

University of New Mexico

UNM Digital Repository

History ETDs

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

3-20-2022

Alternative Chicanx Educational Activism in the U.S. Southwest, 1935–1975

Moises Santos

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist_etds



Part of the [Chicana/o Studies Commons](#), [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Santos, Moises. "Alternative Chicanx Educational Activism in the U.S. Southwest, 1935–1975." (2022).
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist_etds/308

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in History ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

Moises Santos

Candidate

History

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Durwood Ball , Chairperson

Barbara Reyes

Samuel Truett

Irene Vasquez

**ALTERNATIVE CHICANX
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVISM
IN THE U.S. SOUTHWEST
1935–1975**

by

MOISES SANTOS

M.A. Latin American Studies, UCLA, 2013
B.A., Chicana/o Studies, CSU Dominguez Hills, 2011

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
History**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May, 2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work
To my children
Que lo son todo

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank my committee chair, Dr. Durwood Ball, and my committee members Dr. Samuel Truett, Dr. Irene Vasquez, and Dr. Barbara Reyes for their guidance throughout this long process of researching, writing, editing, and rewriting this dissertation. I also thank the History Department, the Bilinski Foundation, and the Center for Regional Studies at UNM for providing me with the funds that allowed me to complete this dissertation.

I give special thanks to Dr. Barbara Reyes, who has been the greatest of mentors since I arrived at UNM. I thank you for encouraging me, believing in me, and allowing me to grow.

To Dr. Irene Vasquez, I thank you for showing me the path into higher education and for teaching me the importance of the work we do for our community. And for always being there for my family.

To Profe GQ, Juan Gomez-Quiñones, who when I was questioning my path into the PhD said: “Just apply.” Thank you for seeing the potential in me that I could not see for myself.

I could not have completed this PhD journey at UNM without the support of all the CCS, TRC, and Writing Group crews. The work we did together shaped who I am as a person and a scholar. You are all very special to me. I want to specially thank Alex Jara, Rafael Martinez, Trisha Martinez, Froilan Orozco, Maria Eugenia Lopez, and Candolin Cook for all their continued support. I’d like to also thank Elizabeth Gonzalez Cardenas and Jose Luis Serrano Najera, who have always been there to support me through the troubles and triumphs of graduate school going back to our UCLA days.

I thank my sisters, Lupe, Laura, and Melissa, and family members in California who supported me always. I hope I make you all proud.

Most important of all, thank you to my family in Albuquerque: Lucy, Mel, Soleil, Ricky, and Hopey.

ALTERNATIVE CHICANX
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVISM
IN THE U.S. SOUTHWEST
1935–1975

By

Moises Santos

B.A., Chicana/o Studies, CSU Dominguez Hills
M.A., Latin American Studies, UCLA
Ph.D., History, University of New Mexico

ABSTRACT

This project studies the use of independent newspapers, community theater, and independent Chicana/o colleges by activists to educate their community. Geographically, this study is placed in the Southwest states of New Mexico, Texas, and California. Using the theoretical frameworks of Southwest Borderlands Studies and Critical Race Theory in Education, this project contextualizes the historical racial power dynamics of U.S. takeover in the Southwest region that influence oppressive educational practices, and the challenge to those institutions by the alternative educational activism among Chicanx communities.

Activists employed ingenuity to provide educational materials to their communities when they needed them the most. These activists filled the role that educational institutions failed to meet with Mexican descent communities by providing culturally relevant and politically conscious education. Furthermore, this project introduces a new element to the narrative of educational activism among Mexican-descent communities by focusing on grassroots, non-institutional, and non-traditional educational strategies and mediums.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Racialization of Mexican Americans: Consequences of U.S. Takeover of the U.S. Southwest in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries	23
Chapter 2: “La Educacion Salvara A Nuestro Pueblos”: Newspapers as Alternative Educational Spaces in 1930s New Mexico	74
Chapter 3“People Say Knowledge is Power, So We Educated Ourselves”: The Dual Educational Projects of Chicano Theater in California, 1965–1975	114
Chapter 4: “A True Chicano Alternative”: Colegio Jacinto Treviño – The First Chicano College in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, 1970–1976	164
Conclusion	190
References.....	198

Introduction

Throughout the twentieth century, a constant and evolving undercurrent of activism in the Chicax community focused on education.¹ As Mexican-descent populations sought to end their historical marginalization and oppression, they also worked to create new institutional and alternative avenues to better their communities. Mexican-descent, education-focused activists desegregated schools, reformed school boards, created curricula, and transformed institutions of higher learning to create culturally relevant disciplines, Ethnic Studies among them.² They did so to challenge the existing and dominant educational system, which historically marginalized Mexican-descent populations in the U.S. Southwest. This dissertation explores the use of alternative educational strategies by Mexican descent activists from 1935–1975 to

¹ In this dissertation I attempt to identify the community with the term that the people used in the time period under scrutiny, or to apply the terms adopted and established by previous scholars. At the present time, the most accepted term is *Chicax*, the “x” signifying the inclusion of gender-non-conforming members of the community. Here *Chicax* is applied when I refer to the entire community, irrespective of time period. I deploy *Mexican-descent* to encompass the community when referring to it historically. The *Mexican American generation* is what historian George J. Sanchez calls the “generation of American-born Mexican Americans” who were influential between roughly 1930 to the mid-1960s, and I likewise adopt that identifier here. *Chicana* and *Chicano* refer to the generation of the 1960s and 1970s. George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

² The term *culturally relevant education* is most commonly used in the present to identify disciplines broadly associated with Ethnic Studies. However, midcentury activists applied terms like *quality education* or *transformative education* to refer to the type of education that incorporated the history, politics, culture, and experiences of Mexican-descent communities. For an overview of the history of Chicax education in the Southwest and the movements for equitable education, see José F. Moreno, ed., *The Elusive Quest for Equality: 150 Years of Chicano/Chicana Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Educational Review, 1999).

address the educational needs of their communities in New Mexico, California, and Texas.

I argue activists used alternative educational mediums to address inequitable education in their cities, towns, and communities. This project explores three of these mediums—independent newspapers in New Mexico, *Teatro* (community-led theater) in California, and alternative community-led schools in Texas. With the use of these mediums, community organizations created viable alternative educational models that made education multidisciplinary, accessible, and more inclusive of community-based knowledge.

In New Mexico, the publishers of newspapers such as *La Estrella* (1910–1931) and *El Defensor del Pueblo* (1904–1950) used their publications to deliver culturally relevant and community-based educational materials to their readership in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Socorro, New Mexico, respectively. In the 1920s and 1930s, these newspapers acted as an alternative to the Eurocentric public schools established in New Mexico at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a result of American takeover of northern Mexico or the Southwest region at the end of the U.S.-Mexico War in 1848. These Mexican Cession territories became known as the Southwest in the U.S. territorial system. In the 1960s and 1970s California, *Teatro Campesino* (Delano, California) and *Teatro de las Chicanas* (San Diego, California) produced plays that at once entertained, politicized, and educated their local communities. Additionally, these theater troupes produced educational pedagogies, curriculum, and instructional methodologies for their participants, creating an alternative educational space for theater performers and their audiences. Between 1970–1976, Colegio Jacinto Treviño (Merced,

Texas), an independent Chicano college founded by agrarian workers, community members, and local scholars, stood as an alternative to institutions of higher learning in the Rio Grande Valley region. By prioritizing the inclusion of students, community members, and community intellectuals in the governing structure, Colegio Jacinto Treviño created an educational institution that found solutions to the educational concerns shared by Chicana/o Movement activists of the time.

Regional differences, including the historical racialization of Mexican-descent people in the U.S. Southwest, are important to the discussion of education-focused activism. Regional differences also influence educational practices: the education Mexican-descent populations received in the U.S. Southwest is partially explained by the historical development of that region. Although Chicana/x peoples developed alternative educational content and pedagogies in a variety of mediums, their solutions to educational inequities were unique responses to the historical injustices they had endured for over a hundred years since the U.S. annexation.

Using Critical Race Theory in Education (CRTE)³ and Southwest Borderlands Studies,⁴ this project analyzes how Chicana/x activists pedagogically, philosophically, and

³ A selected list of relevant work on Critical Race Theory in Education for this project includes Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings, eds. *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Adrienne D. Dixson and Celia K. Rousseau, eds., *Critical Race Theory in Education: All God's Children Got a Song* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Michaela J.L. Mares-Tamayo and Daniel Solórzano, eds., *The Chicana/o Education Pipeline: History, Institutional Critique, and Resistance* (Los Angeles, Calif: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2018); and Tara J. Yosso, *Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*, The Teaching/Learning Social Justice Series (New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁴ I use the term Southwest Borderland Studies as a scholarly conceptual framework that builds on the fields of Borderlands Studies, Southwest Studies, and Ethnic Studies. A partial list of Southwest Borderlands Studies work includes the following scholarship: Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-

epistemologically challenged racist and elitist educational practices in the U.S. Southwest. CRTE provides the conceptual frameworks for identifying oppressive educational practices, while Southwest Borderlands Studies highlights the historical power dynamics that help create and maintain those oppressive practices. By using them together, this project explores how these cases of resistance to the U.S. educational system in the Southwest looked different in California, Texas, and New Mexico.

The work that activists performed to create alternative educational models shapes the methodology of this dissertation. They expressed and demonstrated their efforts in primary sources such as newspapers, organizational documents, pamphlets, meeting notes, and unpublished manuscripts. Using traditional and digital archives, this project aims to highlight the use of newspapers, Teatro, and alternative schools to create alternative educational models and support ongoing education-focused activism among

States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 814–841; Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (2011): 338–361; Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, *Continental Crossroads : Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History, American Encounters/Global Interactions* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004); José M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960*, Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Centennial Series (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Geraldo L. Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground : The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013); Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War*, The Lamar Series in Western History (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008); Rosa Linda Fregoso, *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands*, *American Crossroads*, no. 12 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest*, *Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014); Phoebe S. K. Young, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2006); Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Mexican-descent populations in the Southwest during the middle of the twentieth century.

Activists recognized that education could afford them access to better employment, better quality of life, and social mobility. Most importantly, however, education could presumably secure them inclusion in mainstream U.S. society, something that was broadly denied before the 1960s to Mexican-descent populations. Furthermore, by creating alternative models of education, activists aimed to take control of the conceptualization and implementation of that education.

The activists this project highlights are an essential part of the history of education-focused activism in the mid-twentieth century. However, their contributions to the development of educational models and Chicana/x Studies have been largely ignored in the scholarship.⁵ Furthermore, these organizations and the materials they produced are an understudied and underused piece of the archive but they are a piece that reveals a

⁵ As an essential part of Chicana/x social and political movements, education-focused activism has been studied by scholars of the Chicana/o Movement. See George Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun : Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Moreno, *The Elusive Quest for Equality*; and Gilbert G. Gonzalez, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation* (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Balch Institute Press, 1990). Important scholarship on education-focused activism as a separate topic of study also exists: Armando L. Trujillo, *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education: Movimiento Politics in Crystal City, Texas, Latino Communities* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1998); Guadalupe San Miguel, *Let All of Them Take Heed: Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); and Rubén Donato, *The Other Struggle for Equal Schools: Mexican Americans during the Civil Rights Era*, SUNY Series, The Social Context of Education (Albany, N.Y. : State University of New York Press, 1997). Additionally, there is recent scholarship on the creation of Chicana/o Studies in universities: Rodolfo Acuña, *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe*, Latinidad: Transnational Cultures in the United States (New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press, 2011); Michael Soldatenko, *Chicano Studies: The Genesis of a Discipline* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009).

significant aspect of education-focused activism that is also rarely discussed, namely, the enormous work, planning, theorizing, and dialogue that are required to execute an alternative educational model.

In the absence of traditional, physical schools and conventional school administrations that addressed their concerns, these activists used the resources and spaces available to them to advance their educational goals. This approach allowed them to create alternative educational models. Newspapers, Teatro, and alternative schools were the mediums where these models were created and implemented. Newspapers provided editorial freedom to the educational activists as well as consistency and accessibility to the readership expecting to find educational materials in these publications. Teatro groups, through art, provided a language and space where community could learn by engaging with historical and contemporary issues; this community included both audiences and theater participants. And alternative schools allowed the students and community to be a constant and essential part of their own education.

Through these three mediums—independent newspapers, Teatro, and alternative schools—activists developed alternative educational models that both complemented and challenged the concurrent and more-recognized educational activism of the mid-twentieth century.

To be sure, education-focused organizations and activists engaged in this type of work in the early twentieth century, before the temporal parameters of this project. However, the time period this study spans, 1935-1975, allows for an analysis of education-focused activism that includes two separate, complementary movements: the

Mexican American Generation (MAG), which flourished from 1945-1965 and the Chicana and Chicano Movement (CCM), which arose from 1965-1980.⁶

MAG and CCM provide the historical and social-movement context for education-focused organizations and their activism. Situating the first half of this study during MAG enables tracking the school-reform campaigns during the 1940s and 1950s. Toward the end of MAG and beginning of CCM, these reform campaigns gave way to the rise of the critique of liberalism and to racial-power dynamics. In historical terms, the second half of the study is set during CCM, in which community-based educational activism broke from the reformist campaigns and a step towards transformative education, such as Chicana Studies, and developed and applied the alternative educational models this project explores.

Neither MAG nor CCM were monolithic, cohesive movements. Instead, they were a connected network of organizations that used similar politics, rhetoric, and strategies, and pursued similar goals. For MAG, the most influential organizations were the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the American G.I. Forum (AGIF). During CCM, the United Farm Workers Union (UFW), the Crusades for Justice (Crusades), La Alianza de Mercedes (Alianza), and La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) constituted much of the recognized leadership in CCM, although there were other less-

⁶ Mario T. Garcia defines the Mexican American Generation as those people of Mexican descent who became politicized between the end of World War I and the end of World War II. I use the term to identify these activists as precursors to the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Mario T. Garcia, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989).

recognized, mostly student-led organizations—including M.E.Ch.A. and Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc—some of which developed the alternative models this project discusses.⁷

Although with radically different approaches, both MAG and CCM addressed the issue of inequitable education. MAG primarily focused on securing access to better education by engaging in reformist campaigns in K–12, desegregating schools, and demanding access to higher education for returning World War II veterans and the resources to open the doors and support them. CCM likewise demanded access to better education but took reform a step further by also advocating for the implementation of culturally relevant and transformative education.⁸ The biggest difference between the two movements was their strategies. MAG primarily used indirect activism, such as using the court system and electoral politics to achieve their goals, whereas CCM applied direct action, including walkouts, large-scale marches, and sit-ins. Both movements, however, focused on changing established institutions of learning, including school boards and the schools governed by them, as well as colleges and universities and their respective curricula.

⁷ Much of CCM, particularly in urban areas, was led by youth and college-age adults. Organizations included the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO), the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (M.E.Ch.A.), the Brown Berets, and many others. See Rodolfo Acuña, *The Making of Chicana/o Studies*; and Juan Gomez-Quíñones and Irene Vasquez, *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966–1977* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014).

⁸ A transformative education includes culturally relevant education and accessible curriculum and pedagogy (including language accessibility, sometimes in the form of Spanish or Spanish/English instruction). Transformative education also challenges or attempts to dismantle the oppressive nature of the racialized educational content, practices, and systems. Finally, transformative education creates spaces and accessibility for the education of future generations.

Consequently, much of the scholarship about MAG and CCM emphasizes organizations such as LULAC, AGIF, Crusades, and the UFW, as well as the struggle for education within institutions. Historical moments such as the *Roberto Alvarez vs. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District* (1931) and *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) desegregation court cases, and the High School Blowouts of 1968, receive special attention when discussing education-focused activism.⁹ These events, while historically important, do not tell the complete story. Scholarship that emphasizes these types of events categorizes the education-focused activism during MAG and CCM as having only one strategy to address unequal education. This scholarship typically implies that there is a complete break from one generation of activism to the other. This trend continues in much of the scholarship about these two movements. This project highlights continuity between the two general movements by exploring the ways education-focused activists from CCM built on the work of their MAG counterparts.

Alternative educational models were developed and practiced in order to address the historically oppressed position of Mexican-descent populations in the Southwest. Mario Barrera argues that the second-class position of ethnic Mexicans is a result of internal colonialism brought on early by capitalists looking to secure economic and political control of the Southwest during the late nineteenth century. Internal colonialism facilitated the removal of ethnic Mexicans from lands and restricted their economic, political, and cultural power, making their labor an essential commodity during the U.S.-

⁹ See Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun*; and Moreno, *The Elusive Quest for Equality*; Gonzalez, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation*.

led development of the region. Internal colonization of the Southwest also meant that a racial hierarchy was developed to delineate the social position of the inhabitants.¹⁰

Having lost most of their socio-political and cultural power, ethnic Mexicans were placed within a racial hierarchy that restricted access to that power. Laura E. Gómez explains that, as colonized indigenous people, ethnic Mexicans became racialized as nonwhite. However, their racialization was defined in relation to other people of color in the region; thus, they presumably held a social position above Black and Native American (and some Asian) populations, but below that of Anglos.¹¹ This racialization was then cemented during the early twentieth century and became difficult to challenge. Chapter 1 will expand on how this historical racialization has functioned in the U.S. Southwest.

As a result of these power shifts, the U.S. educational system during the twentieth century did not properly address the experience, needs, and priorities of Chicana communities. This neglect made it necessary for communities to do the work of developing alternative educational models to resist that oppression and negligence. However, this work and these models did not always look the same. California, Texas, and New Mexico experienced racialization and western expansion differently. Thus, the communities' relationship with the U.S. nation-state and its educational system also looked different. Furthermore, when MAG and CCM activists developed alternative

¹⁰ Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979).

¹¹ Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

modes of education in these states, they did so by engaging with the unique racial and cultural history of that state.

Significantly, this difference in experiences of racialization and westward expansion marks a distinction in activism among people of Mexican descent during the Mexican American Generation and Chicana and Chicano Movement in California, Texas, and New Mexico.¹² Although access to whiteness at various levels was possible, it did not end oppression or second-class status for Mexican-descent communities.

Consequently, Mexican communities had to challenge and resist that oppression. While analyzing the alternative educational models created by activists in these states, this study also considers the different approaches to that work that were influenced by the particular history of the region. For example, some New Mexican alternative schools engaged in the concept of *resolana*, a community-based philosophy of knowledge production unique to northern New Mexico; and in Texas activists had to contend with the history of the border and the real and symbolic threats it represented for the community.

For the purposes of education, the marginalization of Mexican-descent communities also meant that the culture, language, bodies, and histories of Mexicans could never be part of the curricula, pedagogies, philosophies, and epistemologies of the U.S. educational system. Alternative educational models, then, were not only necessary to challenge an oppressive system but to correct the erasure that system had created and upheld.

¹² John M. Nieto-Phillips, *Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008); Charles H. Montgomery, *The Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

Both MAG and CCM activists challenged the established educational system, although with different strategies. During the beginning and middle of the twentieth century, MAG organizations such as LULAC recognized that the educational system was an essential site for change and resistance to marginalization. As Gilbert G. Gonzalez explains, the desegregation cases championed by MAG activists were the ideal strategy to bring attention to the racism deeply rooted in the U.S. educational system.¹³ The fight against racism was a visible one that brought much attention to those individuals and organizations engaged in desegregation efforts. Unlike their African American counterparts, however, Mexican American desegregation advocates made their claims on the argument that Mexican-descent people were white, so segregating them was morally, if not legally, wrong.

Although desegregation was important in addressing the disparities in education delivered to communities of color, the solution often was to bus students to more-affluent Anglo schools instead of addressing the inadequate funding or resources provided to “Mexican schools.” Busing addressed racial segregation in public schools but ignored the fundamental and most-oppressive aspects of the U.S. educational system: its curricula, pedagogies, and philosophies that erased or excluded Chicanx communities.

Desegregation cases in Texas, California, and New Mexico created much needed change and a long-standing organizing base.¹⁴ However, not all organizations were

¹³ Gonzalez, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation*.

¹⁴ San Miguel, *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States, 1960-2001* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2004); Darius V. Echeverría, *Aztlán Arizona: Mexican American Educational Empowerment, 1968-1978* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014); Gutierrez, *The Chicano Education Rights*

content to use desegregation as a strategy to attain better education. Some realized it was necessary to create alternative models to adequately address the poor education provided to Chicana youth. It was difficult, however, to get much accomplished given the conservative nature of politics in the mid-twentieth century—politics that most MAG activists adhered to— politics from which it was taboo to deviate.

As the twentieth century progressed and political strategies changed, organizations such as the American G.I. Forum that began their activism during MAG but gradually embraced CCM politics and strategies recognized that they had to deploy the advantages gained by desegregation campaigns to propel transformative education.¹⁵ During CCM, when direct-action strategies were most popular and community-based politics were put into practice, education-focused activists sought to transform the educational system. This work meant calling attention to the exclusion of Mexican Americans in K–12 curriculum, individual school administration, school boards, and faculty. Through these efforts, CCM activists made changes to the K–12 systems in their communities, making schools more inclusive. CCM education-focused activists also developed Chicano Studies—a community-based interdisciplinary field that aimed to address the Chicana community at an academic and research level. These efforts propelled education-focused activism forward by challenging the notion of Eurocentric

Movement and School Desegregation, Los Angeles, 1962-1970; Gonzalez, Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation.

¹⁵ An initial review of the American G.I. Forum’s newspapers reveals that the organization advocated for more radical changes to the educational system than did their LULAC counterparts.

education as the best-quality education delivered in U.S. public schools, colleges, and universities.

Still, incorporating Mexican Americans into the K–12 and university system fell short of providing transformative education to the community as a whole. For one, changing K–12 curriculum or administration still did not give the Chicax community credibility or legitimacy as knowledge producers. Second, Chicano Studies was inaccessible to those learners outside the university and college systems.

The existing scholarship on education-focused activism among Chicax communities lays the foundation for the study of this subject but differs in scope from this project. Some scholars analyze macro-level changes, as with the edited volume, *The Elusive Quest for Equality: 150 Years of Chicano/Chicana Education*, or the monograph, *The Other Struggle for Equal Schools: Mexican Americans during the Civil Rights Era*. Scholarship produced while CCM was still in its early stages (1970s), such as *Chicanos in Higher Education* and *Minorities in Higher Education: Chicanos and Others*, considers the place Chicana/o students held in higher education as well as evaluates the effectiveness of recruitment and support services in creating avenues for Chicana/o youth to access colleges and universities.¹⁶

Additionally, some work focuses on localized movements in the U.S. Southwest. Works like *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education: Movimiento Politics in Crystal City, Texas* explore specific cases of education-focused community organizing.¹⁷

¹⁶ Casso and Román, *Chicanos in Higher Education*; Cabrera, *Minorities in Higher Education*.

¹⁷ Trujillo, *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education*.

These localized studies add an important aspect to the scholarship by highlighting the work of community organizations and leaders (many of who were not educators by training) and the essential part that work played in attaining equitable education.

Scholarship that explores the creation, implementation, and degrees of success of policy meant to provide equitable or transformative education to Mexican descent populations adds an important aspect to the historiography. These works include *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States, 1960-2001* and *Aztlán Arizona: Mexican American Educational Empowerment, 1968-1978*. The value of these works is that they discuss the relationship between Chicana communities and the institutions in charge of educating their youth, namely school boards and departments of education.

Most of the scholarship centers the stories of education-focused activism in relation to established institutions of education. Some of the scholarship already mentioned, including *The Other Struggle for Equal Schools* and *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation*, explores the struggle for equitable education in K–12. Additionally, works like *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe* and *Chicano Studies: The Genesis of a Discipline* detail the establishment of Chicana/o Studies programs and departments in institutions of higher learning. While important contributions, particularly their detailing of the tremendous labor communities invested in education, this scholarship does not give enough significance to the alternative spaces (noninstitutional) in which education occurred.

The most-prolific Chicano scholar on the subject of education-focused activism among Chicana communities is Guadalupe San Miguel. Author of works, *Contested*

Policy and Let All of Them Take Heed, already cited above, San Miguel has produced scholarship that considers all the thematic fields mentioned here, including K–12 education, Chicano education in higher learning, policy implementation, and localized case studies. His book *Chicana/o Struggles for Education: Activism in the Community* is most closely related to the topic my project considers. That history explores the alternative ways community activists thought about and implemented culturally relevant education.

This project utilizes the theoretical frameworks presented by Critical Race Theory in Education (CRTE) and Southwest Borderland Studies. Both of these fields are useful to discuss the effects of race and class on educational systems and practice in the U.S. Southwest. Specifically, they help frame a discussion about the historical racialization of people of Mexican descent in the U.S. Southwest and the role of education in maintaining racialized difference in the region. Furthermore, these frameworks inform the discussion of the historical and political importance of Chicana efforts to establish alternative schooling to combat unequal school practices.

CRT emerged as a theoretical lens in the field of education in 1994 when Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate theorized CRT's applicability to discussing the inequity in schooling caused by race. They pointed out that the racial inequalities found generally in U.S. society were also at work in educational policy, curriculum, and instruction, and helped explain the failure of the educational system as an avenue for social mobility for people of color.

Several of the concepts presented by Ladson-Billings and Tate are applicable to the discussion of Chicana education-focused activism and alternative models.¹⁸ The most important one is their definition of whiteness as property, and its influence on education in the United States. While whiteness allows people access to the benefits of white privilege, so does it afford those who can claim whiteness the ability to define what benefits are attainable. When applied to education, this means that those who can claim whiteness have the ability to define curriculum, pedagogy, theory, and practice. Historically, this has meant that people of color could not define these concepts, or their definitions were not considered valid. Although some Mexican descent people could claim whiteness, they could not access the power to define social structures, societal parameters and/or practices, including education.

Ladson-Billings and Tate also briefly discuss the shortcomings of desegregation cases in providing the opportunity for equitable education. While desegregation afforded folks access to schooling that was previously unattainable and corrected one of the most explicit forms of racism in the United States, as Ladson-Billings and Tate explain, the strategy of desegregation was too ambiguous to address the inequality of resources provided for the education of people of color. Thus, after desegregation, Anglos could claim that racism no longer existed while white flight allowed them to economically segregate people of color into poorly funded schools, particularly in blighted urban areas.

Finally, Ladson-Billings and Tate, as well as other CRTE scholars, emphasize the necessity and importance of including the voices of the communities that scholars

¹⁸ Taylor, Gillborn, and Ladson-Billings, *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*; and Yosso, *Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*.

research. Tara J. Yosso, for instance, introduces the concept of community cultural wealth, the cultural and historical knowledge of Chicana/Latina communities that is critical to the education of these communities and that challenges the Euro-centric/U.S.-centric orientation of public education in the United States.¹⁹ An example of community cultural wealth is the concept of *resolana* mentioned above and discussed later in this dissertation.

This project uses CRTE to analyze the actions of Mexican-descent, education-focused activists during MAG and CCM and discusses the importance of their activism to the history of education-focused political activism of these communities in the U.S. Southwest. The goal is not to apply CRTE to historical actors who did not use the language of CRTE scholars but to underscore that MAG and CCS activists understood the complex social, cultural, and political dynamics about which CRTE now theorizes. Furthermore, CRTE is a useful lens through which to discuss and critique the consequences of this activism on the community at the time and in the present.

CRTE is limited by its exclusion of regional histories in its analysis of educational practices among communities of color. While CRTE scholarship has expanded beyond the white/black binary of CRTE's initial discussions of race in education, it has only recently begun to consider the intersections of race, education, and region. Wendy Cheng, in her book *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California*, introduces the concept of *regional racial formation*, which she defines as “place-specific processes of racial formation, in which locally accepted racial orders and

¹⁹ Taylor, Gillborn, and Ladson-Billings, *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*; Yosso, *Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*.

hierarchies complicate and sometimes challenge hegemonic ideologies and facile notions of race.”²⁰ Cheng is concerned with how race is defined in different spaces and how that relationship affects the racial position and interaction between different communities of color. It is useful to apply that comparative model to the southwest region. In other words, it is important to explore how race is defined in Texas, California, and New Mexico; and it is just as essential to compare how those racialization processes differ and how they compare to regional racial definitions (whether real, imagined, or imposed).

Cheng’s concept is similar to Laura Pulido’s discussion of racial hierarchies as they are affected by geographic region, which posits that the racial hierarchies found in Los Angeles are created not only by racialization processes enacted by governments or white society but also by interactions among people of color. The position a community holds in the racial hierarchy of a place, then, is defined in part by the other communities of color present. Both Cheng’s and Pulido’s theorization of the effects of place on racialization of communities of color are useful to understanding how public institutions, such as public schools, function in a given region or city.²¹

However, neither Cheng nor Pulido fully consider the role of the history of a place or region in their analysis. It is essential, then, to incorporate Southwest Borderland Studies into the framework of this project. Southwest Borderland Studies allows for the consideration of the historical power dynamics of a place. The regional framework and historical methodology help contextualize the difference in racial processes, development

²⁰ Wendy Cheng, *The Changs Next Door to the Díazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

²¹ Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

of social institutions (like education), and development of activism in a region like the Southwest. Southwest Borderland Studies provides a lens that allows for contemporary racial dynamics to be centered and incorporates the historical processes that created them.

Together, CRTE—including Cheng’s and Pulido’s concepts—and Southwest Borderland Studies create a theoretical framework for a discussion of the education-focused activism that this project highlights. MAG and CCM activists were aware, influenced, and in some cases limited by the racial hierarchies present in their cities, state, region, and country. Their activism, then, had to address or navigate these dynamics. CRTE and Southwest Borderlands Studies will help contextualize and analyze the decisions activists made in their efforts to combat racial oppression in education. As mentioned above, MAG and CCM had differing strategies, rhetoric, goals, and outcomes—all of them influenced by the history or racial definitions of the Southwest region broadly and of Texas, California, and New Mexico specifically.

The archival materials used for this project come from both traditional and digital archives. The America’s Historical Newspapers Archive, where I accessed digital scans of *La Estrella* and *El Defensor del Pueblo*, was invaluable to the production of chapter 2. For chapter 3, which focuses on the theater troupes *Teatro Campesino* and *Teatro de las Chicanas*, I used the play transcripts available in Luis Valdez and *El Teatro Campesino*, *Luis Valdez—Early Works: Actos, Bernabé, and Pensamiento Serpentino* and Laura E. Garcia, Sandra M. Gutierrez, and Felicitas Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana: A Collective Memoir and Selected Plays*. Finally, the digital scans of the Colegio Jacinto Treviño collection at the University of Houston made chapter 4 possible.

Chapter 1 details the history of U.S. western expansion into the Mexican North (later U.S. Southwest) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This chapter will also historicize the racialization of Mexicans in the United States, with particular interest placed on the different racialization projects existent in California, Texas, and New Mexico. As part of that history, I discuss the education system's role in defining and maintaining racial and ethnic difference. The chapter discusses the several strategies that Mexican-descent communities deployed to resist U.S. expansion, contextualizing the alternative educational practices that this project analyzes as part of that resistance.

Chapter 2 details the use of newspapers as educational tools in New Mexico. Between 1925–1935, *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, New Mexico) and *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, New Mexico) served as mediums in which activists provided education to their local communities. By publishing recurring educational columns, these newspapers became a reliable source of educational readings for Mexican-descent communities. I use the definition of culturally relevant education to demonstrate that these activists constructed and applied a vision for the kind of education they wanted to provide their readers and worked to bring that ideal to fruition in their newspapers. At a time when public schools excluded Mexican history and culture from their curriculum, *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* were an alternative venue on which local New Mexican communities could rely.

Chapter 3 provides a textual analysis of plays produced by *El Teatro Campesino* in Delano, California, and *Teatro de las Chicanas* in San Diego, California. During the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, these troupes used theater to educate their audience about various topics including U.S. politics, culture, sexism, and transnational

politics. In addition to using their plays to educate audiences, they also created educational spaces for their participants to engage powerful and pressing issues in their daily lives.

Chapter 4 tells the story of Colegio Jacinto Treviño in Merced, Texas, the first Chicano college in the Rio Grande Valley—as the founders claimed. Established by agrarian workers with the support of local academics and community members, Colegio Jacinto Treviño was an alternative to the institutions of higher learning, both public and private, in the area. More than a singular institution, Colegio Jacinto Treviño trained students to be educators in their communities, networked with institutions across the Southwest and internationally, and tried to find solutions to the educational needs of Chicana/o communities in the United States.

New scholarship in Chicana/o Studies attempts to add to our previous understandings of the Chicana/o community throughout history. There is always the goal to recover stories, fill in the gaps, and highlight the work of those who have been silenced or ignored. This allows to acknowledge the complexity of the experiences that make up the history of Chicana/o communities. With this project, I aim to follow in that tradition.

Chapter 1

The Racialization of Mexican Americans: Consequences of U.S. Takeover of the U.S. Southwest in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

U.S westward expansion, which effectively colonized, for the second time, the current Southwest, defined the early social, cultural, and political status of Mexican Americans.²² With westward expansion came the colonization of former Mexican territories by Anglos or Euro-Americans, the eventual elevation of federal territories into states and their incorporation into the United States, but not the full incorporation of their Indigenous and Mexican inhabitants into the body politic. Instead, Indigenous people and Mexicans were racialized, stripped of their lands, relegated to second-class citizenship, and forced into the wage-labor sector of the economy. In the face of economic, political, and social oppression and marginalization by white colonists or settlers, Mexicans and Mexican Americans pushed back through a variety of means. One form of contestation that embodied a critical view of western expansionism and imperialism was empowering the Mexican community through educational practice in creative and unique ways. This dissertation examines alternative educational projects as part of the broader history of

²² In the past three decades, revisionist scholars have categorized the historical moment of U.S. takeover as imperialism or national expansion. Historian Deena J. González describes it as colonization, highlighting that the process, goals, and results of U.S. takeover were similar to those of the British settler-colonial project in North America. Deena J. González, *Refusing the Favor: The Spanish-Mexican Women of Santa Fe, 1820–1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). See also, David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); and Howard Roberts Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846–1912: A Territorial History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

educational activism that Chicana communities engaged in during the twentieth century to combat their historical oppression in all institutions but especially in schools.

In the late nineteenth century, the takeover of the Mexican North by the United States resulted in the transfer of social, political, and cultural power from Mexicans to Euro-Americans. The acquisition of Mexican territory was achieved through violence and war as in the cases of the conflicts in Texas and of the U.S.-Mexico War, or through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.²³ Euro-Americans who gained power in the territories did so through violence, legal proceedings, political maneuvering, and economic displacement of Indigenous peoples and Mexicans.

Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resisted the processes of colonization, westward expansion, racialization, and oppression. Sometimes this resistance came in the form of survival; withstanding the attempts to eliminate their culture and communities was an act of resisting those imperial or colonial projects. The U.S. state apparatus classified some of this resistance as delinquent, illegal, or rebellious actions and used those classifications to further marginalize and criminalize Mexican-descent communities.

Some generations of activists chose more radical and at times leftist politics and strategies to combat their oppression, while others chose more assimilationist and centrist

²³ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*; Lamar, *The Far Southwest*; Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

ones. They all, however, understood that the U.S. nation-state utilized different institutions to impose and maintain racial hierarchies in the U.S. Southwest.²⁴

One of the most effective ways the U.S. state implemented its projects for the control and marginalization of people was through the educational system in territories and states. While the educational system in the United States has functioned as an avenue of opportunity for historically oppressed communities, it has also served as a tool and venue for indoctrination and assimilation. In the Mexican North, where Mexican and Catholic educational systems governed, the introduction of American government was followed by the elimination of culturally Mexican, Spanish-language, and Catholic instruction from public schools in the U.S. Southwest.²⁵ Such a Eurocentric system aided in the oppression of Mexican-descent populations in the U.S. Southwest. Public educational institutions in the Southwest, then, followed the logic and history of colonial programs and racial structures established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Indigenous and Mexican-descent peoples were their subjects and victims.

Deconstruction of the Mexican North

Westward expansion, the process by which the United States conquered its continental expanse, began with the idea of a romanticized western frontier open for conquest,

²⁴ See Robert J. Rosenbaum, *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest* (1981; repr. with a new forward by John R. Chávez and new afterword by the author, Dallas, Tex: Southern Methodist University Press, 1998); and Americo Paredes, *“With His Pistol in His Hand”*: *A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958).

²⁵ Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. and Richard R. Valencia, “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest,” *Harvard Educational Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 353–412.

occupation, and exploitation.²⁶ The process of “emptying” the West for the purposes of Anglo American settlement fit this romanticized idea and led to the removal of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral homes and later Mexicans from their ancestral and cultural lands. Removal of Indigenous and Mexican populations from the Mexican North also facilitated the establishment of a power dynamic that placed Euro-Americans at the top and all others at the bottom of a hierarchy based on race. This power dynamic would be difficult to escape for Indigenous, Mexican, and other people of color during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Several historical moments presented opportunities for the United States to move into the Mexican North. Among them were Mexican Independence (1810-1821); the Texas Rebellion (1835-1836), Texas Independence (1835), and the incorporation of Texas into the United States (1845); the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848); and signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). Citizens of the United States took advantage of all these movements or upheavals to expand westward, claim space, and exploit resources, while the federal government planted and exerted U.S. sovereignty over conquered territory and people.

In the nineteenth century, U.S. westward expansion collided with the legal transformation of the North from a Spanish-controlled territory to one claimed by a newly formed nation-state, the Republic of Mexico. The success of Mexican

²⁶ See Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950; repr., with new preface by the author, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); and Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: The Significance of the Frontier in American History and Other Essays*, comp. and intro. John Mack Faragher (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).

Independence in 1821 effectively opened the new nation's northern frontier (later U.S. Southwest) to American trade and settlement. Whereas the Spanish crown had mandated that its territories not trade with Americans or any other agent of a non-Spanish nation or kingdom, the Mexican state encouraged trade and settlement in an effort to economically develop and politically control the frontier.²⁷

Growing Euro-American migration to the Mexican North in the 1830s and 1840s, however, quickly presented problems for the Mexican state. Unable to regulate the number of Americans coming into its territories, the Mexican state attempted to curtail some of the migration by enforcing rules that, it hoped, would make Americans lose interest in migrating to Mexican territories. One regulation, issued in 1830, outlawed slavery in the northern Mexican territories. The object was to stop or discourage Anglo settlers, especially those originating in the U.S. South, from bringing enslaved Africans and their African American descendants into the Mexican northern territories, Texas in particular. The Mexican government also required Americans, the vast majority of whom were Protestant, to convert to Catholicism, abide by Mexican law, and show loyalty to the Mexican nation. The Mexican state, however, lacked the infrastructure and political strength to enforce these regulations. Many American settlers saw their entry to Mexican-controlled territories as the continuation of their traditional movement west. Settlers

²⁷ William Patrick O'Brien, *Merchants of Independence: International Trade on the Santa Fe Trail, 1827-1860* (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2014); David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982); Susan Calafate Boyle, *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

resented Mexican requirements or limitations on their movement and sought to erode or even eliminate the Mexican state's power in the region.

This conflict between American settlers and the Mexican government was exemplified by the Texas Rebellion from 1835-1836, in which American settlers moved to separate the Texas state from the Mexican nation. A decade later, the so-called Republic of Texas formally incorporated into the U.S. nation. The Texas Rebellion was led in part by Texians (Americans living in Texas) who resented the attempt by the new Mexican centralist government to control its northern region. Angry that the centralist government seemed to dictate how the northern territories operated without prioritizing the concerns many in those territories faced, namely the fact that Indigenous communities, such as the Comanches, consistently attacked settlements and politically controlled the territories,²⁸ Texians chose to rebel against the Mexican state. Having declared independence in 1836, Texas accepted the offer of annexation into the United States in 1845, which heightened the conflict between the Mexican nation and Americans living in the northern territories, and consequently between the government of United States and Mexico.

Waged from 1846-1878, the U.S.-Mexico War was a conflict in which both parties hoped to establish political control over the region, something the Mexican state had been unable to effectively do since its independence and something the U.S. state hoped to accomplish as it had done with the territories it had acquired since the late eighteenth century. In reality, even after the culmination of the U.S.-Mexico War, the true

²⁸ Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008); and Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008).

political force in the region continued to be Indigenous people.²⁹ As a result, after the war, the United States and Mexico agreed to join forces to eliminate the threat from those Indigenous communities. For the United States, this agreement was a continuation of its policies of genocide or removal of Indigenous people. Significantly, the wars and other violence against Indigenous people also defined their racial classification within U.S. society. Eventually, Mexicans living in the newly acquired U.S. Southwest faced similar consequences under its sovereignty.

While the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 primarily ended the U.S.-Mexico War, it also marked the culmination of the United States' continental westward expansion, at least until its purchase of Alaska in 1867. Significantly, for this study, the treaty legally created the Mexican American, for Mexican citizens living in the Southwest were granted U.S. citizenship if they chose to stay after the takeover. The treaty, however, did not guarantee any protections for the new citizens of Mexican descent, and thus the U.S. had no obligation to enforce the benefits outlined in the treaty. The Mexican withdrawal left behind a population of U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, whom the U.S. government and society had no desire to fully incorporate into their country.

What followed in the late nineteenth century was the deliberate and concerted effort by the U.S. state and Euro-Americans to take over political, economic, and social power in the Southwest. While some Mexicans resisted this takeover and were in some

²⁹ Pekka Hamalainen and Brian DeLay separately demonstrate that Indigenous groups such as the Comanches and Apaches controlled the economic trade and were politically superior to Europeans in the current U.S-Mexico border region. Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*; and DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*.

cases successful, the loss of federal and local political influence made it difficult for Mexicans to resist the Anglo takeover for very long. Because the conquest had both economic and racial motivations, the culmination of the takeover was that the social and political position of Mexicans became one of second-class citizens in the southwestern region, which their ancestors had occupied for over two centuries.

Second-Class Citizenship for Mexican Americans

U.S. conquest, occupation, and sovereignty in the Southwest, particularly in California, Texas, and New Mexico, resulted in the exchange of land ownership, a change in political power, and the second-class status of Mexican Americans living in the territories. The racialization of Mexican-descent populations in the late nineteenth century also played a role in their designation and treatment as second-class citizens. In his history of Santa Barbara, California, Albert Camarillo identifies three sites in which U.S. takeover occurred: the economic, social, and political spheres.³⁰ As in other cities in California and the Southwest, Euro-Americans eventually achieved control and supremacy in these sectors. David Montejano likewise highlights the role of economic, political, and social change in Texas, importantly adding the role of Anglo merchants and lawyers to the transitional process.³¹ Deena J. Gonzalez similarly analyzes the U.S. takeover in New Mexico and, through the addition of women into the narrative, shows

³⁰ Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*.

³¹ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).

the ways New Mexicans resisted instead of accommodating the transfer of power.³² All of these scholars describe how Mexican elites experienced U.S. sovereignty differently, at times politically or economically aligning themselves with incoming Euro-American elites and resisting or refusing to cooperate at others. Nonetheless, most Mexicans living in the U.S. Southwest faced a similar racialized and socio-economic fate. If class, then, differentiated Mexicans' experiences of takeover, race made their experiences similar. To fully understand the consequences of takeover and the effects of it on the Mexican community, historians need to consider the conquest through economic, social, political, *and* racial lenses. Undoubtedly, the social status of Mexicans in the Southwest was governed by intertwining economic, political, and racial structures that they often did not have the power to control. Yet, an analysis of the economic, political, social, and racial processes of the U.S. takeover as separate entities highlights the deliberate nature of the conquest.

Land dispossession, for instance, was in part carried out by legislation that left Mexican landowners at a disadvantage. Although the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo included provisions that protected Mexican land ownership, during ratification the U.S. Senate struck out Article X which would have guaranteed the legality of land grants issued by the Spanish and Mexican governments. When some territories, including New Mexico, established land claims courts to review land grants, Mexicans had a difficult time proving to American courts that they owned the land, which favored Euro-Americans.

³² González, *Refusing the Favor*.

Racialization in the late nineteenth-century U.S. Southwest is of particular importance as a site of conquest and colonization because race was used as both a justification for takeover and was defined as a result of the takeover process. Racial language, attitudes, and policies all were part of conquest but also helped maintain a racialized social structure to secure Euro-American superiority in the region where there was previously Mexican and Indigenous dominance. Additionally, historians have to consider the role of violence as a separate point of analysis. Takeover included market speculations, industry manipulations, land dispossession through courts and lawyers, intermarriage, and several other factors—but the process also necessitated, bred, and utilized violence. Historians have to understand violence not only as a tool used for conquest and control but a function and expression of power, thus a political and sociological structure of its own in the process of the imposition of U.S. sovereignty on occupied people, Mexicans and Native Americans in this case.

Analyzing these five factors—economics, politics, society, race, and violence—define the process of takeover and explain how Mexicans ended up as second-class citizens in the U.S. Southwest.

Economic Takeover

The late-nineteenth-century transition from Mexican to American economic control created the power dynamic between these two communities that left Mexicans economically marginalized. Camarillo writes: “During the transitional period between ‘Mexican’ southern California and ‘American’ southern California, approximately 1850 to 1875, and during the following quarter-century, the basic socioeconomic and political

relations between the two groups were established.”³³ Montejano argues that the “making” of Texas is a history of “market penetration and development,” a historical process that explains why his study focuses on merchants and land lawyers during and after takeover.³⁴ Gonzalez addresses the consequences of Euro-American domination, stating that it “impoverished the majority of the residents of Santa Fe and perhaps much of the New Mexican north.”³⁵

California was settled, industrialized, and, as a result, taken over by Euro-Americans at a much faster pace and much earlier than Texas and New Mexico. That is because Euro-Americans, like others before them, saw the economic value of California. During the Spanish colonial period, scientific-exploration ships docked on the California coast, so merchants recognized the economic importance of its ports.³⁶ The discovery of gold in late 1848 further solidified California’s economic value to whatever nation controlled the territory or state.

On the subject of the heightened interest among Euro-Americans, historian Earl Pomeroy argues that the development of the six western states was buttressed by California’s political and economic position of strength in the region: “The history of California is the quintessence alike of romance and of prophecy. Whatever the

³³ Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 3.

³⁴ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 15.

³⁵ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 3.

³⁶ Jean-François de la Pérouse, *Life in a California Mission: Monterey in 1786, the Journals of Jean François de la Pérouse* (Berkeley, Calif.: Heyday Books, 1995); and Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850–1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

neighboring states were, they were in large part because it served as catalyst, banker, and base of operations; and much of what it was depended on the tribute they paid.”³⁷

California, however, did not always hold this position of superiority. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, the center of trade between U.S. merchants and the Mexican North was Santa Fe, New Mexico. However, the shift toward California during the early American period as the center of development came about through the Euro-American economic and political interest in the territory following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and discovery of gold in 1848.

Natural resources also informed the economic geopolitical imperatives of western expansionism. Albert Camarillo makes the argument that California was the theater of Euro-American takeover and shows how the economic sector was the first one in which Euro-Americans achieved superiority over Californios.³⁸ In Texas, Euro-Americans were also distinctly aware of the economic potential of the region, particularly the possible access to the Rio Grande. Euro-Americans who migrated to Texas and those who later advocated for independence, understood the economic power of the Rio Grande. By controlling the river, they would have access to the U.S. markets through Santa Fe in the north and the Mexican markets through Matamoros in the South. Disagreement over who politically controlled the region surrounding the river in Southern Texas exacerbated the conflicts between Texas and Mexico and later the United States and Mexico.³⁹

³⁷ Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), vi.

³⁸ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 26.

³⁹ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 16.

As with any settler colonial project, land was the primary driver of Euro-American economic takeover in the Southwest. In the late nineteenth century, Euro-American and European settlers were attracted to central Texas with the incentive of cheap land.⁴⁰ After takeover, land shifted from an imperial political holding to an economic commodity. This meant that Euro-Americans could now take “free lands” from Indigenous people and land owned by Mexicans. Of course, land ownership or lack thereof defined class structures between Euro-Americans, Mexicans, and other people of color in the region. In Texas, the term *sharecropper* for instance, signified both the type of labor a person performed and the fact that they did not own land and held a lower-class status than “tenant farmers.”⁴¹ The economic incentive of land was so dominant that what Montejano terms the “peace structure” (de-escalation or pause to hostilities) between Euro-Americans and Mexicans was established in order to pursue the “commercial goals of Manifest Destiny.”⁴² Of course the economic power of land was intertwined with and defined the social and racial position of Mexicans in the late nineteenth century. Camarillo asserts that the loss of land “altered the nature of the economy . . . and resulted in economic exploitation of the Mexican people.”⁴³ Likewise, Gonzalez states that “colonizers from the United States wove a financial web whose threads entangled

⁴⁰ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 26.

⁴¹ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge*, 10.

⁴² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 8.

⁴³ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 113.

everyone, especially women.”⁴⁴ Importantly, Gonzalez highlights that the economic threat also affected women, both landowning and landless. In the late nineteenth century, the financial web, as she terms it, was inevitably tied to landed property.

Economic takeover ultimately accomplished the reclassification of Mexican people as primarily laborers. Camarillo shows how the demand for labor and the limited work options available to Mexicans forced them to enter the market as that large labor force.⁴⁵ According to Camarillo, by the end of the nineteenth century, Mexicans were the go-to population for manual labor, cementing their position in the market in Santa Barbara, California.⁴⁶ The jobs available to Mexicans in this era included manual or seasonal labor, most commonly field work.⁴⁷ Mexican laborers in Texas shortly after takeover resided mostly in the San Antonio area and worked as cotton pickers. Recent Mexican immigrants at the time also resided and worked in that geographic area. Laborers not only included men but also women and children, particularly in agricultural work. In 1920, the Bureau of Labor estimated that 50 percent of all immigrants were women and children.⁴⁸ González points out that in New Mexico Mexican, laborers were paid less than whites, and Mexican women even less than both.⁴⁹ Importantly, across social-economic class, Mexicans were excluded from lucrative economic opportunities in

⁴⁴ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 13.

⁴⁵ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 79.

⁴⁶ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 96.

⁴⁷ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 166.

⁴⁸ Neil Foley, *White Scourge*, 42-43.

⁴⁹ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 44.

the nineteenth century, including the gold rush in California. Consequently, while there is little evidence of downward socio-economic movement among Mexican elites in this early phase, the number of the working-class Mexican population increased in the decades following American takeover. Additionally, economic markets were increasingly taken over by Euro-Americans. In Santa Fe, for instance, Euro-Americans established their own connections, trades, and funds in Mexico and the Southwest, which facilitated takeover of the trade in the region.

The economic structure established by Euro-Americans in the Southwest was at times facilitated by and benefitted the Mexican elites who held power before U.S. conquest. Some of this was done through class interactions and accommodation, including marriage—bringing to attention the voluntary and involuntary influence of women in takeover.

Accommodation, however, did not last long in Texas, where war, conquest, and fleeing Mexican elites ended whatever power Mexicans had in the region. Although the takeover in each Southwestern state or territory was not uniform, the outcomes tended to be the same: Mexican citizens found themselves unable to halt the assumption of power by Anglo Americans, who relegated them to the lower rungs of economic and political hierarchies. The most economically commodifiable resources during takeover were land and labor. González affirms that, in Santa Fe, “90 percent of resident Spanish-Mexicans lost their lands to the colonizers”⁵⁰ and that, after U.S. takeover, “most Spanish-Mexicans [were] dependent on wages, earned in jobs controlled by Euro-Americans.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 10.

⁵¹ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 3.

Like Camarillo, González identifies the outcome of American takeover and its effect on the economic and social position of New Mexican communities. Like their Californian counterparts, then, New Mexicans who experienced the American takeover of the territories they occupied ultimately saw themselves at a political and economic disadvantage, if not pushed outright into a second-class citizenship status under American rule.

Political Takeover

Euro-Americans also attempted to leverage their economic power into political power. For example, when labor shortages and anti-immigrant sentiments made it harder for Euro-American bosses to find enough available Mexican laborers, they sought to force the state to intervene in their behalf. Their economic power afforded them state resources to maintain that power. Further political power came in different forms, including control of legislatures and courts and command of the ability to institutionalize supposed Euro-American superiority over Mexicans in the Southwest.

At first, Euro-Americans derived their political power from westward expansion's territorial occupation structure. Because the United States had been victorious over Mexico in the war, Euro-American conquerors after 1848 sought to rule over the conquered—Mexicans—in the Southwest.⁵² In New Mexico, the Kearny Code maintained “military rule until territory status was achieved [in 1850].”⁵³ Eventually, Euro-Americans sought to convert their colonial power to state power. For instance, what

⁵² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 37.

⁵³ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 70.

Montejano referred to as a “peace structure” in Texas between Euro-Americans and Mexicans “allow[ed] victors to maintain law and order without the constant use of force.”⁵⁴

Euro-Americans sought to control legislatures and courts in particular. Shortly after 1848, Euro-Americans in California began using local newspapers to question the Mexican-controlled politics in the Santa Barbara area, although it would take until the 1860s for them to turn the political tide.⁵⁵ The political power they gained in California, Texas, and New Mexico allowed Euro-Americans to make decisions about landownership and institutionalize the second-class status of Mexicans by passing laws that benefited Euro-Americans. In New Mexico, Mexican land grant owners could not always produce the documents that Euro-American-controlled courts required to legitimize their ownership under U.S. law.⁵⁶ In California, land claims were accompanied by court expenses some Mexicans could not afford to pay.⁵⁷ Similarly, in Texas some Mexican landowners found themselves with large expenses necessary to secure their lands, and some opted instead to sell.⁵⁸

Euro-Americans also used both political and racial justifications for the delineation of landownership rights and political participation. The Republic of Texas only allowed whites, or Mexicans who could prove their whiteness, to purchase land.

⁵⁴ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 34.

⁵⁵ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 23.

⁵⁶ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 90.

⁵⁷ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 114.

⁵⁸ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 30.

This effectively made whiteness a requirement for landownership and, consequently, political participation.⁵⁹ After 1848, Texas legislators claimed their previous independence exempted the state from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, particularly the treaty's provisions on Mexicans and their lands.⁶⁰ This claim, recognized by the U.S. Congress, led to further land takeovers by Euro-Americans and the disenfranchisement of Mexicans. In California, city governments passed laws that favored the industries Euro-Americans introduced or preferred and worked against Mexican industrial and economic interests.⁶¹ The so-called "No Fence" Law of 1874, for instance, favored Euro-American farmers and eventually the larger agricultural industry and led to the decline of cattle herding, a major industry among Mexicans before the American takeover.⁶² The "No Fence" law allowed farmers to sue cattle herders whose animals wandered into their agricultural fields. It also empowered the farmers to confiscate and sell the cattle herders' animals at auction to pay for damages.⁶³

⁵⁹ Foley, *White Scourge*, 19.

⁶⁰ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 38.

⁶¹ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 114.

⁶² Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 81.

⁶³ It was called the "No Fence Law" because, during the 1850s, cattle herders had been successful in passing the Trespass Law of 1850, which made farmers responsible for funding and building fences if they wanted to keep grazing animals out of their property. The Trespass Law was termed the "Fence Law," so a movement against it was termed "No Fence." John Ludeke, "The No Fence Law of 1874: Victory for San Joaquin Valley Farmers," *California History* 59, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 98-115; Martha Menchaca, *The Mexican Outsiders: A Community History of Marginalization and Discrimination in California* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

The domination of political power also enabled Euro-Americans to dictate their own and Mexicans' political status in the Southwest. In 1845, Texas officials debated whether Mexicans in the Republic should be allowed to vote. Mexicans were granted the right to vote by tangentially being accepted as "white."⁶⁴ Still, in practice some Mexicans were disenfranchised, a reality that continued well into the following century in Texas. Additionally, laws were passed to segregate Mexicans from particular counties in Texas. In one instance, Mexicans were required to leave a county because of the Euro-American fear that Mexicans were aiding enslaved Africans in their pursuit of freedom. In another case, the concern was that Mexican men were marrying enslaved women in order to free them.⁶⁵ In both cases the overall concern was that Mexicans' proximity to enslaved people influenced the latter to seek freedom. Euro-Americans found it concerning that the people of color they subordinated could challenge their position of power when in close proximity to each other. Euro-Americans also legislated what Mexicans could or could not do within their communities. The Sunday Law in California was enacted to outlaw Mexican cultural traditions on Sundays.⁶⁶ In California, antivagrancy laws aimed to restrict Mexicans' movement in cities, and in Texas, similar laws were used to force Mexicans to labor for whites.⁶⁷ Euro-American political power also translated into socio-political areas. The American Federation of Labor, for instance, sided in favor of anti-

⁶⁴ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 38-39.

⁶⁵ Foley, *White Scourge*, 25

⁶⁶ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 81.

⁶⁷ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 108; Foley, *White Scourge* 32.

immigrant policies to prevent the supposed threat Mexican laborers posed to Euro-American laborers in Texas.⁶⁸

Social and Cultural Takeover

The effects of Euro-American takeover also had social and cultural consequences for the Mexican community. After the U.S.-Mexico War, some soldiers and others associated with the U.S. Army remained in Texas and married into elite Mexican families. Euro-Americans had previously used intermarriage to circumvent Mexican trade laws. During the Mexican period, Euro-American fur trappers in New Mexico likewise used intermarriage in this way when Mexican law only issued fur trapping licenses to Mexicans. In addition to the impact to the local economy, these marriages created new familial structures within the Mexican community.⁶⁹

Aside from a tool for Euro-Americans to establish social and economic ties to the Mexican community, marriage apparently functioned to calm conflicts between Euro-Americans and Mexicans. Montejano writes, “Marriage between representatives of the two [Euro-Americans and Mexicans] seemed to be a classic resolution, a suspension of the conflict between these two classes.”⁷⁰ He goes on to explain that this relationship did not stop all conflict between the two groups. However, it is noteworthy to highlight how women and marriage were used in conquest. To be sure, women sometimes had agency

⁶⁸ Foley, *White Scourge*, 47.

⁶⁹ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 41; David J. Weber, *The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest, 1540–1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971).

⁷⁰ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 49.

in deciding their roles during Euro-American takeover. As a patriarchal Euro-centric colonizing project, however, American conquest of the Southwest also sought to establish new gendered social norms and relations. These changes to traditional Mexican gender norms included women (and children) entering the wage-earning work force. In California, women and children most commonly labored in domestic service and agriculture.⁷¹ In New Mexico the change in the social order also most negatively affected women and children.⁷²

The new social order also changed the appearance of Mexican cities. Camarillo describes this change as the “barrioization of the Mexican population—the formation of residentially and socially segregated barrios or neighborhoods.”⁷³ This segregation led to Euro-Americans distancing themselves further from Mexicans, refusing to go into Mexican neighborhoods and interact with people they viewed as inferior. Additionally, pseudo-scientific theories about the inferiority of Mexicans were disseminated in media outlets of the time.

As Mexicans adjusted to their new reality as a colonized, oppressed, segregated, and socially marginalized population, they often had to modify their cultural and social traditions. During the takeover, Euro-Americans misunderstood and rejected social traditions common among Mexicans. In New Mexico, for instance, Euro-Americans found communal activities like gambling and saloon dancing odd and even immoral and

⁷¹ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 91.

⁷² González, *Refusing the Favor*, 4.

⁷³ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 53.

used their objections to such practices to critique Mexican leadership.⁷⁴ In California, Mexicans had to adapt their community cultural traditions, which during the Mexican period could be celebrated widely, to fit their new reality in the segregated barrio.⁷⁵ The Mexican population in the Southwest, had to socially adapt to Euro-American takeover by maintaining, however limited, their traditions and cultural heritage.

Racial Categories During Takeover

Euro-Americans sought to establish a social order that left them atop a racial hierarchy. A racial and social hierarchy had long ago been established on the U.S. East Coast and in the South along a white and black binary, with Indigenous people and others who did not fit into those categories left outside and at the bottom of that hierarchy. In the West, Euro-Americans had to contend with the presence of Mexicans, Indigenous nations, Asians, and immigrants from other places. The social hierarchy, then, could not simply function along existing racial binary lines; new racial categories had to be addressed.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Euro-Americans were most commonly at the top of the hierarchy, and Black Americans at the bottom, with the claim to whiteness being the deciding factor for inclusion at the top. Mexicans, then, “came to locate themselves in the ethnoracial middle ground between Anglo Americans and African Americans.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ González, *Refusing the Favor*, 49.

⁷⁵ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 60.

⁷⁶ Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁷⁷ Foley, *White Scourge*, 41.

As Montejano notes, the historical actors he studied were both class and race conscious, deploying their socio-economic and racial positionality when in public spaces.⁷⁸ Euro-American settlers in Texas in the 1850s, for instance, referred to themselves as “white folks” to draw clear racial lines between themselves and Mexicans.⁷⁹ Still, some Mexican-descent communities attempted to include themselves in the new social order by claiming whiteness.⁸⁰ Of course, for some Euro-Americans it was not the first time they had to encounter nonwhites and distinguish themselves by establishing racial categories. Some Euro-Americans in Texas descended from southerners and from the legacies of racial supremacy and terror.⁸¹

Euro-Americans also sought to institutionalize racism in the Southwest. In Texas, laws were created as early as the Texas Republic to institutionalize racial difference and white superiority.⁸² Camarillo states that, in Santa Barbara, “during the period from the late 1840s to the 1880s, Anglo racism was an oppressive social force.”⁸³ Laws, disenfranchisement, and economic displacement made that oppression a reality for Mexicans throughout the Southwest. After the U.S. takeover, legal and cultural citizenship became defined along racial lines, with whiteness identified as a superior

⁷⁸ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 6.

⁷⁹ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 29.

⁸⁰ John M. Nieto-Phillips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s–1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).

⁸¹ Foley, *White Scourge*, 2.

⁸² Foley, *White Scourge*, 19.

⁸³ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 107.

racial marker and as an implicit requirement for social, political, and even economic inclusion. All others who did not meet the requirement of whiteness were suspected of not being loyal and reliable citizens. This is evident by Euro-Americans' use of the term *Mexican*—often as a racial slur—to refer to both Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans.⁸⁴ Racial categories mattered more than place of birth when Euro-Americans decided who would be included or excluded from U.S. society.

Citizenship status and privileges defined individuals along racial lines with whiteness being a lure for acceptance. Therefore, Mexicans sometimes found ways to claim whiteness. Across the Southwest, some Mexicans argued that their Spanish heritage positioned them closer to Euro-Americans and whiteness and further from Indigenous and African populations. Mexican elites, with their socio-economic privilege in place, at times had an easier time making this argument than did working-class Mexicans.

Nonetheless, Euro-American attitudes toward Mexican populations continued to mark Mexicans as inferior. Racialization offers identifiable rhetoric that imposes attitudes and expectations on populations of color—this process includes creating racist narratives along economic, cultural, gendered, and sexualized lines. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Euro-Americans employed a rhetoric of “cleanliness” and “dirtiness” to mark and justify their “racial superiority” over Mexicans. They attributed dirtiness to Mexicans, for they believed Mexicans were unhygienic and immoral, while they assigned cleanliness and virtue to whiteness. These characteristics were used as justification for segregation. Dirtiness was also tied to Mexicans because of their labor, often manual and

⁸⁴ Foley, *White Scourge*, 8.

backbreaking. Because many labored as agricultural industrial workers, Mexican communities were considered dirty. The categories *dirty* and *clean* were also used to mark social mobility and make arguments for racial identity and subordination. Mexicans could claim whiteness by claiming their cleanliness, a quality that allowed them access to social privilege and white spaces such as segregated schools. Ultimately, *dirtiness* was a racial term meant to justify the imposition of segregation and racist policies and violence toward Mexicans.⁸⁵

Violence During Takeover

The power dynamic that resulted from Euro-American takeover of economic, political, and social structures was cemented through violence. Euro-Americans inflicted violence on the bodies of Indigenous and Mexican people to facilitate their removal from lands that the U.S. wanted to incorporate into their territories and their confinement in the margins of the U.S.-controlled Southwest.⁸⁶ Examples of this type of violence appear early in the timeline of Euro-American conquest of the Mexican North. After fighting and gaining Texas independence alongside Texas Mexicans, some Euro-Americans inflicted violence on Mexicans during the republic era. Resulting in their loss of land and life, the

⁸⁵ Foley, *The White Scourge*; Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*; Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

⁸⁶ See Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier 1600-1860* (1973; repr., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000); Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006); and Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

violence was also meant to hold Mexicans in Texas responsible for and to avenge the Texian defeats at Goliad and the Alamo during the Anglo American rebellion.⁸⁷ Following U.S. takeover, violence was also deployed to communicate and establish Euro-American racial superiority, claim Texas as American, remove Mexicans from coveted lands, and enforce racial codes that oppressed and marginalized them.⁸⁸ Euro-Americans invoked racial difference, as it was defined and redefined beginning in mid-nineteenth century, to inflict and justify this violence.

Although the conquest itself was a violent act and set in motion racial oppression in the region, there were also overt examples of violence after the takeover. In Santa Barbara, California, the Ku Klux Klan had a sustained presence that grew stronger in the 1920s, a decade when the racist organization robustly expanded across the United States. The newfound strength in the twentieth century was a result of the culmination of Euro-American takeover and control in the region. Evidence of the prevalence of racism and willingness to exercise violence to maintain racial hierarchy, the KKK in Santa Barbara included members from law enforcement, religious leadership, and elite and middle-class businessmen.⁸⁹ In other parts of the Southwest, the KKK was not present, but other organized racists also used violence to socially control Mexicans and maintain the racial hierarchy.⁹⁰ The Texas Rangers was one such organization—state sponsored—that was not an explicitly racist organization like the KKK but Rangers used their power,

⁸⁷ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 26, 30.

⁸⁸ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas* 31.

⁸⁹ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society* 193-195.

⁹⁰ Foley, *White Scourge*, 87.

influence, and violence to wreak fear and havoc on Mexican communities along the U.S.-Mexico border, while protecting Euro-Americans in the region with the goal of maintaining racial lines.⁹¹

Lynching of Mexican people, particularly in Texas, became the primary form of violent social control. In the politically and racially contested U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, lynching became a way to define cultural and legal citizenship. Lynching marked Mexican bodies as undesirable and disposable; Mexicans were an obstacle to social, economic, and political progress. Historian Nicholas Villanueva also asserts that the lynching of Mexicans in the Texas Borderlands was used to define and secure sovereignty over the region.⁹²

Securing and enforcing sovereignty over the West required that Anglo Americans define Indigenous and Mexican peoples as incompetent and subhuman and thus unworthy of securing and maintaining that sovereignty for themselves. Racial violence in California was used to discredit Mexican elites and establish Euro-American superiority. In these cases, newspapers encouraged vigilantism against marginalized populations and supported the erosion of Mexican political power.⁹³ Attempts to question Indigenous sovereignty was the continuation of the settler-colonial project begun on the East Coast during the seventeenth century and continued alongside the decentering and

⁹¹ Benjamin Heber Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁹² Nicholas Villanueva Jr., *The Lynching of Mexicans in the Texas Borderlands* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017).

⁹³ Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 18–19.

destabilization of stable Mexican communities.⁹⁴ Although the attack on Mexican peoples' sovereignty differed from the assaults on Indigenous populations, it had the same goal: to identify Indigenous and Mexican communities as enemies of the U.S. nation-state.

Furthermore, Mexicans were also identified as dangerous in their challenge to Euro-American superiority. Euro-Americans at times deployed violence to punish Mexicans who helped enslaved Africans escape or revolt—that is, those who challenged Euro-American superiority and their legalized racism.⁹⁵ Violence was also used to claim sovereignty over or control certain industries, particularly mining. In Southern Texas, Mexicans were violently removed from freight businesses that Euro-Americans sought to control.⁹⁶

Violence on Mexican communities targeted cultural beliefs and expression, and aimed to destroy or other the languages, religions, cultures, and history. Attempts were made to Americanize Mexicans in the West by encouraging or forcing them to accept American foods, culture, customs, religions, and the English language and requiring them to abandon Spanish and their cultural practices. Importantly, these efforts were commonly carried out through educational practices. These Americanization practices effectively marked Mexican cultural practices as non-American, making the racial

⁹⁴ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2014).

⁹⁵ Foley, *White Scourge*, 24-25.

⁹⁶ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 29.

categorization identifiable not only through phenotype but through culture and language as well.

Altogether, the violence that was an essential part of westward expansion defined Indigenous and Mexican peoples as undesirable; their otherness was identifiable on their bodies, through their culture, and by the geographic space they occupied.

Maintaining Social and Racial Difference

Racialization

In the mid- to late nineteenth century, the process of racialization intensified as the U.S. attempted to define its national identity.⁹⁷ Like other newly formed nation-states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the United States sought to define its national identity by imagining and defining its core racial and historical makeup—which it explicitly defined as white and Western European. Three historical changes intensified and became the sites in which racialization occurred at the turn of the century. The first was the influx of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Southern and Eastern Europe during the Great Century of Immigration. The second was the emancipation of enslaved Africans during and immediately after the Civil War. And the third was the acquisition of the U.S. Southwest. All of these historical processes forced the United

⁹⁷ Racialization of people of Mexican descent can be traced to the anti-Spanish tropes during the English and Spanish colonial periods in North America, as well as the anti-Indigenous violence carried out by both colonizing projects. This pattern also led to anti-Mexican sentiment before, during, and after U.S. takeover of the Mexican North. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

States, which already at this point was a Eurocentric, white-supremacist nation, to grapple with the inclusion of large numbers of nonwhite populations.

The racialization process in the U.S. Southwest mirrored the ways other non-Anglo peoples were racialized during the late nineteenth century. Social status, or lack thereof, was constructed through assigning value to phenotype, heritage, language, gender, and religion. This process was accompanied by the demonization of Mexican men, who were supposedly criminal and dangerous, and the assumption that both Mexican men and women were sexually dangerous to whites. This perception is a construct that continues to carry weight in the message of racialization in the twenty-first century.

Two major factors made the racialization of Mexicans different from that of other people of color. One was the definition of whiteness. Despite all attempts to define whiteness as strictly Anglo Saxon and Protestant, other Euro-Americans and nonwhite persons socially disrupted that definition with their attempts to gain access to the privileges of whiteness. Most notably, the Irish, Italian, and other European populations who were previously rendered nonwhite became incorporated into the definition of whiteness.⁹⁸ Of course, much of that was done through redefining whiteness but also by strictly enforcing nonwhiteness—in other words, these previously nonwhite populations enacted the same racist actions that were once directed at them. This redefining and

⁹⁸ Paula S. Rothenberg, *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* 5th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2015).

enforcement of whiteness and nonwhiteness opened the possibility for some Mexicans to claim whiteness.⁹⁹

The second factor was immigration from Mexico. The continued presence of African and Indigenous communities made it necessary for Euro-Americans to grapple with their position in the racial and social hierarchies. However, there was an assumption that once they were placed in the racial hierarchy, they would remain there and through generations be incorporated into U.S. society, albeit not at all fully. The proximity of the Mexican nation and the seemingly constant immigration of Mexicans to the U.S., on the other hand, gave the impression that the Mexican population in the United States could never complete the process of inclusion because there would always be a section of that community that needed to be assimilated and controlled for labor purposes. This reality also marked Mexican populations as perpetually immigrant, which factored into their racial definition. Mexicans, then, could rarely escape their racialized status due to their immigration or the constant perception that they were new arrivals and outsiders to the U.S.¹⁰⁰

Assimilation and Americanization

Although Euro-Americans considered Mexicans incapable of incorporation, that belief did not stop attempts to assimilate and Americanize them at the turn of the twentieth century. In fact, the development of the U.S. economy required the disciplining of

⁹⁹ Neil Foley, *White Scourge*.

¹⁰⁰ Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Mexican bodies and laborers. As the U.S. nation-state defined itself at the turn of the century, it sought to redefine its citizenry. Given the massive influx of immigrants following the Civil War, reformers and others launched concerted efforts to assimilate and Americanize those populations, including people of Mexican descent, that were considered too different from the Euro-American standard ever to fit in easily.

Because the racial category of Mexican-descent populations was identifiable through various factors including culture, language, and religion, assimilationist projects aimed at people of Mexican descent attempted to change these elements to fit American ideals. In particular, Mexican women became the targets of these efforts. The belief was that, if women adopted American culture and ideals, then they would reproduce those qualities in their children as well.¹⁰¹

Because the loyalty of Mexicans and Mexican Americans to the United States was considered suspect, and to ensure that these populations integrated American culture, language, and national values into their lives, their identity, history, and culture were to be replaced with the American normative. One of the most effective ways through which this program was accomplished was through institutions of learning. Mexican children were to be assimilated through Americanization projects in the schools. Education, thought by Progressives to be the road to fix societal ills at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was used as a national tool to assimilate Mexicans into American

¹⁰¹ George Sanchez, *Go After the Women: Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant Woman, 1915–1929* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Center for Chicano Research, Stanford University, 1984).

culture and identity, superior in the minds of policymakers, reformers, and others.¹⁰²

Schools purported to make assimilation efforts possible and successful. Some Mexican children gravitated toward American culture and often welcomed a new language, culture, and set of values. Others did not.

Both forced and voluntary assimilation granted some Mexican-descent populations the opportunity to incorporate themselves into mainstream American society. Many of the cities and neighborhoods they resided in, however, continued to welcome new immigrants from Mexico. Assimilation and immigration at times created a division between the residents of Mexican neighborhoods and assimilated or Americanized Mexicans, who distanced themselves and resented the new arrivals. On the other hand, immigration created a sense of community rooted in Mexican culture that was constant, inescapable, and challenging to the American culture they were adopting at the time. This contest between tradition and assimilation created a fragile foundation on which Mexicans' social position stood. Euro-Americans could easily dismantle the foundation and status if tensions between Mexicans and Anglos ever intensified.

Scapegoating and Deportations

The need for and treatment of Mexican laborers were fluid and interactive with the growth of the U.S. economy. In the early twentieth century, as agriculture in the Southwest expanded, the United States recruited Mexican nationals as laborers. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, however, white Americans saw them as a threat. The

¹⁰² Douglas Monroy, *Rebirth: Mexican Los Angeles from the Great Migration to the Great Depression* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 130-33.

economic strain caused by the Great Depression tested the limits of Mexican assimilation, integration, and acceptance into American society. By the late 1920s, many Mexican-descent communities had begun to assimilate. However, their position in the national narrative continued to be that of immigrants—alien, threatening, unpatriotic, untrustworthy. In the 1930s, with the U.S. economy in severe depression and with Mexicans working primarily as laborers, the argument was made to remove them from the labor sector and expel them from the country. This policy, it was argued by federal and state governments, would improve the employment opportunities of Euro-Americans and would fix the economy. A decade earlier during a recession, Mexican “repatriation” was used as an economic strategy and deemed successful. The white majority viewed Mexicans and Mexican Americans, then, as disposable labor that must be removed from the market to save the economy and open jobs during the Great Depression.¹⁰³

Repatriation, as the process of removal was termed, was a misnomer.¹⁰⁴ Because racial markers included language, culture, and phenotype, both recent Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans were scapegoated as a threat to the position of Euro-Americans in the economy. As a result, Mexican Americans born in the United States or

¹⁰³ Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁴ This was not, of course, the first time Mexicans were removed from the Southwest. However, there was also a precedent to Mexicans being incentivized to leave the Southwest. At the conclusion of the U.S.-Mexico War, the Mexican government provided land and funds for Mexicans who wanted to relocate to the Mexican north rather than live under U.S. rule. Martín González de la Vara, “The Return to Mexico: The Relocation of New Mexican Families to Chihuahua and the Confirmation of a Frontier Region, 1848–1854” in Erlinda Gonzalez-Berry and David Maciel, *The Contested Homeland: A Chicano History of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

with U.S. citizenship, were rounded up by the authorities and deported to Mexico along with recent immigrants.¹⁰⁵

This policy further proved to these communities that they could never remove the perpetual immigrant status, even with assimilation, and showed them the lengths to which the United States had racialized and classified them as second-class citizens unworthy of full civil rights and personal protections. Repatriation also signaled that whatever value they held in U.S. society was directly tied to their labor and could be discarded when they became deemed a threat, undesirable, and unnecessary. The disruption caused by deportations changed the way Mexican-descent populations viewed their position in society. The decades that would follow proved to be the most politically active for Mexican-descent populations in the United States. A range of political strategies were used, but all in the attempt to raise the social-economic and political position of Mexicans from that of second-class citizens.

World War II and Its Aftermath

After the rampant discrimination they suffered during the Great Depression, World War II (WWII) presented Mexican Americans with several opportunities to prove their loyalty and patriotism to the U.S. and emphatically earn their acceptance, at least in theory, into American society. Military service, long an avenue for immigrants to demonstrate their commitment to United States and earn their citizenship, became appealing to Mexican Americans as an avenue to gaining a better social position. The U.S. nation-state, conversely, propagandized the military's involvement in WWII as an effort to end

¹⁰⁵ Balderrama and Rodriguez, *A Decade of Betrayal*.

tyranny and bring democracy to the world, a message that appealed to many, including people of color, in the United States. The expectation, then, was that military service would afford Mexican Americans opportunities that would counter or eliminate the discriminatory practices the United States and the individual states had directed at them since 1848.¹⁰⁶

Ideas of freedom and inclusion also permeated the Mexican community at home during WWII. Some young Mexican American men and women were able to enter the wage-earning economy in industries that they did not traditionally have access to before.¹⁰⁷ This afforded them an discretionary income, which in turn allowed them to create a unique culture and engage in some consumerism. The Pachuco/a culture that emerged from that urban Mexican American youth culture—a Mexican American adoption and expansion of African American zoot suit culture—had both positive and negative consequences for the Mexican community.¹⁰⁸

On one hand, Pachuco/a culture challenged white Euro-American racialized expectation of Mexican communities. *Pachuquismo* disrupted the image of WWII-era American youth. Mexican Americans introduced a unique culture all their own, which

¹⁰⁶ For a comprehensive study of the different experiences of Mexican Americans during WWII, see Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, ed., *Mexican Americans and World War II* (Austin: University of Texas, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth R. Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

¹⁰⁸ Shane White, *Stylin': African-American Expressive Culture, from its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2018); Kathy Lee Peiss, *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

fused traditional Mexican cultural heritage and contemporary American culture. Pachuco/a culture also showcased the deep connection between Mexican American and African American communities in urban cities in the Southwest and elsewhere. Pachuca culture created a space for young Mexican American women to challenge traditional Mexican gender norms and American racialized gender expectations.¹⁰⁹ Pachuco/a culture gave young Mexican Americans a sense of pride in their shared Mexican and American cultures. This new attitude also had a positive effect on political activism both at the time and in generations to come.

On the other hand, Euro-Americans regarded Pachuquismo as an affront to American culture and the war effort. The zoot suits that Pachucos and Pachucas wore in their communities stylized large baggy pants and oversized coats as the centerpiece of their culture. At a time when the U.S. military's propaganda campaigns for support asked U.S. citizens to ration essential materials, Pachuco/a culture seemed to boast extravagance and flaunt noncompliance. Euro-American response to Pachuco/a culture ranged from exaggerated and racist claims that they were Mexican American gangs, to organized violence against Mexican American youth across the United States.¹¹⁰ The most notorious of these violent attacks was the so-called Zoot Suit Riots in Los Angeles

¹⁰⁹ Catherine S. Ramirez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 2009).

¹¹⁰ Eduardo Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

in June of 1943, although other violent episodes occurred in cities where there was a large presence of Mexican Americans and Pachucos/as.¹¹¹

Mexican Americans realized that the propagandized American fight for freedom did not apply to people of color within the United States. Returning Mexican American G.I.s—like other servicemen of color—also found that their military service did not reverse decades of racism in the Southwest. After the war, Mexican American women were swiftly pushed out of the industries they had dominated during the war years to make way for returning white servicemen and found that both white and Mexican men expected a return to prewar gender norms.

Conversely, some Mexican Americans were able to use the G.I. Bill to attend institutions of higher learning and earn academic degrees. Those graduates produced work that was later considered the first wave of Chicano scholarship. Mexican American G.I.s in Texas established one of the most recognizable Mexican American organizations of the mid-twentieth century—the American G.I. Forum.¹¹² In labor, Mexican Americans continued trying to access work that was previously denied to them and could potentially afford them upward social mobility. In large part, however, Mexican Americans still contended with the entrenched legacy of colonization and racism in the Southwest.

Consequences of U.S. Takeover and Racialization in Education

¹¹¹ Laura Cummings, *Pachucas and Pachucos in Tucson* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009).

¹¹² Henry A. J. Ramos, *The American G. I. Forum: In Pursuit of the Dream, 1948-1983* (Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 1998).

Like all other institutions, schools were transformed as a result of the U.S. takeover in the Mexican North. Before 1848, the institution most committed to providing education to Mexican children was the Catholic Church. After the U.S.-Mexico War, Euro-Americans introduced both Protestant and secular schooling to the U.S. Southwest. In the late nineteenth century, religious, private, and public institutions established more Catholic, Protestant, and secular schools for Mexican children for different purposes. Religious groups hoped to use these schools to convert the U.S. Southwest population to their religion, while still providing useful academic instruction. Public schools were also established, but local officials were more concerned with providing schooling to white children.¹¹³

The legacy of American schooling in the U.S. Southwest is one of discrimination against Mexican-descent communities. As early as the late nineteenth century, the public schools established for Mexican children in the region were segregated and of lesser quality than the schools for white children. Furthermore, as schools passed from Mexican and Catholic control to Protestant and Euro-American control, Mexican culture and Spanish-language were removed from school curricula. Catholic schools were the most respectful of Mexican culture, maintaining culture in the curriculum. Some public schools, while under local control continued to include Spanish-language and Mexican cultural instruction after 1848. Eventually, however, both public schools and Protestant schools turned to a more Euro-centric curriculum and educational structure.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood."

¹¹⁴ San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood."

At the turn of the century, schools became the sites for the Americanization efforts that were the focus of public officials and religious leaders, particularly in the South and U.S. Southwest. In the Southwest, these leaders identified Mexican culture, Spanish language, and Catholic religion as socially “backward” and a threat to American hegemony. Through local and state policies, encouraged by anti-Mexican social attitudes, schools institutionalized an English-only and Euro-centric instructional model.¹¹⁵ This process was part of the larger process of U.S. takeover in the region. Similar to the expulsion of Mexican-descent populations from certain cities, labor sectors, and political participation, the elimination of Mexican culture and Spanish language from schools marked Mexican people as second-class citizens. While schools failed to eliminate Mexican culture and Spanish language from the U.S. Southwest completely, the institutionalization of racist policies had a long-lasting effect on the quality of education that Mexican-descent communities would receive.

Segregation became the norm and Americanization was the priority for schools in the U.S. Southwest. In this context, schools failed to provide adequate academic instruction to Mexican children. The academic “failure” reflected in school standardized assessments was blamed on Mexican students and their culture—they were racially and innately inferior to white students and American culture. This racist view in turn further justified segregationist and inequitable educational practices. Although Mexican children had access to public education, institutionalized racism in schools made it difficult for them to use education as an avenue into higher education or for upward social mobility.

¹¹⁵ San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood.”

Still, Mexican-descent communities recognized the potential for education to provide these opportunities and sought to transform schools into institutions that could do just that. Influenced by the political, social, and cultural developments in the Mexican/Chicanx community during the twentieth century, activists addressed the lack of quality education as part of the larger struggle for better treatment, equality, and civil and human rights.

Resistance

Alongside the legacy of colonization and racism practiced by Euro-Americans in the Southwest, Mexican and Mexican-descent populations established a robust tradition of resistance to that oppression. Resistance to U.S. takeover of their homeland came in different forms. Not all resistance attempted or was successful in challenging or dismantling Euro-American power. Yet, all resistance had the shared goal of addressing the needs, concerns, fears, anger, and suffering of the Mexican community. Three forms of resistance dominated these efforts: rebellion, reform, and social movements.

Rebellion

Rebellions were those instances of violence that categorized the Mexican response to Euro-American takeover during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in parts of the Southwest. Robert Rosenbaum categorizes two different types of resistance in this era: social banditry and community upheavals.¹¹⁶ Often called bandits, rebels burned structures, cut fences, stole cattle, and otherwise disrupted the society Euro-Americans

¹¹⁶ Rosenbaum, *Mexicano Resistance*, p. 53

were attempting to establish at the turn of the century. The bandits aroused the ire of Euro-Americans and their institutions and won the admiration of the Mexican community.

Social bandits in the late nineteenth century sought to resist the Anglo invasion encroachment in the Southwest by acting as a defense force against Euro-Americans. While not organized as a militia or other recognized defense force, people such as Tiburcio Vasquez and Joaquin Murrieta in California became emblematic of Mexican pushback to the U.S. takeover. But this resistance went beyond a couple of men. So-called leaders relied on social networks and places to retreat to when they were pursued by U.S. authorities. In fact, the name Joaquin became a popular moniker for social bandits at the time even before Joaquin Murrieta was popular, signifying a prevalence of banditry in the region. Resistance was also mythical and symbolic. Both Vasquez and Murrieta took on a mythlike persona while they were alive and became even more legendary after their death. Men like them resisted Euro-American takeover consciously and strategically. Unsurprisingly, the bandits attacked the symbols of Euro-American takeover such as barbed wire fencing that surrounded the common lands from which Mexican communities had drawn their daily necessities for decades before the U.S. invasion and conquest.¹¹⁷

Mexicans in the Southwest also fought several “wars” of rebellion. Usually caused by a singular issue or incident, these wars resulted in the large-scale attack on

¹¹⁷ Covadonga Lamar Prieto, “Los Bandidos y La Identidad California en la Segunda Mitad del XIX: Tiburcio Vasquez,” *Revista de Indias* 76, no. 267 (2016): 509–541; Ireneo Paz, *Life and Adventures of the Celebrated Bandit Joaquin Murrieta: His Exploits in the State of California* (Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 2001); Humberto Garza, *Joaquin Murrieta: A Quest for Justice* (San Jose, Calif.: Chusma House, 2001).

both Mexican and Euro-American communities. In Texas in 1859, the Cortina war—named after wealthy landowner Juan Nepomuceno Cortina—included attacks on both Mexican and Euro-American ranchos. Cortina, who reportedly defended a former servant from a beating at the hands of a local town marshal and began the war, gathered an army of nearly six hundred men and appealed to the anger of local residents who had lost their lands during Anglo takeover.¹¹⁸ The “Salt War” of 1877 in Texas was caused by Euro-American attempts to take over profitable resources, in this case salt deposits, and remove Mexicans from the area. Their efforts resulted in a conflict between the two communities.

Social banditry and armed resistance to Euro-American encroachment and later dominance led to more violence and discrimination toward Mexicans, as Euro-Americans used them as examples of insubordination and as reasons to further racialize and marginalize the Mexican population. On the other hand, the resistance mounted by Mexicans after 1848 inspired their communities and made the names of those involved legendary. The name Joaquin, for instance, resurged during the Chicana/o Movement with Corky Gonzalez’s famous poem “I Am Joaquin.”

Community upheavals were often more organized than individual or small-scale banditry, pulling together resources and wide support. Historian Juan Gomez-Quiñones

¹¹⁸ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 32-33. A full-length study of Juan N. Cortina is Jerry D. Thompson, *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007). Durwood Ball discusses the origins of Cortina War and the U.S. Army’s suppression of the Cortinistas in *Army Regulars on the Western Frontier, 1848-1861* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), chap. 6.

identifies an additional form of rebellion: clandestine organizations.¹¹⁹ These instances were sometimes called conspiracies or plots, and it is doubtful that they were really what Euro-Americans made them out to be. All these groups, however, were unsuccessful in stopping U.S. takeover in the Southwest and the Euro-American establishment of a society that made Mexicans second-class citizens.

While Mexican resistance continued in other forms throughout the twentieth century, the rebellions, such as Las Gorras Blancas in New Mexico, begun in the late nineteenth century receded as the twentieth century advanced. By the 1930s, the most popular form of resisting Euro-American dominance became reform.

Reform

Instead of attempting to disrupt society, reformist resistance organizations aimed to accommodate and incorporate the Mexican community into the established U.S. mainstream. While not a direct challenge to the status quo, reformers, like the rebels before them, aimed to address the oppression Mexicans daily faced in the Southwest. This era also produced more stable and long-lasting organizations with sustained presence and influence in the community. For the most part, however, while this era allowed some Mexican Americans to gain some access to better resources and social positions, most Mexicans in the Southwest remained socially, politically, economically, and culturally marginalized throughout the region.

¹¹⁹ For more, see Juan Gomez-Quiñones, *Roots of Chicano Politics, 1600-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994).

American politics during the middle of the twentieth century was characterized by a powerful wave of conservatism in general and antiradical sentiment—even intolerance—specifically. This suspicion and intolerance were often directed at people of color and others fighting for social and racial justice. This hostile conservative environment made it impossible for some of the reform-oriented political organizations popular during the first two decades of the twentieth century nearly to conduct their missions in the post–World War II era, particularly as the Cold War spawned virulent anticommunism in American society and politics. Mexican American activists, then, turned to more centrist and assimilationist politics to carry forward their reform agendas. The goal was still to improve the social, political, and economic position of Mexicans and Mexican-descent people in the Southwest, but the strategies used by this generation of activists played into the expectations of the general American politics at the time.

Reformist efforts varied by region but were persistent. George J. Sanchez refers to the midcentury generation of activists as the Mexican American Generation (MAG).¹²⁰ Politicized by the dichotomy of the U.S. fight for freedom in Europe during WWII and its racist treatment of people of color at home and influenced by the decades of African American political and social struggle, MAG sought to open avenues to or gain inclusion in American society and politics. Organizations such as the American G.I. Forum (AGIF) were formed to fight racial discrimination politics, employment, housing, and especially education in the Southwest.¹²¹ Notably, MAG organizations strategically aimed to reform institutions in which Mexicans had been traditionally rejected, including schools.

¹²⁰ George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

¹²¹ Ramos, *The American G. I. Forum*.

One of the most recognized successes of MAG was the desegregation of schools across the Southwest. Desegregation campaigns had the double effect of affording children a better education and communicating to Anglo Americans that Mexicans belonged in U.S. society. Across Texas, New Mexico, and California, desegregation cases became the avenue for arguing for and securing full citizenship rights for Mexicans in the Southwest. Some of the most famous of these cases in California were *Alvarez v. Board of Trustees* in 1931 (Lemon Grove, California) and *Mendez v. Westminster* (Orange County, California) in 1946. *Alvarez* resulted in the first state-desegregation court decision and *Mendez* first successfully challenged the constitutionality of segregated schools and became a groundbreaking and an essential precedent to *Brown v. Board of Education*.¹²² The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)—the most recognizable and influential of the MAG organizations—was instrumental in *Mendez v. Westminster* and other desegregation cases in the Southwest. Unlike the next generation who would highlight Mexicans’ Indigenous heritage, MAG argued for inclusion Mexicans on the basis of their Spanish European heritage. LULAC successfully argued to have Mexicans classified as “white” in the U.S. census.¹²³ Overall, MAG’s successes laid the foundation for the next generation to take the struggle for equal rights and equitable education a step or two further.

¹²² Richard R. Valencia, “The Mexican American Struggle for Equal Educational Opportunity in *Mendez v. Westminster*: Helping to Pave the Way for *Brown v. Board of Education*,” *Teachers College Record* 107, no. 3 (March 2005): 389–423.

¹²³ Benjamin Marquez, *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

Social Movements

In the 1960s and 1970s, Chicanas and Chicanos formed a social movement that attempted to revolutionize the way they created their identity and approached their incorporation into American society. By utilizing direct-action strategies, embracing radical politics influenced by early-twentieth-century activists and mid-twentieth-century revolutions in Latin America, and continuing the work of reformist activists a generation before them, Chicana/o Movement activists built a unique revolutionary movement distinct from others before them but with similar goals and ideals. This generation of activists, scholars, intellectuals, philosophers, and artists achieved the most transformative change experienced in the community during the twentieth century. Education became a major site of resistance and reformist politics.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Mexicans in the U.S. Southwest had been resisting the marginalization and oppression caused by U.S. takeover. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, that resistance took on a new form in the Chicana/o Movement (CCM). CCM activists were inspired by previous Mexican American political organizing and concurrent international and transnational social movements and revolutions. Still, CCM was unique in its strategies, rhetoric, and goals.¹²⁴ While MAG was categorized by its “respectability politics”¹²⁵ and its argument for inclusivity based on approximation to whiteness, CCM highlighted Indigeneity, used it to create a new cultural national

¹²⁴ Juan Gomez-Quiñones and Irene Vásquez, *Making Aztlan: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014).

¹²⁵ Respectability politics refers to the political engagement or activism that follows normative and acceptable modes, strategies, and spaces.

identity, and deployed direct-action strategies. Additionally, CCM aimed to radically transform or create new culturally grounded versions of institutions that MAG activists for the most part sought to reform.

CCM's most recognizable organizations included the United Farm Workers Union (UFW), the Crusade for Justice (Crusade), La Alianza de Mercedes (Alianza), and La Raza Unida Party (LRUP). In addition, student organizations such as M.E.Ch.A. in universities exemplified the constant and impactful contributions of youth. Together, these organizations formed a movement that worked to gain a better economic, political, and social position for Chicanas/os. A key component to the CCM was activists' emphasis on self-determination. This concept produced community protection organizations such as the Brown Berets in California and the Black Berets in New Mexico. CCM activists also created grassroots political organizations, clinics, art collectives—and importantly for this project—schools, theater groups, and independent newspapers. Together, the efforts of CCM activists revolutionized the way people of Mexican descent politically and culturally expressed their individual and community identities and goals, and successfully opened new spaces, most notably in higher education.

Alternative Education

Throughout the twentieth century, educational activists sought to combat the oppression of Mexican-descent communities in schools. Notably, generations of activists addressed the racism in schools that resulted in the segregation and marginalization of

Mexican-descent children. In that pursuit, activists made use of various strategies, including policy reform, participation in electoral politics, court suits, and community-based activism. During CCM, activists also attempted to create curricular and pedagogical models that were an alternative to the Euro-centric content and approaches found in normative public schools. Rooted in Chicana and Mesoamerican Indigenous cultures, histories, and philosophies, CCM activists attempted to reintroduce the culture that was eliminated from southwestern schools at the turn of the twentieth century. Additionally, they sought to create a new discipline, Chicana/o Studies, that would make the historical, community, and cultural knowledge of Mexican-descent communities legitimate and long-lasting in education. These efforts were most successful in institutions of higher education, yet activists never lost sight of the necessity of transformation of K–12 schools.

While educational activists reformed and transformed existing institutions of education, they also made attempts to create institutions of their own. These were also a form of resistance to the Euro-centric and racist practices of many schools in the U.S. Southwest. Working outside established institutions of learning enabled innovative and grassroots spaces for education to emerge.

This project highlights three spaces that Chicana educational activists used to educate their communities in the U.S. Southwest states of New Mexico, California, and Texas during the twentieth century. The activists at the center of this study used independent newspapers, Chicano Theater, and independent Chicano colleges to put into practice alternative educational projects. In the case of the newspapers in New Mexico and Chicano Theater in California, those activists used mediums that were not explicitly

meant for education. However, by developing curricular and pedagogical models rooted in historical, community, and cultural knowledge, they transformed those mediums into educational tools wielded to battle racism, marginalization, exclusion, and injustice in U.S politics, society, and culture and to secure full citizenship, inclusion, equity, and justice for Mexican-descent people. The independent Chicano college Colegio Jacinto Treviño (Merced, Texas) likewise exemplified a commitment to educating the community, particularly when the people believed that established institutions of learning did not serve the community adequately.

The two New Mexico newspapers that I study in this dissertation, *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, New Mexico) and *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, New Mexico) published educational materials between 1923–1931. The editors of these newspapers were involved in educational activism in other forms and used their publications to educate their local readership. To do this, they published recurring columns, titled *Lectura Selecta para El Hogar* in *El Defensor* and *Lectura Amena* in *La Estrella*. In these columns they published articles from different literary genres and sourced from various places, including Europe, Latin America, and New Mexico.

The Chicano theater troupes *Teatro Campesino* (Delano, California) and *Teatro de las Chicanas* (San Diego, California) were a part of the ongoing political and artistic movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were also, however, sites for educational activism. The participants of these two theater groups wrote, produced, and performed plays that broadcast educational messages. Additionally, they created an educational space for the participants themselves, helping advance the intellectual and cultural knowledge of theater members.

The activists, intellectuals, and community members that established Colegio Jacinto Treviño, an independent Chicano college in Merced, Texas, had a collective goal of creating a school that looked and functioned unlike any other institution of higher learning. The activists behind Colegio Jacinto Treviño attempted to create a school that developed Chicax educational models; educated the Mexican community at all ages; trained activists, teachers, and intellectuals that contributed to the Chicax community across the Southwest; and imagined a network of Chicano colleges that would bring this type of alternative and autonomous education to all Mexican-descent communities in the United States.

Together these three examples of alternative educational projects are a part of the broader history of educational activism that Chicax communities engaged in during the twentieth century to combat their historical oppression in all institutions but especially in schools.

Chapter 2

“La Educacion Salvara A Nuestros Pueblos”: Newspapers as Alternative Educational Spaces in 1930s New Mexico

In the early twentieth century, Mexican-descent populations engaged in different strategies to combat their political, social, and economic oppression in the U.S. Southwest. The consequences of westward expansion created the racialized social order that facilitated that oppression in the political process, justice system, and social institutions, particularly within schools. One of the ways that Mexican-descent communities attempted to resist that oppression was through the creation of their own institutions, including labor and political organizations, mutual aid groups, and community-based alternatives to the ones that already existed. The organizations of this era, such as the Primer Congreso Mexicanista (1911) in Texas, and activists, such as Jovita Idar and Emma Tenayuca, were rooted in Mexican cultural and political identity with deep roots in the historical past. Community and culturally relevant educational models emerged alongside labor and political organizers. The impetus for more community or local control over those institutions arose from the disillusionment over liberal models of education that upheld assimilationist modes of thinking.

Importantly, activists at the turn of and through the mid-twentieth century sought to challenge the U.S. notion that Mexican-descent people were second-class citizens. Through social mobility and a call for modernity—at times meaning assimilation—early-twentieth-century activists aimed to address the inequalities Mexican-descent communities faced in their daily lives. Education was of particular importance. As

historian Gabriela González explains, these activists “saw education and class mobility as mechanisms to combat racial discrimination.”¹²⁶ At its best, educating the community provided an avenue for individual and collective intellectual, economic, and political advancement. However, at times, education was used by educated middle-class Mexicans and Mexican Americans to deride and attempt to reform working-class people, their cultural traditions, and their community knowledge

As the century unwound, Mexican-descent mainstream organizing focused increasingly on assimilation and Latin American identity. The most notable of these mainstream organizations was the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) founded in 1929.¹²⁷ The educational activism that these organizations engaged in typically involved the reform of established institutions of learning. The campaigns to desegregate public schools, in particular, generated lasting benefits for Mexican-descent children. As early as 1910 in Texas, Mexican communities organized to combat segregation in schools.¹²⁸ Desegregation of schools is also part of the longer lineage of educational activism that later included the struggle for equitable education and the establishment of Chicana/o Studies (CCS) during the Chicana/o Movement (CCM) of the

¹²⁶ Gabriela González, *Redeeming La Raza: Transborder Modernity, Race, Respectability, and Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7.

¹²⁷ For more on LULAC and its contributions to early-twentieth-century Mexican American political activism, see Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

¹²⁸ Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. and Richard R. Valencia, “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest,” *Harvard Educational Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 306.

1960s and 1970s. Additionally, some tried to set up schools in the community, with varying levels of success and longevity.

A major component of the transformative and equitable education that CCM educational activists established in the 1960s and 1970s was the gathering and application of community and cultural knowledge. In earlier educational efforts, bilingual education, art and craft production, and positive cultural affirmation were core and energizing elements in Mexican American communities. Later, organized educational programs such as Chicana/o Studies particularly emphasized the incorporation of community-informed and -controlled educational approaches that encompassed multiple sources of knowledge centering the histories of U.S.-based Mexican-descent and Mesoamerican Indigenous communities. An alternative to the Euro-centric curricula and pedagogy of more traditional disciplines in the liberal arts and social sciences, CCS attempted to create a field of study that rectified the educational oppression, marginalization, and dismissal that Mexican-descent communities had experienced throughout the twentieth century. This educational approach championed the inclusion of culturally relevant knowledge, community-oriented praxis, and social transformation. Moreover, Chicana and Chicano Studies and Ethnic Studies advocates proposed educational systems that drew on students' community culture and cultivated political consciousness. Later, their efforts would influence Critical Race Theory in Education (CRTE) scholars who theorized about and discussed the impact of culturally relevant education on students of color—so long

ignored and underserved by mainstream educational institutions at K–12 and university levels.¹²⁹

I argue that, in the early twentieth century, Mexican-descent people practiced a type of educational activism that preceded notions of culturally relevant education advanced by the CCM. This chapter demonstrates how two New Mexico newspapers, *El Defensor del Pueblo* published in Socorro from 1904-1950 and *La Estrella* issued in Las Cruces from 1910-1931, curated and published culturally relevant materials for the educational benefit of their Spanish-speaking Mexican-descent readership between in the years between 1923–1931. These two newspapers provided this type of education at a time when public and Catholic schools were more likely to teach a Euro-centric curriculum.

With the U.S. conquest of the current U.S. Southwest came the transformation of education and schools. This change included the removal of Mexican, Spanish-language, and Catholic instruction from the schools. In its place, U.S. schools introduced English-language instruction and Eurocentric curricula. The histories, language, and culture of Mexican-descent populations in New Mexico and the Southwest were systematically excluded from schools during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹³⁰ In this

¹²⁹ Gloria Ladson-Billings, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 465-91.

¹³⁰ San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood;” Lynn Marie Getz, *Schools of their Own: The Education of Hispano in New Mexico, 1850–1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); Philis M. Barragan-Goetz, *Reading, Writing, and Revolution: Escuelitas and the Emergence of a Mexican American Identity in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020); Victoria-María MacDonald, *Latino Education in the United States: A Narrative History from 1513–2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Rubén Donato and Jarrod Hanson, *The*

context, the newspapers served as alternative spaces in which community instructors could provide an education that resonated with Hispano, Mexican-descent, and Spanish-speaking audiences. In this way, these newspapers were a part of the larger movement for equitable education in the twentieth century.

These independent newspapers, often run by educators or educational activists working in other areas, such as political and labor reform, published educational materials with an identifiable curriculum and pedagogy that were an alternative to the ones practiced in dominant U.S. schools at the time. Upon examination of the educational materials these newspapers published, particular themes and objectives become apparent. The CRTE framework of culturally relevant education is a useful tool with which to analyze these educational materials and categorize the themes. Culturally relevant education is defined by Ladson-Billings as having three main objectives: (1) it prioritizes the academic success of students; (2) it affirms cultural identity; and (3) it provides a socio-political context of oppression to the students.¹³¹ The educational materials found in the newspapers fit these three objectives. *El Defensor del Pueblo* and *La Estrella* published recurring columns that are the focus of my analysis. These columns, titled *Lectura Selecta Para El Hogar* (Select Reading for the Home) in *El Defensor* and *Lectura Amena* (Pleasant Reading) in *La Estrella*, were the primary outlet for culturally relevant

Other American Dilemma: Schools, Mexicans, and the Nature of Jim Crow, 1912–1953 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021).

¹³¹ Ladson-Billings, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy;” Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings, eds. *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Adrienne D. Dixson and Celia K. Rousseau, eds., *Critical Race Theory in Education: All God’s Children Got a Song* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

educational materials in these newspapers. However, the newspapers regularly published articles and editorials and publicized events that centered the discussion about equitable education for Mexican-descent communities. These discussions demonstrate that the newspapers were dedicated to the improvement of their communities through education and learning. The editors, publishers, and writers engaged a larger history of educational activism that included but went beyond the publishing of newspapers.

El Defensor del Pueblo was published in Socorro, New Mexico, by the brothers Anastasio “A.C.” Torres and Meliton Torres. A.C. served as editor of the newspaper and Meliton as its administrator. Both brothers had a history of educational activism in the Hispano community outside their work for *El Defensor*. In 1906, an advertisement in *El Defensor* publicized the sale of educational materials through a bookstore A.C. owned in Socorro.¹³² In 1914, A.C. was member of the Sociedad Educacional Fraternal (Fraternal Educational Society) in Socorro, which hosted community forums about the significance of education in the community.¹³³ And in 1924, A.C. gave a speech for the end-of-the-year celebration for a local school titled “Una propaganda en educacion para el elemento hispano-americano” (Propaganda in Education for the Hispanic-American Element)—presumably a talk about the necessity for the community to be educated. The article publicizing the event highlighted A.C.’s speech to the readers, stating, “El número que recomendamos mas altamente por ser de mas interés educacional en este programa es el

¹³² “De Venta en la Libreria y Oficina de A.C. Torres,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 30 March 1906, 2.

¹³³ “Programa De La Sociedad Educacional Fraternal,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 9 January 1914, 1.

del Sr. A.C. Torres.”¹³⁴ Meliton, on the other hand, was involved in Democratic electoral politics on behalf of his community.¹³⁵

It is no surprise, then, that A.C. and Meliton Torres used their newspaper as an educational tool for their local Socorro community. In *El Defensor*, the Torres brothers published educational materials that constituted a culturally relevant curriculum. The scope and sophistication of the recurring column *Lectura Selecta Para El Hogar* reveal the emphasis the publishers of *El Defensor* put on the academic and intellectual success of their readers. The Spanish-language content and the fact that the materials were sourced from Spanish-speaking, Latin American, and, importantly, New Mexican authors showed the Torres brothers’ commitment to using community knowledge that highlighted and promoted their readerships’ culture. By doing this, *El Defensor*, like other New Mexico newspapers at the time, kept some of these traditions alive by printing work that had previously existed and circulated in oral traditions.¹³⁶ Finally, *Lectura Selecta* provided the audience a socio-political context by publishing readings that included a class analysis.

¹³⁴ The number we highly recommend because it is of most educational interest is that of Mr. A.C. Torres. “Tres Dias de Grande Celebraciones en las Escuelas Publicas de la Joya, N.M.,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 25 April 1924, 2.

¹³⁵ “Convencion Democrata Del Condado De Socorro,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 16 May 1924, 1; and “Delegados Del Condado De Socorro Que Atendieron A La Convencion de Estado” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 19 September 1924, 4.

¹³⁶ A. Gabriel Melendez, *Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico, 1834–1958* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005); Doris Meyer, *Speaking for Themselves: Neomexicano Cultural Identity and the Spanish-language Press, 1880–1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

La Estrella likewise provided an education that was culturally relevant and rooted in the Mexican American politics of the time. Published by Isodoro Armijo, with the help of other local publishers in Las Cruces, New Mexico, *La Estrella* (1910–1931) was also part of the larger educational history and activism of its founder. Armijo had previously been a schoolteacher in New Mexico. He had also traveled to other states in the Southwest and published other newspapers. His commitment to Hispano history and culture is best exemplified by his service to the New Mexico Constitutional Convention in 1910, where he is credited with introducing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo into the state’s constitution. This accomplishment would bring him recognition and admiration from the Hispano community in New Mexico.¹³⁷ Armijo’s use of *La Estrella* as an educational tool is apparent by his use of sections such as “Editoriales” (Editorials) and “Pensamientos” (Thoughts), in which the editor wrote directly to the audience, often to talk about the importance of education in the community.

Other articles published in the newspaper also spoke to the audience about the power of education. On 11 May 1912, *La Estrella* published an article titled “La Educación Salvará á Nuestros Pueblos” (Education Will Save Our Communities), written by Maximiliano Aviles. In the text, Aviles talked about the importance of education for the community and for all social classes. With education in a society or community, Aviles declared, equity and democracy were possible.¹³⁸ Liberalism offered the ideological context for educational reform efforts during this period. Reminiscent of

¹³⁷ Melendez, *Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico*. See N. Mex. Constit. Art. II, sec. 5 (Bill of Rights, Rights under Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo Preserved).

¹³⁸ Maximiliano Aviles, “La Educación Salvará á Nuestro Pueblos,” *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM) 11 May 1912, 1.

Torres's "Propaganda," the article was not part of the *Lectura Amena* column. It stands as an example of the newspaper's emphasis on education.

Lectura Amena, however, was *La Estrella*'s dedicated space for educational readings and also featured a culturally relevant curriculum. The *Lectura Amena* readings showed a sophistication and scope similar to *El Defensor*'s *Lectura Selecta* but with a different application. *Lectura Amena* also included a variety of literary materials all published in Spanish and sourced primarily from Spanish-speaking, Latin American, and local authors. Unique to *Lectura Amena*, however, was its publication of materials translated from other languages into Spanish, most notably, a handful of readings translated from Russian and French. The work necessary to create this collection of readings, including the translation of some works, demonstrated *La Estrella*'s and Armijo's commitment to the academic learning among and intellectual advancement of the readers, primarily people of Mexican descent. *Lectura Amena* also connected culturally with the audience. Like *La Estrella* as a whole, *Lectura Amena* often published religious or religious-themed readings. Through religion, the newspaper reflected the interests and tastes of its Hispano audience and published discussions on politics, morality, class, and gender. Culture, then, was the setting in which educational discussions could occur in the newspaper. Finally, like "Lectura Selecta" the readings in *Lectura Amena* also expressed or demonstrated a class consciousness. Across all the different topics, subjects, literary styles, and translations, one theme remained a constant—the contest between working-class protagonists and elite-class antagonists. In the majority of the readings, the elite-class characters were morally corrupt or otherwise

villainous. Conversely, the stories end with the working-class characters as the smarter, funnier, savvier, or wiser, often to the embarrassment of their elite antagonists.¹³⁹

At different times in its forty-six-year run, *El Defensor* dedicated part of page three of its weekly publication to the recurring educational column. Not consistently published, at times the column carried different titles. In the 1910s, the column was titled “Seccion Literaria” (Literary Section) with an accompanying column titled “Seccion Humoristica” (Humorous Section) dedicated to humorous readings. Later, in the 1930s the title “Seccion Literaria” reappeared in the paper but without “Seccion Humoristica” as a partner column. Between 1923–1926, the column was titled “Lectura Selecta Para El Hogar,” and sometimes featured a subcolumn with jokes. This period, 1923–1926, is the focus of this chapter. During this period, the column included readings from a variety of literary genres and with different educational messages and themes. Furthermore, during this four-year period the column first expanded to the point that it at times covered most of page three and at one point included up to seven different readings in one weekly column. Then, the column shrank to offer only one long reading a week. At the beginning of 1926, a new column titled “Seccion Para El Bienestar del Niño: Cuidados de Las Madres Para Asegurar la Salud de Sus Hijos” appeared next to *Lectura Selecta* and eventually became the main focus of page three.¹⁴⁰ While “Seccion Para El Bienestar del

¹³⁹ Although the stories printed in *La Estrella* were meant for a Mexican-descent/Hispanic audience, the stories often did not take place in a specific geo-political space. By not identifying the elites in the stories with any local place or regional context, the paper allowed for the use of textual imagery to demonstrate the contending forces—the elite and working-class characters—in any geopolitical and historical space.

¹⁴⁰ “Section for the Wellbeing of the Child: Mother’s Care to Ensure the Health of their Children;” This section first appeared on page three of *El Defensor del Pueblo* on 29 January 1926.

Niño” did not replace “Lectura Selecta,” it constituted a change in focus by the editors, from a column meant for a general adult audience to one meant specifically for mothers and the care of their children.

Similar to *El Defensor* and other independent newspapers of that era, *La Estrella* served several purposes beyond news reporting. The newspaper regularly published local community and town updates, advertising for local businesses, art reviews, editorials and—importantly for this study—educational materials such as poetry, literature, religious-themed texts, and other educational readings. *La Estrella* often ran articles on the importance of education; updated its readership on the establishment, development, and progress of local schools; and encouraged its audience to value education in their families and in their community.¹⁴¹

From 1929-1931, however, the newspaper’s efforts materialized in a more deliberate and consistent educational endeavor. In that three-year span, the editors of *La Estrella* curated a cultural and literary column titled *Lectura Amena*, a regular educational engagement with its readership. While *La Estrella* regularly published literary works such as short stories, poetry, fables, and prose both before 1929 and after 1931, it did not consistently publish it under the same title or commonly include it on the same page every issue, as it did between 1929 and 1931. *Lectura Amena* had a continuous educational value during that three-year period.

¹⁴¹ Examples of these are Miguel Moran “MAESTRO,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 29 February 1924; and “Diversos Temas: UN MAESTRO” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 14 March 1924. Both of these readings praised the work of teachers as a way to talk about the positive impact of education on the community.

The content in *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena* suggests that the editors understood the potential for the newspapers to act as a medium for education. Like teachers in the classroom, the editors curated historical information, literary work, poetry, religious-themed stories, and other materials in what can be understood as a curriculum.¹⁴² Pedagogically, teachers in a classroom prepare and present educational materials to deliver them in a pattern that students can anticipate, thus aiding the students' comprehension and retainment of the information. The consistency of the columns between 1923–1926 and 1929–1931, along with the fact that they were often published in the same page (page 3 for *El Defensor* and page 2 for *La Estrella*), can be understood as the pedagogy of the newspapers. That is, the editors made sure the columns carried the same name, regardless of the content's theme, which often varied from issue to issue, and made it easily accessible to their audience by printing it on the same page issue after issue. The repetition and consistency suggest that the editors aimed to make the columns a reliable part of their audience's reading of the newspaper and to give them educational value.

El Defensor del Pueblo and *La Estrella*, like other Mexican and Mexican American organizations, employed strategies to resist attacks on their culture and traditions, particularly the attempts to eliminate them from schools. Americanization

¹⁴² The editors of *El Defensor del Pueblo* often curated their column to include a collection of readings with varying topics and genres in a single issue. For examples see, *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 7 September 1923; 29 February 1924; 18 December 1925. The editors of *La Estrella* curated their column to include familiar themes and authors, as in the case of Eusebio Blanco, who is featured several times. Additionally, *La Estrella* also included some historical readings that are not part of this chapter's analysis. For example, see, "Historico," *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 10 January 1931.

efforts in the 1920s emphasized whiteness, Europeanness, Protestantism, and American exceptionalism while concurrently attempting to eliminate other cultural, religious, linguistic, and national traditions—including those practiced by Mexican communities.¹⁴³ This campaign, coinciding with the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan across the country, led some Mexican communities to adopt U.S. national and American societal norms while maintaining their cultural traditions. Others aligned their communities' identities to closely resemble that of the national narrative, claiming whiteness and emphasizing Europeanness, especially western European roots, in order to gain social, economic, and cultural capital. Still others opposed and resisted the campaigns to eliminate their Mexican heritage by emphasizing their traditions and practices over those of American or European cultures. All three were strategies of survival in a country that did not value their cultural, economic, and political contributions to society and, at specific points, sought to purge them. Commonly, however, Mexican communities subscribed to varying strategies.

Lectura Selecta's and Lectura Amena's curriculum reflected all these strategies. At times the editors of *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* cited and quoted European literary figures, commonly Spanish essayists, poets, and journalists, suggesting that they considered them more relevant or culturally resonant with their audience in Socorro, Las Cruces, and other parts of New Mexico. At other times, the editors prioritized more localized and community-sourced materials. These selections included Latin American

¹⁴³ San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood"; and John Nieto-Phillips, "Spanish American Ethnic Identity and New Mexico's Statehood Struggle," in *The Contested Homeland: A Chicano History of New Mexico*, ed. Erlinda Gonzalez-Berry and David R. Maciel (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), chap. 6.

and local New Mexican literature and printed oral storytelling traditions like *decimas*, a traditional Mexican and New Mexican form of poetry. A similar nuance is present in the religious-themed articles frequently found in *Lectura Amena*. Those articles were often Christian-themed, with references to tenets of the religion and its moral philosophy, or quotations from the Bible. These religious-themed texts did not make references to Catholicism specifically, thus suggesting that they were nondenominational or possibly Protestant and that editors sought to avoid sectarianism in and to reach the broadest possible audience in the community. However, most of the noncanonical and original religious-themed literature published within *Lectura Amena* featured working-class and culturally Mexican characters. These articles, then, displayed both an American influenced, non-Catholic emphasis on religion, and a culturally relevant appeal to Mexican communities.¹⁴⁴

Complexity and Variety of Readings

In application, the first tenet of a culturally relevant education is that it seeks to enhance the academic advancement of students. In this case, the students were *El Defensor del Pueblo*'s and *Las Estrella*'s readers in communities of Mexican descent. Indeed, these two newspapers were dedicated to the intellectual advancement and enlightenment of their readership. They regularly published a sophisticated collection of materials from which the audience could learn by reading the columns one time or week after week.

¹⁴⁴ For examples of this material, see “La Bondad” *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 3 May 1930; and “El Egoismo” *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 11 April 1931.

A major part of the educational sophistication of *Lectura Selecta Para El Hogar* was its inclusion of a variety of readings. Often, a single issue included in the column a religious reading paired with a reading about science or one with general life advice. *Lectura Selecta*, then, served a double function. First, in each issue *Lectura Selecta* could provide a collection of educational readings on different topics so that a casual reader might benefit from that variety. The most commonly recurring themes between 1923-1926 were item about nature, religion, moral advice, and health. Second, over the months and years of the column's existence, the themes of the column remained consistent so that avid readers of the newspaper could come to expect content that built on their education from previous features. The literary genre used to deliver these themes also varied from issue to issue and included informational articles, poetry, prose, original short stories, and humorous writings. At times, the column included writings quoted from known writers or other publications. Other times, the readings were written by local New Mexico writers. Two recurring subjects in the column—nature and history—demonstrate how articles could provide multiple lessons and serve to advance the knowledge of the readers of *El Defensor*.

Some of the nature readings were descriptive essays and focused specifically on animals, while others were poems or fables that used animals as imagery and symbols. Among the descriptive type were those such as “Un Mamífero Raro” (A Rare Mammal) published on 5 October 1923.¹⁴⁵ The article described in great detail a takin recently acquired by a British zoo, saying it was one of the rarest mammals in the world and detailing the scientific name, species, and other zoological information about the

¹⁴⁵ “Un Mamífero Raro,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 5 October 1923, 3.

animal.¹⁴⁶ Another example of this type of article was “La Astucia de la Zorra” (The Cunning of the Fox), which quoted a professional with knowledge about foxes and similarly detailed zoological and behavioral information about the animal.¹⁴⁷ Included in these pieces were also facts about the origins of the animal, and the commercial use of its fur.

Other nature articles focused on horticulture, with similar descriptions of the different qualities of plants. Two examples of this are the articles titled “Los Injertos Y El Perfume de las Plantas” (Plant Grafts and Perfumes) and “El Eucalipto Y Las Abejas” (The Eucalyptus and the Bees) published in 1923 and 1924 respectively.¹⁴⁸ Both articles referenced scientific and technological methods used to grow and harvest plants. They both also covered topics similar to those about animals, including botanical descriptions of the plants, their application in everyday life, and their industrial use.

There is an inherent complexity in the readings about nature, particularly the ones about plants. More than articles meant to provide anecdotal or factual information on their subject, the readings make efforts to relate information that could be useful in everyday life. Additionally, the articles include scientific and technological vocabulary and make sure to translate language for the nonspecialist. Finally, the nature articles also discuss the commercial use of plants and animals, giving readers the opportunity to monetize or commodify the information if they wish.

¹⁴⁶ A takin is a large goatlike mammal native to the Himalayan region.

¹⁴⁷ “La Astucia de la Zorra,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 23 October 1923, 3.

¹⁴⁸ “Los Injertos y El Perfume de las Plantas,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 5 October 1923, 3; and “El Eucalipto y Las Abejas,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 21 March 1924, 3.

In addition to readings on nature, *Lectura Selecta* featured readings on history. One article titled “Orígen De Los Hombres Notables” (The Origin of Notable Men) lists powerful men in history who had humble beginnings.¹⁴⁹ Notable mentions included Abraham Lincoln, Napoleon Bonaparte, William Shakespeare, and Thomas Edison. Importantly, the list also included men such as Simón Bolívar and Miguel de Cervantes who could have been more recognizable to the Spanish-language reading audience. This column is also an example of the use of familiar cultural knowledge to educate. Beyond its historical and educational contribution, this reading was also meant to be inspirational. The article ends with the quotation, “Work, honor, and constancy can defeat anything.”¹⁵⁰ The message, then, is that if these recognizable men from humble origins could achieve great accomplishments, with hard work anyone could do the same—a message of encouragement for individual and collective progress.

A historical reading like “Origen De Los Hombres Notables” was written to both inspire and inform the reader. While the information about the men included in the reading was helpful, the educational value also came from the historical context it provides. The purpose of the reading was to reveal the humble working-class origins of men whom most readers would recognize. And if the readers did not recognize the names, they would be educated on the subject as well. Ultimately, the article conveyed a sense that upward social mobility was possible for working-class people who educated themselves and daily sought to achieve an aim they set for themselves, their family, and

¹⁴⁹ “Orígen de los Hombres Notables,” *El Defensor del Pueblo* (Socorro, NM), 14 March 1924, 3.

¹⁵⁰ “El trabajo, la honradez y la constancia lo vencen todo.”

community. This message resonated with the goals of Mexican-descent organizations at the time.

The inclusion of the nature and historical readings in *Lectura Selecta* reveals the intricacy of the column's educational intention. While these readings or the information they contain could have easily fit in another section of the newspaper, such as a current event or editorial section for instance, they were instead included in *Lectura Selecta* for the benefit of providing educational materials to the reader. In other words, *Lectura Selecta* was the designated space for educational readings like these. The selections curated in *Lectura Selecta* were purposely varied, complex, informational, and guiding. Regular and casual readers could learn several lessons from one column that included different types of reading or from one reading that had several purposes.

The articles featured in *La Estrella's* recurring column, *Lectura Amena*, were also complex and varied in genre and literary styles. This material included poetry, short stories, prose, analytical articles, religious readings, and readings taken from textbooks. Part of the intellectual advancement the column provided for its readers was through this variety of genre. Another part came from the range of cultural and geographic sources from which the readings were drawn.

The editors sourced European literature from Spanish, French, and Russian writers. One such writer, Eusebio Blasco (1844-1903), was featured three times between 1929-1931. Blasco was a Spanish essayist, poet, and playwright. Blasco had two stories published in "*Lectura Amena*," "*La Capa del Tonto*" and "*Los Dos Burros*."¹⁵¹ In "*Los*

¹⁵¹ Eusebio Blasco, "*La Capa del Tonto*," *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 1 March 1930, 1; and Eusebio Blasco, "*Los Dos Burros*," *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 2 August 1930, 1.

Dos Burros” the main character is named “el Arguella,” which is a regional dialectic version of arguellido (someone who is malnourished, skinny, and dirty). *Arguella* is a regional dialectic version that comes specifically from the comarca de Requena-Utiel from the province of Valencia in Spain.¹⁵² In “La Capa del Tonto,” the main characters are men who work for an elite landowner, including the titular “Tonto.” In both stories, the language spoken by all of the workers is written phonetically, while the landowners’ language is written grammatically. Including readings that featured regional dialects, as in this case, made the column more complex. Readers were exposed to different subjects, genres, and cultures.¹⁵³

Lectura Amena also included literature that was not originally in Spanish which helped diversify the type of educational materials published in the column. These readings were different than the ones written by Spanish authors. They featured different cultures and unique stories and themes. Two examples are the stories written by Adolphe Ribaux, a French Swiss author, and Ivan Turgenev, a Russian novelist and poet. Ribaux’s story, “Los Ladrones de Nápoles” (The Thieves of Naples), is one of the rare inclusions in Lectura Amena that features a morally corrupt main character who, in this story, cons a jeweler and a baker—two working-class characters.¹⁵⁴ Turgenev’s story, “El Mendigo,” (The Beggar) is also rare, in that it features a man who has a higher social class

¹⁵² Feliciano Antonio Yvez Descalzo, *Diccionario del Lenguaje Historico y del Habla Popular de la Comarca Requena-Utiel*, 2nd ed (2008).

¹⁵³ These readings also demonstrate that language serves a social status marker. More information on the class analysis that these readings provide is included later in this chapter.

¹⁵⁴ Adolfo Ribaux (Adolphe Ribaux), “Los Ladrones de Nápoles,” *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 22 February 1930, 1.

than the other but is not the antagonist or morally corrupt. Turgenev's story is about a man that meets a beggar and has nothing to give him except a handshake. The beggar thanks the man for the gesture, saying it is also charity. The main character reflects and concludes that he also learned something from "that brother of mine."¹⁵⁵ In both cases, the editors of *La Estrella* clearly sought to include readings in *Lectura Amena* that were different from the usual. In this way, they curated a column that was sophisticated and complex. The educational value and ability for intellectual advancement of the readership came from this complexity. *Lectura Amena* had a connecting moral message—to be a humble and moral person—and the contrast of the plots in Ribaux's and Turgenev's stories sent the same message.

Lectura Amena also included materials written by educators, including the Mexican writer Maria Enriqueta Camarillo de Pereyra, credited in *La Estrella* as Maria Enriqueta. Enriqueta's inclusion in *Lectura Amena* is particularly significant. Of all the writers included in the column she was the only one we know was an educator. Investment in women's education had previously been debated in the time leading to and after the Independence period. Enriqueta wrote in several genres including poetry, short story, and journalism. Most notably, however, she was commissioned to write a six-volume textbook titled *Rosas de la Infancia: Lectura Para los Niños*, originally published in 1910. The textbook was used in Mexican elementary schools under Secretary of Public

¹⁵⁵ Ivan Turgeneff (Ivan Turgenev), "El Mendigo," *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 8 November 1930, 1.

Education José Vasconcelos between 1910-1930.¹⁵⁶ One of Enriqueta's stories featured in *Lectura Amena*, "La Tortuga Sabia," was extracted from *Rosas de la Infancia*.¹⁵⁷ "La Tortuga Sabia" is significant for two reasons: first, the fact that the editors of *La Estrella* included in *Lectura Amena* readings that undeniably had educational purpose; and second, that, unlike most of the readings featured in the column, "La Tortuga Sabia" was clearly meant for children. While other readings had general themes that could be understood by both adults and children, Enriqueta's writing featured animal characters and easily understandable language and messages. The editors of *La Estrella* must have been aware of this when they decided to include her readings in *Lectura Amena*. Another of Enriqueta's writings appeared in *Lectura Amena* as "Para los Niños: La Nieve Y El Hielo."¹⁵⁸ It is unclear, however, whether the "Para los Niños" part of the title was added by the editors of *La Estrella* or was part of Enriqueta's original title for the article. Nonetheless, the educational value of the article is apparent. The inclusion of Enriqueta's articles suggest that the editors of *La Estrella* saw the value of educating both adults and children, beyond reporting the daily or weekly news, in a column of its newspaper.

Regular subscribers of the newspapers, by reading the columns, could encounter a multitude of written materials sourced from different origins, week after week. As a collection of articles, then, the ones published in *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena* had

¹⁵⁶ Elvia Montes de Oca Nava, "Libros Escolares Mexicanos a Principios del Siglo XX: *Rosas de la Infancia, Serie S.E.P. y Semiente*," *La Colmena* 76 (October-December, 2012): 49-60.

¹⁵⁷ Maria Enriqueta, "La Tortuga Sabia," *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 18 October 1930, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Maria Enriqueta, "Para Los Niños: La Nieve y El Hielo," *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 21 March 1931, 1.

educational value to those reading the column. Readers could be intellectually engaged by the complexity of the language, unfamiliar setting, or moral message embedded in newspaper articles. The educational value of the column came from the consistency with which they provided that engagement to its readership through an accessible medium like a newspaper. The complexity and variety of the readings kept the column interesting, consistent, and fresh. In this way, *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena* displayed an educational sophistication more commonly found in schools. Committed to the intellectual advancement of their readers, the newspapers provided for them a culturally relevant education in more than one way.

Cultural Relevancy

The readings included in *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena* also had a cultural relevancy, which made the educational materials more accessible to a New Mexican/Mexican, working-class, and Spanish-speaking audience. To be sure, some of the information, themes, genres, and messages of the educational materials featured in *Lectura Selecta* at times mirrored the materials found in schools. However, at the time of *El Defensor del Pueblo*'s and *La Estrella*'s publishing—the early and mid-twentieth century—U.S. schools did not prioritize cultural or class knowledge like that found in the columns' readings. Furthermore, the mainstream rhetoric of Mexican American organizations like the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) employed both Mexican and American cultural traditions but at the time began to emphasize the

latter as part of their assimilationist politics.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the educational readings in *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena* employed a New Mexican/Mexican cultural relevancy that both U.S. schools and mainstream Mexican American organizations often did not. As grassroots publications, *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* reflected the needs and concerns of their community through the readings they included in their educational columns. In addition to providing information that was beneficial to readers, the readings referenced community knowledge that resonated with the audience.

One reading that exemplified *El Defensor*'s commitment to the working-class community and to cultural relevance in New Mexico was the piece titled "La Guerra Mundial: Cancion, en tono de LA ADELITA," published in 1925.¹⁶⁰ This reading was written by local Socorro, New Mexico, resident Juan Rivera. The readings in *Lectura Selecta* did not always include a byline. However, whenever the author was a local New Mexico writer, he or she was credited with full name and place of residence—in this case Socorro. Rivera's inclusion in the newspaper showed *El Defensor*'s commitment to the community it served and to culturally relevant readings.

Rivera, a World War I veteran, expressed both his admiration for the U.S. involvement in the war and his dissatisfaction that soldiers did not receive the benefits they were promised when they entered military service. Rivera explicitly mentions class and ethnic differences as the reasons why soldiers did not receive these benefits. While he first talks at length about the positives of the U.S.'s involvement in the war and does

¹⁵⁹ Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (University of Texas Press, 2009).

¹⁶⁰ Juan Rivera, "La Guerra Mundial: Cancion, en tono de La Adelita," *El Defensor del Pueblo (Socorro, NM)*, 16 January 1925, 3.

not mention class or ethnicity, when he begins his critique of the military and the U.S. he notes he is speaking as a “Hispano-Americano” soldier. This is a major component of the class analysis the piece provides, which will be covered in greater detail in the “class analysis” section later in this chapter.

There is an additional cultural component, however, to Rivera’s piece that makes it relevant to *El Defensor*’s audience. The lyrics that Rivera wrote were meant to be sung to the tune of “La Adelita,” a Mexican Revolution-era corrido. The subtitle to the printed article read “Cancion, en el tono de “LA ADELITA” and the rhyming scheme is meant to fit that of a corrido, as exemplified by the first stanza: “Aqui comienzo esta historia en cancion; en recuerdo de la Guerra Europea; que esta fué una Revolución; sorprendiendo a cada una aldea”¹⁶¹

A historically Mexican folk-music genre, *corridos* (ballads) are traditionally written to tell community oral histories. “La Adelita” was written to tell the story of the women who fought during the Mexican Revolution, and a tale that readers of *El Defensor* would find familiar. Rivera employs a community musical genre instead of a literary one to tell his story and provide his analysis. Mexican communities living in the U.S. Southwest Borderlands would have been familiar with *corridos* as a medium for community commentary on socio-political concerns.¹⁶² By including it in *Lectura Selecta*

¹⁶¹ Here I begin this history in song; A memory of the European War; this was a Revolution; surprising every village. Rivera, “La Guerra Mundial,” *El Defensor del Pueblo (Socorro, NM)*, 16 January 1925, 3.

¹⁶² See Americo Paredes, *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958); Martha I. Chew Sanchez, *Corridos in Migrant Memory* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); John Holmes McDowell, Patricia Glushko, and Carlos Fernández, *Corrido: The Living Ballad of Mexico’s Western Coast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015).

the editors of *El Defensor* are likewise making use of Rivera's locally produced community knowledge to educate the audience.

Furthermore, the inclusion of a Mexican/New Mexican musical tradition, like the inclusion of written iterations of oral poetry and storytelling in other issues, legitimized community knowledge as educational and valuable. As Melendez notes, newspapers served as sites in which New Mexicans could keep oral traditions alive in print. However, more than keeping traditions alive, the use of traditional musical genres to provide new perspectives legitimizes music as a source and medium for production of relevant knowledge.

The articles featured in *Lectura Amena* also culturally appealed to a New Mexican audience in different ways. Although *La Estrella* regularly published English-language articles and at times had a consistent English-language section, all the articles published under *Lectura Amena* were in Spanish. There was no equivalent of *Lectura Amena* for the English section. Additionally, for the most part, the characters were culturally New Mexican, Mexican, or Latin American, referencing common sayings and cultural norms, including those about gender, family, and community. At times, the articles were written by local authors or featured local New Mexican storytelling traditions. Finally, many of the articles were culturally relevant in that they talked about religion or religion-themed messages or characters.

A religious story featured in *Lectura Amena* was written by local New Mexico writer Laura de Pereda. The article, "El Huesped," was an original religious story. It had a similar purpose to other religious stories but had a more cultural relevance. The main characters are a poor field worker, Juan, and his wife, Rebeca, who cannot afford to feed

themselves and their young child due to the poor harvest season. While eating dinner, they each want to give up their plate so that their spouse and the son can eat even though they are hungry and feel faint. At that moment a traveler knocks on their door and asks for shelter and food. Rebeca and Juan give up their food so they can feed the traveler. When their son starts to cry, their visitor is able to console him and get him to sleep. Juan and Rebeca also feel better after talking with the visitor. In the morning, as he leaves and walks through their fields, he makes the crops grow tall and strong, making the harvest season better and restoring the family's hope.¹⁶³ In this story, the centrality of communalism is featured through the act of giving up to others what is scarce. This aspect of cultural embodiment is a form of affirming and reflecting social values significant to the community.

The educational investment made the editors of *La Estrella* to make their column culturally relevant went beyond putting together a set of readings for their audience. In both Ribaux's and Turgenev's cases (the French-Swiss and Russian authors mentioned above), their literary work does not seem to have been translated to Spanish or English by 1930, when they were featured in *Lectura Amena*. This suggests that the editors of *La Estrella* knew enough French and Russian to translate the stories into Spanish. Additionally, the editors' translations made the stories accessible to their readership while maintaining enough of the original story to keep its uniqueness. For instance, in Ribaux's story the baker's name is Caretti, an obvious Italian name, but the baker's assistant is named Juan, which is not common in Italian but is very common in Spanish. However, the translation kept the currency used by the characters as *liras*, the currency used in Italy

¹⁶³ Laura de Pereda, "El Huesped," *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 12 July 1930, 1.

at the time, instead of dollars or pesos better known to the readers. Finally, in both cases the author's names were changed to more Spanish sounding names. Adolphe Ribaux was credited as "Adolfo Ribaux" while Ivan Turgenev was credited as "Ivan Turgeneff."¹⁶⁴

In both these cases, the editors of *La Estrella* performed the roles of teachers in the classroom. They found readings that were relevant to their audiences but from sources not commonly featured in *Lectura Amena*. They curated these readings by translating them from their original languages into Spanish. Those translations included edits that made the stories more accessible to the readership. To those reading these stories, the educational value would be found in engaging with readings from authors they likely were not familiar with. Some of the specifics left from the original story would have been new to some, giving them the opportunity to learn about other cultures. The characters, however, would have been familiar to them because they were similar to the characters commonly featured in *Lectura Amena* and because they reflected their own socio-economic status and experience. Ribaux's and Turgenev's stories, then, fit the educational model of *Lectura Amena* and also added something unique to the column. Altogether, the curriculum of *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena* served as a challenge to U.S. epistemological, curricular, and pedagogical standards. By featuring complex literature that often appealed to the cultural, religious, local knowledge and traditions, and class status of the newspaper audience, *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* created their own community-based epistemology and culturally relevant curriculum. Additionally, the inclusion of culturally relevant educational material in a newspaper like *El Defensor* and

¹⁶⁴ Ribaux, "Los Ladrones de Nápoles;" and Turgenev, "El Mendigo."

La Estrella—independent, community based and engaged publications—made learning more accessible to Spanish-language readers.

Class Analysis

The articles featured in *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena* also had a third element: a class analysis. This analysis ranged from subtle nods to the working class, as in the consistent positioning of the working-class character as the hero, to more explicit critique of the elite, as we will see with Rivera’s song in this next section. By printing articles that included this analysis, *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* provided their audience with an education that both resonated with their lived experience and contextualized their political and social status in the U.S. Southwest.

A prime example of class relevancy is seen in the article titled “Historia Anecdótica,” published on 9 May 1924 in *El Defensor*. The article also implicitly discussed the importance of education. The narrative focused on the interrelated story of elite-class and working-class characters’ access to education in the country of Colombia. As the story goes, the president of Colombia, Mr. Caro, asks the president of a school to allow his son to enter the university. Despite the fact that Caro’s son did not meet the requirements for admission, Dr. Carrasquilla, the school president, admitted the son. A week later, a working-class man asked the same favor of Dr. Carrasquilla, which the school president denied. The working-class man’s response was to ask, “Are we not in a republic? Are we not all equal?” and to question why Caro’s son had been admitted and not his own.¹⁶⁵ Dr. Carrasquilla answered: “for the same reason that Mr. Caro receives

¹⁶⁵ “Entonces el peticionario alegó en su favor lo hecho anteriormente y dijo que si no estabamos en una República, que si acaso todos no eramos iguales, que por qué se la

nightly parades and you do not.”¹⁶⁶ Notions of liberalism could be used to question the lack of equal opportunities available to working-class Mexican communities.

The article’s title gives insight into the purpose of the story. “Historia Anecdótica” translates to “anecdotal history,” meaning the story may not be true. However, this means that the message the story is sending is more significant than its factual validity. The story is about the unequal treatment that the working-class man received in comparison to the treatment president Caro received. Although the author of the article does not directly side with one character or the other, the working-class man is the one in better standing in the narrative. The author assures the reader that Dr. Carrasquilla accepted Caro’s son into the school because Caro represented not only the state, but he was a patron of the school. On the other hand, the working-class man, although unnamed in the story, is described as “a good man from Sesquilé.”¹⁶⁷ The author is sympathetic to the protagonist, making the story relevant to a working-class audience like the readership of *El Defensor*.

Rivera’s song “La Guerra Mundial,” which, as discussed above, had culturally relevant elements, also communicated a working-class analysis and critique of the elite. The lyrics in Rivera’s “La Guerra Mundial” talk about his experiences in World War I. He writes at length about the speed and effectiveness of the German armies and the response from the U.S. war effort beginning in 1917. Rivera also expresses his belief that

había concedido al Sr. Caro lo que a él se le negaba;” “Historia Anecdótica,” *El Defensor del Pueblo (Socorro, NM)*, 9 May 1924, 3.

¹⁶⁶ “Por la misma razón que al Sr. Caro le llevan retreta todas las noches y a usted no”; “Historia Anecdótica,” *El Defensor del Pueblo (Socorro, NM)*, 9 May 1924, 3.

¹⁶⁷ “Historia Anecdótica.”

most soldiers fought in the war because they believed they were protecting their communities and preventing the powerful German military from invading the U.S. However, he also points out that they were drafted into military service and that he considered the process a bit hasty. So, while he considers the U.S. involvement in the war and his own experience in the military as generally positive, his critique comes from his experience as a veteran, Hispanic-American, and working-class person.

In the second half of the text, Rivera dives into his critique of the treatment of *Hispano-Americano* soldiers. First, he asserts the patriotism of *Hispano-Americano* military men. Rivera declares:

“Los Soldados Hispano-Americanos
combatieron con mucho valor
siendo ellos fieles Ciudadanos
portaban su Bandera tri-color”¹⁶⁸
(The Hispanic-American Soldiers
fought with much valor
they being loyal Citizens
they bore their tri-color Flag)

With this stanza, Rivera commemorates the participation of Hispanic American soldiers and also asserts their loyalty to the U.S. It was common for people of Mexican descent to assert their citizenship and patriotism in this time period when U.S. society called it into question. Due to the racial and social power dynamics as a consequence of westward expansion and the xenophobia against Mexican-descent populations in the Southwest as a

¹⁶⁸ Rivera, “La Guerra Mundial.” Translation by author.

result of the Mexican Revolution, Mexican-descent people had to prove their loyalty to the country. Military service was one way that they could do that. Rivera's statement, then, is a reflection of the identity and political rhetoric Mexican American people utilized at the time.

Rivera's stanza on Hispanic American soldiers also serves the purpose of giving him credibility as a speaker. By bringing up his participation in WWI, he claims his right to critique the U.S. government and elite, who, he argues, reneged on promises made to soldiers. That stanza, then, prefaces his following stanzas in which he elaborates his critique. They read as follows:

Aqui comienzo hacer reminiscencia
de la Guerra que fuimos a pelear
nos prometieron a darnos preferencia
cuando regresaramos a nuestro hogar
Los Caballeros de la alta Autocracia
echaban espiches en toda ciudad
decian que iban a darnos preferencia
cuando regresaramos con la libertad
A largo tiempo de duro combate
miles de soldados dieron sus vidas
con la palabra 'preferencia' en la mente
a los q' regresamos nos dieron mentiras
Los Amigos politicos de oficinas
de condado, naci3n o ciudad,

no nos deján chanzas ningunas
con dicer que no tenemos edad
Pero nadie dejó la oficina para tomar destino de soldado
porque sabian que al ir a la pelea
era un trabajo bastante pesado”¹⁶⁹
(Now I start to reminisce
about the War we went to fight
they promised us preference
when we returned home
The Gentlemen of the high Autocracy
gave speeches in every city
they said they would give us preference
when we returned with liberty
After a long time of difficult combat
thousands of soldiers gave their lives
with the word ‘preference’ on their minds
they lied to those of us who returned
The political Friends in office
in county, nation or city
do not give us any chance
by saying that we are not of age
But nobody left office

¹⁶⁹ Rivera, “La Guerra Mundial.” Translation by author.

to take on the fate of a soldier
because they knew that going to fight
was a quite heavy job)

In these stanzas, Rivera is clear about what he considers was a lie told to him and other soldiers who fought in WWI, and specifically who lied to them. The “Gentlemen of the high Autocracy” who made them promises before the war and the “political Friends in office” who prevent them from reaching those promises are to blame. Speaking as a working-class person, Rivera identifies the elite and powerful as the ones responsible for lying to soldiers and abandoning the promises made to them. He also comments on the consequences of those lies when he states that “thousands of soldiers” gave their lives believing they would be rewarded when they returned home. While we cannot be sure of Rivera’s meaning with the word “preference,” enough context is given to understand that what Rivera believes soldiers were promised was an opportunity for a better life and upward mobility.

Rivera also presents an analysis critical of the privileges of higher class and a critique of those who maintain power. By pointing out that those same politicians who are renegeing on the promises did not leave their positions to fight, he is acknowledging his understanding that their socio-political power exempted them from joining the military. Conversely, working-class people had to go fight, under the promises of social advancement, and received nothing. The racial dynamics of the treatment Rivera describes cannot be underscored. While he does not provide a critique based on race, his focus when talking about the treatment of soldiers is on Hispanic-American soldiers. Rivera expresses a nuanced opinion regarding Mexican American social position in the

U.S., military service, and class. He at once asserts Hispanic American citizenship in the U.S., commemorates Hispanic American contributions to the war effort, and critiques the treatment of those servicemen by the U.S. state and American elites.

The readings in *Lectura Amena* like those in *Lectura Selecta* also had a class relevancy. The editors of *La Estrella* also published in *Lectura Amena* literature sourced from authors, who in contrast to the others included in the column, uniquely stood out. One such author was Fabio Fiallo, a Dominican writer whose short story “El Beso” (The Kiss) from his publication *Cuentos Frágiles*, (Fragile Stories) was published in the column in 1930.¹⁷⁰ Fiallo’s inclusion stands out for being one of two Latin American authors featured in the two-year span of *Lectura Amena*, and for his politics. *La Estrella* sometimes printed its political opinions, which for the most part were centrist—supporting the Democratic party (the reform party in New Mexico) and encouraging their readership to vote locally and federally. Fiallo’s political career was much different. Fiallo actively resisted the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic in the early twentieth century, and was several times imprisoned for his anti-imperialist and revolutionary activism. Other authors featured in *Lectura Amena* were politically the opposite to Fiallo. Most, however, including Fiallo, were journalists. This helps to explain why the editors of *La Estrella* might have been familiar with them and why they included their writings in *Lectura Amena*, despite their differing political views.

Eusebio Blasco’s stories are characteristic of the working-class relevancy found in the *Lectura Amena* readings. Both stories included passages where the main characters interact with a member of the elite. In both cases, the working-class character comes out

¹⁷⁰ Fabio Fiallo, “El Beso,” *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 10 May 1930, 1.

in better standing in a humorous interaction with the elite-class character. For example, in “Los Dos Burros,” in which the main character is looking for his two donkeys, a neighboring blacksmith suggests they are at the mayor’s house, which is later revealed as a jab at the mayor’s two sons.¹⁷¹ In “La Capa del Tonto,” the titular working-class character “Tonto” is gifted a new coat by his boss when his current one is too torn and old. In an attempt to humiliate Tonto, the boss asks some of his other workers to steal the new coat from him. They do so seemingly successfully, taking Tonto’s coat as he’s walking home. In exchange for the coat, the workers allow Tonto to safely enter his home. Tonto has the last laugh when he reveals he has given the workers the old coat and says: “Ahi van dos cuaderñas pa que compris hilo y la remendís, porque la capa que m’habis robao es la vieja”¹⁷²

When Tonto makes a fool of the workers, and subsequently the boss, by being savvier than they are and not allowing his coat to be stolen, he becomes the hero of the story.¹⁷³ In both stories, although the narrative seems to be headed in one direction, Blasco does not miss the opportunity to leave the elite-class characters in bad standing and give the working-class characters the upper hand.

Fabio Fiallo’s story also had these class-relevant elements. The antagonist in “El Beso” is a wealthy man, and the main character (eventually the hero) is a poet. His story, it should be noted, is also highly problematic and sexist. In the story, the wealthy man

¹⁷¹ Blasco, “Los Dos Burros.”

¹⁷² “Here is some money so you can buy thread and fix it, because the coat you have stolen from me is the old one”

¹⁷³ Blasco, “La Capa del Tonto.”

bets the poet that he owns a ruby redder than the lips of the poet's lover. The wager they agree on is the woman, who has no say in the matter, and, because the poet loses, is set to be given away to the wealthy man. The "heroism" comes when the poet cannot hand over his lover, kisses her instead, and embarrasses and defeats the wealthy man.¹⁷⁴ Like other *Lectura Amena* stories, Fiallo's tale -was meant to be relevant to the working-class readership in its depiction of the "hero" poet and antagonist wealthy man. Still, the woman in the story has no agency, and the men make all of the decisions about her and objectify her. The story falls into the educational model of *Lectura Amena* for its similarities to the other stories and for its contribution of a Latin American authored entry, but it also is socially and culturally problematic by today's standards. Whether the editors considered this before printing the story is unknown. Given the common gender norms among men at the time, the gender dynamics, which disadvantaged and oppressed women, likely did not trouble them. The fact that they printed the story suggests this as well. Like other independent newspapers at the time and activists, educational or otherwise, the editors of *La Estrella* maintained progressive views in some areas but not others, which is evident in some of the materials they printed.

Conclusion

Between 1923–1926 and 1929–1931, respectively, *El Defensor del Pueblo* and *La Estrella* were committed to the education of their communities. The columns *Lectura Selecta Para El Hogar* and *Lectura Amena* made education more accessible to the readership. For adults, who constitute the majority of the newspaper readership, culturally

¹⁷⁴ Fiallo, "El Beso."

relevant education can make education more inclusive of their culture and validate their experiences, thereby making education more accessible.¹⁷⁵ The educational purpose of the columns for the readership of *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* between 1923–1926 and 1929–1931 was the product of the work that the editors dedicated to the columns. They curated a collection of readings that, as a sample of educational materials with similar themes and variety of subject matter and genre, constituted a culturally relevant curriculum. In this way, they performed the work not of newspapers editors but of educators. Consistently providing these readings under a familiar title and in the same page week after week fit the category and method of pedagogy. As the different iterations of the column throughout *El Defensor*'s and *La Estrella*'s publication history show, the editors committed themselves to this work of educators beyond the parameters of this analysis. However, examining material published during the period between 1923–1931 demonstrates the educational sophistication of *El Defensor* and *La Estrella*, the impact of their culturally relevant content, the work the editors performed to bring it to fruition, and the possibilities and limitations of a column of this kind.

Through *Lectura Selecta* and *Lectura Amena*, these newspapers provided a course of educational readings—instructing the audience and building on familiar themes and messages week after week, demonstrating their goal for intellectual advancement. In addition, both newspapers engaged Spanish-speaking, Latin American, and New Mexico culture. They published readings sourced from that culture and used it to educate the communities of Socorro and Las Cruces. Tapping and running educational sources from

¹⁷⁵ Talmadge C. Guy, “Culture as Context for Adult Education: The Need for Culturally Relevant Adult Education,” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 82 (1999): 5–18.

the cultural knowledge of the community were essential to these newspapers for the education of the Hispano communities they served. Finally, both newspapers appealed to the class status of the readership and used the columns to provide a political education by way of a class critique of the elites. *El Defensor del Pueblo* and *La Estrella*, then, provided an alternative education—alternative because it was delivered through a nontraditional medium like newspapers but also because it was different from the education that U.S. schools provided.

Spanish-language readings on nature, history, culture, and religion had a particular resonance with a community that had seen its culture and language stripped from public schools and ridiculed as backward, vulgar, and uncivilized. The Torres brothers, Armijo, and their colleagues went to great lengths and used their own personal knowledge to create educational columns provided their community what the people needed, culturally relevant education.

Readings such as Rivera's song found a space to be shared in an independent newspaper like *El Defensor*. The inclusion of this kind of reading would not have been possible in the U.S. school system. In a community newspaper, in the column dedicated to educational readings for the home, the reading's distribution was possible. The newspaper dedicated to education opened the space and possibility and provided a forum to hear alternative voices and views where these opinions could be heard, outside the public educational institutions.

The educational columns featured in *El Defensor* and *La Estrella*, however, were not without their limitations. Enriqueta's writings give insight into the limitations of *La Estrella's* educational program and the work of the editors. In Enriqueta's *Rosas de la*

Infancia, the entry titled “La Tortuga Sabia” included a list of questions for assessment.¹⁷⁶ Although the version printed in *Lectura Amena* was true to the original, the list of questions was not included. Clearly, the original was meant for the classroom and the questions meant for teachers to use with students. The editors of *La Estrella* considered it valuable enough to include the essay in *Lectura Amena* but did not go as far as to include the part of the reading that would make it a source for discussion as opposed to just for reading. Here the editors of *La Estrella* show that their goal was to include educational materials in *Lectura Amena* but not to assess learning. While they performed other teacher-like roles in their curation of *Lectura Amena* between 1929-1931, they did not perform this identifiable teacher role.

El Defensor del Pueblo and *La Estrella* are examples of the alternative educational activism that early twentieth-century Mexican-descent activists engaged in. Recognizing that education had the potential for improving the social and economic position of Mexican-descent populations in New Mexico, the editors of *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* worked to provide that education for their local communities. Using the tools at their disposal—newspapers—they curated the recurring columns *Lectura Selecta Para El Hogar* and *Lectura Amena* as educational spaces. Aware of the change in U.S. schools that eliminated the Spanish language, Mexican histories, and Catholic education and replaced them with Euro-centric curricula, these editors took the initiative to provide a culturally relevant education to their Spanish-language audience. This education at once prioritized the intellectual advancement of the readers; sourced, highlighted, and valued

¹⁷⁶ María Enriqueta, *Rosas de la Infancia: Lectura para los Niño's* (Mexico City: Sociedad de Edicion y Libreria Franco-Americana, 1928), 3.

Spanish-language, Latin American, and New Mexico culture; and included a class analysis that was as a whole beneficial to the Mexican-descent communities of Socorro and Las Cruces. In this way, the work done by the activists behind *El Defensor* and *La Estrella* is part of the historical lineage of educational activism that Mexican-descent populations engaged in during the twentieth century.

Chapter 3

“People Say Knowledge is Power, So We Educated Ourselves”: The Dual Educational Projects of Chicano Theater in California, 1965–1975

Like previous generations of activists, the participants of the Chicana/o Movement (CCM) during the late 1960s and 1970s continued the struggle for better economic, political, and social conditions in the United States. An important distinction between CCM activists and previous generations was the strategies they employed to combat their daily and systemic oppression. Activists of the Mexican American Generation (MAG) in the 1940s and 1950s most commonly used court cases, electoral politics, and assimilationist politics to successfully and incrementally ameliorate the conditions of Mexican-descent communities in the United States, particularly in the Southwest.¹⁷⁷ In addition to pursuing traditional political and legal avenues to protect their rights, CCM activists applied direct action, cultural nationalism, and internationalist politics as strategies to address historically oppressive institutions. These included systems of labor, health, education, immigrant rights, political participation, law enforcement, and the arts.

Influenced by international leftist, anti-imperialist, labor, student, and human rights movements, the CCM both continued and advanced the twentieth-century struggle

¹⁷⁷ For more on the Mexican American Generation, see Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930–1960* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989); and Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009). Orozco demonstrates that the activism most identified with what García calls the Mexican American Generation began in the 1920s and 1930s. The quintessential era for this generation, during which many of their successes and impacts, occurred was the 1940s and 1950s.

against the oppression and exploitation of Mexican-descent communities in the United States. Of particular influence were the Black civil rights movement in the U.S., the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and the Mexican student movement of the 1960s. Much of the imagery, rhetoric, and transnational scope of the CCM came from these influences and direct interactions with participants of these concurrent movements. CCM activists often formed formal and informal coalitions with activists of other movements in the same arena. Chicana/o student groups, for instance, while organizing in colleges and universities often organized in coalition with their Black, Asian, Native American, working-class, and immigrant counterparts to achieve common goals.¹⁷⁸

The CCM also benefitted from a structure that enabled it to address several issues at once. That structure also allowed for specific organizations to contribute to more than one cause or impact more than one front. This chapter highlights this dynamic in the world of *teatro* (Chicano theater). I analyze the histories, influences, and theatrical philosophies and practices of Teatro Campesino from Delano, California, and Teatro de las Chicanas from San Diego, California. The narrative and analysis demonstrate that in addition to their contributions to the Chicano Theater and Chicano Art movements—which were a part of the larger CCM—Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas also created alternative educational spaces, which were the theater groups themselves and their productions. These two *teatro* groups educated community on two fronts. The writing, production, and performance of plays and interaction with the audience offered one front. Teatro groups provided audiences information about the importance of

¹⁷⁸ For more on the Chicana/o Movement, see Juan Gómez-Quiñones and Irene Vásquez, *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014).

education in their lives and historical and contemporary topics significant to the community, as well as information about Chicana/o and Mexican culture. The second front entailed the educational process teatro groups provided for the members of and participants in the teatro groups themselves.

Both Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas members have described the collectivist process of their stage production.¹⁷⁹ Additionally, both teatro groups enacted strategies to educate new and continuing members. Teatro Campesino utilized a philosophy and practice known as the Theater of the Sphere, which historian Yolanda Broyles-González analyzes at length in her work on the theater troupe.¹⁸⁰ Theater of the Sphere aimed to teach Teatro Campesino members lessons beyond those useful for theater acting and can “be considered a model for a Chicana/o liberational praxis.”¹⁸¹ In the context of educational activism and the strategies used by educators to impact students and audiences, Theater of the Sphere was a practice that engaged Chicana/o citizens in drawing on indigenous and Chicano mythology/history to teach members something they could take with them beyond the theater and into the community.

Teatro de las Chicanas similarly enacted a philosophy and practice that aimed to educate members. Theirs was rooted in academic/research models in the form of study

¹⁷⁹ Yolanda Broyles-González, *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); and Laura E. Garcia, Sandra M. Gutierrez, and Felicitas Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana: A Collective Memoir and Selected Plays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

¹⁸⁰ Yolanda Broyles-González, *Teatro Campesino*, chap. 2. Teatro Campesino termed the acting/life practice philosophy at the center of the troupe Theater of the Sphere. Broyles-González was the first scholar to analyze its importance and function, identifying it as philosophy, practice, and pedagogy. More on this in the second part of the chapter.

¹⁸¹ Broyles-González, *Teatro Campesino*, 124.

groups. These study groups were the introduction to the theater troupe for many of the members and remained a practice for each of the plays they produced. Many of the members of Teatro de las Chicanas mentioned in their oral histories that they gained in the study groups knowledge that they were able to carry with them beyond their participation in the theater.¹⁸² For both theater groups, then, their educational focus was on the community, whether it was a theater audience or participant. And, while Theater of the Sphere and the study groups impacted the plays produced by the teatro groups and the audiences that attended the productions, the wider scope of that impact was received by the members as individuals and as part of the larger Chicana/o community.

The alternative educational activism of which theater groups such as Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas were a part, was the continuation of a lineage of educational activism advanced by Mexican-descent populations in the twentieth century.¹⁸³ Mexican civic leaders organized to achieve access to quality education for Mexican-descent children within schools. Many also worked to establish representation in faculty, administration, and later curriculum and pedagogy that reflected their communities. In continuation of the work of previous generations, CCM educational activists sought to create curricula, pedagogy, and educational spaces that acknowledged, valued, and served Mexican-descent communities in the United States.

Some of this CCM educational activism achieved change within institutions of higher learning. There, student activists, academics, and community members

¹⁸² Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*.

¹⁸³ For an overview of Chicana/o education and educational activism, see José F. Moreno, ed., *The Elusive Quest for Equality: 150 years of Chicano/Chicana Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Educational Review, 1999).

successfully created Chicana/o Studies as an academic discipline and established Chicana/o Studies and Ethnic Studies programs and departments.¹⁸⁴ While much of this occurred in the U.S. Southwest, where the CCM was most prevalent, in other parts of the country Mexican-descent populations continued this struggle later in the twentieth century. CCM educational activists also sought to change K–12 education by demanding representation in school boards, faculty, and administration. They also brought attention to the historical mistreatment of Mexican-descent children that was still in practice in the 1960s. The high school walkouts organized by Chicana/o youth in the late 1960s became emblematic of the larger CCM and its fight for better education. Finally, educational change at the institutional level also took the form of advocacy for bilingual education. A way of creating curriculum and pedagogy that was linguistically relevant to Mexican-descent and other Spanish-speaking children, bilingual education was one of the most successful, although contested, objectives achieved by educational activists.¹⁸⁵

In addition, some activists created alternative educational projects that went beyond established educational institutions. The Crusade for Justice, for instance, established its own school—Escuela Tlatelolco—which for decades provided K-12 education and for a short while established a college. Colegio Jacinto Treviño represented another alternative educational initiative and is the subject of chapter 4, established by

¹⁸⁴ Rodolfo Acuña, *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011); and Michael Soldatenko, *Chicano Studies: The Genesis of a Discipline* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009).

¹⁸⁵ Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States, 1960-2001* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2004). For a more localized history see Armando L. Trujillo, *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education: Movimiento Politics in Crystal City, Texas* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998).

agriculture workers and academics as an alternative to existing institutions of higher learning in the region of Merced, Texas. Other alternatives included the ones examined here—spaces that scholars have not considered educational spaces because their categorization falls into other fields, in this case Chicano theater.

Chicano theater, as an artistic movement, was part of the larger Chicana/o Art Movement, which ran concurrently and in coalition with the CCM. The Chicana/o Art Movement included visual, musical, performative, and literary arts. Like the CCM as a whole, participants in the Chicana/o Art Movement were inspired by the ongoing political and cultural movements, as well as the artistic movements, that flourished both domestically and internationally. Chicana/o visual and performative artists drew inspiration from Mexican artists of the early and mid-twentieth century. With these influences, Chicana/o artists developed an artistic arm to the CCM that engaged with, advanced, challenged, and helped solidify the political and cultural concerns of the CCM. They did so by creating art that was artistically expressive, aesthetically engaging, and educational for the community.¹⁸⁶

Chicano theater, or teatro, developed within the Chicana/o Art Movement. Like other CCM-era artistic and political expressions, theater developed through bringing together different influences into what was identified as Chicano theater. This included both theater influences and political/cultural influences. Two strands of theater influences are especially notable. First, the European theater practices such as agitprop theater, *commedia dell'arte*, and Brechtian theater informed the art and practice of teatro. Second,

¹⁸⁶ Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Chicano Art: Inside/Outside the Master's House* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

and the most influential, were the Mexican *teatro de carpa* and *rasquachismo*; both were working-class public performance traditions that existed in Mexico and the U.S.

Southwest in the early twentieth century.¹⁸⁷ *Teatro de carpa* is a travelling working-class theater tradition, and *rasquachismo*, a philosophy that encourages the incorporation of any available materials for the creation of art. Both influenced the direct-action, artistic, humorous, satirical?, and political aspects of Chicano theater. Additionally, Chicano theater was influenced by the political and cultural activism of the CCM, particularly the goals to create a uniquely Chicano culture and educate the community about its history and heritage. Putting together these influences, Chicano theater created traditions of its own—traditions that took from regional and transnational influences and positioned theater as an artistic expression, political tool, and, I argue, an alternative educational medium for Mexican-descent audiences.

Much of the scholarship on Chicano theater centers the story of Teatro Campesino, identifying the establishment of the troupe as the beginning of the Chicano Theater movement as a whole. Likewise, Luis Valdez’s personal story is intertwined with the troupe’s history, at times written as if they were one and the same. Valdez is identified as Teatro Campesino’s and Chicano Theater’s primary and most important leader and contributor. Broyles-González, however, challenges readers to look beyond Valdez’s story and examine the communal workings of Teatro Campesino.¹⁸⁸ In her

¹⁸⁷ Broyles-González, *Teatro Campesino*; Jorge A. Huerta, *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms* (Ypsilanti, Mich.: Bilingual Press, 1982); and Nicolás Kanellos, ed., “Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest,” in *Mexican American Theatre: Then and Now* (Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 1989).

¹⁸⁸ Broyles-González, *Teatro Campesino*, xiii.

work, Broyles-González demonstrates that Teatro Campesino had influences that went beyond those contributed by Valdez. Among these were the Mexican theater and other performative traditions that the early farmworker/theater participants contributed to the troupe. Valdez, in his role as spokesperson for the troupe, regularly talked about the Mexican influences on Teatro Campesino. These included teatro de carpa and rasquachismo. Broyles-González demonstrates how greater networks of people influenced Teatro Campesino, including its members. Her analysis strengthens our understanding of Teatro Campesino as a truly collaborative endeavor in which lesser-known members of the troupe and the historical cultural context shaped the troupe's development and the success of Chicano theater.

Following Broyles-González's impetus, I analyze Teatro Campesino's educational contributions to the Chicana/o community. Placing Teatro Campesino's communal and collaborative structure and productions in the context of educational activism demonstrates that the troupe created an alternative Chicana/o educational space. Broyles-González, in her book, analyzes Teatro Campesino's practice known as Theater of the Sphere, which taught its members lessons about theater, worldview, and individual and community progress through Indigenous/Chicano philosophies. I argue that Theater of the Sphere was an educational cultural model, philosophy, and practice similar to the traditional culture that schools implement to "construct the citizen."

One of the primary functions of schools is to provide students with information that will be useful in their adult lives and future careers. A secondary function of schools is to construct citizens for the nation-state and prepare them to assume the duties of citizenship, such as military service. The philosophy used to construct the citizen often

follows nationalist narratives and identities. Through curriculum, pedagogy, rituals, and values, schools teach students the expectations of the nation-state, define national identity, and marginalize those who do not fit within and reflect the ideal or model. In the traditional U.S. educational system, this practice follows a Euro-centric and racist philosophy. This indoctrination and marginalization project is part of what CCM and other educational activists aimed to dismantle in order to allow for the inclusion of other identities and definitions of personhood and citizenship. As opposed to U.S. schools that attempted to teach students how to become U.S. cultural citizens, Teatro Campesino taught its members how to become Chicana/o citizens.

To take the analysis of Chicano theater a step further, it is not enough to write only about Teatro Campesino, for a narrative of that kind would still center only one theater troupe, when there were many during the CCM. Additionally, another teatro group, Teatro de las Chicanas, offered a key educational site. In addition to providing a new vantage point of Chicano theater's story, one outside of the Teatro Campesino—focused narrative, Teatro de las Chicanas exemplifies a different style of teatro altogether. Teatro de las Chicanas illustrates a different possibility in focus, philosophy, scope, and practice for Chicano theater. The troupe's impact on the CCM and its members was also unique. Unlike Teatro Campesino, Teatro de las Chicanas was established by an all-women's collective; many members were college students and nonprofessional actors. The troupe's scope was different too. The troupe began by addressing gender oppression, educational discrimination, and the CCM. Later, the actors addressed working-class issues and supported anti-imperialism more broadly—beyond

the parameters of the early CCM. Teatro Campesino embraced this agenda; it never achieved this internationalism.

By looking at both Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas, this chapter contributes to the scholarship on Chicano Theater, its influences, and its contributions—particularly to educational activism. Broyles-González’s work on Teatro Campesino moves away from an analysis focused on European theatrical influences on the troupe. Instead, she directs her analysis to the Mexican theatrical influences. Both strands of influence contribute to the complex cultural and historical matrix that shaped two successful art-based educational sites. Although European theater’s influence on Teatro Campesino has been extensively studied by scholars, the same is not true for its influence on Teatro de las Chicanas, Teatro de las Chicanas which identified both Brechtian theater and commedia dell’arte as influences. To fully understand the contributions of both teatro troupes, it is important to acknowledge European theater’s influence on both.

More importantly, both teatro groups also share the influences of Mexican working-class performative traditions—teatro de carpa and rasquachismo—and CCM political and cultural innovation. Teatro Campesino were in operating as the artistic wing of the organizing of United Farm Workers (UFW), staging its early plays in the fields and picket lines. The troupe later reached audiences by performing in colleges, community spaces, and renowned performative spaces in the United States and abroad. Teatro Campesino also eventually produced longer plays and thematically addressed broader CCM politics and culture.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Broyles-González, *Teatro Campesino*.

Teatro de las Chicanas also began by engaging Chicana identity, politics, and culture. The members first performed their plays for their mothers, then other audiences at San Diego State University. Although working with limited resources and time, and sometimes too few actors, the troupe nonetheless expanded its skits into longer plays that featured different themes. Teatro de las Chicanas also reached its audiences with performances at community spaces, schools, backyards, and parks.¹⁹⁰ Both Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas incorporated songs, short skits, longer plays, and speeches into their performances. With all these influences and practices, Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas defined Chicano Theater for themselves and their audiences and contributed to the definition, shape, and content of the art form as a whole.

That definition of Chicano Theater included an educational philosophy, texts, and practice. I argue that by putting together the influences of European accessible theater, Mexican *teatro de carpa*, and the politics of the CCM—specifically the struggle for equitable education, Chicano cultural identity, and direct action—Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas created an art form that went beyond the art and expression to constitute an alternative space for education. Scholars of Chicano theater have, in passing, mentioned the educational nature and contributions of *teatro*, but have not elaborated on the subject in detail.¹⁹¹ I aim to show some of the ways these *teatro* groups created educational spaces and produced educational materials. These spaces, materials, philosophies, and practices had two educational foci. The first was meant for the audience. Through the production and performance of plays and interaction with the

¹⁹⁰ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*.

¹⁹¹ Huerta, *Chicano Theater*, Introduction.

audience, Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas educated their communities. The second educational focus was on the *teatro* members themselves. With their use of Theater of the Sphere (Teatro Campesino) and study groups (Teatro de las Chicanas), both troupes educated their members. This internal education was significant because it went beyond teaching lessons necessary for the production of theater. The education that the *teatro* members provided for each other positively impacted them as individuals and their community beyond theater. These two theater troupes, then, were a part of both a burgeoning Chicano Theater movement in the late 1960s and 1970s and made an important contribution to the long history of educational activism among Mexican-descent populations in the U.S. Southwest.

Outward Education/Education for the Audience (the Plays)

The first of two educational projects that Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas engaged in was the one most commonly recognized as part of their overall theater output: the education of audiences through the writing, production, and performance of plays. Both troupes most commonly referred to their work as *actos*, especially the shorter plays or skits in their repertoire. These *actos* addressed a wide scope of themes and developed into longer and more elaborate plays as time passed. *Actos* translates to “acts” but is a terminology used in Mexican and other Spanish-language traditions to mean short plays or skits. Chicana/o Theater troupes used term in this way. Teatro Campesino’s early *actos* focused on portraying the reality of farmworkers in the California Central Valley and encouraging their first audiences—*campesinos* (farmworkers)—to join the United Farm Workers and their strike in the mid-1960s. Later work covered topics related to the

history of Mexican populations in the United States, the Chicana/o Movement (CCM), the Vietnam War, and education. Teatro de las Chicanas, on the other hand, began with plays about education, calling special attention to the experiences of Chicanas in higher education. Their early plays also explicitly exposed and critiqued gender oppression in U.S. society and within the Chicana/o community. As time went on and the troupe grew, Teatro de las Chicanas produced plays that addressed issues of culture, patriarchy, the CCM, the Vietnam War, and the civil war in El Salvador.

In this section I analyze three categorical themes that both Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas addressed in their plays and that, I argue, constituted their audience-focused educational theatrical materials. The first theme is education itself. Both teatro troupes envisioned their craft as a process for educating their audiences in their history and in their current condition and for encouraging them to enact change. Both also found it important to discuss the benefits of education for the Chicana/o community. They also were realistic in depicting what type of education Chicanas/os received at the time, including the structural obstacles, racism, and oppression in schools. Both troupes also depicted the burgeoning CCM participation among youth in schools, making sure to present the support infrastructures and networks that made higher education, for instance, more attainable for Chicana/o youth. An audience watching one of these plays on education would receive historical, critical, contemporary, and practical information related to the education of the community and the possibilities of education for the individual.

The second theme explored by these teatros involved contextual information needed to mobilize their audience's participation in the CCM, community at large, and

general U.S. society. This material included information that was relevant to a specific movement such as the UFW. These groups also offered political analysis that informed and benefited the community. In this chapter, I examine the analysis provided by Teatro de las Chicanas on the subject of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and El Salvador.

Another theme evident in the productions and practices of the teatros was the discussion of Chicana/o culture. These plays often explored Chicana/o culture past and present, presented history of the community, and critiqued the normative or dominant culture, usually white. Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas rooted their productions in Chicana/o culture, and both expressed their specific views of that culture and how to depict it in theater. A major difference is that Teatro de las Chicanas added a critique of patriarchy, gender roles/expectations, gendered violence, and the hypocrisy of some male CCM activists within Chicana/o community and CCM—topics that Teatro Campesino did not include in its performances. This content reflected the growing chorus of feminist critiques and advocacy on behalf of women evident in the Chicana and Chicano Movement.

The plays produced by Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas on the theme of education depicted the ways institutions of education, including instructors and other students, oppressed students of color and offered some solutions in the form of student organizing. The Teatro Campesino play entitled “No Saco Nada de la Escuela” (I Don’t Get Anything Out of School), for instance, followed a group of students through elementary school, high school, and state college. The main characters include Chicana/o students Monty, Francisco, and Esperanza, white students Florence and Abraham, and

Black student Malcolm. Their instructors at each stage of education are white, a woman in elementary school and men in high school and college.¹⁹²

The stage notes instruct all three actors who play the instructors to wear white masks. This costuming signaled to the audience that the three are Anglo. More importantly, the mask exemplified one of the ways Teatro Campesino made theater accessible and educational. By having the teachers wear white masks, the audience could easily identify them as the antagonists in the play.¹⁹³ While many masks served comedic or dramatic purposes, they also served an educational purpose. Masks allowed the production to give primary importance to the message of the play by eliminating any need for prior knowledge about the subject or the characters. The masks told the audience who the character was and either explicitly or implicitly identified their role in the acto. This way, theater practices served the message and the audience who received it.

The acto, *No Saco Nada de la Escuela* (I Don't Get Anything Out of School), highlighted a familiar experience that Mexican-descent and Black students faced in U.S. schools—having their identities, intelligence, and self-worth or merit questioned at school. The elementary teacher, for instance, questioned both Monty's and Francisco's names. Monty's name is Moctezuma, but the teacher changed it to Monty, which he accepted. The teacher is unable to pronounce Francisco and attempted to call him Franky instead, but Francisco did not accept it. In Malcolm's case, all three instructors misname him "Willie," which Malcolm has to correct each time. The Spanish-speaking students

¹⁹² Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino, *Luis Valdez—Early Works: Actos, Bernabé, and Pensamiento Serpentino* (Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 1994).

¹⁹³ Valdez and El Teatro Campesino, *Early Works*.

are also reprimanded when they speak Spanish in the classroom, and by extension their intelligence is questioned. Conversely, the white students, Abraham and Florence, are always given the benefit of the doubt and favored by all the instructors, as in the following example:

TEACHER: Now, all rise for the flag salute. (*Sweetly.*) Stand up, Florence. Stand up Abraham, dear. (*Turns to others.*) I said stand up! (MONTY, MALCOLM, and FRANCISCO *jump up and begin flag salute*).¹⁹⁴

Abraham is also meant to represent the racist white community. He regularly relies on his whiteness to get him out of trouble, and to get his fellow classmates into trouble. At one point he mentions he is also the son of the elite landowner in the town and expects his Mexican-descent classmates to accept their treatment as a subordinates, just like his father treats his workers. In this passage Abraham is speaking to Esperanza about Francisco.

ABRAHAM: Do you know that my dad owns 200,00 [*sic*] acres of lettuce in the Salinas Valley?

ESPERANZA: Really!

ABRAHAM: And he has 200 dumb Mexicans just like him [Francisco] working for him.¹⁹⁵

With these characters, the play presents a historical, political, and social context of the U.S. educational system, which oppresses, derides, and marginalizes students of color, including those of Mexican descent.

¹⁹⁴ Valdez and El Teatro Campesino, *Early Works*, 68.

¹⁹⁵ Valdez and El Teatro Campesino, *Early Works*, 82.

In this context, a critique of assimilation is included in the play. Throughout the act, Monty increasingly assimilated in an attempt to get good grades and be seen favorably by teachers and by Florence, a white female student. Francisco and Malcolm, on the other hand, are portrayed as the rebels who resist assimilation and all attempts to push them out of school. Francisco starts by denying his Anglicized name and later adopts the “vato loco” persona to signify the extent to which he rejects Anglo culture. In high school, Francisco is driven out of school by the teacher and some of his fellow students, including Monty, Abraham, and Esperanza, for being too rebellious. In college, Francisco is the custodian but still wants to attend school. When he sees Malcolm, who dressed as a Black Panther, stand his ground against the professor’s attempts to kick him out of the classroom, Francisco comes back dressed as a Brown Beret and does the same. This act of agency by Francisco seemingly awakens Esperanza’s consciousness. She decides that her calling is to make sure that others from her community can attend college. She says, “I’m going to help my carnales [brothers] get into college.” At that moment, a member of the audience stands up and says he wants to attend college. The professor tries to stop him, but Francisco and Esperanza help him.¹⁹⁶

BATO: ¡Ayúdenme! (*Runs toward stage*)¹⁹⁷

PROFESSOR: No! (FRANCISCO and ESPERANZA *try to help BATO from audience. There’s a tug of war*)

BATO: ¡Sí! (*With FRANCISCO and ESPERANZA*)

PROFESSOR: No!

¹⁹⁶ Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino, Early Works*, 89.

¹⁹⁷ “Help me!”

BATO: ¡Sí!

PROFESSOR: No!

BATO: ¡Sí! (*Jumps up onstage, pushing PROFESSOR back. BATO waves to audience and yells.*) Orale, I made it into college. (*Gives Chicano handshake to FRANCISCO and ESPERANZA*).¹⁹⁸

The Teatro Campesino's message about education, then, is voiced throughout the play and underscored in the end. *No Saco Nada de la Escuela* is one Chicana/o text highlighting the oppression and discrimination felt by Mexican-descent students in U.S. public schools and in universities and colleges. It is also the story of the strategies Mexican-descent populations employed to combat their oppression, including assimilation—although Teatro Campesino, like other CCM activists, believed assimilation was equivalent to selling out. Finally, Teatro Campesino presented its message about the importance of education as a path or vehicle out of poverty through a format and medium accessible to everyone, a story told in visual language on stage. The climax of the story seemingly breaks the fourth wall and makes an audience member the center of the story and purveyor of the message—that is to make his education the success of the story and the characters. His education is a powerful example and would inspire greater numbers of people in working-class communities to attend school and earn high school diplomas and college degrees.

Educational environments also offered an avenue for Chicanas to participate in political dialogue, develop critiques, and sponsor events that imagined social justice for women in Mexican-descent communities. *Chicana Goes to College*, the acto that Teatro

¹⁹⁸ Valdez and El Teatro Campesino, *Early Works*, 89.

de las Chicanas produced on the value of education, served a double function. The play both talked about the importance of education, particularly for Chicanas, and addressed gender oppression within the Chicana/o community and culture. *Chicana goes to College* was also the first play that the troupe performed, event before the women officially established Teatro de las Chicanas. *Chicana Goes to College* told the story of desire of the main character, Lucy, to attend college and her struggle against gender expectations held by her parents, boyfriend, and fellow students.¹⁹⁹

Lucy's announcement that she will be going to college is met with disbelief from both her boyfriend and her parents. Her boyfriend, Ricardo, expects that she will marry him instead of going to college. Her parents oppose her going to college because they believe "proper" young women do not leave the house except to marry or enter a convent. Despite these objections, Lucy applies to college, and in one instance states that she learned about college applications and funding through a college recruiter.²⁰⁰ Here Teatro de las Chicanas is sending a message about prioritizing women's education and discrediting sexist beliefs about their role in society and in college.

"Chicana goes to College" also depicts the struggles that first-generation students face. In the first scene of Lucy and her friend Chona in college, they have the following exchange:

LUCY: I am having a rough time getting around this huge campus.

¹⁹⁹ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*.

²⁰⁰ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*.

CHONA: Hell, I thought psychology and psychiatry were the same so I ended up in the wrong class. Everything sounds confusing. I don't know if I can make it in this *gigante* school.

LUCY: Well, let's try to take many classes together so we can help each other out.

CHONA: Yeah, maybe two *cabezas* [heads] are better than one mind.²⁰¹

Lucy's and Chona's conversation spoke to the difficulties that first-generation students faced in higher education without generational knowledge of such institutions. This passage undoubtedly resonated with Chicana/o youth who had similar experiences, or were looking to attend college but shared the same concerns. Teatro de las Chicanas also provided a solution for the audience: community. Working together, Lucy and Chona banded together to deal with their lack of knowledge of higher education and to succeed in their course of study. This may have been a lesson that the women of Teatro de las Chicanas learned as first-generation students at San Diego State University and that they passed on to the audience with this play.

Conversely, *Chicana Goes to College* also presented the limitations to the Chicana/o student community. In another scene, Lucy and Chona attend a M.E.Ch.A. (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán/Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán) meeting. M.E.Ch.A. was a popular Chicana/o youth organization that led much of the efforts in colleges and universities to make higher education more accessible to Chicana/o students during the CCM. In *Chicana Goes to College*, Lucy's and Chona's experience in the M.E.Ch.A. meeting resembles those of many women during CCM. In

²⁰¹ Emphasis in the original. Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 178–179.

the scene, the male leaders of M.E.Ch.A. are more interested in making sexual advances at the women than in political organizing. The men also expect the women, when joining the organization, to perform traditional gender roles of supporting the men and relegating themselves to a non-leadership capacity. The chairman of the M.E.Ch.A. chapter, Amado demonstrates this chauvinism as he leads the meeting that Lucy and Chona attend.

AMADO: *Orale carnal* [Hey brother] you're alright. I want to talk about our beautiful culture and as you can see for yourselves, the beautiful *Chicanitas* in this room. These women are our Aztec princesses who bear our children and continue the ways of our people. Our people who have been repressed, compressed, depressed, and oppressed. We men must rise up as proud Aztec warriors to defend our helpless children and women.

(Amado reaches for a glass of water and rearranges his hair and shades while Nando fans him with a paper. Lucy and Chona give each other a puzzled look.)

AMADO: And our women will keep and tend our beautiful culture that gives us pride, that feeds us the *maiz*, the *frijoles*, and the *nopales* that make us unique to all the others. We are special. We are a proud people. And now we are calling forth our beautiful women to help us by volunteering in the typing, clean up [*sic*], and food committees. Please step forward and sign up. This meeting has been adjourned.²⁰²

Teatro de las Chicanas provided a critique of the CCM and the male-centered organizing in universities and colleges. It also provided the audience a solution. Lucy, after her negative experience with the men in the M.E.Ch.A. meeting, instead gravitates to a woman UFW organizer also present at the meeting. Through this experience, Lucy

²⁰² Garcia, Gutierrez, Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 184; emphasis in the original.

and Chona evolve a different political consciousness—one rooted in solidarity with other Chicanas. The final scene of the act is titled “Chicana Resolution.” In it, Lucy and Chona read a letter to Lucy’s mother, meant to be directed at the audience, and speak to this solidarity and the lessons they learned as women in the CCM.

No Saco Nada de la Escuela and *Chicana Goes to College* are meant to speak to the audience about the value of education to Chicana/o individuals and communities. Both plays depict the hardships that Chicana/o youth have historically faced in U.S. educational institutions at the elementary, secondary, and college levels. *No Saco Nada de la Escuela* depicts for the audience the racist and exclusionary practices that existed at all levels of U.S. education and often push out Chicana/o youth. Teatro Campesino, nonetheless, advocated an alternative—that education should be accessible to all young men and women, even those whom the system has pushed out, for instance, Francisco. An additional message is that those Chicana/o students who are already in higher education and have gained some privilege can and should help others who aspire to attend, such as the audience member who, at the end, is assisted by Esperanza and Francisco to achieve his goal. The power of community is the lesson that *No Saco Nada de la Escuela* presents to the audience.

Chicana Goes to College similarly addresses the challenges of higher education to a first-generation student, particularly a woman. Teatro de las Chicanas critique the gendered oppression Chicanas faced in college at the hands of parents, community, teachers, and fellow Chicano activists. Yet, they also offer a solution to these hardships—solidarity among women. Lucy and Chona rely on each other to navigate the roadblocks to women in higher education. Compelled by the unreliability of the male organizers of

M.E.Ch.A., they form their own solutions, which they share with the audience. Any audiences watching a performance of *No Saco Nada de la Escuela* and *Chicana Goes to College*, learn the need for and power of education for Chicana/o communities, the challenges they face in educational institutions, and solutions to overcome them. Chicana/o audiences, in particular, learned about the support networks and strategies available to them to be successful in college. Most would never have received such information at their high schools, for most teachers and administrators were not interested in directing or sending Chicana/o students to college—and most universities and colleges did not want them.

The second major theme that Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas addressed in an educational fashion was distribution of information to the community that was relevant and useful. Here, one specific subtopic is addressed by both theater troupes: U.S. imperialism. Teatro Campesino's plays on the Vietnam War, *Vietnam Campesino* and *Soldado Razo*, and Teatro de las Chicanas' play on Central America, *Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador*, all speak to the effects of U.S. imperialism on communities of color in the nation and abroad. One of the major organizing efforts of the CCM related to the Vietnam War, namely the disproportionate number of Chicanos drafted into the armed forces and killed in the war effort. Similarly oppressed by the United States, Chicanas/os also made the argument that they had more in common with the Vietnamese people.²⁰³ Teatro Campesino's plays on the subject reflect this CCM-era sentiment.

²⁰³ For the history of anti-Vietnam War activism during the Chicana/o Movement see, Lorena Oropeza, *Raza Sí! Guerra No! Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and George Mariscal, *Brown-eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons From the Chicano Movement, 1965–1975* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

The acto by Teatro de las Chicanas, *Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador*, also critiques U.S. imperialist interventions, this time in El Salvador. They too saw a similarity between the historical oppression of Mexican-descent people in the United States and the Salvadoran people at the hands of U.S.-backed state oppression in El Salvador. This play demonstrates another departure of Teatro de las Chicanas from Teatro Campesino in political scope and its application of Chicano theater practices to different topics. While Teatro Campesino and CCM reflected the anti-Vietnam War politics of the 1960s, Teatro de las Chicanas addressed the larger issue of U.S. imperialism in the world and its impact on working-class people in general. Importantly, Teatro de las Chicanas' play did not center the experiences of Chicanas/os, rather those of Salvadoran people struggling to overthrow a U.S.-backed dictatorship.

In *Vietnam Campesino*, Teatro Campesino made the connection for the audience between the farmworker labor movement and the antiwar movement. In the opening scene, Butt Anglo, a grower—that is the owner of a large industrial farm—has an encounter with some protesters. These protesters are directing anti-Vietnam War chants and pickets at Butt Anglo. He is surprised by this confrontation and asks why they are protesting him, “a poor grower,” about the Vietnam War. The picketers, through a series of questions, make the connection between agribusiness and the war effort. They ask Butt Anglo about his federal subsidies and the use of pesticides—to point out an analogy made at the time about the use of chemicals on people of color domestically and abroad. The picketers also proclaim that the war had everything to do with the labor movement, especially since the UFW-led Grape Strike of 1965–1970.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ Valdez and *El Teatro Campesino, Early Works*, 98–99.

To further drive home the connection between the anti-war movement and the labor movement, the encounter between Butt Anglo and the picketers is followed by a similar interaction between the protesters and the character General Defense. As the name implies, General Defense represents the U.S. military. When he enters the stage, he is followed by a different group of picketers, who are chanting “Huelga! (Strike!),” the popular chant popularized in the United States by the UFW during the 1960s. He too questions why the picketers are protesting him with farm labor strike chants, for he is a general, not a grower. The picketers, again through the use of questions, make the connection between their labor organizing and the anti-Vietnam war movement. They ask General Defense, “How many Chicanos are dying in Vietnam?” and “How many scab grapes did the Pentagon buy from Delano?”²⁰⁵ The first question reflects the direct connection that many CCM antiwar activists highlighted: the disproportionate number of deaths among Chicanos in Vietnam. By questioning the military and police-state repression and violence against picketers, the Teatro Campesino implicated the U.S. military in the federal, state, and corporate opposition to the UFW and farmworker labor movement and identified farmworkers with the rural laboring population in Vietnam.

Furthermore, the play makes the connection between the repression of working-class farmworkers at the hands of the capitalist and imperialist U.S. government both in the United States and in Vietnam. The mention of chemical warfare, in particular, is a reference to both the deployment of chemical weapons—especially the jungle defoliant, agent orange—on the Vietnamese and the application of pesticides and herbicides in the fields where Mexican farmworkers labored. While not applied in the same context, the

²⁰⁵ Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino*, *Early Works*, 100.

deliberate exposure of human beings to these toxic chemicals clearly was (and is) a practice of violent containment and oppression. U.S. authorities knew that these defoliants, herbicides, and pesticides caused illness, cancer, and birth defects among populations that lived and worked in the environments doused with them. Teatro Campesino, like other CCM activists, made the connection between the violation of human rights in Vietnam and in the U.S.

Teatro Campesino also condemned the use of force to suppress the attempts or movements of working-class people to end their oppression by corporations and governments. In the context of social revolutions around the world and the domestic civil rights movements by communities of color in the 1960s and 1970s, the plight of the Vietnamese people resonated with CCM activists, who themselves aimed to end the historical oppression of the people. UFW strikers, like other CCM activists, were often met with police violence. Motivated by capitalist or racist objectives, local police countered largely peaceful protests with force. CCM activists made the connection between this repression of their movement and the U.S. military intervention in Vietnam as part of the same larger capitalist, political, and imperialist project.

In this context of global resistance to Cold War imperialism and oppression, CCM activists were unwilling to participate in or support the U.S. war in Vietnam, particularly when the rural peasants—families of farmers, fishermen, and artisans—largely supported the Vietcong who shouldered most of the resistance to the U.S.-backed government in South Vietnam. While other groups in the United States opposed the war, it was people of color, and in this case Chicanas/os, who resisted it with a transnational working-class analysis based on the critique of imperialist oppression. Organizations such as Teatro

Campesino reflected that critical perspective and employed plays like “Vietnam Campesino” to get that message across to the community.

Through “Vietnam Campesino,” Teatro Campesino educated the audience about the connection between the anti-Vietnam War movement and the U.S. labor movement, especially UFW. Audience members who might have been familiar with the broader antiwar movement in the United States or the one within the CCM might have recognized the need for antiwar protest based on the disproportionate impact on the Chicana/o community—especially the high number of wounded and dead Chicanos. However, Teatro Campesino took it a step further connecting the war effort and the U.S. military to the opposition of farm labor organizing in Delano, California, and elsewhere. *Vietnam Campesino* teaches the audience that the U.S. state and its military establishment had a hand in aiding the growers that the UFW was striking and boycotting. In the end, the scenes described above show the extent of U.S. imperialism and its role in the oppression of people in both Vietnam and the United States. The play goes on to also depict the similarities, identified by Chicano organizers, between their own oppression and that of Vietnamese farmers at the hands of the U.S. state and its puppet government in South Vietnam.

HIJO: The war in Vietnam continues, asesinando familias inocentes de campesinos. Los Chicanos mueren en la Guerra, y los rancheros se hacen ricos, selling their scab products to the Pentagon.²⁰⁶ The fight is here, Raza! En Aztlán.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN: (*Rises.*) En Aztlán.

²⁰⁶ “assassinating innocent families of farmers. Chicanos die in the War, and the ranchers become rich...”

MADRE: (*Rises.*) En Aztlán.

VIETNAMESE MAN: (*Rises.*) En Aztlán.

PADRE: (*Rises.*) En Aztlán. (*They all raise their fists in the air, in silence.*)²⁰⁷

On a more personal and emotional note, Teatro Campesino's play *Soldado Razo* depicts the effects of the Vietnam War on the Chicana/o community at home. *Soldado Razo* is the story of Johnny, a Chicano drafted for the Vietnam War. The play depicts his encounters with his loved ones before his departure. At first, Johnny is excited about his upcoming military service, seeing it as a way to prove his manliness and demonstrate his patriotism. After seeing the distress that combat service in Vietnam will cause his family, however, he is not so sure that he wants to go but realizes that he has no choice.

From the play's opening, another character, Muerte (Death), reveals to the audience Johnny's fate. Muerte explains that Johnny will die in Vietnam. While the play is going on, Muerte begins the preparations by progressively painting Johnny's face white. His death in Vietnam is never in question, and Muerte knows it. At one point in the play, some of the characters become aware of Muerte's presence—they see death and believe it is a sign of Johnny's doom. First, Johnny's mother accidentally sees Muerte while he is talking to the audience. Muerte tries to hide, but the mother knows she's seen him. When Johnny is at the train station to depart, it is Muerte who sells him his ticket. Johnny also seems to recognize Muerte but ignores his premonition. Muerte's presence foreshadows Johnny's fate but also communicates to the audience that death is the most likely outcome for Chicano soldiers. Despite the characters' attempts to be positive about

²⁰⁷ Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino, *Early Works*, 119–120.

Johnny's military service, *Muerte* makes it clear that this outcome will be inevitable. It is a lesson Teatro Campesino wanted the audience to learn.

In the end, Johnny's experience in Vietnam expands his consciousness about the U.S. intervention in Vietnam and the relationship between the Vietnamese people and Chicanas/os in the United States. At the end of the play, Johnny writes a letter to his mother in which he first describes the atrocities committed by the U.S. military in Vietnam, including the indiscriminate killings of Vietnamese civilians. He then describes a dream in which he attacked a Vietnamese household. In the dream, after killing the inhabitants, he realizes that they are actually his mother, father, and brother. As he is about to ask his mother to warn his friends about the realities of war and to help prevent them from serving in Vietnam, *Muerte* shoots Johnny.²⁰⁸

With both *Vietnam Campesino* and *Soldado Razo*, Teatro Campesino presented a political critique and analysis about the Vietnam War. In addition to depicting the experiences of Chicanas/os in relation to the war, Teatro Campesino added an anti-imperialist and international working-class perspective. By making the connection between the oppression of the Vietnamese and that of the Chicana/o community, Teatro Campesino linked the experiences of the two communities and countered the narrative of the U.S. military asserting that the Vietnamese people were the enemy of Americans. This analysis was one that antiwar CCM activists made. The plays by Teatro Campesino, however, added visual and performative elements to deliver a poignant message to the audience: that the U.S. military had a vested interest in the institutional mechanism oppressing Mexican-descent farmworkers, as well as in drafting them for military service

²⁰⁸ Luis Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino*, *Early Works*, 121–33.

despite the large number of deaths. Here Teatro Campesino displayed its ability to present an educational narrative to its audiences. CCM activists made the arguments about the connection between the Vietnamese and Chicana/o communities but did so in the political arena in the form of protests. Teatro Campesino had the unique skills and forum with which to educate the community on the subject in unique ways.

Teatro de las Chicanas also educated its audiences about the relevance of the international struggle and its relation to Chicano communities. The troupe offered critical analysis about the civil war in El Salvador with the play *Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador*, which they began performing in 1979.²⁰⁹ In this act, the characters Archie and Gloria, based on the popular TV show *All in the Family*, play a role in the war in El Salvador. Archie, in his well-known conservative and xenophobic fashion, believes the revolutionary factions in El Salvador are Godless communists, the view shared by the U.S. government and many Americans at the time. His daughter, Gloria, on the other hand is more progressive politically and a journalist interested in depicting the realities of the war. In the play, Archie is sent to El Salvador as a military advisor to the Junta, the Salvadoran military government/military system the revolutionaries are fighting against at the time.²¹⁰

Through the dialogue, Teatro de las Chicanas educated the audience on the U.S. imperialist intervention in El Salvador and the goals of the revolutionaries. Archie reveals and represents the U.S. view of the revolutionaries and also the reasons for the U.S. intervention. At one point, to argue for intervention, he says, “The U.S. has a lot of

²⁰⁹ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, xxv.

²¹⁰ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*.

investments there, sees [*sic*], and they've got to be protected."²¹¹ He also declares, "We're going over there to teach their military junta how to make them people respect theirs [*sic*] God and country right or wrong, in the good ole traditional American way."²¹² At one point Archie's wife Edith points out that the language Archie is using to talk about El Salvador reminds her of his description of the Vietnam War. The dialogue is meant to be essential to the story, informative to the audience, and to provide critical analysis of the war and the U.S. intervention.

The character, the Newscaster, provides another opportunity to give the audience context and analysis of the war. In one scene, when Archie is watching TV, the Newscaster talks about the war in El Salvador in the following way:

"The people of El Salvador have risen against hunger, illiteracy, repression, and disease. There are rumors that the military's response has been murder and violation of basic human rights. In the 1930s 30,000 peasants were massacred by the government troops. Since 1980 over 20,000 people have met their death in the streets and in the jungles of El Salvador."²¹³

This passage demonstrates that Teatro de las Chicanas found it important to not only comment on the ongoing war in the 1980s but on the historical context pertinent to understanding the situation. The Newscaster goes on to say, "The Salvadorian government's actions and the U.S. military interference are clear signs of capitalists' true

²¹¹ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 247.

²¹² Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 247.

²¹³ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 249.

interests.”²¹⁴ Teatro de las Chicanas presented a critical analysis of the U.S. that marked the U.S. involvement in the war as driven by capitalist greed instead of democratic interests.

In addition to revealing the reasons for U.S. intervention, *Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador* also explains the reasons for the civil war from the perspective of the revolutionaries. Giving voice to the revolutionaries themselves, Gloria interviews civilians and guerrilla fighters in urban and rural settings. It is established early in the play that Gloria knows Spanish well. This allows for the play to present the interviewees’ answers to Gloria’s questions in Spanish, with Gloria translating them for the audience.

When interviewed, the revolutionaries talk to Gloria about the reasons why they are fighting against the Junta. One character, the City Worker, commenting on the view of the U.S. intervention, says that the Salvadorans expect U.S. intervention to make things better for them but they realize later the outcome was the opposite.

CITY WORKER: *Primero déjeme explicarle, nosotros antes éramos un país de campesinos trabajadores pero la mayoría de lo que ganamos se va a los patronos, a los dueños por que nuestro labor es de tan poco valor.*

GLORIA: *(Interpreting)* First, let me explain: we were a country of peasant workers, but the majority of our wages go to the landlords because our labor is of little value.

CITY WORKER: *Y luego vinieron los de los Estados Unidos del Norte y dijimos que bien ahora vamos a tener trabajo, dinero, comida, y un Cadillac.*

²¹⁴ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 249.

GLORIA: (*Interpreting*) So, when the United States of North America came we said, now we are going to have work, money, food, and a Cadillac.

CITY WORKER: *Pero a nosotros nos pagan casi un decimo de lo que se ganan los trabajadores de los Estados Unidos y apenas podemos comer. Y ahora nos encontramos peleando en contra de un gobierno fascista, que se empeña en bloquear el progreso del, trabajador Americano del Sur, el Proletariado Salvadoreño.*

GLORIA: (*Interpreting*) But we only earn a fraction of what the North American worker gets paid. Now we find ourselves fighting a fascist government that is set against the progress of the South American worker, the Salvadorian proletariat.²¹⁵

Teatro de las Chicanas also revealed, with information rather than slogans, the nuances of a war in which the U.S. intervened and the reasons why the United States backed an oppressive government. Finally, *Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador* gave voice to the revolutionaries in El Salvador—their experience in some ways was a parallel to that of Chicana/os in the United States, particularly the role of the state in their oppression.

The Teatro Campesino plays *Vietnam Campesino* and *Soldado Razo*, as well as the Teatro de las Chicanas play *Archie Bunker Goes to El Salvador*, are examples of the theater troupes utilizing their artistic medium to educate audiences. The common goal in these plays was that they intended to inform the audience historical and contemporary context and critical analysis of an international political situation. In addition, they made connections between the oppressed in the narrative—the Vietnamese and Salvadoran people—and the history of Chicana/os in the United States While it is impossible to know

²¹⁵ Garcia, Gutierrez, Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 251.

just how much previous knowledge the audience already knew about the topic covered by the plays, the theater troupes made the information accessible to all people in the audience. Character dialogue was used primarily to deliver information, context, or analysis. Finally, the plays ended when the message had been delivered.

The third educational theme found in Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas plays is the discussion and critique of Chicana/o culture. The Teatro Campesino play *The Militants* and the Teatro de las Chicanas play *So Ruff, So Tuff* portrayed late 1960s Chicana/o culture and critiqued a specific aspect of it—machismo. They did so, however, in two distinct ways and with two different messages. *The Militants* depicts CCM activist culture and criticizes the *macho* attempts to be “more militant” than the next guy or group as a detriment to the movement, one that benefits Anglos. *So Ruff, So Tuff* depicts the dynamics inside the typical Chicana/o family, using the stage to critique the differences in gender expectations and to call out the denial of gender oppression in the community.

In “The Militants,” Teatro Campesino employed an informative, critical, and satirical, rather than simply narrative-driven, structure to portray its view of Chicano militants. The story follows two Chicano militants who are speaking at a university meeting. Only one of them is invited to speak by an Anglo professor, but two of them show up. The militant whom the professor expected is named “Ben Dejo,” a play on the word *pendejo* (a vulgar vernacular word for idiot), yet both militants answer to the name. The commentary is that, humorously, the militants are both idiots. The rest of the play reveals why they are portrayed this way.

As they begin their speech, the militants agree to “sock it to ‘em,” meaning to the Anglos in the audience. The professor, too, is seemingly interested in these Chicano militants calling him out on his white privilege. The militants, identified as Chicano #1 and Chicano #2, begin by pointing out some of the ways the Chicana/o community is oppressed, including labor exploitation and school discrimination. Quickly, however, the militants start to passive-aggressively discredit one another in an attempt to prove they are the more militant of the two. First, they argue about their politics, each one escalating their “militant-ness” toward advocating for violent revolution. Then they move on to cultural representation of Chicano identity and therefore militant politics. In the end, the two militants turn and shoot each other dead—the ultimate demonstration of their machismo. The Anglo professor is delighted at the outcome and leaves the stage laughing.²¹⁶

In this skit, Teatro Campesino explores and critiques the importance placed on the cultural and political expressions of the CCM. It questions the motive of those who focus on flaunting their cultural dress and political militancy. And it answers the question: who benefits when Chicanos fight among themselves? Their answer is the “Anglos.” In the play, the militants care more about who is wearing the most “Chicano clothing,” wears the biggest mustache, and is the most militant Chicano in the room. Before they shoot each other, Chicano #2 comically exclaims, “I’m so militant I scare myself.”²¹⁷ Never does either militant offer a solution to the community problems that they identify. Instead, the militants are more concerned with how they are perceived. At the height of

²¹⁶ Luis Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino*, *Early Works*.

²¹⁷ Luis Valdez and El *Teatro Campesino*, *Early Works*, 94.

the CCM, when most activists in the movement were expressing their cultural and political identities in the same way the militants in the play were, Teatro Campesino asked the audience to reflect on the purpose and limitations of that expression. As an educational exercise, the play acts as a medium for critical thinking on and reflection of Chicana/o culture and CCM activism. Chicano machismo, which both militants display, is depicted as the downfall of both. Teatro Campesino does not go so far as to identify machismo as problematic. *The Militants* only identifies it as a problem in so much as it benefits Anglos when Chicanos turn on each other, not in that *machismo* is harmful to the community.

Teatro de las Chicanas goes further in its critique of Chicano community and CCM and also asks the audience to reflect on a part of the community that they identify as common and harmful. In *So Ruff, So Tuff*, the main characters are siblings Rosie Martinez and Rudy Martinez, and their mother Mrs. Martinez. In this story, an Anglo authority figure, high school teacher Mrs. Fuller, is an obstacle to Rudy and Rosie's educational progress. Mrs. Fuller suggests that the siblings enter into the workforce after high school, despite the fact that both graduated with excellent grades. Rosie mentions how M.E.Ch.A. will help them attend college, another instance of Teatro de las Chicanas using the theater to inform the audience. To this point, Mrs. Fuller says to Mrs. Martinez, "I think you should set your children straight on what's real and put an end to their dreams."²¹⁸

The more damaging obstacle for Rosie, however, is the gender expectations placed on her by society and Chicana/o culture in particular. When she tells her mom that

²¹⁸ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 194.

she wants to go to college, Mrs. Martinez responds, “You certainly can’t; you will find a decent man and get married.”²¹⁹ At another point, Mrs. Martinez tells Rudy “Rudy, you should help your sister look for a decent husband.”²²⁰ Rosie doesn’t accept this expectation and continues to want to attend college. In the play, she also challenges other gender expectations placed on her and her brother. She questions the notion that Rudy’s job is to go into the workforce to provide financially for their mother and her. Rosie and her mother are employed in the story; Rudy is looking for employment. He becomes so desperate to fulfill this expected gender role that he considers selling drugs, a job that he is offered after one of his friends is killed while performing that same role. Rosie, on the other hand, wants both of them to enroll in college. There is also a double standard with the mother’s view on the siblings’ marriage. The mother insists through the play that Rosie marry a good man but tells Rudy not to marry his girlfriend. In this act, Teatro de las Chicanas is criticizing the cultural and gender expectations that make it difficult for Chicana/o youth to attend college, particularly Chicanas as in Rosie’s case.

An additional part of what Rosie provides is a questioning of Rudy’s ideas about oppression. Rudy struggles to find a job as potential employers discriminate against him. Rosie tries to connect with him by reminding him that she too knows about oppression. Rudy rejects this notion, at one point having the following exchange with his sister:

RUDY: You don’t understand; what do you know about discrimination. [*sic*]

ROSIE: Hey, Rudy, first of all I am poor, I am brown, and I am also a woman.

RUDY: You’re only a broad.

²¹⁹ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 195.

²²⁰ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 200.

ROSIE: And I don't need you discriminating against me!

RUDY: Who, me?²²¹

This passage demonstrates the type of education about the triple burden or oppression borne by women that Teatro de las Chicanas communicated to the audience with *So Ruff, So Tuff*. The scenes with Mrs. Fuller and those with Rudy facing discrimination at potential jobs are the obvious ones—racial discrimination at the hands of Anglos. What Teatro de las Chicanas also wanted to communicate was the discrimination that Chicanas experienced as racialized and gendered people within the community. Rosie's statement, "I am poor, I am brown, and I am also a woman," points to this consciousness that the theater troupe was attempting to purvey. Chicana/o culture, with its traditional expectations of women and men and its assumptions represented by Rudy's own views and values that discrimination only exists from the outside, contributes the oppression of Chicana women.

So Ruff, So Tuff, however, further complicates this notion and adds nuance by presenting Chicana/o culture as the solution. At the climax of the story, Rosie, Rudy, and their mother are in an argument. The mother is angry that Rudy is thinking about selling drugs as his only solution to make money, and she is angry after discovering that Rosie had an abortion. The dialogue in this scene is another opportunity for Teatro de las Chicanas to teach the audience about abortion, without shame and in defense of women's reproductive rights.

As the scene escalates, the character of the Old Man enters. His inclusion signals the conclusion of the play. He gives wise advice to the two siblings on how to deal with

²²¹ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 198.

their individual problems. He says: “Problems have always been. But you young people have to get out there and struggle with all the contradictions like your ancestors did.”²²² At first, the siblings neither want to hear the advice nor want the Old Man involved in their discussion. But the mother scolds them and invokes the cultural concept of *respeto* (respect), which asks the siblings to show respect and have admiration for their elder, the Old Man. Through the Old Man’s and the mother’s cultural wisdom, then, Rosie and Rudy come to appreciate what they have in their family structure and accept that they will have to struggle to succeed and that their role as youth is to create change in society.

The outward education that Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas provided for their audiences was multifaceted. It included the historical, contextual, and critical analysis of the subjects and themes they depicted. With the plays discussed above, the theater troupes performed the role of educating the audiences about the topics they depicted, challenging or questioning common knowledge, and offering solutions to community challenges. By engaging the audiences’ own knowledge on the subject and providing an avenue for critical thinking, the theater troupes acted as educators and their plays as sites for educational dialogue.

Inward education/education for the members (Theater of the Sphere/study groups)

In addition to educating audiences, the second part of the educational project that Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas engaged in was the education of their members. In addition to producing actos that worked to educate the audience for whom they were performed, Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas also created a system of

²²² Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 202.

education for the actors. This education served an obvious purpose: to educate the members on the subject matter with which they would need to be familiar to produce and act in the play. However, educating the membership was not solely a self-serving endeavor. Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas aimed to educate the membership for the benefit of the individuals themselves and the overall benefit of the Chicana/o community. This is a unique way in which the two theater troupes put into practice one of the tenets of the CCM—educate the community. Teatro became the space in which transformative education could occur. Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas contributed to the broader movement to educate community by using the structure of theater to provide members an education that they could apply toward theater productions, to their individual lives, and in service of the community.

The two theater troupes had different approaches to this education. Teatro Campesino employed the practice of Theater of the Sphere, which was specifically structured for and aimed at teaching the participants of the troupe to be better actors but, more importantly, to be better people. Broyles-González provides a detailed analysis of Theater of the Sphere.²²³ The goal here is to demonstrate how Theater of the Sphere fits into the broader project of educating the Chicana/o community. With Theater of the Sphere, Teatro Campesino deployed an educational practice often found in schools—that of “constructing the citizen,” Chicano citizen in this case.

By using a philosophy that centered Indigenous and Chicano knowledge, curriculum, pedagogy, rituals, and values, Teatro Campesino challenged the Euro-centric philosophy practiced in U.S. schools. Theater of the Sphere also served a double

²²³ Broyles-González, *Teatro Campesino*.

function. One was to create better actors and benefit the theater. The second, just as important, was to construct a Chicano citizen. As opposed to U.S. schools, which followed a Euro-centric model, Theater of the Sphere applied an Indigenous/Chicano model rooted in Aztec and Mayan mythology/history. The curriculum, pedagogy, rituals, and values of Theater of the Sphere functioned as a practice that benefited the theater and the members of the theater troupe by teaching them to fully realize their potential along Indigenous/Chicano models, and the community by teaching members how to take the philosophy and teach others in the community.

The goal of impacting the larger community with this Indigenous/Chicano model is witnessed in the plays produced by Teatro Campesino that scholars have classified as the “mystical” stage of the troupe’s development and history. Broyles-Gonzalez argues that this “mystical” stage was not necessarily a specific period in the troupe’s development but part of the troupe’s output throughout its history.²²⁴ Theater of the Sphere also made it possible to educate the members of Teatro Campesino so that they could contribute not only to the theater but to their community.

Teatro de las Chicanas also employed a philosophy and practice that worked to educate the members of the theater troupe. Teatro de las Chicanas instructed its members in the subject matter to raise their consciousness and to prepare them for the education of the audience. Many of the women who participated in Teatro de las Chicanas throughout its run credited the education they received within the theater troupe as beneficial to them outside the theater and beyond their involvement. Teatro de las Chicanas employed an academic structure to the education of members. Before writing and as part of the

²²⁴ Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*.

preparation of the play, the women in the troupe created study groups to learn about the subject they were depicting. They researched, absorbed, and discussed the subject. For many of the women, the study groups were their introduction to the theater troupe. Newer members were invited to the study groups to learn, then quickly encouraged to perform.

In their oral histories, many women in Teatro de las Chicanas highlighted the significance of the educational messages they were providing for the audience. They noted that the acting was not always good. At times it got better with practice or repetition, and at times it did not. In their opinion, the message, not advancement as an actor or theater troupe, was the most important part of the theater's mission. Notably, Teatro de las Chicanas did not attempt a trajectory similar to that of Teatro Campesino, which grew into a mainstream theater company. Teatro de las Chicanas' goal was to perform for the community in order to provide education and dialogue on social, political, and cultural issues that were significant to its audience, the Chicana/o community. The study groups were the foundation of that practice.²²⁵

In the study groups, the women of Teatro de las Chicanas employed the skills, knowledge, and resources afforded to them by their participation in higher education and community organizing. The emphasis placed on the message that the theater troupe could deliver applied to the work the women for themselves within the troupe. Learning from one another and growing as individuals and members of the community were just as important for the participants. Many of the women mentioned in their oral histories that their politics changed as a result of their involvement in the theater troupe. Member Delia Ravelo described her involvement in the theater: "*Teatro* awakened my senses in every

²²⁵ Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*.

way imaginable. It was live theater with a dose of popular Chicano culture, political criticism, and a mirror reflecting a society rife with institutional racism, economic disparity, male supremacy, and prejudice.”²²⁶ Within the troupe, and through the study groups, the members of Teatro de las Chicanas learned of new topics and politics that they were not familiar with or entertained negative opinions about in the past. Many of the women, like others during CCM, became radicalized through their participation in the theater. The members of Teatro de las Chicanas went into different professions, including academia, health services, and union organizing. All described Teatro de las Chicanas as the space where they learned about topics and politics that helped them later in their careers and encouraged them to seek justice.

Both Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas created a space where the theater members could learn skills and knowledge that enhanced their individual and community lives beyond the lessons necessary for the theater to function and themselves to perform. Through Theater of the Sphere and the study groups, the two troupes aimed to leave their members with lessons that they could apply to their lives and contribute to their communities. Theater, then, functioned as an alternative space for education of Chicanas and Chicanos.

Teatro Campesino sourced and put into practice teaching philosophies that Luis Valdez and others learned from their own mentors and educators and influential intellectuals. The teachings and writings of Domingo Martinez Paredes, a Mexican scholar of Mayan culture, were particularly important for the development of the philosophy. At the center of the philosophy of Theater of the Sphere was the concept of

²²⁶ Ravelo quoted in Garica, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 8.

pensamiento serpentino (serpentine thought), which rooted in Mayan and Aztec worldviews.²²⁷ As Broyles-Gonzalez describes it, *pensamiento serpentino* “stresses the importance and need for a Chicana/o education and liberation grounded in a knowledge of native teaching.”²²⁸ Informing the CCM’s exploration of culture and history, these Native teachings focused on Aztec and Mayan knowledge and directly challenged the Euro-centric philosophy, pedagogy, and content of mainstream elementary, secondary, and higher education in the United States. This choice partly stemmed from the Mexico’s own definition of the country’s Indigenous past as specific to Aztec and Mayan origins and partly from the materials that were available to CCM activists and scholars and that were often limited to literature on Aztec and Mayan histories. Through their own formal and informal education, the members of Teatro Campesino developed a philosophy for passing on that education to other members of the troupe. Rooted in Mesoamerican Indigenous knowledge, the philosophy of *pensamiento serpentino* and practice of Theater of the Sphere created an alternative educational approach that challenged the Euro-centric one so dominant in U.S. educational systems.

More than a political or spiritual project, Theater of the Sphere functioned as a “pedagogy of the oppressed, offering self-empowerment through a process of relearning and reascertaining a Chicana/o humanity.”²²⁹ In practice, Theater of the Sphere implemented *veinte pasos* (twenty steps), workshops, and “a program of study that

²²⁷ Written by Luis Valdez and Teatro Campesino as a poem, *pensamiento serpentino* describes their group’s theater and life philosophy.

²²⁸ Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*, 94.

²²⁹ Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*, 95.

embraced indigenous languages, poetry, philosophy, and dance.”²³⁰ The veinte pasos were meant to teach Teatro Campesino members the great human potential in unity of the mind, body, heart, and soul. Based on written and oral indigenous history and mythology, the veinte pasos used practice, ritual, and performance to teach members the philosophy of Theater of the Sphere. In this way, Theater of the Sphere developed its own educational model and practice. The use of a Chicano-interpreted Aztec and Mayan epistemology made its curriculum an alternative to the Euro-centric one practiced in the United States. By sourcing and using Aztec and Mayan knowledge, history, culture, and worldviews to create educational tools, Teatro Campesino legitimized the production of knowledge that came from Indigenous communities as opposed to European ones. Pedagogically, too, Theater of the Sphere was different. It privileged and utilized community-sourced knowledge and incorporated accessible teaching practices that involved little previous experience in school or theater.

In an educational context Teatro Campesino’s Theater of the Sphere put into practice the idea of “constructing the citizen” that schools use to create citizens for the nation-state. In the United States, the purpose of educational institutions is to teach students the definitions of cultural and national identity, in addition to instructing them in reading, writing, arithmetic, and science. Schools used and largely still apply a Euro-centric approach to this practice, which excludes knowledge sourced from other cultures and histories—in this case those of populations of Mexican descent.

Theater of the Sphere provided an alternative to this dominant path in several ways. Primarily by using the Aztec and Mayan mythology described above for its

²³⁰ Ibid, 116.

curriculum. Teatro Campesino used concepts like pensamiento serpentino and the holistic Mayan-influenced philosophy of *in lak ech* (you are my other self). Both introduced to them by Martinez Paredes, these philosophies incorporated Indigenous cultural beliefs and historical knowledge into education. In practice, too, Theater of the Sphere diverged from the established systems of learning. Teatro Campesino employed body movements, acting, *danza*, dance, and theater itself to educate. Theater of the Sphere constituted an alternative to U.S. educational traditions by incorporating Indigenous and Chicana/o cultural and historical traditions into learning. Broyles-Gonzalez has recognized this unique approach and urged scholars to consider the implications of Theater of the Sphere as an alternative educational model.²³¹

Teatro de las Chicanas also knew the importance of educating members and the positive impact the process could have on their lives, both inside and outside the theater. One of the troupe's members, Laura E. Garcia, stated, "People say knowledge is power. So we educated ourselves."²³² Another member, Sandra M. Gutierrez, echoed this sentiment: "My college experiences with the *teatro* were formative in my personal, political, and intellectual growth."²³³ Members were committed to the structure of Teatro de las Chicanas that facilitated their own education within the troupe. Kathy Requejo commented: "Life as a member of the teatro meant being devoted to the *teatro*. It meant spending precious time rehearsing and going to meetings."²³⁴ The study groups, or

²³¹ Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*, 126.

²³² Garcia quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 28.

²³³ Gutierrez quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 73.

²³⁴ Requejo quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 58.

meetings, that the women organized for themselves were a space where they not only could prepare for their plays but could be educated.

The women of Teatro de las Chicanas created an educational space in which they could gain knowledge they did not receive in schools and even in their own community. Importantly, their site also served to analyze the construction of dominant gender codes and their pernicious impacts on women and society. The obstacles of these gender roles in their community and their socio-political oppression in American society created a challenging reality for them that was different from their male counterparts. An all-women theater troupe with an educational component was an alternative to both U.S. educational systems and gender norms. Member Margarita Carrillo recognized the value of this alternative educational space: “Above all, the *teatro* educated me at that time in ways I would never have imagined. I learned things my mother certainly hadn’t taught me in my twenty-two years. From these women I learned to stand up for myself and be proud of who I am.”²³⁵ Breaking down gender traditions and conventions, Teatro de las Chicanas was an alternative to both U.S. formal schooling and the cultural education the women of the troupe received at home.

The study groups sponsored performances mounted by Teatro de las Chicanas also contributed to the political education of its members. Carrillo explained how the teatro was instrumental in developing her political awareness: “The *teatro* actos seemed more radical to me and yet I kept going back to the weekly rehearsal meetings to observe them. I learned what was happening on the various college campuses they attended. I was

²³⁵ Carrillo quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 81.

also becoming aware of working-class oppression from their *teatro* skits.”²³⁶ Maria Juarez also had the encouragement of her fellow members: “The women were patient and encouraged me to continue improving my English, not just to be vocal but to develop political understanding.”²³⁷ Through the collaborative educational model in Teatro de las Chicanas, members received an education that no mainstream public school or university would have given them and that they would likely have found nowhere else at the time. The theater educated troupe members politically for the benefit of the plays, their audiences, their communities, and for their own personal growth.

Delia Rodriguez, who was one of the several women who went on to receive a graduate degree, also pointed out the long-lasting educational impact that the theater had on her life: “My involvement in the *teatro* as an actor was very short. But my association with the *teatro* continues to be a real education. I am blessed because my *teatro* family ties are eternal.”²³⁸ Rodriguez here is commenting on both the education she received by being part of the theater troupe and the life education that she received by joining the theater and the relationships she developed as a result. Gloria Escalera also used what she learned in the theater for her life and political career after the troupe stopped performing. She stated: “I stopped *teatro* role-playing and dived into real-life issues affecting our working-class lives. I got involved in local community issues and started speaking out—without a script.”²³⁹ The education that the women of Teatro de las Chicanas gave to

²³⁶ Carrillo quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 84.

²³⁷ Juarez quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 118.

²³⁸ Rodriguez quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 105.

²³⁹ Escalera quoted in Garcia, Gutierrez, and Nuñez, *Teatro Chicana*, 127.

themselves and each other shaped their individual and community lives. As an alternative to the education they received in schools, the education provided to them by the space they created within Teatro de las Chicanas allowed for personal, political, and community growth.

Conclusion

Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas are part of the history of Chicano theater, Chicano art, and the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Both teatro troupes contributed to the artistic expression of the CCM and to the discussion of identity, politics, and culture. Both are, however, also part of the history of educational activism within the CCM and are examples of how equitable and transformative education was imagined, planned, and put into practice. In addition to serving as spaces for artistic endeavors, the teatro troupes also created alternative educational spaces.

In their first function as educational spaces, Teatro Campesino and Teatro de las Chicanas educated the community at large by reaching audiences in the fields, colleges, and community spaces. In these venues, they staged plays that educated audiences on importance of education, on relevant topics critical for the community to discuss, and on community culture, tradition, justice, and identity. The second function was providing education to the members of the troupe. For this object, the two companies used philosophies and practices rooted in community knowledge. Teatro Campesino implemented the Theater of the Sphere, a philosophy based in Aztec and Mayan mythology and a practice that incorporated Indigenous cultural traditions. Teatro de las Chicanas also created an alternative space in which its members could educate each

other, particularly in Chicana feminism that evolved their political consciousness and transformed their lives and careers. From this space, members learned and created long lasting connections. These alternative spaces allowed for an education that troupe members could not have received in U.S. institutions of secondary and higher learning.

Both theater troupes are an example of alternative educational spaces in which education was not only possible but a priority and reality. These spaces were communal, community-centered, and alternative. This education was possible and attainable for these theater groups. In the long history of the struggle for equitable education, Chicano Theater was an imagined performative space where collective educational successes were achieved.

Chapter 4

“A True Chicano Alternative”: Colegio Jacinto Treviño – The First Chicano College in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, 1970–1976

Chicana/o Movement (CCM) educational activists in the 1960s and 1970s attempted to reform established institutions of learning in the United States to achieve equitable education for Mexican-descent populations. Through these efforts, they were successful in establishing Chicana/o Studies programs in colleges and universities and K-12 schools. (This type of activism continues to this day.) In addition, educational activists also made attempts to create alternative sites and resources outside or parallel to the institutions available to them. CCM scholars and educators compiled reading lists and self-published books, and established their own schools. The schools established by CCM activists included K-12 schools such as Escuela Tlatelolco in Denver, Colorado, founded by the Crusade for Justice. Activists also founded independent colleges and universities. Examples of this include DQ University in Davis, California—a joint effort by Chicana/o and Native American activists and educators—and Universidad de Aztlan in Fresno, California. This chapter focuses on a similar independent college called Colegio Jacinto Treviño (1969-1976) in Merced, Texas. The organizers of Colegio Jacinto Treviño, like those of the other independent colleges around the Southwest, attempted to break down the hierarchical structure of education that left communities of color at the margins. They did so by prioritizing holistic educational systems involving community members in

decision-making, establishing transnational linkages, and developing culturally relevant and community-responsive education.

Colegio Jacinto Treviño (CJT) was part of community efforts across the U.S. Southwest to establish grassroots independent colleges. These efforts were also a part of the organizing that went on in colleges and universities to create Chicano Studies programs and departments. In Fresno, California, for instance, professors and community members associated with Ethnic Studies at Fresno State College established an independent college named Universidad de Aztlan in the late 1960s.²⁴⁰ The founders of CJT, like those of Universidad de Aztlan and other Chicano colleges, created their institutional and educational philosophies to align with the ongoing cultural expressions and political consciousness of the CCM. The college's namesake, Jacinto Treviño, was a Texas Borderlands folk hero. Like other border heroes, Treviño was culturally significant to the Chicana/o community for his heroic encounter with the Texas Rangers. The founders of CJT learned about Treviño's story and its significance from Chicano folklore scholar Americo Paredes. Naming the college in honor of Treviño signified the founders' commitment to the Chicano communities of the Rio Grande Valley and demonstrated the intention of educational activists and reformers to institutionalize discourses of resistance to compulsory government education that did not serve Mexican communities in the U.S. Southwest.

As an educational institution, CJT was also an attempt to address the educational needs of the Mexican-descent community in the Rio Grande Valley. Like other CCM

²⁴⁰ Eliezer Risco, "Before Universidad de Aztlan: Ethnic Studies at Fresno State College," in *Parameters of Institutional Change: Chicano Experiences in Education* (Hayward, Calif.: Southwest Network, 1974), 41–47.

activists, the founders of CJT were aware of the inequitable and often-racist education that Mexican-descent communities received in the United States. CJT became an avenue for them to provide the type of education that would be transformative for their community. To achieve this goal, they established programs to educate students of all ages and at all stages of schooling, including a General Educational Development (GED) program, undergraduate and graduate college courses, and eventually a children's campus. The efforts by activists to address education directed at young children revealed that they understood the need to intervene early and consistently in the trajectory of K-college education. The curriculum at CJT also aimed to provide the college's students with the necessary college courses for the degree most of them were pursuing—the Master's in Education—and to supplement those with courses that studied the history, politics, and culture of the Chicana/o community. The college's emphasis on granting degrees in the field of education was also significant. CJT aimed to provide more educators for the Rio Grande Valley region. Both undergraduate and graduate students at CJT were required to complete a practicum in the GED program and children's campus. This way, students worked directly within their community and became part of the educational changes led by the founders of CJT.

Organizationally, CJT also presented an alternative to normative institutions and was influenced by the educational activism of the CCM. One important component was CJT's inclusion of community members and students as part of the organizing body of the college. The movement to establish CJT, like other types of activism during the CCM, involved scholars, political organizers, young people, and community members. Their inclusion in the government of CJT was in line with the movements to bring the

needs of the community to the center as opposed to government mandates. This revisioning of education took place at other newly established alternative schools in the Southwest and at those that achieved the establishment of Chicano Studies at colleges and universities. CJT's scope was also reflective of the ongoing movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

CJT had at once a local, regional, and transnational reach. Many of the students attended school and worked in the Merced, Texas, or the surrounding community. However, some lived in other southwestern states and worked in those communities while attending CJT satellite campuses. Additionally, CJT created relationships with educational institutions in Mexico and other Latin American countries and funded student trips to those institutions. This capability gave CJT students an opportunity to receive an education from different sources and contribute to the larger movement to change the type of education the Chicana/o community received.

CJT administrators also sought to impact the Rio Grande Valley community with their plans for the college. For example, CJT planned to build a new campus, la piramide del sol (the pyramid of the sun), which administrators envisioned would be modeled after Mesoamerican pyramids and would house the college in the future. Unfortunately, la piramide del sol, like the educational goals of CJT, did not all come to fruition. The college closed in 1976, the year it planned to open the new campus. While CJT had a short-lived history, the college's achievements are significant to the history of Chicana educational activism. CJT was part of the ongoing activism that addressed the historical marginalization of Mexican-descent communities by educational institutions at all levels. Like other activists at the time, CJT founders made significant contributions to the

struggle for equitable education by establishing an independent college that valued community, developed culturally relevant curriculum, and made the education of Chicana/os across the Southwest a priority.

History

The proposal for Colegio Jacinto Treviño (CJT) emerged during a Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) conference in Mission, Texas in December 1969. At this gathering, community members from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, first began conversations about establishing a Chicano college. CJT-produced literature about its history states that the “founders of Colegio Jacinto Trevino [*sic*] [were] all former migrant farmworkers that learned about the educational problems facing Chicanos by having to live through them.”²⁴¹ Aware of the failings of the U.S. educational system to address the educational needs of Mexican-descent communities, community members and professionals decided to create their own educational venue to better serve their local community. As they stated, “creating our own institution of higher learning was not something that we had long planned to do.”²⁴² These educational activists first tried to reform established institutions of learning by using the strategies employed by mid-twentieth-century activists. They “petitioned, picketed, walked out, registered voters and

²⁴¹ CJT Brochure, undated, item 1, folder 10, box 1, folder 10, Colegio Jacinto Treviño Records, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries, Texas [hereafter (date), box (no.), folder (no.), item (no.), CJT Records]. The item titles and numbers cited here are those used in the CJT Records finding aid. Many of the materials in the CJT Records archive do not contain page numbers. For those that do, page numbers will be cited.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

ran candidates for school boards, but found that the system [was] inherently unwilling to change.”²⁴³

Having used the strategies of reform to little success, the CJT founders were convinced that if they “wanted fundamental change, it was [their] duty to create it.”²⁴⁴ They began by planning what a Chicano college would entail and set out to find funding and support. One of the more-detailed official histories of CJT, written by the founders, describes their history as follows.²⁴⁵ Between December 1969 and May 1970, the CJT community dedicated their time to the “planning, preparation, and meditation for the concept of the Colegio.”²⁴⁶ Between June 1970 and August 1970, CJT founders “looked for support and ideas all over Texas and the rest of the Country.”²⁴⁷ In August 1970, they “found support in terms of money and accreditation from Antioch College,” located in Yellow Springs, Ohio. August to October 1970, the founders “established [the] base of studies and curriculum.”²⁴⁸ And on 12 October 1970, they established Colegio Jacinto

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Several documents in the CJT Records archive give the history of the college. Some are more detailed than others. At times they provide a concise history of major events, followed by a more detailed description or elaboration. Here I use the histories found in “CJT Brochure” and “Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Informacion Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas” (A Book of Information Prepared for the Community and Interested Persons).

²⁴⁶ Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Informacion Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas, January 1971, item 1-2, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. It is not clear why CJT founders chose to partner with Antioch College for the school’s accreditation. However, a big factor might have been Antioch College’s known

Treviño. However, instruction did not begin until the founders were able to secure the physical location of the college in Mercedes, Texas. It is unclear exactly when they acquired the two-story mansion in which CJT was located, but it was in fall of 1970.²⁴⁹

The decision to establish CJT, then, came after years of attempting to reform schools to better serve the educational needs of Chicanas and Chicanos in the Rio Grande Valley. Once the decision was made that the best option was to create an alternative to those institutions by establishing a community-based Chicano college, a great amount of planning and research was done before instruction began. The CJT archive includes a collection of literature and reports showing that CJT founders dedicated time and energy to researching how best to establish a college that could be educationally, culturally, and politically relevant to Chicanos.²⁵⁰ Additionally, the CJT founders' own experience with the U.S. educational system and knowledge of the educational needs of their local community guided the type of educational services they provided at CJT.

One of the primary concerns of CCM-era educational activists was the experience of Chicana/o youth being pushed out of K-12 public schools, a pattern that led to a high number of them not receiving a high school diploma. Across Texas, students and community members protested this inequity with walkouts at their local schools. This must have been a concern for the Rio Grande Valley Chicano community as well,

progressive politics both within the area of education and in mid-twentieth-century society.

²⁴⁹ In its brochures, CJT mentions this two-story mansion, in which the school is housed, although no other information is given about how the college acquired it.

²⁵⁰ See folders 23, 24, and 25 of the CJT Records, titled "External Studies used as models for founders, 1970-1974, 2013." Unfortunately, I was unable to access these records for this project, but I plan to include an analysis of them in future research.

because the first educational support venture that CJT founders embarked on was the college's General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program. GED courses began in the fall of 1969. Some of the CJT founders held college degrees and served as the first GED instructors. With limited resources, the professors funded those first months of the college by continuing to work as agricultural laborers.²⁵¹

In the following months, CJT expanded to establish a master's program and became an essential educational site for Mercedes, Texas, and the surrounding communities. Through its association with Antioch College, CJT was able to gain accreditation for the master's program, which was CJT's next educational offering after the GED classes. The master's program began on 12 October 1970, which CJT literature identifies as the college's formal founding date. By January 1971, CJT reported fifteen students in its master's program. In that short time, the college had also begun to develop a library in which it planned to house educational materials in both Spanish and English. The college also offered classes on Mexican art and theater for the community and had plans to "establish an 'Editorial House' to service the entire state."²⁵²

By fall 1971, CJT had established its undergraduate program, inaugurated with seventy students. In 1972, administrators projected they would welcome 150 new undergraduate students for fall 1972 and 500 for fall 1973.²⁵³ Shortly after establishing CJT in Mercedes, the college established satellite campuses in other parts of the

²⁵¹ CJT Brochure, undated, item 1, folder 10, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁵² Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Informacion Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas, January 1971, item 1-2, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁵³ El Desafio de Colegio Jacinto Trevino, 1972, item 11, folder 5, box 1, , CJT Records.

Southwest, with students attending the college from as far away as Washington, D.C.²⁵⁴ In August 1972, the governing body of CJT discussed the plans to establish a campus in San Juan, Texas, which the members identified at that time as a potential fourth site for CJT.²⁵⁵ By Spring 1973, CJT had also established its Colegio de Niños, a preschool in La Villa, Texas. What began years prior as summer classes for community children had grown into a CJT program dedicated to children. In February 1973, administrators reported ten children ages 3-5 enrolled in the second group to attend the school.²⁵⁶ In addition to all these programs, CJT also hoped to eventually offer a Ph.D. in Education and planned to build a new campus—what the administration referred to as the “Piramide del Sol”—which would be constructed as a pyramid.²⁵⁷

CJT grew exponentially in the first few months and years of its establishment. The founders’ goals were to address the educational needs of their community. As they explained, they aimed “to work on problems and questions that effect [*sic*] the Mexican-American children from kindergarten to the college level.”²⁵⁸ To that goal, CJT established programs to educate children, youth, and adults at various levels. As a

²⁵⁴ Students attended CJT in Colorado, New Mexico, California, and other places in Texas beyond Mercedes.

²⁵⁵ Concilio de Gobernacion (meeting minutes?), 19 and 20 August 1972, item 6, folder 1, box 1, pp. 2-3, CJT Records.

²⁵⁶ Memo from Juan Dias Alemán re: Reporte Sobre El Centro Colegio De Niños, 10 February 1973, item 10, folder 4, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁵⁷ CJT planned to house the entirety of the college in the pyramid, which was advertised as the first pyramid in the Southwest, including classrooms and administrative offices.

²⁵⁸ Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Informacion Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas, January 1971, item 1-2, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

Chicano college that provided GED, undergraduate, graduate, and later early-school-age courses for the Rio Grande Valley community, CJT acted as a vibrant and welcome alternative to the U.S. educational system. The educational activists involved with the college made all that possible because they acknowledged the need for an educational institution that valued Chicano culture and history and prioritized putting that alternative vision into practice at CJT. In this way, CJT became an essential educational site for the Rio Grande Valley Chicano community.

CJT administrators were also aware of the college's significance in the context of the U.S. educational system's failure to address the learning needs of Mexican-descent communities. When Chicana/o people attempted to reform educational institutions, they met resistance or indifference. Speaking to this experience, CJT administrators wrote: "We have learned that we must create our own ways and means if we are to find lasting solutions to our problems."²⁵⁹ Instead of seeking reform in dominant institutions, founders established CJT to create an educational institution that could be a lasting solution. In undertaking this project, CJT organizers were answering the call for educational self-determination outlined in the Plan de Santa Barbara (1969), the founding document for Chicana/o Studies. However, for CJT to be long-lasting or successful, it could not simply be different from other institutions. It had to be a legitimate alternative by providing something that other colleges could not—an education that was relevant to the Chicana/o community. CJT administrators were committed to creating that alternative. Elsewhere in their literature, the founders concisely state CJT's goal in the following way:

²⁵⁹ Brochure for applicants, undated, item 2, folder 10, box 1, CJT Records.

“Colegio Jacinto Treviño, the first Chicano college in the United States, is dedicated to the creation and implementation of a true Chicano alternative to the present educational system, one which would be relevant to all of La Raza.”²⁶⁰

This declaration was a powerful vision for a program and environment dedicated to the service of educating Chicana/o students on their own terms, in their culture, and in their stream of history.

Administrators also viewed CJT as an avenue to achieve the goals of the Chicana/o Movement (CCM). Emphasizing the need for a praxis that, they argued, CJT represented, they stated: “It does no good to yell, march, and protest without also producing concrete solutions.”²⁶¹ Like other generations before them, CCM-era educational activists identified specific problems in the mainstream educational system. These challenges and issues included the omission of Mexican/Chicano history and culture in the curriculum, the lack of Mexican-descent instructors, and the emphasis on English-language instruction, which negatively affected bilingual students. To address these concerns, the CJT community “[came] together to establish a College that truly belongs to ‘our people.’”²⁶² The college’s founders also recognized that the political moment of the CCM allowed for a different approach to educational activism. Establishing an independent Chicano college signified an opportunity to address the issues of the past and to create something for the future. CJT administrators

²⁶⁰ Official Colegio Jacinto Trevino brochure, 1972–1973, item 9-11, folder 10, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁶¹ Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Informacion Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas, January 1971, item 1-2, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁶² Ibid.

acknowledged this situation when they wrote, “Our primary motive is that we see an urgency to better the present educational system by developing a variety of programs that are creative and intimately relative to the needs of our Raza.”²⁶³

In order to provide this type of institution for their community, CJT founders worked closely with that same community. To their credit, CJT literature and other internal documents always acknowledged the support and essential part the community played in the establishment and development of CJT. When reporting on the progress of the college in 1971, the founders wrote that school’s achievements had “taken the labor of professors, students, and parents.”²⁶⁴ More than acknowledging the community’s involvement, CJT made its participation an official part of the college’s administrative structure. In this way as well, CJT was an alternative to the established U.S. educational system, which generally did not consult or include community to extent expected at the new school.

CJT’s by-laws dictated the role that community and students would play in the administrative body of the college. Article 2, Section 2, stipulated that the college’s Governing Council would be one-third community members, one-third students, and one-third professionals.²⁶⁵ The student members could be GED, undergraduate, and graduate

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ By-laws of the Governing Council, 21 February 1972, item 1, folder 1, box 1, CJT Records.

students, while professionals included professors and poets.²⁶⁶ The first version of the by-laws was ratified on 12 October 1970, the day the college was founded, signifying that this organizational structure was integral to the goal of creating the unique educational institution that CJT became.

The community's role in the college was not simply ceremonial. In 1972, community member Ruben Saenz was elected president of the Governing Council, a position he held for a year. At a meeting in 1973, the council discussed lowering the number of members from twenty-one to nine. It was then suggested that nine were too few and that low number of members could potentially unbalance the council. In the end, it was decided to lower the member count to fifteen.²⁶⁷ The participation and ratio of community members and students, however, was never in question.

The faculty and student body were also from diverse professional backgrounds and had a history of community engagement, a role they continued at CJT. In some of the college's literature, CJT highlighted the cultural and community background of some professors. Among them was Dr. Leonard Maestas, who held a Ph.D. in administrative education and had considerable knowledge in child development and surely contributed to the traditional academic rigor necessary for a college. However, CJT's goal was not to provide traditional academic education only. As an institution, CJT also valued community knowledge. Martha P. Cotera, a master's student at CJT, applied some of her

²⁶⁶ By-laws of the Governing Council, 21 February 1972, item 1, folder 1, box 1, CJT Records; and Miembros del Concilio de Gobernacion, undated, item 5, folder 1, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁶⁷ Junta del Concilio de Gobernacion, 2 June 1973, p. 13, item 8, folder 2, box 1, CJT Records.

knowledge and experience gained elsewhere to serve as the college's librarian. The library was one of the major projects that CJT undertook to become unique in its offering of educational materials on Mexican American populations and culture. Cotera also taught a course on research methodology at CJT.²⁶⁸ Another professor, Dr. Sena-Rivera donated his time to teach a class at CJT.²⁶⁹ Students also brought diverse experience and skills, which they used to support and develop CJT. One of the fifteen original master's students served as the editor of the publication *YA MERO!*—a periodical that was available in the local Mercedes community. Of that group of students, two had previously worked as educators.²⁷⁰

The structure that the founders created for CJT had a positive impact on the college itself and the community it served. However, the college at times encountered some problems, which administrators had to identify and resolve even as CJT continued to grow. In 1973 for instance, Governing Council members and other administrators were still figuring out the exact description and duties of each administrative position. Towards this effort, then-CJT administrator Francisco Briones wrote a "Proposal for a Governance Structure," a document that aimed to delineate administrative duties. In this document, Briones detailed the roles for each administrator and staff member at CJT. The fact that Briones wrote this document in 1973, two years after CJT's establishment, demonstrates

²⁶⁸ Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Informacion Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas, January 1971, item 1-2, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁶⁹ Reporte Profesionista por Ruben Solis, Jr., undated, item 13, folder 2, box 1, CJT Records. Dr. Sena-Rivera's first name is not provided.

²⁷⁰ Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Informacion Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas, January 1971, item 1-2, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

that CJT was a work-in-progress, even as it attempted to provide educational services for the community.

In 1972 and 1973, the Governing Council considered two cases in which it was unclear whether a student had properly followed all requirements and procedures to graduate. The confusion arose because the members of the governing council were themselves unsure of the specifics of some of those requirements. In the case of Elida Ochoa, the council was uncertain about how to assess her teaching practicum in the community. Some council members believed she had not completed enough practicum hours, while others thought that she had. In the end Ochoa was allowed to graduate, but council members agreed to review how students were assessed in the future.²⁷¹

When another student, Victor Moheno, believed that he was ready to graduate, he submitted the necessary paperwork directly to Antioch College, which oversaw the degree granting. Francisco Briones, then director of graduate studies, commented in a Governing Council meeting that Moheno had incorrectly submitted his paperwork. The council was unsure about whether Moheno or Briones made the errors. Council members also discussed whether Moheno should be allowed to graduate.²⁷² In the end, Briones conducted an investigation and found that errors were made by both him and the student. The issues were resolved and Moheno graduated.²⁷³ These two cases forced the

²⁷¹ Concilio de Gobernacion (meeting minutes?), 19 and 20 August 1972, pp. 2-3 and pp. 8-11, item 6, folder 1, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁷² Junta del Concilio de Gobernacion, 2 June 1973, pp. 4-5, item 8, folder 2, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁷³ Memo re: Implementation of Concilio Requests, 5 June 1973, item 10, folder 2, box 1, CJT Records.

governing council to evaluate the clarity of graduation requirements, assessment, and procedures for students at CJT. It was fortunate that the students were not negatively impacted, but the lack of clarity in these standards and processes was another example of the challenges CJT administrators had to address as they worked to develop the college.

A major contribution made by CJT was the curriculum that it offered students. Its organizational structure and community engagement made CJT a unique institution, but its curriculum made CJT a significant educational alternative to the established institutions of learning in the Southwest. It was not enough to create an institution that was culturally rooted in and worked with the Chicano community. To be a sustainable solution for the educational needs of the community, CJT had to *teach* differently. To that end, CJT's curriculum pushed the education that the college offered into subjects that aligned with the political liberation movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly CCM.

This curriculum included monthly three-day seminars in different disciplines. In the field of education, for example, CJT offered courses such as "Chicanismo," which studied the "historical development of the various degrees of the ideological positions taken by Chicanos since 1900 to 1970"²⁷⁴ and two sections of "Conscientization," which reviewed Paulo Freire's concepts and their application in the education of the Chicano community. Historical courses included "Colonialism and Neo-colonialism," which analyzed "contemporary colonialism as related to the Chicano and Latin America" and used "Colombia and Ecuador as case studies."²⁷⁵ Another history course was titled

²⁷⁴ CJT Brochure, undated, p. 10, item 1, folder 10, CJT Records.

²⁷⁵ CJT Brochure, undated, p. 12, *ibid.*

“History of the United States (1800–1970),” a survey course that studied “the rise of ‘white supremacy.’”²⁷⁶ In addition to providing analysis on contemporary and relevant topics, these courses were also meant to complement the more-standardized graduate course offerings. This curriculum is an example of CJT’s educational innovation. The study of topics such as colonialism, transnationalism, white supremacy, and interethnic political relationships was not common at the time but essential to CJT’s goal of revolutionizing the type of education provided to its students and the community.

The courses available to all master’s students at CJT included those in education, which trained students in teaching of and assessment for children and adults. History courses were also standard two-section surveys—one on early U.S. history, and the other on late-nineteenth and twentieth-century U.S. history. Seemingly, the course mentioned above, “History of the United States (1800–1970), was meant to add to and challenge the standard U.S. history offerings found in other colleges—as evidenced by the description as a course that studied the “the rise of ‘white supremacy.’” Additionally, the CJT master’s program included courses on the Civil Rights movement, “Inter-Racial Relations,” and “Non-Violence as a Technique of Social Change.”²⁷⁷ It is unclear whether these latter courses were original to CJT, or their version of politically influenced courses offered at other colleges and universities at the time.

The curriculum at CJT was purposefully created to give students a breadth of education in different subjects and was “designed to develop Chicanos who are aware of

²⁷⁶ CJT Brochure, undated, p. 13, *ibid.*

²⁷⁷ CJT Brochure, pp. 3–13, *ibid.*

the history and the economic position of La Raza.”²⁷⁸ To achieve this goal, CJT students were also required to complete a teaching practicum in the community or at CJT. Graduate and undergraduate students, for example, taught the GED courses offered at CJT as part of their degree program. Graduate courses were scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The rest of the week, graduate students worked on special projects and administration at CJT.²⁷⁹ All of this was part of CJT’s goal to create a community of educators that could provide education to various community members, including those who were not within educational institutions.

CJT also had an emphasis on addressing the many learning needs of students and the community. Master’s students were encouraged to use their practicum to contribute to the field of education and their own professional careers. In 1973, the twenty-five students in the master’s program were all working on a master’s in education. A report on the status of the program that year stated that the program was “categorized by the expansion and implementation of new methods of pedagogy.”²⁸⁰ This also demonstrates CJT’s commitment to developing the pedagogical and curricular methods in the education of Chicana communities. The master’s program curriculum also included courses on mental health, urban education, sociology, evaluation instruments, and rural

²⁷⁸ CJT Brochure, p. 24, *ibid*.

²⁷⁹ Colegio Jacinto Treviño: Un Libro de Información Preparado Para la Comunidad y Personas Interesadas, January 1971, item 1-2, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁸⁰ caracterizada por expansion y implementacion de nuevos metodos de pedagogia. Reporte del Programa de Maestria del Colegio Jacinto Trevino, January 1973, item 5, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

pedagogy.²⁸¹ The scope of the education that students at CJT received matched the scope of the CCM in addressing the concerns of the community in multiple areas including education, health, and urban and rural populations.

CJT's ambition and reach went beyond the local Mercedes community and the education of the Rio Grande Valley Chicano community. The college had at once a local, regional, national, and transnational scope. This included a commitment to providing several levels of education for all age groups in the community. It extended to CJT's support of other Chicano colleges, with a plan to create a stable network among the different colleges in the Southwest. While enrolled at the college, CJT students resided in different cities in the Southwest and the rest of the United States, expanding the impact of CJT on different communities. CJT also prioritized sending students to various Latin American countries to become better educators, establishing transnational networks and sourcing different educational methods to strengthen the students' professionalization.

CJT aimed to contribute to the future of education for the Chicano community. The primary goal was to produce educators with a social consciousness. The curriculum at the college reflected that approach. CJT also hoped to produce new educational materials and an educational program that balanced the classroom and community engagement.²⁸² Additionally, CJT recognized that the tools (e.g., standardized testing) used for student assessment often did a disservice to students of color and hoped to create new tools. CJT planned to develop testing tools that were more culturally relevant to Chicano students because the existing ones were "geared to the Anglo." Existing tools,

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Goals and Objectives, undated, item 29, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

according to the evaluation that CJT researchers conducted, failed to consider the cultural background of Chicana students. This was an extension of the lack of value placed on culturally relevant curricula.²⁸³

CJT's commitment to educating the local community in Mercedes, Texas, is exemplified by the different types of educational programs the college provided. The classes offered to the community and the eventual establishment of a children's school demonstrate that CJT's goal was to inform and impact the education of the entire community, not only students enrolled at the college. The CJT satellite campuses across Texas and the Southwest served to expand the reach of the college regionally. In 1972, of the thirteen master's students enrolled at CJT, six resided in Denver, Colorado, four in Mercedes, two in San Antonio, Texas, and one in Washington, D.C.²⁸⁴ These sites in which CJT students resided outside of Mercedes were often referred to as satellite campuses. The satellite campuses in Texas were physical spaces, but it is unclear whether this was true of the sites in Colorado, New Mexico, California, and Washington, D.C. It is also unclear how students took courses while living in cities outside of Mercedes. Nonetheless, these students were a priority to CJT and an integral part of the college's goal to expand its educational model beyond the Rio Grande Valley.

The students in San Antonio and Mercedes worked at the CJT campuses. The students in Denver worked by "teaching and administering" at Escuela Tlatelolco—the independent school established by the Crusade for Justice, one of the more recognized

²⁸³ One of the objectives of the Colegio...., draft with revisions, undated, item 13, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁸⁴ Memo from Victor B. Moheno re: Graduate Program, 27 May 1972, item 21, folder 4, box 1, CJT Records.

and influential CCM organizations.²⁸⁵ The student in Washington, D.C., was identified as a coordinator of the Chicano Educational System, “a group of Chicanos working on educational problems throughout the United States.”²⁸⁶ It is unclear whether the students resided in other places because they lived there before enrolling in CJT or because they moved to work with the communities in those cities. Nonetheless, the educational work that these students engaged in was an extension of the work CJT was attempting to solidify in Mercedes. CJT administrators asserted that they prioritized this wider educational scope, stating “the education of our Chicano people cannot be isolated in terms of regionalism.”²⁸⁷

Enrolling students who resided in other southwestern states was a CJT commitment. In 1973, of twenty-five master’s students, twelve resided in San Antonio, two in Denver, one in Albuquerque, New Mexico, three in Mercedes, and seven in Fresno and Del Rey, California.²⁸⁸ The students from California seem to have been a new addition between 1972 and 1973. This can be explained by a second example of CJT’s regional influence.

In addition to some students residing in different states, CJT attempted to network with other independent Chicano colleges in the Southwest. In fact, one of those colleges,

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ “La educacion de nuestra gente Chicana no puede aislar [*sic*] en terminos de regionalismo.” Memo from Victor B. Moheno re: Graduate Program, 27 May 1972, item 21, folder 4, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁸⁸ Reporte del Programa de Maestria del Colegio Jacinto Trevino, January 1973, item 5, folder 5, box 1, CJT Records.

Universidad de Aztlan, sought out CJT's support. In 1972, Universidad de Aztlan, headquartered in Fresno, California, sent a representative—Eleazar Risco—to ask for CJT's support of its growth. CJT administrators agreed to align their college with Universidad de Aztlan.²⁸⁹ Although the nature of the agreement is not completely clear, it might explain the seven CJT master's students who resided in Fresno in 1973.

CJT also took the initiative to reach out to Chicano colleges in the Southwest region, although not always with success. In 1973, CJT administrator Francisco Briones reported being in contact with Escuela Tlatelolco in Denver. His object was to bring Tlatelolco into a network of Chicano colleges. Although, as previously noted, CJT students worked with the Tlatelolco school in Denver, Tlatelolco did not want to join the network. Nevertheless, Briones was not ready to give up on Tlatelolco. When asked why he would keep insisting, his response was “to better [build] unity in the Chicano movement.”²⁹⁰ CJT administrators were committed to uniting Chicano colleges in the Southwest into some kind of association that, they believed, would strengthen the efforts to provide relevant and meaningful education to the local communities and strengthen the CCM national focus.

CJT also had a transnational scope. CJT established summer travel programs through which students were sent to Mexico, Colombia, and Ecuador.²⁹¹ There, students

²⁸⁹ Concilio de Gobernacion (meeting minutes?), 19 and 20 August 1972, p. 4, item 6, folder 1, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁹⁰ Junta del Concilio de Gobernacion, 2 June 1973, p. 14, item 8, folder 2, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁹¹ Concilio de Gobernacion (meeting minutes?), 19 and 20 August 1972, p. 4, item 6, folder 1, box 1, CJT Records.

participated in seminars and other educational programs to learn pedagogical methods that would be useful to Chicana/o educational efforts. In 1972, some CJT students were selected for a seminar on Bilingualism and Chicano Studies in Mexico City sponsored by the University of California, Santa Barbara.²⁹² As participants in this program, they came into contact with graduate students from several different campuses. These efforts to reach out to institutions in Latin American countries strengthened CJT's goal to give students a wide range of educational experiences. It was also an extension of CJT's efforts to use multiple sources and resources to contribute to the development of Chicano education as a discipline.

Conclusion

The educational project that became Colegio Jacinto Treviño rose out of the lineage of activism among Mexican-descent populations who sought to receive equitable education in the United States. Influenced by that history of activism during the twentieth century and the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the organizers of CJT created a college that could serve the Rio Grande Valley community—and in some ways the U.S. Southwest region—by providing a community-based and culturally rooted curriculum and institutional philosophy. The establishment of GED, undergraduate, and graduate programs demonstrated the organizers' awareness of the educational need in the community. By providing these three levels of education and later a children's campus,

²⁹² Memo from Victor B. Moheno re: Graduate Program, 27 May 1972, item 21, folder 4, box 1, CJT Records.

CJT was an alternative to established institutions of learning for Mexican-descent communities in the Rio Grande Valley region.

Addressing the educational needs of the community, however, was not an easy task. Planning the college took several years, and the rollout of the educational programs was slow paced and, at times, encountered setbacks. The organizers of CJT had to contend with their own limitations and those of the college. In May 1972, an administrative report highlighted some of these concerns. The report discussed that CJT administrators had to contend with and reflect on the college's importance in the community. The author pointed out that, in the first several years of CJT's existence, the college had done a good job of providing their students a politicizing education, which was in line with their goal of contributing to the CCM. CJT students were becoming more politically radicalized and active in the community. However, the concern was that students were not receiving an education that would also allow them to reflect on their politics and their position in the community. In other words, the concern was that students were learning political and social theories, but not enough about how to put those theories into practice for the benefit of their communities. The report stated that students themselves had pointed out this need and that CJT had to address it.²⁹³ Another report also acknowledged that the college was a work-in-progress by stating, "We will continue to stumble, but although we will commit errors, they will be our faults and we will be able to correct them in the future."²⁹⁴ CJT organizers were aware that they had to

²⁹³ Report, 24 May 1972, folder 4, box 1, CJT Records.

²⁹⁴ "continuaremos tropezandomos pero aunque comitemos errores, ellas seran nuestras faltas y podremos corregirlas en le futuro[sic]." Reporte del Programa Profesionista para

be responsive to the community and their students, and that the goal of educating the Rio Grande Valley community would take time and require growth.

Still, CJT organizers hoped for and dreamed of an educational institution that would become a staple in their community. They attempted to reach as many students as they could, students of all ages and in other states in the U.S. Southwest region and beyond. Organizers also tried to establish a stable and mutually supportive network between CJT and other Chicano colleges, all done to strengthen the educational activism coming out of the CCM. Their hopes for the future are best exemplified by their plans to build a new campus, *la piramide del sol*. In brochures and other documents, CJT administrators claimed the structure would be the first pyramid in the Rio Grande Valley region. Modeled after Mesoamerican pyramids, the new campus was CJT's goal to be a permanent institution in their community. Planning for the pyramid began as early as 1972, and many steps were taken to bring it to reality. Organizers purchased the land and hired an architect to plan it. The goal was to inaugurate the new campus in 1976, the same year the college closed.

While CJT was ultimately short-lived and did not achieve all its goals, it remains a significant part of the history of educational activism among Mexican-descent communities in general and in the Rio Grande Valley in particular. CJT was revolutionary. The organizers established the first ever Chicano college in the valley region—a college founded, originally funded, and governed by the community. The professors were all part of the larger U.S. Southwest network of educators working in the

El Concilio de Gobernacion del Colegio Jacinto Treviño, 27 May 1972, folder 4, box 1, CJT Records.

Chicana/o community. The students were organizers, educators, and innovators all at once, working within CJT as an extension of the educational activism of the CCM. Unfortunately, limited access to the archive makes it impossible to quantify CJT's impact on the community in the present.²⁹⁵ But somewhere in the U.S. Southwest or elsewhere, there are college graduates who received degrees from Colegio Jacinto Treviño between 1969-1976. For a community that historically received substandard education and whose people were kept out of institutions of higher learning, the contributions that CJT was able to provide to the struggle for better education are invaluable.

²⁹⁵ Limited access to the archive in preparation for this chapter leaves the story of CJT incomplete at this moment. Most notably, this chapter does not address the years between 1973-1976, and does not provide information on the college's demise. In the near future, with more access to the CJT archive, this story will be completed.

Conclusion

Much of the history of the Mexican-descent community in the U.S. Southwest during the twentieth century is about resistance. Activism was made necessary after U.S. Western Expansion in the late nineteenth century left Mexican-descent communities in a marginalized social, political, economic, and cultural position. Prevalent among the strategies employed to combat that historical oppression were the attempts to achieve equitable education. Generations of activists recognized the opportunities for upper social mobility that education could afford. Americanized education, which prioritized Euro American populations and systematically excluded or removed Mexican history and culture from curricula, made it difficult for Mexican-descent communities to use education for this purpose. To remedy this, mid-twentieth-century activists invested money, time, and knowledge to changing the condition of their local schools, organizing to end segregation and to have better representation in school boards. An important part of this advocacy was asking for Mexican-descent faculty, administration, and curriculum in the schools. During the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, activists extended this work to include the development of curriculum that valued their culture and history, eventually leading to the establishment of Chicana/o Studies.

Scholars that focus on this lineage of educational activism have produced works that highlight this history. With this project, I proposed to add to that history by highlighting a little-studied aspect of that activism—alternative education. I made the decision to focus on newspapers and *teatro* because I wanted to analyze the use of

mediums that were familiar as being part of the history of Chicana/o activism, but not in the realm of education.

Throughout the twentieth century Mexican-descent activists used newspapers to disseminate news about their local communities, advertise community-owned business, and comment on national and international political occurrences. Additionally, newspapers were a space where political and cultural thoughts could be shared with communities locally, nationally, and transnationally. The Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) and other political organizations in the first two decades of the twentieth century were innovative in their use of the newspaper to politicize, inform, and dialogue with their audiences. A recent available technology at the time, the newspaper allowed these organizations the editorial freedom to construct a space where they could address community concerns. In previous research I explored the PLM's use of their newspaper, *Regeneración*, to educate their readership and encourage them to establish independent schools. For this project, I looked at *El Defensor del Pueblo* and *La Estrella* in New Mexico to see if this was a tradition that Mexican-descent communities continued.

I found that activists who were already involved in trying to secure equitable education for their communities used newspapers as an additional avenue by which to achieve that goal. Brothers Meliton and A.C. Torres, who published *El Defensor*, and Isodoro Armijo, who published *La Estrella*, used their newspapers to provide consistent, reliable, and culturally relevant education.

The two theater troupes, *Teatro Campesino* and *Teatro de las Chicanas* are part of the history of Chicano Theater during the Chicana/o Movement as well as part of the longer cultural and artistic history of the Mexican-descent community. The Mexican

theater traditions that influenced Chicano Theater had a long history of bringing entertainment, news, and education to communities in Mexico, particularly those at the geographic and political margins of the country. Previous Chicano Theater scholars had pinpointed the educational nature of the theater tradition, highlighting its ability to inform different communities about the occurrences of the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, there had not been an analysis of Chicano Theater as an educational medium. The goal with the analysis in this project was two-fold. First, I wanted to show that a well-known Chicano Theater troupe like *Teatro Campesino* could be contextualized as an educational organization. It was important to show that *Teatro Campesino* had the ability and purpose to educate their audiences with the plays they produced. The same was true for *Teatro de las Chicanas*. However, the analysis of *Teatro de las Chicanas* also demonstrated that the troupe had a wider political and critical lens that included a critique of patriarchal structures within the Chicana/o community. Just as important was showing that the troupes' commitment to education went farther than that, leading them to establish educational models that could also serve the participants.

Independent colleges, unlike newspapers and *teatro*, are examples of institutions that are established for the purpose to educate. However, I wanted to highlight the history of Colegio Jacinto Treviño (CJT) because of the unique successes achieved by the founders of the college. As the founders claimed often, CJT was the first Chicano college in the Rio Grande Valley region. Additionally, the college provided graduate degrees, which was uncommon for independent colleges at the time. This project demonstrated that CJT had a scope that encompassed projects that aimed to benefit the education of

local, regional, national, and transnational Chicana/o communities. CJT's governmental structure demonstrated that it was possible to establish a successful Chicana/o independent college by prioritizing Chicana/o culture, history, students, and community.

All three examples—newspapers, *teatro*, and independent colleges provided unexpected but exciting factors that showed the amount of dedication that activists committed to the goal to educate Mexican-descent communities. There is some evidence that publishers of *El Defensor del Pueblo* translated readings from other languages into Spanish. The women at the center of *Teatro de las Chicanas* approached theater and education differently than *Teatro Campesino*, which allowed them to have a transnational, anti-sexist, and working-class scope. CJT's scope was also surprising, as was the college's innovation in addressing the many educational needs of the Chicana/o community across the U.S. Southwest.

Limitations and Additional Research

In the process of writing this dissertation, I ran into some limitations—some of these exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. Namely, there were travel restrictions that prevented further access to the archives necessary for this project. This impacted chapter 4 the most. Although thanks to the archivists at the University of Houston I had some access to the Colegio Jacinto Treviño Records, that only included less than thirty percent of the available documents in the collection. The story of CJT can be expanded with further research into the curricular records of the college. These additional records could allow for a deeper exploration into how CJT's administrators planned and implemented the curriculum that is described in chapter 4. Furthermore, the

research into CJT could be complemented by conducting oral histories of some of the former students.

For chapter 2, I used the America's Historical Newspapers Archive to access the collection of *El Defensor del Pueblo* and *La Estrella*. The archival material allowed for a literary analysis of the educational articles that were published in these two newspapers. Access to traditional archives can help expand this research to include the impact that these educational materials had on the readership. For example, demographic data about the populations in Socorro and Las Cruces, New Mexico could give insight into the cultural makeup of those communities. This can allow for an analysis of the interaction between the newspaper and its readership. Additionally, state records on the newspaper itself—including its distribution numbers, addresses, ownership records—can be useful to understand the geographic reach of the publication and by extension the educational materials printed within.

Chapter 3 centered on an analysis of the published transcripts of plays produced by *Teatro Campesino* and *Teatro de las Chicanas*. Unfortunately, I did not have access to the physical archives of *Teatro Campesino*, housed at the University of California, Santa Barbara nor those of *Teatro de las Chicanas*, housed at San Diego State University. As a result, the primary limitation is that I only had access to the play transcripts that were edited for publication. The ability to see transcripts from the playwriting and production process would be valuable. This would allow for an analysis of the process it took to develop educational plays. Further access to archives would also provide the opportunity to learn about the scope, impact, and reach of the theater troupes and their productions.

Future Research

This project is a continuation of my previous research, which analyzed the Partido Liberal Mexicano's (PLM) use of their newspaper, *Regeneracion*, as an educational outlet between 1910–1918. While other scholarship had demonstrated the PLM's impact on anarchist politics and the Mexican Revolution (1910), I noticed the organization's emphasis on education and wanted to explore that further. That research led me to this current project. I was interested in investigating whether other generations of Mexican-descent activists had used newspapers in the same ways as the PLM. Furthermore, I was interested in whether Mexican-descent activists in the middle of the twentieth century had used other seemingly non-educational mediums to educate. This led me to *teatro*. I knew that Chicano Theater was influenced by Mexican theater traditions and Brechtian theater, two traditions that developed theater practices that made the art form and its messages accessible to its intended audiences. The PLM had also used theater in this way. Finally, I knew that during the Chicana/o Movement activists had established schools and colleges, yet very little had been written about those institutions, with perhaps the exception of Escuela Tlatelolco. The PLM had also encouraged its readership to establish independent schools. Toward that goal, they published articles on curriculum, pedagogy, and other materials that would be useful for those who did work to establish schools. I knew from this research that a great deal of work was necessary to establish independent schools. Colegio Jacinto Treviño had been mentioned in previous research. I suspect that its short-lived tenure made it hard for scholars to consider it one of the successes of the Chicana/o Movement and its educational goals. Yet, I also suspected that for the college to be active

for six years meant a lot of work and dedication was given—that made it one the Chicana/o Movement’s successes.

As I continue my research on the alternative educational models and mediums used by Mexican-descent activists, there are specific directions I want to take my analysis. Chapter 2 focuses on newspapers in New Mexico, however, there are a multitude of newspapers across the U.S. Southwest that have a similar history of educational activism as *El Defensor* and *La Estrella*. To expand the research’s geographic scope I plan to include newspapers from other states into the analysis to demonstrate that using newspapers to educate the community was an activist strategy used by other Mexican-descent communities across the Southwest region. There is also an opportunity to expand the temporal parameters of this research. Two generations of activists used newspapers as educational tools in the early-to-mid twentieth century, the PLM’s generation and the Torres brothers/Armijo’s generation. Given that newspapers continued to be an important organizing tool into the 1950s with the Mexican American Generation as well as the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, there might be more examples of alternative educational models developed within those newspapers.

A geographic expansion of the analysis on *teatro* as an educational tool is also necessary. With the limitations of this project, I was unable to achieve one of the early goals from the planning stage—which was to take the story of Chicano Theater out of the California context. Much of the scholarship on Chicano Theater has focused almost exclusively on the theater troupes that were established in California. Yet, Chicano Theater existed in other Southwestern states like Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona. These troupes used the art form to organize, agitate, inform, and educate. An

analysis of these troupes will give us a better understanding of how *teatro* was used in different Chicana/o communities as an educational tool.

Similarly, the story of Colegio Jacinto Treviño is only one example of the educational institutions established by Chicana/o educational activists. Others include Universidad de Aztlan, which was part of CJT's regional network of Chicano colleges, and La Academia de la Nueva Raza in Dixon, New Mexico. La Academia de la Nueva Raza, like CJT, was uniquely influenced by the regional cultural history of the community in which it was established. Further research into Chicana/o independent colleges would explore the ways local cultures and histories produced different approaches to the educational models these colleges produced.

This project's goal was to add to the expanding, complex, and diverse history of the Chicana communities of the U.S., and to contribute to Chicana Studies scholarship which continues to reveal and complicate the multiplicity of experiences, processes, strategies, that comprise Chicana activism.

REFERENCES

Archives

Colegio Jacinto Treviño Records. Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries
America's Historical Newspapers. Online Collection.

Newspapers

La Estrella (Las Cruces, New Mexico)

El Defensor del Pueblo (Socorro, New Mexico)

Published Work

- Acuña, Rodolfo. *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe*.
Latinidad: Transnational Cultures in the United States. New Brunswick, N.J.:
Rutgers University Press, 2011.
- Adelman, Jeremy and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-
States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American
Historical Review* 104 (1999): 814–841.
- Alamillo, José M. *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and
Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960*. Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island
Centennial Series. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- Almaguer, Tomás. *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in
California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Balderrama, Francisco E., and Raymond Rodriguez. *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican
Repatriation in the 1930s*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.
- Ball, Durwood. *Army Regulars on the Western Frontier, 1848-1861*. Norman: University
of Oklahoma Press, 2001.

- Barragan-Goetz, Philis M. *Reading, Writing, and Revolution: Escuelitas and the Emergence of a Mexican American Identity in Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020.
- Barrera, Mario. *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979.
- Blackhawk, Ned. *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Boyle, Susan Calafate. *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997.
- Broyles-González, Yolanda. *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.
- Cadava, Geraldo L. *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Camarillo, Albert. *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848–1930*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Cheng, Wendy. *The Changs Next Door to the Díazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Cummings, Laura. *Pachucas and Pachucos in Tucson*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009.
- de la Pérouse, Jean-François. *Life in a California Mission: Monterey in 1786, the Journals of Jean François de la Pérouse*. Berkeley, Calif.: Heyday Books, 1995.
- DeLay, Brian. *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War*. The Lamar Series in Western History. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Descalzo, Feliciano Antonio Yvez. *Diccionario del Lenguaje Historico y del Habla Popular de la Comarca Requena-Utiel*. 2nd ed. 2008.
- Dixson, Adrienne D. and Celia K. Rousseau, eds., *Critical Race Theory in Education: All God's Children Got a Song*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Donato, Rubén, and Jarrod Hanson. *The Other American Dilemma: Schools, Mexicans, and the Nature of Jim Crow, 1912–1953*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021.

- Donato, Rubén. *The Other Struggle for Equal Schools: Mexican Americans during the Civil Rights Era*. SUNY Series, The Social Context of Education. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2014.
- Echeverría, Darius V. *Aztlán Arizona: Mexican American Educational Empowerment, 1968-1978*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014.
- Enriqueta, María. *Rosas de la Infancia: Lectura para los Niño's*. Mexico City: Sociedad de Edicion y Libreria Franco-Americana, 1928.
- Escobedo, Elizabeth R. *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- Foley, Neil. *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands*. American Crossroads, no. 12. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Garcia, Laura E., Sandra M. Gutierrez, and Felicitas Nuñez. *Teatro Chicana: A Collective Memoir and Selected Plays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008.
- Garcia, Mario T. *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Garza, Humberto. *Joaquin Murrieta: A Quest for Justice*. San Jose, Calif.: Chusma House, 2001.
- Gaspar de Alba, Alicia. *Chicano Art: Inside/Outside the Master's House*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Getz, Lynn Marie. *Schools of their Own: The Education of Hispano in New Mexico, 1850-1940*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997.
- Gomez-Quiñones, Juan and Irene Vasquez. *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014.
- Gomez-Quiñones, Juan. *Roots of Chicano Politics, 1600-1940*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994.

- Gómez, Laura E. *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race*. New York: New York University Press, 2018.
- González de la Vara, Martín. "The Return to Mexico: The Relocation of New Mexican Families to Chihuahua and the Confirmation of a Frontier Region, 1848–1854." In *The Contested Homeland: A Chicano History of New Mexico* by Erlinda Gonzalez-Berry and David Maciel. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.
- González, Deena J. *Refusing the Favor: The Spanish-Mexican Women of Santa Fe, 1820–1880*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- González, Gabriela. *Redeeming La Raza: Transborder Modernity, Race, Respectability, and Rights*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Greer, Margaret R., Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan. *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Griswold del Castillo, Richard. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.
- Guy, Talmadge C. "Culture as Context for Adult Education: The Need for Culturally Relevant Adult Education." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 82 (1999): 5–18.
- Hämäläinen, Pekka and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (2011): 338–361.
- Hämäläinen, Pekka. *The Comanche Empire*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Huerta, Jorge A. *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms*. Ypsilanti, Mich.: Bilingual Press, 1982.
- Johnson, Benjamin Heber. *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Kanellos, Nicolás. "Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest." In *Mexican American Theatre: Then and Now*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 1989.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 465-91.

- Lamar, Howard Roberts. *The Far Southwest, 1846–1912: A Territorial History*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006.
- Ludeke, John. “The No Fence Law of 1874: Victory for San Joaquin Valley Farmers,” *California History* 59, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 98-115.
- MacDonald, Victoria-María. *Latino Education in the United States: A Narrative History from 1513–2000*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Mares-Tamayo, Michaela J.L. and Daniel Solórzano, eds., *The Chicana/o Education Pipeline: History, Institutional Critique, and Resistance*. Los Angeles, Calif: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2018.
- Mariscal, George. *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.
- Marquez, Benjamin. *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.
- McDowell, John Holmes, Patricia Glushko, and Carlos Fernández. *Corrido: The Living Ballad of Mexico’s Western Coast*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015.
- Melendez, A. Gabriel. *Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico, 1834–1958*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005.
- Menchaca, Martha. *The Mexican Outsiders: A Community History of Marginalization and Discrimination in California*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.
- Meyer, Doris. *Speaking for Themselves: Neomexicano Cultural Identity and the Spanish-language Press, 1880–1920*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.
- Monroy, Douglas. *Rebirth: Mexican Los Angeles from the Great Migration to the Great Depression*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Montejano, David. *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.
- Montes de Oca Nava, Elvia. “Libros Escolares Mexicanos a Principios del Siglo XX: Rosas de la Infancia, Serie S.E.P. y Semiente.” *La Colmena*, no. 76 (October-December, 2012): 49-60.

- Montgomery, Charles H. *The Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Moreno, José F., ed. *The Elusive Quest for Equality: 150 Years of Chicano/Chicana Education*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Educational Review, 1999.
- Needham, Andrew. *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest. Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Ngai, Mae. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Nieto-Phillips, John M. *Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.
- Nieto-Phillips, John. "Spanish American Ethnic Identity and New Mexico's Statehood Struggle." In *The Contested Homeland: A Chicano History of New Mexico*, edited by Erlinda Gonzalez-Berry and David R. Maciel. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.
- O'Brien, William Patrick. *Merchants of Independence: International Trade on the Santa Fe Trail, 1827-1860*. Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2014.
- Oropeza, Lorena. *Raza Sí! Guerra No! Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Orozco, Cynthia E. *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009.
- Pagán, Eduardo Obregón. *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Paredes, Americo. *"With His Pistol in His Hand": A Border Ballad and Its Hero*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958.
- Paz, Ireneo. *Life and Adventures of the Celebrated Bandit Joaquin Murrieta: His Exploits in the State of California*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 2001.
- Peck, Gunther. *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Peiss, Kathy Lee. *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

- Pomeroy, Earl. *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973.
- Prieto, Covadonga Lamar. "Los Bandidos y La Identidad California en la Segunda Mitad del XIX: Tiburcio Vasquez." *Revista de Indias* 76, no. 267 (2016): 509–541.
- Pulido, Laura. *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Ramirez, Catherine S. *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory*. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Ramos, Henry A. J. *The American G. I. Forum: In Pursuit of the Dream, 1948-1983*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 1998.
- Reséndez, Andrés. *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Risco, Eliezer. "Before Universidad de Aztlán: Ethnic Studies at Fresno State College." In *Parameters of Institutional Change: Chicano Experiences in Education*, edited by Southwest Network, 41–47. Hayward, Calif.: Southwest Network, 1974.
- Rivas-Rodriguez, Maggie, ed. *Mexican Americans and World War II*. Austin: University of Texas, 2005.
- Rosenbaum, Robert J. *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest*. 1981; repr. with a new forward by John R. Chávez and new afterword by the author. Dallas, Tex.: Southern Methodist University Press, 1998.
- Rothenberg, Paula S. *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*. 5th ed. New York: Worth Publishers, 2015.
- San Miguel Jr., Guadalupe and Richard R. Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest," *Harvard Educational Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 353–412.
- San Miguel Jr., Guadalupe. *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States, 1960-2001*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2004.
- San Miguel, Guadalupe. *Let All of Them Take Heed: Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001.
- Sanchez, George J. *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1993.

- Sanchez, George. *Go After the Women: Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant Woman, 1915–1929*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Center for Chicano Research, Stanford University, 1984.
- Sanchez, Martha I. Chew. *Corridos in Migrant Memory*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier 1600-1860*. 1973; repr., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000.
- Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. 1950; repr., with new preface by the author. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- Soldatenko, Michael. *Chicano Studies: The Genesis of a Discipline*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009.
- Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream, 1850–1915*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Taylor, Edward, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings, eds. *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Thompson, Jerry D. *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007.
- Truett, Samuel and Elliott Young, eds. *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History. American Encounters/Global Interactions*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Trujillo, Armando L. *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education: Movimiento Politics in Crystal City, Texas*. Latino Communities. New York: Garland Publishers, 1998.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” In *Rereading Fredrick Jackson Turner: The Significance of the Frontier in American History and Other Essays*. comp. and intro. John Mack Faragher. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Valdez, Luis, and El Teatro Campesino. *Luis Valdez—Early Works: Actos, Bernabé, and Pensamiento Serpentino*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 1994.
- Valencia, Richard R. “The Mexican American Struggle for Equal Educational Opportunity in Mendez v. Westminster: Helping to Pave the Way for Brown v.

Board of Education.” *Teachers College Record* 107, no. 3 (March 2005): 389–423.

Villanueva Jr., Nicholas. *The Lynching of Mexicans in the Texas Borderlands*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017.

Weber, David J. *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982.

Weber, David J. *The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest, 1540–1846*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971.

White, Shane. *Stylin’: African-American Expressive Culture, from its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2018.

Yosso, Tara J. *Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*. The Teaching/Learning Social Justice Series. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Young, Phoebe S. K. *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.