CRITICALLY CULTURAL AND POLITICAL COMMONALITY

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Introduction

Chicano political history has tended to focus on the states of the American Southwest. This is not surprising, since it is in this region that the Chicano population is most concentrated and the emerging impact of Chicano politics most pronounced. However, scholars are recognizing that important Chicano communities exist in geographic areas outside the Southwest. Research indicates that these communities have developed their own distinct strategies for influencing the political system and furthering Mexican Americans' social and economic goals. Much can be learned by comparing Chicano political experiences elsewhere in the country with those of southwestern Chicanos.

This article presents an overview of Chicano communities in two significant regions, the Midwest and Pacific Northwest. In both regions, there are sizeable Chicano populations that have a sense of group identity, and that take an interest in common issues such as bilingual education, workers' rights and benefits, immigration reform, and expansion of voting rights. Moreover, Chicanos in these regions are not simply taking cues from southwestern Chicano leaders. Rather, they have taken an interest in these issues because they are confronting similar political, and socio-economic circumstances as Chicanos in the Southwest.

Two theses are presented in this paper. The first is that Chicanos in different regions of the United States, faced with similar socio-economic and demographic forces, have developed many political strategies in common. Several tactics illustrating this point are the establishment of state commissions and community centers, and the creation of farm worker organizations. All have been popular among Chicanos in the Midwest and Northwest as well as the Southwest. The second thesis is that Chicano leaders, who have previously concentrated on Southwest developments, can learn from political and eco-
nomic innovations of Chicano communities elsewhere in the country. This research has found that National Chicano organizations have effectively net-worked with local Chicano groups and communities in the Midwest and Northwest while also influencing local, state and regional public policies. This sug-gests a developing capacity to politically mobilize Chicano communities na-tionwide while this group is more recognized as a national constituency with a national agenda.

The first part of this article surveys Chicano history in the Midwest and Northwest with an emphasis on World War II, which created preconditions for Chicano protest activity in the 1960s, also described later in this paper. Section two describes Chicano organizational activities to achieve this community's goals, noting preferences for interest group politics in the Northwest and Mid-west as opposed to electoral strategies used in the Southwest. Finally, a critical look at Chicana political participation is presented.

**Historical Overview**

Mexican immigration into the Pacific Northwest and Midwest regions greatly increased during the first thirty years of the 20th century. Factors behind this increased Mexican migration were harsh economic and political conditions under the Porfirio Díaz regime, the chaos engendered by the Mexican Revolution, and later violent conflict between the church and Mexican government. These events forced thousands to flee to the United States where the expanding economy promoted perceptions of greater job security. In addition, new U.S. immigration laws, which limited cheap labor from Eastern Europe and Asia, were generally favorable to Mexican immigrants seeking work. Other factors promoting Mexican migration were the use of Mexican workers as strikebreak-ers in some industries, and the connecting of Mexican railroads with the North American rail system which facilitated the movement of Mexican laborers into the U.S.

Throughout Texas in the first decades of the century, there were hundreds of recruiters called enganchadores who represented North American companies eager to sign up men to work in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest. The Texas-Mexico border hosted an elaborate network of employment agencies and labor recruiters. By the 1920s, Mexican labor was a major factor in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest agricultural economies. Not surprisingly, Mexican com-
munities throughout the U.S. were negatively impacted after 1930 by the Great Depression, as well as by repatriation and deportation programs. The impact was felt especially in the Midwest, where Mexican communities around the Great Lakes Region, were large.

World War II and the Civil Rights Movement
As the decade of the 1930s ended, Mexican communities in the United States were already undergoing dramatic social, economic and political changes. World War II proved a pivotal event in the development of the country's Mexican American community. The war led to a surge in community solidarity, and produced another generation of leaders who were bicultural and from working-class backgrounds.

More than 300,000 Mexican Americans served in World War II, fighting in all major campaigns in Europe, the Pacific, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Mexican American women also made key contributions during the war. In defense plants, they labored as riveters, crane and forklift operators, welders, and assemblers. These women also worked in other industries supporting the war, as railroad section workers, roundhouse mechanics, shipyard workers, meatpackers, farmworkers, seamstresses, nurses, secretaries, pipe fitters, janitors, and translators. Their wartime contributions were not confined, however, solely to work in defense plants and domestic industries. Mexican American women also enlisted in the military; some of them served overseas prior to the end of the war.

Meanwhile, thousands of other Mexican American women and men aided the war effort through volunteer activities such as organizing war bond drives, working with the Red Cross, cultivating victory gardens, and collecting scrap metal for armaments. Besides Mexican American contributions on the battlefield and in defense work, Mexican braceros were used extensively during World War II in agricultural industries of the Midwest and Pacific Northwest. Braceros were desperately needed because of severe labor shortages created by the war and increased demand for agricultural products to feed the army.

As Mexican Americans adjusted to peacetime after 1945, they were again confronted with reminders of their pre-war, second-class, status. Their hopes for a better life had soared during and immediately after the war. But, their expectations later plummeted due to the realities of racism. Mexican American
military veterans were denied entrance to bars, restaurants, barber shops, movie houses, pool halls, parks, and churches. Such racist acts were commonplace throughout the Midwest and Northwest. Not surprisingly, these veterans and former defense workers felt betrayed, but not dispirited, by the country they had served so loyally.

In the war’s aftermath, Mexican Americans lost patience with unpaved streets, segregated housing, inadequate sewage facilities and the lack of recreational services. Now this group was taking action to remedy problems and correct injustices facing their communities. A consequence of the war was that Mexican Americans now viewed themselves as a national group, sharing particular issues and concerns. On the battlefield, Mexican American service personnel from various states had met each other for the first time, and learned that Mexicans were victims of racial discrimination regardless of residence. For example, many Mexican Americans from the Midwest were stationed in the Southwest, while some Southwestern Mexican Americans reported for duty in the Northwest. Thus, the war brought Mexican Americans from distant areas physically together and promoted greater awareness of their ethnicity and cultural solidarity.

During World War II Mexican Americans developed greater political awareness and leadership. The “new outlook” of Mexican Americans in both the Midwest and Northwest was that they had earned the right to be treated as first-class citizens, since they had fought and worked side-by-side with Anglos on the battlefield and in defense plants. In order to provide effective leadership for their communities, they formed organizations that fought to abolish remaining vestiges of overt discrimination. Mexican Americans sought to eliminate unfair political practices such as poll taxes and literacy tests, as well as jury exclusion. They also challenged discrimination in labor unions, education and restrictive housing covenants.

In the Midwest, Mexican Americans created new political and social organizations including veterans groups such as the Latin-American Veterans, the Mexican-American Servicemen’s Association, the Mexican G.I. Club, the Catholic War Veterans, and the Mexican American Veterans. Also, these trailblazers formed civic groups. Among these associations were the United Betterment Club, Civic Councils for Mexicans, and the Latin American Social Club. In the Pacific Northwest, Spanish American Clubs, the Mexican American Fed-
eration and the Latin American Association were formed in Mexican communities. Most community-based organizing, however, in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho focused largely on migrant worker issues during the 1940s and early 1950s.

The post-war period also witnessed changes in the demography of the Mexican community in the Midwest and Northwest. Mexican Americans, from many walks of life, divided into various subcultures. There were in rural areas, for example, Mexican braceros, and native-born migrant workers. Mexican Americans were also divided by first, second and third generations as well as age. Despite a common ethnic and cultural background, Mexican Americans had diverse interests. Socio-economic interests were based on class, occupation, and educational achievement, while cultural interests were identified by religion, language, and degree of acculturation. Political views were manifested in ideology, citizenship status, geography, and gender. As a result of this complex segmentation, a variety of political, social, and cultural organizations were formed by Mexican Americans between 1940 and 1960. Mexican American activism and organizations in the 1940s and 1950s prepared the way for a period of social protest, called the Chicano Movement.

The Chicano Movement

The Chicano Movement emerged in both the Midwest and Pacific Northwest during the late 1960s and early 1970s. This movement offered Chicanos more political opportunities, new challenges, new organizers, and a cultural ideology. The Chicano Movement also produced, for some, greater political and gender consciousness as well as cultural pride.

Similar economic and political forces to those which shaped the Chicano Movement in the Southwest, were also found in the Northwest and Midwest. Among the political issues underlying the movement were the war in Vietnam, the hypocrisy of the two major political parties, and the Civil Rights Movement. In addition, Chicanos mobilized to correct socio-economic problems such as: inferior education, job discrimination, denial of student and parental rights in the schools, abuse of migrant workers, and the grape and lettuce boycotts that called attention to exploitation of farm workers in these regions.

This new generation of Chicanos tended to view their Mexican American predecessors as overly accommodationist. Chicano leaders were impatient with
the slow progress that came with voter registration, and get-out-the-vote strategies of traditional electoral politics pursued earlier. It was evident that the previous generation had won important political victories while fostering social progress. However, young Chicano leaders still saw racism permeating American education, politics, health care, housing, the labor market, and services.

Many Southwestern Chicano leaders, including Corky Gonzales, spoke many times in the Midwest and Northwest. César Chávez visited the Northwest frequently in the 1970s, where he promoted unionization of farmworkers and increased awareness of the inhumane working conditions on farms in the region. José Ángel Gutiérrez taught in the early 1980s at an Oregon state university in Monmouth, Oregon, near Portland, and organized political action in the state. Chicano leaders also hosted numerous conferences and workshops to discuss strategies for achieving social, economic, and political equality for Chicanos in both regions.13

Chicano student organizations in the Midwest sponsored dozens of state and regional conferences during the late 1960s to try to formulate a political and cultural agenda. José Juárez, a student leader from South Bend, Indiana, described this activity noting Chicano student conferences in Kansas, Ohio, Nebraska, Michigan, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. “We discussed and debated several issues and strategies to oppose the war in Vietnam, police brutality in our community, the oppressive tactics of the immigration service, and the lack of adequate housing and health care, as well as political powerlessness.”14

Some examples of Chicano student conferences that were held during these years included one on April 4, 1970, when the Mexican American community held a Youth Conference at Michigan State University. Over 300 young people attended the conference, the first of its kind in Michigan. Workshop subjects included education, the military and the draft, civil rights, community organizing, and Cinco de Mayo activities. Also in 1971, over 100 Chicano students attended a conference at Kansas University in Manhattan to discuss issues, including the grape and lettuce boycotts. Three years later, a conference held at Chicago State University was entitled “Urban Education and the Latino Community.”

Educational issues and concerns in both regions were similar to those of Southwest Chicanos. Their demands included: enrollment of Chicano stu-
dents in higher education, creation of Chicano Studies programs, a more equitable distribution of scholarships and financial aid, hiring of Chicana/o professors, counselors, and administrators, expansion of bilingual and migrant education programs. In response to resistance by the educational establishment in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest, Chicano students organized walk-outs, sit-ins, marches and other forms of protest. John Mendoza, a student at the time, notes: “We protested against low reading scores, the high percentage of dropouts among our youth, and the lack of Chicano staff.” Mendoza added that most teachers believed that all Mexicans were poor students, and did not have the intelligence to attend college.

The Chicano student movement gained additional momentum in the early 1970s. For example in April of 1970, 150 persons demonstrated at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, to protest the low number of Chicano students on campus. Students presented college administrators with a list of demands ranging from establishment of a Chicano Studies program to creation of Chicano outreach projects.

In the Northwest, students at Washington State University (WSU) presented eleven demands to the school administration on May 19, 1970. These demands were aimed at eliminating racist practices at the school. Workshops on eliminating racism were also organized at the same time. When the university denied student demands, a strike resulted. The following year, Chicano students and faculty pushed for larger student enrollments from Chicano communities. Also on April 6, 1970, a proposal for a Chicano Studies program was submitted to the Dean of Letters, Arts and Sciences. Chicano Studies classes and a bachelor’s degree in this area, through the Comparative American Cultures Department, continue to be offered at WSU.

Around the same time, Chicano students were making their presence known at other Washington state campuses. At WSU, classes were held on the UFW grape boycott and workshops on eliminating racism featured visits by César Chávez, Luís Valdez, the Chicano playwright and screenwriter, and the Chicano poet, Ricardo Sánchez. Similar events were repeated in Oregon and Idaho.

Chicano student activism resulted in the creation of numerous student groups. Ramiro Gonzales of Saginaw, Michigan, described several groups at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, called Los Trabajadores de la Raza, a graduate student group, and an undergraduate student group, Chicanos at
Michigan (CAM). Meanwhile, Michigan State University had started Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanos de Aztlán (MEChA). Other organizations existed such as La Nueva Generación at Saginaw Valley State, and the Chicano Club at Delta College. Wayne State University in Detroit had the Chicano/Boricua Studies Club.

In addition to student organizations and activities, Chicano/a faculty, staff, and administrators formed educational groups. In Michigan Chicanos formed the Association of Chicanos for College Admissions (ACCA). The membership was composed of Chicanos working in admissions, financial aid, and as student counselors. A number of Michigan colleges were represented within ACCA. The extensive tradition of Chicano student organizations continues today in the Midwest, with dozens of groups and alliances. “The Hispanic of Today Conference,” for example, sponsored its Seventh Annual meeting in the Midwest in 1996.

Moreover, both the Midwest and Northwest have seen publication of numerous Chicano newspapers since the late 1960s. Newspapers play important roles because they raise political consciousness, bring issues to the fore, and offer possible solutions to problems confronting communities. Whether through newspapers or other mass media, Chicano student organizing in the 1960s and 1970s promoted a more aggressive and politically conscious community while developing new leadership.

The Chicano student movement changed the political landscape in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest. Among the changes were the emergence of influential parents’ organizations in the schools, a growing membership in La Raza Unida Party and the Brown Berets, as well as publication of dozens of Chicano newspapers. Brown Berets had several chapters in the Midwest, including affiliated groups in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Iowa. This group also appeared in the Pacific Northwest. As early as 1969, Brown Berets had three chapters in Washington state, two in Seattle and one in Yakima County. According to one source, by 1970 Brown Berets had around 200 members in Washington.

Another outcome of Chicano activism of the 1960s and 1970s was a stronger effort to penetrate U.S. electoral and party politics, and to create more aggressive interest groups. Some of these organizations now actively pursue Chicano issues in the Midwest and Northwest. Also, many Chicano student
leaders of the 60s and 70s found a role in the communities of these two regions. Meanwhile, in a consistent effort to engage in electoral and party politics, litigation has been filed to protect Chicano voting rights in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest.

**Interest Group and Electoral Politics**

In Washington state, according to the 1990 census, Chicanos and Latinos are over four percent of the population. These groups also comprise four percent of Oregon's residents, and 5.3 percent of Idaho's. Chicanos and Latinos are therefore slightly less than five percent of the total population in the Pacific Northwest. However, there are non-metropolitan areas in all of these states where Chicanos make up more than 30 to over 50 percent of a city's or county's residents. In spite of these numbers at the local level, barriers such as citizenship, ability to speak English, voter registration and a large Latino population under eighteen years of age, pose serious obstacles to Chicano electoral participation and political representation.

The Midwest has a similar pattern as Pacific Northwest states. Illinois has the largest concentration of Mexican-origin people, who make up only 5.5 percent of the state's population. The other midwestern states have even smaller concentrations—Kansas has a Chicano population of only 3.3 percent; Ohio's is only 0.5 percent. However, as in the case of the Pacific Northwest, there are cities in non-metropolitan areas of the Midwest where Chicanos constitute at least one third to over half the residents in these small towns.

Trends in Washington, in particular, indicate continued growth among people of Mexican-origin because of the expanding agricultural sector. Concentrated Chicano communities are found throughout the Northwest in areas where irrigated agriculture exists because this type of farming is very labor-intensive. The Columbia Basin in central Washington, with large concentrations of Chicanos, is an example of this type of farming. In Oregon similar areas include the Willamette Valley in the west, the Hood River Valley in the central part of the state, and the Magic Valley off the Snake River in eastern Oregon. In southern Idaho, Chicano communities are located along the Snake River, where irrigated agriculture is also dominant. As irrigated agriculture expands in both Oregon and Idaho, the need for agricultural laborers is expected to increase. Chicano farm laborers can be expected to supply this need,
and this economic fact will promote larger Chicano populations in Oregon and Idaho as it already has in Washington. Timber companies of the Northwest employ both Mexicans and Chicanos. This industry's reliance on Mexican and Chicano workers can only add to the growth of this population in the region.

Chicano communities of the Midwest have a history that goes back to the early decades of this century. The tendency is for relatives and friends to continue to migrate into these established communities. Chicanos first entered the Midwest by finding agricultural employment in rural areas and later factory work in large cities. With developing Midwest communities, more Chicanos in professional fields such as law, business, higher education, and medicine are attracted to this area.

Chicano leaders in both regions have created a multitude of associations and agendas to address their concerns at the federal, state and local levels of government. The next section will focus on activities of a number of Chicano interest groups and discuss the range of electoral strategies in the two regions. We will see how, in rural areas of the Midwest and Northwest, farm worker unions have been instrumental in addressing problems in Chicano communities.

**Farm Worker Organizations**

To enhance Chicano political power at state and local levels, farm worker associations have been organized to lobby and promote favorable legislation. These farm labor groups have also worked through the courts to change unfair labor laws affecting agricultural workers. In the Northwest, such groups include the United Farm Workers of Washington State (UFWWS), the Idaho Farm Workers Association, and Oregon's Pineros y Campesinos Unidos Del Noroeste. In the Midwest, groups include Obreros Unidos in Michigan, the Farm Worker Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in Ohio, the Beet Workers Defense Committee, and the Nebraska Association of Farm workers. Besides these groups, Chicano communities, along with religious organizations, unions, and other political allies, have established a network of service agencies, which include migrant councils, and migrant service centers.

Beyond these activities, farm workers and their supporters have led economic boycotts in the Midwest and Northwest. UFWWS, a union which
affiliated with the United Farm Workers of America (UFWA) in early 1994, has also been lobbying and protesting in Olympia, Washington, to try to win collective-bargaining rights, health-care legislation for agricultural workers, and protection of farm workers’ interests in the state capitol. UFWWS was initially founded by Tomás Villanueva, the group’s first president. Rosalinda Guillén became the state coordinator for the union in 1995, and Guadalupe Gamboa, an attorney, is now the state director for the UFWWS, previously having served as director of Evergreen Rural Legal Services in eastern Washington.

The UFWWS recently conducted a successful national and international boycott against Chateau Ste. Michelle and Columbia Crest Wines, both owned by United States Tobacco (UST). This boycott led to farm worker elections at Chateau Ste. Michelle, and recognition of UFWWS as the farm workers’ representative in future collective bargaining negotiations. In late 1995, UFWWS won a labor contract with Chateau Ste. Michelle providing a number of benefits to farm workers. This contract was renewed again in June of 1997. With this recent victory, UFWWS has launched a campaign against the apple industry. Pending the outcome of the strawberry strike in Watsonville, California, the UFWWS expects to make an aggressive effort against the state’s apple industry soon, with substantial assistance from the AFL-CIO. Finally, UFWWS has been successfully struggling for the past nine years to have farm workers covered under state labor laws, to win health benefits for farm laborers, and to secure improved working and living conditions for these people. Such efforts have helped give definition to political and economic struggles of the Chicano community in eastern Washington. Chicano residents and the community at-large now better understand socio-economic issues affecting farm laborers in Washington.

In Oregon, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos Noroeste (PCUN) has been promoting a consumer boycott of a frozen fruit and vegetable processing company, Northwest Packing and Canning Company (NORPAC). PCUN, which has also organized strikes against Oregon strawberry growers, has gained a membership of four thousand. Members receive a range of services such as immigration counseling, and legal assistance for those seeking job benefits.

In Ohio, the FLOC succeeded in its economic boycott of Campbell Soup products. Founded by Baldemar Velasquez in 1967, the FLOC started as a reform movement trying to improve working conditions for Midwest farm work-
ers. The FLOC's establishment coincided with the UFW's emergence in California and it also modeled itself after the UFW. Once established, the FLOC called for a consumer boycott of all Campbell Soup products including such Campbell subsidiary products as Vlasic pickles, Swanson's frozen dinners, and Pepperidge Farm foods. During the seven year boycott, the FLOC found broad support among organizations and people from many different backgrounds. The boycott effort reached a new peak in 1984, when the National Council of Churches said it would endorse the boycott if Campbell did not resolve the labor dispute. Campbell finally agreed in January of 1985 to meet with the FLOC; on May 13, the FLOC and Campbell signed a formal statement of understanding. History was made when the FLOC signed three-year labor contracts with Campbell Soup and its Ohio tomato growers, as well as its Michigan Vlasic pickle growers, in February of 1986. The contracts gave FLOC farm workers a new set of labor rights and benefits. Finally, workers won recognition of their right to unionize, and a voice in determining wages, benefits, and grievance procedures.

State Commissions
By the early 1970s, Chicanos in the Midwest and Northwest pushed for establishment of state commissions or advisory committees to address issues of special concern. These commissions were to function in advising governors, legislators, and state agencies on policy matters, while also carrying out needed research. Eventually, all states in the Midwest adopted various forms of Chicano affairs commissions. In December 1969, Oregon's governor established the first Advisory Committee on Chicano Affairs. Washington state formed the Governor's Commission on Mexican American Affairs two years later; Idaho established its commission in 1987.

The creation of these agencies was a political breakthrough for the Chicano community because state-sponsored commissions formally acknowledged Chicanos as an important political constituency. For Chicanos, commissions were a significant improvement over token appearances by elected officials at community fiestas, or state-issued proclamations about "Hispanic Month." These commissions have served as clearinghouses for information, particularly for state documents and data, and have provided direct contact with governors' offices. Chicanos have utilized commissions for greater media access, while
having greater opportunities to testify before governmental bodies. These agencies are also excellent for cultivating leadership. Important issues have been explored by the commissions. These have included: education, youth problems, affirmative action, farm worker rights, immigration, police relations, economic development, drug and alcohol abuse, and voting rights.  

Other positive political developments growing out of state commissions have been appointments of commission members to state boards and departments, and as advisors to state governors. George Gómez, of Topeka, Kansas, explained that appointments of Mexican Americans and other Latinos to other state offices was a critical turning point for the community. Gómez noted that Latinos were making decisions that impacted all state residents and not simply their own community. This, said Gómez, made it clear that “Mexican Americans were qualified to make critical policy decisions about issues not labelled ‘Hispanic’.”

One example of Chicano state appointments in the Northwest is Jesse Berain, who left the Idaho House of Representatives in the summer of 1995 to be appointed to the Governor’s cabinet as director of the Office of the Aging. In Washington, Chicanos have been appointed to head three different departments—Employment Development, Licensing, and Veterans Affairs—and also to act as citizen advisors to the governor, according to Margarita Sugiyama de Mendoza. In Oregon, Anabelle Jaramillo has held the position of Citizens’ Advisor to the Governor, after serving as director of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs in Oregon.

There are some Chicano community members, nevertheless, who have contended that state commissions have failed to deal with community problems. These people argue that commissions are often supported by “soft” funding, which has led to elimination of some commissions, and reduced staff for others. Staffing problems render these agencies useless. An additional problem is that subsequent elections may bring a new governor or new party majority in the legislature, which may lead to a lack of continuity, preventing commission appointees from becoming long-term advocates for the Chicano community. Other weaknesses of commissions are that they lack female and youth representation; geographical diversity among members; and input from rural areas. Research staff limitations and minimal representation of other Latino groups are other noted drawbacks. Finally, the middle-class and professional background
of most commissioners has inhibited serious attention to such issues as employ-
ment, benefits for farm laborers, gang violence, AIDS, spousal abuse, immigra-
tion and teenage pregnancy.

**Community Centers**
The emergence of Chicano community centers was critical in expanding Mexi-
can American political awareness after World War II. Many of the centers’
original founders in the post-war period were veterans and defense workers,
whereas Chicano students were in the forefront of the development of commu-
nity centers during the 1960s and 1970s. These agencies often provide free tax
services, assistance in filing police complaints, help in processing immigration
papers, and voter registration. Some centers also have free lunch programs for
children and senior citizens as well as day care for working parents.

Neighborhood centers have helped bring to the fore a new set of commu-
nity leaders—the center directors and their board members. These individuals
have varying degrees of power, and their political influence may be based on
the size of their budgets, and ability to control program funding. They may
also regularly meet with Anglo business and political leaders, and they are often
sought out by the press regarding the community’s opinions on many issues.

Midwest and Northwest Chicanos have struggled for private, state, county,
and federal funding of community-based centers. Chicanos believe such agen-
cies are important because they improve employment opportunities, work for
better housing, promote a higher quality of education, increase health care ser-
VICES, and provide support for senior citizens. In many places, centers have
been particularly important in serving as cultural bridges between foreign-born
Latin Americans and U.S. social, political, and economic institutions.

Two notable community centers in Washington state are the Centro de la
Raza in Seattle, and the Centro Campesino in the city of Granger, located in
the lower Yakima Valley. The Centro de la Raza is one of the oldest and largest
Latino community centers in the Northwest. According to Roberto Maestes,
the center’s director, there are seventy full-time staff members and at least two
hundred regular volunteers. The Centro de la Raza had its beginnings in the
fall of 1972, when students and their parents, along with a few school teachers,
occupied the abandoned Beacon Hill School near downtown Seattle. Presently,
the center functions as a meeting place for community advocates, and provides
an array of services. Maestes describes the Centro as a civil rights organization concerned with salient issues such as community empowerment, crime, education and national and regional outreach. Programs of the Centro include housing assistance, senior services, a food bank, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, a José Martí child development center, and a job readiness and placement program. The Centro is also involved in economic development projects designed to meet Latino small businesses needs in the Seattle community. Besides the center's local projects, the Centro's International Relations and Community Outreach Department maintains contacts with international peace organizations. In addition, this department promotes cultural and educational exchanges as well as hosting foreign dignitaries.  

The Centro Campesino in the lower Yakima Valley, focuses its services and activities on Mexican-origin people in this non-metropolitan area. Ricardo García directs the center, which also operates a Spanish-language radio station, KDNA. Also located in the two-story building of the Centro Campesino are offices dedicated to immigration assistance, ESL classes, alternative schooling for adolescents, and housing referral services. There are conference rooms in the main building as well, and adjacent to this building is a community meeting hall. Through the radio station and his public involvement, García has kept in the limelight many issues of particular interest to the Chicano community in eastern Washington. The Centro Campesino provides a model of a rural community-based organization structured to provide services and be an advocate for Chicanos. 

Hundreds of other community centers have been established in the Midwest. One such agency, the Guadalupe Center, located on Kansas City's Westside, is involved in education, social services, health awareness, cultural heritage, and recreational programs. The center has also established programs involved with job placement, anti-gang activities, immigration counseling, alternative high schools, adult basic education, teen pregnancy, AIDS/HIV education and counseling, senior citizen outreach, and aid to the homeless. Recently, the center established a new component called the Policy Analysis Center, which carries out research and disseminates information on the local Chicano population. The philosophy of "knowledge as power" underlies the center's policy research. By developing accurate demographic information on the community, for example, the Guadalupe Center equips itself to address social problems.
In addition to community centers, Chicanos in the Midwest established several research institutes devoted to providing information and public policy recommendations to elected and appointed officials. One such “think tank” is the Latino Institute, founded in 1974 and based in Chicago. The Latino Institute is a non-profit organization promoting Latino progress through research, scholarly training, and political advocacy; its efforts pursue two main goals. The first is helping Latinos work on their own behalf to become better informed and organized, as well as involved, in the fight for equity in the larger community. A second goal is increasing Latino representation and influence in Chicago's political, cultural, and economic power structures.42

The Julian Samora Research Institute, located at Michigan State University in East Lansing, is the only Latino research center at a major university in the Midwest. It was established in 1989 out of the recognition that most social science research has failed to consider issues pertaining specifically to the Latino community. The institute carries out research which examines the social, economic, educational, political, and health conditions of Latinos in the Midwest; transmits its research findings to other academic institutions, government officials, community leaders, and to interested citizens in the private sector. The organization also provides technical expertise and support to Latino communities in their efforts to develop policy responses to local problems.43

**Women's Organizations**

As already noted, Mexican American women have been significant in the politics of their communities in the Northwest and Midwest. They have also formed their own entirely female organizations, because their concerns have largely been ignored by both Anglo and Mexican American male leaders. Paula Jasso of Topeka, Kansas, explained: “Women were involved in the community prior to World War II. In addition, Mexican American women were in the forefront of the Chicano Movement. Yet, many issues affecting women have not been fully addressed.” These issues include wage and job discrimination, family planning, domestic violence, lack of prenatal care, sexual harassment, and the lack of educational opportunities. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the development of a strong women’s movement for resolution of these problems. The period from the 1970s through the 1990s has continued with the expansion of Mexican American women’s associations in the Northwest and Midwest.
In “A Cultural Profile and the Status of Chicanas in the Northwest,” Luz Maciel Villaroel and Sandra Fancher Garcia write that: “Chicanas as a group in the Northwest continue to experience cultural, political and economic oppression as well as discrimination.” Maciel Villaroel and Fancher Garcia add that the economic exploitation, oppression, and discrimination experienced by Chicanas not only comes from relations with Anglo men and women, but also develops from relations with Chicanos. Oral interviews conducted by Maciel Villaroel and Fancher Garcia in Washington and Oregon found that women in the Northwest from urban or rural areas, young or old, light skin or dark skin, indicated having experienced discrimination based on race and gender. A major concern among Chicanas in the Northwest, according to Maciel Villaroel and Fancher Garcia is the lack of equal access to public services, education, health, employment, politics and legal institutions. Problems with access to services is compounded by the fact that unplanned pregnancies are high among Chicanas, according to Fancher Garcia and Maciel Villaroel. From their interviews in the Northwest, these researchers learned that abortions are not options for Chicanas. Many Chicana interviewees were hesitant to speak about it, and for them the main issue was not just choice, but rather whether abortion is a moral or immoral choice. The problem of pregnancy must be discussed in combination with the issue of education for Chicanas, given high Latina dropout rates and high teen pregnancy rates at the national level.

Studies have demonstrated that women who believe they have control over their lives and view pregnancy as a matter of choice have few unplanned pregnancies. According to Fancher Garcia and Maciel Villaroel, many Chicanas in the Northwest are not in this group. Census data for the Northwest reveals a higher incidence of poverty for Chicanas who are single parents. This incidence of poverty is much higher than for non-Chicanas who are also single heads of families.

Other observations by Fancher Garcia and Maciel Villaroel as well as this article’s authors are that Chicanas have frequently served as leaders of groups and movements in the Northwest. These include the United Farm Workers of America, the Mexican American Women’s National Association (MANA), Mujeres de Oregon, the Oregon, Washington, and Idaho Commissions on Hispanic Affairs, and the Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement (OCHA). In the Midwest, some of the leading Chicana organizations include: the Mexi-
can American Women’s National Association (MANA), the Mexican American Women’s Business and Professional Club, and Adelante Mujer.\(^{46}\)

Over the past twenty years Chicana organizations in the Northwest and Midwest have sponsored hundreds of conferences, seminars and other forums. Major conferences, for example, have been held in Kansas City, Kansas; Lansing, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; and St. Paul, Minnesota. These meetings have addressed subjects such as networking, role models, leadership development, assertiveness training, financial support for higher education, and employment discrimination as well as campaign and lobbying skills.

### Advocacy Organizations
Besides organizing themselves, Chicanas have worked through advocacy organizations. In the Northwest, statewide advocacy organizations exist in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The Washington State Council of La Raza (WCLR), which is headquartered in Yakima City, is a local chapter of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) in Washington, D.C., which has some 150 affiliates nationwide.

Directed at present by Tony Sandoval, the WCLR was created in 1989 as a statewide Chicano advocacy group. The major focus of the WCLR has been public education. According to Sandoval, the WCLR has worked with local educational agencies to promote parent involvement programs that are culturally sensitive. This group has also advocated recruitment of Chicano/a teachers, administrators, and counselors for public schools in Washington.\(^{47}\)

In support of these activities, WCLR conducts annual conferences and legislative receptions. The council uses conferences as forums to bring interested individuals and agencies together to address issues significant to Chicanos. Also during these meetings, individuals are recognized who have made contributions to the Chicano community. At the first annual conference of the WCLR, Governor Booth Gardner, and Superintendent of Public Instruction, Judith Billings, were featured speakers. The conference provided workshops on education, public access, and public policy.

In addition to conferences, the council organizes annual legislative receptions. These receptions allow state legislators, state and local officials and interested citizens to meet on a one-on-one basis. The council also brings in community representatives to discuss Chicano issues in the state, and to press for
solutions to community problems. IMAGE is an advocacy group with chapters in all three Northwest states—Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. This group, which is particularly active in Idaho, consists of public employees at local, state and federal levels. Leo Puga, who directs IMAGE in Idaho, notes that this organization has a national office in Washington, D.C., and promotes advancement of Mexican American government workers. IMAGE's main goals are to improve job and educational opportunities for Mexican Americans. Recently, IMAGE in Idaho has lobbied the state legislature to pass a farm worker rights bill. This group has also promoted voter registration and citizenship campaigns for undocumented Mexicans in Idaho. IMAGE, in fact, has been closely linked to the state's Commission on Hispanic Affairs and the Idaho Migrant Council.

In Oregon, Latinos have created an advocacy organization known as OCHA (the Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement). It began in 1983 when the United Way chapter of the Columbia-Willamette region created a project to address Latino human service needs in the area. Thirteen committees were created addressing such issues as youth services, the judicial system, health, housing, media relations, business development, religion, education, the arts, labor issues, and community demographics. The committees continued to meet until 1985, when a conference was called to report their findings. OCHA grew out of this effort. Under María Elena Campisteguy Hawkins' direction, OCHA prioritized four service areas: education, health, employment and economic development, while developing greater resources. In education, OCHA conducts the Oregon Leadership Institute (OLI). Another of this group's education services is a high school retention program, Proyecto Adelante. OCHA's involvement in the health field consists of the Oregon Hispanic AIDS project (OHAP), which has attempted to inform Latinos/as about the disease. OCHA also has a job bank and has created workplace training and workshops for Latinos. OCHA has addressed economic development issues by purchasing a downtown Portland building with the aim of establishing a central location for Chicano business people in the city.

In the Midwest, too, Chicanos have established local advocacy groups that have direct ties to national groups such as IMAGE and the National Council of La Raza. For example, in April of 1970, over 300 midwestern representatives
met at the University of Notre Dame to establish a regional civil rights organiza-
tion. Delegates, including over 100 students, formed the Midwest Council of La Raza (MWCLR), which took the lead in differentiating issues of special concern to midwestern Chicanos.52

Another advocacy organization is the Midwest Voter Registration and Edu-
cation Project (MWVRP), which was founded in 1982 to encourage voter reg-
istration and balloting among Chicanos.53 The MWVRP sponsored many voter registration programs in the 1980s, and later merged with an East Coast voter registration project to form the Midwest-Northeast Voter Registration and Edu-
cation Project. This organization will host its 15th annual Hispanic Leadership Conference in Chicago in October of 1997.

**Migrant Councils**

During the War on Poverty in the mid-1960s, agencies were created to provide farm workers in the Northwest with services. In Washington state, day care assistance was provided by the Washington Council on Migrant Affairs, and education programs were administered by the Washington State Migrant Educational Organization. These two agencies merged in 1968 to form the Northwest Regional Organization (NRO).54 In 1983 the NRO's programs were dis-
continued and the Washington State Migrant Council (WSMC) was incorpo-
rated to provide services to farm workers. Carlos Díaz has been the first, and only director of this agency. WSMC, today, is a large organization with twenty-six centers, over 900 employees and a twenty million dollar budget. Services are provided to over 10,000 families in fourteen counties.55

The Migrant Head Start program has been one of the primary projects operated by the WSMC. Currently, it provides educational opportunities for children, adolescents, and adults. This agency also administers programs in health care, substance abuse, and pre-teen outreach.

Besides its service role, the WSMC also works to promote the interests of Washington's Chicano community. For example, it has assisted school districts in recruitment of teachers and school administrators. The extensive resources of the National Head Start program aid the council in addressing many social, psychological, and health problems of children. The WSMC offers these resources, as well as its staff's expertise to school districts and other community agencies.56
In the late 60s and early 70s the Colorado Migrant Council (CMC), directed by Lalo Delgado, began sending staff to assist Chicano leaders in the Pacific Northwest with the organization of similar migrant councils. Services such as health and job training were being promoted. The oldest incorporated migrant council today in the Northwest is the Idaho Migrant Council (IMC). The IMC became a public agency in 1971, after the CMC had instigated the development of other migrant councils in Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, and Montana in the 1960s.

Housing is the IMC's major concern. Since 1972, the housing division has spent over 2.5 million dollars on single family homes for migrants and an additional five million dollars on various types of low-income housing. To accomplish all this, the IMC staff has used a combination of resources from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), foundations, banks, public corporations, the state's "Home" program, and various finance agencies. IMC director, Beto Fuentes, notes that, in addition to providing services to farm workers, his agency also acts as a community advocate. According to Fuentes, IMC works on behalf of farm-worker children once they enter school. The IMC has advised on litigation against several Idaho public school districts. The 1995 Farm Worker Rights bill, which was considered by the Idaho legislature, presents another example of the IMC's advocacy work.

Washington and Idaho have created strong migrant councils offering extensive networks, numerous community services, and well-staffed centers in agricultural areas of these two states. On the other hand, the Oregon Chicano community does not have such migrant councils where one agency provides multiple services to agricultural laborers at nearby multiple sites. Oregon's Chicano community is more dependent on a combination of federal, state, and county agencies. Migrant councils' multiple functions are conducted by the farm worker group PCUN (Pineros y Campesinos Unidos, Noroeste). PCUN has a small full-time, highly trained staff providing farm worker services. Whereas PCUN cannot provide as extensive a range of services as Washington and Idaho migrant councils, it does have advantages of obtaining steady funding from membership dues. Therefore, Oregon farm workers are not dependent on grants from corporations and government agencies as are Washington and Idaho Migrant Councils.

Oregon farm workers typically are confronted with problems seeking out
multiple agencies for assistance with housing, education, health care, and other needs. Oregon’s county-level community action agencies have been attempting to provide some of these services. However, many times all they can do is make referrals.

The lack of a single agency providing multiple services to agricultural laborers at locations near farm working communities goes beyond simply rendering effective and efficient services. Migrant councils have the capacity to hire trained staff in medical, business and educational fields as well as provide opportunities for staff development. These organizations are active agents in the political socialization of a younger generation of Chicana and Chicano leaders in the Northwest, as was the case with the War on Poverty experience in this region. Chicanos in Washington and Idaho have seen a number of Mexican-origin individuals elected and appointed to local city councils, county commissions, school boards, and state agencies. Oregon, although having some appointed Chicano and Chicana officials, by comparison, has not demonstrated a similar capacity to make much headway in local and state elections so far. It may take another decade for local and state Chicano representation to yield concrete and extensive results.

Like the Northwest, the Midwest has had an influx of thousands of migrant farm workers since the late 1940s. Major issues facing these farm workers have been and continue to be low wages, lack of medical insurance, inadequate housing, high infant mortality rates, pesticide poisoning, and child labor. Over the years, Mexican American leaders have pressured almost every Midwest state legislature to establish effective migrant councils. These agencies, in turn, have allocated funds for educating migrant children, and for providing health care, adult bilingual education, job training, and adequate housing. In addition to these state agencies, some local Midwest communities have also created support service networks for migrant farm workers.

Electoral Politics and Voting Rights
Chicano leaders in the Midwest and Northwest face serious electoral obstacles denying them a meaningful voice in politics. Racial gerrymandering, at-large election systems, barriers to voter registration, insufficient bilingual voting materials, and the fact that many potential Mexican voters are not citizens, pose serious problems for Chicano politics. In recent years, Chicano commu-
nities have challenged electoral practices in many midwestern cities, including Chicago and Detroit, to name a few. Chicanos have also spearheaded redistricting reforms in the region during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s as well as numerous voter registration efforts. These efforts have been sponsored by many groups such as the League of Mexican American Voters of Illinois; and the Chicano Political Education Group.

Lawsuits were filed pertaining to voting rights violations in Yakima County, Washington, by the ACLU office in Seattle in 1991 and 1992; more investigations occurred in 1995 and 1996. In Idaho, litigation was initiated by Chicanos in challenging the 1990 state plan for redistricting. Chicano groups also appeared before the Idaho State Legislature both in 1990 and in 1980 concerning political redistricting.

Chicanas have been instrumental in organizing voter registration, and political campaigns in numerous Chicano communities. Most community leaders agree that women make up the organizational backbone of nearly all Chicano local and state campaigns. Women have walked precincts, addressed and stuffed envelopes, designed and printed campaign materials, staffed phone banks, and organized the community for voting on election day. "There is no doubt that women have played a key role in the development of Mexican American politics," says Nancy Barcelo of Iowa City, Iowa. She also noted that women have traditionally had broader networks in the community than men. Most men's networks revolve around work, whereas Mexican American women are linked to neighborhood organizations such as church and school groups. In Portland, Oregon, for example, Luz Bazán Gutiérrez coordinated a regional voter registration campaign in 1989 and 1990, while directing the Northwest Community Projects. Bazán Gutiérrez worked in areas of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. Although grants for this effort were received from a number of foundations and churches, initial support was obtained from the Southwest Voter Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas.

Partly as a result of voter registration and education efforts, Chicanos in the Northwest and Midwest have elected members of their communities to public office; in other cases Chicanos have been appointed to city council and school board seats. Within both major parties, Chicanos are making their presence known. For example, Jesse Berain, a Republican state representative from southern Idaho, has served two terms in the house of representatives, receiving im-
important campaign assistance from the GOP after having worked for the party for years. Another Chicano legislator from Oregon, Rocky Barilla, held a legislative seat during the mid-1980s.\(^{68}\) In Washington, Emilio Cantú, also a Republican, represents the predominantly white and upper middle class Bellvue community. Only Margarita Prentice, in Washington, serves as a Democratic state senator with a significant nonwhite population in her south Seattle district. To win elections, she has forged a multi-ethnic coalition.

Outside of Yakima County the election of Chicanos to local government positions is uncommon. However, the city of Othello in Adams County recently had an Mexican American businessman, Samuel Garza, appointed to the city council. Garza ran unopposed for his seat later in 1994. In the city of Pasco, in Franklin County, Luisa Torres was appointed to the city council in 1990, but was defeated in an election the following year. In 1993, Conrado Cavasos ran for the Pasco City Council, but was convincingly defeated. The Pasco School District elected a conservative Mexican American to the school board in 1993. This person received support from conservative white residents who have opposed Chicano student programs in the district.\(^ {69}\)

In Idaho, Abe Vasquez, a Republican, was elected to the Canyon County Board of Commissioners. In southern Idaho, along the Snake River, where concentrated Chicano communities exist, Chicanos have won city council positions as well as the mayor's office.\(^ {70}\) In Oregon, the election of state and local government officials in recent years, has been less common than in the states of Washington and Idaho.

Despite efforts to register Chicanos, many cities in the Northwest have low numbers and percentages of registered voters who are Spanish surnamed. Low voter turnout is another problem that partly explains the fact that few Chicanos hold elective office in the Northwest even though they often account for 20 to over 50 percent of the population in many non-metropolitan communities.\(^ {71}\)

Mexican Americans' political progress in the Midwest suffered several setbacks in the 1930s and 1940s due to the Great Depression, the deportation and repatriation programs, as well as World War II. Yet by the 1960s and 1970s, Chicanos were again electing candidates to local, state and national offices. By 1985, there were over 450 elected Chicano officials in the Midwest—mostly at the local level. Chicanas, in particular, have broken new ground in the Midwest with elections to dozens of local and county-level offices, includ-
ing those of Mary Simon to the Flint, Michigan, School Board, Irene Hernandez to the Cook County (Illinois) Board of Commissioners, and Frances García to the city council in Hutchinson, Kansas. García later served as mayor, making her the first Mexican American woman to hold such a post in the United States. García noted that: “Mexican American women have always played a critical role in the politics of our community.”72 She observed how prior to World War II, women were involved in many organizations and activities. However, after the war, women’s political visibility greatly increased. “To the outside world, Mexican American women appear to be invisible because men generally are the spokespersons. Nothing could be further from the truth.”73 Mexican American women have moved from campaign workers to political officeholders in the last two decades.

Conclusion
This research has revealed that Midwest and Northwest Chicanos have identified with many political strategies and movements of Southwest Chicanos. At the same time, these communities outside the Southwest have sought to achieve their goals in light of realities of their own demographic and political circumstances. This situation has tended to bring emphasis to interest group activity as opposed to electoral strategies in these two regions. However, many issues and concerns are still shared in common among Chicanos in all three regions—the Midwest, Northwest and Southwest. These circumstances have opened up possibilities for the creation of a national agenda for this group, while also making it more evident that Chicanos are a national constituency. Recent attacks on bilingual education, undocumented immigrants, affirmative action, and women’s rights have sounded an alarm for Chicanos to organize on a national scale. In addition, coalition building with other groups confronted with similar attacks has become more urgent.

The common culture, political experience, and socio-economic circumstances shared by Chicanos in the Midwest, Northwest and Southwest gives impetus to national mobilization. This study has found that national Chicano organizations have networked in all three regions, achieving concrete results in terms of favorable public policies and responsive political leaders. This situation suggests more possibilities for Mexican-origin people within the United States.
At the same time, the authors wish to recognize this study's limitations and suggest future research agendas for these regions. This brief demographic description of the Midwest and Northwest is not meant to be definitive, but rather to suggest that electoral strategies in these regions, particularly for state and federal offices, have serious limitations for Chicanos. Because some areas of both regions are growing quickly, further demographic studies are needed not only to count individuals in these communities but also to assess the educational achievement, socio-economic characteristics and family structure of this group. The migrant labor stream in the Midwest and Northwest has long delivered many Chicanos and Mexicanos to these areas. Explanations as to the growth of Chicano populations in urban areas of the two regions should also be researched and evaluated. The census has shown that a large percentage of the Chicano population in both regions is dominantly Spanish-speaking. This situation has implications for government services and marketing done by the private sector. To facilitate further research on the Midwest and Northwest, more comparative studies of the Southwest, with cases from other regions having significant Chicano populations, might be pursued.

Finally, the nature and scope of Chicano organizational activity in the Midwest and Northwest, like that in the Southwest, is most important. However, this article has focused specifically on interest groups. The authors realize that this is a standard unit of analysis in Political Science; specific topics may not be adequately discussed when limited to interest groups. One such subject is the empowerment of women and Chicanas. Studies have shown that Chicanas, particularly from lower socio-economic backgrounds, establish linkages to their communities via the family. In attempting to confront the everyday struggles of family life, Chicanas may engage in issues like the adequacy of park facilities in their communities, or participate in functions of local churches that may provide social services to their families. This work is unpaid and unrecognized. However, this unpaid labor develops skills in negotiating, fund raising, and neighborhood organizing. Undoubtedly these are necessary political skills. This road to empowerment is significant for a large segment of the population, but has been neglected in studies of Chicanas and other groups in general. Although the authors have attempted to describe Chicana political participation, we realize that this is a very limited sample of Mexican American women who engage in the political sphere as part of their everyday life struggle.
NOTES

1 The authors greatly appreciate all of the support from numerous community leaders who enriched this article with their invaluable insights and knowledge on the post-World War II development of the Mexican American community in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest. In addition we wish to thank Stuart Anderson for his excellent editing and helpful suggestions on our manuscript. Finally, this article is dedicated to our colleague, Ricardo Sánchez, and the loving memory of Gloria Ramírez Santillán.

2 The terms Mexican American and Chicano are used interchangeably in this paper. "Mexican American" is used in describing Mexican-origin people in the United States. "Chicano" generally is used as a self-descriptive term for people of Mexican descent in this country, and it is a term that emerged as a result of the Chicano Movement in the 1960s. Chicano also reflects a more politicized group of Mexican-origin people. Latino refers to all people of Latin American descent in the U.S.


After the early period of Spanish/Mexican exploration in the Pacific Northwest, Mexicanos first entered this region in significant numbers in the mid-19th century. In the 1850s, Mexican arrieros, or muleteers, conducted business in the mining camps of southern Oregon. By the late 1860s Mexican sheepherders were grazing sheep in eastern Oregon while Mexican cowboys were gaining a reputation as cowhands in Oregon's ranches. See Gilberto García, "Mexicanos in Othello, Washington: The Excluded Chapter in the History of Adams County," forthcoming in Revista Apple, 1995.

As Mexicans became permanent laborers in the Northwest and Midwest, they took the first steps toward developing stable communities. Many Mexican workers, for example, returned to Texas, Mexico, or the Southwest to find brides or to bring established families to their new homes in the north. Literally thousands of Mexican children were born in the Midwest or Northwest during the first quarter of the century. The presence of wives and children transformed Mexican neighborhoods from areas inhabited by transient males to full-fledged, multigenerational communities of men, women and children.


6 Raúl Morín, Among the Valiant: Mexican Americans in World War II and Korea, Borden Publishing Company, Alhambra, California, 1966. Many Mexican American men and women serving in the military, showed themselves to be people of great physical courage, demonstrated by the numerous military medals awarded to them as well as the media attention focused on their heroic actions. Their actions on the battlefield brought increased respect and pride to their communities.


8 One instance of military enlistment by a Mexican American woman, was that of Victoria Archuleta Sierra. Born in La Junta, Colorado, in 1924, she came with her family to Pocatello, Idaho, where they settled permanently. She enlisted in the Army at Pocatello and served with distinction as a nurse during World War II. See Erasmo Gamboa, "Voces Hispánicas / Hispanic Voices of Idaho," Boise, Idaho: Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs and Idaho Humanities Council, 1992.


10 For information on the Pacific Northwest braceros see *Ibid.*, Gamboa, *Mexican Labor and World War II*. For information on the Midwest braceros see: *Gopher Historian*, Fall, 1971, Minnesota Historical Society, p. 18; and Interview with John Quintana, 6-10-87. (Mr. Quintana came to the Midwest as part of the bracero program.) and *Ibid.*, Valdés, *Al Norte*, chapter 5.

11 Interviews with Ben Franco, Omaha, Nebraska, August 18, 1985, Joe Terronez, Silvis, Illinois, June 21, 1986, Felisita Ruiz, Kansas City, Missouri, February 24, 1987, and Hazel Gómez, Topeka, Kansas, February 9, 1987. All four of these individuals were active with the post-war civil rights movements for social and economic equality for Mexican Americans.


13 Interview with Erasmo Gamboa, Professor of Chicano Studies and History at the University of Washington, October 6, 1996.

14 Interview with José Juárez, South Bend, Indiana, August 13, 1986. This student leader discussed the political climate on college campuses during this time: Chicano students and community leaders realized that the graduation of Mexican Americans from college was key to broadening the cultural and political agendas in the community. There were many protests throughout the Midwest regarding access and retention of Chicano students in higher education.


17 Interview with Louis Gonzales, East Chicago, Indiana, August 2, 1986.


20 “Applications Total 200 in Minority Recruiting,” *Daily Evergreen*, (March 12, 1970); “Class Studies Boycott,” *Daily Evergreen*, (May 26, 1970): 3; and “RIS Approves Chicano Stud-


The schools which comprised ACCA were the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Wayne State University in Detroit, Oakland University in Pontiac, Delta Community College, Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan University in Lansing, and Saginaw Valley State University.


Ibid., Estrada, (forthcoming) “Political Mobilization and Representation in Mexican Origin Communities in Eastern Washington.”

For reference materials on the Northwest demographics and Chicano voting data see:


For reference material on Midwest demographics and data on Chicano voting see:


“Profiles, Political/Demographic, Hispanics in the City of Chicago,” Midwest Voter Registration Education Project, 1983.

“Profiles, Political/Demographic, Hispanics in Ohio,” Midwest Voter Registration Education Project, 1983-84.

“Profiles, Political/Demographic, Hispanics in Michigan and Wisconsin,” Midwest Voter Registration Education Project, 1983-84.


Interviews with Mary Gonzales, April 25, 1995, Baldimar Vasquez, Toledo, Ohio, September 2, 1985; and Ella Ochoa, North Platte, Nebraska; Ramon Ramirez, president and Mary Gonzales, staff member of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos, Noroeste, Woodburn, Oregon, April, 25, 1995; Rosalinda Guillén, Coordinator for United Farm Workers of Washington State, Sunnyside, Washington, March 24, 1995; and Rogelio Valdez, Complaints Investigator with Monitor Advocate Unit, Idaho Department of Employment, Boise, Idaho, May 2, 1995. All of these individuals are extremely active in organizing and union-
izing farm workers in their respective states.

Interviews with Mario Compean, Madison, Wisconsin, July 7, 1986; Olga Villa Parra, South Bend, Indiana, August 30, 1985; and Gloria Cardenas Cudia, Rockford, Illinois, April 1, 1987. Some of these groups in the Midwest include the Ohio State Migrant Council, Western Kansas Migrant Health Project, Oklahoma Rural Opportunities Development Corporation, Illinois Migrant Council and Midwest Farm Worker Employment and Training, Inc.


These Midwest commissions include the Governor's Council for Spanish Speaking Peoples (Wisconsin); Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs (Ohio); Oklahoma Commission on Mexican American Affairs; Mexican American Commission (Nebraska); Spanish Speaking Affairs Council (Minnesota), Spanish Speaking Peoples Commission (Iowa); Commission on the Status of Spanish Heritage Peoples (Indiana); Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs (Michigan); Governor's Advisory Council on Hispanic Affairs (Missouri); and Advisory Committee on Mexican American Affairs (Kansas).

Interviews with Lydia Guerra, director of the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs, March 29, 1995; Annabelle Jarramillo, Oregon Citizens' Advisor to the Governor and former Director of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, March 27, 1995; and Jaime Gallardo, administrative assistant to the Washington Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Olympia, Wash., May 17, 1995.

Interviews with Leticia Patino, Columbus, Ohio, September 1, 1985; Jose Trejo, St. Paul, Minnesota, July 1, 1986; Francisco Rodriguez, Madison, Wisconsin, August 7, 1986; Miguel Teran, Des Moines, Iowa, July 18, 1986; Rudy Perales, Lincoln, Nebraska, August 17, 1985; Anabelle Jaramillo, Oregon's Citizen's Advisor to the Governor, Salem, Oregon, March 27, 1995; Lydia Guerra, Director of the Idaho Commission of Hispanic Affairs, Boise, Idaho, March 29, 1995; Jaime Gallardo, Olympia, Wash., May 17, 1995. All of these individuals served as executive directors of the commissions in their respective states.

Interview with George Gómez, Topeka, Kansas, February 9, 1987.

Interview with Jesse Berain, Boise, Idaho, April 9, 1995.

Interview with Magarita Sugiyama de Mendoza, former citizens advisor to the Governor of Washington State, May 15, 1995.

Interview with Anabelle Jaramillo, Oregon Citizens' Advisor to the Governor, March 27, 1995.

Interview with Roberto Maestes, Director of Centro de la Raza, and Stella Ortega, Chair of the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Seattle, April 20, 1995.


Some of the centers include El Centro Cultural Hispano and Chicano, El Centro Servicios Para Mexicanos, Chicano Awareness Center, La Clinica Benito Juárez, El Centro de la Causa, La Casa Aztlán, the Chicano and Indian American Cultural Center, El Centro Pan Americano, Spanish Center, Spanish-Speaking Information Center, Mexican American
Culture Center, El Centro de Western Kansas, Hispanic Center of Indianapolis, Guadalupe Center, Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, and El Centro de la Comunidad. These organizations provide, among other services, employment referrals, medical advice, social and educational opportunities, immigration and naturalization assistance, and recreational facilities.

42 Written correspondence with Sylvia Puente, Director of Research and Documentation, Chicago, Illinois, January 5, 1995.

43 Written correspondence with Refugio I. Rochín, Director of the Julian Samora Institute, East Lansing, Michigan, May 4, 1995.

44 Interview with Paula Jasso, Topeka, Kansas, September, 1994.


46 Other women's groups noted in the Midwest are: Mujeres Unidas, Las Mujeres de la Esperanza, El Grupo de Mujeres Hispanas, Mujeres Latinas en Acción, the Mexican Ladies Association, the Hispanic Women's Network, the Hispanic Women's Forum, the Alliance of Latin Women of Waukesha (Wisconsin), and Las Mujeres Unidas de Michigan.

47 Interview with Tony Sandoval, Yakima City, November 22, 1994.

48 Interview with Tony Sandoval, November 22, 1994.

49 Interview with Leo Puga, President of IMAGE of Idaho, Boise, May 23, 1995.

50 Interview with María Elena C. Hawkins, President of OCHA, Portland, OR, May 12, 1995.

51 Interview with María Elena C. Hawkins, May 12, 1995.

52 Interview with Ricardo Parra, South Bend, Indiana, October 10, 1985. Parra was one of the key organizers and leaders of the MWCLR. Another group formed in 1971 was the Latin American Congress (Congreso Latino). On January 16, 1971, 810 people representing 45 organizations in the Milwaukee area met to establish a central organization to coordinate the various activities and services to better serve the people of the community. Citation from: Latin American Convention, July 16, 1971, published by Latin American Union for Civil Rights, Inc.

53 Interview with Juan Andrade, Toledo, Ohio, September 2, 1985. Andrade, for the past seven years, has served as the director of the MWVRP.

54 Interview with Ricardo García, Past Director of the Northwest Regional Organization, Granger, Wash. May 30, 1995.


58 Interview with Beto Fuentes, Director of the Idaho Migrant Council, Boise, Idaho, May 24, 1995. Today the IMC also administers programs in Wyoming and Montana. Four-
teen IMC Migrant Head Start centers are currently operating in Idaho, Wyoming and Montana. The Head Start centers provide not only educational programs for children but also provide children with physical and dental exams, and nutritional programs. Head Start parents are assisted by IMC in seeking medical services for children with disabilities.


60 Ibid., Miller "Community Action and Reaction."

61 Interview with Juan Cardena, Muscatine, Iowa, June 20, 1986. Some of these community groups include Las Clinicas Migrantes Regional, Ohio State Texas Migrant Council, Committee on Migrant Relations, Western Kansas Migrant Health Project, Migrants in Action, La Escuela de Migración de Emporia (Kansas), Council of Agricultural Workers and Low-Income Families of Kansas, United Migrant Opportunities Service, Inc., Associated Migrant Opportunity Services, Migrant Legal Action Program, and Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training, Inc.

62 Other cities which have seen Chicanos challenge electoral results include: Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Dodge City (Kansas), Scottsbluff (Nebraska), Omaha, Topeka, East Chicago, Cleveland, and Kansas City.

63 Interviews with Robert A. Ruiz, Kansas City, Kansas, August 14, 1985, and Juan Andrade, Toledo, Ohio, September 2, 1985. Other groups which have sponsored Chicano voter registration in the Midwest include: the United Mexican-American Voters of Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri; the Alianza Chicana de Iowa; the Wisconsin Voter Education Project; the Mexican American Voters of Nebraska; and the Concerned Mexican American Voters of Kansas.

64 Interview, with Luz Bazán Gutiérrez in Yakima City, September 10, 1994, former director of Northwest Community Projects' voter registration drive.


66 Interview with Nancy "Rusty" Barcelo, Iowa City, Iowa, June 26, 1986.

67 Interview with Luz Bazán Gutiérrez, Yakima City, October 29, 1995.

68 Interview with Annabelle Jaramillo, March 27, 1995.

69 Daniel Estrada, "Chicano Politics in the Northwest," unpublished manuscript.

70 Information on elected officials in Idaho was obtained from the 1995 Directory of Idaho Government Officials, Boise, ID: Association of Idaho Cities.

71 Ibid., Estrada, "Political Mobilization and Representation in Mexican Origin Communities of Eastern Washington."

72 Interviews with Frances García, Hutchinson, Kansas, January 27, 1987.

73 Interview with Frances García, Hutchinson, Kansas, January 27, 1987.