12, 2010). Attending these community and university events added to the sources for analysis in this project.¹⁴⁹

Following anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, I situate my project in the voices and aspirations of people who faced and resisted state discrimination, neglect, and violence.¹⁵⁰ In total, I conducted seventy interviews, intermittently between 2007 and 2011 with residents who lived or worked in Pilsen and Little Village during the time period of my study. I also conducted in-depth interviews with casistas. I determined the patterns, anomalies, and particularities in the lived experiences of my interviewees'

correspondence with David Lozano, Summer 2010. In 1987, Emma Lozano, Rudy Lozano's sister, founded Centro Sin Fronteras to honor the legacy of her brother.

¹⁴⁸ A word on Casa Aztlán, several of Chicago's Mexican American youth identified with Chicanismo. For example, a group of Chicago Mexican American youth, including Noé Cabrera formed a chapter of the Brown Berets, a Chicano nationalist group. Chicanismo as a political identity had important currency in Chicago. Just like youth in the American Southwest, it exemplified cultural pride and political consciousness. Inspired by the Chicano conference, the Brown Berets showcased their Chicano pride in many ways. For one, they named the newly controlled settlement house, Casa Aztlán, to institutionalize Chicana/o pride. Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas on 18th Street*, 24, 28.

¹⁴⁹ I also attended *Towards an Oral History of the Civil Rights Struggle in Mexican Pilsen* project, funded by the Illinois Humanities Council. I used the real names in this project if the information and stories I collected derived from public events. At the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), I attended the conference *Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Life of Rudy Lozano: Remembering the Past, Fighting for the Future*, sponsored by the Independent Political Organization of the 22nd Ward and the UIC, Rafael Cintron-Ortiz Latino Center (June 22, 2008). At Casa Michoacán, I attended *1968: From Mexico City to Chicago* (June 2008), a panel discussion linking the political sensibility and activism of 1968 Tlatelolco student leaders to local organizing in Chicago.

¹⁵⁰ William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 17, 38.

stories. For instance, I did not begin this project knowing that several slices of Rudy Lozano's activism would make its way into my dissertation. However, the majority of my interviewees made mention to his activism in my interviewees. My participants also continued to school me on the pressing immigration issues in the community.

Complicating the notion of Mexican labor migration, I also learned of the various other reasons (familial, political, and adventurous) Mexicans came to the Chicago and the United States, more broadly. I conducted interviews and follow-up interviews from July 2007 to September 2011. I identified key participants from historical documents. I also received referrals from community leaders and then utilized a snowball method. In addition, I recruited participants at community events. My academic colleagues and professional contacts also provided important leads. I interviewed Mexicans, Mexican Americans, as well as other Latinas/os, African Americans and whites. They represented a wide array of backgrounds (social-class positions, racial/ethnic groups, and education levels), including academics, lawyers, politicians, teachers, students (elementary, high school, college, or graduate level), factory workers, homemakers, and organizers. The age range varied, but the majority of participants had been in their teens to the forties during the time period under investigation (1968-1986). Many of my interviewees migrated during their teenage years and young adult lives. Many casistas that I interviewed were in their twenties and thirties when they were in the prime years of community organizing.

Participants could pause or stop the digital recording at any moment and they were promised anonymity, unless a participant wanted to disclose their real names in my publications. Interview questions explored immigration and the politics of belonging in

the United States, in a semi-structured manner in the language in which each interviewee felt most comfortable: English, Spanish, or sometimes a combination of both languages. The interviews ranged from thirty minutes to five hours, and averaged 75 minutes. The majority of the participants were interviewed in their homes, but I also conducted interviews in public areas, such as restaurants, coffee shops, and community organizations. I conducted interviews in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Mexico City because the transnational connections between these cities have been and are still alive. CASA Chicago activists, including Felipe Aguirre, joined CASA's national headquarters in the past and continue to live in Los Angeles. Other CASA leaders, such as José Jacques "Pepe" Medina, returned to live in Mexico City, and still reside there.

Organization of the Dissertation

Sin Fronteras: Activism, Immigration, and the Politics of Belonging in Mexican Chicago, 1968-1986 has five chapters. Chapter Two, "Envolviendose En Una Teleraña" [Caught up in a Spiderweb] historically situates the migration stories of Mexican immigrants in Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s. This chapter shows a *sin fronteras* [beyond borders] paradigm at work to examine the migration stories and settlement experiences of Mexican immigrants moving to Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s. I argue Mexican immigrants living and working in the United States led lives beyond borders as a strategy for confronting and resisting U.S. labor exploitation, racism, and immigration policies that dehumanized their (working) bodies. Family, social, and economic ties pulled many Mexican immigrants to move across national border,

sometimes without the proper government authorization. The *sin fronteras* paradigm highlights the human dimensions of Mexican immigrants whose lives are entangled in a transnational web unequally linking Mexico and the United States. To that end, the chapter reveals how, and under what circumstances, Mexicans migrated to el norte. Moreover, it sheds light on how Mexicans responded to the state and mainstream discourse that has positioned them as racially and socially inferior.

Chapter Three, “Emergence of *Sin Fronteras* [Beyond Borders] Politics, 1970s” argues that the growing Mexican immigrant population in Pilsen, the intensity of INS harassment, and the militant politics of the times produced a *sin fronteras* politics that brought Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Latinas/os together as a community. I argue that Chicago’s Midwestern location, one relatively far from Mexico and the American Southwest, fostered the development of a uniquely *sin fronteras* Mexicanidad historically situated in this time and space. The chapter exposes the contradictory ways that Pilsen was both a welcoming and hostile place for Mexicans and Mexican Americans. I map how Mexicans and Mexican Americans negotiated questions of “illegality,” race, and the politics of belonging. The economic anxieties during the 1970s reinforced the construction of Mexican “illegality” by the state and mainstream media.

Chapter Four ““Un Pueblo Sin Fronteras’ [A Community Beyond Borders]: Challenging the Terms of Belonging in Mexican Chicago, 1974- 1983” analyzes *sin fronteras* politics in the mobilization for immigrant rights in Mexican Pilsen. This chapter traces the rise of the Chicago chapter of CASA and the *sin fronteras* politics that Chicago members espoused in theory and in practice. Activists challenged the dominant terms of belonging in the United States. By espousing a transnationally-minded *sin fronteras*

politics, casistas centered and included the rights and needs of the undocumented in their social movement. I further examine how and why CASA members in Chicago organized a May Day march on May 1, 1975 to serve as the organization's national coming-out day for immigrant rights. Additionally, the May Day march built on and extended the activism of previous community leaders as it signified the beginning of a new Movimiento [movement] in this community, a movement for the humanity and rights of non-citizens.

Chapter Five, "Lessons Learned, Today's Immigrant Rights Movement, and Future Directions" concludes by discussing CASA Chicago's increased engagement with electoral politics in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the demise of CASA Chicago. The project concludes with discussing the lessons learned from the *sin fronteras* activism and the politics of belonging undertaken by CASA Chicago. In the spring of 2006, hundreds of thousands of people mobilized across the United States to protest House Resolution 4437 "The Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005" that the House of Representatives passed on December 16, 2005. Many former CASA Chicago activists continue to participate in immigrant rights activism; they advocate for a comprehensive immigration reform and amnesty for the undocumented. I discuss the similarities and differences in the campaign for immigrant rights during the 1970s. By understanding immigrant rights activism during the 1970s, and the ones launched in 2006 and 2007, we can learn the varied ways in which a transnational political sensibility contested citizenship as the ultimate means for full inclusion into the

nation-state.¹⁵¹ The current movement for immigrant rights in Chicago is a continuation of the mobilization that Lozano and many other CASA Chicago leaders (as well as others) co-led and nurtured. Since there are no academic texts to date that engage with Lozano's activism and its significance, my work historicizes immigration debates as a continuum of violence, racism, and global capitalism.

¹⁵¹ This claim builds on the arguments made in Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

Chapter Two: Envolviéndose en una Telaraña [Caught up in a Spider Web]

Si había (trabajos) pero no en grandes números. Los trabajos más pesados, los hacíamos los que veníamos de México.... Se agarraban trabajos una temporadita y se salían a otros que les pagaban mejor.

[There were (jobs), but not in large numbers. We—the ones who came from Mexico—undertook the most difficult jobs. We use to take jobs for a while and leave for better paying jobs.]

-Alfredo María González, Mexican immigrant, Chicago, IL

Siempre teníamos la idea de irnos para allá (Zacatecas), siempre decíamos, nos vamos a ir y si íbamos a México nos llevábamos algo, para cuando nos vayamos, siempre estábamos pensando en irnos, pero queríamos estar viviendo más cómodos, tener nuestra casa, siempre estábamos pensando en estar viviendo más cómodos, y así lo hicimos.

[We always had the idea of returning there (Zacatecas), we always said we are going back and if we went to Mexico we would take something so when we would go back. We were always thinking in returning, but we wanted to leave more comfortable, have a house. We were always thinking in living more comfortably, and that's how we did it.

-Norma Arredondo, Mexican immigrant, Chicago, IL

Yo tenía ese coraje. Tenemos que pelear por nosotros, los Latinos.

[I had that anger. We had to fight for ourselves, the Latinos.]

-Osvaldo Aguilar, Mexican immigrant, Chicago, IL

The history of Mexican migration to Chicago reveals ties directly related to the demand for labor and the state of the economy with cyclical expulsions that came with downturns. Mexicans, often in search of work, joined family and friends living in the United States. Though the Bracero Program formally ended in 1964, Mexican laborers continued to migrate en masse as family and social ties in the United States as well as global economic restructuring and changes in U.S. immigration policy propelled their migration to el norte [the United States]. Historically and in the current juncture, many

immigrants believed that one day they would return to their homeland.¹ Mexican immigrant Víctor Manuel Quintero, like many other Mexican laborers, arrived ready to work in Chicago in 1972. Though he imagined returning to Mexico, almost forty years later, he continues to live in the United States. Quintero and other Mexicans led lives in el norte while maintaining varying degrees of transnational linkages to Mexico—emotional, social, economic, and familial ties. Certainly, not all Mexicans maintained ties across national borders. Over time, the lives of Mexican immigrants became even more entangled in the elaborate socio-political and economic web unequally binding Mexico and the United States.² These deeply enmeshed transnational lives reconstituted their ideas about home.

This chapter adopts a *sin fronteras* [beyond borders] paradigm to examine the stories of Mexicans migrating to Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s as well as provides a lens to understand their experiences in creating a sense of belonging in the United States. During this era of Mexican immigration (1965 to 1985), the general population of Mexicans consisted of a largely undocumented, young male population, most in their early twenties.³ Many came from small towns, and did not necessarily have an agricultural background. This characterization subsumes the experiences of elders,

¹ See Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Audrey Singer and Greta Gilbertson, “The Blue Passport: Gender and the Social Process of Naturalization among Dominican Immigrants in New York City” in *Gender and U.S. Immigration: Contemporary Trends*, ed. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003); Yen Le Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Gina Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

² Espiritu, *Homebound*, 2; Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions*, 6-7; Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, “‘I’m Here, But I’m There’: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood,” *Gender and Society* 11, no. 5 (1997): 548-71.

³ Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).

women, and children who also migrated during this era—though a smaller segment of the immigrant population. Family, social, and economic ties pulled many Mexican immigrants to the United States, sometimes without the proper government authorization. Furthermore, the migration of women and children during the late 1960s (and since then) played an important role in shift from circular migration to long-term residence in the United States.⁴

The chapter reveals how, and under what circumstances, Mexicans migrated to Chicago during the late 1960s and 1970s. Drawing on a *sin fronteras* paradigm highlights the human dimensions of Mexican immigrants, many of who came to work in the United States, and discusses their experiences living in Chicago. I argue Mexicans living in the United States engaged multiple ideas of home—configured across and beyond national borders—as a strategy for confronting and resisting U.S. labor exploitation, racism, and immigration policies. Enduring new arrangements of everyday life in *el norte* complicated their sense of belonging in Mexico and in the United States—while generating various and overlapping understandings of home.

Speaking of adjusting to life in Chicago, Mexican immigrant Alejandro Carrillo shared, “se va uno acoplando con batallas y a veces cometiendo errores.” [One adjusts with battles, and sometimes making mistakes.] Beginning with migration stories, the chapter contextualizes the joys, struggles, tribulations, and triumphs that Mexicans experienced in creating a life in *el norte* within a transnational context. Building on ethnic studies scholar Yen Le Espiritu’s analysis in *Homebound*, which explores the transnational lives of Filipino migrants, this study suggests that Mexican immigrants have

⁴ Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions*, 24.

also led “lives stretched across borders” or “beyond national borders” as a way of confronting U.S. racism and the global racial order that positions Mexicans outside the boundaries of U.S. social membership.⁵ Creating multiple understandings of home, across and beyond borders, makes visible the global economic configuration that unequally links the United States with Mexico, one that has spurred Mexican labor migration—and continues to do so.

I underscore the reasons Mexicans migrated and contextualize the significance of living and working in the United States. During the 1970s, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents targeted Mexican communities in the search for the undocumented as mainstream media racialized Mexicans as “illegal aliens.” Employers took advantage of undocumented labor during this period of economic insecurity. More broadly, this chapter complicates the master narrative of the United States as the “nation of immigrants” that has long privileged the experiences of European immigrants over those of multiple diasporas that have helped people the nation.⁶ This idea is a powerful myth that fosters a narrow understanding of immigration in the U.S. popular imagination.⁷ As sociologist Stephen Steinberg argues, “the bottom is not the same” for

⁵ Espíritu, *Homebound*, 2. Espíritu’s central argument is: “Attentive to both the local and global structures of inequality, I argue that Filipino Americans confront U.S. domestic racism and the global racial order by leading lives stretched across borders—shaped as much by memories of and ties to the Philippines as by the social, economic, and political contexts in their new home in the United States.”

⁶ The idea of a nation of immigrants also neglects the violent population histories of Native Americans, African Americans, Chicanas/os, and other groups. Critical immigration scholars, such as Erika Lee, have offered alternative frameworks to study immigration. Lee argues, “In fact, it is Angel Island—and not Ellis Island—that best personifies America’s true relationship with immigration. We are indeed a ‘nation of immigrants,’ but we are also a ‘gatekeeping nation,’ and it is the tension between these two identities that continue to shape not only America’s ambivalent immigration policy but also Americans’ ambivalence toward immigrants.” Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), p. 251.

⁷ Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and “Illegality” in Mexican Chicago* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 2. De Genova uses the term migrant instead of immigrant for

all groups as the master immigrant narrative overlooks the historical legacy and contemporary social reality of institutionalized racism, classism, and heterosexism in the United States, and the ways these overarching structures and variations of domination have shaped the lives of immigrants, citizens, and others in the United States.⁸

The lives of Mexican immigrants, as active social agents, in the United States reveal a multiplicity of experiences demonstrating how the intersection of socially constructed categories, such as race, class, citizenship, and gender worked together to impact everyday life. Intersectionality, the manner in which various social identities and statuses interact to position a person in society, considers how new meanings are created at these sites of interaction.⁹ Instead of solely focusing on one category to analyze

strategic, epistemological purposes: to destabilize the view of the United States as the receiving nation. He uses migrant to emphasize “a sense of the *movement*, intrinsic incompleteness, and consequent irresolution of social processes of migration.” Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 5. Camacho uses migrant to describe: “one who moves within and across national boundaries; it also references a subordinate position with respect to that of the citizen.” Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú, Jr., eds., *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). Luibhéid also uses migrant as an expansive term to capture the diversity of circumstances that has propelled migration to the United States. Espíritu, *Homebound*, 3. Espíritu uses the word immigrant rather than migrant to emphasize the “permanency of immigrant settlement” in the United States. In my study, I use the term migrant and immigrant to capture the experiences of those who move within and across the United States with the former term, and with the latter to refer to those who permanently reside in the United States. When referring to both, I use im/migrant.

⁸ See Stephen Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981), 6; David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); Karen Brodtkin Sacks, “How Did Jews Become White Folks? In *Race*, ed. Steven Gregory and Roger Sanjek (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates*; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Bill Ong Hing, *Defining America Through Immigration Policy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

⁹ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge Press, 2000); Lisa A. Flores, “Reclaiming the ‘Other’: Toward a Chicana Feminist Critical Perspective,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 24, no. 5 (September 2000): 687.

experiences, such as classism, sexism, or racism, it highlights the cumulative effect of race, gender, and other factors in immigrant lives.

Scholars, such as Lisa Lowe, David Roediger, Karen Bodkin Sacks, and Matthew Frye Jacobson, demonstrate how the construction of a national American identity has been—and continues to be—racially equated with whiteness.¹⁰ Race, along with its intersection of other social categories (class, gender, sexuality), has organized U.S. society by demarcating who fully belongs (citizens) and who does not belong (non-citizens) in the nation, and under what conditions.¹¹ In the case of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the United States, the master immigrant narrative neglects the historical legacy of the 1848 conquest of the American Southwest and the long-lasting tradition of the active recruitment of Mexicans to work in the United States. To this end, Espíritu's concept of differential inclusion, "as the process whereby a group of people is deemed integral to the nation's economy, culture, identity, and power—but only or precisely because of their subordinate standing" is useful in my scholarship.¹² It demonstrates how Mexicans are integral to the nation precisely because of the state's need for menial labor, but not for inclusion as full social members of U.S. society. The differential inclusion of Mexicans complicated their ideas of setting long-lasting roots in the United States. My research brings attention to the intricate socio-political and economic web that has produced the conditions for Mexican migration to the United States and the ways it

¹⁰ See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*; Brodtkin Sacks, "How Did Jews Become," in *Race*; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different*; Ian Haney López, *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1997). The Naturalization Law of 1790 explicitly required whiteness as a criterion for U.S. citizenship. In 1952, it was repealed with the McCarran-Walter Act.

¹¹ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994).

¹² Espíritu, *Homebound*, 47.

shaped immigrant lives. As sociologist Pierrette Hondagneu states, “it is the immediate context of family and community relations (such as social networks) that shape how people will respond to pressures exerted by structural formations.”¹³ By highlighting the stories, experiences, challenges, decisions, and circumstances that Mexican immigrants encountered in migrating and forming lives in el norte, I aim to bring out the humanity of Mexican immigrants and bring a nuanced understanding of Mexican labor migration and settlement during the late 1960s and 1970s.

Historical Hauntings of Mexican Labor Migration

Mexican migration to the United States is haunted by the ghosts of *trabajadores* [Mexican workers]—generations and generations of them—pulled into the United States by capitalist desires, a historical tradition that has welcomed working bodies, but not the person or humanity who performs the arduous labor.¹⁴ Sociologist Avery Gordon’s concept of haunting frames my discussion here, she states, “If haunting describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities, the ghost is just the sign, or the empirical evidence if you like, that tells you a haunting is taking place.”¹⁵ In this case, the problem with Mexican immigration, especially with the construction of “illegality,” is haunted by unresolved, troubling, contradictory issues with capitalists’ (continued) desires for

¹³ Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions*, 7.

¹⁴ Michael Kearney, “Borders and Boundaries of State and Self at the End of Empire,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 4, no. 1 (1991): 52-74; Gilbert G. González and Raúl A. Fernández, *A Century of Chicano History: Empire, Nations, and Migration* (New York: Routledge Press, 2003); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 8.

cheapened labor, the dominant terms of national inclusion and membership, and the experiences of immigrants whose lives, families, desires, and struggles are stretched across and beyond nations.

In my research, the legacy of the Bracero Program [working arms], a bi-national agreement program to fill labor shortages brought on by World War II, haunted the migration stories recounted by my participants. The U.S. and Mexican governments instituted the Mexican-United States Program of the Loan of Laborers in 1942 and extended it to 1964.¹⁶ Indeed, the United States government also established labor agreements with other regions, including Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and the Bahamas. However, the agreements with Mexico served as the largest bi-national contracted labor program in the Western Hemisphere. Braceros worked in agribusinesses (1942-1964) and in many types of factories, including defense and steel, and on railroads (1943-1945).¹⁷ From 1942-1945, the state allotted 168,000 visas for the temporary workers. Originally the program recruited agricultural workers, but a year after its institutionalization, the U.S. government made modifications to include industrial workers. This change made Chicago a major site for Mexican workers, drawing more than 15,000 braceros between May 1, 1943 and September 30, 1945.¹⁸ Nearly 24,000 Mexicans and Mexican

¹⁶ Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*. These agreements were known as the International Bracero Contract Labor Agreements in 1942 and 1943-1964; Kitty Calvita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the INS* (New York: Routledge Press, 1992).

¹⁷ Lilia Fernández, "Of Immigrants and Migrants: Mexican and Puerto Rican Labor Migration in Comparative Perspective, 1942-1964," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 14. Fernández states that the Railroad Bracero Program brought over 100,000 Mexican laborers during its short two and a half year duration (1943-1945).

¹⁸ Felix M. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 32; Gabriela F. Arredondo and Derek Vaillant, "Mexicans," in *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago*, (Chicago Historical Society, 2005) <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/824.html>; Louise Año Nuevo Kerr, "The Chicano Experience in Chicago: 1920-1970" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1976), 121.

Americans lived in the Windy City by 1950, most of who were born in the United States.¹⁹ Mexicans, including braceros, continued to migrate to the city—some moved to Mexico, Texas, and other parts of the American Southwest before returning to work in Chicago.²⁰ The U.S. and Mexican governments pledged to supervise appropriate living and working conditions for braceros, but frequently neglected their supervisory role, leading to widespread abuses. In 1945, for example, the Mexican consulate in Chicago reported to the Mexican president concerns over the brutal mistreatment of Mexican braceros.²¹

Since U.S. industries, agribusinesses, and corporations greatly benefitted from this contracted labor, the U.S. government increased the number of visas issued to braceros to 100,000 in 1949.²² Notwithstanding, the U.S.-Mexico labor agreements fueled a surge in undocumented Mexicans, and due to their vulnerability, maximized profit for growers. Sometimes braceros remained in the United States after the expiration of their contracts—in their current positions or different ones. The number of undocumented workers, at times, exceeded the number of braceros in the postwar period.²³ Scholars estimate that the number of apprehensions of unauthorized workers, which, of course, reflected only a fraction of the number of workers actually circulating in and out of the U.S. economy at any one time, was roughly equal over the course of the

¹⁹ Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago,” 8.

²⁰ Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side; Lilia Fernández Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012). Wartime labor demands in the 1940s and throughout the 1950s also prompted Puerto Rican laborers into Chicago as participants of Operation Bootstrap, a labor recruitment program designed to help “modernize” Puerto Rico.

²¹ Fernández, “Of Immigrants and Migrants,” 22.

²² Massey, Durand, and Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors*, 36.

²³ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

program.²⁴ Although Mexico experienced an economic boom, known as the Mexican Miracle (1940-1968), this period of prosperity did not necessarily reach the working classes nor did it reach those in rural areas.²⁵ Fittingly, Mexicans migrated to the United States—under and beyond the auspices of the contracted labor program—to alleviate economic hardships. Unauthorized migration did not raise much national concern because of the wartime demand for labor, but this all changed after World War II.

The end of the war did not terminate the labor agreements under the Bracero Program as it was intended to do so. Pressured by corporate interests from agribusinesses and manufacturing industries, the Bracero Program lasted 19 years after the end of the war.²⁶ While in negotiations to extend the labor contracts, Mexican government officials wavered from their initial stance to ban Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and other states from participation because of the horrible working conditions in these regions—not to mention harsh winter weather in the Midwest.²⁷ The renewal of the Bracero Program produced the migration of more laborers to the United States.²⁸ This time, trabajadores encountered a different climate. The close of World War II and the rise of cold war politics, national anxieties over the spread of communism worldwide

²⁴ David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 142.

²⁵ David G. Gutiérrez, *The Columbia History of Latinos in the United States Since 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 63.

²⁶ See Fernández, “Of Immigrants and Migrants,” 15.

²⁷ Ibid. Fernández discusses how the Mexican government made some attempts to advocate on behalf of braceros who often faced deplorable working conditions, especially in the sugar beet industries and in the Midwest region. While negotiating the terms of the labor agreements with the United States government, Mexican officials threatened that they would only sign if the bracero program was banned in the sugar beet industries as well as in following states: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. In the end, these restrictions were not instituted.

²⁸ Ibid., 6. Sometimes concerned Mexican American leaders in Chicago advocated on behalf of Mexican immigrants. Frank Paz, leader of the Mexican Civic Committee, for example, organized relief efforts (economic and social) for braceros in need. By late 1946, as Fernández notes, a Subcommittee on Social Services to Mexican Migratory Workers was established by the Committee of Minority Groups of the Council of Social Agencies to provide support and services for Mexican immigrants.

reconfigured the socio-political landscape.²⁹ Despite President Truman's vocal opposition, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, popularly known as the McCarran-Walter Act was passed. It instituted new procedures and criteria to stiffen and block entry into the nation, deny naturalization, and revoke U.S. citizenship.³⁰ Hysteria over the threat of communism in the United States led to the rise of McCarthyism, the massive witch-hunt to identify so-called communists. This government frenzy was especially damaging to immigrant activists because the legislation broadened the conditions for denaturalization as well as the deportation of any non-citizen who had entered the country after 1924.³¹ Historian John H. Flores demonstrated how this played out in Chicago with the 1953 deportation case of Mexican immigrant Refugio Ramón Martínez.³² In 1924, he migrated from Mexico to Chicago, and developed a lengthy record of labor organizing in the city.³³ Despite major health problems, government officials deported him to Mexico. He died shortly thereafter.³⁴

²⁹ The U.S. military intervened to manage, weaken, and eradicate communism at the global level. For example, the United States intervened in the Korea conflict (1950-1953) when North Korea (communist) invaded South Korea (capitalist). The United States sided and aided South Korea against North Korea, which was supported by China and the Soviet Union.

³⁰ Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 118.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 115-16. Labor leaders like Luisa Moreno left the country because of this government witch-hunt. Moreno advocated for the inclusion of the undocumented in labor organizing. Furthermore, she believed that the pursuit of civil rights should not come at the expense of undocumented people.

³² Witnessing these varied forms of persecution of immigrant labor activists, John H. Flores suggests, led many Mexican Americans to foster claims of national belonging vis-à-vis Americanism. John H. Flores, "On the Wings of the Revolution: Transnational Politics and the Making of Mexican American Identities" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2009).

³³ From the 1930s to the 1950s, Martínez participated in labor organizing. He had formed a family in the United States, including the births of two daughters. Mexicans in Chicago (and other parts of the United States) joined the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO), a union of industrial workers (1935-1955). In 1955, it merged with American Federation of Laborers (AFL) to form AFL-CIO. Mexicans also participated in the meat packers' unions. Acuña argues that joining unions helped Mexicans assimilate. See Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* (New York: Pearson, 1999), 317; Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams: Latino Immigration to Chicago* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 16. By the 1950s, Mexicans grew critical of unions such as the United Steel Workers of America because of their racially discriminatory practices.

The combination of these structural, political, and social forces expanded national concerns over the “unlawful” presence of immigrants. To address the issue of undocumented immigration, the INS instituted “Operation Wetback” in 1954, a concerted national effort to return undocumented workers to Mexico.³⁵ Ethnic Mexican communities in Chicago and around the United States bore witness to the deportation of Mexicans once again. It terrorized families as the U.S. government did in the 1930s. La migra [immigration officials] made few, if any, attempts to distinguish Mexican Americans from undocumented Mexicans.³⁶ These state actions reminded Mexicans and Mexican Americans alike of their inclusion in the nation as merely laborers—vulnerable and expendable. And yet, after Operation Wetback ended, the U.S. and Mexican governments reinstituted the Bracero Program and extended it until August 31, 1964. The Bracero Program was not renewed, in part, because modern agricultural equipment lessened the number of workers needed. Some scholars state that criticisms of the ghastly working conditions also pushed the state not to renew the labor program.³⁷ Lee G. Williams, the U.S. government official in charge of the U.S.-Mexico labor agreements, characterized it as an exploitative, slave-like labor system. Still, the Bracero Program — though officially terminated—would continue to meet capitalist interests by systematically propelling Mexican laborers to the United States.

³⁴ Flores, “On the Wings of the Revolution.” Martínez was affiliated with various organizations, including the Congress of Industrial Organizations, Frente Popular Mexicano, and the Communist Party.

³⁵ Wetback is a derogatory term for an undocumented worker. The term “wetback” comes from the idea that Mexicans swim across the Rio Grande River at the U.S.-Mexico border to “illegally” enter the United States. To cheapen is the process of becoming cheap; I use cheapen in lieu of cheap to signify how the labor performed is important work, but it is regarded as menial or cheap. Thank you to Yen Espíritu for pointing out this important detail.

³⁶ Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago,” 156.

³⁷ Ibid., 163.

Despite the formal termination of the labor agreements in 1964, growers and other capitalists continued to welcome Mexican laborers. Social scientists Jorge Durand, Douglas S. Massey, and Emilio A. Parrado explain that the United States shifted from a *de jure* to *de facto* policy of soliciting and contracting Mexican labor; businesses no longer needed to play an active role in recruitment.³⁸ Trabajadores from the bracero era developed the cultural knowledge and social connections necessary to find work en masse in the United States, and also informed the next generation of Mexican laborers. Trabajadores reestablished connections with former employers and oriented others to pursue opportunities in el norte. The legacy of the Bracero Program continued to shape and spur Mexican migration to the United States. The demand for labor persisted. The global economic crisis unfolded; economic conditions in Mexico weakened and U.S. deindustrialization moved menial jobs abroad.³⁹ Strong social and family relations drew more and more Mexican immigrants north. The United States was a place to come and work, but this idea changed as more and more Mexicans began to create a sense of home in the United States.

Me Voy Para Chicago [I'm Going to Chicago]

During the late 1960s and 1970s, Mexicans migrated to secure economic stability in the United States, but a wide variety of other familial and social factors, sometimes

³⁸ Jorge Durand, Douglas S. Massey, and Emilio A. Parrado, "The New Era of Mexican Migration to the United States," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (September 1999): 518-36.

³⁹ See María Patricia Fernández-Kelly, *For We Are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); Saskia Sassen, *The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study of International Investment of Labor Flow* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Foreign investment in Mexico aggravated the conditions for migration. Food products were expensive as many were imported. Also, the Mexican government formed the Border Industrialization Program in 1965 to draw foreign investment in maquilas or manufacturing plants along the U.S.-Mexico border.

overlapping, also propelled Mexicans to undertake the journey to el norte.⁴⁰ Seventeen-year-old Víctor Manuel Quintero determined to find work to support his family in Mexico migrated to the United States without the proper government authorization in 1970. Living in the sierra of Tepehuanes, Durango offered minimal opportunities for upward mobility.⁴¹ Struggling to make ends meet, the Quintero family lived in impoverished conditions because the promises of the Mexican Miracle did not reach the rural communities such as Durango.⁴² Pressured to help his family buy food, clothes, and other basic necessities, Quintero had to abandon his formal schooling in fifth grade. He took care of farm animals, ran household errands, and worked odd jobs to earn a pocketful of pesos [Mexican currency]. Not until the age of 15 did Quintero own his first pair of good shoes—a generous gift from his tía [aunt]. Moreover, he assumed tremendous responsibility at a young age because of his father's intermittent and extended absences. When his father Arturo Quintero became a bracero, it came at a great cost: enduring difficult work conditions and long months of family separation. His experience as a bracero, however, established important social and economic ties that in time led to the settlement of many of his family members, siblings, cousins, and children, and friends in the United States.

Prior to physically arriving in the United States, many Mexican migrants already led lives that extended across national borders as in the case of Quintero, whose father

⁴⁰ The number of Mexicans migrating for basic survival and livelihood only continued to increase with neoliberal policies, such as the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement.

⁴¹ The town of Tepehuanes derived its name from the Nahuatl word meaning mountain dwellers. It is located in the northern and western part of the state of Durango. Durango is a state in the northern part of Mexico; neighboring states are Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Zacatecas.

⁴² The Mexican Miracle refers to the Mexican government's plan for internal economic development and opportunities.

worked as a bracero. Anthropologist Gina Pérez writes, “Transnational practices and imaginings have gradually become interwoven with the fabric of a community, binding it up with other places and people, who fasten and loosen ties as necessary.”⁴³ The experiences, tales, news, and remittances stretched families’ emotional, economic, and social lives and home across two countries as Pérez writes, “mobility is not necessary for one to feel part of a transnational community.”⁴⁴ The Bracero Program, in particular, reconfigured family units across national borders as grandfathers, fathers, sons, brothers, and uncles physically went to work in the United States and other kin, mostly women and children, stayed behind.⁴⁵ Loved ones frequently or sometimes not so regularly, reported on life in the United States through phone calls, letters, notes, post cards, photographs, cultural products, gifts, and sometimes visits. They recounted news, adventures, updates, challenges, and even chismes [gossip]. Through these transnational interactions and connections reconfigured family, social, and cultural lives across borders, but also set an important foundation for a future life grounded in the United States.

In 1970, Quintero embarked on the arduous journey to Chicago, a city where his uncles and primos [cousins] lived. Guided by his cousin who had previously crossed the border, the two young men took a bus to Tecate, a small city east of Tijuana, Baja California. They crossed the U.S.-Mexico border without detection. While his primo continued on his journey to the Windy City, Quintero stayed behind to work and save

⁴³ Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side*, 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁴⁵ Ana Rosas, “Flexible Families: Bracero Families’ Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries, 1942-1964” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2006). Rosas provides a compelling analysis revealing the ways the Bracero Program reconfigured everyday family life, pulling three generations to lead lives across borders. She highlights how braceros and their families negotiated the state’s (Mexico and the United States) production of family and work under the Bracero Program.

enough money for fund the next leg of his trip. Quintero found agricultural work in Escondido, a town in northern San Diego County. One night, immigration officials raided the sleeping quarters of the fields where he worked, just a few days before payday. Quintero returned to Mexico. Even though this negative experience severely dampened his spirits, Quintero decided to cross the border once again in 1971. This time, Quintero's tía loaned him \$250 to contract a coyote [human smuggler] that other family members had previously used.⁴⁶

A few months later, Quintero, Rutilio, (his cousin), and Luis (a friend) crossed the border at Tecate. After reaching an isolated road, they nervously waited for a pick-up car bound to Los Angeles. Upon its arrival, racial profiles determined the arrangements in the clandestine car. Rutilio's red hair, green eyes, fair skin afforded him the prized assignment: the front passenger's seat. During the four-hour ride, he peered out the window enjoying the scenic drive in southern California. Rutilio's "white" features presumably would not raise any suspicion of the undocumented travelers in the car. In contrast, Quintero's black hair, brown eyes, and dark skin complexion would more likely generate attention by immigration officials. Thus, Quintero and Luis had to hide—enduring very awkward poses—all to give the appearance of two travelers: a driver and passenger. Under a blanket, Luis positioned himself across the back seat. Meanwhile, Quintero, the darker-skinned of the two, had the most uncomfortable position. With his back humped, he laid at the foot of the rear passenger seats. Since his head was pressed against the car's base, he was forced to bear the muffler's maddening sounds. The next

⁴⁶ Today, it costs approximately \$2,000 to contract a coyote. Border crossing conditions are more treacherous because of increased border security. However, this has not deterred migrants from crossing, and instead has led to more deaths. Border crossers did not face the same risk as today's migrants who encounter the intense militarization of the border since the 1990s.

leg of the journey was undoubtedly much more comfortable. At the Los Angeles International Airport, Quintero and Rutilio boarded a commercial airliner bound for Chicago.⁴⁷ Contracting a coyote, money, and traveling with Rutilio, his primo with “white” features facilitated his ability to migrate all the way to Chicago without detection.

Mexicans with (some) class privilege also migrated to the United States. Aurelio Díaz, a manager of an automobile mechanic shop in Michoacán, earned just enough money to cover weekly expenses, leaving little to no room to save, or much less splurge. Díaz could search for (temporary) work in the United States—whether in Texas, California, Illinois, and another part of the country. Díaz’s father, also a former *bracero*, provided the cultural knowledge necessary for his journey to el norte. For similar reasons, Tomás García migrated to the United States. He was a teacher who lived fairly comfortably in San Luis Potosí. Despite García’s professional status, Mexico offered few prospects of economic security, especially in the field of education. García decided it was best to migrate even though his professional degree and experiences carried no value in the United States.

Listening to the advice informed the decisions made by Mexicans on places to avoid and areas to go to. Mexican immigrant Manuel Bañuelos shared, “Por las pláticas de ellos fue que decidí venirme a Chicago porque me parecía que era más sólido, más fácil encontrar trabajo aquí que en el campo de California.” [It was because of talks with them that I decided to come to Chicago because it seemed to me that it was easier to find

⁴⁷ Today, it is more difficult for the undocumented to travel on commercial airliners because of heightened airport security after 9/11.

a job without a doubt here rather than in the rural areas of California.] Drawing on a rich social network, Bañuelos left Morelos to find work in Chicago. Having the proper government authorization facilitated the passage of many Mexicans across the international border. At the same time, thousands of Mexicans who did not possess the appropriate documents also migrated to el norte through more creative and risky ways—sometimes with the help of a coyote. Prevailing transnational connections surpassed, bypassed, and, even undermined the power of immigration agents to manage the mass migration of Mexicans to the United States, especially undocumented entries. Not having the proper authorization did not deter the trek of Mexicans to el norte. The economic crisis in Mexico in the 1970s with the global oil crisis, the devalued peso [Mexican currency], and the U.S. (and British) bailout of Mexico's collapsing banking system propelled hundreds of thousands of migrants to the United States.

In the late 1960s and the 1970s, major changes in immigration law and economic shifts also played a role in the production of a major wave of undocumented migrants. Social scientists Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone labeled the period from 1965 to 1985 as the “era of undocumented Mexican migration” because 81% of the Mexican immigrants came without official papers.⁴⁸ During this time, 23 million undocumented Mexicans migrated compared to 1.3 million who came with visas and the 46,000 contract workers. This era brought an estimated 5.7 million unauthorized Mexicans when accounting for those who left the country.⁴⁹ In 1965, the Immigration

⁴⁸ Massey, Durand, and Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors*, 45.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 39 and 45.

and Nationality Act ended the racist quota system established in 1924.⁵⁰ Previous to this immigration legislation, the state imposed no quotas on the Western Hemisphere.

Historian Mae Ngai argues that the rhetoric of civil rights imbued discussions surrounding the immigration act, but at its root the immigration legislation addressed discrimination faced by ethnic European groups, who were already U.S. citizens at the time of the new immigration legislation.⁵¹ The policy instituted a limit of 120,000 people from the entire Western Hemisphere allowed to enter the country legally each year. Years later, the government instituted important amendments: a new limit of 20,000 visas per country in the Western Hemisphere (1976) and a 290,000 worldwide cap (1978). The vast reduction in available visas played a significant role in the rise of undocumented Mexican immigrants as the new legislation could not impede the pull of a strong tradition of labor recruitment, nor could it sever the vibrancy of social, economic, familial ties linking the United States and Mexico.

In some cases, the search for life-changing aventuras [adventures] led some border crossers to explore el norte. Alfredo María González and his teen-aged friends left their hometown in Los Altos, Jalisco in 1972. They traveled over a thousand miles and

⁵⁰ See Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Bill Ong Hing, "Social Forces Unleashed after 1965" in *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 79-120. The Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924 signified the beginning of an era of restrictive immigration. The act instituted race-based hierarchical quotas, although it deemed northern and western European immigrants as more desirable than southern and eastern Europeans. The act also systematically excluded Asian immigrants from legal migration. After the 1965 legislation's implementation, the characteristics of immigrant populations widely represented those from the third world. However, Luibhéid has warned not to benevolently attribute the influx of third world people to this revised immigration policy. Instead, U.S. economic and military imperialism, specifically in Asia and Latin America has contributed to the increased third world populations in the United States.

⁵¹ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 268. Abolishing racist quotas primarily addressed the interests of U.S. citizens and did not easily extend civil rights protections to immigrants. Ngai has stated that while civil rights legislation was effective during the 1970s and 1980s in protecting immigrant rights, in some cases, it also had limitations.

crossed the Tijuana-San Diego international border “just for fun”—and some of them eventually made it all the way to Chicago. To fund their travel expenses, González and his friends followed agricultural work in California, Oregon, and Washington. Persuaded by his friend, González left the group to accompany him to Chicago; little did González know at the time that he would form a life there. These escapades are deeply gendered, however. The thought of adventures in the United States may just as well capture the interest of women; yet, these voyages are generally reserved for young, healthy men.⁵²

During her teenage years, Verónica Conchas dreamed of adventures in el norte, particularly to escape heteronormative cultural expectations and practices “appropriate” for young ladies, such as getting married and bearing children. Chicana feminist scholar Gloria E. Anzaldúa discusses these dominating social and hetero-cultural constructs or what she terms “movimientos de rebeldia y las culturas que traicionan” [rebellion movements and cultures that betray] in her book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*.⁵³ Various neighborhood mothers in Guanajuato, Mexico persistently suggested: “marry my son.” Others playfully pushed an eligible bachelor as a potential husband. Since her own mother had passed away, the neighborhood mothers had cared for her for many years. Nevertheless, Conchas refused to conform to these prevailing ideas and gender-conforming behaviors. Chicana feminists have refuted the narrow categorizations of “womanhood” and have documented the ways Chicanas/Latinas and Mexican women

⁵² For more information see Hondagneu-Sotelo, “Single Men: Migration as a Patriarchal Rite of Passage” in *Gendered Transitions*, 83.

⁵³ Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012).

like Conchas resist and “transgress gender boundaries” and embody new understandings of gendered constructions.⁵⁴

Conchas fantasized of a life in the United States, a place physically, culturally, and ideologically far from this dominant and restricting frame of life possibilities in her hometown. Feminist scholars such as Chandra T. Mohanty complicates our understanding of the “constraining” experiences that Conchas describes, the scholar states academics “must be attentive to the micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle, as well as to the macropolitics of global economic and political systems and processes.”⁵⁵ Doing so reveals a broader understanding of these gendered constructions in Mexico *and* the United States. Feminist scholars of color underscore the hetero-patriarchal constructs of U.S. society. Feminists remind us that the United States is not necessarily a liberatory space for women, especially those on the margins of society (poor and working-class, queer, immigrant, and other disenfranchised women). Chicanas, Latinas, and immigrant women of color also experience surveillance, harsh judgments, rigid expectations, and constraints in families, communities, and other spaces within and beyond the United States, and find ways to create and draw on “safe” spaces. For

⁵⁴ Sonia Saldívar-Hull, *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Politics and Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Regents of the University of California, 2000), 78; Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*; Katie L. Acosta, “Lesbianas in the Borderlands Shifting Identities and Imagined Communities,” *Gender & Society* 22, no. 5 (October 2008): 639–59; Patricia Sánchez, “Adopting Transnationalism Theory and Discourse: Making Space for a Transnational Chicana,” *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 22, no. 3 (December 2001): 375–81.

⁵⁵ Chandra T. Mohanty, “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles,” *Signs* 28, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 501.

example, mujeres [women] have formed “families of choice” to escape the ways some families of origin make judgments on their practices, values, behaviors, and desires.⁵⁶

Conchas’ outlook is as an example of “underground feminism,” undocumented forms of feminism that provide lessons and insights into oppression, resistance, and worldviews of change. In other words, as Chicana scholar Aida Hurtado notes, feminism “might look different if we were to expand its definition beyond the feminisms developed and defined by the academy.”⁵⁷ Conchas’ rebellious self against heteronormativity or what Anzaldúa conceptualizes as the “Shadow-Beast” pushed her to seek an alternative space in the United States. However, the reality of seeking adventures or ideas of liberatory spaces in the United States seemed nearly impossible for young women like Conchas. During the 1950s and early to mid-1960s, for the most part, women in her hometown remained in Mexico while the men (fathers, brothers, husbands) migrated to the United States, usually as braceros. This highly male gendered migration pattern, however, began to slowly change in the 1970s and 1980s and only accelerated in the 1990s, which only continues in the present era.⁵⁸

Verónica’s dream of a life in the United States became a reality under bleak family circumstances. When her father’s aging body could no longer work, it left the family with no choice: Verónica had to migrate to el norte in order to alleviate financial

⁵⁶ Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); Patricia Zavella, “Talkin’ Sex: Chicanas and Mexicanas Theorize about Silences and Sexual Pleasures,” in *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gabriela F. Arredondo, et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 228–53; Acosta, “Lesbianas in the Borderlands,” 639–59.

⁵⁷ Aida Hurtado, “Underground Feminisms: Inocencia’s Story,” in *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gabriela F. Arredondo, et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 261. See also Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000).

⁵⁸ Denise A. Segura and Patricia Zavella, eds., *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: A Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

anxieties. Only through these extenuating circumstances did Conchas' vision of living in el norte become a reality. In 1971, Pedro Conchas, Verónica's older brother who lived in Chicago, obtained the proper documentation for Conchas to cross the border. Pedro clearly abided to a different set of expectations as he left on his own at the age of seventeen to work in the United States. Verónica imagined a different structuring of a gendered division of roles in the United States. Yet, she continued to face the same kind of gender constraints and expectations that she had chafed against in Mexico and her expectations were different from those of her brother. Pedro expected Verónica to assist his wife with the household duties on a daily basis—even when she came home tired from working long hours at the local factory. Contributing to the maintenance of the household did not disturb Verónica; instead, it was the narrow designation of ways to help in the household and disappointment with Pedro's lack of help. Moreover, Pedro's disciplining gaze limited Verónica's construction of a social life in Chicago based on her own terms.

During the 1970s, more and more mujeres migrated to the United States. Conchas, like other women, came to work in the United States. Familial and social motivations also played a role. Gabriela Chacón, a mujer from a small town in Durango, faced little family resistance to her plans to visit her primos in Chicago in 1969—even if she was still a teenager. These cousins were living in the United States because their father (her uncle) had set roots in the Windy City when he came as a laborer in the early 1960s. With her mother's support, Chacón prepared the paperwork for her travels abroad. She states, "Me dieron mi permiso y mi pasaporte. Me lo dieron por un año y después de

un año fue que ya me quede. [They gave me my visa and passport. They granted authorization for a year. And after a year, I stayed].” During her yearlong visit, Chacón thoroughly enjoyed the city’s sights, events, parks, and lakefront. Having a visa helped her take advantage of Chicago’s offering of leisure activities. She decided to work in a factory in order to sustain her daily expenses. The job also allowed her to send weekly remittances to her mother in Mexico.⁵⁹ Over the course of time, she fell in love and married a Mexican man who had migrated to the Chicago area from San Luis Potosí. Chacón led a life in the United States. During our interview Chacón expressed great sorrow so much so that we had to take a break from the interview. She never had reflected on how her life changed dramatically. The city, that Chacón came to visit as a tourist became her home. Eventually her mother and siblings followed the stream of Mexican immigrants to el norte in 1975 and there was no reason to return to live in Mexico.

For Chacón, the Windy City was as a fun place to visit and where she fell in love. This all changed when she established roots in Chicago. She encountered many struggles in forming a life in a country that did not fully welcome her. Historically and contemporaneously, Mexicans have contended with implicit and explicit forms of racism. Trabajador Alfredo María González insisted, “Con el tiempo ellos [los americanos] han entendido que nosotros de verdad no venimos hacerles mal. Vinimos a este país a trabajar y a tratar de prosperar un poco. No venimos a quitarle a nadie nada” [Over time they (Americans) have come to understand us. We did not come to do them harm. We came to

⁵⁹ Mexicans have sent money to relatives for many years to help support their families in Mexico—over \$21 billion in 2010. Remittances comprise an important part of the gross national product of Mexico.

this country to work and to try to thrive little by little. We did not come to take anything away from anybody.] Drawing on this idea of working hard reinscribed his human dignity in a society that has differently included Mexicans. In their words, labor served as a vital contribution to the country: their bodies produced wealth in a capitalist society. Situating Mexican migration stories within a larger context of labor, capitalism, and immigration law reveals the ways the state has pulled these *trabajadores* to this country while marginalizing them socially. Alfredo María González made claims for (full) social inclusion and (equal) membership in the United States even within a transnational context. The historical legacy was that Mexicans just came to work in the United States—and then had to go or eventually went home. The United States was not a place to set roots because of its racist culture. He stated,

No solo son los anglo-sajones, el sistema en si ya está institucionalizado es algo sistemático. No es algo que está sembrado en el sistema es algo que está patentizado sistemáticamente, que de alguna manera u otra le afecta a la gente o le beneficia. Algo que va a través de las culturas, la costumbres, lo que les inculquen, eso lo van sembrando hasta que alguien viene y cambia las cosas de una manera drástica, solo así la gente puede abrir los ojos.

[It's not only the Anglo-Saxons. Integrated within the system. It is already institutionalized. It's systematic, something that's embedded in the system that in one way or another it affects people or it benefits them. Something that penetrates vis-à-vis culture, customs, that which is programmed, that is being nurtured through the manner those ideas become rooted. Until someone comes and changes things in some radical way, only in that way can people open their eyes.]

In previous decades, Mexican immigrants, especially during the Bracero era, periodically traveled back and forth to Mexico as necessary: to visit family and loved ones, to deal with emergencies, or to vacation. Yet, this, within the context of Chicago and the United

States, more broadly, much of this changed in the 1970s.⁶⁰ More Mexicans migrated directly to Chicago during the 1970s with the intention of permanently remaining in the United States.⁶¹

Creating a home in Mexican Chicago

This generation of newly arrived Mexicans immigrants built new lives in the United States, a long, slow, and uneven process that over time fostered a transnational sense of home. Alfredo María González described, “Así vine yo, pensando que no más iba quedarme por una temporada y se va uno envolviendo como en una telaraña y nunca se va a poder ir, va a ver.” [That’s the way I came, thinking that I would only be here temporarily and then one becomes entangled as if one was in a spider web and one can never leave, you will eventually see.] González did not anticipate the deep familial, social, political, and economic ties he would form in the United States. In a similar manner, Sonia Rodríguez, a mujer from Durango, initially planned a two-week vacation in Chicago to attend her sister’s wedding. She kept extending her trip by a week as she found city life impressive and enjoyed the company of her family living in the United States. Her uncles, former braceros in the United States, laid the social foundation for family members to live and work in the United States. Rodríguez began to date a

⁶⁰ Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions*, 24; Harley L. Browning and Nestor Rodríguez, *The Migration of Mexican Indocumentados as a Settlement Process: Implications for Work* (Austin: Texas Population Research, University of Texas at Austin, 1982). Long-term settlement patterns intensified in the late 1980s. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 discouraged the free movement of people in either direction across the border. Accordingly, the passage of IRCA in 1986 was one of a number of factors that altered long-term patterns of Mexican labor migration, namely from one characterized by circulatory migrant streams to one of long-term settlement in the United States. See Massey, Durand, and Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors*, 5.

⁶¹ Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago,” 173. The scholar cites higher naturalization rates to make this claim.

handsome Mexican man from Ensenada, Baja and married him two years later. She, too, became entangled in the city's social web, a place she did not envision creating a home. Weeks in the Windy City became months, months became years, and years became decades; over thirty-five years later Rodríguez continues to live in the city, and has come to terms with the idea that Chicago is now home.

Creating Home in Pilsen

The 1970s generation of Mexican immigrants no longer arrived to the historic port of entry in the Near West Side as urban renewal shrank the ethnic Mexican neighborhood. Instead, Pilsen became the main hub. The number of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in la dieciocho [Eighteenth Street] flourished because many families from the Near West side moved there throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Newly arrived Mexican immigrants also moved to la dieciocho. Relocating to Pilsen in the 1950s and 1960s proved difficult for many ethnic Mexican families because they had to break racial stereotypes in their new community that was historically a port of entry for many European immigrant families.⁶² In the nineteenth century, a large concentration of Czech and Bohemians lived in Pilsen, named after a large city in the Czech Republic. As the first ethnic Mexicans on the block, families sometimes had to deal with the racial prejudices of their new neighbors. Many European ethnics turned a cold shoulder to the arrival of displaced ethnic Mexican families from the Near West Side.

In the early 1960s, the de la Torre family relocated from the Near West Side to a Pilsen apartment on 19th Street and Carpenter Street. They, like other Mexican families,

⁶² In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, Germans, Irish, Czechs, and Bohemians lived in Pilsen. In the nineteenth century, Polish, and Lithuanian immigrants lived there.

dealt with both subtle and explicit forms of racism. Margarita de la Torre recalled overhearing the European ethnic neighborhood mothers instructing their children not to play with “those Mexicans.” She stated, “It was just us in the back yard or playing in front.” This socially isolated the de la Torre children even at play, thereby preventing the formation of interracial friendships. The Tapias, one of the first Mexican families on 18th and Morgan Street, also did not intermingle much with the European ethnic residents. As an alternative, they spent most of their leisure time confined within their apartment or with visiting with relatives. The Tapias relied on their network of relatives and friends to collect information, problem-solve, and support one another. Though Luis Tapia heard that Howell Neighborhood House, a settlement house a few blocks away on 18th Street and Racine Avenue, offered services that assisted immigrants, he did not use them.⁶³ Tapia did not know if their staff spoke Spanish. He also believed the center had limited hours that conflicted with his long work schedule. The Tapias lived on the social margins of Eighteenth Street in part because of their designated inferior racial positioning.⁶⁴

Mexican and European ethnic friendships surely emerged in the neighborhood as exemplified by the day the de la Torre sisters won the heart of an elderly neighbor, Stella Leahy, a European immigrant. She lived by herself and rarely did her children and grandchildren visit her. Their relationship began the day the de la Torre girls helped Leahy carry in some groceries. Enamored by Leahy’s animated stories, the sisters regularly helped and gladly visited with Leahy. Other *viejitas* [elderly ladies] on the

⁶³ Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams*, 24. In 1970, the Brown Berets closed down the Howell Neighborhood House because it neglected to cater to the ethnic Mexican population.

⁶⁴ Eighteenth Street is the main commercial strip in Pilsen.

block followed Leahy's lead and interacted with the de la Torre children. As Margarita de la Torre shared,

I used to go with the viejitas that lived next door to us call us. Viejitas, 80 years old, they'd take us on the bus with them just to help them out with their shopping. They were the only ones that really took us in. They were really nice to us. They baked cookies for us; they treated us like we were their own. Then they started talking to other older people that lived there. We were the only kids that they would call to go run the errands because they trusted us. We're not going to steal. They were all old people and we helped them out. Sometimes they just wanted somebody talk to, even though we were young. We would just sit there and you know, keep them company, so that was nice to learn that much as far as what they're used to, and by that time we were already speaking English, not too good, but [well enough].

The de la Torre sisters served as friends, personal assistants, and chaperones for the viejitas—who had minimal visits from family or friends. They appreciated the baked goods, tips, and other small gestures of appreciation and kindness. In a relaxed and enjoyable way, the sisters practiced their English by listening to her stories. Though the de la Torre sisters earned the trust of the neighborhood viejitas, they recognized how the elderly ladies distanced themselves from the other Mexican youth who were deemed “suspicious.” The de la Torre girls had experienced this discriminatory gaze on multiple occasions. Margarita recalled that “(they would) look at you like you are going to steal something. That wasn't nice.”

During the flight of many whites to the suburbs, Pilsen transformed into a major port of entry for newly arrived Mexican immigrants in the late 1960s. By 1970, Mexicans constituted a numerical majority in la dieciocho, a first for a Chicago neighborhood.⁶⁵ Even so, community members in Eighteenth Street had to also fight against

⁶⁵ Kerr, “The Chicano Experience in Chicago,” 192.

gentrification, and continue to do so today. Headed by powerful business and civic leaders, the Chicago 21 Plan (1973), a large-scale development plan designed to revitalize the “Loop” and its surrounding areas, threatened Pilsen because of its close proximity to downtown Chicago. Notwithstanding, Eighteenth Street became a welcoming and vibrant community for ethnic Mexicans with a growing array of bicultural and bilingual activities, businesses, and social services tailored to the needs, tastes, and desires of the Mexican and Mexican American community. Restaurants, such as Nuevo León, served tacos, enchiladas, and other Mexican cuisine. Many places, such as El Milagro and Casa de Pueblo sold tortillas and other Mexican food products. Dance halls played Mexican *ranchera* and Tejano [Texan] music. Movie houses, such as Cine Villa and Cine Atlantic, featured Mexican films. Roman Catholic parishes began to cater more and more to the Mexican-origin population, including St. Pius, St. Adalbert, Providence of God, and others.⁶⁶ Use of both Chicano and Mexican symbols in storefronts, murals, and decorations reflected the growing ethnic Mexican community in Eighteenth Street.⁶⁷ See Figure 2.1.

⁶⁶ For a discussion on the Mexican transformation of Roman Catholic churches in Pilsen, see Deborah Kanter, “Making Mexican Parishes: Ethnic Succession in Chicago Churches, 1947-77,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 301, no.1 (2012): 35-58.

⁶⁷ Interview material, archival records, local newspaper reports. See Leonard G. Ramírez et al., *Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

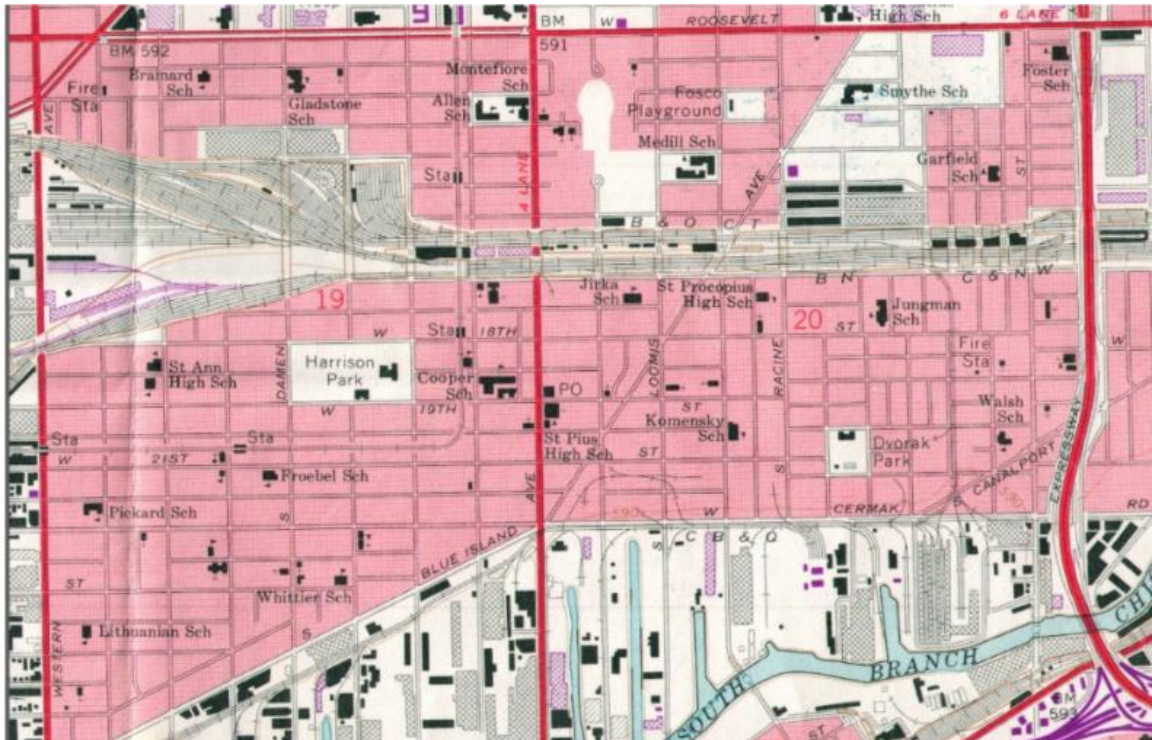


Figure 2.1: Map of Pilsen

U.S. Geological Survey. *Englewood quadrangle* [map]. Photorevised 1972 and 1980. 1:24,000. 7.5 Minute Series. Reston, Va: United States Department of the Interior, USGS, 1981.

Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

Negotiating “Illegality” and Questions of Belonging

Mexican immigrant Roberto Bañuelos and his family migrated to Chicago from Michoacán in the early 1970s. They initially settled in la dieciocho to join family members who already lived there. Bañuelos believed he would enjoy living in this community, a place flourishing with Spanish-speaking businesses, services, and entertainment. Casa Aztlán, for example, offered an array of services in Spanish to help. Moreover, the center’s basement housed Servicio [Service] JEAN, an agency affiliated

with the branch of Immigrants' Service of the Travelers Aid Society.⁶⁸ It provided services in immigration and citizenship affairs as well as English as a Second Language classes. In aspects such as these, Eighteenth Street was a warm and friendly neighborhood for many Mexicans and Mexican Americans. As Norma Arredondo, a Mexican immigrant from Zacatecas, stated, "Pues no conocía nadie. La esposa del señor que llevaba a mi esposo me decía que podía irse a casa ir a Casa Aztlán, que ahí ayudaban a la gente. Ahí nos dieron latas de comida. Fui una sola vez." [I did not know anyone (when I arrived here). The wife of the man who used to take my husband (to work) would tell me to go to Casa Aztlán, a place that would help people. There, they gave us canned food. I only went there one time.]

Recent immigrants in Pilsen could often rely on community organizations, family, friends, and neighbors to help with the transition to their new lives in the United States—to find a sense of home in *la dieciocho*. Mexicans and Mexican Americans provided support, guidance, and advice for newly arrived Mexican families like the Arredondos and Bañuelos. Mexican American Daniela Pérez from Pilsen recalled how her immigrant mother enjoyed helping other Mexican women. She stated, "Les ayudaba a la mujeres y le decían que ellas tenían su derecho... eran mujeres solas las amenazaban no que la Migra ... (pero) otros mexicanos, a los mismos mexicanos." [She would help the women and would tell that they had their rights... they were women all alone and they would be harassed not by immigration, but by other Mexicans.]

Pérez explained how immigrants, especially the undocumented, were vulnerable

⁶⁸ Carolyn Tool, "Servicio J.E.A.N. Crusade Agency Aids Immigrants," *Chicago Tribune*, October 22, 1972, B2. The social workers averaged thirty-five cases on a monthly basis.

to widespread threats, abuses, and costly deceptions. Contactors and entrepreneurs would sometimes overcharge immigrants for different services. Some landlords did not feel compelled to fail to fix items in the apartment or address any other housing concerns. People wielded their citizenship privilege like a cudgel by threatening to call immigration officials if the undocumented did not conform to specific practices, behaviors, or commands. Quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* article “Easy prey for schemers: Ripoffs, Arrest—A fearful World for the Illegal Alien,” published on December 30, 1973, Reverend Peter Rodríguez, a Roman Catholic priest of St. Francis of Assisi parish in the Near West Side, discussed the dangers that the undocumented routinely face, such as inflated smuggling, services, and false documentation fees.

In contrast to the affirmative and encouraging expectations of life in Eighteenth Street, it was a dreadful place to live. The Bañuelos family did not anticipate living there would generate feelings of distress, uncertainty, and foreignness. Lacking the proper documentation to reside and work within the United States, they feared INS apprehension and deportation so much that they opted to remain indoors. Unless absolutely necessary, they seldom left the apartment. Bañuelos recalled,

Ellos nos escondieron un poco porque era un tiempo muy difícil que no podía uno salir a las tiendas a comprar la comida ni la ropa. ...Todos los días llevaban la comida a la casa para que nosotros preparamos porque no podía uno salir ni a la esquina.

[They used to hide us a little because it was a difficult time. One could not go out to the stores to buy food or clothing. ...They would bring food to the house every day for us to prepare because one could not even step out, not even to the corner.]

Stories of these years revealed frequent INS activity raids in Pilsen (and also mirrored occurrences in other Mexican American communities).⁶⁹ The article “Chicanos Contest Illegal Alien Hunt” featured on December 1, 1974 in the *Chicago Tribune* reported,

The word is out in the “barrio”: Be on the lookout for strange men, especially if they are riding in green Fords, be cautious of who you talk to, since Chicano informers are known to work with them; and stay away from 26th Street and Kedzie [in Little Village], where immigrant agents have been spotted at a corner gasoline station.⁷⁰

The reporter Emmett George also explains how local ethnic Mexican leaders were contesting the heightened surveillance and INS activity in Pilsen.

The legacy of the Bracero Program, changes in immigration policies, a growing neoconservative climate, national frenzies in relation to the rising number of undocumented workers, and preoccupation with the economic recession all played a role in the racialization of Mexicans as “illegals” during the decade of the 1970s.⁷¹ Race is a socially constructed category with changing meanings over time and space.⁷² Following the passage of civil rights legislation, the decade of the 1970s marked the shift from explicit forms of racism to implicit ones.⁷³ Sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant have argued that beginning in the early 1970s economic and political volatility

⁶⁹ Harassment by INS agents was not specific to Chicago. It mirrored the national context, especially in the American Southwest. For example, INS agents in Los Angeles frequently raided factories, apartment buildings, and neighborhoods. They demanded that people produce documentation. Sometimes INS agents unfairly placed individuals, including U.S. citizens, in deportation hearings and proceedings. See Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 288; Ernesto Chávez, *‘Mi Raza Primero! (My People First!): Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁷⁰ Emmett George, “Chicanos Contest Illegal Alien Hunt,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 1, 1974. Little Village or South Lawndale is the community adjacent to Pilsen.

⁷¹ See Howard Winant, “Racism Today: Continuity and Change in the Post-Civil Rights Era,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 4, (1998).

⁷² Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 55.

⁷³ See Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*.

challenged and even reversed ideas of racial equality in the pursuit of opportunities, programs, and policies.⁷⁴ In this process the distinction between “legal” and “illegal” and “citizen” and “alien” became sharpened and heightened, and in the process, “race” at least nominally became a less important public markers of one’s status in U.S. society. Thus, in theory at least, immigration concerns were now framed as an issue of “illegality” versus “illegality” in which potentially anyone of any race could be a person officially unauthorized to be in the country. In this way, discourse on “illegal immigration” seemed now to be framed in racially and culturally neutral terms. And yet, despite this, it was clear that the racial contours of these immigration discussions continued to identify and code Mexicans as the ultimate source of the “immigration problem.”

In turn, mainstream media outlets also did their part in helping to reinscribe and constantly reinforce a racialized lexicon of immigration issues by conflating illegality with Mexican. Anthropologist Leo Chávez’s research demonstrates how mainstream immigration discourse from 1965 to 2000 in ten national magazines, including *U.S. News & World Report* and *Newsweek*, overwhelmingly used inflammatory language and alarmist imagery when considering Mexican immigration issues. Loaded words, such as “invasion,” “crisis,” “danger,” and hydraulic metaphors such as “floods,” “inundation,” “illegal flows,” and “influxes” all characterized the increasingly typical rhetoric on unauthorized migration from Mexico.⁷⁵ Mainstream news coverage at the local level on

⁷⁴ See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “Contesting the Meaning of Race in the Post-Civil Rights Movement Era,” in *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America*, ed. Silvia Pedraza and Ruben Rumbaut (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996), 471-78.

⁷⁵ Leo R. Chávez, *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). For discussions on the negative representation of Mexicans in the media in recent decades, see Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Leo R. Chávez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

immigration issues also reproduced this national trend. Exaggerated language in news articles warned readers of the “danger from illegal aliens.”⁷⁶ A December 15, 1971 news story in the *Chicago Tribune*, titled “Invisible Community: For Illegal Aliens, Chicago Is No Place to Be a Someone,” relied on negative vocabulary words, such as “swarmed” to conjure disconcerting worries of the high concentration of undocumented people living in the Windy City.

Despite the article’s cursory mention of the “good work ethic” exhibited by Mexicans, it established a causal understanding of “illegality” and “criminality”—and clearly conveyed the notion that the undocumented have a predisposition for unlawful activity. As quoted in the article, “their [undocumented immigrants] presence in a community leads to a crime problem because of their illegal status.” The idea that individuals with an “illegal status” have no respect for the law, as they chose to violate the law when they crossed the border without the proper government authorization—and more than likely would repeat illicit behaviors once in the country was a common trope of the time.⁷⁷ And yet, unauthorized migration is technically a civil violation, not a criminal offense.⁷⁸ Making commentaries on undocumented immigrants’ presumed lack of morals and respect for the law placed the onus of “illegality” on their minds, values, and bodies. It failed to recognize the systematic trend of undocumented immigration,

⁷⁶ “The Danger from Illegal Aliens,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 1974, A2.

⁷⁷ See Tanya Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation: Raids, Detention, and Deportations in a Post-9/11 America* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 41-4; Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz, *Labor and Legality: An Ethnography of a Mexican Immigrant Network* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Post-9/11 has amplified the negative discourse where immigrants are constructed as terrorists. See Michael Welch, “Immigration Lockdown before and after 9/11: Ethnic Construction and Their Consequences,” in *Race, Gender, and Punishment: From Colonialism to the War on Terror*, ed. Mary Bosworth and Jeanne Flavin (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 149-63.

⁷⁸ On this note, Arizona State Bill 1070 was controversial because the state government took control over an immigration matter—a federal issue—and made an unlawful presence in Arizona a criminal offense.

leaving no room to consider the structural conditions and reasons as why thousands and thousands of Mexicans crossed the U.S.-Mexico border without the papers, such as the reduction in available visas and the legacy of the Bracero Program. Placing responsibility on undocumented people for their “unlawful” actions also ignored the role of the employers who knowingly recruit and hire undocumented trabajadores. All in all, although the news story characterized undocumented Mexicans as good workers, the article perpetuated negative and dehumanizing stereotypes about Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

“The social space of ‘illegality’ is an erasure of legal personhood—a space of forced invisibility, exclusion, subjugation, and repression,” anthropologist Nicholas De Genova writes, “in the form of real effects ranging from hunger to unemployment (or more typically, severe exploitation) to violence to death—that is nonetheless always already confounded by their substantive social personhood.”⁷⁹ This dominant discourse justified the need for immigration surveillance, raids, and other policing activity in ethnic Mexican neighborhoods. The heightened presence of immigration agents in ethnic Mexican communities, many times, was uncritically accepted by U.S. society at large. *La migra* unfairly targeted Mexicans in their search to apprehend illegal aliens, as in previous historical moments (the Great Depression and the cold war).⁸⁰ To many, this was common sense, the way things happen, for example, Mexican American Daniela Pérez stated, “Claro es una cosa si tu vives en un barrio mexicano pues a donde más va

⁷⁹ Nicholas P. De Genova, “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability in Everyday Life,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 427.

⁸⁰ Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-39* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006).

llegar la migra no ni modo que llegue en el north side?” [Of course, it is one thing if you live in a Mexican barrio because where else is the INS going to go, it’s not like they are going to go to the north side?] She developed this sensibility through observations, conversations with others, and media outlets.

With alarmist imagery, the April 3, 1972 *Chicago Tribune* article titled, “Mexicans Flock Illegally to U.S.—‘Promised Land’” written by Barry Bishop described how unauthorized Mexican migrants generally “head for large, industrial cities such as Chicago where they are easily absorbed into Mexican-speaking communities and thus more easily escape detection.”⁸¹ To refer to the Mexican communities, Bishop, the Latin American correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune* used the imprecise, but striking phrase “Mexican-speaking” in lieu of “Spanish-speaking” in the article. Though positioned as an expert of Latin American affairs, the report uncovers Bishop’s lack of cultural awareness of the rich and heterogeneous dimensions of Mexican and Latina/o populations. There is no Mexican language, just particular cultural nuances of the Spanish language.⁸²

Moreover, Bishop wrote that in 1971, “381,682 ‘wetbacks’ were caught in the United States and deported to Mexico. However, it is estimated that many times that number remain in the U.S.”⁸³ Drawing on the dehumanizing term, “wetback,” Bishop stated his dissatisfaction with this statistic “because there are not enough agents to track them all down.” In his new coverage, Bishop failed to explore the underlying reasons

⁸¹ Barry Bishop, “Mexicans Flock Illegally to U.S.—‘Promised Land,’” *Chicago Tribune*, April 3, 1972.

⁸² In addition to the Spanish language, there are also many indigenous languages spoken in Mexico.

⁸³ Bishop, “Mexicans Flock Illegally to U.S.—‘Promised.’” Although Bishop reported 381,682 deportations in 1971, the official numbers documented by the United States Department of Homeland Security were 18,294 deportations and 370,074 were categorized as voluntary departures. See Department of Homeland Security, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, Table 36 (2010). <http://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2010>.

fueling Mexican migration, authorized and unauthorized. Rather, he placed the burden on immigrants without the proper authorization.

The overlapping categories of “illegality” and “Mexican” cemented the social construction of “the Mexican” as the inferior other. This particular racialization of “the Mexican” as illegal also affected Mexican Americans, especially when INS agents focused their operations in ethnic Mexican neighborhoods. Anthropologists Nicholas De Genova and Ana Yolanda Ramos-Zayas have argued, “It is impossible to underestimate the extent to which the disproportionate and unprecedented legal production of migrant ‘illegality’ for Mexican in particular has directly or indirectly affected all Mexicans in the U.S., regardless of nativity or citizenship, and supplies a defining feature in their racialization as ‘Mexicans.’”⁸⁴ Mexican Americans sometimes found themselves apprehended by *la migra*. Mexican American David León recalled,

I was twenty years old and I had my own apartment, my brother, my friend, the three of us. I swear one evening, I heard “Boom, boom, boom. Get up and (there’s) knocking on the door, (it’s) *la Migra*.” And the first thing when I opened the door, they said, “What’s your name? Where were you born?” So, he asked me questions and I got pissed, you know. I said, “David León. Chicago.” And he realized, you know, that I was (a citizen) and he just left.

León does not know why *la migra* came to his house because no one who lived with him was undocumented. In this particular encounter, David León’s response in an unaccented English convinced immigration officials to direct their search for undocumented immigrants elsewhere. In the end, not even Mexican Americans, however, could escape apprehension by immigration officials.

⁸⁴ Nicholas De Genova and Ana Yolanda Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge Press, 2003), 7.

Racial sensibilities of “illegality” and “Mexican-ness” played a major role in shaping the practices undertaken by *la migra*. Whiteness did not raise suspicion in contrast “brownness” did. Víctor Manuel Quintero spent his first few days in Chicago sleeping at work and in the garage. He came to the Windy City with the expectation that his uncle and primos would provide support. However, his cousins who phenotypically looked “white”—tall, light-skinned, red and brown haired, green and brown-eyed—including those undocumented, feared that Quintero’s brown body would direct immigration officials’ attention to their small apartment. They all lived in Little Village, a community adjacent to *la dieciocho*.⁸⁵ The neighborhood was slowly transforming into a Mexican area as more and more European ethnic immigrants moved to the suburbs. The primos feared that Quintero’s residence in the apartment would raise suspicion of their undocumented status. They collectively insisted that Quintero live in a hidden life in the garage. Rather than sleep in the unheated garage in the dead of winter, he secured permission to sleep at the factory where he worked for a few days. Perhaps, the work supervisor agreed to have his new worker sleep in the lunchroom to ensure production over the next few days. Quintero’s undocumented status *and* brown body justified the decision to have his sleep in the garage. When word travelled to other family members, they expressed disgust, anger, and disappointment in the decision to have Quintero sleep in the garage. Thereafter, Quintero slept in the apartment with the rest of the cousins. *La migra* never came to their residence.

⁸⁵ The percentage of Latinas/os, mostly Mexican, grew to 47% in 1980. See “South Lawndale (‘Little Village’),” Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships, <http://www.uicni.org/page.php?section=neighborhoods&subsection=southlawndale>.

La migra regularly canvassed Pilsen and other ethnic Mexican communities for undocumented people at or near bus stops, stores, churches, parks, agencies, and restaurants. They carried weapons. They also organized raids to round up unauthorized workers at local factories. Mariana Leal shared, “La migra paraban a la gente que iba al trabajo, en la mañana esperando el bus. En eso la inmigración vinieron. Sabían que se esperaba allí la gente. Les pedían papeles. Si no tenían, se los llevaban. Así pasaban en varias ocasiones.” [The INS stopped people who were going to work, waiting for the bus in the morning. At that moment, immigration officials arrived. They knew that people waited there. They asked them for papers. If people did not have any papers, then INS took them away. That’s how it happened on various occasions.] The INS frequently asked people for their mica [green card], a government-issued card showing authorization to live in the United States. Failure to produce the mica established the grounds for detention until people could produce papers proving a lawful presence in the United States, such as U.S. citizenship, permanent U.S. residency, or legal immigration.

Pilsen resident Lydia Dávila described what it was like to live under this particular context. She stated,

The community was under siege because of the migra [INS]. They would shut down the theater. In those days, it was the Cine Villa [Villa Theatre]. INS would shut it down. They would ask people for their papers. Or, they would shut the entrance to the grocery store, the Casa Del Pueblo [The Community’s Home] and ask people for their papers. Literally, they put the community in under siege.

Furthermore, in the community book *Rudy Lozano: His Life; His People*, Father Robert “Bob” Starks, a priest of European descent at Saint Vitus parish, described an encounter with INS agents that outraged la dieciocho in the early 1970s:

These people got so upset that the priest who was in charge told them to go outside the church at the sermon time because somebody came in and said the Immigration officials had gone in somebody's house. The people just left the church and surrounded the Immigration cars and wouldn't let them go and forced the Immigration people to leave without taking them. So the church was very militantly [against] the way the Immigration Department would make raids in the community and would violently harass and terrorize people [sic].⁸⁶

Neighborhood churches and religious leaders provided solace for troubled, irritated, and concerned parishioners and residents. In response to the growing immigration concerns, Pilsen churches declared their sacred space as a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants in the late 1970s.

To cope with the practices of racial profiling, Mexicans and Mexican Americans developed strategies to mediate encounters with *la migra*. Ethnic Mexicans acquired important knowledge as to what to carry, say, and do when approached by INS officials. Multiple encounters with immigration agents annoyed Mexican immigrant Jorge Chávez. One night, INS officers stopped him while on his way to his car parked near the intersection of Cermak Road and Paulina. Two officials asked Chávez for proof of his lawful presence in the United States. He shared the following incident,

La migra me decía en ingles, "Let me see your papers." Le dije, "No traigo nada." Preguntaron, "¿Tienes?" Le dije, "Si." Yo nunca cargaba nada, no más mi licencia y mi tarjeta de registro para votar. Saque mi cartera. Les ensene. Le dije, "Aquí está la licencia, y aquí está la tarjeta de para votar."

Preguntaron, "Are you a citizen?" Le dije "Si." Se me quedaba viendo a los ojos. Preguntaron, "¿Dónde vives?" Dije, "Aquí vivo. Allí está el domicilio. 1636 de la Cermak, medio bloque de aquí." Preguntaron, "¿A dónde va?" Dije, "Voy aquí a mi carro que está en el garaje. Voy por el

⁸⁶ *Rudy Lozano: His Life, His People* (Chicago: Taller de Estudios Comunitarios, 1991), 106. Father Bob Starks was involved in community organizing; he was a member of the Chicago chapter of CASA and provided many religious services for local activists.

porqué voy a salir a un mandado. Tengo mis documentos pero no los cargo. ¿Para qué?” Se miraron uno al otro. Y dijeron, “Okay.”

[The INS told me in English, “Let me see your papers.” I said, “I don’t have anything. They asked, “Do you have any? I said, “Yes.” I never carried anything, except my driver’s license and voter registration card. I took out my wallet. I showed them. I said, “Here is the license and here is the voter registration card.

They asked, “Are you a citizen? I told them, “Yes.” They stayed there staring me in the eyes. They asked, “Where do you live?” I said, “I live here. There’s my home. 1636 W. Cermak Road, half a block away from here.” They asked, “Where are you going?” I said, “I am going right here to my car that is in the garage. I am going for my car because I am going to run an errand. I have my documents, but I do not carry them. Why should I?” They stared at each other. And they said, “Okay.”

Although he did not carry his official paperwork while engaging in quotidian affairs, Chávez had the onus to prove his U.S. citizenship, but United States citizens may not carry their voter registration with them, much less birth certificates or naturalization papers; driver’s licenses are the most common government issued identification cards. Chávez not only presented his driver’s license to the agents, but also his voter registration card. Since government agents had the discretion to accept or reject these documents, he worried that this alternate documentation would not suffice to prove his legal residence in the United States. This episode served as a bleak reminder of the need to carry the proper legal papers or copies of his naturalization papers (and risk theft or loss) at all times. Even so, he was rightly concerned that INS officials would transport him to the local immigration headquarters to fully investigate the legitimacy of his status.

Federal immigration agents subjected many Mexicans and Mexican Americans to these guilty until proven innocent practices. Octavio Rincón, a Mexican immigrant,

explained what happened when la migra encountered an individual who did not furnish the appropriate paperwork. He said,

Los agarró [unos sin papeles] la inmigración. Los tenían en el centro donde los detenían. Por cierto, un compadre mío que me hablo. El pobrecito que estaba en su playera. Tenía frío. Ya en ese tiempo trabajaba en un “laundry” y se lo llevaron. Ya fui por él. Fui al centro y me dijeron, “No, lo acaban de trasladar a la California. Aquí en la veintiséis y California.” Entonces fui. Iba a llevar la fianza para que lo sacaran. Pero cuando llegue ya lo habían soltado. Ya llegó a la casa. El pobrecito vivía en Aurora.⁸⁷

[Immigration officials apprehended them (people who had no documentation). They held them downtown where they detained people. For instance, a close friend of mine called me. The poor guy was in his t-shirt. He was cold. At that time, he worked at a Laundromat and they took him. I went for him. I went downtown and they told me, “No, they just transferred him to California. Here on 26th street and California.” So I went. I was going to take the fee so they could release him. But, when I arrived, they had already released him. He had already arrived to his house. The poor guy lived in Aurora.]

Rincón’s story illustrates how unexpected confrontations with the federal agents could profoundly disrupt, sidetrack, and restructure the day. Not having one’s papers on hand at all times could potentially lead to a day or more of havoc. As Octavio Rincón explained, “Es una cosa que si me tocó vivir y ver mucha gente así.” [It was something that I happen to live and to see many people like that.] Residents of la dieciocho could not turn a blind eye to rampant INS activity in the neighborhood.

Sometimes residents did not bear witness to immigration raids. Yet, these stories of harassment by la migra in the neighborhood generated stress. Furthermore, the idea of “deportability” fueled the vulnerability of Mexicans without papers, that is, as De Genova writes, “the possibility of deportation, the possibility of being removed from the space of

⁸⁷ The intersection of 26th Street and California Avenue is in Little Village (South Lawndale). It is where the county jail is located. Aurora is a town approximately 50 minutes away from downtown Chicago.

the nation-state.”⁸⁸ Carlos Jolla, a Mexican immigrant, stated,

Aquí siempre ha habido redadas, en lo personal nunca visto a un agente de inmigración, nunca he visto una camioneta de inmigración. Yo trabaje en fabricas y tampoco. Trabaje como siete años en una fábrica, a principios de los ochentas cuando llegamos aquí. Pero había el temor, pero no había mucho contacto, era más el susto de la gente a la migración... Las marchas de ahora fue por los medios de comunicación que se conocieron antes no hubiera sido posible.

[There have always been raids here. Personally I have never seen an immigration agent. I have never seen an immigration truck. I worked in factories and not in there either. I worked about 7 years, at the beginning of the 1980s when we got here. However, there was the fear, but there was not much contact, it was more the people's fear of immigration.]

These state actions rendered ethnic Mexicans as an expended source of labor and reinforced their social exclusion, placing them outside the imaginary of national belonging. Widespread likeliness of apprehension by immigration officials, moreover, impacted immigrants' sense of home and belonging in the nation.

Leaving Pilsen, Creating Home in Other Spaces

Even with this immigration harassment, Mexicans and Mexican Americans continued to live in Pilsen. However, some left. The intensity of INS activity convinced the Bañuelos family, as well as other families and individuals, to leave la dieciocho. With the help of relatives, the Bañuelos family relocated to another Latina/o neighborhood with a heterogeneous population of Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and others, one on the north side of Chicago.⁸⁹ Though it was a predominately Latina/o neighborhood, it also had a

⁸⁸ De Genova, “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability,” 439.

⁸⁹ Bañuelos has lived in Cicero, a suburb west of Chicago. At the time of our interview, he did not specify which Latina/o neighborhood he moved to. He just said he moved to the north side of Chicago where a lot of Puerto Ricans resided. Stanley Ziemba, “Latinos Comprise City’s No.2 Minority: De Vise.” *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 1974. This article cites the following areas with a Puerto Rican concentration:

sizable presence of multiracial residents, including European ethnic immigrants and African Americans. He thought that the multiracial nature of the neighborhood mitigated INS activity there. Bañuelos said, the family continued to face the possibility of INS apprehension in this neighborhood, but to a far lesser degree. One time his fellow Puerto Rican friends helped him dodge INS officials. He also hoped that perhaps culturally passing as a Puerto Rican might cut short any INS questioning. Certainly, this is assuming that INS agents possess the cultural sensibility to discern Puerto Rican practices, expressions, and such from Mexican ones, at best, or simply care to consider the differences.⁹⁰ Undoubtedly, immigration agents racially profiled also Puerto Ricans as Mexican or “illegal.” In the end, Bañuelos deeply believed that he could better navigate an undocumented status in a neighborhood that did not have a Mexican majority. Bañuelos felt more at ease in his new neighborhood; he did not have to hide indoors like he did in Eighteenth Street. As soon as he left his neighborhood to go to work or another place, the anxiety of apprehension came rushing back in, however.

In another case, Mexican immigrant Mateo Pulido found refuge from INS harassment in an African American community, creating a home for himself in near Lake Street and Pulaski Road on the West Side of Chicago. He described his experiences as follows:

Muchas familias llegaron por esa área porque pues me imagino que la renta era un poco más barata, por lo mismo que estábamos entre el barrio negro. Yo viví entre familia negras que eran más o menos buenas familias.

Humboldt Park, East Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Lincoln Park, and Lake View. For a manuscript that examines Chicago’s Puerto Rican community, see Mérida M. Rúa, *A Grounded Identity: Making New Lives in Chicago’s Puerto Rican Neighborhoods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁹⁰ My intention is not to convey essentialist understandings of culture. Culture is fluid and dynamic; there are not fixed markers around being “Puerto Rican” or “Mexican.”

No teníamos mucha conversación por lo mismo de la comunicación. No hablábamos mucho inglés. No había por qué compartir, pues no sabíamos como convivir con ellos. . . Allí los negros nos trataban bien.

[Many families arrived in the area. I imagined they came because the rent was cheaper. Well, for the same reasons that we were living in an African-American neighborhood. I lived among African-American families. They were more or less good families. We did not exchange many conversations because we did not speak a lot of English. There was no reason to interact. We did not know how to live with them. . . African-Americans treated us well there.]

Pulido created a sense of belonging in an unlikely place. He rarely interacted with his neighbors because of language barriers, but did feel a sense of mutual respect. He also explained that the corner grocery store had a tiny section on a shelf dedicated to a few Mexican products. Pulido experienced no INS harassment in his African-American neighborhood. The racial composition deterred INS activity there. He did not worry—except, of course, when he and his family passed through INS hot spots on their way to work, church, school, or other outings. For the most part, Mexicans and Mexican Americans explained how the main hubs of INS activity and search for illegal aliens existed in predominately Mexican and Latina/o areas, such as Pilsen.

Conclusion

Despite this anti-Mexican climate, the numbers of Mexicans migration to Chicago continued to grow. Deteriorating conditions in Mexico pushed trabajadores to the United States. Myriad factors, such as work, politics, family, and love, intricately entwined and brought Mexicans and absorbed them in everyday life in the United States. Alfredo María González cited “el dinero” [money] as the central reason for remaining in the United

States. Yet, Ana González, his wife, interrupted our conversation. “¡No, no viejo!” [No, no old man!], she forcibly interjected.⁹¹ Ana clarified: the family decided to stay in the United States in order to invest in their children’s future. These different views allude to a gendered perspective in which the husband cites money while the wife cites family as the main reason for long-term residence in the United States.⁹² Nevertheless, these seemingly contrasting reasons in fact illuminate closely related logics. According to Alfredo María González, the economic opportunities in the United States would lead to the family’s continued welfare. Meanwhile, Ana firmly believed the family’s well being led them to form a life in the United States, certainly a decision shaped by the steady economic security they experienced. Perhaps, González cited economic reasons because of gendered, socially constructed understandings of “husband as head of the household.” Certainly, these distinct reasons are not mutually exclusive or rigidly organized around a gendered division of roles.

For many generations of trabajadores, working in the United States was just a place to go work—and home was back in Mexico. However, ideas about home all changed as they found themselves envolviéndose en una telaraña [getting caught up in a spider web]. This analogy of the spider web highlights how people’s lives over time become unevenly enmeshed in an intricate globalized system of social, familial, political, and economic relationships. Diego López, a Mexican immigrant from Jalisco, repeatedly told his family and friends during his first years in the United States, “No, no para que compro casa si ya me voy.” [No, no, why am I going to buy a home if I am leaving.]

⁹¹ Viejo is often used as term of endearment. The literal translation, old man, does not convey this affection.

⁹² For scholarly discussions on this topic, see Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions*; Singer and Gilbertson “The Blue Passport.”

Despite his seemingly unwavering conviction, López's deep roots have undermined his goal of returning to Mexico. He formed a family in the United States. He has five children. He secured steady factory work over the years. López believed he would presumably acquire the financial means to retire in Mexico, and finally return to his hometown even after so many years. But, now he feels this is unlikely to happen.

The Windy City continued to draw Mexican migration in numbers that only continued to grow for decades to follow. The United States has had an uneasy political and economic relationship with Mexico. It desires the Mexican labor, particularly undocumented workers, but does not extend the necessary visas to authorize the migration of the people who come to the United States. Despite the implementation of immigration laws and policies, increased border enforcement, employer sanctions, the Mexican and Mexican American population in the United States has grown exponentially. Many Mexicans thought they would work in Chicago for a year or two and then return to their towns in Mexico; however, they ended up remaining in the Windy City for over 30 years.

The next chapter examines how Mexican and Mexican American activists in Chicago integrated immigration concerns into their activism. As ethnic studies scholar Yen Espiritu write, "immigrants do not merely insert or incorporate themselves into existing spaces in the United States; they also transform these spaces and create new ones, such as the 'space between'"⁹³ I explore the ways Mexicans and Mexican Americans engaged in a *sin fronteras* politics as a strategy to challenge the labor exploitation, racism, and immigration policies that dehumanized their working bodies.

⁹³ Espiritu, *Homebound*, 10.

Community residents mobilized to create better conditions locally. By focusing the problem of unauthorized migration on immigrant bodies and not power structures, the state disavows itself from responsibility in producing the conditions in the United States and in Mexico for the increase in undocumented immigration. While navigating racial logics based on white supremacy, capitalist demands for cheapened labor, immigration law, Mexicans and Mexican Americans have expanded, challenged, and complicated the dominant terms of belonging in the United States. I discuss how civil rights legislation did not resolve how racism and immigration harassment continued to shape the everyday lives of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in differentiated ways. I demonstrate how, and under what circumstances, a *sin fronteras* politics emerged as a critical alternative framework for activism and claiming rights for citizens and non-citizens.

Chapter Three: Emergence of Sin Fronteras [Beyond Borders] Politics, 1970s

People were protesting or creating their own institutions. That's when Centro de la Causa [Center of the Cause] opened, Casa Aztlán, and Mujeres Latinas en Acción [Latina Women in Action]. The Pilsen Mental Health program was in the Centro de la Causa. Many people who participated at the Centro became significant leaders in the community. Essentially, they were there to get an education, then to do things in the community. Everybody knew each other, maybe not well. Everybody knew what was going on. People knew who was organizing what.

-Lydia Davila, Interview, Chicago, IL¹

Humberto Corona fue un sindicalista impresionante con una vision binacional, con una visión increíble. Ó sea su planteamiento fue más claro que todos. Planteo la cuestión de que la clase trabajadora mexicana es una parte integral de la clase trabajadora de los estados unidos. Y planteo la cuestión del dilema de la frontera.

[Humberto Corona was an incredible union organizer with a bi-national vision, with an incredible vision. In other words, his platform was the clearest among all of them. He raised the issue that the Mexican worker was an integral part of the working class in the United States. And he raised questions about the border.]

-Joel Ochoa, Chicago, IL, June 22, 2008²

Eighteenth Street was a welcoming and vibrant area for Mexicans and Mexican Americans, but it was also a marginalized community fighting against gentrification, state neglect, and terror. Chicago's Chicanas/os, Mexicans, and Latinas/os led many political ventures in 18th Street. Pilsen served as the hub of Chicago's Movimiento [Movement] that thrived in the late 1960s and early 1970s.³ The Chicano Movement in Chicago began a little later than it did in the U.S. Southwest (California, Texas, and Colorado). The Windy City's relatively recent history of Mexican migration (compared to the multigenerational history of Mexicans in the U.S. Southwest), the low numbers of

¹ Pseudonym.

² Joel Ochoa, Keynote Speaker at *Rudy Lozano Commemoration*, June 22, 2008, Chicago, IL.

³ Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 182; Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 209-210.

second, third, and fourth generations of Mexican Americans, and its sizable, heterogeneous Latina/o demographics contributed to this later development.⁴

Grounded in the experiences of Pilsen residents during the late 1960s and early 1970s, this chapter explores the following questions and issues: How, and under what circumstances, did activists in Pilsen come together to mobilize for immigrant rights? How, and why, did activists challenge, complicate, and reject the dominant terms of inclusion and membership in the United States? What alternative frameworks did organizers create, and why? To begin to answer these questions and others, I demonstrate how various activists representing various political ideologies came together, at least for a moment in time, to mobilize against Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) harassment and terror. I situate my larger argument to explore a case study in which state violence against a Pilsen resident, Margarito Rosendo Padilla, prompted community activists to join together and laid the foundation for the emergence of a *sin fronteras* politics. I also argue that immigrant rights activists' rejection of what they understood to be inherently hierarchal form of citizenship as a means to claim belonging proved necessary in order to articulate and practice an expansive strategy of gaining rights and belonging in the United States. By doing so, I join scholars whose research brings attention to the ways in which immigrants articulate political visions that move beyond citizenship as the (ultimate) claim of national inclusion and membership. In *Unruly Immigrants*, Monisha Das Gupta investigates the ways marginalized South Asian immigrants (queers, women, laborers) practice a politics of mobile rights.⁵ This is not to

⁴ Ibid., 182.

⁵ Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

undermine the continuing power of what anthropologist Nicholas De Genova terms as “deportability”—the idea that the possibility of deportation and not deportation itself is what makes the undocumented expendable and vulnerable.⁶ Nor it is to discount the history of Mexican naturalization or the political aspirations of segments of the immigrant populations in becoming U.S. citizens as anthropologist Martha Menchaca reminds us in *Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants*.⁷ Instead, my research offers an understanding of an alternative political reconfiguration that is in dialogue with these scholars, but that reconciles questions of “rights” in the face of labor, global capitalism, and the nation.

Texts like *Migrant Imaginaries* by Alicia Schmidt Camacho demonstrate how Chicana/o Studies discourse has tended to obscure or even erase the migrant presence in both history and in the current juncture.⁸ To address this gap, my study highlights the agential and self-conscious ways in which noncitizens, including the undocumented residents of the greater Chicago mobilized in the 1970s onward. Further, Chicana/o nationalist politics has long centered political, cultural, and spiritual connections with Aztlán, the symbolic homeland of the Chicanas/os that invokes the land lost after the United States seized the American Southwest in 1848. However, this framing developed during the Movimiento [Movement] does not necessarily account for the history of Mexican immigration, generally, and ignores the particularities of population circulation

⁶ Nicholas P. De Genova, “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability in Everyday Life,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 427.

⁷ Martha Menchaca, *Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants: A Texas History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

⁸ Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

and settlement outside the purported “Chicano homeland” in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and especially in the Midwest. Indeed, as discussed previously in this study, Chicago has a rich and heterogeneous Latina/o population, and a long history of multi-ethnic and multi-racial interactions. Ethnic Mexican activists formed coalitions with other Latinas/os, especially Puerto Ricans, as well as African Americans, working-class whites, and others. Thus, my main intervention is to suggest that in the Midwest, Mexican, Mexican American, and Latina/o political groups agitated for the rights of immigrants during an era of the Chicano/a movement, shifting away from nationalism to that “sin fronteras” coalition that I will demonstrate with the Margarito Rosendo Padilla case.

Overlapping, Competing, and Contradictory Political Streams in Pilsen

During the 1960s and 1970s, national and worldwide struggles, aspirations, and hopes for liberation, Marxism, and revolutionary change, popularly characterized as the Third World Left, shaped the political context. The United States government experienced tugs and pulls by various strands of the civil rights movements (Women’s Movement, Gay’s Rights Movement, Ethnic Studies Movement), the anti-Vietnam War Movement, and other forms of large-scale political and ideological mobilizations. National liberation struggles erupted through the Third World as a variety of freedom fighters in Latin America, Asia, and Africa fought for national liberation in far flung locations including Algeria, Angola, South Africa, and, of course, Vietnam. As anti-colonial forces fought against European and American interests in such areas, they challenged both western and U.S. hegemony and also challenged some of the basic precepts of the global capitalist system. Calls for social change permeated the air across

the world. Mirroring the national and international context, Pilsen residents mobilized for better social, economic, and political conditions.

Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Pilsen undertook leadership roles in community institutions. Students, workers, teachers, and other residents mobilized and established culturally relevant groups, such as the Brown Berets, Spanish Coalition for Jobs, el Comité, el Valor, el Centro de La Causa, Mujeres Latinas en Acción, the Mexican American Council on Education, and many others. They worked together—sometimes while debating contentiously—to address pressing issues at hand, such as housing, education, health, and labor. In the words of Mexican immigrant Ediberto Santana,

Todas esas organizaciones estaban para atender demandas de educación, salud, y empleos. Así son los primeros pasos que daban. Por eso se fue consolidaron un montón de grupos. Se convierte en una zona bien organizada porque la gente fue tomando “ownership” de la situación del espacio. Esa es la dinámica social y la dinámica económica.

[All those organizations were attentive to education, health, and employment demands. Those were the first steps that were taken. That’s how many groups became consolidated. The zone converted into a well-organized one because people began taking ownership of the context. That was the social and economic dynamic.]

For the most part, organizers implemented campaigns often centered on single-focused issues (domestic violence, health, or education).⁹ Utilizing this approach, however, did not preclude organizers from becoming involved in different struggles. By participating in various fronts, activists expanded their networks and fortified important relationships of solidarity with one another. Yet, the growing anti-immigrant political context in the 1970s pressured community activists to confront immigration issues. It precipitated the

⁹ Rudy Lozano: *His Life, His People* (Chicago: Taller de Estudios Comunitarios, 1991), 29.

emergence of an alternative political framework to include immigrant rights in the agenda for community empowerment.

Mexican, Mexican American, and Latina/o activists engaged in various forms of community mobilization, including grassroots organizing, oppositional politics, and electoral politics, but not without navigating a complex web of political ideologies. Working and coming together was not easy—and sometimes not possible—as community organizers engaged a broad scope of backgrounds and political thought, and competing, complimentary, and overlapping ideologies. Still, illusory and elusive notions of community improvement often served as a common ideological thread while disagreements persisted over the causes and explanations of inequalities as well as stark distinctions regarding strategies, tools, and platforms to employ. Influenced by debates that had ranged in the Mexican-origin and pan-Latino populations ever since the nineteenth century, activists continued to debate a range of philosophies including traditional notions of “assimilation,” communism, socialism, liberalism, reformism, Chicano—and other forms of ethnic and/or racial nationalism, and others—as well as all the graduated variations and political nuances within each of these tendencies and strains of thought.¹⁰ Some activists found it critical to stress assimilation, or the social absorption of ethnic Mexicans into the greater U.S. society. They stressed the importance of adopting American practices, such as English proficiency, while they advocated that individuals make a conscious effort to shed cultural, social, emotional, economic, and political ties to Mexico. In contrast, based on revolutions in China and Cuba, communism

¹⁰ *Rudy Lozano: His life, His people*, 29. Antonio Zavala, “Project Seeks to Recover History of Mexican-Americans in Chicago,” *Latin American Herald Tribune* (2009), accessed May 29, 2013, <http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=330576&CategoryId=14091>.

and socialism influenced other activists who believed in building a movement to overthrow U.S. capitalism. Communism's belief in fighting for a classless society influenced some whereas various Latino socialists advocated for public ownership over the means of production as determined by people's labor contribution. On the other hand, liberalism, the belief in individual freedom, also shaped organizing efforts for some. Reformist approaches, to gradually change the system through policy changes and legislation, captured the efforts led by the Chicago-area Mexican American Council of Education. Chicano nationalism, the belief and commitment to the Chicano nation, informed the political outlook of groups, such as the Brown Berets.

Another influential political stream "(a)lthough small in numbers," writes scholar Leonard Ramírez, were how "social activists escaping turmoil and repression in Latin America began to play a role in the broader Chicago Latino movement."¹¹ In Mexico City, for example, student organizers during the late 1960s critically examined the underlying reasons that produced massive Mexican emigration. Political activists Carlos Arango, José Jacques "Pepe" Medina, and Joel Ochoa organized to improve the political, economic, and social conditions in Mexico and hoped that in doing so, they could help deter or eliminate the exodus of trabajadores to the United States. Ironically, unexpected political persecution fueled their migration to the United States. As immigrant rights and labor activist Carlos Arango stated, "No sabía en 1968 que fuera acabar del otro lado de la frontera." [I did not know in 1968 that I would end up on the other side of the border].¹² Mobilizing around a number of key issues, students like Arango participated in multiple demonstrations calling out the government's complicity in prioritizing

¹¹ Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*, 183.

¹² 1968: *From Mexico City to Chicago*, Casa Michoacán, Chicago, IL Monday, October 6, 2008.

corporate interests and foreign investment over the needs of the average Mexican struggling to make ends meet.¹³ Thusly, charging the Mexican and United States government with creating the economic conditions for the mass exodus of Mexican trabajadores [workers], a disposable and expendable force. Organizers in Mexico discussed, debated, and theorized the possible ways to challenge the system that funneled the mass movement of trabajadores to el norte.

Students staged numerous protests that fed into the formation of the broader student movements of 1968 held in Mexico City.¹⁴ The approaching 1968 Olympics in Mexico City only exacerbated the volatile political climate. Students called out President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz for ignoring their concerns while the country invested hundreds of millions of pesos [Mexican currency] to prepare for the renowned international sports competition. As the student movement intensified, the Mexican government prepared to squash the demonstrations once and for all.¹⁵ Interior Secretary Luis Echeverría Álvarez authorized paramilitary and military officials to suppress the situation. Agents lashed out against the student protestors in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas [Three Culture Plaza] on October 2, 1968. The attack resulted in the injuries, fatalities, and disappearances. This bloodshed of hundreds of students is popularly known as the Tlateloco Massacre.¹⁶

Medina stated, “I recall the massacre on October 2 in La Plaza de Tres, where more than

¹³ At the same time, just as Mexican activists protested the Mexican government’s unjust practices and human rights violations so did other activists across the globe protested in solidarity.

¹⁴ Activists also voiced the need to expand educational opportunities, such as establishing Preparatorios Populares [Community-based High Schools]. At the university level, students voiced their rights to free speech and autonomous action. They demanded an end to violent tactics and retaliation authorized by university officials to quell the student protests.

¹⁵ The Mexican government asked and received military equipment from the United States government. See Kate Doyle, “Human Rights and the Dirty War in Mexico” (Washington, DC: George Washington University, National Security Archive, May 11, 2003).

¹⁶ Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 162. Luis Echeverría Álvarez was the president of Mexico from 1970 to 1976.

1,200 students, peasants and workers were killed by the army. Then more than 300 students in the leadership of the movement were arrested and put in jail.”¹⁷ The Mexican government exercised draconian tactics to cull student activism; the number of dead in the Tlateloco Massacre remains disputed.¹⁸ Global attention to these heavy-handed attacks on the students led the International Olympic Committee to consider canceling the games; in the end, the competitions proceeded as scheduled.¹⁹

In addition to the killings and officially acknowledged arrests, students also began mysteriously disappearing in the aftermath of the massacre. The state detained hundreds of others, some for the alleged possession of weapons.²⁰ According to Medina, police and military officials imprisoned individuals, sometimes without formally filing charges. These intimidation tactics weakened, but did not eradicate activism. Medina related, “The students’ demands now became the demands of the people.”²¹ Though activists sought to broaden the movement by building coalitions, the state managed to weaken the movement and silence activists.

¹⁷ “Struggles on Both Sides of the Border: An Interview with Jose “Pepe” Medina,” *Keep Strong*, April 1977, 35, Catherine Archibald Personal Collection, Chicago, IL.

¹⁸ The official numbers are disputed. According to U.S. government records of the U.S. embassy in Mexico, 150-200 students were killed. See Kate Doyle, “Human Rights and the Dirty War in Mexico” (Washington, DC: George Washington University, National Security Archive, May 11, 2003), 73.

¹⁹ On October 16, 1968, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, two African American athletes who won the gold and bronze medal respectively in a track competition, displayed a black power salute, a sign of black pride, at the awards ceremony. The athletes also wore the Olympic Project for Human Rights badges, including Australian Peter Norman, the silver medalist for the track competition. On a global stage, these Olympians called attention to the racist practices of the United States and social injustices on a broader scale. Consequently, Smith and Carlos faced both negative and positive reactions. On the one hand, supporters praised these athletes for the courage to publicly display discontent with the United States in this international forum. In contrast, others criticized the athletes for protesting at a public, international venue. Ultimately, the committee suspended the athletes from participating in future Olympic Games.

²⁰ ““Struggles on Both Sides of the Border: An Interview with Jose “Pepe” Medina,” *Keep Strong*, April 1977, 35, Catherine Archibald Personal Collection, Chicago, IL.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Fearing for their lives, Carlos Arango, José “Pepe” Jacques Medina, Joel Ochoa, and many other activists fled to the United States as *de facto* political refugees; a migration stream certainly not recognized by the United States government. They turned to political allies in the United States for support, including Humberto “Bert” Corona, the co-founder and director of Centro de Acción Social Autónomo-Hermandad General de Trabajadores [Center for Autonomous Social Action-General Brotherhood of Workers] or CASA.²² Arango believed that the United States government would not condone the unlawful entry of this cohort of activist migrants. Carlos Arango stated, “Nunca pedí el asilo político, no se dio la cuestión.” [I never asked for political refuge that never became a point.] For one, the United States government ideologically and materially supported Mexico’s aggressive efforts to eradicate the student demonstrations.²³ In 1971 Mexican President Luis Echeverría Álvarez cautioned President Nixon of the imminent dangers of “communism” spilling into the United States if he not aid Mexico; the United States government authorized the support.²⁴ It was improbable that the United States government would grant asylum for Mexican activists clearly associated with anti-capitalism and connected with U.S.-based activists labeled as potential threats and under surveillance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.²⁵ Each country played its own role in containing and eliminating communism or any activity that the government labeled as

²² Some went directly to Los Angeles and became involved in CASA there; however, many feared the FBI surveillance and harassment of CASA, so they relocated to Chicago and joined the CASA chapter there.

²³ The Mexico government asked and received military equipment from the United States government. Kate Doyle, “Human Rights and the Dirty War in Mexico” (Washington, DC: George Washington University, National Security Archive, May 11, 2003).

²⁴ Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 161-162.

²⁵ COINTEL Radical organizations in the United States, such as the Black Panthers and the Young Lords, faced intense Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) scrutiny and police surveillance.

“communist.”²⁶ Fueled by a transnational understanding of politics, Arango, Medina, and Ochoa activists became important leaders in Chicago and in the United States, more broadly.²⁷

La Dieciocho: The Heart of the Movimiento

Informed by a diversity of political streams, la dieciocho represented the heart of Chicago’s Movimiento, not to say that mobilization did not exist in other parts of the city.²⁸ In 1968, Mario Castillo’s art *Metaphysics* launched a movement of Mexican murals in Pilsen. Artists, including Carlos Córtez, and Marcos Raya, created vibrant cultural and political expressions in the area.²⁹ On another cultural front in the late 1960s, a group of youth formed a local chapter of the Brown Berets, a Chicano nationalist group.³⁰ Most of these activists were aware of events occurring elsewhere, and reached out to Chicano and other Latino activists working in different places. For example, a number of young Latino Chicagoans traveled by bus from Chicago to Denver, Colorado to attend the soon-to-be-famous 1969 Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, sponsored by Corky Gonzales’ local organization Crusade for Justice.³¹ In addition, mujeres

²⁶ Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 161; Kate Doyle, “Human Rights and the Dirty War in Mexico” (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, National Security Archive, May 11, 2003).

²⁷ Carlos Arango and Joel Ochoa remained in the United States whereas Pepe Medina returned to Mexico City years later. Today, they each continue their political involvement in immigration and labor issues in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Mexico City.

²⁸ Lilia Fernández, “*Latina/o Migration and Community Formation in Postwar Chicago: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Gender, and Politics, 1945-1975*” (PhD thesis, University of California, San Diego, 2005), 79-141. Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*.

²⁹ Rita Arias Jirasek and Carlos Tortolero, *Images of America: Mexican Chicago* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 98 and 106. Artists Marcos Raya, Salvador Vega, and Carlos “Moth” Barrera worked on the murals at Casa Aztlán.

³⁰ For more information on the Brown Berets, see David Montejano, *Sancho’s Journal: Exploring the Political Edge with the Brown Berets*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).

³¹ For more on this conference, see Ernesto B. Vigil, *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government’s War on Dissent*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).

[women] from Illinois, including Chicago attended the 1971 Conferencia de Mujeres Por La Raza [Conference of Women for the People] in Houston, Texas.³² In *Chicanas of 18th Street*, scholar Leonard Ramírez documents the social, political, educational, and cultural experiences of six Chicana organizers of El Comité, including María Gamboa, Isaura González, Victoria Pérez, Magda Ramírez-Castañeda, and Cristina Vital. Librería Nuestro Continente, Chicago's first Chicana/o bookstore, served as their headquarters from where they held planning meetings for many community endeavors in the early 1970s. Fueled by their educational experiences and a growing political consciousness, many of Pilsen's Mexican American youth soon emerged as important community leaders.

Pilsen's local public schools Froebel School (freshmen center) and Harrison High School were both troubled by terrible conditions, structurally, socially, and academically.³³ Mexican American student Iris Ibarra remembered having lead-bearing paint chips fall into her hair during class because "they'd get knocked off the ceiling when the other students had gym upstairs." Witnessing fights in the hallways on a daily basis, Mexican American Victoria Meza feared for her safety at school. She also worried about gang violence on her way to and from school. Mexican American student Nancy Enríquez detested school. She found it boring and irrelevant. When Carlos Heredia's history teacher characterized Pancho Villa, a Mexican revolutionary leader, as a bandit,

³² Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 161; Maylei Blackwell, "Archival Activism and the Politics of Chicana/o Print and Digital Communities April 19, 2013," The Mexican American Archival Enterprise at the Benson Latin American Collection: A Historical Approach.

³³ Froebel was the freshman branch of Harrison High School, to protest the ill conditions there. It was located on 21st Street and Damen Avenue.

he fervently refuted the educator's claim.³⁴ The teacher punished Heredia for bringing in his knowledge and assessment of Villa's life and politics. He detested and resisted the educational material and resources delivered in class because it made no or little mention of Ethnic Studies—scholarly inquiries of the experiences of African Americans, Latinas/os, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other racial/ethnic groups. In the following years, Heredia took it upon himself to learn these underrepresented histories by attending various Chicano student conferences in the Midwest, participating in independent study groups, and attending colloquia, events, and workshops.

Similar to the walkouts of various high school students in 1968 and 1969 during the Chicana/o movement in Los Angeles, California, Denver, Colorado, San Antonio, Kingsville, Abilene, and Crystal City in Texas and in other U.S. cities, Latina/o and African American youth at Harrison High School organized a series of social protests in 1968.³⁵ Community leader Rudy Lozano, then a sophomore at Harrison High School, participated in the 1968 protest.³⁶ In 1970, Lozano co-organized—among many other student leaders—the walkouts at Harrison High School. Students demanded better structural, social, and academic conditions at school, including a culturally inclusive curriculum, one that integrated African American and Latina/o history, an effective bilingual education program to meet the needs of English language learners. Leaders also pushed for the hiring of Latina/o and African American faculty and staff, those who reflected the backgrounds and histories of the student body.

³⁴ Carlos Heredia, panelist. "Oral Histories of Activism in Mexican Chicago" (Chicago: Casa Aztlán and Illinois Humanities Council, January 28, 2009).

³⁵ Carlos Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, and Power: the Chicano Movement* (New York: Verso, 1989). In 1968, following Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, African American students demanded a culturally relevant curriculum, the recruitment and retention of African American teachers and staff among others.

³⁶ Rudy Lozano, Jr., *Rudy Lozano: His Political Development and Involvement*, unpublished paper.

Paralleling national trends of Latinas/os, Harrison High School had low graduation rates, and even lower rates of college-bound students.³⁷ Disengaged and non-culturally relevant teaching caused many youth to drop out. Other students left school in order to work to help alleviate economic pressures at home. Some pursued part-time employments while others sought full-time employment to bridge the financial gap at home. Or, if Latina/o youth completed their high school degrees, they often entered the entry-level jobs as semi-skilled workers—as sometimes teachers’ low expectations funneled students to pursue identities as menial laborers. Other students pursued vocational training to become electricians, construction workers, or welders. Youth also enlisted in the military, as draftees or of their own volition; yet, historically and in the current juncture, military recruiters target working-class and youth of color. All in all, ideas of attending college hardly existed, if at all. A university education seemed unattainable for many high school youth. Very few youth received the appropriate college readiness skills and the proper mentorship to make higher education a reality. Of the low number of local high school graduates who enrolled in an institution of higher education, many attended Loop Junior College or the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UICC) as well as other institutions.³⁸

Since the Chicago Board of Education neglected to ameliorate conditions at Froebel School and Harrison High School, Pilsen residents demanded the construction of

³⁷ Tara J. Yosso and Daniel G. Solórzano, “Leaks in the Chicana and Chicano Educational Pipeline,” *Latino Policy & Issues Brief*, Number 13, March 2006, University of California, Los Angeles, Chicano Studies Research Center.

³⁸ Loop Junior College was founded in 1962. In 1987, the higher education institution changed its name to Harold Washington College in commemoration of the late mayor, the first African American mayor. In 1982 the University of Illinois Chicago Circle (UICC) changed its name to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC).

a new high school. Many joined the community efforts to fight for a local public school for high school students. Pilsen Neighbors Community Council (PNCC), a civic organization founded in 1953, played an important role in the fight for the high school. By the late 1950s Mexican American participation grew in PNCC, some of whom undertook leadership roles.³⁹ PNCC adopted a community organizing approach coined by leftist Saul D. Alinsky. His book *Rules for Radicals*, published in 1971, provided key lessons for working within the system to initiate change. Mexican American PNCC leaders changed the organization's focus. They organized the annual community festival, Fiesta del Sol [the Sun Festival], began in 1972. The PNCC fight for a high school attracted a wide variety of organizers, including Rudy Lozano. During his sophomore year of college, Lozano joined the PNCC team as a part-time organizer.⁴⁰ Lozano enthusiastically worked on PNCC's campaign for a new high school. Collective efforts materialized into establishment of Benito Juárez High School that opened in 1977.

In college, Rudy Lozano—like many others—collaborated with other student organizers. At their new institutions of higher education, they continued to build on their organizing skills gained from the high school walkouts or experiences with community activism. Certainly, not having previous experiences in organizing did not exclude students from getting politically involved in college. Leaders formed and participated in various groups. At Loop College, they formed the Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS) to generate political and cultural awareness of Latinas/os. At UICC,

³⁹ Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 4th edition, Longman, 2000, 318. See Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, 37.

⁴⁰ Guadalupe Lozano, *Oral History*, Interview, Dr. Louise Año Nuevo Kerr Papers, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 1, Folder 8, Part B, page 9, line 14. (1996); *Rudy Lozano: His life, His people*, 103.

students raised their concerns over the recruitment and retention of Latina/o students, staff, and faculty to the university administration. Since the Deans, Vice Chancellors, and Chancellor neglected their concerns, activists found creative ways to bring the upper-management to meet with student leaders. In 1971, students staged a sit-in. They stopped the elevators leading to the chancellor's office located in the top floor of University Hall (UH). With bullhorns, students listed their demands. As activist Guadalupe "Lupe" Lozano shared, "This lasted for a couple of days. They [students] were arrested. Then, we posted bail and they came right back to UH."⁴¹ This demonstrated their steadfast determination to improve conditions for Latinas/os in college.

For many, political organizing came at great emotional, academic, and financial costs. Students often experienced retaliation in covert and overt forms, such as police brutality. Some faced disciplinary action by university officials for their political actions (suspensions, expulsions). In the end, students sacrificed their education for future generations of students. The student mobilization at UIUCC resulted in the creation of the Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services (LARES), a program designed to recruit Latina/o students to the university and to provide support for Latina/o students enrolled in the university.⁴² This student activism mirrored the struggles, efforts, and dedication of students and community members in the 1960s and 1970s, and since then, in the fight for ethnic studies, an academic and political project that charts multiple

⁴¹ Guadalupe Lozano, *Oral History*, Interview, Dr. Louise Año Nuevo Kerr Papers, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 1, Folder 8, Part B. Line 14. (1996).

⁴² The LARES office is still in existence at the University of Illinois at Chicago today.

structures of domination, theorizes social possibilities, and fosters social action and change.⁴³

Different hues of political organizing all informed Chicago's Movimiento [Movement]. Many activists—some immediately, others gradually—adopted the usage of Chicana/o to signify political consciousness, pride, and empowerment. At the same time, many of them expressed an immigrant sensibility as they themselves were immigrant students, came from mixed status families, or regularly interacted with immigrants. In certain instances, at least some ethnic Mexicans in Chicago dismissed or at least acted with ambivalence about the usage of Chicana/o as a label of self-identity, much less collective political and cultural identity for the entire community.⁴⁴ Given this context, community organizers bickered over the political, cultural, and ethnic contours of Chicana/o and Mexican identities so much so that Pilsen activists reached what scholar Leonard Ramírez describes as the “Chicago compromise,” the usage of the bifurcated term, Mexicano/Chicano. It became a way to argue “for the coexistence and/or blend for the full range of ethnic identities without giving preference to any one.”⁴⁵ The names of political groups sometimes reflected the particularities of Chicago identity politics—where Chicano and Mexicano identity politics worked with and against each other—for instance, the UICC student group: the Chicano-Mexicano Student Union.

⁴³ The field originated as a result of mass mobilizations led by students of color who were inspired by the civil rights movement. During the 1968-1969 academic year, leaders of Black Student Union and a broad coalition of participants formed the Third World Liberation Front. By leading a historic strike against the administration at San Francisco State College (now known as San Francisco State University), activists successfully pressured officials to institutionalize an ethnic studies department, the first unit of its kind at an institution of higher education in the United States.

⁴⁴ Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*, 24; Rudolfo Acuña, *Occupied America*.

⁴⁵ According to Leonard Ramírez, “the bifurcated name acknowledges the participation of ethnically identified Mexicans and those who framed their identity at the intersection of two cultures and national experiences.” Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*, 183.

Chicago's Mexican American activists often drew on Chicana/o and Mexican identities interchangeably as many exhibited an immigrant sensibility and an affiliation to a Mexican identity because their own parents and grandparents had migrated from Mexico. In some ways, it could be argued that this reflected the local sense that Chicago's Mexicans had a historical legacy of labor migration and not one of territorial colonialism. Renewed waves of Mexican migration to the United States generated the integration of recent immigrants among extended families, thereby keeping ethnic Mexican communities freshly and firmly rooted in Mexico. For a cohort of activists in Pilsen, using the historical narrative of the territorial conquest of the American Southwest as a political tool for claiming rights, space, and dignity fails to capture the specificity of Chicago's Mexican labor migration. In this regard, anthropologist Nicholas De Genova offers "Mexican Chicago" as a theoretical concept. He defines this idea as "a transnational conjunctural space—a Chicago that is practically and materially implicated in Mexico and thus, a city that can be understood to belong meaningfully to Latin America."⁴⁶ Rather than the territorial conquest of the U.S. Southwest, "Mexican Chicago" builds on the historical legacy of labor migration spanning over a century where economic, social, familial, and political ties continue to link communities in the United States and immigrant-sending regions of Mexico in unequal ways. Yet, this conceptualization of a Mexican Chicago centers the political and economic relationship between the United States and Mexico that neoliberal policies, namely the North American Free Trade Agreement have informed.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 7.

⁴⁷ For instance, the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement has produced the conditions for Mexican labor migration, as many farmers could not afford to compete with U.S. companies in corn production.

Other activists strategically espoused a collective ethnic Mexican identity in a different way: as a means to organize for resources, representation, and better conditions.

In *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, sociologist Felix Padilla explains,

Of great significance is the realization by Mexican leaders of uniting under one ethnic community of interests.... This new ethnic innovation points to the common similarities shared by ‘all’ Mexicans in the city, and it also indicated that the newly emerging Mexican leadership was more aware of the political importance of ethnicity and/or ethnic solidarity in American society. In other words, the new leaders realized that there was more to gain as one citywide Mexican ethnic group than as separate Mexican groups representing the interests of individual neighborhoods.⁴⁸

Chicago’s Mexican-origin residents developed an understanding of a collective, citywide ethnic identity that built on local issues and expanded beyond their local neighborhood identities. Uniting under a collective Mexican identity proved critical while confronting questions of inclusion and membership—as the term that resonated with a larger population of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the city.

Despite ideological fissures, tensions, and conflicts, Chicana/o as a political identity—in its multiple forms—had important currency in Chicago in varying gradations. Mexican American Daniela Pérez recounted the excitement she found when learning about Chicanismo as a college student at UICC in the early 1970s. Pérez’s self-identification is aligned with sociologists Denise Segura and Beatriz Pesquera’s conceptualization of a Chicana Insurgent Feminist.⁴⁹ Attentive to the “how Chicana inequality results from three interrelated forms of stratification—race/ethnicity, class, and gender,” Pérez’s newfound Chicana identity was based “on a tradition of radical thought

⁴⁸ Felix Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness* (Notre Dame: University of Norte Dame Press, 1985), 38.

⁴⁹ Denise A. Segura and Beatriz M. Pesquera, “Beyond Indifference and Antipathy: The Chicana Movement and Chicana Feminist Discourse,” *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 19 (2) (1988): 69–92.

and political insurgency.”⁵⁰ Political consciousness drove Pérez to participate in activism for better conditions in her community. She explained how, at times, her family, peers, and community members questioned her usage of “Chicana.” Some believed Chicana/o was an identity reserved for those residing in the American Southwest. Others, unfamiliar with the term, expressed ambivalence or outright disdain.

Pérez, like many others, believed that Chicanismo transcended the geopolitical borders of the Aztlán; from her point of view, Chicanas/os invoked Aztlán wherever they lived. At the same time, Pérez’s new political consciousness prompted her to learn more. She stated, “you wanted to be aware of what happening in other (Latin American) countries. In other countries you had so much going on.” Pérez, like other Chicanas/os, navigated a rich political terrain of varying radical, third world ideologies and struggles for national liberation circulating during the late 1960s and early 1970s. At UICC, Pérez studied social movements in Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Chile. Fascinated by socialist politics of Chilean President Salvador Allende and those of Puerto Rican Independistas [pro-Puerto Rican Independence activists], Pérez developed a Third World leftist consciousness.

Chicano youth in Chicago created a local chapter of the Brown Berets and developed yet another strand of Chicanismo. Brown Berets modeled themselves after radical groups, such as the Black Panther Party. However, the Brown Berets as an

⁵⁰ Ibid., 82.

organization were nationalist and not necessarily Third World leftist in nature.⁵¹ Guided by principles of self-determination, the Brown Berets like other Chicano nationalist groups worked to create their own institutions. Members pushed to destroy existing structures because they considered them to be inherently corrupt. The Brown Berets had a majority male membership. Many members had a keen sense of street politics, including some who were former gang members who gained a political understanding of the oppressive forces that structured their social and economic realities.

In 1970, the Chicago chapter of the Brown Berets closed down the immigrant settlement center Howell Neighborhood House because it neglected to cater to the growing ethnic Mexican population in Pilsen.⁵² They renamed the newly controlled settlement house, Casa Aztlán as a way to institutionalize Chicano pride. Its mission statement noted that, “Like the original settlement house, Casa Aztlán provides community residents with a variety of services needed to adapt to life in a new urban environment while preserving their culture and maintaining their values.”⁵³ Muralists, including Marcos Raya, Salvador Vega, Carlos “Moth” Barrera, and others proudly used Chicano and Mexican imagery in the murals adorning Casa Aztlán. The emphasis on Chicana/o and Mexican cultural pride signified the key difference from previous administrations of the neighborhood house.

According to Mexican immigrant David León, the “Brown Berets (estaban) involucrado en toda la luchas. Lucha para la escuela Benito Juárez, para las huelgas, para

⁵¹ Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 7.

⁵² Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007), 24.

⁵³ “History of Casa Aztlán”, accessed May 27, 2013, <http://www.casaaztlan.org/history>.

todo siempre estaba allí.” [Brown Berets were involved in all of the struggles. The fight for Benito Juárez High School, for the strikes, they were always there for everything.] As with perhaps better-known Brown Beret chapters in the Southwest, Chicago’s Brown Berets undertook a variety of community issues. They fought police brutality. They worked to deter the negative impact of neighborhood gangs on Latina/o youth, especially young men. They established the Benito Juárez Free Health Clinic at Casa Aztlán. Political curiosity and consciousness encouraged many ethnic Mexican, Chicana/o, and Latina/o youth to volunteer at Casa Aztlán in different capacities.

However, for some Mexican Americans and newly arrived Mexican immigrants, the Brown Berets’ hetero-patriarchal and militant tactics deterred them from participation in Casa Aztlán activities. Generational and ideological differences, and, in many cases, cultural dissimilarities contributed to this clash. For instance, some members of the Brown Berets critiqued a beloved Mexican community doctor, Dr. Jorge Prieto, who also worked at the clinic. The community doctor had a long history of working with Chicago’s Mexican immigrant community. The younger group of Brown Berets and the older, well respected, service-oriented Dr. Prieto and his supporters clashed. Many believed that the Brown Berets feared losing control over the community clinic. Dr. Prieto did not engage in oppositional politics. He served as the President of the Chicago Board of Health.⁵⁴

Non-violent direct action and confrontation represented one of many strategies used during the Movimiento. With a clear demand to Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to hire more Latinas/os employees, leaders, such as Lola Navarro, blocked traffic at the

⁵⁴ Jorge Prieto, *Harvest of Hope: The Pilgrimage of a Mexican American Physician* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1989).

main intersection of Eighteenth Street and Ashland Avenue. This form of civil disobedience came to an end when police officers arrested the protestors. Following a philosophy of non-violence echoed the strategies used by civil rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and the labor leader Cesar Chavez, activists continued to protest against the CTA's discriminatory practices against Latinas/os until it resulted in policy changes. These tactics revealed a difference in the community between those who advocated non-violence and incrementalism and those who supported political strategies and philosophies that condoned and encouraged confrontational and oppositional politics.

One of the key disagreements of the times amongst Chicana/o, Mexican, Mexican American, and Latina/o political organizers was whether to reform the system or overthrow existing structures of institutionalized power. Groups, like the Mexican American Council on Education, chose to reform the system, that is, to work within the system. Also inspired by the Chicano Movement, the Mexican American Council on Education, or MACE—a group of teacher-activists who worked in the Chicago Public School system, fought for the needs of the growing population of ethnic Mexican students in the city. MACE adopted a social reformist approach committed to advocating for institutional policy changes to improve equal access and opportunities for ethnic Mexican families. In the words of Evelyn Lira, a MACE leader, “There were few (Mexican American and Chicana/o) teachers. We would all get together and try to strategize. In the ‘70s, we were working to organize the Mexican teachers and encouraging young people to go to college, to get degrees, to become part of the educational system.” MACE members attended various educational conferences to

connect with other Chicana/o and Mexican American teacher activists across the country. Lira's personal notes record some of these trips. On December 3, 1970, she documented on a small memo pad, MACE members attended a Chicano conference in Minnesota and another one in Colorado on March 26, 1970. MACE also actively participated in teacher recruitment efforts to attract Chicana/o and Mexican American candidates to apply for positions as teachers in the Chicago Public School system. Community empowerment would come from improving economic, social, and educational opportunities.

MACE leaders also intervened to challenge many anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican policies and practices. MACE members, parents, and community members spoke against a proposed policy requiring the documentation of a student's immigration and citizenship status. They believed that documenting a student's immigration or citizenship status would be a discriminatory practice that would only lead to further discrimination. They feared that if school administrators collected this information, then teachers would unfairly treat students without papers as inferior. As Lira explained,

We fought back so that [immigration status] shouldn't be considered, but that was at the school level. Each school had different policies and it depended on the principal. They didn't have to. And of course then came the decision that they couldn't ask for immigration status.

MACE formed to advocate for Mexican and Mexican American families by fighting for and creating better conditions and quality educational opportunities by working within the system.⁵⁵

All of these political differences were temporarily suspended as activists came together to deplore state violence against an undocumented community resident, Margarito Rosendo Padilla. Community leaders had already developed a sense of

⁵⁵ Some MACE members worked at Jungman Elementary School. One continues to work there today.

residents' distress over the activity of immigration officials in Pilsen. Consequently, many indisputably took action when state agents wounded Margarito Rosendo Padilla. Through community organizing and campaigns, leaders uncovered the growing immigration concerns in the neighborhood. Lupe Lozano described how she gained consciousness of immigration issues. She stated in an oral history interview,

To get the new school we had to go door to door to get petitions signed for the new school. That lasted for about two months. Because of that struggle and the work that the community, parents, and students did with Pilsen neighbors, we were able to get Benito Juárez. It was during this time, that we realized how people were living, how they were scared. We realized that a lot of our neighbors were undocumented. I think that opened the door for the undocumented. It exposed the conditions that they were living in and the fear of 'la migra.'⁵⁶

As Rudy and Lupe Lozano mobilized for the creation of a local high school, they learned of residents' fear of deportation. Face-to-face time while door knocking deepened organizers' understanding of the prevalence of anxieties penetrating the everyday lives of newly arrived Mexican immigrants, especially the undocumented. Possession of citizenship or authorized immigration status sometimes mediated this terror, and sometimes it did not. Rampant fear of the INS inevitably raised new questions about inclusion and representation of this vulnerable segment of community residents. This was not particular to Chicago, but this concern also occurred in the U.S. Southwest as well as other parts of the United States.

⁵⁶ Lupe Lozano is Rudy Lozano's widow. See Guadalupe Lozano, *Oral History*, Interview, Dr. Louise Año Nuevo Kerr Papers, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 1, Folder 8. (1996).

The Emergence of Sin Fronteras Politics

Immigration and Naturalization Services [INS] officials (what we now know as Immigration and Customs Enforcement or ICE) routinely intimidated ethnic Mexican residents. Agents questioned their immigration status. Interrogation sessions often lasted more than twenty minutes making people late to work, school, or church.⁵⁷ Having armed federal officers patrol the neighborhood only exacerbated community frustration with the state. On a Thursday evening in early November 1972, Margarito and Antonio Rosendo Padilla, two brothers from Mexico, panicked when they saw immigration officials staging a raid in Pilsen. The Rosendo Padilla brothers were undocumented. Antonio did not get away. However, the encounter with INS erupted into violence. When Margarito tried to help his brother escape, INS agent Mayo Baker fired his weapon. He shot Margarito in the chest. Pilsen had a history of INS harassment—but not to this violent extent. According to an article that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on November 11, 1972, the journalist Robert Davis wrote: “A crowd gathered in the predominately Latin area, and persons began shoving and hitting immigration agents. The agents were rescued by several Chicago policemen. In the confusion, Antonio managed to escape.”⁵⁸ This coverage frames the officials as benign state actors as the police officers had to “save” the INS agents. The local residents intervened in what was perceived as an unfair situation; this violence against Margarito Rosendo Padilla was understood as an attack

⁵⁷ Many of my interviewees reported that INS questioning disrupted everyday affairs. These unannounced INS apprehensions and raids often caused anxiety. People worried that they would be late to work. INS apprehensions raised great concern because individuals did not know if the government officials would delay or deport them. People worried about the immediate and long-term consequences of these random INS questioning sessions.

⁵⁸ Robert Davis, “FBI Called In: Chicano Shooting Quiz Is Ordered,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 11, 1972.

against the community. The usage of “Latin” in the newspaper reflects its historically specific usage to refer to Latinas/os during this time. Although the article’s headline used the term “Chicano,” the reporter made no mention of Pilsen’s cultural specificity as a predominately “Mexican and Chicana/o” area. Instead, the article lumps Pilsen as part of a larger undifferentiated “Latina/o” community. The coverage demonstrates how immediate action was taken in relation to the Rosendo Padilla shooting, which converted aggravation into immediate mobilization against INS practices.

The day following, at least twenty protestors picketed the Dirksen Federal Building in downtown Chicago to denounce the shooting and overall inhumane INS tactics.⁵⁹ Twenty attendees, the number documented in the *Chicago Tribune* is an undercount as to what Pilsen residents remembered. Mexican American Felipe Aguirre explained,

Basically our whole participation in that process was to ask for the resignation of the INS director. We took a big march from Pilsen all the way to Jackson Street where the INS offices were at the time. He was shot ... on a Monday. And by Wednesday, we took like a thousand people down to the federal building to demand the resignation of the INS director.

Protestors demanded that U. S. Attorney James R. Thompson direct the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to probe the Rosendo Padilla incident. Thompson agreed and also ordered the public protection division to document other complaints of INS harassment. Given the violence enacted at the hands of state actors, in this case, immigration agents, activists did not and could not rely on the state for protection. Instead, they pushed to hold the state accountable for its problematic tactics. The Rosendo Padilla ordeal led

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Mexicans and Mexican Americans to mobilize around immigration issues, and their formation of what I theorize as a “sin fronteras” theory of practice.

Rosendo Padilla experienced violence at the hands of INS agents. Immigration and border enforcement officials functioned as a paramilitary or quasi-police department that bullied an already vulnerable community. Officials executed operations while armed, and in this case, they seriously wounded a resident. The medical care team at a health clinic on 18th Street and Alport Avenue did not admit Rosendo Padilla. Perhaps, the health clinic did not have the proper facilities to attend Rosendo Padilla’s injuries and this is why he was directed to Illinois Research Hospital where he underwent open-heart surgery.⁶⁰ In *Chicanas of 18th Street*, narrator Magda Ramírez-Castañeda states her suspicions of Rosendo Padilla’s operation as “science experimentation.”⁶¹ All in all, Pilsen community residents remembered previous incidents where medical clinics turned away the undocumented or experimented on marginalized communities. This case also raises the question of access to quality health care that marginalized communities have historically had to contend with, and continue to do so, just as they have struggled with issues of criminalization and other forms of state subjugation. Rosendo Padilla died a few years later from complications from this incident

⁶⁰ Leonard G. Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 159. This text states Rosendo Padilla was taken to the University of Chicago Hospital. This text also uses a different spelling Resendo not Rosendo.

⁶¹ Ibid., Ramírez-Castañeda’s frenzy of the possibility of science experimentation on Rosendo Padilla’s body is based on the knowledge of historical accounts of science experimentation, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment and sterilizations of Puerto Rican and other women. See Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

The *Chicago Tribune* narrates the Rosendo Padilla ordeal distinctly, perhaps with boldface lies. According one article, “Baker almost had succeeded in putting handcuffs on Antonio when he saw Margarito lunge at him with a knife. The agent lifted his arms to ward off the attack and was cut in the hand. He then drew his gun and shot Rosendo once in the chest.”⁶² In another article, the reporter stated, “Padilla had attacked Mayo Baker, the INS agent with a knife before the shooting. Padilla was seriously wounded but has since recovered.”⁶³ In contrast, narrator Magda Ramírez-Castañeda in the book *Chicanas of 18th Street* states, “They [community residents] said he was eating in a restaurant and had a knife and that he was going to attack the immigration official, and that’s why they shot him.”⁶⁴ In another account, Felipe Aguirre explained the incident as follows,

First of all, the way that immigration took after him and shooting him. They shot him I think on 18th Street and Racine Avenue or somewhere around there. They [INS] did a raid in one of the local restaurants. I don’t remember if it was Cuernavaca, or Nuevo Leon, or one of the local restaurants there on 18th Street. He fled, like everybody would when people knew that immigration was coming. People took off. He ran across 18th Street. [...] by the laundromat [...] He ran across the street and they shot him. You don’t shoot anybody in the back. He was not a fleeing felon. Illegal immigration status has never been a felony.

Despite the conflicting accounts, one where Rosendo Padilla is shot in the back and another one he is shot in chest, the more important point is that community concerns with the presence of armed immigration officials in the neighborhood. Moreover, the sources of these differing accounts show how the state fabricated fictitious acts of violence by immigrants and counter memories of the community. In the former, Margarito is

⁶² Robert Davis, “FBI Called In: Chicano Shooting Quiz Is Ordered,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 11, 1972.

⁶³ Author unknown, “FBI check finds no harassment of Latinos here,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 30, 1973.

⁶⁴ Leonard G. Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 159.

portrayed as the instigator and the agents as victims that responded forcefully in self-defense. The news affirms the ideas of criminality already circulating about the undocumented in mainstream discourse. Padilla reacted in the face of violence and tried to protect himself and his brother. From Ramírez-Castañeda's account and Aguirre's words, we can see how residents used the memory of the Rosendo Padilla case as a tool of redemption. They organized an immigration conference in his honor months later that I will discuss shortly. Community residents also recovered the memory of Rosendo Padilla in oral histories and interviews.

The way the community united in November of 1972 to protest the INS officer's use of excessive force exemplified the emergence of a *sin fronteras* politics in Chicago immigrant organizing circles. Aguirre explained,

We were able to get the reforms out of that. It included that officers were not going to be pulling their guns. [It established] procedures and policies for people that were fleeing an INS officer. There were a lot of things that we did get, including the resignation of the director of INS at that time. And I don't know what happened to the actual officer that was involved. No me recuerdo [I don't remember] if he was reassigned or he was kicked out. So, that was basically the instigation. It was ... what lit the torch.

They called for the reformation of state policies, procedures, and practices, but this was not enough because it did not tackle the root of the problem—the global capitalism that has propelled, and continues to push *trabajadores* [Mexican workers] to the United States as well as the expendability of people without papers and its implication for the ethnic Mexican and Latina/o community.

El Partido de La Raza Unida, Electoral Politics

Against the backdrop of these pressing immigration issues, when the possibility of achieving Mexican American political representation presented itself in the early 1970s, Pilsen residents became involved in electoral politics. Some Latina/o residents in Pilsen were drawn to the possibility of improving their social conditions (housing, immigration, education, employment, health and other issues) through the ballot and the formation of an alternative political party. On September 29, 1972, an article in the *Latin Times*, a newspaper circulating in Chicago and in the Midwest, more broadly solicited the support of the community in promoting El Partido de La Raza Unida [La Raza Unida Party or LRUP], an alternative political party for Chicanas/os that was created in Texas.⁶⁵ Despite the political origins of the party, the article described the party “con character nacional para que todos nosotros, Chicanos, Mexicanos, Boricuas, Latinoamericanos, tengamos un medio para que seamos nosotros mismos los que rijamos nuestros propios destinos” [with a national character so that all of us, Chicanos, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Latin Americans have means from which to determine on our destinies].⁶⁶ The Illinois

⁶⁵ Juan Gómez-Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Ignacio García, *United We Win The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party*, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989); David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1995), 267. On January 12, 1970, José Ángel Gutiérrez founded LRUP, an alternative, ethnically based political party in Crystal City, Texas. Since Latinas/os consisted of a majority in some areas, many believed in the success of a separate party system for Chicanas/os. The party, however, experienced a short-lived success. It failed to bring in the numbers to support candidates because of the configurations of district maps, but more so, because of ideological clashes and the overall heterogeneity in political views within the Mexican American community. For more information on La Raza Unida Party, see Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. two-party dictatorship*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ Mexicans and Mexican Americans from the Midwest participated in the 1967 La Raza Unida Conference held in El Paso, Texas and the September 1972 national convention also in El Paso, Texas. See Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party*, 219, 200; Author unknown, “Partido La Raza Unida,” *Latin Times*, September 29, 1972.

representatives broadened the party's base in order to attract a broader pan-Latina/o base as well as an immigrant population. The article further stated:

En la Convención Nacional la delegación de Illinois presento un ideal y un programa para la creación del partido aquí en este estado. Este programa abarca una base practica y sobre puntos de imigración, educación, empleo, derechos civiles y economía en lo que afecta Latinoameririca y a nosotros en los barrios... a toda persona interesada en formar parte del Partido de la Raza Unida o de participar en cualquier evento que se lleve a cabo con fines de propagar este mismo comuniquese con: Juan Velasquez 243-850—o Angel Moreno 666-2669 (sic).⁶⁷

[At the National Convention, the Illinois delegation presented an idea and a program for the creation of a party in this state. This program will be based on practical matters and on issues of immigration, education, employment, civil rights, and the economy that affects Latin America and us in the barrio....anyone who is interested in forming part of the party or in participating in any event with the purpose of promoting this, get in touch with Juan Velasquez 243-850 or Angel Moreno 666-2669 (sic)]

La Raza Unida Party did not materialize as a “certified political party” in the city’s electoral political scene, but rather as an organization, albeit for a short period of time.⁶⁸

The political races in Chicago launched by La Raza Unida Party, though short-lived, and independent electoral politics enamored local residents.⁶⁹ Serving as consultants, seasoned LRUP organizers came from Texas to help with the campaign. LRUP members, for the most part, self-identified as Chicana/o as community activist

Isaura González in *Chicanas of 18th Street* stated,

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party*, 223.

⁶⁹ Juan Gómez-Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Ignacio García, *United We Win The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party*, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989); David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1995), 267. On January 12, 1970, José Ángel Gutiérrez founded LRUP, an alternative, ethnically based political party in Crystal City, Texas. Since Latinas/os consisted of a majority in some areas, many believed in the success of a separate party system for Chicanas/os. The party, however, experienced a short-lived success. It failed to bring in the numbers to support candidates because of the configurations of district maps, but more so, because of the heterogeneity in political views within the Mexican American community.

At one time, activists were trying to convince everyone to mark *Chicano* on the census. They wanted people to write in *Chicano* because there was no box for it. They were getting everybody to say they were Chicanos. Some Mexicans in OLAS were more open to thinking of themselves as Chicano, but others were not. The differences around identity might have played some small role in LRUP's short history in Chicago.⁷⁰

Despite these identity politics, the campaign headquarters of El Partido de La Raza Unida de Chicago- 18th Street Chapter became a site bursting with energy. Ethnic Mexicans were inspired by the possibility of securing Mexican American political representation in Pilsen.

In 1972, Mexican American Ruth "Rhea" Mojica-Hammer ran a campaign to represent the seventh congressional district in the United States House of Representatives against African American George W. Collins. With 10, 856 votes (16.09% of certified votes) independent candidate Mojica-Hammer lost the Democratic Primary Race (Illinois District 7) as Collins registered 56, 615 votes (83.91%).⁷¹ The opportunity for political representation arose once again on December 8, 1972 when United Airlines Flight 553 crashed near Chicago's Midway Airport, killing George W. Collins. However, Collin's widow, Cardiss Collins, ran to fill the congressional seat. Even so, campaign leaders decided to run a Mexican American candidate: Angel Moreno, a Vietnam veteran. Local organizers believed Moreno had a chance, even if small, at winning the election because of the small, but growing Latina/o presence in the predominately African American congressional district in Chicago's west side. As Mexican American educator Lydia

⁷⁰ Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*, 65.

⁷¹ An e-mail conversation with Mojica-Hammar's daughter Linda García Merchant reveals how on the night of the election. The television news station CBS declared Mojica-Hammar with a major lead. However, a news blackout occurred at 10:30pm, not an uncommon occurrence during election days. When the blackout was lifted, the final tally of certified votes led to a Collins victory. See "Our Campaigns," last accessed on May 25, 2013, <http://www.ourcampaigns.com/RaceDetail.html?RaceID=733984>

Dávila stated, “Essentially we were running up against a dead man and his wife, who were already institutions to the West side communities, especially the African American communities.” The reference to the political representation of George and Cardiss Collins as “institutions” indicates the difficulty in breaking the existing political structure and culture. It also suggests that the Collins as politicians had the support of the machine politics.

Dávila first learned of the Moreno campaign when a co-worker at the Centro de la Causa, a community center in Pilsen, passionately shared his experiences as a campaign volunteer.⁷² She clearly remembered, “Here is a Mexican that’s going to run for office. He’s going to try to make a difference.” Drawn to Third World Leftist politics, Dávila had no faith in working within the system as a means for community empowerment. Electoral affairs did not particularly interest her, Dávila never imagined herself dabbling with this type of mainstream politics, especially given the prevalence of the political machine. Nevertheless, the sheer excitement surrounding Moreno’s campaign drew her in just, as it did for many other Mexican Americans in Pilsen. Moreno managed to get on the ballot. Political scientist Armando Navarro notes Moreno “was required to submit nominating petitions bearing signatures of at least 5 percent of the district’s registered voters, which amounted to 6,700 names.”⁷³

On June 5, 1973, Angel Moreno and Republican candidate Lawrence “Lar” Daly lost the special election by a major landslide. However, only 22 percent of the district’s

⁷² For a history of El Centro de la Causa, see John Van Willigen, “Collaborative Research,” in *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*, ed. John V. Willigen et al. (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2002), 111-112.

⁷³ Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party*, 223-224.

registered voters participated in the special election.⁷⁴ Of the certified votes casted, Angel Moreno received 1,429 (3.9%), Lar Daly had 1,311 (3.58%), and Cardiss Collins won 33,875 votes (92.52%).⁷⁵ The overwhelming percentage is also a consequence of receiving machine-aligned endorsements, including the Cook County Democratic Central Committee. Local news articles reported suspected accusations, brawls, and voter fraud in this special election to ensure the Collins win.⁷⁶ Beginning with this victory, U.S. Representative Cardiss Collins served twelve consecutive terms, one of the longest serving African American women.⁷⁷ Despite the loss of Moreno and Mojica-Hammar in their respective races for political office, the campaign resulted in symbolic victories for the Mexican American community. For one, it strengthened and expanded social networks. In the words of Dávila, “What ended up happening is that it [the campaign] bought together a lot of different forces from all over the city. Interestingly enough, there were people [involved] from South Chicago, from Pilsen, and a lot of students from Loop College. There were students from the University of Iowa. It just brought a lot of people together.”

Certainly, involvement in electoral politics operated hand-in-hand with grassroots, alternative politics. Campaign participants honed Latinas/os’ organizing skills. Learning from one another, they expanded their knowledge of other struggles in the city, United States, and in the world. Dávila’s involvement in the Angel Moreno campaign stretched

⁷⁴ Author unknown, “Black Congresswoman Elected.” *The Milwaukee Star Times*, “June 14, 1973.

⁷⁵ U.S. Congressional Elections, 1788-1997, Michael J. Dublin, 684.

⁷⁶ Author unknown, “Blair Files in 7th—Horwitz Attempts to Misuse Collins,” *Chicago Metro News*, January 27, 1973; Phillip G. Smith, “Voter Fraud Is Still Rampant,” *Chicago Metro News*, April 21, 1973.

⁷⁷ *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-2007*, prepared under the direction of the Committee on House Administration of the U.S. House of Representatives, by the Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives.(Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008).

her political identity in complex ways. She continued to think about the Rosendo Padilla case and engaged immigration issues, more broadly. As an educator committed to fostering a critical consciousness, she remained involved in educational struggles too. Capturing this idea of stretched political lives, community resident Felipe Aguirre explained, “We weren’t just involved in La Raza Unida or in El Enfoque. Rather, we had influence over a lot of different actions because we were involved in many different groups.” Gaining rich experiences from working behind-the-scenes in a campaign, participants received on-the-ground education regarding Chicago’s political and social landscape. While many imagined future possibilities for more Latina/o political representation at the local and national level, they also clearly recognized the limitations of mainstream politics—working within the existing structures of domination. Observations such as these led the original members of the La Raza Unida Party to faction into two chapters, one with a reformist approach infused with cultural nationalism and the other adopting a Marxist line.⁷⁸

In the end, La Raza Unida Party could not effectively escape the stronghold of Chicago’s political machine, a powerful and intricate system of creating political alliances through various means, including bribing voters, politicians, and government officials.⁷⁹ The local political landscape also did not have a base of eligible voters to address the issues that preoccupied Chicago’s diverse Latina/o population, especially on immigration issues.⁸⁰ In addition, ideological clashes at the national level, tensions

⁷⁸ Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party*, 227, 228.

⁷⁹ Roger Biles. “Machine Politics,” *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago Historical Society, 2005), see <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/774.html>

⁸⁰ Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party*, 229.

around reformist politics, cultural nationalism, Marxism, and socialism also affected the local political scene.⁸¹ All of these reasons (and others) contributed to the demise of La Raza Unida Party in Chicago.

With the Rosendo Padilla incident recently imprinted in their minds, experiences, and visions, Aguirre, Lozano, Dávila, and other local organizers questioned the future direction of their political lives that stretched across a variety of forms of organizing. Immediately following the campaign, organizers fervently discussed whether engagement with electoral politics represented the main vehicle for community empowerment. As Dávila shared,

Electoral politics was the same monster with two heads: the Democrats and the Republicans. People were saying “Do we really want to do this? Or, do we want to organize the community?” People needed to be organized. Was it really electoral politics? Was it voter registration? So we made our decision to open up a store front. It was called *el enfoque* [the focus]. It was called that primarily to focus on the issues, to do forums about community issues, to do know your rights campaigns. This was all volunteer work. Essentially, we maintained the place either through fundraisers or donations.

Activists also recognized that the large and growing presence of Mexican immigrants in Pilsen stymied immediate victories in electoral politics. Campaign work, such as voter registration drives and door knocking revealed the ineligibility to vote for a growing segment of the Pilsen community.

After hours and hours of heated debates, bickering, diatribes, and soapbox speeches, organizers decided to build community without (solely) relying on electoral politics as the central framework. This decision did not preclude activists from future

⁸¹ Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party*, 221, 227, 228, 229, 263.

participation in voter registration drives, campaigns, and elections. Indeed, they recognized the importance of electing local, independent politicians committed to community interests, concerns, and issues. For example, activists lobbied politicians to vote against anti-immigrant legislation. Non-citizens also had a stake in electoral politics. They also participated in political campaigns, lobbying efforts, and endorsing pro-immigrant legislative bills. However, a different set of circumstances reinitiated electoral work in the late 1970s. The growing population of Mexican Americans eligible to vote and the death of Mayor Richard J. Daly in 1976 fostered the likelihood for political power at the local level. Community activists formed a coalition of progressive hopefuls, the Independent Political Organization.

After the Moreno campaign, community residents aligned with a Marxist ideology continued to use the political headquarters housed at 1859 S. Throop Street as an organizing space—excitement, energy, and the quest for social change was channeled in new and exciting directions. Since the site no longer functioned as an official branch of the LRUP, the group changed the office's name from La Raza Unida to El Enfoque de la Raza Unida [The Focus of the United Community], but simply referred to as El Enfoque. Residents held meetings, social events, political activities, and study circles at El Enfoque. There (and in other spaces), Mexican and Mexican American activists reconceptualized the terms of belonging in the nation and not let the legal designation of citizenship fracture, weaken, or tear apart the community. While they recognized the institutionalized barriers that produced differential treatment between citizens from non-citizens, Mexicans and Mexican Americans worked towards chipping away at social,

cultural, and national borders that often distanced them from each other. Sin fronteras politics fused concerns of the local residents while being attentive to the variegated experiences of citizens and non-citizens.

Pilsen leaders brought the neighborhood together, discussing the tensions, frictions, and conflicts within the larger ethnic Mexican community. This also partly stemmed from the change in demographics, with the growing influx of Mexican immigrants. Still, this collaboration was complicated and, at times, strained around issues of “legal” status. Lydia Dávila, a Pilsen community member, stated, “There was a little bit of tension between people that were born here and the ones that were born in Mexico. There was some collaboration, but it was hard. It was really hard.” And immigration officials sometimes capitalized on the citizen and non-citizen divisions within the community. Some Mexican Americans, especially those invested in their citizenship privilege, reported undocumented immigrants to immigration officials, or threatened to do so.

However, immigration harassment in the community only intensified even in light of the mobilization spurred by the Rosendo Padilla ordeal. As Mexican immigrant Tomás Santana stated, “Luego vino la necesidad de defenderse de la migra que iba a los cines, iglesias, paradas de tren, y las esquinas, cualquier lado que pudiera levantar.” [Then, the need arose to fight the INS, who went to the theatres, churches, train stops, and street corners, wherever they could sweep people.] Mexican Americans were not shielded from apprehension from INS officials. Citizenship offered little currency. The INS often used one’s physical appearance to determine a potential undocumented Mexican, a gaze that

has subjected brown bodies to suspicion. Yet, federal officials, such as Alva Pilliod, the district director of INS denied discrimination against ethnic Mexicans and Latinas/os in their day-to-day operations.⁸² According to the *Chicago Tribune* article, Pilliod refuted the idea that INS concentrated its efforts in Mexican and Latina/o communities. He did this by reporting that in March of 1973 the Chicago area INS apprehended 2,006 undocumented people that included those from Poland, Greece, India, and a variety of Latin American countries. Still, “88 to 90 per cent of those seized were from Mexico.”⁸³ To contradict his claims, twenty-five of the 326 people held one day were Mexican Americans indicating how citizens suffered from collateral “damage” of these racial profiling practices.

Quoted in the *Chicago Tribune*, Pilliod said, ““Our agents can spot illegal aliens.” He stated, “Our people can tell them by their manner of dress, their accents, the way they walk.”⁸⁴ With these problematic comments, Pilliod claimed that his agency did not discriminate. Yet, the idea that federal agents could “just tell” someone was undocumented exemplified the logics of racial profiling where the American was presumably white, middle-class, and an English-speaker. I surmise that the style of “dress” referred to working-class apparel or uniforms menial laborers worked, the linguistic accent indicated those learning English, and the “walk” to those quickly walking away from immigration officials. A week later on April 19, 1973, the *Chicago Tribune* once again featured the story reporting that Pilliod denied that his agency practiced any form of racial discrimination against Mexican Americans. Repeated

⁸² Robert Davis, “No Harassment U.S. Aide Says,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 12, 1973.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

coverage of the story suggests that importance of sharing that the investigation vindicated the INS from any wrongdoing. Denial of racial discrimination reduced the protestors' actions and demands as unfounded because apprehensions were about "illegality" and not race. It also illustrated the power of the INS to continue with its everyday practices in search for the illegal alien, one that was Mexican or Latina/o.

To intervene in this anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican discourse and INS practices, ethnic Mexican activists decided to organize a conference. Already drawn together by previous community organizing experiences, such as the high school walkouts, the fight for the local high school, campaigning for Ruth "Rhea" Mojica-Hammar and then Angel Moreno, the Rosendo Padilla mobilization, and many others, activists came together. Multiple organizations representing a wide variety of political ideologies and affiliations supported the immigration conference including the Benito Juarez Peoples Health Center, Brown Berets, CASA Los Angeles, Casa Aztlán, Centro de la Causa, La Raza Cosmica, Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Mujeres en Acción, National Coalition for Fair Immigration Laws & Practices, Nation Education Task Force de la Raza, Pilsen Neighbors Community Council, and the library of the Centro de la Causa.

Rudy Lozano, Linda Coronado, Guadalupe "Lupe" Lozano, and many other leaders organized a three-day symposium on January 18- 20, 1974. Acknowledging overall concerns of vulnerability, violence, and death for migrant workers, they dedicated the ¡Raza Si, Migra No! [Community Yes, INS No!] conference to Rosendo Padilla. The immigration forum also honored migrants who had died in a fatal accident on an

interstate expressway en route to the Midwest.⁸⁵ Under the banner of La Raza Unida Party [the United Community Party], flyers promoted the conference in both English and Spanish.

Ya es tiempo de que nos empecemos a organizar para luchar en contra de la represión que no traen las practicas y leyes de Inmigracion. El gobierno no puede seguir echandonose la culpa. Tenemos que luchar UNIDOS para: Parar las Deportaciones e botas la Ley Kennedy-Rodino (de Inmigracion); investigar las practicas del Dept. de Inmigracion; poner alto al terrorismo que existe en los barrios y para organizar una union de Trabajadore Inmigrantes. Basta Ya! [sic]

We've had enough of Immigration abuses! It is necessary that we organize ourselves to fight against the repressive situation faced by many of our people who are here without documents. Only organized and United can we: Stop Deportations, Smash the Kennedy-Rodino Immigration Bill, End the Exploitation of those who can't defend themselves, Stop the harassment of the people in our communities, Expose the U.S. Immigration Dept. and Form a Union of Immigrant Workers. Basta Ya! [Enough Now!] [sic]⁸⁶

Stressing the need to fight for undocumented workers, it was simply unfair to harass them. However, the reason the residents also mobilized was because immigration officials targeted ethnic Mexicans, as well as other Latinas/os, which highlighted for them that the harassment was fundamentally shaped by ideas about race.

Banners with slogans such as La Raza Unida La Hace La Union Fuerza [the Community United Makes a Strong Union] adorned the conference site. The conference took place in Pilsen, at El Enfoque [The Focus] headquarters, Villa Theatre, Union Hall, and at the Centro de la Causa. They advertised using slogans, such as La Raza Unida La Hace La Union Fuerza [the Community United Makes a Strong Union]. The conference

⁸⁵ Centro de Acción Social Autónomo Papers, 1963-1978, M0325, Stanford University Special Collections.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

planning committee scheduled time for watching political films, such as *Viva la Raza* [the Community Lives] about the Chicano movement, cultural activities, and a benefit dance. The forum drew in Pilsen residents and other interested people. They invited immigrant rights and labor activists from California, New York, Texas, Ohio, and other states. Organizing efforts show that the concern was not specific to Chicago, but it was also a national issue, that moved the conversation out of Chicano rights of the nationalist movement and into a more pan-ethnic, mixed status political coalition.

Labor leader Humberto “Bert” Corona of CASA Los Angeles; Mario Cantú of Centro Cultural Ruben Salazar—an organization in San Antonio, Texas that worked against the INS; and María Piedra of CLAN, a group that fought unjust immigration laws in New York, delivered the keynote speeches.⁸⁷ Bert Corona’s speech was entitled, “Organizing for Protecting the Civil and Human Rights of the Foreign Born.” His presence generated an additional layer of advertising for the conference. Corona corresponded with his contacts in Illinois, inviting them to attend the conference.⁸⁸ Others, such as Ernest DeMaio, President of the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Council #11 wrote to Corona hoping to connect during his visit to Chicago. Corona’s talk focused on the inhumane nature of state and immigration policies that produced and prosecuted the undocumented. Mario Cantú named his speech “Mexico, Latin American, and the Immigration to the U.S.” Thirdly, Piedra’s talk was entitled “The Need for Building Coalitions to Combat the Reactionary Bill, H.R. 982 and

⁸⁷ Many organizations supported the conference including the Benito Juarez Peoples Health Center, Brown Berets, CASA Los Angeles, Casa Aztlán, Centro de la Causa, La Raza Cosmica, Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Mujeres en Acción, National Coalition for Fair Immigration Laws & Practices, Nation Education Task Force de la Raza, Pilsen Neighbors Community Council, and the library of the Centro de la Causa.

⁸⁸ Bert N. Corona Papers, 1923-1984, M0248, Box 16, Folder 3, Stanford University Special Collections.

H.R. 981.” This theme corresponded with the organizing session against the Kennedy-Rodino Bill, legislation that would impose sanctions to employers who knowingly hired undocumented immigrants.⁸⁹ Other workshops educated the community on the inhumane nature of state and immigration policies that produced and prosecuted the undocumented.

Workshops included: “Organizing Undocumented Workers Unions and Documentation Service Centers,” “Neighborhood Self-Defense: Challenging the Migra, Defending the Persons Arrested,” “Reasons for Immigration,” and “Human Rights and Immigration Laws.” Leader María Piedra also spoke to the broader conference theme of Puerto Rican, Latina/o, and Third World Solidarity.⁹⁰ This resonated for many because ethnic Mexicans in the city often worked side-by-side with Puerto Ricans and other Latinas/os, as well as African Americans, European immigrants, and other people from working-class backgrounds.

Activists developed the idea of a militant immigrant, “a conception that the immigrant worker was not only someone who was looking up for direction or a solution to his problems, but also someone who has the capacity to be part of the struggle.”⁹¹ This concept functioned as an empowering one for trabajadores [Mexican workers], with or without papers. It fostered a sense of resilience, resistance, and agency. The concept reinforced *sin fronteras* politics because the militant immigrant resists differential treatment between citizens and noncitizens when articulating rights and belonging. The

⁸⁹ In the Ninety-third Congress, Peter Rodino, Jr., a Democrat from New Jersey, introduced H.R. 982 on January 3, 1973. In 1974, Senator Edward Kennedy, a Democrat from Massachusetts, introduced a Senate bill. However, his bill included a provision for amnesty for undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States for 3 years or more.

⁹⁰ Centro de Acción Social Autónomo Papers, 1963-1978, M0325, Box 30, Folder 1, Stanford University Special Collections.

⁹¹ “*Keep Strong*, 1977, 35,” Catherine Archibald Personal Collection. Chicago, IL.

militant immigrant also does not concede to the state to make his/her membership and inclusion legible or palatable. Instead, the militant immigrant pushed the terms of belonging in the United States as a way to tackle the immigration problem, anxieties over the growing presence of the undocumented. And yet, the central focus on the worker was exclusionary—marginalizing those who did not fit within the rubric of “work.” Invoking popular understanding of laborers in the context of Chicago during the 1970s meant factory workers. Attention to *trabajadores* erases the experiences of other forms of “labor,” such as activist work, childcare, household work, as well as labors of love and care in the private sphere.

The idea of the militant immigrant was also limited by its heteropatriarchal constructions. A workshop on the special needs of *mujeres* [women] gestured, in a small way, how the concept of the militant expanded to include *mujeres* as well, at least in theory. It begs exploring the forms of feminism that emerged from this strand of community activism, especially in immigrant rights discourse. Gendered and sexualized notions of politics factored, and continues to impact, community activism. Historical knowledge begs for a more nuanced understanding of the varied ways Latina activists affirmed, complicated, and contested gender roles within and across personal, familial, cultural, and community spheres. They embraced, challenged, and rejected feminist consciousness in its multiple forms, a political thought of empowerment for *mujeres* providing language and tools to dismantle (hetero)patriarchy and other interlocking socially constructed structures of domination.

Complicating the idea of the “militant immigrant” as a masculinist paradigm reveals the meaningful ways mujeres participated in activism, problematizing the male dominated nature of history of this era besides their limited roles in nurturing future generations of activists. Mexican American Jesus “Chuy” García shared the impact of community activist Lola Navarro’s mentorship on his own identity as a community activist.⁹² García stated,

This was some señora [lady]. A housewife could be very vocal, very loud. We had a good mentor and teacher. When you have a teacher like that telling you that it's okay to do that, that it's the right thing to do, and that it takes guts to do, it will help you engage. It can be pretty embarrassing and intimidating for a young person to grab a picket sign and start picketing, especially if there are only five of you. At the beginning, it takes a special character. You have to be you have to develop a thick skin. She helped us and coached us in developing that.

References of her role as a mentor and educator draw on maternal notions to frame Navarro’s activism. Her position as an elder also commands respect of others in ways that women activists could not. Women activists struggled have their voices heard. They were often marginalized or excluded from decision-making sessions. Mujeres, like Chicana activist peers, interrogated the ways in which, according to Maylei Blackwell, women “named, theorized, and created a politics around intersecting oppressions.”⁹³

With the idea of building a national movement, the conference concluded with action plans that included connecting with activists in different states, creating press releases, and generating participant commitment for future activities. Despite the

⁹² Jesus “Chuy” García has run for public office in Chicago. In 1986 he served on the Chicago City Council. In 1992, he served two terms as state senator. He was the founding director of Enlace, a non-profit community development organization in Little Village. He currently serves as the Cook County Commissioner for the 7th District.

⁹³ Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

conference's gendered limitations, *sin fronteras* politics offered a possibility for a language inclusive of citizens and non-citizens during a time of intense anti-Mexican sentiment and disdain for the undocumented trabajador. It also provided a new vision for claiming rights that moved beyond national borders and legal divisions; it also drew attention to the increasingly globalized system of structural forces and economic systems that has propelled generations of documented and undocumented trabajadores to the United States.

Reflecting on the immigration conference, Felipe Aguirre recalled, "Corona was impressed with the fact that we had this little collective, that we were interested in doing some immigration work." Corona had a legacy of developing strong leadership among those interested in learning. Jaramillo, a CASA member, stated, "Corona didn't have time for you if you didn't want to be an active participant in the cause of defending not just immigrant workers, but workers in general." After the conference, Corona invited the conference organizers to come to Los Angeles and learn more about El Centro de Acción Social Autónoma-Hermandad General de Trabajadores [Center for Autonomous Social Action- General Brotherhood of Workers]. Rudy Lozano and Felipe Aguirre went, and a foundation was built that nurtured the relationship between activists in Chicago who later became CASA leaders and the national headquarters in Los Angeles. In 1975, Felipe Aguirre, one of the main conference organizers moved to Los Angeles to participate in organizing at the national headquarters. He remained in Los Angeles and did not return to Chicago. To capture the office's central focus on immigration issues, El Enfoque leaders changed their name to CASA de la Raza Unida to reflect the influence and support of

CASA, an immigrant rights organization based in Los Angeles.⁹⁴ Eventually, CASA de la Raza Unida office became the headquarters of the local chapter: CASA Chicago.

Beyond Civil Rights

Sin fronteras activism offers new possibilities in the quest for rights, dignity, and equality. It provides a frame to understand and imagine a claim to rights that is attention to the historical legacy, globalized economic systems, and lives stretched across borders. As scholar Linda Bosniak reminds us,

A normative political and legal theory that attends to transnational connections is still in its infancy, but the issues are increasingly on the agenda in scholarly and political debates. Those who study immigration and work with immigrant communities find themselves in a lag-time between our social reality and our prevailing political concepts.⁹⁵

By complicating juridical citizenship, my conceptualization of sin fronteras politics provides a new lens to understand claims, rights, and activism. Immigrant rights activists fought state exploitation holding the state responsible for its oppressive practices, such as holding protests, press conferences, and know-your-rights workshops. Since immigrants, especially the undocumented, cannot necessarily draw on citizenship as the means for equality and full inclusion into the nation, activists generated ways of organizing inclusive of citizens and non-citizens alike.

My research responds to historian David Gutiérrez's call "to take seriously arguments about the expansion of the rights of denizenship, or even some new, regionally

⁹⁴ Rudy Lozano: *His Life, His People*, 33

⁹⁵ Linda Bosniak, "Being Here: Ethical Territoriality and the Rights of Immigrants," *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 8 (2) (May 29): 410, accessed May 30, 2013. doi: 10.2202/1565-3404.1155.

based, multinational forms of membership, as alternatives to increasingly archaic notions of formal membership in a single national entity.”⁹⁶ For instance, Mexican immigrant Aureliano Cortéz articulated the limitations of civil rights legislation in the quest for social justice. Civil rights struggles, for Cortéz, failed to provide Latinas/os, especially non-citizens, with the substantial leverage to fight for social justice. Accordingly, he emphasized,

Los “civil rights” no cubrieron a los Latinos. No cubrieron a los mexicanos. En la realidad los “civil rights” fue para la fundación Afro Americana, el movimiento de los negros. Nosotros, de cualquier manera, estábamos hasta abajo, el “bottom of the bottom.”

[Civil rights did not address Latinos. They did not extend to Mexicans. In reality, civil rights were the foundation for African Americans, the black movement. We, either way, are at the bottom, the bottom of the bottom.]

For Cortéz, African Americans led and participated in the civil rights movement for equal citizenship. He stressed that a civil rights framework failed to address Latina/o issues, a population with a rich history of immigration.⁹⁷ He identifies the limits of what scholar Linda Bosniak describes as status-based conception of rights, the designation of rights tied to the specific legal category one occupies in the nation’s fluid, complex, and volatile immigration and citizenship regime.⁹⁸

Furthermore, Latinas/os, he believed, did not have the same leverage as a community to fight for equal citizenship rights in the same sense as African Americans.

⁹⁶ David G. Gutiérrez, “The Politics of the Interstices: Reflections on Citizenship and Non-Citizenship at the Turn of the Twentieth Century” *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Transnational Migration, Race, and Citizenship (Autumn, 2007), 112.

⁹⁷ Speaking as an immigrant himself, Cortez overlooks acknowledging the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. The U.S. government has granted Puerto Ricans with U.S. citizenship.

⁹⁸ Linda Bosniak, “Being Here: Ethical Territoriality and the Rights of Immigrants,” *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 8 (2) (May 29): 389–410, accessed May 30, 2013. doi: 10.2202/1565-3404.1155.

Chicanas/os made grievances against the state for the second-class treatment as citizens. Moreover, mobilizing for equal citizenship rights does not resolve the concerns of immigrants, especially the undocumented. Citizenship has provided minimal currency in the lives of vulnerable populations, including African Americans. “Being a citizen does not guarantee any particular citizenship substance,” Bosniak writes, and “*enjoying* citizenship does not require *being* a citizen in any formal sense.”⁹⁹ The civil rights movement, for instance, did not resolve the question of second-class citizenship status for many aggrieved groups in the United States. People of color (African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanas/os, and Native Americans), sexual minorities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender), and other marginalized groups have historically struggled for equal citizenship rights, and continue to do so.

The idea that citizenship is the ultimate goal to acquire in immigrant rights activism sorely ignores how citizenship is an exclusionary, uneven category that continues to perpetuate racial and social inequalities even amongst members that it legally includes. Historian Carol Anderson stated, “For too long, civil rights has been heralded as the ‘prize’ for black equality. Yet, those rights, no matter how bitterly fought for, could only speak to the overt political and legal discrimination that African Americans faced.” Anderson’s research highlights how passing key legislation cannot and does not erase a historical legacy of racism nor does it abolish institutionalized racism. Fighting for equality of citizenship does not necessarily address other forms of inequalities, such as those in the spheres of education and economic parity. Additionally, Cortéz offers an instructive point: citizenship is an uneven and exclusionary category that

⁹⁹ Linda Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 77-101.

promotes hierarchical distinctions. As Evelyn Nakano Glenn contends “equality among citizens existed alongside inequality of others living within the polity who were defined as noncitizens.”¹⁰⁰ Cortéz understood the limits of a framework that theoretically privileged citizenship at the expense of non-citizens.

Out of the Margarito Rosendo Padilla campaign, new organizations—such as CASA in 1974 and the Coalition in Defense of the Immigrant Worker in 1975—formed specifically to deal with immigration issues. Meanwhile, existing organizations, such as the Mexican American Council on Education (MACE) in the community integrated immigrant concerns into their agenda. The coalescing of the community demonstrated an emerging commitment to immigrant rights issues and provided a ripe context for the rise of CASA Chicago activism that I discuss in the next chapter. Organizing for immigrant rights amplified, challenged, and undermined the traditional civil rights framework. During the 1970s, community activists, militant immigrants, and others in Chicago led the charge in redefining the broader citizen/noncitizen agenda. They participated in campaigns to denounce INS harassment directed towards brown bodies, that is, persons the state perceived as Mexican. When Tlateloco activists Pepe Medina, Joel Ochoa, and Carlos Arango arrived in the United States, they built on their organizing experiences that he gained as a youth activist in Mexico to his new community in Pilsen. They did not let their own immigrant and “illegal” statuses deter them from participating in immigrant rights activism, much less from making demands of the state. They resisted against the

¹⁰⁰ Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 20.

vulnerability and exploitation that the state imposed on the undocumented by actively protesting against the state apparatus that produced these conditions.

Chapter Four: “Un Pueblo Sin Fronteras” [A Community Beyond Borders]:
Immigrant Rights Activism in Mexican Chicago, 1974- 1983

CASA as an organization believed that we all have rights. We have rights to be treated equally: men and women, documented or undocumented, that we have rights to a decent education. Since that time [1970s] we have struggled. We have struggled as a community, but not alone. We have struggled with other immigrants. We have struggled with other refugees. We have struggled with working class people across this city and this country.

-Linda Coronado, CASA Chicago co-founder, June 22, 2008

In 1974, Pilsen community activists Rudy Lozano, Linda Coronado, Bernardino Echeverría, Guillermo García and others co-founded the Chicago chapter of El Centro de Acción Social Autónoma- Hermandad General de Trabajadores [Center for Autonomous Social Action- General Brotherhood of Workers] or CASA Chicago. The co-founders had a wide range of experiences in initiating and engaging various campaigns addressing an equally wide array of issues, including education, political representation, and health concerns. With the formation of CASA Chicago, they built on these previous experiences of organizing. The founders believed the organization would provide an alternative political framework from which to address pressing immigration concerns. CASA Chicago leaders opened a storefront near the intersection of 18th Street and Blue Island Avenue, a central juncture in Pilsen. Since its inception CASA Chicago the organization played an important role in immigrant rights and labor activism. Leaders launched several campaigns, workshops, and projects to rally for immigrant and workers’ rights. They engaged in a variety of creative strategies to disseminate its mission. Members formed partnerships with other organizations committed to protecting the rights of the undocumented, such as Asociación Pro Derechos Obreros [Association for Workers’

Rights] (APO) and United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE).

Many CASA Chicago members had multiple memberships in various local groups. They lobbied against anti-immigrant legislation at the state and national level. While CASA Chicago flourished, the organization at the national level experienced deep-seated tensions, struggles, and challenges that eventually led to its demise in 1979. Not to say that CASA Chicago did not experience any difficulties, tensions, or conflicts, rather the troubles it faced did not lead to its downfall when CASA ceased to exist at the national level.

CASA Chicago provided a wide array of support services for Mexicans and other Latinas/os. In the words of CASA Chicago leader Laura Dávila, the organization:

Helped people fill out their papers, taught them their rights in case of an immigration raid. ... We did forums on Sundays that would essentially teach people about their rights. ... The National Lawyers Guild ... would come in and talk about what peoples' rights were and why. We would help people fill out their immigration papers and then eventually their citizenship papers. Then sometimes we'd go to court with people, as an interpreter or just to lend a hand.¹

The CASA Chicago office provided a space for alternative political imaginings, claims of belonging, and community building. It served as headquarters for organizing, activities, and events. There, members held meetings, study circles, and brainstorming sessions. They drafted strategic plans, created reports, and launched campaigns at the office. Moreover, in collaboration with many other organizations, CASA Chicago spearheaded a movement for the rights of *trabajadores* [workers] whether documented or not.

In this chapter, I argue CASA Chicago's political vision complicated and challenged the currency of the hierarchal category of citizenship by centering the focus of

¹ Pseudonym, Chicago, IL.

claims for rights and belonging on the Mexican immigrant body. Members challenged the dominant terms of belonging in the United States. Reflecting a long history of the construction of the “ideal immigrant,” the common expectations prevailing at the time were immigrant who would adopt “good behaviors,” that is, they were expected to blend into mainstream society (culturally, linguistically, socially, and politically) and follow in the steps of previous generations of immigrants—ultimately becoming full members of the U.S. society ideally as U.S. citizens.² Casistas [CASA activists] disrupted these mainstream beliefs and challenged the notion of the good immigrant. Instead, they advanced and practiced the idea of what they called a militant immigrant, “a conception that the immigrant worker was not only someone who was looking up for direction or a solution to his problems, but also someone who has the capacity to be part of the struggle.”³ CASA Chicago activists mobilized for better living and working conditions by not only including the rights and needs of the undocumented, but focusing and centering on them as focal points of a broader social movement of working people regardless of their citizenship or juridical status. Carving out an alternative and critical space for immigrants in a nation that generally did not acknowledge the presence of the undocumented as social beings, much less as active and engaged political beings. The figure of the “militant immigrant” created a new worldview of a *sin fronteras* membership in the United States to account for the ways U.S. capitalism and other structural and social forces had stretched their lives, families, and home across borders.

² Leland T. Saito, *Race and Politics: Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites in a Los Angeles Suburb* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 59.

³ “Struggles on Both Sides of the Border: An Interview with Jose ‘Pepe’ Medina,” *Keep Strong* 2, no. 12 (April/July 1977): Catherine Archibald Personal Collection, Chicago, IL, 35. Activists created this concept at the Raza Si, Migra No conference they organized in 1974 as I discuss in the previous chapter.

This chapter examines how, and under what circumstances, CASA Chicago activists created and engaged with a *sin fronteras* politics bringing Mexicans and Mexican Americans together, regardless of birthplace, generation, or citizenship status. I examine the ways CASA Chicago members mobilized for immigrant rights during the 1970s. Aligned with a coming-out day for the organization at the national level, CASA Chicago leaders organized a march honoring the *día internacional de los trabajadores* [International Workers' Day] on May 1, 1975. For CASA Chicago activists, the march represented the beginning of a renewed *movimiento* [movement] for immigrant rights and workers' rights that built on and extended the activism of previous generations, dating back to the 1886 Haymarket Affair.⁴

Adoption of a *sin fronteras* politics exemplified how CASA Chicago members engaged in space-making politics to “create structures and resources that transform daily life into an arena of political contest.”⁵ Organizers drew on a *sin fronteras* politics and other creative strategies because undocumented migrants fell outside the confines of the law.⁶ CASA Chicago activists recognized, overlooked, and challenged the hierarchal legal and social distinctions between citizens and non-citizens, and between the documented and undocumented. Leaders drew on various political strategies to hold the state accountable for discriminatory practices against Mexicans and Mexican Americans

⁴ Interview with CASA Chicago leaders. A strike at the McCormick Harvesting Machine, Co., an agricultural equipment manufacturer, resulted in violence and death when police officers fired their arms to quell a confrontation between strikers and strikebreakers. Police officers and protestors clashed at the demonstration. It turned into uproar and bloodshed when someone threw a bomb that killed police officers. The state found guilty and punished eight activists for inciting the deadly riots by ordering their death. May Day, international workers' day, is celebrated in many countries on May 1st.

⁵ Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2006), 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

and organized for better working and living conditions. Their demands included: unconditional amnesty; stopping deportations and raids; jobs for all; rights for all to organize; and respect for the rights of undocumented people. The selected usage of “all” in some of the demands, that is, “jobs for all” and “rights for all to organize,” highlights the inclusion of the noncitizens. CASA Chicago activists believed an undocumented migrant should certainly have a right to live and work in the United States without fear or discrimination. In other words, having an unauthorized status should not produce differential treatment and vulnerable conditions for undocumented migrants nor should it be a condition for the state to deprive this segment of the population of a sense of belonging and rights.

Historical Overview of CASA

Chicago established a local chapter of an organization that had been servicing Mexican immigrants for many years. Founded in 1968, CASA began as a social services and support agency for immigrants in Los Angeles. Humberto “Noe” Bert Corona, Soledad “Chole” Alatorre, Francisco Amaro, María Cedillos, Juan Mariscal, and Rafael Zacarías co-founded the organization imbued with a mutualista [mutual aid society] sensibility.⁷ In this spirit, the group provided support for Mexican immigrants and other

⁷ CASA first began as an offshoot of the San Diego based group founded in the 1950s that worked for immigrant rights: La Hermandad Mexicana Nacional [the National Mexican Brotherhood]. For a more detailed history of CASA, see Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles: Radical Activism in Southern California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 17-119; Ernesto Chávez, “¡Mi Raza Primero!” (*My People First!*): *Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 106.

Latinas/os with financial services, counseling, and legal advice on housing, health, legal, and other issues. Casista Maricela Arroyo described this:

Ahí en CASA estaba un lugar acondicionado para recibir a las familias; teníamos fondos para ayudarlos a pagar su renta; teníamos comida que le podíamos dar, bolsitas de comida, su alimentación mientras se quedaban sin trabajo. Había abogados en CASA. Los abogados daban su tiempo gratis. Los abogados estaban ahí siempre, apoyando al inmigrante y sus problemas.

[There in CASA there was an air conditioned place to welcome families. We had the funds to help them pay their rent. We had food that we could give them, bags of food, meals while they had no employment. There were lawyers in CASA. The lawyers provided free services. The lawyers were always there, supporting the immigrant and their problems.]⁸

Additionally, CASA centers offered a range of classes, fiestas [parties], events, and other activities promoting Mexican history, pride, and cultural practices, including baile folklórico [folkloric dance].⁹ As the organization expanded and its leadership changed in 1972, CASA transformed from a mutualista orientation to a Marxist-Leninist organization in defense of the Mexican immigrant worker.¹⁰

CASA's central commitment to immigrants attracted many participants across and beyond Los Angeles. Support offices opened in different neighborhoods throughout the city; they served the particular needs of respective communities. Each locale ran autonomously and tailored its operations to serve the particular needs of the community. Between 1968 and 1973, CASA reached its peak period of membership, an estimated number between 12,000 and 15,000 members.¹¹ CASA chapters proliferated throughout California (Oakland, San Jose, Santa Barbara, San Diego, and Santa Ana), as well as in

⁸ Pseudonym, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. June 2010.

⁹ Chávez, "*¡Mi Raza Primero!*" (*My People First!*), 106.

¹⁰ Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left*, 7.

¹¹ Arnoldo García, "Toward a Left without Borders: The Story of the Center for Autonomous Social Action-General Brotherhood of Workers," *Monthly Review*, July 2002, 77.

Arizona, Colorado (Greeley), Texas (El Paso, San Antonio), New York (New York City), Oregon, and Washington (Seattle).¹²

CASA Chicago formed at the crux of a major transition within CASA's leadership, membership, and ideology at the national level. Soon after the formal creation of CASA Chicago in 1974, Bert Corona and others resigned because of stark ideological differences with the new, younger generation of CASA directors.¹³ The change in leadership transformed the organization from an immigrant serving organization into a revolutionary group committed to organize against U.S. capitalism that fueled undocumented Mexican migration and condoned labor exploitation.¹⁴ These latest members, a zealous group of college students, community organizers, and young professionals, strove to lead and build a national immigrant rights movement vis-à-vis CASA. Informed by far left politics: Marxist-Leninist thought, a communist ideology based on the theories of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin with an international worldview, they called for collective mobilization.

¹² Marisela Chávez, "We lived and breathed and worked the movement": The Contradictions and Rewards of Chicana/Mexicana Activism in el Centro de Acción Social Autónomo (CASA), Los Angeles, 1975-1978," in *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, ed. Vicki L. Ruiz, vol. 20 no. 1, *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family* (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 2000), 92; García, "Toward a Left without Borders," 77.

¹³ The early 1970s marked the beginning of this change when a cohort of activists from Casa Carnalismo [House of Brotherhood] joined CASA. Casa Carnalismo was an organization in East Los Angeles that worked to combat drug, gang, and education problems in the Pico Garden Housing Projects. Most prominently, Casa Carnalismo members developed an interest in CASA while collaborating on the National Committee to Free Los Tres [the Three]. It aimed to vindicate Los Tres, Juan Fernández, Alberto Ortiz, and Rodolfo Sánchez, who faced federal charges for assaulting a government agent posing as a drug dealer. The group accused the state of undermining Casa Carnalismo's operations through repeated acts of infiltration to aggravate tensions, flaws, and challenges. The state succeeded in these efforts because the campaign to Free Los Tres required intensive labor and time that led to Casa Carnalismo's demise. See Chávez, "*¡Mi Raza Primero!*" (*My People First!*), 99.

¹⁴ See Chávez, "*¡Mi Raza Primero!*" (*My People First!*), 106. Chávez describes how activists from the Committee to Free Los Tres slowly became involved in CASA and then over time assumed leadership positions. When a cohort of members from a local Chicano organization in Los Angeles, including Antonio Rodríguez, Isabel Rodríguez, and Patricia Vellanoweth, began to participate in CASA more and more, they transformed the organization. See also Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left*; Chávez, "We lived and breathed," in *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano*, 87; and García, "Toward a Left without Borders".

In the early part of 1975, CASA had a series of national meetings in Los Angeles, Oakland, and Chicago to discuss the organization's growth and development as a revolutionary agent.¹⁵ In July 1975, leaders, after countless hours of conversations, made decisions to implement new policies, procedures, and structures at a CASA national meeting held in Los Angeles. Three CASA Chicago representatives, including Felipe Aguirre and Rudy Lozano, traveled to California to participate at this particular national gathering.¹⁶ Some of the decisions included, to move the publishing headquarters of *Sin Fronteras*, the organization's newspaper from San Antonio to Los Angeles; doing so would allow the national leadership of CASA and the editorial staff to work even more closely.¹⁷ With its latest identity as a revolutionary organization, CASA adopted a new editorial policy to expand its current coverage of immigration issues to people's struggles and to promote national and class consciousness amongst readers.¹⁸

As a result of these assemblages, CASA instituted a bureaucratic structure. The National Congress, the upper level of management, was formed, and a Central Committee of elected members who would execute the resolutions made.¹⁹ The Central Committee in turn, voted into office representatives to serve on the Political Commission (PC), an entity created to oversee its members' political and ideological stances and

¹⁵ David G. Gutiérrez, *CASA in the Chicano Movement: Ideology and Organizational Politics in the Chicano Community 1968-1978*, Working Paper Series, No. 5, (Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Chicano Research, Stanford University. 1984), 15.

¹⁶ Rudy Lozano: *His life, His people* (Chicago, IL: Taller de Estudios Comunitarios, 1991), 36.

¹⁷ Sin Fronteras was originally based in San Antonio, Texas. Sin Fronteras was the newspaper of the National Coalition for Fair Immigration Laws and Practices. As part of the efforts to centralize CASA in Los Angeles, the newspaper headquarters moved from San Antonio to Los Angeles. At the 1974 immigration conference, CASA-Chicago also expressed the need for creating a national newspaper that would speak to immigration issues. See Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left*, 15.

¹⁸ Chávez, "¡Mi Raza Primero!" (*My People First!*), 107.

¹⁹ Ibid., 108; Rudy Lozano: *His Life, His People*, 36.

practices.²⁰ Inspired by his participation in these national meetings, Felipe Aguirre moved to Los Angeles to serve on the PC, where he continues to reside. To further centralize the organization, CASA created a Reglamento [Rules] document outlining the new organizational structures and guiding principles.²¹ Each CASA had a Local Committee that would report to the Political Commission. Each Local Committee had subgroups of organizing units known as *nucelos* [cells], the lowest level in CASA's organizational chart.

Additionally, leaders implemented a hierarchal membership ranging from militants to sympathizers. Militants had to be at least eighteen years old, have exclusive membership to CASA, had voting privileges and possessed eligibility to run for office. They also had to exhibit advanced knowledge various political ideologies, especially Marxism-Leninism. Affiliates had overlapping memberships with other organizations that did not undermine CASA guiding beliefs. Affiliates generally had a working understanding of diverse political thought. They also actively participated in CASA, but were not eligible to vote or hold any officer positions. Sympathizers contributed to CASA affairs, but not on a regular basis. They did not hold any voting privileges nor were they eligible to hold office. Sympathizers also demonstrated a basic or emerging knowledge of political philosophies. This new hierarchal structure enacted exclusionary features; it privileged the militants' contributions above others. It did not facilitate the equal participation of its members as it also made it difficult for new members to join.

Reaching these organizational change and agreements were not easy, and not without consequence. Business was all done in the name of building a Marxist-Leninist

²⁰ Ibid., 108.

²¹ Ibid., 107.

collectivity for immigrant and labor activism. However, some members felt that the way CASA reached the decision violated democratic principles of decision-making. It particularly raised turmoil with the San Diego and San Jose chapters. This new revolutionary vision of the new leadership led to San Diego's CASA Justicia and the Greeley chapter to break away.²² When the old leadership (Bert Corona and his supporters) left the CASA at the national level, membership waned as the organization morphed and adopted an increasingly centralized, bureaucratic and hierarchal character. As CASA took on its new political identity as an activist collectivity, it neglected its role of providing direct services and support for immigrants. As a national group, CASA experienced a variety of amplified tensions, disagreements, and criticisms as it launched its new project of building a national, revolutionary movement. These conflicts led CASA's base to decline from 1976 through 1978, until its formal demise in 1979. At the local level, CASA Chicago continued to exist until its strength waned when it became more and more involved in electoral politics, organizing for local political representation. Some CASA Chicago members mark the end of the organization in 1983, the year when key CASA leader Rodolfo "Rudy" Lozano was killed.

For these new CASA members, adopting a collective Mexican identity and using a *sin fronteras* politics became the means from which to demand equal rights for citizens and non-citizens alike. To lay claims to Mexico, CASA affirmed Spanish-language usage and the maintenance of other varied forms of Mexican ethnic practices, customs, and identity-making. CASA espoused cultural nationalism, ideas of a shared culture to a

²² Gutiérrez, *CASA in the Chicano Movement*, 15. For a project that discusses CASA San Diego, see Jimmy C. Patino, Jr., "'A Time for Resistance': Globalization, Undocumented Immigration, and the Chicana/o Movement in the San Diego Borderlands" (PhD diss., University of California, 2010).

greater Mexico in conjunction with Marxism-Leninism.²³ To characterize CASA, Historian Ernesto Chávez writes,

Marxism-Leninism as the ideology of CASA, national unity among the ethnic Mexican people, the participation of Mexican-American workers in the trade-union movement in the struggle of Mexican people everywhere for full equality and democratic rights, and the ethnic identity of CASA members as solely Mexicans.²⁴

CASA's new direction emphasized a transnational class-consciousness and underscored communist ideologies in the fight for immigrant rights. The intermingling of Marxist-Leninist ideology and cultural nationalism became a way to resist the state construction of Mexicans as racially inferior in the United States. It also provided political language in mobilization for better conditions that was attentive to the role of U.S. imperialism in producing a vulnerable group of workers: the undocumented. By stressing the historical and repeated acts of capitalistic exploitation at the hands of the United States, CASA highlighted how these state actions produced the problematic social and economic conditions in the lives of Mexicans and Mexican American trabajadores.²⁵ CASA members argued that Mexican trabajadores, as an integral component of the American working class, had legitimate claims to rights, as did other workers in the United States.²⁶

²³ According to literature scholar George Mariscal, cultural nationalism is "the strategic deployment of key features of Mexican and Mexican American history and culture in order to fashion individual and collective subjects capable of asserting agency and demanding self-determination. See George Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 44.

²⁴ Chávez, "*¡Mi Raza Primero!*" (*My People First!*), 107.

²⁵ Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left*, 125; David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 191; Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands (Nation of Newcomers: Immigrant History as American History)* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2008), 190.

²⁶ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 190-191.

Indeed, *sin fronteras* reinscribed national borders as it sought to reconnect with a Mexican nation. Though CASA positioned itself as a transnational organization, it did not invoke a benign Mexican nation as CASA members harshly criticized Mexican state practices.²⁷ They condemned Mexico for capitalist endeavors, financial mismanagements, and support of the United States and other foreign investment in Mexico. The organization had important transnational ties to activism in Mexico. Political connections with CASA drew a small cohort of Tlatelolco activists (Carlos Arango, José Jacques “Pepe” Medina, and Joel Ochoa) to CASA in Los Angeles and later Chicago in the early 1970s. Once in the United States, they participated in CASA campaigns and activities, as they remained critical of the Mexican state. This cohort of activists—small, but extremely influential—undertook important leadership roles in CASA.

CASA’s collective *sin fronteras* identity reflected, in theory, an expansive identity that included Mexican immigrants, documented and undocumented, as well as Mexican Americans. *Sin fronteras* served as the slogan to characterize the community building to unify Mexicans and Mexican Americans, as well as Latinas/os more broadly. Just as importantly, adopting *sin fronteras* as a political tool for organizing pushed the dialogue on immigration by providing a transnational lens that situated the lives of Mexicans and Mexican Americans within the politics, legislation, and economies of the United States *and* Mexico. In theory, a *sin fronteras* politics operated as an expansive tool for community building. In practice, however, it did not (fully) achieve this goal. Adopting

²⁷ García, “Toward a Left without Borders,” 77. The author makes mention of a chapter in Mexico although I have found no detailed information on CASA chapters in Mexico. One of my interviewees did make mention of CASA chapter in Mexico.

an intersectional lens, the way in which multiple and overlapping social categories, such as race, class, gender, and sexuality, work together to inform a person's position in society, uncovers how a *sin fronteras* framework neglected to consider the nuanced and particular experiences of various populations, such as indigenous, queers, and *mujeres*.²⁸ People faced immigration harassment differently depending on their social locations in the matrix of structures of domination. CASA Chicago organizers drew on political language and ideas around recourse and rights for working-bodies in menial jobs. *Sin fronteras* as a political frame failed to account for the domestic labor that women often took on, for instance. Feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins pushes us to draw on intersectionality as a tool for recognizing and exploring the ways our privileges, social locations, and identities function at the expense of others coming from marginalized and vulnerable statuses.

CASA Chicago

The decision to centralize not only affected the national structure of CASA, but also its local chapters.²⁹ Originally, a main coordinating committee and four subcommittees—*Sin Fronteras* newspaper, Office Manager, Finance, and Political Education—comprised CASA Chicago. Then, influenced by the structural changes at the national level, the Local Committee—comprised of representatives from the Finance, Propaganda and Organization and Trabajo Laboral [Labor Work] subcommittees—replaced the Coordinating Committee. CASA Chicago also used materials created at the

²⁸ For more on intersectionality, see Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), 18, 128, 135.

²⁹ Rudy Lozano: *His life, His people*, 36.

national level. For example, CASA members developed a kit for a Teach-In of the Undocumented Worker and the Economic Crisis. According to CASA documents, the teach-in highlighted three major instructional points:

the economic crisis and the effect on the Mexican people; deportations, a key to the relationship between the United States and Latin America; the historical use of Mexican immigrants as economic scapegoats and current means of resistance and defense and solidarity.³⁰

The teach-ins also aimed to “expand the organizational contacts, project the national leadership, disseminate the political line of the organization, and provide the much needed funds for the sustainment of the national office and the expenses of the Political Commission.”³¹

The general culture of the national organization and its changing nature certainly affected CASA Chicago—as evident by its organizational structure, usage of the standardized reading material and propaganda, distribution of the organization’s newspaper *Sin Fronteras*, circulation of memorandums, regular correspondence, and much more. In October 1975, CASA Chicago experienced a drop in membership because the site closed for meetings as it transitioned into this new structure.³² In practice, however, CASA Chicago the Chicago chapter carved out its own flair that allowed the organization to flourish beyond the life of the national organization, at least five years longer. It did not strictly follow this new structure in multiple ways. For instance, many militants had various memberships with other student, labor, and community organizations.

³⁰ CASA Documents, Box 1, Folder 9, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

³¹ CASA Documents, Box 1, Folder 9, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

³² *Rudy Lozano: His life, His people*, 37.

Political Education

To provide an understanding of *sin fronteras* politics, CASA members at the national headquarters institutionalized study circles in order to master the political theory and the knowledge necessary to educate the community and mainstream society on immigration issues. Political theories included readings about Marxism, Leninism, Che Guevarra, Ho Chi Mihn, and more. The study circles provided the theories, histories and overall background information to articulate its positions in a variety of legislation, policies, and initiatives. This knowledge proved necessary to challenge anti-immigrant discourse and draft rebuttals accordingly. These political education circles were not new to many of the leaders of CASA Chicago. They had already participated in their own versions of political education circles held at *el enfoque* [the focus], an organizing headquarters.³³ With the formation of CASA Chicago, *el enfoque* seamlessly transitioned into CASA's structured political education circles. In its study circles, participants ranging from 10 to 20 in number explored questions of power, imperialism, and racism by reading political and historical texts and commentaries on current issues. The study group reviewed a wide range of materials. The program of study included: the history of CASA, history of immigration laws and policies, Mexican and Mexican American experiences and histories, a review of imperialism, domination, and control in the United States and abroad, and selected readings of internal documents. For instance, participants read historical accounts of the U.S. - Mexico war and reviewed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848. They studied the long history of discrimination that ethnic Mexicans

³³ Other groups also had their own version of political education circles. For example, the Young Lords also implemented political education classes. See *Pa'lante, Siempre Palante!: The Young Lords*, directed by Iris Morales, 1996.

faced in the United States. They also analyzed immigration policies with a global perspective.

The political education circles served as an important tool for articulating and building a political consciousness among workers and a vision for change. It served as a rich social network of resources because of the diversity in the study participants; yet, it was a male-dominated group. Study circles drew together a diverse group of participants with varying levels of formal education, from those with a few years of elementary education to those with graduate degrees. However, those with advanced degrees dominated, especially the ones who were professors. Also, the Tlateloco activists Carlos Arango led many study sessions. CASA members had varying degrees of formal education. Trabajadores, community activists, college students, professors, and young professionals participated in *el enfoque*.

According to my interviewees, the most interesting and eye-opening lessons, for many, occurred in these political education circles. CASA Chicago activist Emmanuel Barajas barely achieved a fifth grade level education in Mexico when he had to leave school to work.³⁴ At age fifteen, Barajas migrated to the United States to find work and became involved in CASA Chicago. His involvement in the political education circles fueled his desire to pursue a formal education. In Barajas' words, "se me metió en la cabeza continuar educación." [I got the idea in my head to continue my education.] Motivated to pursue formal studies, Barajas enrolled in classes to learn English. After that, he enrolled in General Educational Development (G.E.D.) classes. Once he completed his G.E.D., he took courses at Malcolm X College, a community college in

³⁴ Pseudonym, Chicago, IL.

Chicago. At the same time, Barajas' work schedule allowed him to enroll classes, unlike other trabajadores who were unable to do so. However, Barajas shared that his formal education could not replace the education he gained at *el enfoque*, which provided a safe space to learn alternative, transnational histories and politics.

For Rudy Lozano, political education became an important priority, more so than his formal college education. Lozano had a vested interest in a career in medicine because he wanted to help people. However, through his activism he was already assisting people. Given his unwavering commitment to community organizing, Lozano made the difficult decision in 1974 to postpone his college education. Even though he was in his senior year at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, in his view, addressing urgent community concerns with immigration could not wait while he completed his bachelor's degree. In 1976, Lozano taught at Latino Youth, an alternative high school for youth in Pilsen where he exposed his students to a culturally relevant education that he did not receive in his formal education.

The political circles consisted of discussions and analysis, and debates of local, national, and global issues. Participants engaged in critical thinking as they connected the readings to real life and to their activism. Lozano pushed the analysis with the group as Dávila explains,

He forced us to analyze. He forced us to study. Sometimes we felt that we were dealing with someone that was incredibly stubborn that we couldn't move him from one position to another. What Rudy did for us was he forced us to look not only inward, but to look outward in the communities around us. He forced us to think about how important it was for us not to be isolationist. That is Rudy's legacy.

Rudy Lozano pushed himself and his fellow comrades to be well-informed and over-prepared on larger structural and systemic issues informing CASA's activism. The group also generated creative ways of disseminating alternative histories, struggles, and models for change: theatre groups, workshops, and teach-ins in the community.

Sites of leisure, sites of resistance

CASA Chicago brought visibility to its activism by disrupting quotidian affairs in Pilsen and other places in the Chicago metropolitan area. Militants and affiliates stopped to talk to people on the street. Members distributed flyers and sold *Sin Fronteras*, the organization's newspaper. In the early 1970s, a Mexican theatre group performing in Chicago inspired Bernardino Echeverría and other CASA Chicago members, to create a troupe, Teatro Proletario [Proletariat Theatre] de CASA with the name reflecting CASA's commitment to workers' rights. CASA Chicago activist Jorge Gómez shared, "Enseñamos a la gente detrás de la obra a conocer sus derechos." [Through theatre, we taught the people about their rights.]³⁵ CASA Chicago utilized the theatre groups to generate enough enthusiasm to prompt participation in activities, campaigns, events, and services. In the weeks prior to a large-scale affair, CASA Chicago crafted relevant skits to publicize and underscore the importance of upcoming events. Teatro proletario de CASA created skits that covered a variety of topics to highlight capitalist exploitation and resistance. One play, for instance, highlighted unjust practices at a factory, where the supervisor demanded that his employers work harder and longer hours. He reprimanded his employees when they did not perform to his satisfaction. Then, another scene focused

³⁵ Pseudonym, Chicago, IL.

on the employees coming together to discuss these unjust conditions. In this way, CASA Chicago aimed not only to highlight the widespread abuses at the workplace, but also to demonstrate the importance of organizing.

CASA Chicago leaders also disseminated political messages at Fiesta del Sol, an annual cultural festival organized by the Pilsen Neighbors Community Council.³⁶ CASA Chicago leader Lupe Lozano explained,

At the Fiesta del Sol, C.A.S.A. was the only organization that would have petitions to denounce the racist discrimination bills. We would have this booth. We would put 'la migra' in the dunking booth, and people would come and pitch balls. We would say 'abajo con la migra' (down with the migra!) We thought it we very good because the people responded well to this. [sic]

People lined up to take turns throwing balls at the migra. When recalling Fiesta de Sol in its early days in the 1970s, many Mexicans and Mexican Americans described the fun they had when playing or seeing others participate in the dunking game. The opportunity to throw balls at the migra made a political statement in an entertaining way. See Figure One. They expressed frustration, anger, and disappointment with INS practices. Indeed, some community residents did not necessarily have these negative feelings. Nonetheless, CASA Chicago raised political awareness of immigration issues with the mere presence

³⁶ Fiesta del Sol began in 1972. According to its website "History." Fiesta del Sol. Accessed January 2011. <http://fiestadelsol.org>, Pilsen Neighbors Community Council (PNCC) organized the festival as a celebration for the community victory in the fight for a local high school named Benito Juárez Community Academy. PNCC continues to organize Fiesta del Sol on a yearly basis. In 2005, Fiesta del Sol expanded to San Diego, California by collaborating with Justice Overcoming Boundaries.

of the game. It also brought visibility to the organization.



Figure 4.1: Dunk the Migra Game.

Courtesy of Guadalupe “Lupe” Lozano with support from the Ruth Landes Memorial Fund.

Many Mexicans and Mexican Americans watched Mexican films at local cines [movie houses]: Cine Atlantic, Cine Marshall, and Cine Villa.³⁷ The 1970s was a time of limited but rapidly growing Spanish-language programming media: radio, television, and newspapers in Chicago. Norma Arredondo described Cine Villa as “también [era] pura mexicanada. Principalmente allí era puro barrio Mexicano en la 18 y la Loomis en ese tiempo. [It (was) also mostly Mexican. At that time, 18th and Loomis was a Mexican barrio.]” Sunday was the most popular movie day. Taking advantage of this gathering of

³⁷ Cine Villa was located on 18th Street and Loomis. Cine Marshall and Cine Atlantic were located in Little Village: the former on Cermak Road and Marshall Boulevard and the latter on 26th Street and near Pulaski Road.

ethnic Mexicans and other Latinas/os, CASA Chicago disseminated immigrant rights information, recruited members, and sold *Sin Fronteras* during the intermission.³⁸ The theatre owner of Cine Atlantic and Cine Villa allowed and supported CASA Chicago using his theatres as a site for political awareness, events, and fundraising.

Using bullhorns, CASA Chicago informed and updated patrons of pressing immigration issues and events. As Barajas shared,

Así era como vendíamos todos los periódicos o pasábamos propaganda llamando al alguna reunión o llamando alguna protesta o simplemente dando información en un volante de “Conoce Tus Derechos” y nos dejaban entrar a los cines. Paraban la función del cine y hablábamos allí con la gente.

That was how we would sell the newspapers or we would distribute propaganda calling for a meeting, protest or, simply circulating information on a “know your rights” flyer. We stopped the movie theatre’s function and would talk to the people.

Barajas learned of CASA Chicago at one of these presentations at the movie house. At this point, his day-to-day life consisted of factory work and leisure, such as spending Sundays watching Mexican movies at the local theatre. With a growing consciousness of the injustices around him, particularly of the plight of trabajadores in the United States, Barajas was struck by CASA Chicago’s political messages. He became a member and with time, a CASA Chicago militant. Similarly, Mexican American Jesús “Chuy” García first learned about CASA Chicago at Cine Marshall, where he was startled by the sudden interruption by bullhorns delivering speeches and announcements. He initially thought to himself, “Who are these crazy people?”³⁹ However, the immigrant rights messaging not

³⁸ Rudy Lozano, *His Life, His People*, 35.

³⁹ Jesus “Chuy” García, Chicago, IL.

only captured his attention, but captivated García. Weeks later, he joined CASA Chicago after his mentor Lola Navarro introduced him to Rudy Lozano.⁴⁰

CASA Chicago leaders also used the cines to host various political events and smaller fundraising efforts.⁴¹ On November 20, 1975, CASA Chicago organized a commemoration of the Mexican Revolution at Teatro Villa attracting an audience of 250 people. Rudy Lozano served as the Master of Ceremony and Felipe Aguirre as the main speaker. Teatro Proletario de CASA performed a skit. The event featured the Mexican film *Rosa Blanca* [White Rose] (1961) directed by Roberto Gavaldón. The film illustrates the story of an indigenous landowner, who was killed because his land title stood in the way of a U.S. oil corporation's desire to acquire his land.⁴² The service celebrated the Mexican historical holiday as made connection to the struggle for better conditions of Mexicans in Mexico and ethnic Mexicans in the United States. For a couple of years, CASA Chicago members drew on the cines as a place for building political awareness and fundraising for various aspects of CASA Chicago operations. Joel Ochoa, a 1968 Tlatelolco activist, delivered a speech on immigration during the intermission at Cine Villa just a few days after he arrived to Chicago from Los Angeles where he was also involved in CASA, while the others collected donations. In June 1977 CASA Chicago raised \$87.00 at theatre to help fund the buses that would take people to Springfield to lobby legislators.⁴³

⁴⁰ The film *Mi Raza: Portrait of a Family*, produced by Susan Stechnij (www.chicagofilmarchives.org/preservation), 1972, discusses Lola's family life.

⁴¹ *Rudy Lozano: His Life, His People*, 35.

⁴² The film was based on novel by B. Traven (pen name). B. Traven also wrote the novel *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010). His work became the basis for the famous Academy Award winning film.

⁴³ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

Into the mid- and late-1970s, the organizers increasingly found it challenging to maintain an active and consistent presence at the theatres. Important meetings or events often conflicted with the cines' peak hours and most popular days (the weekends). Traveling between theatres and other venues began to take a physical and emotional toll on the leaders. With the passing of time many of the original CASA Chicago founders and leaders formed families or expanded them, namely with the birth of children. In the end, when CASA Chicago lost relationships with the theatre bosses they abandoned using the cine space. At a later time, CASA Chicago returned to theatres under a different set of circumstances.

On November 20, 1978, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations Union Local #372 went on strike at Cine Marshall to protest the poor working conditions at the movie houses, such as unkempt bathrooms, sticky floors, and rat infestation. Margarita Torres recalled hearing yelps during the film because a rat had run past them. When Jaime Gillette, the owner of Cine Villa, Cine Marshall, and Cine Palacio Theatre failed to renew the contract in a timely fashion, AFL-CIO union representative Alfredo González called for a strike.⁴⁴ Approximately thirty protestors chanted "el pueblo unido jamás será vencido." [the people united will never be defeated]. The peaceful demonstrators were effective in convincing moviegoers to boycott the theatre during the strike, even during peak hours of business.⁴⁵ They achieved their goal and secured better working conditions and structural improvements.

⁴⁴ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁴⁵ CASA Documents, Box 1, Folder 6, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

Boycott Shell Gasoline

CASA Chicago leaders also orchestrated focused campaigns against the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). In the fall of 1974, local residents complained to CASA Chicago members of rampant INS activity at the Shell gasoline station in Little Village on 26th Street and Kedzie Avenue.⁴⁶ See Map below. There, immigration agents questioned Shell customers.⁴⁷ A distressed señora [lady] reported to CASA Chicago that la migra [INS officers] had apprehended her son at the gasoline station, and that the incident resulted in his deportation.⁴⁸ To halt this practice, CASA Chicago orchestrated a boycott against Shell. It also organized weekly protests, bringing together twenty to fifty residents depending on the day. As quoted in the *Chicago Tribune*, Lozano explained, “We are protesting the firm establishment of the immigration service in our community, which is causing misery and instilling fear in our community.”⁴⁹ Despite the frigid winter weather, approximately forty to fifty people regularly participate in the weekly demonstrations at the Shell gasoline station.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Little Village is in the neighborhood adjacent to Pilsen. It is southwest of Pilsen.

⁴⁷ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁴⁸ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁴⁹ Emmett George, "Pilsen Alien 'Spy Post' Protested," *Chicago Tribune*, November 24, 1974, 22.

⁵⁰ CASA Documents, December 10, 1974, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA. These ill-founded comments did not go unchallenged. On Sunday, December 15, 1974 Lozano led a press conference to respond to Bartley's racist comment and general anti-Mexican sentiment in the press.

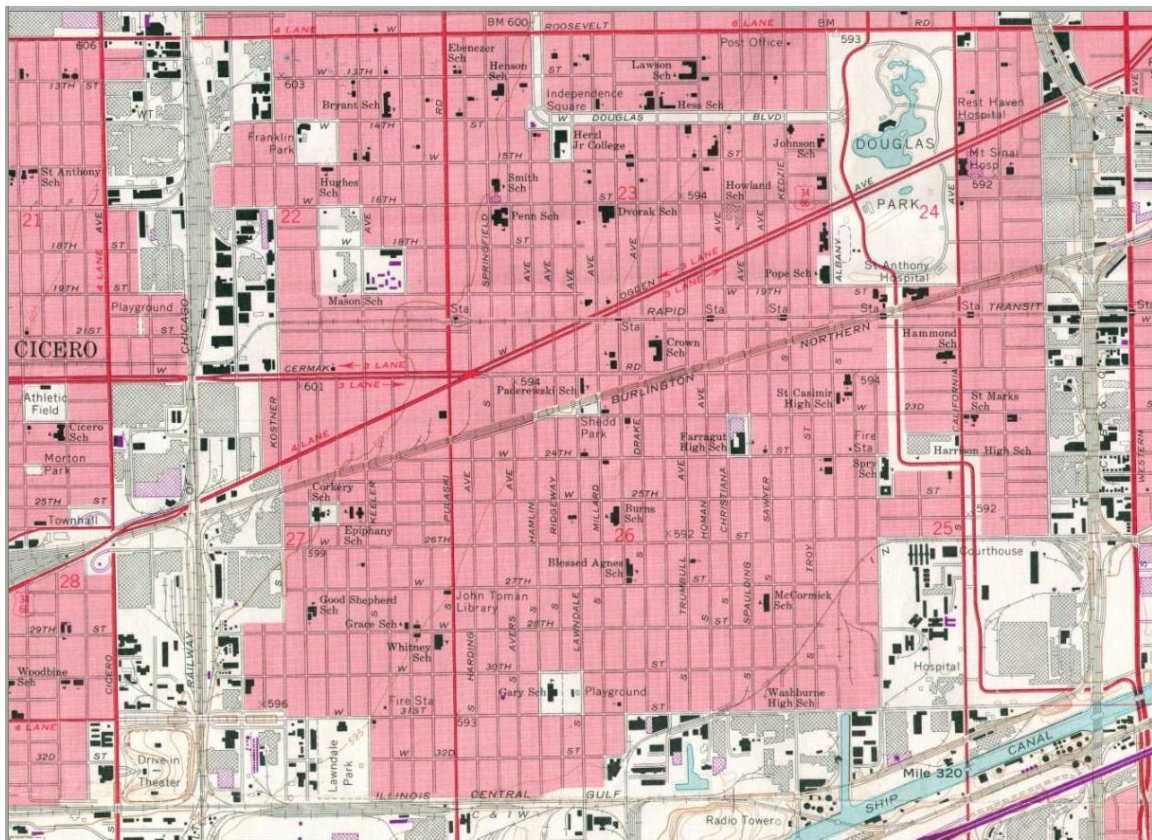


Figure 4.2: Map of Little Village

U.S. Geological Survey. Englewood quadrangle [map]. Photorevised 1972 and 1980.
1:24,000. 7.5 Minute Series.

Reston, Va: United States Department of the Interior, USGS, 1981.

Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

CASA Chicago confronted Dan Torres, the gasoline station owner, for allowing Shell to serve as a hub of INS activity in the community. Torres, however, disputed the accusation. He claimed that he had to honor a two-year contract to repair government cars, which included the “green fords” or INS vehicles. Furthermore, a CASA memorandum stated Torres describing that he “displays immigration cars in the front of his station to show the people that the immigration is not a bad bunch and only doing their jobs.” Regardless of this agreed-upon contract, the point of tension rested in the

unfair practices of federal agents targeting customers at the gasoline station as well as those who passed by it. It also discounted the pervasiveness of racial discriminatory practices adopted by the government officials.

Quoted in the *Chicago Tribune*, William Bartley, the Chicago director of INS, responded harshly to the Shell protest by stating, “This guy Lozano is leading a bunch of ignorant apes who don’t know what they are talking about.”⁵¹ The social climate of the times facilitated Bartley’s deployment of this offensive racist epithet even though he served as government official. Clearly, referring to the protestors as apes disregarded the human dignity of Mexicans. However, Bartley’s racist comment merely extended the alarmist imagery and language that mainstream media and society commonly used to characterize Mexicans. The local mainstream press used terms common in mainstream media depictions of the influx of Mexican immigration, such as crisis, invasion, plague, and loss of control.⁵²

Framing undocumented Mexican immigration with this logic of “illegality” foreclosed the possibility of the pursuit of rights by the undocumented. Like many people in the United States, many Chicagoans also believed that the undocumented had no grounds for making claims to rights. Attorney General William B. Saxbe, days prior to Bartley’s comments, pledged the deportation of 1 million Mexican undocumented workers. For example, on December 3, 1974, the *Chicago Tribune* opinion piece “The danger from illegal aliens” reflected this racist sentiment. It berated CASA Chicago for the protest it staged at the Shell station, and CASA Chicago’s overall involvement in

⁵¹ Emmett George, “Chicanos Contest Illegal Alien Hunt,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 1, 1974, 36.

⁵² Leo R. Chavez, *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 216.

assisting the undocumented. The anonymous writer wrote, “The existence of great numbers of improperly admitted aliens in the United States is harmful to this country and to the aliens themselves. It is therefore lamentable to find organizations encouraging aliens in illegal practices.”⁵³ The writer emphasized that the undocumented had broken the law. This judgment placed the responsibility of having an undocumented status on the individual.

Various community organizations, including the Pilsen Neighborhood Community Council, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, the African American Solidarity Committee, St. Vitus Roman Catholic Church, and Casa Aztlán took action to express solidarity in their positions against these racist remarks. In response to Bartley’s dehumanizing reference, CASA Chicago stated in a press release, “... this blatant display of racism typifies the discriminatory nature of the immigration department. This slanderous rhetoric is viewed by our community as harmful to all sectors of the latin working force and will not be tolerated idly (sic).”⁵⁴ The usage of “latin working force” demonstrated the inclusiveness of Latinas/os in the campaign, not just Mexicans.

CASA Chicago served as a structure to channel immigrant rights mobilization and to amplify its visibility. CASA Chicago generated political consciousness and activated mobilization in various ways. Residents could seek advice and support by visiting the CASA office. The organization launched various campaigns “to militantly combat this blatant act of racist repression (sic)” as demonstrated in the Boycott Shell efforts. Members advertised these campaigns; they held press conferences to generate attention to a broader audience. CASA Chicago, in collaboration with many other organizations,

⁵³ Anonymous, “The Danger From Illegal Aliens,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 1974.

⁵⁴ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

also staged large-scale events, such as the marches and rallies. At times, CASA coordinated political activities throughout the country organized by local chapters.

Building a National Movement:
el día internacional de los trabajadores [International Workers' Day]

Under directives by CASA's national steering committee, the Chicago chapter organized events locally to mirror ones planned by other chapters in the United States. In the spring of 1975, CASA held an important national meeting in Colorado to discuss ways to institutionalize the newly elected leadership's vision of developing an identity as a revolutionary organization. Representatives from the CASA chapters participated in the conversations on ways to centralize CASA as a national organization for immigrant rights. There, CASA participants designated May Day 1975 as the organization's national day of action where local chapters would organize immigrant rights rallies and marches. This national "coming out" day sounded like a fine idea; however, May 1, 1975 fell on a Thursday. Many members believed that staging such an important event on a weekday would result in poor attendance and participation. Others remained firmly committed to hosting the national event on May 1 because it was día internacional de los trabajadores [International Workers' Day], also known as May Day. On this day—an official holiday in many countries and an unofficial one in others, labor rights advocates, unions, communist and socialist groups across the world organize demonstrations and rallies to commemorate the history of struggles and mobilization for labor rights, such as the fight for the eight hour day.

Staging the immigrant rights march on the actual day of May 1—even if on a

weekday—was especially significant to the Chicago chapter. It was a way to honor the workers and organizers who lost their lives in the Haymarket Affair that had occurred in Chicago in May 1886. On May 4, 1886, protestors had organized a rally at Haymarket Square to denounce the death of strikers at the hands of the police the day prior. A strike at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, an agricultural equipment manufacturer, resulted in violence and death when police officers fired their arms to quell a confrontation between strikers and strikebreakers. Police officers and protestors clashed at the demonstration resulting in massive uproar and the eruption of bloodshed, including the death of police officers. The state penalized many activists for inciting the riots. Local courts convicted eight activists for murder, and punished them with death. To keep alive this struggle for workers' rights, labor rights activists, workers, and supporters from around the world commemorate their lives on May 1st. To pay tribute to this Chicago-based historical event, CASA Chicago remained tenacious and organized a Raza Si, Migra No ["Community, Yes, INS No], a collective day of action on Thursday, May 1, 1975. In the words of CASA Chicago activist Lydia Dávila,

Everybody nationally said, "We can't do it on a Thursday. And Chicago said, "No, we have to do it on Thursday!" Part of it had to do [with] historically how important the first of May was to Chicago. So we said, "No! We have to do it on May first."

The chapter's leaders drafted a memorandum to CASA's headquarters in Los Angeles to explain the significance of mobilizing a day of action on May 1st whether or not the day fell on a weekday.

CASA quickly moved forward with preparations for a march on Thursday, May 1, 1975. Leaders drafted objectives to guide their planning. Organizers framed the march as

“one that would have less of a ‘Leftist’ character and more of a mass character.”⁵⁵ In that spirit, they aimed to attract many participants. They aimed to strengthen their *nucelos* [organizing cells], groups of approximately 10 people headed by the militants or key leaders. Furthermore, they strove to increase the sales of *Sin Fronteras*, the organization’s newspaper, as a tool for consciousness-raising and to draw in members, participants, and supporters. May Day organizers designated Pilsen’s Harrison Park on 18th Street and Damen Avenue to serve as the site for the rally because the neighborhood represented the heart of the Mexican community.⁵⁶ Community activists renamed Harrison Park as Parque Zapata [Zapata Park], after Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata. The renaming of the park reflected an enthusiastic embrace of Mexican cultural pride and political activism.

CASA Chicago members coordinated to build a broad range of coalitions to support the May Day demonstration.⁵⁷ According to CASA Chicago members, Rudy Lozano, a gifted-speaker, also had a charismatic personality that allowed him to speak with people within and across racial/ethnic communities, led the movement to bring in a wide range of participants. The members had to mobilize quickly in order to garner the necessary support; they drew on their extensive network of contacts. Many CASA Chicago members held multiple memberships and affiliations with other organizations, such as Asociación Pro Obreros and the Eighteenth Street Development Corporations. Immigrant rights organizations such as the Illinois Migrant Council, a community

⁵⁵ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁵⁶ During the early to mid 1970s, Chicago Mexicans primarily resided in Pilsen, Little Village, South Chicago, and Back of the Yards. Stanley Ziemba, "Latinos Comprise City's No. 2 Minority: De Vise," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 1974. The respective order was New York, Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Chicago.

⁵⁷ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

organization founded in 1966 to promote housing, employment, health, and other opportunities for immigrants, also supported CASA Chicago.⁵⁸ Moreover, Casa Aztlán, Centro de la Causa, Mujeres Latinas en Acción, and several other groups had close associations with CASA Chicago. Drawing on this wide base of contacts, CASA Chicago built relationships and collaborated with groups committed to the principles of equality and rights for trabajadores. Supporters also included Latino Youth, an alternative high school; Saint Pius's adult education center; the Pilsen Coalition against the 21 Plan, a large-scale development plan designed to revitalize the "Loop" and its surrounding areas; and the Mexicano/Chicano Student Union at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle. In addition, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), a Marxist organization in support of Puerto Rico's political independence from the United States, strongly supported CASA.⁵⁹

To build a successful launch of a wide-scale movimiento for immigrant rights, CASA Chicago formed a broad coalition of leftist and populares [populists] political ideologies that expressed solidarity to the needs of trabajadores and everyday working people in some form, such as the Committee of Resistance against the Eilberg Law, a coalition formed to protest the recent immigration proposal authored by Congressman Joshua Eilberg of Pennsylvania.⁶⁰ CASA Chicago had strong relationships with unions, such as the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, the International Ladies Garment Workers, United Pressed Products Company, and various unions such as

⁵⁸ In 1975, IMC had filed a lawsuit against the INS for unlawful raids and questioning.⁵⁸ The INS reserved the right to raid homes and the workplace at any given moment and without any warrants.⁵⁸ These INS practices unfairly targeted Mexicans and Latinas/os. They violated the rights of U.S. citizens of Mexican descent and those of the overall Latina/o community. The IMC, like CASA, highlighted that the U.S. Constitution protected the equal access to rights by members in U.S. society. See "Rights Question- Illegals Fair Game for U.S.," *Chicago Tribune*, February 11, 1975.

⁵⁹ This was not unique to CASA Chicago as CASA at the national level collaborated with the PSP. *Rudy Lozano: His Life, His People*, 36.

⁶⁰ *Rudy Lozano: His Life, His People*, 36.

the meat cutters, shoe workers, and steelworkers.⁶¹

As a result of several weeks of dedicated preparation, the publicity for the immigrant rights march generated much community enthusiasm and participation. To publicize the May 1 demonstration, CASA Chicago activists posted signs and passed out fliers throughout the community. They advertised for the march at its activities, events, and workshops. For example, on April 22, 1975, CASA Chicago provided detailed information about the May Day march at a *Migra Fuera de las Fabricas* [INS Out of the Factories] roundtable discussing ways to halt INS raids at local factories.⁶² Activists also organized skits to motivate people to participate. Members used loudspeakers on top of the cars to publicize the march. Two weeks prior to the march, CASA Chicago made public service announcements and press releases. Youth did pintas [taggings] around the neighborhood with slogans in favor of immigrant rights, such as tagging “Stop Deportations” on stop signs and walls.⁶³

At the rally, CASA Chicago proclaimed many demands, such as the right to unionize, immediate and unconditional amnesty to the undocumented, a stop to deportations, claims to self-determination, and democratic rights for the working class.⁶⁴ CASA Chicago membership increased in every brigade after the immigration march.

⁶¹ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁶² CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁶³ One time, the tagging reached the wall of a community church. The pastor and the church community grew very upset and disappointed. CASA apologized, denounced the tagging, and declared sacred respect for the church.

⁶⁴ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

CASA's attendance at the general meetings increased to approximately 65 people from Chicago and the suburbs, and Mexicans, Latinas/os, and other allies.⁶⁵

CASA had a built in structure of self-criticisms in order to reflect and make adjustments accordingly for future events. The main critiques included the following points. The wide-spread circulation of flyers and posters helped publicize the event. However, the poor quality of the leaflets for the May Day event was not one that members proudly recruited with. As a memo stated, "We are all in agreement of its unattractive design. This was partly due to the urgency in producing the leaflet for the May Day Committee and not giving it to the specialist we have in layout."⁶⁶ They praised the usage of the loudspeakers on top of the cars as a form of spreading news of the march widely. However, it frowned upon the misuse of the pintas because someone tagged a church wall, producing backlash against CASA. The church pastor and others publically condemned the young radicals for the lack of respect of sacred spaces.

In sum, CASA Chicago leaders believed that 1975 May Day did not create a movement; rather an isolated day of action. To become a movement, members believed they needed to generate support from far more workers and unions. As documented in a memo, "We must move the left closer to the workers and the workers closer to the left which is something we have not consciously practiced outside this organization."⁶⁷ This shows the move to commitment to *trabajadores* and the need to expand their efforts for movement building. The initial idea was to attract the participation of the masses, but at the end it was at the expense of pushing the views of *trabajadores* more to the left and

⁶⁵ *Rudy Lozano: His Life, His People*, 35.

⁶⁶ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁶⁷ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

educating the left on issues pertinent to trabajadores, especially those undocumented.

Activists had to invent ways to negotiate their radical politics in such a way to generate a wide base of supporters and to attract a new membership of activists. Deciding on the appropriate messaging, advertising, and slogans was critical. By addressing these gaps, CASA aimed to build a movement of a change inclusive of the trabajadores.

Raising this argument among fraternal left organizations creates many possibilities for the general movement and would move it objectively forward. Many leftists have a very narrow subjective and sometimes romantic view of these activities and are satisfied with raising what they believe to be revolutionary-only slogans. In working toward these mobilizations we should make a conscious effort in changing this petit-bourgeois attitude within our sphere of influence and in a constructive way. [sic]⁶⁸

The May Day march of 1975 was a first step in building a movement. After the march, CASA diligently worked within and beyond the framework of their organization to create a structure for change. They organized important events, workshops, forums, and campaigns in favor of the rights of the trabajador. They built on the experience from the May Day event which critically informed the preparation for future marches and rallies.

Building on the lessons from previous marches and rallies, CASA Chicago organized another important May Day march in 1977. People came out to support CASA Chicago's 1977 May Day march as described in Lydia Dávila's words,

It was one of the largest May first demonstrations we've ever had. I think it was 1,500- 1,700 people. It was an incredible amount of people on a weekday. This was to the credit of Rudy, who did it in coalition with other organizations [and] progressive organizations.

⁶⁸ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

Since then CASA members, especially Rudy Lozano, continued to build relationships with important organizations open to the rights of the trabajadores.

CASA members also had an opportunity to develop their intellectual and theoretical understandings of a better world for trabajadores. CASA activist Pepe Medina's speech delivered on May Day 1977 articulated a new vision for immigrant workers. In his speech, Medina reminded his constituents that the May Day event was a continuation of the activism from previous generations as early as the Haymarket Affair. He challenged workers to be wary of union leaders who collaborate with the corporate interests and have distanced themselves from their constituents by neglecting to address their issues and demands. He further stated how unions have traditionally blamed the undocumented for the decline in union membership. However, they fail to acknowledge how they support capitalist interests in the United States and imperialist ones abroad.

Medina challenged unions to not only recognize the undocumented trabajador as an important part of the working class, but also challenged them to find innovative ways of including them in the unions. In this way, he stated, "la victoria de los trabajadores indocumentados en una defensa a [...] sindical ha repetido como victoria de todos, el movimiento obrero en los estados unidos." [the victory of the undocumented in defense of unions is repeated as a victory for all in the labor movement in the United States.]⁶⁹ Furthermore, Medina stressed, "No solo importa el crecimiento de miembros, sino la aportación de experiencias de lucha que los migrantes traen consigo." [The growth in (union) membership is not only important, but the contribution of organizing experiences that migrants have gained.] In other words, integrating the experiences of the

⁶⁹ Jose 'Pepe' Medina documents, Personal Collection, Mexico City, MEX.

undocumented trabajador will only strengthen unions. He further stated, “la división del trabajo esta unidad de obreros de diferentes nacionalidades siembra el camino la consciencia de clase obrera el movimiento en los estados unidos son las futuras luchas de la clase en la busca de la transformación social y económicas.” [The division of work comprised by the unity of workers from different nationalities creates the path for a class-consciousness, the workers’ movement in the United States represents the future struggles of the class in search of social and economic transformation.] Acknowledging the diversity of workers and generating a class-consciousness was fruitful in generating possibilities for the radical transformation of an economic world order into an anti-capitalist one. Moreover, a victory for the undocumented is a way of expanding rights and better conditions for all workers not just the ones without papers. Medina transformed a discourse that blamed and positioned the undocumented as an impediment to union organizing. In the process, Medina articulated a position that had just begun to be explored by progressive unions such as the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which, of course, would soon begin the famous “Justice for Janitors” campaign among a largely undocumented workforce in Los Angeles and southern California.⁷⁰

Medina’s speech centered the voice of the militant immigrant. He stated, “Hay un grito de los migrantes: de la lucha obrera no lo para la frontera.” [There is a migrant’s cry: the border does not stop the workers’ fight] He advocated for the need to abolish

⁷⁰ See Valery Alzaga, "Justice for Janitors Campaign: Open-sourcing labour conflicts against global neo-liberalism," openDemocracy, February 7, 2011, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/valery-alzaga/justice-for-janitors-campaign-open-sourcing-labour-conflicts-against-global-neo-libera>; Gary L. Anderson, *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007); Christopher Nulty, "Justice for Janitors Campaign: Rooted in the Struggle for Immigrant Rights," *Service Employees International Union, CTW, CLC*, June 14, 2010, <http://www.seiu.org/2010/06/justice-for-janitors-campaign-rooted-in-the-struggle-for-immigrant-rights.php>; "Panel: Learning from the Past to Change the Future," Social Justice History Project, <http://socialjusticehistory.org/projects/justiceforjanitors>.

laws hostile to workers and create ones attentive to the conditions and needs of all workers, including the undocumented ones. In other words, he stressed the importance of the integration of the undocumented within the larger demands of all workers. He outlined CASA's demands and main principles for action. There were as follows:

- Equal pay for equal work
- Equality of women at the workplace
- Jobs for all
- An injury to one is an injury to all
- 30 hours of work for 40 hours of pay

By organizing around these main ideas, CASA members overlooked the hierarchal distinction of U.S. citizenship and generated a model inclusive of citizen and non-citizen workers.

El primero de mayo 1977 se significa por ser una historia del movimiento Universal de los estados unidos, una nueva etapa con inclusión consciente del papel que juega el obrero indocumentado en la lucha sindical, sindicalistas progresistas promuevan en sus sindicatos las resoluciones por la amnistía legalización a obreros indocumentados ... Las futuras celebraciones del día internacional de los trabajadores será el resume de las nuevas victorias y de las formas de defensa independientes y combatida alcanzada. Viva la lucha de los mártires en Chicago, Mueran los Traidores!

[May 1977 is known by being a history of universal movement of the United States, it is a new age of conscious inclusion of the role played by the undocumented worker in union struggles, progressive unionists encourage your unions to adopt resolutions for amnesty for the undocumented workers.... The future celebration of international workers' day will be a snapshot of the new victories and of new forms of independent mobilizing strategies fought and reached. Long live the Chicago martyrs, Die Traitors!]

Medina motivated the crowd by linking the past, present, and future in the workers' movement as he shared his dream of a reconfigured and improved movement shaped in part by contributions of the undocumented trabajadores.

CASA Chicago's adoption of a *sin fronteras* identity proved useful to build community—certainly not without tensions. As CASA member Lupe Lozano explained:

We would rally on May Day, and we would be with our banners... 'Raza Si, Migra No!' We would try to educated [sic] the people that are no different than any other. Also at that time the (Chicago) movement was real strong. But we felt that the (Chicago) movement only divided the Mexicans from one side of the border to the other. So we had to look at this differently... we are all Mexicanos, we are all one people. We should not be divided because of sectors.⁷¹

In their mobilizing efforts, CASA members aimed to build a community of Mexicans and Mexican Americans and other Latinas/os by drawing on a *sin fronteras* politics. They also challenged the anti-Mexican imagery prevalent in popular discourse during the 1970s by emphasizing the arduous labor—often under poor working conditions—undertaken by *trabajadores*. As reflected by Medina's speech, a *sin fronteras* politics also provided a new vision for claiming rights that moved beyond national borders and legal divisions; it also demanded attention to the increasingly globalized system of structural forces and economic systems that has propelled generations of documented and undocumented *trabajadores* to the United States.

Migra Fuera de las Fabricas [INS Out of the Factories]

With the idea of the militant immigrant, *Migra Fuera de las Fabricas* and other CASA Chicago campaigns aimed to unionize immigrants, regardless of legal status.

⁷¹ It is interesting the original text of the transcript has Chicago movement instead of Chicano movement. It could be very well a typo however I speculate it has more to do with the transcriber, who was then an undergraduate a UIC who neglects to consider Chicano as a term because the term is not as pervasive in Chicago. Dr. Louise Ano Nuevo Kerr Papers, 1996, Series I, Box 1, Folder 8, Part B, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

In the mid-1970s, CASA Chicago created the Migra Fuera de las Fabricas [INS Out of the Factories] campaign aimed to halt INS raids and harassment of trabajadores in the factories. It also advocated for immigrant workers' rights through union organizing and other ways. Organizing for Migra Fuera de las Fabricas highlighted the notion of the militant immigrant as citizen and noncitizen workers united to improve their working conditions. CASA Chicago militants collaborated with unions to secure successful Migra Fuera de las Fabricas campaigns. Members believed CASA Chicago "must move the left closer to the workers and the workers closer to the left which is something we have not consciously practiced outside our organization."⁷² To practice its Marxist-Leninist principles CASA Chicago sought to strengthen projects directly connected to trabajadores, such as collaborating with unions and labor organizations such as Asociación Pro Derechos Obreros [Association for Workers' Rights] (APO). APO had several victorious campaigns, such as fighting Saint Luke's Presbyterian Hospital and Greyhound Lines, intercity bus company to employ more Latinas/os; protesting A&P grocery store to implement fair wages for its workers; and demonstrations against Jewel grocery store and People's Gas, the natural gas company in the city of Chicago.

CASA Chicago supported various strikes, such as the one against plastics molding plant Grede Plastics in Maywood, a suburb of Chicago.⁷³ The dispute began in April 1974 when the union agreement was to expire and the union launched the strike in July 1975. In September 1975, CASA Chicago notes state, "Our comrades at Grede Plastics

⁷² CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁷³ National Labor Relations Board v. Maywood Plant of Grede Plastics, no. 628 F.2d 1, United States Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit (<http://cases.justia.com/us-court-of-appeals/F2/628/1/59185/>) June 3, 1980.

have been on strike for three months, on the fourth, the labor court will begin to receive testimonies, so that later determine a ruling. Workers united will never be defeated.”⁷⁴

CASA Chicago managed to create a small discussion group of four members to dialogue:

el aspecto economico de la huelga, es decir a lo relacionado con salaries, senoria etc. El aspecto político, se ha discutido, no con la misma intensidad que lo primero, y esto claro que se entiende que es erroneo, pero las condiciones de desarrollo tanto del grupo como del organizador, asi lo han determinado... Por otro lado, se cuneta tambien con la experience de mi parte, razon por la cual no se had podido resaltar el valor prioritario del trasfondo político de la lucha económica (sic).⁷⁵

[the economic aspect of the strike, that is to say to that related to the salaries, seniority etc. The political aspect has been discussed, but not to the same degree, and this clearly is to be understood as wrong, but the group as well as the organizer have determined the conditions for the development. For different matters, my inexperience also contributed to the reason as to why the background politics has not been prioritized in the economic fight.]

This CASA Chicago organizer attempted to infuse a Marxist-Leninist understanding of the strike among the trabajadores at the plant, or at the very least among the discussion group participants. However, his/her inexperience and working knowledge of CASA doctrine limited his/her ability to do so. This also illustrates the strict structure and policies that CASA Chicago members followed. Though he/she recognized this limitation, it did not prevent him/her from leadership at the plant. Meanwhile, fellow CASA Chicago members supported the strike. In the end, the National Labor Relations Board ruled in favor of the workers and cited Grede Plastics for its refusal to meet and negotiate a new contract as well as for changing employment benefits with no consultation.

⁷⁴ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁷⁵ “Reporte de Asuntos Laborales”, CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

CASA Chicago activist Benjamín Estrada experienced unjust working conditions which poor union representation allowed year after year. He described the stronghold that the Harry Davies Molding Company, a manufacturing company of plastic components, had on the unions. The union representative did not do much for the workers. The union as an independent body solely existed on paper because in practice the company greatly influenced the union representative. The union representative protected the company's interest. In Estrada's words,

El chief steward nunca hacia nada y ni le importaba que despidieran a los trabajadores por nada.... Yo esperé dos o tres contratos colectivos y las condiciones de trabajo no se mejoraban... Todo tiempo ganaba la compañía, porque ellos hacían sus arreglos ahí... porque en la cafetería [de la empresa] se hacía las reuniones. El mismo empleador... era el que andaba llamado a las personas a que fueran a votar... Las cosas no podían continuar así; la gente estaba inconforme con tantos abusos y barbaridades que cometían, por cualquier cosa les quitaban señoría, eran muchos abusos.⁷⁶

[The chief steward never did anything and did not care that employees were fired with no apparent reason.... I waited 2-3 collective contracts and the working conditions did not improve ... The company won each time because they would make their arrangements... because they won host the meeting in the [company's] cafeteria. The employer himself ... was the one calling people to go vote. ... Things could not continue in that way; people were not okay with the many abuses and atrocities that were committed because with anything they would take away one's seniority, there were many abuses.]

Estrada sought the support of CASA Chicago to resist abuses and to negotiate a fair contract. Lozano suggested adding demands that included a 20 percent salary increase, health insurance, and optical and dental benefits. Only by making such demands, Lozano believed that the trabajadores would achieve a fair contract. After revising the demands, Lozano and Estrada distributed petitions and fliers. They held meetings with trabajadores.

⁷⁶ Rudy Lozano: *His Life, His People*, 96.

Given the de facto absence of official union representatives, Lozano and Estrada solicited support for this alternative means of union representation and organizing. Through petitions, the workers elected Estrada into power and to negotiate as a union representative. Indeed, the company greatly resisted in addressing these novel union efforts, ones that voiced the concerns of the workers. Representatives misinformed Estrada of meeting detail. They attempted to bribe him on different occasions to relinquish the campaign. Estrada did not let these intimidation tactics sway his focus from the incorporation of these union demands. In the end, the workers secured a just contract that incorporated most of the demands. Though a union existed at Estrada's factory, it did little to promote the workers' interests and rights. It seems that the large presence of noncitizens did not compel the union to advocate for their constituents. Presumably, an immigrant worker, especially undocumented ones, would not challenge the union. As historian Juan Mora writes, "Many of the immigrants worked in hotels, sweatshops, restaurants and other places that abused all labor laws. Few labor unions sought to organize and protect the immigrant worker."⁷⁷ CASA Chicago activists aimed to intervene in union organizing.

CASA Chicago worked closely with the unions friendly to the undocumented worker, such as the United Electrical Workers or UE. The UE had a long legacy of opposing discrimination against immigrant workers, including Latin American immigrants and had been one of the leftist unions sanctioned by the AFL-CIO in the Red Scare of the 1950s. Consequently, in the name of immigrant workers' rights, the UE supported CASA Chicago and vice versa. On November 7, 1975, Frank Rosen, the

⁷⁷ Rudy Lozano: *His Life, His People*, 30.

President of UE District Council #11, addressed a letter to Lozano specifically and CASA broadly. The letter informed CASA that the UE drafted a resolution at its 40th Convention in support of protecting undocumented workers. According to the letter, the resolution stated:

1. That any undocumented worker living in the United States have the right to file for residency status on the same basis as any other immigrant without the imposition of any sanction, including arrest and deportation.
2. That any worker who pays the usual payroll taxes be able to collect unemployment and other public assistance, be eligible for all other social advantages.
3. That undocumented workers be protected from harassment, from seizure and from deportation.
4. That the arbitrary power of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to arrest and deport be curbed, and that the agency be used to provide useful social services to people instead of acting like military police.
5. That the UE make a determined effort to organize these workers, as we organize all other workers, to fulfill the basic principle of an organization without regard to national origin, because only by the full and complete organization of all workers will we all be protected from unemployment and wages.⁷⁸

As exemplified by this resolution, the UE advocated for citizen and non-citizen workers. Relationships, such as this one, only strengthened CASA Chicago's Migra Fuera de las Fabricas campaign and general activism to defend the undocumented.

By the late 1970s, community pressure alleviated the intensity of INS harassment and raids in the neighborhood; it continued, but not to the same degree. The Rosendo Padilla ordeal brought community leaders, activists, priests, teachers, and many others to be attentive to the activities of immigration agents in the neighborhood. Instead, INS shifted its harassment of Mexicans and Latinas/os to the workplace, primarily factories. With no advanced warning, INS asked workers for documentation of legal residence,

⁷⁸ "UE letter to Rudy Lozano", CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

particularly asking those who “looked Mexican.” On April 19, 1977, the INS raided a factory and asked workers to prove their legal status. The raid resulted in the apprehension of 127 people. The INS routinely raided factories, harassed permanent U.S. residents and U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, and deported some of the apprehended. The weak economy of the 1970s seemed to justify these unfair INS practices; however, activists refuted these excessive practices because they violated the basic civil and human rights of Latinas/os. Needless to say, campaigns, such as *Migra Fuera de las Fabricas*, became even more important to combat unfair INS practices at the factories and to protect immigrant and undocumented workers.

CASA leaders worked to ensure that factories remained in Pilsen and in the United States, more broadly. However, during the 1970s, the political economy in Chicago underwent a transformation from a manufacturing city into a service-based economy. Despite their efforts, some factories relocated to the suburbs. Others moved production abroad. Battles to keep factories in the community primarily failed due to globalization; companies began to relocate assembly lines to *maquiladoras* [border factories] to border cities along the United States-Mexican border.⁷⁹

Though CASA Chicago could not fight to keep local factories opened, they sometimes did experience important feats in negotiating contracts that ensured the rights of undocumented workers. Whereas other workers had citizenship or papers to

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the structural changes that had begun to transform the economy in the greater Chicago area at this time, see Joel Rast, "Manufacturing Industrial Decline: The Politics of Economic Change in Chicago, 1955–1998," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23, no. 2 (December 19, 2002): 175-190; James DeFilippis, Nina Martin, Annette Bernhardt, et al., "On the Character and Organization of Unregulated Work in the Cities of the United States," *Urban Geography* 30, no. 1 (January 2009): 63-90; and Marc Doussard, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, "After Deindustrialization: Uneven Growth and Economic Inequality in 'Postindustrial' Chicago," *Economic Geography* 85, no. 2 (April 2009): 183-207.

circumvent deportation, the undocumented did not. Not having proper documentation potentially subjected workers to differential treatment: undocumented trabajadores faced abuses. Employers and co-workers could threaten the undocumented into compliance simply because they lacked state authorization to work in the United States. Without papers, trabajadores could forcibly earn substandard hourly wages, tolerate unsafe working conditions, and work unreasonable hours. However, the militant immigrant resisted these injustices and did not let the fact of not having the proper authorization to work in the United States open the door to widespread abuses.

Highlighting the mere fact that the undocumented contributed their blood, sweat, and tears to the job CASA Chicago made claims for the entitlement of equal protection. Fighting for equal protection extended to those removed from the country, but who made their ways back to the worksite. After many years of battle, CASA Chicago managed to secure job protection for the returnees. More specifically, returnees could secure their positions at the worksite. CASA Chicago ensured that employers reinstate the returnee's seniority. In CASA Chicago activist Emmanuel Barajas' words, "Estaba protegido por el contrato, si regresaban le tenían que dar su chamba de regreso." [One was protected by contract, if one returned then one's job would be reinstated.] This minor, yet significant account exemplifies how CASA Chicago secured unique provisions to offer protection in light of the precarious circumstances that the undocumented workers faced.

Most notably, CASA Chicago experienced success with the Migra Fuera de las Fabricas campaign when it collaborated with the UE to develop protective policies to ban la migra from making unannounced factory raids. The union negotiated terms with a local factory that many in the community referred to as la Pioja [the Flea]. The union

stipulations blocked INS agents from entering la Pioja. Instead, the INS had to provide the employers with a list of names of people they wished to question. If INS asked for a particular person, then the managerial staff summoned the employee and directed him/her to meet with INS officials at the entrance. Only under these circumstances could INS officials apprehend trabajadores at work. Again, this story exhibits CASA Chicago's unwavering support and activism for the rights of undocumented at the workplace.

Mexicanidad or Chicanismo?: Ideological clashes and the demise of CASA

CASA faced repeated political clashes with other organizations, especially with the August Twentieth-Ninth Movement (ATM), a Chicano and Maoist organization formed in 1974 that believed Chicanos were a distinct oppressed nation.⁸⁰ It took its name from August 29, 1970, the historic date of the Chicano Moratorium to protest the Vietnam War. Leaders particularly took issue with CASA's rejection of Chicanismo.

According to CASA document "There Are No Chicanos":

The position of CASA is that Mexicans in the US whether born north or south of the imperialist border are part of the same nationality. It is our duty to take our position amongst the masses of our people and to debate it against the position that the Mexicans born here in the US form part of another nationality the Chicano nationality.⁸¹

By steadfastly invoking a collective Mexican identity, CASA discounted the significance of invoking a Chicana/o identity. Instead, it promoted a *sin fronteras* identity within and beyond the organization. Based on their guiding philosophy and experience, CASA leaders explained that the broader community of ethnic Mexicans actively engaged in a collective Mexican identity.

⁸⁰ Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 157.

⁸¹ CASA Documents, Box 25, Folder 8, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

However, ATM leaders strongly challenged the assertion that Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the barrio preferred the *sin fronteras* term, Mexicanidad rather than Chicana/o. They stated, “CASA has refused to take their position amongst the masses because they realize the strong national sentiments of the Chicano people for their right to self-determination.”⁸² According to ATM, Chicanismo penetrated deeply within the community and that CASA had no real foundation to claim a *sin fronteras* identity appealed to people in the barrio. Similarly, Chicana/o Studies scholars, such as Mariscal, echo this sentiment, he argues “the appeal of Chicano nationalism was (is) always greatest for working-class people living in tightly knit urban or rural Mexican communities in the United States.”⁸³

CASA leaders believed that a collective Mexican identity in the barrio had greater currency and usage than a Chicana/o identity did in which Marxist-Leninist transnational consciousness fueled this belief. Moreover, the rising immigration population of Mexicans in the barrios also seemed to factor into this sensibility. It believed that drawing upon a Chicana/o identity made unnecessary distinctions within the ethnic Mexican community, one that privileged Mexican Americans. However, for ATM, immigrant rights activism subsumed a politically distinct Chicana/o identity. For example, leaders stated,

Chicano people have a distinct history, have taken up armed struggle for their land, for their democratic rights and for their right of self-determination. For years, the imperialists have denied the existence of Chicano people—suppressing their language, history, culture, and stealing their land. By denying the existence of a Chicano nation and their right to self-determination, CASA is objectively siding with imperialism.⁸⁴

⁸² CASA Documents, Box 25, Folder 8, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁸³ Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun*, 13.

⁸⁴ CASA Documents, Box 25, Folder 8, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

ATM, like other organizations, used Chicanismo as a key political identity, one attentive to the history of U.S. colonialism of ethnic Mexicans in the American Southwest. The term Chicana/o honored the history of resistance against U.S. exploitation among ethnic Mexicans in the lands seized by the United States.

CASA assertively utilized *sin fronteras* as a vital political term for organizing. However, historian Ernesto Chávez argues that the merging of Marxist-Leninist ideologies and cultural nationalism “fatally undercut its efforts by imagining the complex and multifaceted ethnic Mexican working class as a monolithic and undifferentiated mass of people.”⁸⁵ When CASA organized, for instance, it overlooked the specificities in Mexican American experiences, such as those with a long history spanning several generations in the United States or those who could trace their lineage to the conquered Mexican territories. Placing the focal point on immigrant rights seemed to ignore the specificities of their needs as Chicanas/os. This point became a source of tension as exemplified in the resignation of CASA leader Carlos Vásquez, a member of the Political Commission and the *Sin Fronteras* Director in 1977.⁸⁶ In his resignation letter, he criticized CASA’s *sin fronteras* concept. He expressed that CASA “must address both the sectors of our people whose main issue is immigration as well as those for whom it is not [...] We cannot hope to unite our people while only addressing one sector or one issue.”⁸⁷ Vásquez wanted to broaden the scope of CASA’s activism by decentering immigrant rights. Uniting the ethnic Mexican community meant addressing the prominent concerns

⁸⁵ Chávez, “¡Mi Raza Primero!” (*My People First!*), 99.

⁸⁶ Carlos Vásquez was also a professor of History at University of California, San Diego. See Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*, 83.

⁸⁷ CASA Documents, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

of the sizable population Mexican Americans in Los Angeles. If not, the focus on immigrant rights would continue to marginalize those with other pressing issues. However, the undocumented were very vulnerable, especially during this time period of escalated xenophobia against the illegal alien, presumably a Mexican or Latina/o.

CASA navigated a multiplicity of challenges that unevenly abated the organization including heated encounters with groups. For example, ATM accused CASA of rabble-rousing and contradictory practices while CASA refuted these condemnations and drafted charges against ATM. ATM blamed CASA of exploiting the undocumented in the campaign for immigrant rights. He stated, “CASA has consistently been unable to involve workers within their political structure ... The CASA leadership supports itself like any capitalist business—off the hard earned wages of workers.”⁸⁸ CASA and ATM engaged in many public and private brawls. In sum, CASA encountered resistance for adopting *sin fronteras*.

Certainly, Chicago’s Chicano Movement had a vibrant and strong presence. Some of CASA Chicago members had participated to varying degrees in the movement and self-identified as Chicanas/os.⁸⁹ However, their vigorous involvement in CASA Chicago and general commitment to immigrant rights activism raised questions about Chicanismo. Many activists, including those previously involved with the Partido de La Raza Unida [Raza Unida Party], a Chicana/o political party, traveled to a conference in Ohio to explore and debate this question of a Chicana/o identity versus a Mexican identity. The conference resulted in the stance that Chicanismo divided the ethnic Mexican

⁸⁸ CASA Documents, Box 25, Folder 8, Stanford University, Special Collections, Palo Alto, CA.

⁸⁹ *Rudy Lozano: His Life, His People*.

community, pitting those born and raised in the United States against the newly arrived immigrants. Moreover, CASA Chicago instituted an agreement that would eradicate the usage of the term Chicana/o. CASA Chicago activist Lydia Dávila declared that in a CASA Chicago meeting it was decided that they would cease to use Chicanismo. It would no longer exist. The heated political divisions and dogmatic views over the deployment of Chicanismo versus a *sin fronteras* politics proved to be very contentious and created deep-seated rivalry between and within organizations. These two political ideologies, but certainly not limited to these specific forms of political thought, deeply clashed and could not coexist because Chicanismo privileged the experiences of the citizen while a *sin fronteras* politics focused on the experiences on non-citizens. Still, both of these strands of political thought and revolutionary politics reinscribed a nation-state; Chicanismo invoked Aztlán and a *sin fronteras* politics summoned Mexico.

Sin fronteras politics offered possibilities for a language inclusive of citizens and non-citizens during a time of intense anti-Mexican sentiment and disdain for the undocumented trabajador. It also provided a new vision for claiming rights that moved beyond national borders and legal divisions; it also demanded attention to the increasingly globalized system of structural forces and economic systems that has propelled generations of documented and undocumented trabajadores to the United States. Though CASA folded at the national level, CASA Chicago continued albeit it morphed to incorporate electoral politics.⁹⁰ This time, in the late 1970s, CASA Chicago

⁹⁰ Though CASA Chicago continued to advocate for immigrant rights, they experienced heightened state surveillance, harassment, and infiltration into the early 1980s. FBI, police, and local government investigative tactics created uneasy tensions among the CASA Chicago membership. For example, activist Laura López recalled being particularly suspicious of two new members. For one, she had not previously encountered or noticed these new CASA-Chicago members in the community. They seemed to come out of

members built on the lessons learned in 1973 with the Angel Moreno campaign. The organizing nucleus, political education circles, and broad base of support proved extremely effective for CASA Chicago to mobilize the community to vote. Facing opponents supported by the machine was not a small task. CASA Chicago and other independent activists did not have the same degree of power, money, and connections as the machine did. However, it had a highly organized structure of networks to motivate and mobilize the community to chip away at the machine. CASA Chicago began to adopt electoral politics. Though facing varying degrees of repression from the Daley machine, it launched independent candidates for various offices. In 1983 Rudy Lozano ran for alderman of the twenty-second ward (Little Village). Lozano faced many threats during his campaign, but he continued and came a few votes shy of securing a seat as alderman. CASA disbanded at the national level, but CASA Chicago continued as it maneuvered through neighborhood politics dominated by machine politics.

nowhere and then disappeared, she said. One delayed the decision-making process, while the other made false accusations and harshly criticized CASA Chicago leaders. López, upon reflection, strongly believed that these new members most likely served as FBI or local government infiltrators. Moreover, she mentioned that a large wave of new CASA members seemed to come and go. They raised tensions, troubles, and hostility. Perhaps, they were not state informants, but it did raise suspicion among members of CASA Chicago.

Chapter Five: Lessons Learned, Today's Immigrant Rights Movement, and Future Directions

In 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Resolution (HR) 4437, “the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005,” a bill sponsored by Congressman James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, which would have made it—in its varied legislative forms—a felony to “help” the undocumented, including providing medical services, classroom instruction, and religious services or simply giving someone a ride home.¹ Popularly known as the 2006 “Primavera de los Inmigrantes” [Spring of the Immigrant], massive opposition to the bill passed in late 2005 sparked hundreds of thousands of people to mobilize across the United States in support of immigrant rights early in the following year.² On March 10, 2006, the first large march led by Latinas/os with participants of different races took place in Chicago. More than 250 subsequent marches took place throughout the United States in March, April, and May.³ On May 1, 2006, immigrant rights activists in Chicago brought individuals, families, and allies together. Locally, it became the largest march in the city’s history. Nationally, the participation of millions in the immigration marches became historic. In the end, due to widespread national opposition to the House legislation, which was evident not only by the overwhelming public support for the undocumented during the historic protests, but also by other political mobilizations across the country, ultimately, Sensenbrenner’s bill did not pass.

¹ The Sensenbrenner bill is popularly known as HR 4437. It was passed on December 16, 2005 and different forms, since then, have been drafted.

² Amalia Pallares and Nilda Flores-González, eds., *¡Marcha!: Latino Chicago and the Immigrant Rights Movement* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 79-96.

³ Ibid.

As previous chapters indicate, my project is engaged with questions of historical continuity and change, and includes discussion of the immigrants' rights movement in the American Midwest in their period beginning with the Bracero Program in the 1940s and including the most recent iteration of this movement symbolized by the mega-marches for immigrants' rights that occurred in 2006 and 2007. On March 10, 2006, Chicago staged a march with crowd estimates in the range of 100,000 to 300,000 participants. This only hinted at the thousands more than would participate in the May 1, 2006 marches (400,000 to 600,000 people).⁴ On May 1, 2007, Chicago staged one of the largest immigrant rights' rallies held in the country.⁵ Chicago's narratives of mobilization for immigrant rights circulated in various arenas, from coverage of the marches in news media to the publication of *Marcha!* edited by Amalia Pallares and Nilda Flores-González, to social media disseminated by undocumented youth broadcasting events, such as "Coming Out of the Shadows" in downtown Chicago, and U.S. Congressman Luis V. Gutiérrez (D-IL, 4th congressional district; Puerto Rican), advocating for comprehensive immigration reform, all of which have brought visibility to the vitality of this important social movement in the Windy City.⁶ This huge outpouring of a heretofore largely hidden pool of public opinion demonstrated the many ways multiracial and multiethnic participants came to together to denounce proposed anti-immigrant policies (HR 4437) and attacks on immigrant communities.

Commenting on events in the Midwest, political scientist Amalia Pallares states, "Chicago's ability to stage the first megamarch of 2006 and the largest marches in 2007

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., xii.

⁶ Ibid.

and 2008 illustrates the existence of a vibrant scene of Latino/a activism that both precedes and postdates the marches.”⁷ Not without heated debates, fights, ideological differences, and splits, pro-immigrant rights organizers in Chicago formed the coalition El Diez de Marzo [the March 10th]. The group planned the initial immigrant rights march on March 10, 2006. Community leaders regularly discussed and debated issues, strategies, and plans in Pilsen at Casa Michoacán, an umbrella organization for dozens of hometown associations linking residents in the Chicago area with Michoacán. Participants from various organizations collaborated, including Centro Sin Fronteras (CSF), the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Contratiempo Magazine, and many more.⁸ However, reflecting political schisms that had characterized the fight for immigrants’ rights in the Latina/o community at least since the 1970s—and arguably much before—in the end, CSF and March 10 Coalition split because of myriad ideological differences.

During Chicago’s 2006 “Primavera de los Inmigrantes,” local Univision Radio disc jockey, Rafael “El Pistolero” Pulido played a role in drawing thousands of marchers to the protests in the Chicago metropolitan area. At the time, Pallares stated that “The movement involves the rights of both undocumented and legal immigrants as well as the rights, status, and dignity of Latinos as a racialized group.”⁹ On May Day 2006 and 2007, participants organized car pools, chartered buses, and utilized public transportation (Chicago Transit Authority buses and trains, Pace Suburban Bus System, and the Metra

⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁸ For a comprehensive list of participants, see “March 10 Committee,” 24Ahead.com: Immigration and Politics, <http://24ahead.com/march-10-committee>.

⁹ Pallares and Flores-González, *¡Marcha!*, 56.

commuter rail) to get to staging areas. Employers shut down their businesses or workers simply failed to report to the job. Students skipped classes. Clerics organized parishioners. Union leaders and members came also out in support, and represented an array of local and national unions and labor federations, including the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (UNITE HERE), and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). The marchers demanded a stop to the state persecution and harassment of immigrant communities. They also advocated for comprehensive immigration reform—which notably included demands for the “regularization of status” of the estimated 10 to 11 million individuals who were unauthorized to be in the country at that time.

The marches of the new millennium brought together many of the immigrant rights activists who mobilized in the 1970s, if only in their memories. Former CASA leader Felipe Aguirre stated, the immigrant rights mobilization “was like a reunion of the old CASA-HGT leadership” where members relived their experiences in the 1970s. In their own ways, former casistas [CASA activists] continue to engage sin fronteras politics in private and public ways. The political positions staked out by immigrant rights activists in the 1970s anticipated and in many cases foreshadowed many of the political claims later generations of immigrants’ rights activists would make against the state in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Former CASA Chicago leaders, such as Carlos Arango and Linda Coronado, make historical arguments to remind young people of Chicago’s rich history in immigrant rights organizing. Carlos Arango is a public figure in Chicago’s scene of pro-immigrant rights organizing. He is the Executive Director of

Casa Aztlán. He is also the President of El Frente Unido de Inmigrantes, a political organization advocating for the rights of Latina/o immigrants. The group consists of former CASA members, including Ramiro Borja, Oscar Téllez, and Guillermo Gómez, and Bernardino Echeverría. Leader José Jacques Pepe Medina continues his pro-immigrant advocacy in Mexico City. He is helping to build a movement for immigrant rights in Mexico, advocating for the rights of Central American migrants. Medina volunteers at a Casa Migrant [Migrant House], a home where migrants can find housing, food, drink, and support. He participated in a campaign where Central American migrants successfully received government-issued, Mexican drivers' licenses. He bridges immigrant rights activism on both sides of the border. In various public venues in the United States and Mexico, former casistas have underscored the ways 1970s activists from different groups, factions, and ideologies coalesced together to fight for immigrant rights.



Figure 5.1: Immigrants' Rights March, 1970s.

Courtesy of Guadalupe "Lupe" Lozano with support from the Ruth Landes Memorial Fund.

During the Primavera de los Inmigrantes, marchers also chanted "Somos América" echoing CASA's slogan from the 1970s, *Somos Una Porque América es Una* [We are One because America is One] asserting an expansive, hemispheric American identity, a bi-continental notion referring to North and South America *not* just the United States. Carrying on a political tradition that was first explored by casistas at that time, both political phrases undermined the hegemonic reference of the United States with the all-encompassing term, America. Though a wide base of supporters representing a wide range of political philosophies and leanings, the marchers collectively asserted their humanity and demanded "leyes justas" [fair legislation] overall. For the first time on such a dramatic scale, the massive protests for the first time forced the nation to pay attention

to the political and social issues raised, and the demand issued hundreds of thousands of noncitizens demanding humane treatment, rights, and immigration policy changes.

The 2006 marchers challenged and expanded the terms of belonging in the nation in similar ways that immigrant rights activists had first explored in the 1970s.

Noncitizens exercised their freedom of expression by engaging in public marches, rallies, and demonstrations as a way to assert their human dignity and rights as captured by the increasingly popular slogan “Ningún Ser Humano Es Illegal” [No Human Being is Illegal]. In addition, participants expressed defiance of national borders by claiming that the state cannot and should not erase their personhood. They made demands of the state irrespective of their “legal” status. This slogan captures a more recent iteration of a sin fronteras ideology that called out the power of immigration law and the national borders that have rendered unauthorized im/migrants outside of humanity.



Figure 5.2: Immigrants' Rights March, May 2007, Chicago, IL
 Photograph courtesy of Héctor M. González

The city of Chicago itself has undergone significant change in this arena of politics since the heyday of CASA in the 1970s. Mexican immigrants now live in a city that has declared itself a sanctuary municipality where unauthorized residents have at least limited access to some services as city employees are prohibited from inquiring about their immigration status. However, they remain barred from access to most important federal health and welfare programs. In 1985, the late-mayor Harold Washington signed the sanctuary legislation. At the state level, Illinois also instituted legislation in support of its noncitizen population. In 2003, H.B. 60 allowed undocumented students who had graduated from Illinois high schools to pay in-state tuition at public colleges and universities. However, despite being a sanctuary city and a

center of pro-immigrant rights activism, intense enforcement programs have tormented the city's residents as in other parts of the country. On June 5, 2007, a resolution declared Cook County, a sanctuary county for authorized and unauthorized immigrants, the first of its kind in the United States.¹⁰ However, the adoption of legislation and policy does not indicate that it is necessarily upheld in practice as officials sometimes violated these protective resolutions. Accordingly, the Chicago City Council held a public hearing on August 5, 2008 to review grievances regarding the sanctuary violations by the Chicago Police Department (CPD). CPD officers did not hesitate to detain undocumented immigrants for traffic violations while informing ICE agents of these detentions. Three months later (on October 8), the Chicago City Council adopted a resolution in favor of a moratorium on all raids and deportation. However, in 2009 the implementation of the federal Secure Communities in the state of Illinois undermined the protective measures. Two years later in 2011, Illinois became the first state to withdraw from participating in the Secure Communities program. Governor Pat Quinn terminated the memorandum of agreement with federal authorities because he argued that the program unfairly resulted in the deportation of noncriminal undocumented immigrants as well as those with minor offenses. Chicago-based government officials have publically expressed support for the immigrant rights campaign, including former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley - Democrat (1989-2011), U.S. Senator Richard "Dick" Durbin - Democrat, U.S. Congressman Luis V. Gutiérrez -Democrat (1993- present), and Illinois Governor Pat Quinn- Democrat (2009- present). When the DREAM Act failed to become a national law in that same year, Governor Quinn signed the Illinois DREAM Act, creating

¹⁰ Ibid., xii.

privately funded college scholarships for documented and undocumented immigrants. Undocumented students in Illinois who meet specific criteria are eligible for in-state tuition at public postsecondary institutions.

Elvira Arellano

The marches of the new millennium brought together some of the old-time CASA activists and it also created a new generation of immigrant rights activists and pushed newly-formed organizations to build their organizing efforts and undertake leadership roles in new and exciting ways—and sometimes in problematic and conflicting manners. Chicago gained national and international attention in the current immigration debate with the case of Elvira and Saul Arellano. Without papers, she worked nights cleaning at O'Hare airport. In 2006, ICE agents conducted a sweep at her place of employment and consequently issued Arellano with a deportation order. Arellano, a La Familia Latina Unida activist, used her own immigration case to generate political awareness of the ways deportation tears families apart. In 2007, Elvira and Saul Arellano sought sanctuary at Adalberto United Methodist Church located in Humboldt Park, a Puerto Rican community, and managed by Reverend Walter “Slim” Coleman.

Parishioners and local residents from different racial and ethnic backgrounds guarded the church doors around-the-clock; Adalberto United Methodist Church was the first to extend sanctuary for an undocumented immigrant. Arellano publically shared her story. She worked without the proper government authorization in order to care and provide for Saul, her seven-year-old, U.S. citizen son. Arellano's case sparked

controversy and became a topic of discussion in local venues such as news reports, radio shows, and community forums.

Arellano compared her noncompliance of the deportation orders to the political actions of Rosa Parks, who famously refused to relinquish her seat on a bus, thus helping to spark the equally famous Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56. This civil rights analogy drew support, opposition, and difference. For example, Ted Hayes, an African-American member of the Minute Man project, a controversial group of individuals who have taken it upon themselves to police U.S. borders and at times, make “citizens’ arrests” of suspected unauthorized migrants, flew in from California to express disgust for Elvira Arellano’s cause. He is quoted as stating, “If she wants to use Rosa Parks as an example, so be it. But do it in Mexico! . . . They are hijacking my people's movement! They are hijacking our icons, Dr. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks.” This logic points to the way that the rubric of civil rights is used by some as a tool to exclude immigrants; to justify that the undocumented do not belong or have a say in the United States. According to Hayes, Arellano is not entitled to use African American Rosa Parks as an example because of her noncitizen status. As an undocumented immigrant, Arellano is not entitled to fight for equal rights in the United States. In contrast to Hayes’ views, some African-Americans have expressed solidarity with immigrant rights advocates, such as Jesse Jackson, Sr. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for example, is another prominent predominantly African American organization that supports immigrant rights. They argue that blaming immigrants is a smokescreen for the role that white privilege and corporate greed has played in creating and sustaining

inequality in the United States through the systematic, structural use of officially unsanctioned and yet clearly tolerated non-citizen workers.

The Arellano case brought attention to the negative impact of immigration and deportation policies on families. The arguments used to generate support for the Arellano incident drew on language that privileged U.S. citizenship. Bringing attention to Saul's U.S. citizenship status, La Familia Latina Unida activists argued that Arellano's deportation violated her son's citizenship rights. He needed his mother in the United States, adding a new wrinkle to an old debate. Although some critics of the presence of unauthorized persons have derided these so-called "anchor babies," under the terms of the birthright citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment, children born to parents who are themselves unauthorized to be in the country can claim full-vested U.S. citizenship through nativity, or the principle of *jus soli*. As an indication of just how pervasive and structural a feature unauthorized persons have become in U.S. society, demographic experts estimate that as of 2009, there were at least 4 million of such children—and another 1.1 million minors who were born abroad and brought into the country without official authorization. On August 19, 2007, Elvira left sanctuary to attend an immigration rally in Los Angeles. Despite the intervention of immigrants' rights advocates on their behalf, ICE agents apprehended and deported Elvira to Tijuana, Mexico. Arellano has continued her immigrant rights activism in Mexico. In 2009, she ran for office as a Mexican congressperson as a Partido de la Revolución Democrática [Party of the Democratic Revolution] or PRD candidate.

Flor Crisostomo

On January 23, 2008, another individual who was in the country without official authorization, Flor Crisostomo, a Mexican indigenous woman (Zapotec), took refuge in the church after Elvira left.¹¹ Flor Crisostomo, also a former Familia Latina Unida activist, raised questions and awareness regarding the structural conditions (globalization, neoliberal trade policies, and immigration legislation) that have led to the rise in authorized and unauthorized Mexican immigration. Crisostomo publically shared her story of undocumented migration. She highlighted the adverse consequences of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that propelled her undocumented migration to the United States. Migrating from Mexico, she came to the United States in search of work. Under the care of her mother, Crisostomo left her children. Physically absent, but socially and financially present, Crisostomo regularly communicated with her children. She regularly sent remittances to her family in Mexico. Unlike Arellano, Crisostomo did not draw on the language of U.S. citizenship as she had no family ties with U.S. citizens. Still, she argued for the right to stay and work in the United States. She called out the contradictions in U.S. policies that privileged the crossing of capital and goods across international borders, but not people or workers. During her tenure in sanctuary, Crisostomo advocated for comprehensive immigration reform that reconciled these contradictions in a humane way. Crisostomo's story deviates from the dominant, pro-immigrant rights discourse that privileges citizenship. She also received public ridicule because she did not return to Mexico to be with her children.

¹¹ Crisostomo self-identified as an indigenous woman from Mexico. Though she highlighted her indigenous background, popular discourse erased this identification.

Crisostomo's arguments demonstrate what is arguably yet another variant of sin fronteras politics. By invoking political slogans, such as No Human Being is Illegal, Crisostomo underscored a political position for the right to live and work in the United States even though she does not have papers. In the end, Crisostomo's sin fronteras politics encountered difficulty establishing a strong base of supporters as her arguments moved away from the hierarchal investment in citizenship. On October 18, 2009, Crisostomo left the sanctuary; her current whereabouts remain unknown.

Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL)

The historic marches also created a new cohort of pro-immigrant rights activists, including young people. For example, Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL), founded in October 2009, is a "Chicago-based organization led by undocumented youth working towards full recognition and contributions of all immigrants through education, leadership development, policy advocacy, resource gathering, and mobilization."¹² According to IYJL leaders, they organize and live their lives "undocumented, unafraid, and unapologetic." IYJL members represent migration stories from Latin America and other parts of the world, including Poland, Palestine, China, Philippines, and other areas.

IYJLY leaders organized the first annual "Coming Out of the Shadows" march and rally on March 10, 2010. A network of undocumented youth throughout the country have designated March 10th as a National Coming-Out Day, where the undocumented youth have publically disclosed their undocumented status and shared their stories in order to promote awareness and support. Accordingly, IYJL organized a Coming-Out

¹² "About Us," Immigrant Youth Justice League, <http://www.iyjl.org/about-2/>.

march and a rally in downtown Chicago in 2011 and 2012. Moreover, to demonstrate solidarity with this national day of action, some undocumented youth take advantage of the “Coming Out of the Shadows” day as an opportunity to declare their unauthorized status and personal testimonies to teachers, colleagues, peers, or others in their classrooms, organizations, teams, and cafeterias. Some of the main ideas driving the national day of action include: promoting awareness on how the undocumented lives are deeply entangled within the fabric of U.S. society, building solidarity for equal rights and pro-immigrant legislation, especially the DREAM Act. IYJLY has formed important coalitions with other DREAM activists throughout the country. They have also organized civil disobedience acts locally and in other parts of the United States, including Arizona, Georgia, and Washington, D.C.

Politics Differences, 1970s and Today

Three key differences distinguish the more recent marches from those of the 1970s. For one, today’s mobilization for immigrant rights is a central concern for many Mexicans as well as Mexican Americans, whereas in the 1960s and 1970s immigrant rights activists had a hard time soliciting support from Mexican Americans as the Chicano Movement focused on grievances with second-class U.S. citizenship. Secondly, today’s U.S. citizens and noncitizens, especially the undocumented, encounter tremendous emotional and physical violence at the hands of the neoliberal economic forces, globalization and a hostile immigration apparatus. A post-9/11 context has only exacerbated immigration issues, and continues to do so, as national security concerns have inhumanely trumped the livelihood and social well-being of U.S. citizens and

noncitizens, especially people of color. Thirdly, Chicago has played a major role in the recent national movement for immigrant rights that builds on the mobilization that CASA Chicago leaders co-led and nurtured, as this dissertation has shown.

The 2006 marchers expressed massive widespread support of noncitizens, specifically undocumented migrants. This mobilization resembled earlier historical periods, namely the Civil Rights Movement, where thousands upon thousands also mobilized to fight for better conditions, although in that case for the full rights of national citizenship for citizens who had long been denied equal rights. Like the Civil Rights Movement, the immigration marches also may well have marked a crucial turning point in U.S. history—albeit in a special way. It brought immigration issues front and center whereas previous social movements in the United States generally grappled with issues of second-class citizenship. For instance, the dominant narrative of activism regarding the plight of ethnic Mexicans in the United States has revolved around overcoming institutional and cultural barriers in order to gain full and equal inclusion as U.S. citizens into the nation. We know more about organizations, such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), founded in 1929, that focused on U.S. citizens (voter education and registration drives, language training, and political campaigns) while we are less familiar with organizations that espoused *sin fronteras* [beyond borders] ideological leanings, such as El Congreso de Pueblos de Habla Española [Congress of Spanish-speaking Peoples], founded in 1939. El Congreso refuted assimilation as they included and addressed the concerns of noncitizens.

As this project has demonstrated, CASA, an understudied organization of the 1960s and 1970s, politically deviated from the *Movimiento* [Chicano Movement]. The

general characterization of the mass mobilization of Mexican Americans during the 1960s and 1970s falls within a *Movimiento* framework. Centered on immigration issues, CASA moved away from remedying the problem of second-class citizenship for Mexican American citizens that the *Movimiento* worked primarily to address in favor of a position that advocated on behalf of all Mexicans, and arguably for all Latinas/os, regardless of their formal citizenship and/or legal status. CASA Chicago activists primarily focused on the rights of the undocumented worker. Furthermore, the organizers recognized the limitations of using citizenship as a condition for rights or as the sole guarantor for rights given the historical legacy of racism in the United States resulting in the differentiated experiences of citizens from aggrieved backgrounds (internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, *de jure* and *de facto* segregation of African Americans and Latinas/os, and the ongoing suppression of queer citizens and noncitizens alike, and other groups). The adoption of *sin fronteras* politics underscored a theoretical positioning that tested the limits of the nation-state. On a material level, this “beyond borders” framework highlighted how globalization produced the conditions that fueled the influx unauthorized Mexican immigration. Today’s immigrant rights leaders have also engaged in similar discourse calling out the broken immigration system that fails to address the root causes of undocumented migration (capitalism, neoliberal economic policies, and immigration law). They demanded comprehensive immigration reform and the regularization of status of millions unauthorized residents.

During the 1970s, under this *sin fronteras* banner, activists privileged the needs, rights, and experiences of the *trabajador* while erasing the experiences of other strands of the undocumented population. The wave of Mexican immigrants that came during the

1970s was characterized mostly by young, single, male *trabajadores*. This categorization subsumed the experiences of women and children who migrated during this time period, though it was certainly smaller in size then than it is now. In recent decades, however, the categorization of the Mexican immigrant population is a diverse one that includes women and children, as many migrated to escape tenuous conditions in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America to join family members in the United States in the 1990s. Representing this demographic profile, the recent immigration marches have included many diverse faces: *trabajadores*, families, young and aged people, women, and to a lesser extent, but certainly critical, a growing representation of queer immigrants.¹³

Immigration concerns during the new millennium profoundly troubled ethnic Mexicans, Latinas/os, and other concerned communities. According to the University of Illinois Immigrant Mobilization Project, coordinated by scholars Nilda Flores-González and Amalia Pallares, though most of the marchers in Chicago were Latinas/os (mostly Mexican), marchers included a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds (Polish, Irish, Korean, and Palestinians)—as was also true of mobilizations in New York, Boston, and elsewhere. Many participants support the need for comprehensive immigration reform, particularly as it pertains to the reuniting of families. U.S. citizens and those with an authorized immigration status participated in the marches because they may have personal relationships or experiences with someone who faces deportation. Unlike the mobilization of the 1970s, the present-day cover of the immigration marches underscore

¹³ For work on queer immigrant rights organizing, see Eddy Álvarez, "A Queerstory" about Love, Dreams and Immigrant Rights." in *Cien Años de Lealtad en Honor a Luis Leal/One Hundred Years of Loyalty In Honor of Luis Leal V. 2* Ed. Sara Poot Herrera, Francisco Lomelí & Maria Herrera Sobek. Mexico City: University of California, Santa Barbara, 2007 p. 1039-1050 and Eddy Álvarez "Space, Identity and Memory in Queer Brown Los Angeles: Finding Sequins in the Rubble" University of California, Santa Barbara, PhD thesis, forthcoming.

how families are ripped apart because of mixed-status families—where some family members are citizens or permanently legal residents while others are undocumented residents. Family separation, whether of immediate or extended family members, is a major concern that motivated many U.S. citizens to participate in the immigrant rights marches in alliance and solidarity with noncitizens. The emotional stress and fear of deportation runs deeply through the Mexican community. Citizens and non-citizens share these immigration concerns because family, neighborhood, school, and work life are closely intertwined—particularly for members of the working-class. Participants and supporters of the marches also extended to non-Mexicans because of their intimate ties with Mexicans as in the case of multi-racial and interethnic families where Mexicans have married with or partnered with non-Mexicans (other Latinas/os, Europeans immigrants, African Americans, etc.). In mixed-status families, questions of deportation raise great concern. Sometimes people go to work and children and youth go to school not knowing if an undocumented loved one will come home. These worries are a result of a broken U.S. immigration system.

Immigrant rights mobilization in the first decade of the twenty-first century pulled together a wide variety of participants espousing a heterogeneous mixture of political thought. This included ideologies that challenged, clashed, complicated, or sometime overlapped with a *sin fronteras* framework. Indeed, the current post-9/11 political context is different from that of the 1970s. To that end, many of the former CASA leaders—though generally continuing to invoke a *sin fronteras* politics to some degree—have also refined and changed their thinking on immigration issues, just as many have also altered their political approaches and strategies. Though the political claims laid out by the initial

wave of marchers in 2006 exemplified a certain kind of *sin fronteras* politics at work, the dominant narrative of the immigrant rights mobilization began to deviate from this “beyond borders” frame in subsequent years. The shift, for the most part, is characterized by varying degrees of accommodationist politics, one that unevenly embraces state norms and practices based on a hierarchal investment in citizenship. In recent years, the pro-immigration movement has invoked messaging, tactics, arguments, and solutions to the immigration problem that are intentionally designed to be more palatable for more conservative elements in the ongoing debate.

At least some pro-immigrant rights leaders feel compelled to operate within the dominant terms of belonging in the United States by buying into the mainstream narrative of the United States as a nation of immigrants. This mode of thinking is in sharp contrast to the *sin fronteras* orientation of social change aimed at radically transforming structures by creating the necessary resources to transform daily life into an arena of political contest. As stated by immigration scholars David Gutiérrez and Pierrette Hondagenu-Sotelo,

The spring 2006 marches were the largest show of immigrant rights movements that the United States has ever witnessed, but here’s the rub: although globalization and transnationalism characterize the present moment, the resurgent immigrant rights movement in the United States has paradoxically focused squarely on claims to rights located at the national level, namely legalization and citizenship. The meanings of acquiring a particular national citizenship are certainly changing, as increasingly people seek U.S. citizenship for protection from deportation and for the pursuit of economic opportunity, but it is nonetheless striking that at this particular historical moment, immigrant rights claims are still made on the nation, not on transnational, supranational, or global institutions.¹⁴

¹⁴ David G. Gutiérrez and Pierrette Hondagenu-Sotelo, “Introduction: Nation and Migration,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3, (September 2008): 507.

CASA organizers engaged in inventive thinking and campaigns of resistance to encourage and enable conceptual shifts in ways that pushed beyond the confines of citizenship. Indeed, the current mobilization of individuals and families also voiced opposition to the totalizing and dehumanizing label of “illegality.” To this end, participants refuted the criminalization of immigrants through cries of protest, such as “¡No somos criminales!” [We Are Not Criminals!]. Although this catchphrase seems to generate a liberatory sentiment, it does so conditionally by disaggregating and valorizing “good immigrants.” Pro-immigrant rights activists make political claims for “legal” inclusion into the nation by exhibiting cultural markers of an “American” identity (English speaking, investment in U.S. citizenship, and national patriotism). The use of this kind of discourse—which became more common the longer the protests simmered—implies deservingness of law-abiding immigrants of good moral character who, they suggest had no other choice but to cross the border. With these claims, the marchers exemplify their worthiness for inclusion into the nation. Yet, this political orientation is inadequate for those who cannot position themselves as “good immigrants.” Furthermore, the “no somos criminales” discourse fails to account for the ways the state has historically included and excluded citizens based on various organs of the state’s own notions of desirability (whiteness, middle-class, heteronormative) and undesirability (non-white, working-class, “queer,” and therefore by definition, aberrant or anomalous).¹⁵

Indeed, both this type of accommodationalist—and *sin fronteras* politics can and do operate concurrently—albeit in tension with each other. Overall, since the 1970s,

¹⁵ Martha D. Escobar, “Understanding the Roots of Latina Migrants’ Captivity,” *Social Justice* 36, no. 2 (2009): 7-20; Martha D. Escobar, “Neoliberal Captivity: Criminalization of Latina Migrants and the Construction of Irrecuperability” (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2010).

different forms of *sin fronteras* politics moved away from solely relying on the electoral arena as CASA and other groups and individuals in Chicago and elsewhere grappled with ways to transform oppressive institutions and systems through collective action and empowerment. At the same time, however, CASA and an expanding web of other immigrant advocacy, welfare rights, and civil society organizations engaged with policy debates and interventions, lobbying, and electoral politics at all levels.¹⁶ Members, for instance, lobbied support from local, state, and federal politicians to combat anti-immigrant bills. CASA leaders recognized the importance of political control in the electoral arena as clearly evident by members' engagement with and transition to electoral political organizing at the local, state, and federal level. During CASA's height of activism in the mid-1970s, the organization did not center electoral politics in its immigrant rights discourse, however.

In contrast, the marches, demonstrations, and rallies throughout the United States also highlighted the (potential) power of the Latina/o vote through the use of mottos such as, "Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos!" [Today We March, Tomorrow We Vote]. The mobilization of the non-citizen masses and their citizen allies during the new millennium exemplified a renewed investment in the electoral structure signaling the long awaited "Awakening of the Sleeping Giant," the putative Latina/o voter first predicted more than four decades ago by members of the academy and mainstream media outlets such as *Time*

¹⁶ For recent scholarship on this realm of political activity, see, in addition to Monisha Das Gupta's, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Lynn Fujiwara, *Mothers Without Citizenship: Immigrant Families and the Consequences of Welfare Reform* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Magazine.¹⁷ The driving idea behind this metaphor is to highlight the growing power of the Latina/o vote—the children of authorized and unauthorized immigrants as well as naturalized citizens—in the 2008 elections (and in future elections). In the end, the historic marches pushed Presidential candidates and other politicians running for office to address and entertain immigration issues in their campaign.

All in all, pressing immigration issues prompted waves and waves of citizen and noncitizen marchers to participate in the “Spring of the Immigrant” in a collective effort to denounce HR 4437 and to push the capitalist state to remedy the broken immigration system. In the 1970s, CASA activists denounced similar tribulations. Though the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 aimed to address the immigration dilemma, in many ways it only perpetuated the problem because it did nothing to address the massive regional and global economic forces that drive the dynamics of economic displacement and the ongoing super-exploitation of migrant labor in both the developed and the developing world. Furthermore, capitalist state practices in the 1990s and 2000s, such as the institution of faulty immigration legislation and the accelerated implementation of neoliberal economic policies have also exacerbated the immigration problem. These state practices seemingly have created and reinforced the “immigration industrial complex.” According to sociologist Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, the immigration industrial complex refers to,

the public and private sector interests in the criminalization and marginalization of undocumented migration, immigration law enforcement, and “anti-illegal” rhetoric. This concept is based on the idea

¹⁷ For the recurrent trope of Latinos as the “Sleeping Giant” of U.S. politics see, Leo Grebler, Joan W. Moore, Ralph C. Guzman with Jeffrey L. Berlant et al., *The Mexican American People: The Nation’s Second Largest Minority* (New York: Free Press, 1970); and “Hispanic America—Soon: The Largest Minority,” *Time Magazine*, October 16, 1978.

that there exists a convergence of interests that drives the United States government to pass and then avidly enforce a set of immigration policies that consistently have failed to achieve their stated goals.¹⁸

The “Spring of Immigrants” exemplifies the widespread frustration with the complications, contradictions, and inconsistencies of the structural forces (immigration law, economic policies, and media discourse) that have negatively affected economically displaced persons in Mexico, Latin America, and elsewhere in the world as well as the everyday lives of the noncitizen populations in the United States.

Immigration Policy Since 1986

Casistas outlined demands that they believed reconciled the contradictions in immigration law, U.S. capitalism, globalization, and popular news discourse. One of their demands included unconditional amnesty; however, the Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 solely granted conditional amnesty to a selective group of undocumented migrants who met very specific criteria. This historic immigration legislation did little to halt undocumented immigration as it failed to solve the root of the problem as to why people migrate without the official authorization. For a variety of reasons, the number of documented and undocumented Mexicans migrating to the United States has steadily increased since the 1970s (although it dropped a bit after the economic recession of the twenty-first century). The immigration marches demonstrated a public outcry of a broken immigration system that does not recognize how a globalization is

¹⁸ Tanya Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation: raids, detentions, and deportations in post-9/11 America*, Boulder, Colo. : Paradigm Publishers, 2011.139

chipping away at the power of national borders. IRCA and other subsequent immigration and economic legislation have only intensified the immigration problem.

IRCA, for instance, increased the operating budget for immigration enforcement projects, including hiring more Border Patrol agents. Though this made clandestine border crossings more dangerous, many unauthorized migrants continued to migrate. Moreover, the undocumented, including those who were not able to adjust their status with IRCA, had to think twice about leaving the United States to visit loved ones or to handle emergencies in Mexico because they knew returning would be difficult. IRCA legislation also mandated that migrants remain in the United States while their case for amnesty was under review. Many loved ones consequently came without papers to join those in waiting for the legalization of their status. IRCA policy also instituted new legal employer sanctions against employers who “knowingly” hired unauthorized workers. The provision only created a surge in false papers because the law did not require bosses to check the validity of the documents—even if they had the capacity in the first place. In other words, the loose structure of IRCA in effect made employers the enforcers of this key aspect of U.S. immigration law, with the expected effects. Two decades later, in 2007, the government mandated a new employee screening technology known as E-Verify, an Internet-based system where employers verify the authenticity of the documents submitted to accompany the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9. But again, the system has not been implemented fully and it is difficult at this juncture to tell how effective the screening process has been, especially given the fact that millions of unauthorized immigrants obviously remain employed in jobs in the U.S. economy.

More and more Mexicans migrated to the United States after 1994, with the passage of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) – a neoliberal policy that lowered or eliminated tariffs when goods traveled across national borders (United States, Canada, and Mexico). Although trade between the three major signatories (Canada, Mexico, and the United States) since the free trade agreement was implemented, NAFTA has had devastating economic consequences on certain sectors of the economy and workforce in Mexico. For instance, Mexican farmers could not compete with U.S. agribusinesses, namely in corn production. This prompted a rural to urban migration within Mexico as millions of displaced farmers and agricultural workers moved in search of employment, and many crossed into the United States, sometimes without papers, for basic survival of their families.¹⁹ More generally, the implementation of NAFTA and the subsequent expansion of similar agreements with Central American nations with the more recent Central American Free Trade Agreement, or CAFTA, reflected the growing influence of neoliberal economic policies in reshaping the economies in the Western Hemisphere in ways almost certain to continue to spur out-migration from Latin America. Under this framework of globalization, the governments—in this case, the United States, Mexico, and Canada, and now, the governments of a growing number of Central American nations as well—privileged the transnational movement of capital, commerce, and corporations over the bodies of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants who have left their places of origin in search of better economic opportunities

¹⁹ For recent analyses of the effects of NAFTA on the Mexican agricultural sector, see, for example, Raúl Delgado Wise and Humberto Márquez Covarrubias, “Capitalist Restructuring, Development and Labour Migration: The U.S.-Mexico Case,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 7 (Oct. 2008): 1359-74; and Donna Chollett, “From Sugar to Blackberries: Restructuring Agro-Export Production in Michoacán, Mexico,” *Latin American Perspectives* 36, no. 3 (May 2009): 79-92.

in the United States—and increasingly, in Canada as well.²⁰ This neoliberal economic structure propelled a new influx of Mexican immigrants (authorized and unauthorized) in search of work. Newly arrived *trabajadores* in the United States undertook different types of menial labor, including construction work and service-industry jobs in restaurants, hotels, landscaping, and domestic workers. It also propelled the migration from more women and children whereas in the 1970s more men dominated the wave of Mexican immigrants.

During the 1990s, the nation experienced another period of anxieties over the “illegal alien” and economic insecurities similar to the anti-immigrant discourse of the 1970s and today’s climate. For instance, in 1994 California Governor Pete Wilson supported Proposition 187, popularly known as “Save Our State” initiative. The referendum banned the government from providing social services, such as public health, education, and welfare services to the undocumented. It also required government employees to report suspicion of any undocumented person applying for or receiving public services. Proposition 187 prompted intense debates as opponents raised concerns over racial profiling where government officials would disproportionately target brown bodies in the search of the unauthorized Mexican migrant. In the 1970s, anti-immigrant discourse almost exclusively targeted the Mexican male undocumented worker as the “immigrant menace,” by the 1990s the focus had broadened to undocumented Mexican

²⁰ Until recently, the increasing role of Mexican and other Latino workers in the Canadian economy has been an unappreciated and understudied dimension of the implementation of free trade policy in the Western Hemisphere. For insightful discussion of this important trend, see Tanya Basok, *Tortillas and Tomatoes: Trans-migrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002); Kerry Preibisch and Leigh Binford, “Interrogating Racialized Global Labor Supply: An Exploration of the Racial/National Replacement of Foreign Agricultural Workers in Canada,” *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 44, no. 1 (Feb. 2007): 5-36; and Kerry Preibisch and Evelyn Encalada Grez, “The Other Side of *El Otro Lado*: Mexican Migrant Women and Labor Flexibility in Canadian Agriculture,” *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture and Society* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 289-316.

women and their children and the previously discussed menace of “anchor babies” born on U.S. soil. Proposition 187 opponents feared that other states would follow and pass similar anti-immigrant legislation—a fear that has clearly been borne out. In 1999, however, a federal court found California’s 1994 initiative to be unconstitutional.

To assuage national concerns over “illegal immigration” in the 1990s, the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) implemented various new border enforcement and apprehension initiatives. Supported by a large and growing operating budget, the INS established Operation Blockade—renamed Operation Hold the Line—in El Paso, Texas (1993), Operation Safeguard in Tucson, Arizona (1994), Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego/San Ysidro (1994), and Operation Rio Grande in McAllen and Laredo, Texas (1997). Operation Hold the Line and Operation Gatekeeper militarized the busiest international ports of entry in Texas and California respectively. The names (Hold the Line, Safeguard, Gatekeeper) of these programs underscore alarmist preoccupation with protecting the nation from “unlawful” entrants, especially at the southern border (U.S.-Mexico border)—and the immigration bureaucracy’s skill in manipulating, and in some ways, *managing* the public’s fears and perceptions.²¹ The INS strengthened its enforcement practices by hiring more border patrol agents and integrating military equipment, hardware and technological surveillance, such as helicopters, night vision devices, sensors, bright lighting, and more recently, unmanned drones, to detect and apprehend unauthorized border crossers. Heightened border security measures also

²¹ For insightful analyses of this program of carefully managed public perception regarding the “border threat” and border enforcement, see Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra!: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Peter Andreas, *Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); and Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond: The War on “Illegals” and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010).

intensified with the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996. It designated additional funds for border enforcement projects, one of which provided funding for the erection of new reinforced barriers across a span of 14 miles, from the Pacific Ocean into the eastern interior.

Once again, the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border did not halt unauthorized migration. Unstable living conditions in Mexico created by both internal dynamics and the effect of neoliberal economic restructuring prompted many Mexicans to continue to seek—and usually find—work in the United States. The desire to join loved ones in the United States has also pulled Mexican migrants to the country—and thus has also contributed to the ongoing demographic makeover of U.S. society. They came without the proper authorization because immigration law is not structured to address this precarious situation. There is a lengthy wait in order to complete the visa process, for example. Given the backlog with family visas, family members would have to wait many years to join loved ones. Furthermore, immigration law privileges and maintains a heteronormative construction of “the family” as the law provided no visa possibilities for queer families. Instead of addressing the root of the cause, U.S. immigration law and policy has tended to push unauthorized border crossers into ever more dangerous terrain, especially in the deserts and mountains of the Sonora-Arizona border and the dangerous Big Bend region of the Rio Grande in western Texas. Many have lost their lives in the isolated and hostile landscapes of the border, especially in Texas, Arizona, and California. Many migrants risked their lives in hopes of finding work in the United States as a remedy to the poor economic conditions in Mexico, such as those created by NAFTA. This heightened border enforcement has also discouraged the kind of circular

migration that was once a normal feature of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Once unauthorized migrants left the United States, the chances of successfully and safely returning remained dubious because of the heightened dangers in clandestine border crossings. Consequently, many undocumented migrants residing in the United States chose not to visit loved ones in Mexico during times of celebration, tragedy, and emergencies to avoid encountering these treacherous and deadly circumstances when returning to the United States.

Under IIRIRA, INS agents gained the power to review and rule on immigration cases by using the administrative procedure known as expedited removal, a policy intended to speed up the repatriation of unauthorized migrants by eliminating the role of evidentiary hearings as well as administrative and judicial review. Under these new processes and procedures, the fate of those who crossed the border without the proper documents and those who entered without inspection, no longer necessarily rested in the hand of immigration judges, but increasingly in the hands of immigration, border enforcement, and “homeland security” officials. Furthermore, IIRIRA retroactively expanded the grounds for detention and deportation by bridging immigration and criminality matters. Under this 1996 policy, immigrants with minor criminal offenses who have lived in the United States for less than seven years, as well as those who have lived in the United States for more than seven years with aggravated offenses, both faced deportation. In recent years, government officials removed immigrants—including those who were unfamiliar with their country of origin—for petty crimes and offenses committed years ago—even in cases when they had already paid fines and/or served time. Immigration agents relied on information (sometimes of faulty or dubious legal quality)

derived from database systems that bridged immigration and criminal records. This retroactive provision in IIRIRA raised concern among activists because of the staggering statistics of Latina/o (and African American) incarceration and the pervasiveness of police brutality issues in Latina/o (and African American) communities. Given this context, activists claimed that IIRIRA has unfairly targeted immigrants from African, Asian, and Latin American countries as well as those from poor communities. Ultimately, this retroactive immigration policy ripped more and more immigrants from their families, communities, and support systems in the United States. IIRIRA has also clearly further conflated criminality with “illegal” immigrants. In the end, its function arguably has been to systematically expel specific strands of the undesirable noncitizen population.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, concerns over undocumented migration once again prompted national discussions. In 2001, Vicente Fox Quesada, the President of Mexico (2000-2006), and George W. Bush, the President of the United States (2001-2009) met to discuss the status of unauthorized Mexicans in the United States and immigration reform, more generally. After September 11, 2001, Bush (Republican) proposed a Temporary Worker Program (TWP), a temporary visa initiative to allow Mexicans the legal authorization to work in the United States. In some ways similar in broad outline to the Bracero Program, the TWP reinforced the idea and practices of the United States that welcomed the disembodied labor of Mexican workers, but not their actual corporeal bodies and social beings. The proposed program was also designed in a manner that largely closed the possibility of long-term social and political integration in the United States, again, despite the fact that the U.S. government continued otherwise to press for a lowering of other types of border restrictions on the flow of capital,

technology, and goods and services. Immigrant rights activists, haunted by the grave injustices committed under the Bracero Program, fought against the TWP. The TWP and other programs attempted to provide solutions that ultimately moved away from discussions of amnesty, a federal pardon for unauthorized immigrants provided that they meet specific criteria. However, national dialogues on immigration disappeared when the tragic events on September 11, 2001, commonly known as 9/11, took precedence. On 9/11, hijackers used commercial airliners to launch multiple attacks on the United States: two planes destroyed the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City; another one damaged the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.; and a last plane crashed in an open field in Pennsylvania. These national attacks propelled questions of national security to the forefront as it dramatically reconfigured and placed severe constraints on the trajectory of ongoing debates over the most rational and humane immigration and citizenship legislation and policy.

Since the events of 9/11, the discussions of these issues have been reframed in a key and dramatic way: superimposing national security concerns into the equation at the expense of the well-being of U.S. citizens and noncitizens. After the September 11th attacks, the U.S. government established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the federal agency responsible for national security, including administering immigration issues. Previously, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had the responsibility of managing immigration, border crossings, and naturalization procedures, which, of course represent the basic processes involved in becoming an American citizen. The INS morphed in 2003 when Congress created several new federal offices under the aegis of the new Department of Homeland Security: the Customs and

Border Protection (CBP), the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (CIS), and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The CBP office handled terrorist, trade, drug, and foreign travel issues. It also addressed national security and public safety concerns. The CIS managed immigration and naturalization services, whereas ICE attended to immigration and customs investigations, deportation, and law enforcement. The post-9/11 context of national crisis gave DHS unprecedented power in immigration affairs all in the name of national security. The institution of new federal policies also amplified DHS authority. For instance, the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA Patriot Act) of 2001 greatly expanded the government's discretion in immigration enforcement and deportation policies and procedures. For another, the Real ID Act of 2005 required proof of an authorized presence in the United States prior to the issuance of a driver's license. This increased the numbers of people without any form of "appropriate" documentation. As indicated previously, under this new organization and to handle its greatly expanded new mission, the DHS is now significantly larger in size than the INS ever was.

Another result of the 9/11 incident is that immigration enforcement extended beyond border regions and into the nation's interior, with the exception of immigration raids conducted in different parts of the country during the Great Depression.²² According to sociologist Tanya Golash-Boza, "*interior enforcement* describes policing strategies designed to find undocumented migrants with the borders of the United

²² Tanya Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*, 45

States.”²³ For example, Worksite Enforcement Arrests have massively multiplied from 510 (25 criminal, 485 administrative) in 2001 to 6,287 (1,103 criminal, 5,184 administrative) in 2008.²⁴ Of the 1,103 criminal arrests, 135 were owners, managers, human resource employees who “knowingly harbored and hired illegal aliens” and the remaining 1,068 were workers charged with identity theft and social security fraud. Furthermore, the 5,184 administrative arrests in 2008 were for various other immigration violations. Immigrant activists condemned the stern immigration enforcement undertaken by the Bush Administration. At a national scale, immigration raids and deportations have increased during and after Bush’s Presidency. Though worksite raids continued to some extent—they have decreased after one of the nation’s largest raids in Postville, Iowa on May 12, 2008, immigration officials have undertaken immigration operations (raids and apprehensions) in the community.

In light of these draconian practices adopted by the Bush Administration, many Latinas/os and immigrant rights activists saw hope for comprehensive immigration reform in U.S. Presidential candidate Barack Obama (Democrat) over John McCain (Republican). During Obama’s presidential campaign, he promised to address immigration issues within the first hundred days of his term. By electing Obama, activists anticipated the end of detentions and deportations that unfairly terrorized families and communities. Others remained skeptical since Obama did not have a pro-immigrant track record in his career as a politician. Latinas/os voted for President Barack Obama-Vice President Joe Biden on the Democratic ticket more than two times more than they did for

²³ Tanya Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*, 45

²⁴ “Fact Sheet: Worksite Enforcement,” U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, <http://www.ice.gov/news/library/factsheets/worksite.htm>.

the Republican one with President John McCain-Vice President Sarah Palin. Latina/o voters carried Obama in states with a large Latina/o population, including Florida—a state with a tradition of supporting Republican candidates.²⁵ Latinas/os played an important role in the victorious Presidential election of Barack Obama on November 8, 2008.

The first hundred days of Obama's term came and went; contrary to his campaign promises, he had failed to address immigration reform. In sharp contrast, the Obama administration has vastly intensified immigration enforcement practices, more so than under the Bush Administration. In January 2009, Obama named Janet Napolitano as the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security. Prior to this appointment, as the Governor of Arizona (2003-2009), Napolitano was known for her draconian views on unauthorized border crossing. To date, the Obama administration has deported over 1.1 million people; it is the highest number in nearly 60 years. In reference to the high number of deportation under the Obama administration, some activists groups have mockingly referred to the President as the “Deporter in Chief” in lieu of Commander in Chief. Since 2008, the Obama administration has relied on “silent” worksite inspections and home raids and review of I-9, employment verification forms, bringing less public attention. Government officials comb through employee records at businesses and companies, and relying on criminal and immigration databases. Home raids, though “silent,” have intensified the fear of apprehension and deportation in Mexican communities. People fear the possibility of ICE agents knocking loudly on the door or windows late at night or early in the morning. They fear immigration officials forcibly removing loved ones from home in

²⁵ See Mark Hugo Lopez, “The Hispanic Vote in the 2008 Election,” Pew Research Hispanic Center, last modified November 5, 2008, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1024/exit-poll-analysis-hispanics>.

front of grandparents, parents, children, or other relatives. These home raids have also resulted in collateral arrests, the detention of those who could not produce the appropriate documentation at the time of the raid. Indeed, it has intensified the fear of the separation of families.

In a 2010 speech delivered to the School of International Services at the American University in Washington, D.C., Obama stated: “No matter how decent they are, the 11 million who broke these laws should be held accountable.” This focus on the criminality of undocumented migrants takes away attention from the larger socio-political context. Post-9/11 coupled with the economic recession has intensified the anti-immigrant, xenophobic sentiment and has rendered invisible the corporate profits gained by the privatization of immigration detentions. Scholars, such as Justin Akers Chacón, Nicholas De Genova, and Tanya Golash-Boza, have highlighted how politicians, corporations, and the media conglomerates greatly benefit (millions of dollars) from the public spectacle of immigration enforcement and deportations. For instance, DHS has outsourced parts of their operations to private prison industries like the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). CCA has profited immensely in part because of the investment in over \$3 million to federal lobby efforts and intimate ties to politicians.²⁶

According to nativists, right-wing extremists, and sometimes the general public, the federal government has not done enough to handle the “immigration problem.” Consequently, states like Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and others have taken immigration affairs into their own hands even though the courts until recently have tended to rule that, with rare exception, immigration and citizenship matters are an area

²⁶ Tanya Golash-Boza, *Immigrant Nation*, 152-153

of responsibility of the federal government. One of the most notorious examples of an individual state passing what amounts to its own immigration policy has unfolded in the state of Arizona over the past several years. While serving as Arizona state senator, Russell Pearce (2008-2011) played a major role in designing both earlier versions of Arizona Senate Bill (SB) 1070 and the version that passed the Arizona state legislature. He served on the Board of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a conservative lobbying group composed of elected officials and members with intimate ties to CCA. In April 2010, Arizona governor Jan Brewer signed SB 1070, one of the harshest anti-immigrant legislation in history. This bill authorizes local police to investigate, detain, and arrest individuals they suspect do not have proper authorization to live in the United States. It also makes it a state crime to be undocumented. This unleashed widespread opposition because the bill would authorize racial profiling of Mexicans and Latinas/os. A coalition of civil rights organization filed a lawsuit in federal court to challenge this legislation. This is similar to the language of racial profiling employed by immigration officials that CASA chapters challenged in the 1970s. Arizona SB 1070 opened the door for state-sanctioned racial profiling and the violation of civil rights.

Following the lead of Arizona, other states have drafted subsequent anti-immigrant legislation at the state level. Georgia House Bill (H.B. 87) signed in 2011, the “Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011” stiffened penalties for hiring undocumented workers and it sanctioned police authority to check immigration status and to conduct search and seizure operations in the name of searching for undocumented

migrants.²⁷ Alabama House Bill 56 required public school officials to check the immigration status of students. It aimed to criminalize people “harboring” or “transporting” undocumented migrants and authorized the police to check the immigration status of people. It also mandated the usage of E-Verify, an instant verification of government authorization to work in the United States.²⁸ This type of anti-immigrant legislation has raised great controversy. It has mobilized various human rights groups, immigrant rights activists, concerned residents, and others to take action. On December 12, 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to examine the constitutionality of draconian immigration enforcement practices at the state level (Arizona SB 1070). On April 25, 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court began reviewing arguments in the case against Arizona SB 1070. On Monday, June 25, 2012, the Supreme Court ruled as constitutional the “racial profiling” provision in the Arizona legislature in which the state has authorized police officers to stop individuals they suspect are undocumented and can demand they provide the proper documentation of legal residence in the United States. Three other provisions were ruled as unconstitutional: making it a state crime for undocumented immigrants, making it a crime for the undocumented to work or look for work, and the authorization of local and state officers to arrest undocumented immigrants without a warrant when probable cause exists that they are deportable.

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, an estimated 6.6 million undocumented Mexicans live in the United States.²⁹ For a variety of reasons, many people, by choice or by need, bypass the proper legal channels and risk their lives to

²⁷ <http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/20112012/116631.pdf>

²⁸ Alabama case is U.S. v. State of Alabama (2:11-cv-2746).

²⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2010

migrate to the United States. For some, there is no way of accessing the proper authorization to join loved ones in the United States because of the limited number of visas available and the over 10 year waiting list for visa applications. Others also face extenuating circumstances in their hometowns, such as poverty, drug cartel warfare, and social unrest. Others seek to escape abuse and persecution because of their political, sexual, religious, or gendered identities. They cannot wait the years and years necessary to secure the proper authorization because for many of them migration may be a matter of life and death. Others immigrate to join family members residing in the United States through the proper channels, then overstay their visas and become undocumented. To qualify for a visa, however, requires a lengthy process comprising the submission of many documents. Others risk their lives and embark on the treacherous, painful journey to the United States because remaining in Mexico is no longer a choice for many migrants. Nativists often declare outrage about undocumented immigration because the undocumented have broken the law. The focus continues to rest on the immigrants themselves without examining the entire immigration system as a whole in conjunction with globalization. In the end, the U.S. immigration system—as complicated and messy as it clearly is—is in need of a comprehensive reform or a radical change, but the challenge is how to institute a policy that moves beyond the confines of national membership.

In closing, the immigration problem points to the contested nature of membership, rights, and im/migration. Complicating a dominant reading of immigration enforcement (namely in the social sciences) as state practices that are relatively new, developing in the

1990s and only intensified post/911, my research shows that such a phenomenon gains force as a state apparatus in the 1970s Chicagoland area.³⁰ Immigration enforcement in the interior of the nation has a long history in targeting and disciplining ethnic Mexicans. In addition, slogans, such as “No Human Being Is Illegal” used in the 2006 marches draw upon the claims made in the 1970s—a political understanding that rejected the usage of hierarchical citizenship. Today, however, the political claims have reinforced narrow and dominant terms of national belonging. The mainstream discourse of the current immigrant rights activism invokes citizenship politically in multiple ways. My research points to the tensions around the desire for undocumented labor, capitalism, and the nation in an era of growing neoliberalism.

³⁰ Tanya Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*

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