¡*JUSTICIA* FOR SANTOS!: MEXICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE SANTOS RODRÍGUEZ AFFAIR IN DALLAS, TEXAS, 1969-1978

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Queda prohibido no sonreír a los problemas, no luchar por lo que quieres, abandonarlo todo por miedo, no convertir en realidad tus sueños.- Pablo Neruda

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Introduction

During the early morning hours of July 24, 1973, two white Dallas police officers, Darrel L. Cain and Roy Arnold, responded to a burglary call at a Fina gas station in the *barrio* of Little Mexico. As the police officers arrived to the crime scene, three suspects fled into the darkness behind the gas station. Unable to detain the suspects, Officer Cain believed that the witnesses' descriptions matched those of the Rodríguez brothers, two Chicano boys who continually had run-ins with the law and lived nearby. Quickly, both Cain and Arnold went to the Rodríguez residence, and without serving a warrant, arrested Santos, twelve-years-old, and David, his thirteen-year-old brother. The officers took the boys back to the scene of the crime to interrogate them parking their patrol car in the darkness of an empty lot next to the gas station. Cain pointed his .357 Magnum pistol toward the front seat, directly at Santos's head, telling him to confess or he would use lethal force. Santos, handcuffed in the front passenger seat of the squad car, denied any involvement with the burglary and refused to name a third suspect. Irritated with the lack of cooperation, Cain pulled the trigger of his pistol once. The gun clicked to an empty barrel. Demanding again that Santos confess, Cain continued the game of Russian roulette pulling the trigger again: This time the boy was not as fortunate. The gun discharged as Cain fatally shot Santos Rodríguez.[1]

[1] "Officer Suspended, Charged: 11-year-old Burglarly Suspect Killed During Questioning," *The Dallas Morning News*, July 25, 1973, 1A. A note on terminology: Throughout this thesis I use the term "Mexican," "Mexicano/a," to denote for someone belonging to or ethnic backgrounds is of Mexican-origin regardless of citizenship status. I will use "Chicano/a," "Chicano militant," and "Chicano radical" to denote members of the community whom endorsed and embraced the term and expressed the politics of *Chicanismo* during the 1960s and 1970s. I will also use "Mexican American" to distinguish the native-born from the immigrant population. I will use "Latino/a" or "Hispanic" to designate Americans of Latin American descent. Finally, although complex to define, I use "liberal" to denote someone who aligned with the ideals of New Deal liberalism, advocated for the expansion of rights of marginalized groups, and who actively participated in Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty programs.

That evening, the community of Little Mexico, or *La Colonia*, located just north of the heart of downtown Dallas, stood in outrage. News had spread quickly that a white Dallas police officer had killed a helpless twelve-year-old boy from the *barrio*. Within a matter of days, a municipal court judge suspended and charged Cain with murder by malice. At the same time, numerous activist news outlets from Chicago to Topeka, Kansas, reported on the atrocity. Immediately after the news broke, Chicano community organizers and Mexican leaders throughout the city of Dallas came together to plan demonstrations. The resulting protests, long neglected by historians and largely forgotten in public memory, transformed race relations in Dallas.

The Santos Rodríguez Affair of 1973 occurred during a period of Dallas history during which police brutality, widespread poverty, and city officials' neglect of minority communities defined race relations in the city. Dallas's Mexican American community comprised around 9 percent of the city's total population, but despite the end of formal Jim Crow, the community continued to live under segregated conditions. As late as the mid-1970s, the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) was still struggling to integrate schools. Racial minorities lacked representation in local and county politics. A wave of police shootings during the late 1960s and early 1970s brought to light the hidden, underlying trend of widespread routine police harassment and beatings of Mexican Americans and African Americans.[2]

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Dallas had been a legally segregated city. The policies of Jim Crow affected not only African Americans but also Mexican Americans. By 1930, Dallas was more diverse than other metropolitan areas of the South. Contrasted to the dual ethnic makeup of other Southern cities, the racial

[2] Michael J. Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 163.

geography of the city traversed Anglos, African Americans, and Mexicans. Even so, Mexicans fell in an ambiguous niche in a society divided between black and white. In 1897, a federal court in Texas ruled *In Re Ricardo Rodriguez* that Mexicans were in theory considered white for citizenship.[3] Despite this, Mexicans in Dallas, and throughout Texas, faced the same segregationist policies as African Americans.[4] Although federal law outlawed segregated schools more than a decade earlier, public education in Dallas during the late 1960s and early 1970s remained sharply segregated by race.

The conditions in Mexican American communities were often dire. *Barrio* residents lacked political representation on the city council and school board, and social services were inaccessible. The Dallas Citizens' Council (the political machine of the city) hand-selected the few political representatives that Mexicanos did attain, prompting these leaders to not explicitly represent or identify Mexicans in Dallas. Instead, these handful of political leaders represented the interest of the city's business elite.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, Mexican Americans participated in the struggle for civil rights in the state of Texas and around the nation. The fervor of the Black Power, anti-war, feminist, and counterculture movements all influenced and coincided with Chicano and Chicana activism across the state. In Dallas, Chicanos from the city's barrios began to participate in fighting for *La Causa* (the cause), in seeking self-determination for *La Raza* (the people), and in developing a pragmatic sense of cultural nationalism and pride.

A closer look at Dallas suggests that the post-World War II Mexican American civil rights struggle was not a unified movement. Instead, in the metropolis, a myriad of

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[3] Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2006), 43-45, 164.
[4] Roy H. Williams and Kevin J. Shay, *Time Change: An Alternative View of the History of Dallas* (Dallas: To Be Publishing, 1991), 62-64.

civic and social organizations worked to obtain broad goals and agreements on a number of issues. Addressing problems was a challenge as Chicano progressives, conservative, and liberal Mexican leaders focused on neighborhood-specific issues rather than on the community as a whole. Conservative and liberal Mexican leaders fought the same battles as the progressive Chicanos, but they used alternate, less-confrontational strategies in finding solutions for barrio-specific issues. At the same time, many self-identified Chicano activists in Dallas did not fall under the "youth" umbrella and were not radicals, as many scholars of the Chicano Movement have conventionally assumed. The generational divide among activists was fragile, and at times, organizers could overcome the differences of age and even ideology and class. The magnitude of the Santos Rodríguez Affair of 1973 produced a singular moment of unification between so-called radical Chicanos, liberal, and conservative Mexican American leaders, for the sake of fighting for equality and justice under the law. Even so, such unity came at a cost, as divisions continued to fracture the activism, demonstrating that shared ethnicity and a consensus over a singular outrage did not necessarily produce a seamless, unitary campaign to combat it on the ground.

Background

Mexican Americans have endured a unique trajectory within the history of the United States. For some, their history began more than five centuries ago with their roots stretching deep into the Spanish colonial era. The Texas Revolution of 1836 represented the turning point in Anglo-Mexican relations in the region. Subsequently, the U.S.-Mexican War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848 completed the transformation of the Northern Mexican region into the American Southwest. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the Porfirio Diaz regime and the Mexican

Revolution led to an influx of Mexicans to *El Norte* and a substantial demographic change in the American Southwest. Scholars estimate that between 1900 and 1930, more than one million Mexicans entered the United States, joining the half million already residing in the nation.[5] Nearly 10 percent of Mexico's population migrated to El Norte during the early twentieth century, with Texas as the most attractive destination.[6] Although many Mexican refugees were escaping the tumultuous violence of the revolution and seeking a temporary base, U.S. immigration policies began to restrict their movements, forcing many to settle permanently in the region. At the same time, Mexican immigrants grasped and implemented diverse cultural strategies in the U.S. during the early twentieth century. As George J. Sánchez contends, these Mexican newcomers did not assimilate but rather constructed a hybrid ethnic identity shaped by their kin networks and memories of *Mexico Lindo* that also simultaneously incorporated and adapted family, gender, and religious elements from American culture.[7]

The Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War presented new challenges that reformulated the composition and character of the Mexican American communities in the Southwest. With a deteriorating economy during the 1930s, anti-Mexican and nativist sentiment dominated the region and intensified throughout the country. Consequently, throughout the Southwest, U.S. government officials undertook mass repatriation campaigns of Mexicans and even Americans of Mexican ancestry. The indiscriminate apprehension and deporting of Mexican Americans during the period

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[5] Manuel G. González, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States: Second Edition* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2009), 113.
[6] González, *Mexicanos*, 121-25.
[7] George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 9-11.

produced a powerful effect that reshaped the population's ethnic identity.[8] The event influenced many Mexican Americans to claim a unique cultural identity as "Americans."

After World War II, discrimination and rising expectations pushed Mexican Americans leaders to emerge out of the *barrios* of the Southwest. Mario T. García argues that these experiences, including increased education and urbanization led to the rise of what he identifies as the "Mexican American Generation" that came of age during the tumultuous times of the Great Depression and World War II.[9] García contends that this generation became increasingly acculturated, bilingual, and more politically functional, translating to better understanding of their rights as U.S. citizens.[10]

A number of significant civil rights organizations sprung out of the Mexican American generation. Scholars have long contended that the League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC), founded in Texas in 1929 by a professional class of Mexican American males, epitomized this generation's struggle for anti-discrimination, assimilation, patriotism, and reformist tactics and goals. Benjamin Marquez explores the ways in which LULAC promoted American patriotism and acculturation of Mexicanos into mainstream society. Marquez asserts that LULACers were in many ways conservative in their approach to civil rights, as their aims persisted to declare its loyalty to the United States, adopt American culture, and renounce ties with Mexico.[11] More recently, scholars have begun to take a different approach in interpreting LULAC's history. Most significantly, Cynthia E. Orozco uses the lens of gender to demonstrate that LULAC was not for assimilation but, in fact, that many chapters embraced the politics of

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[8] Ibid, 210.
[9] Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 3.
[10] Ibid, 15.
[11] Benjamin Márquez, *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 9.

recent Mexican immigrants who had different objectives from those of long-established Mexican Americans.[12] In the same way, Emilio Zamora demonstrates that LULAC fought for the rights of Mexican immigrant workers during World War II working alongside the Mexican consulate in Texas and federal employment agencies, such as the Fair Employment Practice Employment Committee (FEPC), in combating racial discrimination throughout wartime industrial workplaces in the state.[13] Most importantly, he demonstrates how LULAC utilized and applied the Good Neighbor Policy in leveraging and promoting the work against racial discrimination to a hemispheric level of importance, suggesting that assimilation was not a significant ideal for the organization.[14]

World War II opened the door for many Mexicanos to enter mainstream America by serving in the U.S. military. The war and its aftermath brought about significant changes, especially to the growing Mexican American middle-class. Mexicano service members returned from combat overseas with intense optimism in the democratic future that their own actions had shaped and made possible abroad.[15] Many decorated Mexican American veterans came back home to the same discriminatory and dire conditions that they had left behind. In 1948, the only funeral home in Three Rivers, Texas, denied the burial of Felix Longoria, a Mexican American veteran who died in combat overseas. The Felix Longoria affair, as Carl Allsup demonstrates, solidified Mexican American veterans' commitment to fight racial segregation and discrimination in Texas.[16] In the wake of the conflict, Dr. Hector P. García of Corpus Christi established the American

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[12] Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 5-9.
[13] Emilio Zamora, *Claiming Rights and Righting Wrongs in Texas: Mexican Workers and Job Politics during World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 4.
[14] Ibid, 3.
[15] Henry A.J. Ramos, *The American G.I. Forum: In Pursuit of the Dream, 1948-1983* (Houston: Arté Publico Press, University of Houston, 1998), xvii.
[16] Carl Allsup, *The American G.I. Forum: Origins and Evolution* (Austin: University of Texas, Center for Mexican American Studies, 1982), 45-49.

G.I. Forum in 1948. Scholar Henry Ramos contends that the American G.I. Forum placed its commitment of fundamental American ideals and set out boldly to challenge and transform the very structures and institutions of the American establishment from 1948 throughout much of the twentieth century.[17]

During the Cold War period, LULAC and the American G.I. Forum undertook the quest for equality throughout the nation's courtrooms. During the 1940s, both organizations were instrumental in significant school desegregation cases in both California and Texas. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Hernandez v. Texas* proved monumental for Mexican American civil rights activists. The case helped establish the "class-apart" theory, which allowed Mexican Americans and other ethnic groups the extension of the Equal Protection Clause in the Fourteenth Amendment.[18]

The presidential race of 1960 saw the emergence of considerable numbers of Mexican Americans organizing politically for the John F. Kennedy presidential campaign throughout the Southwest. Ignacio M. García asserts that Mexican American leaders during this period were effective in helping to elect a small but significant number of Mexican American candidates and opening the doors for others to participate in American politics.[19] Moreover, important organizations sprung up as Viva Kennedy Club leaders helped establish the Mexican Americans for Political Action (MAPA) in California and the Political Association of Spanish-speaking Organizations (PASO) in Texas. Both organizations pushed the limits of the Democratic Party during the early 1960s. [20] In 1963, with the help of PASO, Mexicans Americans interrupted the long-

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[17] Ibid, xviii.
[18] Michael A. Olivas, ed., *Colored Men and Hombres Aqui: Hernandez V. Texas and the Emergence of Mexican-American Lawyering* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 2006), 43-46.
[19] Ignacio M. García, *Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 200), 8.
[20] García, *Viva Kennedy*, 123.

standing Anglo establishment with the election of five Mexicanos—known as *Los Cinco*—to the Crystal City municipal council. Los Cinco only obtained power for two years due to an outright challenge and harassment of the Anglo political establishment. However, the brief moment of power set the foundation for radical politics within the next few years.

During the mid 1960s and early 1970s, numerous events signaled changing times for younger Mexicanos, including those in Texas. Mexican Americans paid close attention to the African American civil rights movement, as well as the emergence of the anti-war, feminist, countercultural, and other protest movements. For many scholars, 1965 marks the beginning of the Chicano Movement or *El Movimiento* commencing with Cesar Chávez and the farm workers strikes of the San Joaquin Valley in California.[21] The protest rallies of Reies López Tijerina and the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Land Grants) called for the redistribution of land grants to *Hispano* farmers in New Mexico.[22] On June 1967, Tijerina, along with an armed group of men took militant armed action at a Rio Arriba county courthouse, becoming a source of inspiration for young Chicanos.[23] Rodolfo "Corky" González, leader of the Crusade for Justice based in Denver, Colorado, fueled the emotions of Chicano youth throughout the nation with his manifesto in *I am Joaquín*. In the same way, Sal Castro effectively organized blowouts or walkouts in the struggle for educational equality in East L.A., with over 20,000 students

[21] Mario T. García, ed., *Chicano Movement: Perspectives from the Twenty First Century* (New York: Rutledge Press, 2014), 1-4.; F. Arturo Rosales, *Chicano!: The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1997), 147-49.
[22] Carlos Muñoz Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement* (London & New York: Verso Press, 1989), 6, 73. *Hispano* is defined as Spanish-Americans who were direct descendants of Spanish colonizers in New Mexico.
[23] Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power*,73.

protesting against the Los Angeles Unified School District. The protests ultimately caught national attention and secured educational reforms within the school district. [24]

There was an upsurge in Mexican pride among the youth, and agitation for social and political change intertwined with notions of self-determination and an end to racial discrimination. Carlos Muñoz Jr.'s asserts that the movement was a quest for young Mexican Americans in finding a new identity and political power, a contrast that represented a radical departure from the previous politics of Mexican American activists.[25] The ideological vehicle of the movement was *Chicanismo*, or the activist philosophy that Mexican American advocates embraced with the purpose of promoting cultural nationalism in addition to combatting racism, discrimination, poverty, and segregation.[26] Chicano activists saw "direct action" or employing confrontational strategies as significant in order to obtain change.[27] Nevertheless, the movement never developed a centralized philosophical process or leadership taking into consideration the numerous Chicano organizations.[28] As a result, many young Chicanos structured and initiated numerous civic and militant-oriented organizations in the state of Texas and around the United States, contributing to the broader Chicano Movement.

The new scholarship on the Chicano Movement contrasts the romanticized version and provides a number of cutting-edge interpretations of the Chicano Movement. George Mariscal demonstrates that in fact many tensions existed within *El Movimiento* as

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[24] Mario T. García and Sal Castro, *Blowout!: Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 2-5.
[25] Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power*, 15.
[26] Ignacio M. García. *Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997), 133: *Indigenismo* was a political and intellectual movement during the early twentieth century in Mexico, that arose after the Mexican Revolution and embraced the country's "indigenous past." Mexican intellectuals and officials used it as a tool for nation building.
[27] Mario T. García, *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 9.
[28] Ibid, 4.

a result of various forms of ethnic nationalism as well as the broader national and international developments that occurred during the mid-1960s to mid-1970s. [29] Mariscal argues that although the Chicano Movement obtained myriad visions and objectives, it demonstrated a complex and noteworthy aspect of the international decolonization movements around the globe during this period.[30] David Montejano contends that the Chicano Movement was "interpreted and honed through group-specific experiences and interests, giving rise to group-specific organizations."[31] Lorena Oropeza argues that the Vietnam War fundamentally fashioned the Chicano movement challenge to long-held conventions about the history of Mexican-origin people and their role within American society mostly by challenging the notion of integration, understanding themselves as colonized people.[32] Chicano historians have also overlooked the roles that Chicanas contributed to El Movimiento. Numerous Chicano activists remained critical of permitting Chicanas to participate in organizing, yet, women ultimately created the backbone of the movement. Maylei Blackwell demonstrates that as a response Chicana feminism challenged *El movimiento*'s masculine overtones.[33] Vicki L. Ruiz demonstrates that several Chicanas undertook the task of initiating organizations and assembling conferences that would better represent and serve the needs of Mexican women in the barrios.[34] During the early 1970s, young Chicana professionals in Los Angeles founded

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[29] George Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1970* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 7.
[30] Ibid, 8.
[31] David Montejano, *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010), 5.
[32] Lorena Oropeza, *Raza Si! Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism during the Viet Nam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 5.
[33] Maylei Blackwell, *¡Chicana Power!: Cotested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 2-5.
[34] Vicki L. Ruíz, *From Out of The Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 114.

the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional, an anti-poverty organization that devoted on serving barrio women.[35]

Chicanos in Texas played a focal role in *el movimiento*'s political development. Formed in San Antonio, Texas during the late 1960s, the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) became a noteworthy political organization in Texas that utilized radical protest politics and dealt with numerous issues throughout the state. Armando Navarro contends that MAYO was a unique organization in the way it was able to organize the youth from the barrios and universities and "force them into a powerful cadre committed to bringing about social reform and empowerment."[36] MAYO was committed to bringing social justice for Chicanos resulting in notoriety and a rapid development in Texas that facilitated in establishing the foundations to form an authentic political party.[37] Consequently, MAYO played a significant role with the launching of La Raza Unida Party (RUP).

In 1970, the prevailing belief among Chicano radicals that both the Democratic and Republican parties continually failed to represent the interests and ideas of the Mexicano community, prompted them to organize and establish La Raza Unida Party (RUP).[38] With the success that MAYO attained in San Antonio, former-MAYO activists hoped to duplicate these results utilizing the political platform of RUP in the rural town of Crystal City (Cristal), Texas. Ignacio Garcia asserts that RUP's militant dogma and focus to implement social change and self-determination attracted young Chicanas and

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Armando Navarro, *Mexican American Youth Organization: Avant-Garde of the Chicano Movement in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 236.
[37] Ibid, 182.
[38] Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), xix.

Chicanos at a rapid rate.[39] Armando Navarro contends that RUP made its greatest impact in Texas as both Democratic and Republican parties perceived the rise of RUP as a political threat.[40] The success of Cristal became a model and measure for the emerging Chicano movement. [41] As José Ángel Gutiérrez indicates, RUP took the Chicano movement from social protest and unrest to an official political party that challenged the Anglo establishment.[42] Following the electoral success in South Texas, RUP established numerous chapters throughout the country.

Within the past few years, civil rights scholars have gradually begun to move past the black-white binary lens and have begun to scrutinize African American and Mexican American collaboration and conflict during the Civil Rights era. Neil Foley argues that both African Americans and Mexican Americans struggled for similar issues on separate paths yet failed to capitalize on opportunities for cooperation.[43] Emilio Zamora demonstrates that during the Second World War period, LULAC worked alongside the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other African American leaders in fighting against workplace discrimination at wartime industries in Texas. Even so, collaboration between black and brown leaders was not extensive. [44] Gordon K. Mantler contends that black and Mexican Americans' common

[39] Ignacio M. García, *United We Win: The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), xi-xiii.
[40] Ibid, 23.
[41] Armando Navarro, *Cristal Experiment: A Chicano Struggle for Community Control* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 23.
[42] José Ángel Gutiérrez, *The Making of a Chicano Militant: Lessons From Cristal* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1998), 11-14.
[43] Neil Foley, *Quest for Equality: The Failed Promise of Black-Brown Solidarity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 18.: See also: Neil Foley, "Black, White, and Brown," *The Journal of Southern History* 7, No. 2 (May 2004): 343-50.
[44] Zamora, *Claiming Rights and Righting Wrongs*, 140-48.

fight against poverty held the greatest potential for multiracial cooperation at a national level, yet collaboration was often problematic.[45]

Most prominently, Brian D. Behnken argues that although Mexican Americans in Texas had adopted whiteness strategies for civil rights advancement, their rejection of it during the Chicano movement prompted marginal cooperation between blacks and Mexican Americans.[46] Benhken demonstrates that cultural nationalism on both African American and Mexican American sides divided activists and served as impediments for associations.[47] Chicano activists continued to grasp racist opinions against blacks. In the same way, blacks saw Chicanos embracement of "brownness" as opportunistic and disingenuous.[48] In Dallas, both black and brown organizers competed for local resources as well as anti-poverty programs for their particular neighborhoods, further dividing relations between both groups. Understanding the relationships and disagreements among black and brown activists during the Civil Rights Movement era demonstrates how racial prejudice hindered efforts to build a united movement by two major minority groups. [49] The current trend of scholarship illustrates that both groups strongly diverged and delicately collaborated during the Civil Rights era.

Given the myriad visions and organizations of the Chicano Movement, the emerging scholarship on the Chicano Movement has begun to scrutinize the movement at the local level. The first study to utilize this particular lens is Ernesto Chávez's *"Mi Raza Primero!": My People First!: Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano*

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[45] Gordon K. Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 4.
[46] Brian D. Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 10-11.
[47] Brian D. Behnken, ed., *The Struggle in Black and Brown: African American and Mexican American Relations During the Civil Rights Era* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 10.
[48] Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles*, 226.
[49] Ibid, 11.

Movement, 1966-1978. Chávez asserts that in Los Angeles, despite the movement's shared sense of cultural nationalism, activist organizations obtained multifaceted visions and goals for their respective communities resulting in the collapse and failure of the movement in the city.[50] For Chávez, Chicano activist leaders held "essentialist imaginings of community driven by an ideologically bankrupt cultural nationalism."[51]

In Texas, Guadalupe San Miguel Jr.'s *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston* demonstrates how in a period of two years, Chicano activists in the Bayou City were successful in rallying against racial segregation in the public school district. Significantly, Chicanos were effective in pushing formal recognition from administrators and officials of Mexicans as an ethnic minority.[52] David Montejano scrutinizes the movement's organizational structure, formation, and leadership in San Antonio, Texas, and demonstrates that internal divisions fractured activism but enhanced the organizational capacity of the working-class barrios.[53] According to Montejano, the movement's splintered organizing brought political awakening to the barrios in addition to political pressure for the Anglo establishment at the grassroots level.[54] Montejano's supplemental study on the San Antonio Brown Berets, conveys how the organization emphasized the importance of local activism and was involved with anti-police brutality campaigns throughout the city and state. Neverthless, the San Antonio

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[50] Ernesto Chávez, *"Mi Raza Primero!": My People First!: Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 3.
[51] Ibid, 120.
[52] Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2001), xi.
[53] David Montejano, *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010), 4.
[54] Montejano, *Quixote's Soldiers*, 209.

Berets did not draw distinctions with activism and illegal activities resulting in a lack of structure within the organization.[55]

Together, the new community studies reveal a number of groundbreaking considerations in Chicano movement historiography. For one, these studies demonstrate that many movements existed within the national context of *el movimiento* and how it was not student-led, but rather barrio-led struggles. Second, the studies reveal that there was no single organizational structure and that *Chicanismo* was not the primary vehicle for stirring ideology and activists, exploding the myth of cultural nationalism as the sole unifying ideology. Finally, the community studies provide new insight into the process of community formation, showing how distant barrios united at times—using a common ethnic banner—while at other moments, they remained fractured and divided.

In Dallas, numerous organizations emerged during the period that largely paralleled the case studies presented in Los Angeles, Houston, and San Antonio. Nevertheless, the strategies employed by Dallas activists contrasted greatly from the aforementioned case studies. A closer look at the Dallas case demonstrates how the Chicano movement was not a unified movement but many movements that pragmatically followed Chicano ideology. Activists based their contentions on specific-barrio issues rather than a whole community. Unlike the traditional interpretation of the movement, intergenerational divide was not a significant issue, as activists on both sides of the political spectrum overcame these age differences. Chicano activists in Dallas were not militant, youthful, or radical. Liberal Mexican Americans took a traditional course by contesting issues and drawing up demands to city officials. Finally, conservative Mexican leaders rebuked whiteness and assimilation and pushed simultaneously for a Mexicano

[55] David Montejano, *Sancho's Journal: Exploring the Political Edge with the Brown Berets* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 179.

identity. All these factors provide new insights into the larger historiography about the Mexican American civil rights movement in Dallas.

Dallas History

Aside from President John F. Kennedy's assassination, the historiography of Dallas itself remains underdeveloped despite the fact that the city represented a significant regional hub and one of the nation's fastest growing cities throughout the twentieth century. Scholars of Mexican American civil rights history have completely overlooked the local Chicano community's contribution to El Movimiento while a handful of local urban studies have contributed snippets of the city's history and in particular, its race, class, and gender relations.

A number of studies on Dallas have explored the political and social structures of the city. Patricia Evridge Hill examines the political, economic, and social developments of Dallas concentrating on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hill's monograph challenges the city's myth concerning concepts of business growth, the Dallas Citizens' Council, and the myth of power and demonstrates that Dallas was not a harmonious city as city elites had previously portrayed it.[56] Nevertheless, her study's emphasis on social class and politics provides a parochial viewpoint and leaves out the African American and especially the Mexican American experience. Likewise, Harvey J. Graff explores the cultural, political, and economic symbols and elements of the metropolis and deconstructs the elite class's fabricated self-image of Dallas. He asserts that in the process of city-making, the city's elite class disregarded gender and ethnic

[56] Patricia Evridge Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1996), xxvi.

minorities.[57] In contrast to both Graff and Hill, Darwin Payne presents an overarching and ambitious historical narrative on Dallas. Payne demonstrates the numerous and momentous developments that helped to provide a national limelight for Dallas and includes—to a slight degree—the African American perspective of the city's history.[58]

Scholars have long neglected the African American experience in Dallas. Roy H. William and Kevin J. Shay's co-authored piece, *Time Change: An Alternative View of the History of Dallas*, presents the black experience and demonstrates that Anglo Americans designed the city's political structure with methods that best fit their interests. The authors note that despite facing constant racial discrimination on many echelons, African Americans established and obtained agency through various forms that revolved primarily around religious and political institutions. Similarly, in *A History of Dallas: From a Different Perspective*, Robert Prince pioneers the first study on the African American experience in Dallas from slavery to the late twentieth century. He asserts that many studies have largely overlooked and ignored the role of the African slave in the development of Dallas and Texas.[59] Although neither books is an academic study, the authors step away from the customary narrative of Dallas history and contribute a critical viewpoint on the constraints that many African Americans faced living in Dallas, a determinant many historians have glossed over.

In 1935, Ethelyn C. Davis, a graduate student in sociology at Southern Methodist University, studied Dallas's barrio, Little Mexico. Although a work of her time, Davis's ethnographic study on the living conditions of the *barrio* during the early twentieth century reveals how segregation produced poor conditions for Mexicans settling in Dallas

[57] Harvey J. Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of an American City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 98-99.
[58] Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 1994).
[59] Robert Prince, *A History of Dallas: From a Different Perspective* (Dallas: Nortex Press, 1994), 3.

during the early twentieth century.[60] Similarly, Shirley Achor's 1975 in-depth ethnographic study illustrates the complexities of the social and political structures and institutions of a West Dallas barrio. Achor asserts that Mexicanos in *La Bajada* isolated themselves in the barrio due to a lack of opportunities for economic, social, and political resources that the establishment consistently denied them.[61]

Jane Bock Guzmán's 1992 master's thesis offers a critical perspective in scrutinizing the daily affairs and the contributions that Mexicanas of Little Mexico afforded to Dallas.[62] Guzmán presents biographical sketches of prominent *barrio* women ranging from a small-business owner to a former city council member and concludes that Mexican women were an integral factor in contributing to the quality of life of Dallas.[63] Leigh Ann Robinson Ellis offers a spatial historical study on the Mexican American barrio of Little Mexico up to the mid-twentieth century to argue that the community reinforced cultural and practices as a transitional migrant neighborhood.[64] Although her work is not a traditional historical study, Ellis provides a foundation in scrutinizing the methods in which the community interacted in their environment.

Michael J. Phillips's *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001,* is the first study to examine multi-ethnic relations in the city. Utilizing the "whiteness" studies framework, Phillips asserts that "whiteness" served as a hegemonic tool for the city's elite class to divide Mexican Americans, Jews, and working-class

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[60] Ethelyn C. Davis, "Little Mexico: A Study of Horizontal Mobility," (master's thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1936).
[61] Shirley Achor, *Mexican Americans in a Dallas Barrio* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 154.
[62] Jane Bock Guzmán, "Dallas Barrio Women of Power," (master's thesis, University of North Texas, 1992), 5.
[63] Ibid, iv.
[64] Leigh Ann Robinson, "The Place of Borders and Between: Little Mexico, 1900-1950, Dallas, Texas," (master's thesis, University of Texas at Arlington, 1996), 4-6.

Anglos.[65] He contends but does not convincingly establish that Mexican Americans, along with Jews, continually desired to move closer in becoming white.[66] Bianca Mercado's thesis delivers the first history explicitly focused on Mexican-origin people in Dallas. Mercado challenges Phillips and argues that Mexicans in Dallas actively engaged in a daily battle against racial segregation and discrimination, while consistently embracing their heritage, shaping their own communities in the city.[67]

Scholars have largely overlooked Mexican Americans in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. In *Stories From The Barrio: A History of Mexican Fort Worth*, Carlos E. Cuellar demonstrates how Mexicans in Fort Worth, similar to those in Dallas, became an integral part of Fort Worth's social and cultural landscape.[68] More recently, historians Manuel García y Griego and Roberto R. Calderón's *Más Allá del Río Bravo: Breve Historia Mexicana del Norte de Texas* (*Beyond the Rio Grande: A Brief Mexican History of North Texas*) represents a pioneering study on Mexicans in the North Texas region that also scrutinizes race relations between Mexican Americans, ethnic Mexicans, Anglos, and African Americans. Griego and Calderón assert that the African American struggle for civil rights played a significant role in advancing the social and political conditions for Mexican Americans in North Texas, influencing Mexicanos in fighting for their own battles.[69]

Bringing the Chicano movement into a local study is significant in order to understand how the Mexican American quest for civil rights developed in Dallas. Many

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[65] Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 7-8.
[66] Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 12.
[67] Bianca Mercado, "With Their Hearts in their Hands: Forging a Mexican Community in Dallas, 1900-1925," (master's thesis, University of North Texas, 2008), 14.
[68] Carlos E. Cuellar, *Stories From the Barrio: A History of Mexican Fort Worth* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2000), xv-xvi.
[69] Manuel García y Griego and Roberto R. Calderón, *Más Allá del Río Bravo: Breve Historia Mexicana del Norte de Texas* (Mexico D.F.: Dirreción General del Acervo Historico Diplomatico, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, 2013), 184.

scholars have studied the Chicano Movement in regions outside of North Texas, yet the Dallas case study provides a strikingly different example. This thesis aims to fill the void by showing how Mexicanos in Dallas became involved in their struggle for civil rights and the fight against various issues. A diverse number of organizations with myriad and complex objectives sprung up throughout the barrios of Dallas. This thesis aims to demonstrate that despite the identity politics that scholars have long argued for in existing, the intergenerational and class conflicts between Chicano and Mexican American political activists in Dallas were indistinct. Moreover, this study shows that Mexicano identity was important for Chicano activists as well as for liberal and conservative Mexican American leaders during this period. Overall, the crucial point and objective for the Dallas Mexican community was to bring justice forth for Santos Rodríguez.

The first chapter of the thesis will scrutinize the history of Mexicans in Dallas and how the community created its own enclave in the shadows of downtown. This chapter will explore the social issues that many Mexicans faced in the city and argues that the forces of segregation and discrimination prompted Mexicans to establish their own communities based on their shared cultural traits. The second chapter will examine how the city formatted its political system, during the late 1960s to mid-1970s, and the roles of the establishment and community leaders in bringing up issues that addressed the city's Mexicano communities. This chapter contends that although militant-minded Chicano, conservative, and liberal Mexican activists fought for the same issues, they diverged in the methods for obtaining demands in their quest for equal rights. The third chapter looks at the Santos Rodríguez Affair of 1973 and how community leaders, city politicians, and officials came to transform procedures and finally listen to the Mexican

American voice. In all, the Rodríguez Affair produced a landmark moment in the history of Mexicans in Dallas by unifying Chicano progressives, liberals, and conservative Mexicanos for the fight toward equal justice.

Chapter 1

Los Olvidados (The Forgotten): Little Mexico (*La Colonia*) and the *Barrios* of Dallas, 1900-1970

At the turn of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, industrialization and the modernization of the Texan economy, along with the social displacement produced by the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution, pushed Mexicans north to Texas. The growing railroad industry attracted many Mexicans to the expanding urban hubs of Dallas and Fort Worth. The city of Dallas offered a variety of opportunities for both Mexican immigrants and Tejano farm laborers.[1] Cement plants located in West Oak Cliff, most significantly the Trinity Portland Cement Factory, provided significant job prospects for the *cementeros*, or cement workers.[2] In addition, many businesses hired Mexicans for low-wage and unskilled jobs, employing them as dishwashers, barbers, bellboys, servers, and shoemakers.[3] The surrounding farms also provided Mexicans with employment as farm laborers. As a result, Dallas became a destination for thousands of Mexicans during the early twentieth century. Mexican migration to Dallas began to grow substantially during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). During these years, thousands of Mexicans arrived in the city and the North Texas region. Many Mexicanos came for a temporary amount of time to wait for the violence to quell south of the border, while others came to settle permanently in the city. Regardless of their plans, Mexicanos arrived to face Anglo discrimination in the form racial segregation in the city. The forces of discrimination as well as dreadful socioeconomic factors forced many Mexicans to establish their own

[1] Arnoldo de León, *Mexican Americans in Texas*: *A Brief History* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1993), 53.; For the purposes of this thesis, I use the term white, Anglo, and Anglo American to refer to Americans of European descent

[2] Manuel García y Griego and Roberto R. Calderón. *Más Allá del Rio Bravo: Breve Historia Mexicana del Norte de Texas* (Mexico D.F.: Direccion General del Acervo Historico Diplomatico, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, 2013), 34.

[3] Griego and Calderon. *Mas Alla del Rio Bravo*, 35.

communities and institutions that revolved around their shared cultural traits. As a result, Mexicanos established a small number of *barrios*, or ethnic enclave neighborhoods that scattered throughout Dallas.

The Mexican migrant population settled primarily in three particular areas of the city—East Dallas, West Dallas, and "Little Mexico":—and in scattered pockets in South Dallas.[4] The majority of Mexican migrants settled in a dominantly ethnic Polish Jewish immigrant neighborhood, in what Dallasites would rename as "Little Mexico."[5] Little Mexico was the largest and most important Mexican community in Dallas.[6] A Jewish community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the area was also the home to the city's red light district and known as "Frogtown."[7] Located slightly north of downtown Dallas, the barrio's western and southernmost border was the old Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) Railroad line, present-day Woodall Rodgers Freeway, and Bowen Street to the north.[8]

Most of the areas where Mexicanos established themselves were the city's least desirable zones.[9] In 1916, the city of Dallas passed a referendum that racially defined housing areas, creating three categories: white, black, and open.[10] The referendum contributed to legal racial housing discrimination, forcing Mexicans to occupy the less desirable areas of Dallas.[11] Many Mexican railroad workers established themselves near the northern low-lying areas of the Trinity River, which was prone to constant flooding,

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[4] Ibid, 57.
[5] Rose G. Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews in Dallas, 1870-1997* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002), 91.
[6] Ibid; Griego and Calderón, *Más Allá del Rio Bravo*, 36.
[7] Bianca Mercado, "With Their Hearts In Their Minds: With Their Hearts In Their Minds, 1900-1925," (master's thesis, University of North Texas), 35.
[8] Ibid, 31.
[9] Justin F. Kimball, *Our City-Dallas: A Community Civics* (Dallas: Kessler Plan Association of Dallas, 1927), 198-99.
[10] Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2006), 63.
[11] Mercado, "With Their Hearts In Their Minds," 13, 56.

as well as other areas of the city. The *cementeros*, as well as the Trinity River levee workers, settled alongside the concrete companies' plants, in what was an unincorporated area of present-day West Dallas. This community helped establish the barrios know as Big Cement City and Little Cement City. East Dallas gained a small but significant barrio, located in parts of present-day Old East Dallas and Deep Ellum, where Mexicans lived alongside a cultural landscape made up of African Americans, German and Swiss immigrants.[12]

Throughout the years, the barrio of Little Mexico served as the nucleus of the Mexican immigrant and Mexican American communities of Dallas. Whereas the barrio served as the foundation, Pike Park functioned as the gem of the Mexican community in the city. In 1915, the city of Dallas built Summit Play Park, which years later the city renamed as Pike Park, a space that would become the core and landmark for the community. Due to legal racial segregation, all sectors of the park remained closed to Mexican children.[13] Given the lack of Mexican American political representation in the city during the 1920s and 30s, barrio leaders asked the Mexican Consulate to intervene and help with gaining admittance to the park. In 1931, after years of many negotiations, city officials decided to grant Mexican Americans admission to the park.[14] Access remained limited however, as officials allowed Mexicanos to use the park's pool facility during the early hours of the morning and made Mexicans clean the pool prior to Anglos' day-use.[15] Pike Park developed as the public space for the community to celebrate holidays such as Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexican Independence Day, and Cinco

[12] Leigh Ann Robinson Ellis, "The Place of Borders and Between: Little Mexico, 1900-1950 Dallas, Texas," (master's thesis, University of Texas at Arlington, 1996), 39.
[13] Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 70.
[14] Ibid; Mercado, "With Their Hearts In Their Minds," 71.
[15] Francisco (Pancho) Medrano, interview by Jose Angel Gutierrez, Dallas/Grand Prairie, Texas, July 16, 1997, *Tejano Voices*, University of Texas at Arlington, CMAS 37, pg. 34-5.

de Mayo, as well as family milestone celebrations such as *Quinceañeras*.[16] Pike Park also served as the center for recreational activities where the community would host sporting events, predominantly revolving around boxing and the barrio's baseball club.

The Mexicano community built its own churches in the barrio to combat Anglo racism at religious institutions. In 1914, with the help of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Paul, the Roman Catholic Church established, Our Lady of Guadalupe, a mission church for the barrio.[17] In 1927, Our Lady of Guadalupe founded and built Saint Ann's Elementary School located on the corner of Turney (now Harry Hines Boulevard) and Olive Street. The school offered the barrio's children an education with a traditional Catholic curriculum. Further, under the direction of Father Cerillo, the school initiated a boxing club for the boys of the community.[18] Saint Ann's also became a cultural marker for the Mexican community.

Despite shared ethnic and cultural traits, the Mexican community was far from homogenous.[19] Little Mexico remained divided among class lines into different subsections. As a result, living conditions varied greatly within the barrio. The poorest inhabitants settled at the westernmost part of the barrio, in boxcars along the MKT Railroad tracks.[20] A miniscule but significant wealthier and entrepreneurial class settled along the northern part of the barrio, north of Akard Street.[21]

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[16] Amy Simpson, *Pike Park: The Heart and History of Mexican Culture in Dallas* (Dallas, Tex: Los Barrios Unidos Community Clinic, 1981) 5.; "El 5 de Mayo Se Celebro Dignamente en Dallas, Tex.," *La Prensa*, May 8, 1955, 6.
[17] Mercado, "With Their Hearts In Their Minds," 63.
[18] Francisco Medrano, interview by José Ángel Gutiérrez, Dallas/Grand Prairie, Texas, July 16, 1997, *Tejano Voices*, University of Texas at Arlington, CMAS 37, pg. 29.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Gwendolyn Rice, "Little Mexico and the Barrios of Dallas," *Legacies: A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (Fall 1994), 22-23.
[21] Ibid.

A small Mexicano minority undertook entrepreneurial ventures, to help self-sustain the barrios and offer products that were not available anywhere else in the city. Establishments such as Reyes Grocery, Hernández Grocery, and La Colonial Bakery all offered numerous services and products for the barrio.[22] As a result, Mexicans moved toward creating permanent settlements in Dallas through entrepreneurial ventures. During the late 1910s and early 1920s, limited commercial activities provided *Mexicanos* means for further establishing their presence in Dallas. In the beginning, the business district of the community was located in the center of the barrio along Caroline, Payne, and McKinney Streets.[23] Small-family businesses ranging from *tortillerias*, or tortilla factories, to restaurants and cafes sprang up around all around Dallas' barrios but most particularly in Little Mexico. Little Mexico was indeed a little city within Dallas.[24]

Although the barrios flourished economically to a degree, many of the neighborhoods' inhabitants lived under dire conditions. Poverty was prevalent throughout the barrio, in addition to inadequate health care, unpaved streets with a highly dense populated community.[25] The barrio was highly congested with a large number of people packed into a tiny area characterized by unsanitary conditions and the lack of essential utility services. Because of this, diseases were prevalent. In 1938, the barrio of Little Mexico ranked first in the city in deaths from tuberculosis, first in pellagra, and second in the crude death rate.[26] Moreover, given the unbearable hygienic conditions in the barrio, up to the 1950s, Little Mexico experienced high infant mortality rates.

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[22] Sol Villasana, *Dallas's Little Mexico* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 77.
[23] Ethelyn Clara Davis, "Little Mexico: A Study of Horizontal and Vertical Mobility," (master's thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1935), 1-2.
[24] "Our Quaint Little City of Manana," *Dallas Morning News*, April 19, 1925, Part 7, Page 1.
[25] KERA, *Little Mexico: El Barrio*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFXH9q_av4s (Accessed December 2, 2015).
[26] Villasana, *Dallas's Little Mexico*, 8.

During the World War II and postwar period, the barrio experienced profound transformations. By this time, the neighborhood had transformed from a Mexican migrant community to a Mexican American barrio.[27] A number of young Mexican Americans from the barrio joined the war effort abroad. With increasing wartime industries, many barrio residents began to work in industrial plants located in the suburb of Dallas County, most notably, Grand Prairie. During the 1940s, the federal government undertook efforts to eliminate slum dwellings in urban areas, and consequently Little Mexico found itself as a recipient of federal funding. As an outcome, the city, in accordance with the federal government, constructed Little Mexico Village, a public housing development that finally provided many barrio residents with essential utilities such as running water and indoor plumbing.[28] Nevertheless, the growth of the suburbs presented the barrio with the challenge of redevelopment. In 1941, the construction and widening of Harry Hines Boulevard (formerly Turney Street) fragmented the barrio, presenting the community with the beginning of urbanization and redevelopment.[29]

During the mid- to late 1950s, the city's Housing Rehabilitation Advisory Committee selected Little Mexico as a "pilot area," for a program in rebuilding and bringing housing and sanitation conditions up to city codes.[30] The barrio's close proximity to downtown Dallas contributed to the committee's selection. In 1956, the barrio became one of Dallas's and the nation's first neighborhood to receive a substantial federal grant for urban renewal from the Housing Act of 1954.[31] As an outcome, officials helped "rehabilitate" many barrio homes and bring them up to city and federal housing

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[27] Griego and Calderón, *Más Allá del Rio Bravo*, 61.
[28] Ibid; Medrano Interview; "Little Mexico Village Dedication, September 15, 1942," *The Housing Authority City of Dallas, Texas* (Dallas: The Housing Authority of the City of Dallas, Texas.)
[29] "Hines Highway Dedication Set Aug. 8," *Dallas Morning News*, July 23, 1941, 2.
[30] "Little Mexico due for Cleanup Effort," *Dallas Morning News*, September 10, 1955, Part 3, 5; "Dallas OK'd for Slum aid," *Dallas Morning News*, June 28, 1957, 3A
[31] Mercado, "With Their Hearts In Their Minds," 120.

codes. City officials' rehabilitation efforts included installing bathtubs, and basic plumbing and hauling garbage out of the neighborhood.[32]

During the 1960s, Dallas experienced changes on many fronts. Mexican American political involvement began to take course with organizing a chapter of the Viva Kennedy Club as well as the Political Association of Spanish-speaking Organizations (PASSO).[33] The assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 negatively marked the city at a national and international arena, a stigma that followed for the following years. Nonetheless, the election of Mayor Erik Jonsson in 1963 brought profound changes. Dallas County saw an enormous expansion of the suburb cities due to white flight. This was particularly demonstrated with the massive construction of the Dallas North Tollway, in 1967, which sliced another fragment off Little Mexico. Business developments followed alongside the construction of the tollway.[34] The city council's implementation of zoning measures in the barrio, from residential to office developments, resulted in numerous businesses and freeways that ultimately came to displace long-time residents along the route.[35] Changes during the Jonsson administration also included the inclusion of minority city representatives. In 1969, Dallas residents elected Anita N. Martínez as the first Mexican American woman on the city council, a figure who discussion will continue in further detail in the following chapter.

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[32] "Progress in Fighting Blight," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 20, 1956.
[33] "Trujillo Heads Kennedy Group," *Dallas Morning News*, October 11, 1960, 15A. See also Max Krochmal, "Chicano Labor and Multiracial Politics in Post-World War II Texas," in *Working in the Americas: Life and Labor in the New South*, Robert H. Zieger, ed. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012), 134-45.
[34] "North Tollway Dedicated; Use Delayed," *Dallas Morning News*, December 22, 1967, 1A.
[35] Ibid; Robinson Ellis, "The Place of Borders and Between," 68.: Mercado, "With Their Hearts In Their Minds," 72.: Robert Miller, "Lost In The Shadow," *Dallas Life Magazine*, May 5, 1985, 4.

By 1970, Dallas experienced a considerable population boom as the city approximated the one-million-inhabitant mark.[36] Dallas' strong ties to the oil and gas industries, as well as the presence of headquarters of large corporations, benefitted the city for economic expansion during this period. In 1971, the National Municipal League proclaimed Dallas as the winner for the "All-American City" award, positively boosting the city's image.[37]

Not all of the city's residents benefitted from the economic growth and upbeat publicity. In Little Mexico, the trend accelerated with displacing residents to other areas of the city. The barrio's population peaked at 15,000 during the 1950s, and by 1980 the number had dwindled tremendously to 1,668 residents.[38] The 1970s proved a critical period for long-time barrio residents as real estate developers began to buy out properties in the neighborhood. In 1970, the City Planning Commission implemented drastic rezoning measures that left barrio residents with a daunting future.[39] By the early 1970s, investors had bought nearly 25 percent of properties in the barrio.[40] Private developers lobbied the planning commission for change in the barrio's land-use for the construction offices and high-rise apartments. The construction of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway in 1975 decimated the barrio as many residents had to move out.[41] At times, the city did not

[36] Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of An American Supercity in the Twentieth Century* (Dallas, TX: Three Forks Press, 1994), 381.
[37] "Dallas All-American City Proclaimed One of the Nation's Best," *Dallas Morning News*, March 4, 1971, 1A.
[38] Robert Miller, "Lost in the Shadow," *Dallas Morning News*, May 5, 1985, 4.; Griego y Calderon, *Más Allá del Río Bravo*, 39.
[39] Carolyn Barta, "Residential Pocket Faces Uncertain Future," *Dallas Morning News*, May 24, 1970, 37A.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Payne, *Big D*, 344.

compensate residents for their properties, and officials forcibly displaced residents out of the area.[42]

African Americans and Mexican Americans, the two largest ethnic minorities at the time, resided in West Dallas. The area, which the city annexed in 1956, was predominantly black—around 60 percent—yet Mexicanos resided on the farthest eastern and western part of the area. At times, tensions resulted in violent conflicts between both groups at schools, recreational facilities, and in the community.[43] In one account, young black militants intimidated and harassed Mexican American families resulting with the families moving out of the Elmer Scott Public Housing projects.[44] In October 1969, *El Sol de Texas,* a Spanish-language newspaper in the city, reported that a confrontation between "black militants and Mexican Americans resulted in two shots fired in the air and bottles and rocks thrown at the windows of homes."[45] Violence at school between both Mexican and black students resulted in the creation of a sub-commission with the Dallas Community Relations Committee in order to investigate allegations of violence between both groups and to alleviate frictions between them.[46]

The West Dallas area, hidden from and far away from being part of an All-American City, experienced widespread poverty and lacked infrastructure, recreational, and social services. As a result of years of cement and other industrial operations, the area also suffered from environmental pollution that exposed the community members to

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[42] "Growing up in West Dallas," Frances Rizo, interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 10 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Oral History Project* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/growing-up-in-west-dallas (accessed December 2, 2015).
[43] "Mexicano Gravemente Herido Por Una Pandilla de Negros," *El Sol De Texas*, October 10, 1969.; Field-Note 20921-2, Shirley Achor Papers, Dallas Mexican American Historical League: See also "Latins Quit Poverty Center: Four Resign as Result of Wednesday Racial Brawl," *Dallas Morning News*, October 24, 1970, 1A.
[44] "Mexico Americanos Abandonan West Dallas," *El Sol De Texas*, July 24, 1970, 1.
[45] Ibid.
[46] "Debido A Incidentes De Violencia Entre Negros y Mexicanos: West Dallas Nombra Comisión Investigadora,"*El Sol De Texas*, July 4, 1969, 1.; Tom Johnson, "Relations Group Hears Grievances," *Dallas Morning News*, July 2, 1969, 14A.

toxic chemicals and waste. A report carried out in July 1972 by the Dallas Area Respiratory Health Association found high amounts of lead among samples taken from black and Mexican American children living near the vicinity of lead smelters in West Dallas.[47] High levels of lead also affected families living in the Elmer Scott Housing Projects. In addition, samples taken from the area's air and soil demonstrated excessive amounts of lead.[48] For its part, the city did not enforce environmental codes or conduct investigations on the industrial factors that were affecting the people of West Dallas.

An overwhelming majority of the citizens of West Dallas lived in substandard housing conditions, and all signs suggested it was getting still worse. In a U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) community study conducted in 1970, officials determined that nearly 75 percent of the homes in the area fell under substandard living conditions.[49] Although federal programs on urban renovation existed, in 1971 the city did not participate or inquire into bettering impoverished areas of the city.[50] The city council continually overlooked the area for funding public infrastructure improvement through bonds.[51] In October 1971, city officials proposed the construction of a new concrete plant and attempted to rezone the area in order to utilize it exclusively for industrial use.[52] In addition, city officials had also discussed the possibility of damming the Trinity River, which had residents on edge in thinking about the future of the barrio.[53]

In 1972, Shirley Achor, a Southern Methodist University Anthropology PhD student, conducted an in-depth ethnographic study of the "urban" Mexican American in

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[47] Dorothie Erwin, "Near Smelters: Level of Lead in Blood High," *Dallas Times Herald*, December 12, 1972; Shirley Achor Papers, Dallas Mexican American Historical League, Newspaper Clippings, Box 1, Folder 38.
[48] Ibid.
[49] "Hablan de Mejorar la Vivienda en West Dallas," *El Sol De Texas*, March 12, 1971, 2.
[50] "West Dallas Tambien Quiere Progreso," *El Sol De Texas*, March 5, 1971, 3, 9.
[51] "West Dallas Needs Viewed as Slighted," *Dallas Morning News*, August 24, 1971.
[52] Carolyn Barta, "Special Permit Granted For Concrete Plant," *Dallas Morning News*, October 8, 1971.
[53] Doug Domeier, "Council Scraps Bachman Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, May 5, 1972, 1A.

West Dallas.[54] For her study, published as *Mexican Americans in Dallas Barrio*, she lived among the community of La Bajada. The barrio was located on the eastern edge of West Dallas, with its boundaries being Sylvan Avenue to the west, Singleton Avenue to the south, and the Trinity River levee to the east. Achor recognized the cohesiveness and self-reliance of the neighborhood despite the socioeconomic and environmental factors that plagued the barrio. In the shadows of the downtown skyline, unpaved roads and shanty homes, speckled the barrio. Small retail establishments bearing both Spanish and English names dotted Singleton Avenue one of the barrio's asphalt paved road.[55] Although Spanish was more dominant among the barrios' residents, they used both languages interchangeably. The neighborhood's elementary schools, named for Benito Juarez and Frederick Douglass, were deteriorating due to a lack of maintenance.[56] Stray dogs wandered around the neighborhood, as the city did not enforce municipal codes in the barrio. The Dallas Transit Authority (DTA) did not offer services given the lack of paved roads, leaving residents with a lack of public transportation.[57] An informal economic sector functioned in the barrio, from street-vendors with *abuelita/os* selling fresh fruit and vegetables to children going door to door on Sundays peddling framed reproductions of the "Last Supper."[58] Achor observed that for many barrio residents, social resources were scarce and at times unattainable, resulting with many community members to rely on one another for essential resources. Contrasted to Little Mexico

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[54] Shirley Achor, *Mexican Americans in a Dallas Barrio* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1978), 23.
[55] "Field Notes- August 31, 1970," Box 1, Binder 1, Shirley Achor Papers, Dallas Mexican American Historical League.
[56] "At Juarez: Safety Last," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 1972; Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL. Newspaper Clippings, Box 1, Folder 30,
[57] "Journal: March 28, 1972," Research Data Folder 7, Shirley Achor Papers, Dallas Mexican American Historical League.
[58] *Abuelita/os* is a grandparent; Shirley Achor. "Field Note #20815-1," Binder 4. Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.

which was experiencing robust redevelopment, Achor's observations generalized barrio life in West Dallas.

As in Little Mexico thirty years prior, families suffered from overcrowding, as many of them lived in homes that were not enough to support families that reached seven members.[59] The majority of these families resided in single-family homes built in the 1940s and 50s that only had four rooms at most. In a 1970 report conducted by the city's Department of Urban Rehabilitation, officials discovered that nearly 78.5 percent of homes did not meet the city's minimum housing standards.[60] While unemployment was not high, the occupational level of employment for residents was in primarily unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.[61]

Lack of suitable sanitation was another issue that many residents faced on a daily basis, as trash collection was unpredictable. When sanitation services picked up trash, many residents blamed them for spilling as much as they had loaded up along their routes, causing unpleasant health conditions.[62] When it rained, refuse trucks could not collect garbage because the roads became muddy and inaccessible to vehicles.

Crime also affected many community members in the barrio. From shootings and burglaries to drug trafficking, delinquency distressed the neighborhood. Further, the Dallas Police Department maintained insufficient enforcement throughout the area.[63] Achor's interviews with residents, and her experiences while living in La Bajada, illustrated that frustration was a shared sentiment from the barrio given the lack of police

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[59] Achor, *Mexican Americans in a Dallas Barrio*, 40.
[60] The Citizens of La Bajada in Cooperation with the Department of Urban Rehabilitation, *La Bajada: Preliminary Community Study* (Dallas, TX: City of Dallas Department of Urban Rehabilitation, 1970), 3.
[61] "La Bajada Community Survey," Community Council of Greater Dallas for the West Dallas Community Centers: July 3, 1971, 9.
[62] Achor, *Mexican Americans in Dallas Barrio*, 28.
[63] "War on Poverty," Frances Rizo interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 10 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Oral History Project* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/war-on-poverty (accessed December 2, 2015).

inaction on neighborhood activities.[64] Curbing delinquency was an issue that community leaders needed to address. Despite facing law enforcement inaction, the barrio continually encountered police brutality. In a March 1969 incident reported in *El Sol*, recounted how police violently beat and arrested, without any motives, two Mexicano males who were distributing political flyers in the barrio. As the newspaper described from witness accounts, "In the interior of the automobile (they) unloaded their brutality against these persons striking them fiercely with their batons and leaving them in a state of semi-unconsciousness."[65] This was just one of numerous cases of police brutality that occurred against Mexicanos throughout the city.

As a result of city officials' negligence, during the late 1960s barrio leaders emerged and began organizing and pushing for basic services, better conditions, and against rezoning historic neighborhoods. The state of affairs reached its apex in the early 1970s. Mexican American leaders began to search for alternate ways to help their communities. Dallas began to implement gradual urban rehabilitation projects that included raising traffic signals, paving roads, and constructing a recreation center for the residents of West Dallas. Despite the redevelopment projects, the battle was not over for neighborhood improvements. The city took decades to acknowledge the issue of environmental pollution in West Dallas.

By the 1970s, as the city of Dallas grew economically and physically, conditions had grown worse for Mexicans in Dallas. As Little Mexico gradually underwent urban redevelopment, the Mexicano population shifted to other areas of Dallas. The Mexican community continued to struggle with the effects of suburbanization and redevelopment.

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[64] Shirley Achor, "Field Note- 020828-1" and "Field Note- 20829-3," Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL. Box 1, Binder 1.
[65] "En Dallas Golpea Brutalmente a Dos Mexicanos," *El Sol De Texas*, March 28, 1969, 1.

Industrial waste and environmental racism became evident in the city's minority-dominated areas. Finally, police inaction and brutality continued to worry barrio residents of Dallas, setting the stage for future incidents and protests that would eventually engulf the city.

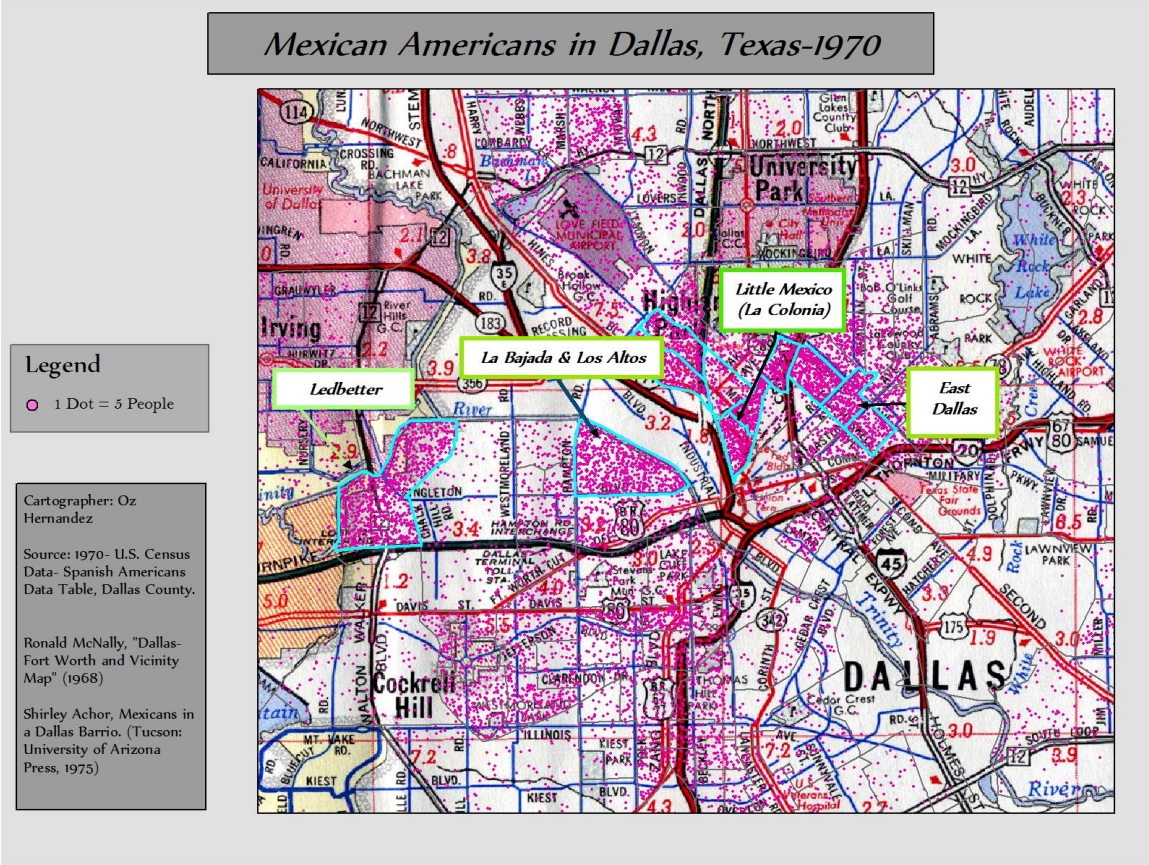

Fig. 1.1 The map shows Dallas' barrios during the late 1960s and early 1970s using 1970 U.S. Census- Sample Based Housing data on Spanish American Persons. Over the years, neighborhood movement from Little Mexico spread north, east, and southward of the city. The area of West Dallas, confined by the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike (now Interstate 30) and Loop 12, bounded the Mexican American barrios of Ledbetter, La Bajada, and Los Altos. Map by Osmin Hernández.

Chapter 2

La Lúcha for Equality: The Mexican American Struggle for Civil Rights in Dallas, 1965-1975

The Mexican American struggle for civil rights in Texas began in the post-World War II period. Originating in 1929 in the Mexican American middle class, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) charged into the battle against segregation and workplace discrimination in the state throughout the 1940s and 50s. Over a thirty-year period, LULAC served as the primary and most discernable Mexican American civil rights organization in the United States.[1] LULAC encouraged its members to recognize both citizenship and assimilation as the only methods in obtaining equal rights. In the same way, returning Mexican American veterans established the American G.I. Forum (AGIF) as a veteran's rights group that rapidly developed into a civil rights organization.[2] Both organizations comprised what Mario T. García labeled as the "Mexican American Generation," or the political generation of Mexican American leaders who organized the first significant civil rights movement in the United States.[3] In Dallas, the Mexican American quest for civil rights encompassed a myriad of organizations and objectives. Despite numerous purposes and groups, Mexicano civic and political leaders both united with and maintained an ambiguous relationship with progressive/liberal Chicanos. This chapter demonstrates the diversity of Mexican American organizers and activists, and the tactics they undertook in challenging a number of issues that composed the organizational structure of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement in Dallas.

Don Pancho Medrano

[1] Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989), 59.
[2] Neil Foley, *Quest for Equality: The Failed Promise of Black-Brown Solidarity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 16.
[3] García, *Mexican Americans,*1.

The Mexican American struggle for civil rights in Dallas began as early as the post-World War II period. During this period, Francisco Franco "Pancho" Medrano emerged as a significant civil rights figure for Dallas's Mexican community.[4] Pancho Medrano serves as Dallas's first example of the so-called "Mexican American Generation." Born in Dallas in 1920, Medrano grew up in the Little Mexico barrio. Medrano experienced discrimination and segregation in the city during the 1930s and 1940s. Segregation was prevalent in neighborhoods and public facilities, and businesses in the downtown district openly denied services for Mexicans. On his first day at Crozier Technical High School, the principal forced Medrano to drop out, given his ragged clothing, and instead to seek employment and return to school when he was able to purchase better apparel for school.[5] At the age of seventeen, he began working at a rock quarry site near Dallas Love Field, earning twenty-five cents per hour laboring ten-hour workdays. After spending a few months at the rock quarry, a supervisor recommended him to the Works Public Administration (WPA) training school. After taking a number of tests with the WPA, he joined the wartime industry working as a machinist at North American Aviation Company in Grand Prairie, Texas.[6] Having no mode of transportation to his jobsite, Medrano walked approximately eleven miles a day for work. Working at North American Aviation, Pancho experienced discrimination from his Anglo co-workers. His phenotype (he "looked" African American) and his Spanish surname struck a chord with his workmates, prompting many of his co-workers to refuse working alongside him on the production line.

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[4] Max Krochmal, "Chicano Labor and Multiracial Politics in Post-World War II Texas," in *Working in the Americas: Life and Labor in the New South*, Robert H. Zieger, ed., (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012) 133-49.
[5] Robert Walker, "Defeat and Scandal Have Taken On the First Family of the Barrio," *Dallas Observer*, January 9, 1992, 16.
[6] Francisco Medrano, interview by José Ángel Gutiérrez, Dallas/Grand Prairie, Texas, July 16, 1997, Tejano Voices, University of Texas at Arlington, CMAS 37, pg. 26.

When Medrano was growing up in Little Mexico, a priest from the local church trained him to fight as a boxer. While working at the manufacturing plant, Medrano began boxing during his lunch hour. After gaining notoriety from his fights, company officials selected him to fight at a professional level and represent the company. In due course, Pancho arose to a professional boxer traveling to fights across the states for two years. After his small break as a professional boxer, Pancho returned to North American Aviation where he met representatives from the United Auto Workers (UAW) and became interested in their anti-discriminatory rhetoric in the workplace. In 1943, Medrano became a volunteer union organizer for the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in Local 645.[7]

Pancho developed into an influential leader within the ranks of the union. In 1955, after he had spent years as a volunteer organizer, his union comrades elected Medrano as a sergeant-at-arms. Medrano became involved with other organizations as he helped establish the first chapter of the American G.I. Forum in Dallas. During the 1960 presidential campaign, Pancho also helped organize Viva Kennedy Club chapter in Dallas, in order to support the election of John F. Kennedy. Moving beyond mono-ethnic political organizing, Medrano also extended his network outside his community by reaching out to African American leaders and joining organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP).

In 1963, union leaders offered him a position with greater responsibility and publicity, as an international representative for the UAW. Utilizing his high-ranking position, Medrano ultimately became involved in the national struggle for civil and labor rights. In August 1963, Pancho helped organize schools and churches for Dr. Martin

[7] Francisco Medrano, interview by José Ángel Gutiérrez, Dallas/Grand Prairie, Texas, July 16, 1997, *Tejano Voices*, University of Texas at Arlington, CMAS 37, pg. 44, 47.

Luther King Jr.'s "March on Washington." Pancho became involved with César Chavéz and the United Farm Workers' struggle, participating in strikes held in the Rio Grande Valley. Medrano developed into an influential political and labor leader for Dallas, actively involved in voter registration drives, protests, and marches. Instead of focusing on race, Pancho emphasized class in order to build coalitions with African Americans, allowing leaders to look past racial animosities between both minority groups.[8] His ability to work with myriad of organizations and collaborate with African Americans on imperative issues influenced his children, who would implement similar strategies down the road.

La Madrina (Godmother) *de* West Dallas

In April 1969, Anita Martínez became the first Mexican American woman on the Dallas City Council. Her election to the council was momentous for the Mexicano community of Dallas. Martínez demonstrates another example of the Mexican American generation of political leaders in Dallas. Although liberal Chicanos like Medrano disagreed with council member Martínez's strategies, Chicano activists ultimately supported her role as the only Mexican American on the council at the time.

Anita Nanez Martínez was born in the Little Mexico barrio in 1929. A third generation Dallasite, Martínez grew up in a working-class family with her five other siblings.[9] Her father owned and operated a small grocery store in the barrio, while her mother ran a beauty salon at their home. When she was fifteen, her father passed away and her mother suffered a stroke. Despite the difficult circumstances and her mother's recurrent pleas to quit school for work, Martínez continued with her schooling and in

[8] Brian Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 125-126.
[9] Bianca Mercado, "Latinas in Dallas, 1910-2010: Becoming New Women," in *Texas Women: Their Histories, Their Lives*, Elizabeth Hayes Turner, Stephanie Cole, and Rebecca Sharpless, eds., (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 309-11.

1943 graduated from Crozier Technical High School. After graduating high school, she attended Southern Methodist University, taking night classes while working as a dietician aid at Parkland Hospital. As the wartime industries opened up new opportunities for minorities and women, a year later, Martínez went on to work full-time as a secretary for the civil service in the Eighth Service Command. In 1946, she married into the wealthy Mexican American family that owned and operated the El Fenix restaurants. Given conservative Post-World War II cultural values, her husband, Alfred Martínez prohibited her from working and instead insisted that she become a full-time homemaker. She resided in an affluent neighborhood in North Dallas and was a homemaker, taking care of her four children. Martínez was involved in many volunteer organizations at the schools her children attended and in churches in the community. After numerous years of philanthropy work with churches and charities, she became a member of the Metropolitan Directors of the Dallas YWCA and social co-chairwoman of the YWCA World Fellowship. In 1966, members of the Dallas Restaurant Women's Association elected her as the president of the organization.[10]

When the Citizens' Charter Association (CCA) undertook measures to place minority representatives for political positions, they invited Anita Martínez, a community volunteer with no political experience or platform, to run for office. Candy Estrada, the only woman on the CCA's nominating committee, forwarded Martínez's name to the board. The CCA ultimately considered her a distinguished candidate due to her extensive resume with civic and non-profit charitable work. When the CCA decided to endorse Martínez as a city council candidate, she received from a call from Estrada, whom she

[10] Sharon Myers, "Councilwoman Spirited Campaigner," *Dallas Morning News*, March 26, 1972, 1E: "30 File for Council Seats," *Dallas Morning News*, March 2, 1969, 1A: "City Council Candidates File Before Saturday Night," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 2, 1969, 1A, 31A: "CCA Pledges Slum Fight," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 9, 1969, 32A.

had never met, late at night. When Estrada asked Martínez if she wanted to run for office, Martínez reluctantly agreed. Anita eventually ran for the city council's Place 9 slot, as an at-large candidate in the 1969 municipal elections.[11]

Martínez competed against two opponents, Shirley L. Baccus of the Dallas Homeowners Association, and Frank P. Hernández, a young Mexican American attorney running as an independent candidate. During the city council race, Hernández, a graduate of the SMU Law School, spoke out against the CCA and accused them of generalizing issues and being unable to relate to the ordinary person.[12] Nonetheless, during Anita's campaign she called on for better communication with the city government and Dallas citizens and pledged to represent and better serve the city's Mexican American community.[13] Although media outlets projected Baccus to win the election, the CCA generously funded and promoted Martínez's campaign, providing her with a comfortable and overwhelming victory for the at-large council position. A year after the election, the CCA reported that they had spent a minimum of $74,500 (or approximately $480,361 in contemporary measures) in the Dallas city council race.[14] An independent member of the city council attempted to draw a measure that would limit campaign spending, but other council members quickly defeated the concept.

As an at-large representative for the city, Anita Martínez primarily worked for numerous issues that benefitted the metropolis as a whole. Nonetheless, Martínez became actively involved in the struggle for better conditions for both Mexican American and

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[11] Anita Martinez, interview by José Ángel Gutiérrez, Dallas, Texas, June 10, 1999, *Tejano Voices*, University of Texas at Arlington, CMAS 129, pg. 1-2.; "Candidate Sketches For City Council," *Dallas Morning News*, March 16, 1969: "Candidates for City Council Campaign Throughout Dallas," *Dallas Morning News*, March 23, 1969, 17A.
[12] "CCA Platform Attacked by Opposing Candidates," *Dallas Morning News*, March 12, 1969, 10A: "Council Candidate Hits CCA Stand on Issues," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 12, 1969, 30A.
[13] "Open Door Policy Urged," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 18, 1969.
[14] "Council Race Money Limit Not Likely," *Dallas Times Herald*, December 16, 1970.

African American constituents in West Dallas. A couple of months following her appointment, Anita began to work closely with Dallas's only Spanish-language newspaper *El Sol De Texas*. In endeavoring to better inform the Dallas Mexican community of her projects and developments in the council, she wrote weekly reports throughout her tenure as a council member. Immediately, Martínez proposed to her constituents numerous projects for redevelopment as well as enhanced public safety measures. Martínez collaborated and worked closely with Pete Martínez, president of Los Barrios Unidos, Incorporated (LBU or the United Neighborhoods) to help improve the conditions for the residents of West Dallas. In October 1969, Anita Martínez helped appoint John Zapata González, a structural engineer and LULAC member, as a member of the Dallas Committee of Urban Rehabilitation. In 1971, Martínez ran unopposed for her position.[15] During her second term as city councilmember (1971-1973) Anita continued to work closely with community leaders.

Alongside Martínez, the only female Mexican American lawyer in Dallas at the time, Adelfa Callejo, also developed into a prominent Mexicana for the community. In 1961, Callejo received her law degree from Southern Methodist University and became the one of only two Mexican Americans to pass the bar exam in Dallas.[16] Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Callejo was highly involved in the fight for equal rights especially in the fields of education, housing, and voting rights.[17]

While numerous factors came into play with better serving the city's Mexican community, Anita Martínez's political career increased the standing of the community,

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[15] "City Races: Mrs. Martinez, Kadane Receiving 'Free Rides'," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 26, 1971.
[16] Vicki L. Ruíz and Virginia Korrol Sánchez , *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 111: Teresa Palomo Acosta and Ruthe Winegarten, *Las Tejanas: 300 Years of History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 189.
[17] Ibid.

however gradually. Martínez's position on the city council helped community organizations obtain the essential resources to help the residents of West Dallas.

Para mejores condiciones: Los Barrios Unidos and The Fight Against Poverty

During the 1960s and 70s, the residents of West Dallas continued to live in substandard and largely undeveloped conditions. The smelting plants operating in the core of the neighborhoods continued to pollute, affecting the health of numerous residents in the area. Growing tired of the unresponsiveness of city and county officials, several Mexican American activists and leaders from the barrios turned their attention to West Dallas. These organizers saw the area as an opportunity to help their compatriots combat poverty and the dreadful conditions that existed in the area by getting the attention of elected representatives. A closer look at one organization, Los Barrios Unidos, as well as the broader constellation of community centers supported by the War on Poverty, demonstrates the traditional course that liberal Mexican Americans in Dallas took for contesting issues.

In 1968, Pete G. Martínez and John Zapata González established and founded Los Barrios Unidos, Incorporated (LBU or The United Neighborhoods) in efforts to combat the social and environmental factors that plagued the community.[18] Pete Martínez, originally from Dallas, was involved in many organizations throughout the community, including LULAC, Mexican Americans for Progressive Action (MAPA), and the meat cutters union.[19] During the late 1960s, Martínez began a struggle toward better social conditions and against a shattered health system that did not provide basic health services for West Dallas's residents. John Zapata González, also from Dallas, was a structural engineer that studied at SMU, and active LULAC member as well as a representative of

[18] "Untitled," Research Data Folder 4, Shirley Achor Papers, Dallas Mexican American Historical League.
[19] "Mexico-Americanos de Dallas Demuestran Poderio Politico," *El Sol de Texas*, May 10, 1970, 1.

city of Dallas's Department of Urban Rehabilitation.[20] At the beginning of their pursuit for improved conditions, many community members distrusted both Martínez and González, because they were not from the barrio, and at times questioned their motives.[21] Many barrio citizens believed that both figures were undertaking projects in their community for their own political purposes. In a 1972 interview with SMU's Shirley Achor, a community member stated:

> There's a lack of trust with people versus Los Barrios Unidos. Los Barrio Unidos is doing good, but the community doesn't trust them. One of the reasons is that the people in L.B.U are not La Bajada residents. So they are suspicious of their motives. But if it weren't for L.B.U. there would be little or no voice for the people here.[22]

LBU was an organization that did not identify itself with the broader Chicano movement that was occurring during the late 1960s and early 1970s. LBU's president, Pete Martínez, was a self-described "moderate conservative" and was unreceptive toward the younger activists, the movement, and their utilization of the word "Chicano." He was also hostile toward the city's political establishment.[23] Nevertheless, under Martínez's leadership, Los Barrios Unidos contributed to the broader struggle by bringing demands directly to the established order. In 1970, citizens of La Bajada met with grassroots organizations in conjunction with the city's Department of Urban Rehabilitation, outlining the issues and goals that were necessary to improve conditions in the neighborhood.[24] Martínez saw community involvement as a way to assess the problems and to demonstrate to city officials the willingness of community members in the desire

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[20] "Gonzalez Fue Nombrado Miembro de la Junta de Rehabilitación Urbana," *El Sol de Texas*, October 10, 1969, 1.
[21] Shirley Achor, "Journal: February 24, 1972," Research Data Folder 5, Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.
[22] Shirley Achor, "Journal: February 24, 1972," Page 3, 4, Research Data Folder 5, Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.
[23] "Field Notes-20829-2," Research Data Binder 4, Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.
[24] Department of Urban Rehabilitation, *La Bajada: Preliminary Community Study* (Dallas, TX: City of Dallas Department of Urban Rehabilitation, 1970).

to improve conditions.[25] By 1971, Los Barrios Unidos grew to include African American and Anglo members within its ranks and collaborated with the Dallas County United Fund.[26] The inclusion of other ethnic groups illustrated the organization's goal of representing all neighborhood residents regardless of ethnicity.

Martínez's quest began with bringing demands to the Dallas City Council for improved social services for the Mexicano communities of West Dallas. He also drew up bond proposals to the city.[27] In 1970, he ran for the War on Poverty's Dallas Community Action Agency (DCAA) Area 3 board member position.[28] Although voter turnout was low, barrio residents observed what Martínez was doing for their community and voted for him overwhelmingly awarding him the position.[29] In February 1971, LBU demanded that city provide medical care for children under twenty, a health clinic for the youth, centers for preschool programs, and better schools, streets, and drainage.[30] Martínez asserted that the city was doing more for African Americans in improving their conditions.[31] Councilmember Anita Martínez continually supported LBU and their resolutions addressed to the council.[32] LBU organized monthly night meetings with the community, held at the Bataan Community Center in La Bajada. In the meetings, LBU representatives obtained inquires and requests from the community and continually updated the neighborhood of its ongoing projects and achievements.[33]

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[25] Ibid, 1.
[26] "Latin Group to Ask for Renewal," *Dallas Morning News*, March 1, 1971, 11A.
[27] "La Bajada Residents Seek Larger Share of Bond Funds," *Dallas Morning News*, June 4, 1971, 20A.
[28] "Dos Mexico-Americanos en Elecciones el Sabado," *El Sol de Texas*, May 24, 1970, 1.; elections for the board on the War on Poverty functioned according to Texas state law elections
[29] "Mexico-Americanos en Dallas Demuestran Poderio Politico," *El Sol de Texas*, May 10, 1970, 1.
[30] "Preliminary Proposal and Project Submitted by Los Barrios Unidos," Research Data Envelope 4, Los Barrios Unidos Folder, Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.
[31] "Journal, February 14, 1972," Research Data Folder 5, Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.
[32]"174.5 Million Issue Eyed: Big Bond Vote Coming," *Dallas Morning News*, May 6, 1972, 1A.
[33] "Field Note August 31, 1970-1-5," Research Data Binder 1, Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.

LBU prepared reports for the city and other government agencies in order to secure funding for new programs. In one report, LBU representatives noted the importance of building an after-school and a pre-school facility for the neighborhood's children, highlighting the advantages of early childhood development.[34] Organizers also petitioned for a free-lunch program for families that were unable to provide meals for their children. In June 1972, after four years of pushing and petitioning for funding from state and federal agencies, LBU received a federal grant to open and finance Los Barrios Unidos Community Clinic. In August, after years of fighting for a community center for Mexicanos, LBU, along with MAPA and the Dallas Chapter of the American G.I. Forum, received a $60,000 federal grant for improvements and establishment of community improvement programs at the Bataan Community Center.[35] The clinic became a successful operation that helped serve the low socioeconomic residents of West Dallas.[36] LBU's traditional approach in addressing concerns ultimately helped them in gaining success in a handful of issues.

The Battle for Education: Trini Garza, Bilingual Education, and DISD Desegregation

Mexican American activism for educational equality in Texas stretches back to the immediate postwar period. LULAC as well as AGIF battled against school segregation in a number of court cases, including *Mendez v. Westminster School District* (1945) in California, and *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD* (1948) in Texas. In both cases, U.S. federal district courts ruled against segregation, but these victories were not the end of the battle for educational equality. The court cases were significantly different compared to

[34] "Report of Los Barrios Unidos, August 3, 1971," Research Data Envelope 5, Shirley Achor Papers, DMAHL.
[35] "$60,000 Approved For Center," *Dallas Times Herald*, August 5, 1972.
[36] "Mexican-Americans Work For Community," *Dallas Morning News*, March 8, 1976, 4F.

the black struggle for educational equality. Guadalupe San Miguel asserts that the lawsuits were "the result of pragmatic litigation decisions based on notions of 'whiteness.'"[37] The 1954 U.S. Supreme court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* finally established school segregation as unconstitutional and mandated integration. In Texas, school officials found alternate methods to strengthen segregation in school districts throughout the state despite the ruling. School districts instituted gerrymandering of school boundaries, building schools for specified neighborhoods, and offering "freedom-of-choice" plans to Anglo parents, allowing them to send their children to preferred school and not their neighborhood schools.[38] Regardless of the 1954 court ruling in *Hernandez v. Texas* that recognized Mexican Americans as a "class apart," Texas state law continued to consider Mexican Americans as "racially" white for desegregation purposes. Given the racial ambiguity that Texas law bestowed upon the Mexican American population, the battle for school desegregation was difficult for activists. The fight for desegregation and bilingual education in Dallas best demonstrates the intergenerational alliance of conservative Mexican leaders and politicians and progressive Chicano activists in Dallas.

In September 1969, the appointment of Trini Garza to the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) board gave a political voice to the Mexican community of Dallas. Garza was born in 1931 in Stockdale, Texas. As his father was an agricultural seasonal laborer, Garza along with his four siblings grew up in impoverished conditions.[39] At age eleven, his mother died leaving his father to tend to his family. At age seventeen, his

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[37]Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., *Chicana/o Struggles for Education: Activism in the Community* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 33.
[38] Arnoldo de León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History* (Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993), 116.
[39] "Parents Background," Trini Garza interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 11, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/parents-background (accessed February 15, 2016).

father passed away while in Montana for agriculture work, leaving Trini Garza, the oldest of the family to take care of his siblings. Despite the unfortunate circumstances Trini continued attending school and participating in extracurricular activities while tending to his younger siblings, excelling in academics and obtaining his high school diploma in 1950.[40] Following graduation, Garza joined the Navy in order for him to gain access to the G.I. Bill and further his education. After serving in the military, he went on to attend Texas A&M University where he received a degree in electrical engineering and subsequently landed a job with LTV, an aircraft plant.[41] While living in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas, Garza became involved at Winnetka Elementary, and he eventually joined and ended up as president of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA served as the doorway for Trini to become involved in local civic issues as he associated with other Mexican American leaders in the community.[42] In the summer of 1969, a vacancy occurred in the Dallas school board. Anita Martínez, whom Trini had previously met and worked closely with, suggested to the Committee for Good Schools (CGS)—the organization that funded and elected school board candidates—they consider appointing Garza.[43]

In September 1969, the CGS appointed Trini to the school board where he served for one term. Garza, like other Mexican American civic leaders in the community, held meetings in order to ascertain objectives that the school board needed to meet. Garza assembled a plan that was prepared and published in *El Sol de Texas*, in which he outlined four major objectives that Dallas needed to execute. The first and most

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[40] "Death of His Father," Trini Garza interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 11, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/death-of-his-father (accessed February 15, 2016).
[41] Mary Brinkerhoff, "Garza's Blend the Best of Both Worlds," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 8, 1974, 1C.
[42] "Getting Involved in Education," Trini Garza interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 11, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/getting-involved-in-education (accessed February 15, 2016).
[43] Ibid.

significant objective for him was for the inclusion of a Mexican American cultural curriculum with the purpose of inspiring the younger generations. He next called for the establishment of a bilingual education program for effectively communicating with children who were accustomed to speaking Spanish at home. Third, Garza called for the increase of the Mexican American community's involvement in identifying and resolving problems concerning them.[44] Finally, Trini demanded for more hiring of bilingual staff and faculty. [45]

School desegregation became a significant issue that many Mexican American activists in Dallas fought for during the late 1960s and early 1970s. School districts throughout the state implemented desegregation policies by way of busing African Americans into predominantly Mexican American schools or Mexicans into predominantly black schools. School districts plainly overlooked the federally judicially mandated order.

Almost twenty years following de jure segregation, schools in Texas continued operating segregated schools. In 1970, the Federal court case *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi ISD* established Mexicans as an "identifiable minority group."[46] The same year, a federal district court judge in *Ross v. Eckels* established desegregation policies for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) but still considered Mexican Americans as "white" for integration purposes, and not a distinct racial group.[47] It was not until Chicanos in Houston protested for almost a year that the courts ruled in September 1972 that Mexican

[44] Trini Garza, "Esta Semana en Nuestras Escuelas," *El Sol de Texas*, February 13, 1970, 8.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Carlos Kevin Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2004), 147.
[47] Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., *Brown Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2001), 75.

Americans were indeed a distinct ethnic group.[48] In Dallas, the school district continued carrying out segregation at public schools. In October 1970, the Dallas Legal Services Project, an agency with the War on Poverty, representing Mexican and African Americans, filed a lawsuit against the Dallas Independent School District asserting that the school system was still practicing segregationist policies in the public school system.[49] The suit contended that DISD continued to practice de jure segregation "through the choice of building sites, staffing of its administrative offices and teaching positions and through the use of the neighborhood assignment plan."[50]

Deprived conditions existed in the schools that served primarily Mexican Americans in Dallas: W. B. Travis, Cumberland Hills, and Benito Juarez. Many of these schools suffered from overcrowding and poorly maintained infrastructure. Despite the demographics at these schools, Mexican Americans did not compose the faculty, as Anglos made up the teaching and administrative positions. In addition, Mexican Americans made up the highest percentage of DISD's high school dropout rate in 1971.[51] The Dallas Human Relations Commission developed a report that concluded that the high dropout rate was a result of "failure to develop a bilingual program, lack of guidance services for Mexican Americans, lack of Mexican American teachers and administrators and a lack of sensitivity and interest in meeting Mexican American needs."[52]

Chicano activists also focused on the struggle to implement bilingual education programs for children in the Dallas school district as well as public schools in Texas. Chicano civil rights advocates in Dallas demanded bilingual education in the city's school system. Many organizations in Dallas such as the Brown Berets, RUP, LBU, and

[48] San Miguel, Brown *Not White*, xi.
[49] Payne, *Big D*, 342.
[50] Earl Golz, "Integration Suit Filed on Schools," *Dallas Morning News*, October 7, 1970, 1A.
[51] Karen Elliot, "Latin Dropout Rate Deplored in Report," Dallas Morning News, March 24, 1971, 4D.
[52] Ibid.

MAPA pushed for the formation of bilingual programs.[53] Due to *chicanismo*, cultural pluralism became an imperative notion for Chicanos working to fight for recognition of their heritage.[54] Bilingual education became an important objective for Chicanos as many activists persistently rejected assimilation, fought against cultural repression, and challenged the Anglo power structure in the school system.[55] President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty legislation increased federal presence and engagement throughout the nation's public schools. In 1968, the Johnson administration enacted the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, which authorized funds for the planning, developing, and establishing of programs for children of limited English-language abilities in high poverty areas.[56] Still, the program was voluntary and not federally mandated. If a state decided to implement dual language education, it became eligible to receive federal funds. In 1969, with the federal recognition and funding of bilingual education, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) saw the importance of implementing a dual language program throughout the state's schools.[57]

For many years, schools officials in DISD prohibited Mexican children from conversing in Spanish with their classmates. Teachers and administrators in Dallas schools reprimanded Mexican American children for speaking Spanish. René Martínez, a member of the Greater Dallas Community Relations Commission, called for a new policy that would make speaking Spanish permissible in "not only classrooms, but in the dining rooms, field trips and outside of the premises of the schools." [58] Ricardo Medrano and the

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[53] "Latin Americans Protest: Letter Opposing Lumping Drafted at Meeting," *Dallas Morning News*, June 28, 1971, 1D.
[54] Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas*, 145.
[55] 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), 45.
[56] San Miguel, Jr., *Contested Policy*, 17.
[57] Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas*, 143-45.
[58] "Chicanos Castigados en Dallas: Por Hablar Español en Escuelas," *El Sol De Texas*, January 16, 1970, 1.

Brown Berets threatened the Dallas school board that they would organize "Walk-outs," if the board did not end the practice of scolding students for conversing in Spanish in school.[59] Nolan Estes, DISD Superintendent, denied any wrongdoing on behalf of the school board and informed activists that in 1969 the board had begun planning a bilingual education program for Spanish-speaking students that the district would launch as early as 1971.[60] After months of inaction by the school board, Charles C. Green, director of the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) threatened Dallas school officials with halting the federal education funding if the district did not remove barriers for children to speak Spanish at school.[61] At the same time, schoolboard member Trini Garza helped pass a resolution that called for the sanctioning of Spanish in "nonformal" situations at school.[62]

Many Chicano and conservative Mexicano activists in Dallas also fought for the implementation and recruiting of more Mexican American teachers and administrators throughout the district. Activists such as the Brown Berets called on the school board to hire more Mexicano principals and teachers. René Martínez, assistant director of the Greater Dallas Community Relations Commission, pushed for the active hiring and recruiting nationwide for Latino teachers.[63]

In August 1971, U.S. District Judge William Taylor Jr. made a critical decision in the *Tasby v. Estes* court case. Similar to the school desegregation case in Houston, Judge Taylor found that Mexican Americans constituted as a distinct ethnic group that fell under any desegregation plan. Most importantly, Taylor established the Tri-Ethnic

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid 1, 7.
[61] "Dallas Continua Sosteniendo Las Barreras Contra el Lenguaje-Espanol," *El Sol de Texas*, May 29, 1970, 1.
[62]Judy Weissler, "Proposal Respects 'Mother Tongue," *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1970, 12A.
[63] Roy Hamric,"Martinez Active in Social Movement," *Dallas Morning News*, October 6, 1970, 4A.; "Buscan Profesores Mexico Americanos para Dallas," *El Sol de Texas*, June 19, 1971, 1, 12.;

Committee, as an organization to oversee the Dallas school board's integration procedures. He appointed as co-chairs Zan Holmes, an African American Methodist minister, René Martínez, a Mexican American and assistant director of the Human Relations Commission, and David Kendall, an Anglo business executive. The Tri-Ethnic Committee grew to become an important organization in overseeing the integration process in the Dallas Independent School District. As René Martínez remarked, "We were given the latitude by the judge to be his eyes and ears of the community."[64] As part of the Tri-Ethnic Committee, Martínez went out in the community and developed monthly reports for Judge Taylor that detailed the issues that Mexicano students faced in Dallas public schools.[65]

Not everyone in Dallas agreed with the court's ruling on school segregation. The verdict caused panic among Anglos and many white families began to move out at a faster rate to the suburbs. Between 1970 and 1976, the Anglo student population dropped from 57 percent to an alarming 36 percent, while the black student numbers increased to almost half of the entire school district's population.[66] Even so, the Dallas business community came out in full support for integration of the schools. As officials undertook extensive measures to diversify Dallas schools, integration did not happen straightforwardly. During the 1972-73 school year (the first year of integration), DISD struggled with numerous issues violence at schools with reports of school fights between black and white pupils.[67] Administrators were suspending black students at

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[64] René Martínez, interview by W. Marvin Dulaney and Alfred L. Roberts, Dallas, Texas, September 7, 2011, *Documenting the History of the Civil Rights Movement in Dallas County, Texas*, 21:21-21:35" (digital recording in author's possession, also available at the University of North Texas Special Collections).
[65] Ibid, 22:19-23:35"
[66] García y Griego and Calderon, *Más Allá del Rio Bravo*, 73.
[67] Glenn M. Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas: Four Decades in the Federal Courts* (Dallas, TX: Three Forks Press, 1995), 91.

overwhelmingly higher rates compared to whites.[68] The Anglo resistance through white flight only demonstrated to officials and activists that the battle over segregation was not anywhere near ending soon.

The Fight Over Independent Representation: The Dallas City Council Elections

In the wake of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963, the municipal government of Dallas had sought to improve its image on the local and national stage. City officials vigorously attempted to recreate a new vision and identity for the metropolis. Despite the negative publicity, Dallas flourished economically in the decades following the JFK assassination, until the 1980s. The city became home for banking centers and international businesses headquarters. Dallas Mayor Erik Jonsson (1964-1971) undertook measures in order for the city to reinvent itself introducing a program entitled "Goals for Dallas."[69] As part of the program, Jonsson commenced momentous projects, such as building a new city hall and executing the blueprint for the construction of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, simultaneously promoting a new identity of "big" visions for the metropolis.

Despite Dallas's pursuit of a new and different identity, the city lacked minority representation in public offices. Throughout the 1960s and mid-1970s, the doors remained closed for minority members of the community to participate in local politics. Elections for the Dallas City Council as well as the Dallas Independent School District School Board both operated under an "at-large" city government structure instead of a single-member voting district.[70] During the early 1930s, Dallas elites had implemented a professionalized council-manager form of government that included on at-large city

[68] Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas*, 92-93.
[69] Payne, *Big D*, 330.
[70] "Candidate Sketches for City Council," *Dallas Morning News*, March 16, 1969, 34A.

council as a practical system for the establishment to implement their "visions of urban growth."[71] This business-political method reflected San Antonio's municipal government, where the business elites through the Good Government League (GCL) effectively preserved the power structures of the city.[72] As in San Antonio, the system implicitly discriminated against minority candidates as many could not afford to campaign on a citywide basis and Anglos would not vote for them regardless. Instead, the establishment placed highly funded candidates whose social and political concerns did not sit well with minority and poor voters of the city. As a result, the city overlooked issues facing both the Mexican American and African American communities. The single-member district court cases of the 1970s reveal how collaboration between so-called conservative and radical activists did in fact transpire and also highlights the significance of cross-ethnic alliances with African American leaders.

During the late 1960s, in an effort for the city to appear inclusive of minority participation in politics, the presiding conservative power broker of Dallas, the Citizens' Charter Association (CCA) endorsed handpicked minority candidates for city council and school board positions. In 1968, Mayor Jonsson appointed Cleophas Anthony "C. A." Galloway as the city's first black council member. The following year, residents elected another CCA-backed candidate, Anita N. Martínez, as the first Mexican American woman city council member. The same year, the CCA-supported school board appointed Trinidad "Trini" Garza, a Mexican American electrical engineer, to an interim spot on the board. Garza became the first Mexicano on the Dallas school board.[73] He served only one year on the board, as he was unable to obtain the necessary votes for reelection. While the

[71] Hill, *Dallas*, 111.
[72] Montejano, *Don Quixote's Soldiers*, 14-15.
[73] Judy Weissler, "Garza Joins School Board," *Dallas Morning News*, September 18, 1969, 1A.

city's power brokers gradually implemented changes through the support and elections of a handful of "token" agents, for many Chicanos and African Americans, these minority representatives embodied the establishment's interests and not the people's.[74]

The outcomes of the Dallas City Council Elections of April 1969 prompted voting rights advocates, both black and brown, to reexamine the city's voting configuration. Within a matter of days, Mexican American activists from the Mexican American League of Voters (MALV) alleged that city officials had violated their civil rights in the recent elections, and demanded an investigation before the Executive Committee of the Dallas Commissioner's Court.[75] Numerous Mexican American voters protested that they had never received their voting registration certificates.[76] Esther Ramirez, MALV chairman, suspected that city election officials had purposely misplaced around 5,300 voter registrations that contained Spanish surnames or that originated from the African American precincts of the city.[77] Dallas officials argued that the mix-up was a result of the late voter registration that the organizers undertook in January 1969 and that officials might have "mislaid" the voter registration cards instead of entering the data on the computer.[78] Because of the city's omission, many minority voters were unable to vote in the April 1969 city elections. Reports had come to the media that someone had dumped the voter registration applications at the city dump, yet voting officials never clearly

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[74] "First Truly Elected Hispanic," Robert Medrano interview by Moisés Acuña-Gurróla, Dallas, Texas, June 10, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/the-first-truly-elected-hispanic (Accessed January 12, 2016).
[75] "Civil Rights Violation Charged in Voter Registration Mixup," *Dallas Morning News*, April 15, 1969, 1D.
[76] "Contest Possible: Woman Fails to Get Vote Certificate," *Dallas Morning News*, April 2, 1969.
[77] "De la recientes elecciones: Mexicanos de Dallas abren investigacion," *El Sol de Texas*, April 11, 1969, 1
[78] Ibid.

verified the reports. The Dallas Human Relations Committee's internal investigations concluded that there was "a mix-up in computer programming."[79]

Elections for the Dallas City Council took place again in 1971. This time, political activists took a different course by challenging the city's at-large system. In April 1967, a Jewish storeowner from Pleasant Grove, Max Goldblatt, ran for city council and won an overwhelming majority of the votes in his district, yet he ultimately lost due to the at-large system. Goldblatt filed a lawsuit in the federal court against the city charging that the established method was unfair, but he ultimately lost because he was unable to prove the inequities of the system.[80] In March 1971, the Dallas Legal Services Project (DSLP) assisted Reverend Peter Johnson of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Al Lipscomb, Pancho Medrano, and other plaintiffs in filing a class-action lawsuit against the city.[81] The lawsuit asserted that the population in the eight districts drawn for municipal representation was unequal and diluted the city's racial minority voting strength.[82] The 1970 U.S. Census demonstrated an increase of the city's black population—which constituted 25 percent of the population and registered voters—yet the city did not redraw its districts to reflect the population growth. Most importantly, the lawsuit called for the replacement of the at-large system with the new single-member districts as federal law had provided for in the Voting Rights Act of 1965.[83] Even so, the Voting Rights Act did not cover the state of Texas.

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[79] John Geddie, "Report Panics Officials: Mysterious Case of Voter Applications Solved," *Dallas Morning News*, April 15, 1969, news clipping in Box 1, Folder 1, Election Issues Resources Materials, 1969-1975.
[80] Darwin Payne, "Profile: Max Goldblatt," *Legacies: A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas*, 16, No. 01 (Spring 2004): 29-31 (http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth35092/ : accessed January 27, 2016).
[81] Roy H. Williams and Kevin J. Shay, *Time Change: An Alternative View of the History of Dallas* (Dallas: To Be Publishing, 1991), 103.
[82] Ruth Eyre, "Suit Challenges Vote Plaintiffs," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 19, 1971, 25A
[83] Earl Golz, "Judge Estes Asks More Facts Before Ruling on Vote Delay," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 20, 1971, news clipping in Box 1, Folder 1, Election Issues Resources Materials, 1969-1975.

The City of Dallas responded that the activists were utilizing the suit in order to obstruct the upcoming municipal elections, adding that seven out of the eighteen plaintiffs in the suit were not registered voters.[84] The city denied any discrimination under the at-large system and pointed to the minority office holders as proof that the city did not repudiate the representation of marginalized groups in municipal public offices. Within a matter of days, U.S. District Judge Joe E. Estes dismissed the suit and noted that the U.S. Supreme Court had previously upheld the at-large voting plan as constitutional and a "valid method of political organization."[85] Judge Estes furthered added that there was no need to formulate new districts since the available data did not establish concrete evidence of a substantial change within the minority population.[86] Although the lawyers included in their affidavit a demographer and sociology professor from SMU to demonstrate the racial changes of the city, Judge Estes called the plaintiffs' arguments "gross assumptions and not facts," completely disregarding the city's black population increase.[87]

The dismissal was only the beginning of an uphill battle that both African Americans and Mexican Americans political activists waged in the courtroom. Following Judge Estes's suit dismissal, attorneys with the DSLP filed an appeal with the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which would take nearly a year for a hearing. The CCA, alongside their political rival the Citizens for Representative Government (CRG), fought in conjunction with the Dallas city attorney Alex Bickley, to maintain the status quo, as the dissolution of the at-large system would mean a threat to their existence. In February 1972, black city councilman George Allen came out in support for the implementation of

[84] Ibid.
[85] Earl Golz, "Judge Refuses to Delay Election," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 28, 1971.
[86] "Suit Says Districts Too Big," *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1971, 30A.
[87] "Legality of Holding April 6 Election Remains in Doubt," *Dallas Morning News*, March 30, 1971, 5D.

single-member districts as part of an amendment in the city charter.[88] Following councilmember Allen's support for the idea of single-member districts, City Attorney Bickley placed a "gag rule" on council members, restricting them from further discussing their opinions on a single-member district plan.[89]

In April 1972, the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the Dallas U.S. district court's decision, placing the establishment on edge. In September, DLSP attorneys filed another lawsuit challenging the at-large voting system, this time targeting the Dallas Independent School District's school board elections.[90] As in the city council suit, the court case against DISD contended that the system negated the poor and minority vote and pitted it against that of affluent residents.[91] With both suits in the federal courts, the city council agreed to hold hearings for its constituents and called a vote on single-member districts as part of the December 1972 city charter amendment election.[92]

Several Mexican American civic leaders did not agree with the redistricting plan. Council member Anita Martínez opposed a single-member district plan and indicated that "there's too much tendency to think just of your own little district."[93] Mexican American lawyer and Tri-Ethnic Committee member Frank Hernández noted that regardless of the established system, Chicanos would not be able to obtain representation given their population figures and distribution.[94] In contrast, Mexican American organizers from

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[88] Carolyn Barta, "Allen to Seek Single-Member Council Areas," *Dallas Morning News*, February 4, 1972.
[89] Jerry McCarty, "City to Fight at-large Voting Suit," *Dallas Times Herald*, May 9, 1972.
[90] "Single Districts Issue Lacks Interests in Dallas," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 3, 1972.: Ruth Eyre and Bryan Martin, "Single-Member Districts Likely: Two Suits Sink At-large Systems," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 8, 1972 in Box 1, Folder 1, Election Issues Resources Materials, 1969-1975.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Jerry McCarty, "Single-Member Vote Test Favored," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 5, 1972. 1B
[93] "Martinez Supports Zeder Plan," *Dallas Morning News*. September 3, 1972, 18A.
[94] David House, "Public Hearing: Single-Member District Advocates Sound Off," *Dallas Times Herald*, October 11, 1972, 2B.

West Dallas, Pete Martínez and Frances Arredondo, in addition to the Medranos, all backed the initiative and saw the potential in obtaining the plan for direct representation in the school board.[95] The city council pushed back the date for a charter amendment election until after the conclusion of the February 1973 trial on the council elections. The city held the charter amendment election on June 1973. Expectedly, the majority of Dallasites voted against implementing a city council plan that drew up single-member districts. The battle for single-member districts demonstrates the internal divisions within Mexicano leaders and civil rights activists that did not necessarily fall among generational but rather political lines. One the one hand, liberals and radicals thought that independent representation was important in order to obtain a voice for their fight towards equality. On the other, conservatives like Martínez, who had made her place through quiet diplomacy, opposed it because of her close connections with the Anglo establishment.

Chicano Activists: The Brown Berets and Raza Unida Party

By the mid-to-late 1960s, the strategies and tactics of the Mexican American Generation for fighting for civil rights clashed with a new generation of emerging Mexicano activists. A radical departure from previous forms of activism created a rift between the Mexican American and Chicano generations. The more radical and younger (at times) generation adopted cultural nationalism. The emerging generation began to embrace being a "Chicano," a term that both the older and traditional Mexican American civic leaders and groups perceived as derogatory. *Chicanismo*, or the ideology that emphasized being a Chicano, took on the strategy of adopting features of Mexican and

[95] "Single-member Districts gain W. Dallas Backing," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 16, 1972, 6B.

Mexican American history and culture.[96] Chicano activists sought the creation of a new political institution that made self-determination a possibility. The new radical activists assumed that social change depended on confronting the establishment unlike the traditional ways of the Mexican American generation. In Dallas, the self-styled Chicano Movement arose during the late 1960s, with activists launching numerous organizations. For Dallas Chicanos, a pragmatic form of *chicanismo*, emphasizing pride in being Mexicano and progressive politics, served as the foundation that united these organizations. Although many Dallas Chicano activists were outspoken, groups such as the Brown Berets and Raza Unida Party diverged from utilizing militancy and violence as a strategy for making demands, instead searching for common ground between themselves and so-called conservative Mexican American leaders and politicians.

In 1969, Roberto "Robert" Medrano and Ricardo "Richard" Medrano, with the help of Pancho Medrano, helped establish the first chapter of the Dallas Brown Berets. Ricardo became the first prime minister of the Dallas Brown Berets, whose members originated in the Little Mexico barrio. The Brown Berets grew in membership, with both Chicanos and Chicanas participating in the liberal/progressive politics of the organization. Under the leadership of Ricardo, the Dallas chapter held meetings at his family-owned grocery store named "Kiko's," located in the barrio of Little Mexico. Similar to the Beret's Piranha coffeehouse in East L.A., Kiko's developed into an assembly point for a myriad of activists and progressive politicians.[97] Unlike scholars' traditional interpretation of Chicano activists composing largely of barrio youth, in Dallas, many Chicano organizers, including the Medranos, were already in their mid-

[96] Jorge Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 45.
[97] "My Grocery Store Kiko's," Ricardo Medrano interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/my-grocery-store-kikos (accessed January 12, 2016).

twenties. Further, the barrio "youth" did not comprise the vanguard of the movement in the metropolis but were rather one part of the movement.

Cross-racial collaboration was the Dallas Beret's noteworthy strategy in organizing within the minority community. As a student at Arlington State College, Robert became involved with the anti-war efforts of a local chapter of the Black Panthers at the university. Medrano studied the Black Panthers' organizing methods as well as their distribution of information regarding minorities in combat in Vietnam.[98] Working with the Panthers would later serve as a foundation for forming coalitions with the African American community in Dallas. Furthermore, both Robert and Ricardo learned to organize with the black community from watching their father, Pancho, who continually participated in the black freedom struggle in Dallas and beyond.[99] The Dallas Berets continually collaborated with organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, under the local leadership of Reverend Peter Johnson. The Berets helped the SCLC and other African American organizations in organizing and attending protests.[100] The ability of the Berets as well as Pancho Medrano to serve as a bridge between both the black and brown communities functioned as the underpinning for coalition work aimed at fighting numerous issues, including most importantly, police brutality.

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[98] Robert Medrano, interview by Osmin Hernández, Dallas, TX, January 9, 2015, 45:35" (digital recording in author's possession): "College Activism," Robert Medrano interview by Moíses Acuña Agurróla, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/college-activism (accessed February 3, 2016).

[99] "First Time Met a Black and White Person," Ricardo Medrano interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/first-time-met-a-black-and-white-person (accessed February 3, 2016).

[100] "Blacks, Police Brutality & Women Participation in Rallies," Ricardo Medrano by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/blacks-police-brutality-women-participation-in-rallies (accessed February 3, 2016).: "Police Brutality and Tri Ethnic Coalition," Robert Medrano by Moisés Acuña-Agurrola, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/police-brutality-and-tri-ethnic-coalition (accessed February 3, 2016).

Conflict and tensions between neighborhoods and Beret members, as well as different objectives for other barrios, resulted in the establishment of other chapters throughout the city. Mirroring the original Dallas chapter were Juan M. Pérez and the Berets from Ledbetter/Eagle Ford barrio in far West Dallas. According to Robert Medrano, Juan Pérez organized the Ledbetter/Eagle Chapter, believing that the original Beret chapter invested no interest in the dire barrio conditions of West Dallas. [101]

Despite disagreements, both chapters continually communicated with one another and supported one another for different causes. In 1974, Medrano supported the Ledbetter chapter in the "Seven Mile March," where both Berets Chapters walked from Gabe P. Allen Elementary School in far West Dallas to Dallas Independent School District (DISD) administration building in northeast of downtown.[102] The Ledbetter Chapter organized the march to protest against the failure of the Dallas school board's decision in renaming George Allen Elementary for Mexican revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata.[103] More than two hundred protestors marched with the Berets shouting slogans such as "Chicano Power!" and "Zapata!" as they walked east on Singleton Avenue.[104]

What set Dallas Brown Berets apart from those in Los Angeles was the absence of violence and militancy. For the Dallas Berets, violence was never an option and the only way for presenting demands was to confront officials at either school board or city council meetings.[105] Unlike Berets chapters in California who protested showing

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[101] "Dallas Brown Berets," Robert Medrano interview by Moisés Acuña-Gurróla, Dallas, Texas, June 10, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/dallas-brown-berets (accessed January 22, 2016).
[102]"The Seven Mile March," Robert Medrano interview by Moisés Acuña-Gurróla, Dallas, Texas, June 10, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/the-seven-mile-march. (accessed January 22, 2016).
[103] Doug Domeier, "Brown Berets: Parade Protests Name-Change Denial," *Dallas Morning News*, October 27, 1974, 47A.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ricardo Medrano, interview by Osmin Hernandez, Dallas, Texas, January 17, 2016, 5:10-5:23" (digital recording in author's possession).

weapons to threaten the establishment, Ricardo Medrano remarked that for the Dallas Berets "our pen was our weapon. That is mightier than the sword."[106]

The Berets became outspoken at Dallas City Council meetings, disrupting and confronting officials, and as an outcome, the public eye continually followed them.[107] In May 1971, the Dallas City Council held a hearing where the Berets made numerous demands. For police officer positions, the Berets demanded the city to lower weight and height restrictions, along with educational level, and increasing recruitment of Chicanos in the area high schools.[108] At the hearing, a Beret member criticized Anita Martínez as not being a representative for the Mexican American community. Instantly, John Zapata González with Los Barrios Unidos jumped to Martínez's defense, rebutting the comment and telling the Chicano militant, "Violence breeds violence. I would like to challenge you to work toward constructive goals."[109] The exchange in the city council chambers demonstrates the divisions between conservative Mexicano leaders and the so-called radical Berets in their strategies for addressing issues.

The Berets also fought for other issues that affected Mexicans in Dallas. One significant issue that both the North Dallas and Ledbetter Chapters continually disputed for was name changing of schools. Mario Martínez, the minister of information of the Ledbetter Chapter stated that that a name change "would instill community pride" at predominantly Mexican American schools and "help alleviate the drop-out problems."[110]

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[106] "The Search for Common Recognition," Ricardo Medrano interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 10, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/the-search-for-common-recognition. (accessed January 25, 2016).
[107] "Militants and Dyson," *Dallas Morning News*, May 22, 1971, 2D.
[108] Carolyn Barta, "Minority Hiring Urged: Council Hears Mexican-American Spokesmen," *Dallas Morning News*, May 5, 1971, 1A.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Dotty Griffith, "Elementary School Name Change in Works Again," *Dallas Morning News*, January 9, 1975, 1D.

The Berets faced strong opposition from school trustees especially when recommending the names of Mexican revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata.[111]

Law enforcement continually harassed and kept close watch on the Brown Beret chapters of Dallas. As president of the Dallas chapter, Ricardo remarked that an undercover Dallas police officer approached him one day with a picture of him, threating and letting him know that law enforcement was closely monitoring the group's activities.[112] For Ricardo, knowing that police was monitoring their movement prompted him to become even more vigilant with law enforcement officials. DPD's increasing vigilance on organizations such as the Berets demonstrated the establishment's growing perception of the threat of the so-called radical Chicano movement and activists in Dallas.

The 1972 Ramsey Muñiz gubernatorial campaign on the Raza Unida Party ticket brought increased attention to politically active Chicanos. The idea of a Mexican American running for Texas governor, as well as the party's platform, attracted many Chicanos in Dallas. In 1972, while campaigning throughout the state, Muñiz made a stop in Dallas at Southern Methodist University. At Muñiz's talk in Dallas, Robert "Robbie" Martínez, a Vietnam veteran who was attending El Centro College, became attracted to RUP's political platform.[113] After speaking to Muñiz about the possibility of establishing a chapter in Dallas, Muñiz directed Martínez to RUP representatives in Fort Worth. The Hatch Act prohibited Martínez, a federal employee in Dallas, from becoming politically involved in campaigns. Despite the restriction, he continued with organizing and as a

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[111] Dotty Griffith, "School Board Refuses Name Change Request," *Dallas Morning News*, October 24, 1974, 1D.
[112] Ricardo Medrano, interview by Osmin Hernandez, Dallas, Texas, January 17, 2016, 45:33-45:38" (digital recording in author's possession).
[113] Robbie Martínez, interview by Osmin Hernandez, DeSoto, Texas, October 3, 2015, 1:11-1:13" (digital recording in author's possession).

party delegate attending RUP conventions and talks throughout the state. In nearby Fort Worth, José "Joe" González established an RUP chapter and helped Robbie Martínez found a chapter in Dallas.[114]

In May 1972, RUP officially opened a Dallas County office.[115] RUP in Dallas became involved in voter registration drives throughout the barrios. Likewise, party representatives in Dallas campaigned tirelessly for Muñiz, knocking door-to-door, informing Mexican Americans about a Mexicano candidate running for governor.[116] RUP delegates in Dallas remained discreet in their organizing efforts because they feared reprisal. Robbie Martínez recalled that he had heard about police brutality against Chicanos organizing voter registration drives in California and South Texas. As a result, Martinez noted that, "They are busting heads with the Chicanos who are doing voter registration. What are they going to do to us? We are trying to start a political party, besides voter registration."[117]

Despite Chicano activists maintaining differences with conservative Mexicano leaders in strategies and tactics, they nevertheless unified in various instances, including attempts to organize the community. In 1971, Chicano activists, conservative, and liberal Mexican American leaders held a convention named "Raza Unida" at L. G. Pinkston High School in far West Dallas.[118] The Raza Unida convention, which had no affiliation with the political party, attempted to address the issues of the Mexican barrios throughout

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[114] "Raza Unida Starts Drive in Tarrant," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 13, 1972, 4.: "Joining La Raza Unida Party," José González interview by Caleigh Prewitt, Fort Worth, Texas, March 20, 2013, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/joining-la-raza-unida-party (accessed March 25, 2016).
[115] Pat Svacina, "La Raza Unida Opens Dallas Headquarters," *Dallas Morning News*, May 5, 1972, 4D.
[116] Robbie Martinez, interview by Osmin Hernandez, DeSoto, Texas, October 3, 2015, 1:44-1:45" (digital recording in author's possession).
[117] Robbie Martinez, interview by Osmin Hernandez, DeSoto, Texas, October 3, 2015, 1:17:-1:17" (digital recording in author's possession).
[118] "Importante Coferencia de Raza Unida en Nuestra Ciudad," *El Sol De Texas*, January 1, 1971, 11.

Dallas.[119] According to *El Sol De Texas*, a liberal community newspaper, the primary objective of the conference was for "studying the forms in achieving community betterment in the social and as well as the educational community aspects."[120] The organizers for the convention included René Martínez, assistant director of the Human Relations Commission, as well as Roberto Arredondo, president of the Dallas LULAC chapter. Mario Compean, a co-founder of the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO), also attended the convention. Other politically active Mexican American leaders who participated also included Reverend Rudy Sánchez from the Primera Iglesia Bautista de Dallas (First Mexican Baptist Church of Dallas) and the Dallas Baptists for Mexican American Progress.[121]

Both organizations—the Brown Berets and Raza Unida Party—represented a more liberal position compared to the broader Chicano movement's militant and radical politics in other parts of the American Southwest during the period. As Ricardo Medrano indicated, "We had two different hats: the so-called 'professional Hispanic' and us the 'militants.' But technically we were the same, even though we might have used the term 'coconut.' You know, brown on the outside and white on the inside. But the goal was still the same."[122] Chicano activists in Dallas, especially the Brown Berets, developed into the Dallas Mexican community's progressive voice. So-called conservative leaders also allowed Chicano activists to join their organizations. For instance, Robbie Martínez's military background and organizing efforts attracted the attention of Brownie Treviño, president of the American G.I. Forum in Dallas, prompting Martínez to join the

[119] "La Raza Unida Meet Scheduled Saturday," *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1971, 6A.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ricardo Medrano, interview by Osmin Hernández, Dallas, TX, January 17, 2016, 5:11-5:34" (digital recording in author's possession).

organization while he campaigned for RUP.[123] Despite diverging politically and strategically with traditional Mexican American community leaders, Chicanos would soon unite with conservative activists, especially on the reoccurring issue of police brutality in Dallas.

La Policia and the Mexicano Community

Discrimination in the administration of law was evident for both African Americans and Mexican Americans in Dallas and Texas. In 1970, the Texas Advisory Commission to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights determined that law officers continually harassed and intimidated both black and brown minorities throughout the state.[124] During the mid-1960s to early 1970s, police brutality was rampant and widespread throughout the city. The Dallas Police Department (DPD) targeted both African American and Mexican Americans through a series of beatings, harassment, unwarranted arrests, and shootings (at times fatal).[125] DPD had a force of approximately 1,600 police officers in 1970, and only twelve (or less than 1 percent), were Mexican American.[126] The Dallas County Sheriff's Department had only one Mexican American deputy.[127] During the early 1970s tensions between police and Chicanos in the city developed to a boiling point.

In the early morning hours of February 15, 1971, four deputies were conducting a routine burglary investigation at a home in West Dallas. While conducting the investigation, two Mexican American males ambushed, disarmed, and kidnapped the four

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[123] Robbie Martinez, interview by Osmin Hernandez, DeSoto, TX, October 3, 2015, 1:21-1:25" (digital recording in author's possession).
[124] U.S. Civil Rights Commission, *Civil Rights in Texas: A Report of the Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights* (Washington D.C.: The Commission on Civil Rights, 1970), 14.
[125] Chicano print media continually reported on numerous cases of beatings, for example, "Denuncia Abuso de Autoridad por la policia municipal," *El Sol de Texas*, January 15, 1971, 1.
[126] Nadeane Walker, "The Silent Minority," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 21, 1971, 48A.
[127] Ibid.

officers at gunpoint. The suspects tied and hauled the abducted officers to the bottomlands of the Trinity River where they shot three of the four deputies in execution style.[128] Only one officer, A. D. McCurley, survived with injuries and was able to escape by acting dead.[129] McCurley was able to identify the perpetrators, two well-known offenders, René Adolfo Guzmán and Leonardo Ramos López.[130] Within a matter of hours, the Dallas Police Department, alongside the Dallas County sheriff and other law enforcement agencies, underwent a massive manhunt for the two identified suspects. In a number of days, the manhunt stretched outwards to the U.S.-Mexico border with law enforcement placing border authorities on high alert.[131]

The atrocity infuriated the law enforcement community in Dallas County. The hunt for the police officers' assassins placed a significant strain on Dallas's Mexican community. In the wake of the murders, Dallas police pulled over Mexicano motorists for "looking Mexican."[132] Gus Calderon, a representative of the Latin American Action Group, stated that in many instances, "officers would come up to people in cars and pull their guns on them and curse them out."[133] Anonymous tips gave police faulty intelligence on the whereabouts of the suspects, leading to racist harassment in numerous homes in the barrios.[134] On February 18, 1971, law enforcement officials received a lead that the suspects might be harboring at an apartment complex in East Dallas. During the early morning hours of February 19, deputies undertook a raid operation at the apartment

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[128] Julian Bishop and Warrant Bosworth, "3 Deputies 'Executed' Here: Search Pushed for Triple Slayer," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 16, 1971, 1A.: Drew Roy, "Killed in the Line of Duty…" *Dallas Times Herald*, February 16, 1971, 5A.
[129] "McCurley Thanks God for Escape," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 16, 1971, 1A.
[130] Ibid.
[131] "Search for Slaying Suspect Centers on Mexican Border," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 17, 1971, 1A.
[132] "Racial Profiling in Dallas," Richard Menchaca interview by Moises Acuña-Agurróla, Dallas, Texas, May 12, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Oral History Project*. https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/racial-profiling-in-dallas (accessed March 2, 2016).
[133] "Police Harrassing of Latins Probed," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 24, 1971, 37A.
[134] John Rutledge and Robert Finklea, "Authorities Nab Guzmán: Apartment Search Also Nets 2nd Man," *Dallas Morning News*, February 19, 1971, 1A.

unit in which Guzmán and López were allegedly hiding. In an unfortunate turn of events, police officers entered the wrong apartment.

Officers stormed into to the apartment without any warning while Tomás Rodríguez, his wife Bertha, and their eight children—ranging from ages two to sixteen—slept.[135] Without thinking, a startled Rodríguez, who believed that intruders had broken into his domicile, ran to his sofa, took out his revolver and shot at the unknown assailants.[136] The officers, who were not wearing uniforms and yelling in English, further added to the confusion for Tomás, who did not speak English. In the brief exchange of gunfire, deputies shot and wounded Tomás and wife, who was five months pregnant, and assaulted their fourteen-year-old son. None of the officers received injuries. Thirty minutes after erroneously entering the wrong apartment, law enforcement officials ultimately apprehended Guzmán and López, who were hiding in the apartment unit adjacent to the Rodríguez family.[137] After the shooting, Dallas-Fort Worth's main Spanish-language newspaper, *El Sol de Texas*, reported that thirty-eight bullet holes covered the small garage-sized apartment.

While in custody, both Guzmán and López ultimately confessed to the slayings. Both suspects provided officials the gruesome details of the slayings in their written confessions. López informed law enforcement officials that at the time of the murders, both he and Guzmán were under the influence of heroin. When officials asked him about the motives behind the murders, López replied, "I don't know why it happened. It just

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[135] "Afirma Rodriguez: 'Solo pense en proteger a mi familia,'" *El Sol de Texas*, February 26, 1971, 1
[136] Ibid.
[137] Drew Roy and Julian Bishop, "City, County, U.S. Officers Raid Hideout," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 19, 1971, 1A.

did."[138] Pancho Medrano strongly condemned the murders, and declared that, "The unfortunate circumstances that led to this shooting (the murder of three deputies) should be condemned, but eight innocent children, a pregnant wife and a man protecting his home should not be victims of the extreme reaction of the police officers."[139]

Law enforcement held Tomás and Bertha Rodríguez under arrest without any charges while they recovered from their injuries at Parkland Hospital. Police chained both of them to their beds with an armed deputy standing guard. Law enforcement placed the eight Rodríguez children under state custody with Child Protective Services. Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade attempted to press charges against them for shooting at the deputies during the raid, and ultimately arraigned Tomás with "intent to murder with malice."[140] The Dallas County Sherriff accused him of farfetched charges in selling and supplying both narcotics and weapons to the accused killers, but Wade later dismissed these charges due to lack of evidence.[141] Law enforcement officials continually denied any wrongdoings and even justified the shooting by stating that he refused to open the door, leaving them with no other options but to shoot into the apartment.[142]

The shooting of Tomás and Bertha Rodríguez produced outrage for many Chicanos and even African Americans in the community and triggered citywide

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[138] "Lopez Confessions to Slayings," *Dallas Morning News*, February 24, 1971, 1A.: "Confesiones," *El Sol de Texas*, February 26, 1971, 5.: Bill Hendricks, "Apartment: 2 Holed Up for 3 Days," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 19, 1971, 1A.
[139] "La Familia Medrano Deposita Fianza," *El Sol de Texas*, February 26, 1971, 1.
[140] "Shot Man Charged: Police Shooting Victim Accused," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 24, 1971, 1A.
[141] Julian Bishop, "New Evidence Sought: Rodriguez Linked to Drug Sale," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 24, 1971, 1A: Henry Tatum, "Rodriguez Named as Supplier: Defendant Says Shooting; Sold Heroin to Suspects," *Dallas Morning News*, February 24, 1971, 1A.: "Sherriff Wants Jury to Decide Charges,"*Dallas Times Herald*, February 26, 1971, 23A.; "Jones Faces Block in Rodriguez Case," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 25, 1971, 1A.
[142] Henry Tatum, "2 Deputies: Grand Jurors To Investigate Shooting Case," *Dallas Morning News*, February 23, 1971, 1A.

protests.[143] Pancho Medrano, with co-organization from Frances Arredondo and Pete Martínez, led the charge in attempting to bring justice for the Rodríguez family.[144] As a *padrino* of one of Rodríguez's children, Medrano saw not only the wrongdoing but as well as significance in the incident.[145] The Brown Berets, along with Joe Acosta and the Chicano Youth Organization (CYO), held protests critical of Police Chief Frank Dyson and denounced Anita Martínez as a poor representative for the Mexicano community.[146] In *Dallas-Fort Worth Chicano*, the local movimiento newspaper, activists declared that the, "Councilwoman has never been, is not now, and will never be a true representative of the Chicano community."[147] Frank Hernández, attorney and former candidate for city council, launched a fund drive for the Rodríguez family and called for the legal and civic support of LULAC, AGIF, and the Black Chamber of Commerce.[148] At the same time that Dallas Mayor Erik Jonsson embarked on plans to celebrate the title of All-American city, Medrano along with Anglo and African American leaders, organized a boycott march.[149] The march's purpose was to protest police brutality, demonstrate how far the city was from its bestowed title, and march against poverty, labor treatment, and lack of independent political representation.[150]

Medrano contacted Birch Bayh, U.S. Senator from Indiana. Senator Bayh attempted to elevate the issue from local to national by requesting and pressuring the U.S.

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[143] "No Mas Palabras Ahora Accion: Chicanos y Negros Preparan Fuerte Boicott," *El Sol de Texas*, March 19, 1971, 1.: Max Krochmal, "Chicano Labor and Multiracial Politics in Post-World War II Texas," in *Life and Labor in the New South*, Robert H. Zieger, ed. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012), 145-147.
[144] Marilyn Schwartz, "3,000 'Help' Rodriguezes," *Dallas Morning News*, March 15, 1971, 1A.
[145] *Padrino* is Spanish for Godfather
[146] "Dicen Los Brown Berets: 'Nosotros No Pediremos Perdon a Dyson,'" *El Sol de Texas*, April 30, 1971, 1.
[147] "Mexican Shirley Temple Turns off Chicanos," *Chicano*, March 1971, Pancho Medrano Papers 1946-1971, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Texas at Arlington Special Collections Libraries.
[148] "Rodriguez Fund Drive Launched," *El Sol De Texas*, February 26, 1971, 5.
[149] "Chicanos y Negros Preparan Fuerte Boicot," *El Sol De Texas*, March 19, 1971, 1.
[150] Ibid.

Attorney General, John N. Mitchell, for the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the allegations that occurred and condemning against "police terrorism" upon the Dallas Mexican American community.[151] Ultimately, the Department of Justice did not follow through with an investigation, but Bayh's appeal cast negative attention upon the police department. An infuriated Frank Dyson denied allegations of police terrorism and asserted that Bayh was utilizing the situation for political objectives.[152] Texas state senator from El Paso, Paul C. Moreno, also demanded for further investigation on the incident from state and federal officials.[153]

Earle Cabell, a conservative Democratic U.S. Congressman and former mayor of Dallas, imprudently called Rodríguez a "dope pusher" and demanded the death penalty sentence if jurors found Tomás guilty of the charges. Congressman Cabell's comments further enraged Mexicanos. Mexican Americans, African Americans and poor Anglo civil rights advocates organized a group, The United Peoples' Committee. The organization drew up a letter pressuring Cabell for an apology to the Rodríguez family and labeling his remarks as "racist."[154]

Civil rights activists continued the campaign against police brutality and organized a "March of Unity" aimed at demonstrating agreement among Mexican, Anglos, and African Americans. During the month of March 1971, culturally diverse crowds of protestors held demonstrations throughout the city. Organizers stated that "police brutality, hunger, discrimination and injustice can be terminated in our city if we

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[151] Birch Bayh to John H. Mitchell, March 5, 1971, Box 2, Folder 6, Pancho Medrano Papers 1946-1971. University of Texas at Arlington Special Collections Libraries: "El Senador Bayh Pide Investigacion: Sobre El Trato Policial Que Aterroriza a Mexicanos," *El Sol de Texas*, March 19, 1971, 1.
[152] "Dyson Angered by Bayh: Police Terrorism Denied by Chief," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 18, 1971, 35A.
[153] "Legislator Asks FBI, DPS Probe," *Dallas Times Herald*, February 24, 1971, 37A.
[154] Las Razas Unidas Comite: Demandan Una Disculpa Publica a Cabell," *El Sol de Texas*, April 30, 1971, 1.

unite. The time for our unity is now!"[155] Organizations ranging from Los Barrios Unidos, Mexican Americans for Political Action (MAPA), the Brown Berets, the Chicano Youth Organization (CYO), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) all supported and attended the demonstrations.[156] On March 20, 1971, Pancho Medrano led a demonstration along the route of the Shrine's Spring Parade.[157] More than two hundred Chicanos, black, and whites marched, chanting slogans and waving signs and flags along the parade's route.[158] The parade ended at the steps of the Dallas City Hall where Reverend Peter Johnson with SCLC and other speakers aimed their remarks towards Dallas law enforcement agencies and city politicians.[159] By the end of the month, the protests had grown to include organizers and activists from Fort Worth.[160] Pancho Medrano organized a thirty-mile march that started in Fort Worth, continued to the Kennedy Plaza, and ended at Dallas City Hall.[161] A diverse crowd of brown, black and white protestors, numbering close to a thousand, carried signs and shouted for "Justice."[162] At Kennedy Plaza, Pete Martínez, who helped sponsor the march, declared to protesters that, "We will no longer stand for the lies and terrible injustices shown [to] our people. We want action, we want justice, and we want it now."[163]

In retrospect, the Tomás Rodríguez affair served as a sort of dress rehearsal for what would transpire with the murder of Santos Rodríguez two years later. Despite the demonstrations that followed the Tomás Rodríguez incident, the case left many questions

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[155] "Marcha de Unidad y Protests el Sabado 1o de Mayo a las 2 P.M," *El Sol de Texas*, April 20, 1971, 1.
[156] "Chicanos March in Protest of Rodriguez Treatment," *El Sol de Texas*, March 26, 1971, 11.
[157] Terry Kliewer, "Rodriguez Rally: Protestors March in Shrine Parade," *Dallas Morning News*, March 21, 1971, 40A.
[158] "Chicanos Protest in Treatment of Rodriguez," *El Sol de Texas*, March 26, 1971, 11.
[159] Ibid.
[160] "Dallas y Fort Worth Se Unen A Una Gran Marcha de Protesta Este Sabado," *El Sol de Texas*, March 26, 1971, 1.; See also Krochmal, "Chicano Labor and Multicultural Politics in Post-World War II Texas," in *Life and Labor in the New South*, Robert H. Zieger, ed.,146-149.
[161] Ibid.
[162] "Chicanos Stage March to Protest 'Injustice'," *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1971, 5A.
[163] Ibid.

unanswered for residents of Dallas. The newfound cross-racial alliance did not translate to real political power and did not help transform the police department's policies and treatment of the city's minority population. Months following the incident, barrio leaders and residents lost contact with the Rodríguez family, and many speculate that the couple might have reached a deal with city officials and been placed under the Witness Protection Program.[164]

The Rodríguez incident disappeared quietly in the public eye over the next few months. Although Dallas police dropped charges against Tomás, the officers involved in the shooting went unpunished. Further, city officials did not establish a civilian review board.[165] A couple of months after the Rodríguez incident, Mexican American news outlets reported another incident of police brutality in the barrios. On April 1971, six police officers reportedly beat and arrested a West Dallas Chicana, Chavela Lozada, for attempting to help a man that the officers were arresting. Lozada had inquired if the man spoke English.[166] Chief Dyson denied the allegations of police brutality, and similar incidents continued to transpire.

In 1972, after undergoing scrutiny from the media and the community, Chief Dyson outlined a strategy in order to improve DPD's image. Dyson developed a "Five Year Plan" to demonstrate that the police department was implementing new changes and establishing new goals for the administration of an efficient criminal justice system. In the plan, Dyson called for the decentralization of the department and for establishing district commanders in precincts throughout the metropolis. Further, Dyson sought improvements in establishing relations with neighborhoods throughout the city.

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[164] Ricardo Medrano, interview by Osmin Hernández, Dallas, TX, January 17, 2016, 58:20-0:1:03" (digital recording in author's possession).
[165] Brian D. Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles*, 174.
[166] "And the Bear Goes On: Six Dallas Policemen Pound on Chicana," *El Sol de Texas*, April 23, 1971, 1.

Significantly, the "Five Year Plan" included the heavy recruitment of minority police officers that would reflect the city's demographics. Dyson's plan accepted the need for a change, in stating, "For too long police have been unable or unwilling to change to meet shifting needs for service in the community. Historically, when change has occurred it has been triggered by events or forces beyond police control. That era, that style must end."[167] Although the police chief delineated a plan for better relations with the minority community, tensions would continue to build over the coming years. Following the Rodríguez affair of 1971, police and minority relations continued unchanged.

The Dallas Mexican American quest for equality comprised a myriad of organizations and objectives. The case studies demonstrate how groups overcame generational divides on numerous fronts and issues. Established Mexican American leaders were not necessarily "conservative" but more moderate in their political agenda, as demonstrated by their willingness to collaborate with Chicano radicals on many issues, including bilingual education, desegregation, and police brutality. Nor were all Mexican American leaders tied to whiteness. The fight for educational reform illustrates the significance on behalf of moderate Mexican Americans recognizing themselves as a distinct ethnic group rather than pushing for assimilation. For Chicanos in Dallas, the youth were not the vanguard of the movement, as older Chicanos led the fight for progressive politics in the city. Finally, the 1971 Tomás Rodríguez affair illustrates the preparation of what would come consequently in the near future.

[167] Dallas Police Department, *Five Year Plan* (Dallas: Dallas Police Department, 1972), I-1. In Box 3, Folder 1, Dallas Police Department Annual Reports, 1971-1973, 1983-1989. Dallas Municipal Archives and Records.

Chapter 3

"Just like other boys in the barrio": The Santos Rodríguez Affair, 1973-78

During the early morning hours of Tuesday July 24, 1973, Dallas police officers Darrel L. Cain and Roy R. Arnold received word from dispatch about a burglary in progress at a Fina service station at 2301 Cedar Springs, in the *barrio* of Little Mexico.[1] Although the suspects fled the scene before the officers arrived, Arnold believed he knew the burglars' identities. He reported over the radio that the suspects were probably Santos Rodríguez, age twelve, and his brother David Rodríguez, age thirteen, who lived nearby at 2921 North Pearl Street. From Arnold's previous contact with the brothers, he knew that the Rodríguezes already had some run-ins with the law.[2] The officers proceeded to the boys' home a few blocks away from the service station, and barged in, demanding that the boys' grandfather Carlos Minez (who spoke rudimentary English), give them the Rodríguez brothers' whereabouts. The brothers had been living with their maternal grandparents because their mother was serving time in the Huntsville state prison for a 1971 murder conviction.[3] Minez walked over to the room where the brothers were sleeping, woke them up, and took them to the officers. Serving no arrest warrant, Cain and Arnold proceeded interrogate the Rodríguez brothers at their grandparents' residence. After questioning the boys, the officers handcuffed the brothers and placed them into the squad car for a drive back to the scene of the crime, Santos in the front passenger seat and David in the back seat.[4]

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[1] Ernie Makovy, "Dallas Officer Charged in Boy's Gunshot Death," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 25, 1973, 1A.
[2] Jim Lewis, "Santos' Troubles Blamed on Home Problems," *Dallas Morning News*, July 25, 1973, 9A.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

The officers parked the vehicle in a vacant lot behind the gas station. Officer Arnold sat in the driver's seat, with Cain behind him. Santos sat handcuffed in the passenger seat, with his brother right behind him.[5] During the interrogation process in the squad car, Cain made a fateful decision: he decided to engage in a lethal game of Russian roulette in order to get the boys to confess the alleged crimes. In an interview with the *Dallas Times Herald,* David Rodríguez recalled that the officer pulled out his .357-caliber handgun.[6] Officer Roy told Santos, "Tell the truth, *hombre*. Because he (Cain) means it. This time he's going to shoot you."[7] Cain twirled the gun's cylinder, pointed it at Santos's head, and slowly pulled the trigger twice. The bullet in the second chamber tore into Santos' head, right below the left ear, killing him instantly.[8] After the bullet discharged, Cain frantically yelled "Oh my God!" A helpless David sat in the car screamed his brother's name at the top of his lungs, staring at the corpse of his younger brother with blood soaking his feet.

The magnitude of the Santos Rodríguez murder shocked Dallas's Mexican community. The cruelty of the murder set unprecedented protests, ushered in a heightened degree of cooperation among all Mexican American groups. Ultimately, the murder of Santos Rodríguez represented a turning point in the city's history of race relations.

Around 4 a.m., law enforcement officers headed back to the grandparents' home on Pearl. When the grandfather answered the knock on the door, one of the officers asked him if he knew where Santos was. A perplexed Meniz replied, "I don't know." The officer responded, "Well, Santos is dead." When investigating officers arrived at the

[5] "Cain Recalls Fateful Events of Day," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 24, 1974, 1A, 24A.
[6] Bryan Martin, "Rodriguez Tells His Tragic Story," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 25, 1973, 1A.
[7] Eduardo Celis, "The Ghost of Santos Rodriguez," *The Dallas Observer*, July 12, 1992, 15-16.
[8] Ibid.

murder scene, twelve-year old Santos lay handcuffed and slumped over in the back seat of the squad car. David remained under arrest with law enforcement officials transporting him to police headquarters for supplementary questioning over the gas station burglary. Immediately Cain contended that the shooting was an accident.

Within a matter of hours, the Mexican American community had received word about the murder of Santos Rodríguez, a boy from the Little Mexico barrio who attended William B. Travis Elementary School. The community was stunned. Chicano organizers within the community began coordinating and communicating with barrio residents, calling leaders and community members. René Martínez, of the Greater Dallas Community Relations Committee condemned the murder and stated that the shooting was "reflective of the type of training and insensitivity some police still have."[9] After hearing about the death of Rodríguez, concerned citizens from the barrios flooded the telephone of the only Mexican American council member, Pedro Aguirre, during the pre-dawn hours.[10] The same day, Aguirre met with Mexican American leaders and concerned barrio residents. He declared to his constituents that he planned to seek a review of all police department policies that may have resulted in the fatal shooting of the boy.[11] He called for the immediate indictment of Cain's accomplice, officer Roy Arnold, as well as for a speedy prosecution. Aguirre also criticized the Municipal Judge Frances Goodwin for setting Cain's bond at $5,000. He asked, "Is it customary in a murder case to hold someone on a low bond?"[12]

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[9] Gary Ruderman, "Community Panel: Police 'Insensitivity' To Minorities Charged," *Dallas Times Herald*. July 25, 1973.
[10] "Community Concern Expressed," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 25, 1974, 3A.
[11] Jim Lewis, "Aguirre Says He'll Review Police Department Policies," *Dallas Morning News*, July 25, 1973, 6A.
[12] Ibid.

The night of the murder, Gloria Álvarez, a director in the Dallas City Parks and Recreation Department called for meeting of the Mexican community at Pike Park in order to determine the best strategic response to the incident. Chicano grassroots organizers such as the Medranos, René Martínez, and Adelfa Callejo and religious leaders joined Aguirre at Pike Park on night. More than two hundred Mexican American residents and leaders showed up at the candlelight vigil.[13] During the meeting, Aguirre called for the creation of a five member ad hoc committee to serve as a point of communication for the community. Accordingly, Chicano organizers established the Pike Park Committee, with Reverend Rudy Sánchez, pastor of the First Mexican Baptist Church, as the chairperson. The committee was a conglomeration of progressive Chicanos and moderate conservative Mexicans that included Rev. Rudy Sánchez , Joe Acosta of the Chicano Youth Organization, John Zapata of Los Barrios Unidos, Alicia Rodríguez, and Rachel Escobedo.[14] The committee condemned the Dallas Police Department's attitude towards minorities. In addition, it raised many questions about the incident. How was Cain able to obtain the release of the Rodríguez brothers when their grandfather did not understand or speak English? Why did his colleague Roy Arnold not intervene in preventing the boy's death?[15]

Officer Cain had a history of brutality towards minorities. He had been involved in three shootings within a three-year span, including an unarmed black teenager, Michael Moorehead in April 20, 1970.[16] Cain fatally shot Moorehead as he fled the scene

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[13] Gary Ruderman, "Latins Ask City Action in Slaying: Community Relations Commission Begins Investigation," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 26, 1973, 1A.
[14] Jim Lewis, "Aguirre Says He'll Review Police Department Policies," *Dallas Morning News*, July 25, 29173, 6A.
[15] Joseph Abell, "Mexican-Americans Ask Probe of Policies," *Dallas Morning News*, July 28, 1973, 1A.
[16] "Burglar Killed in Bar Break-In," *Dallas Morning News*, April 21, 1970, 2A.; Richard Mackenzie, "Officer Figured in Past Scrapes," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 25, 1973, 1A.

of an apartment burglary.[17] The officers had fired more than ten shots at Moorehead. As Moorehead cried for help, one of the officers stood over him and fired a shot into his head. The African American community protested against the police execution of Moorehead, but three times a grand jury failed to bring forth any charges against Cain. In addition, the Dallas Community Relations Commission cleared both officers from any charges and wrongdoings.[18] Now the Mexican American community was outraged that he was involved in another fatal shooting again, this time to a twelve-year old Mexican American child.

In a quick turn of events, Dallas police Chief Frank Dyson suspended Cain from the police department and the Internal Affairs Division undertook an investigation in order to determine if officials should press charges. Chief rank Dyson proclaimed that he was aware of the racism and racial bias that persisted inside the department.[19] Dyson declared in a news conference that, "I know—I'm not that naïve—that we do have some officers who exercise dual standards in law enforcement."[20] He urged concerned citizens to contact the department's Internal Affairs Division so that it would conduct thorough investigations of complaints brought against officers.[21] Justice of the Peace Tom Naylor charged Cain but did not set a bond amount. Cain remained free on the $5,000 municipal bond. The meager bond amount outraged the Mexican community. In response to the outcry, the city council declared that the bond-setting powers be removed temporarily in cases involving city employees from the municipal court judge.[22]

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[17] Richard Mackenzie, "Cain Pictured as 'Clean-cut, all-American Boy'," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973, 1A.
[18] "Second Shooting Study Substantiates First," *Dallas Morning News,* August 7, 1970, 2A.
[19] Henry Tatum, "Dyson Hits Dual Standard," *Dallas Morning News*, July 29, 1973, 1A.
[20] "Police Bias Weed-Out Instigated," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 30, 1973, 1A.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Henry Tatum, "Shooting Prompts Vote: Panel Dislikes Bond-Setting Power," *Dallas Morning News*, July 27, 1973, 10A.

Two days after the incident, on July 26, the barrio said its final farewell to Santos Rodríguez. As a result of the tragedy, Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe released Santos's mother, Maria "Bessie" Rodríguez, from the Goree Women's State Penitentiary on a special three-day reprieve in order to attend her son's funeral.[23] The First Mexican Baptist Church, located in Little Mexico, overflowed with mourners both black and brown. Traffic piled up for blocks outside the funeral. Close to one thousand mourners attended the funeral at the small barrio church. Wearing a black shawl and dark sunglasses, Bessie Rodríguez motionless at her son's funeral service. Reverend Rudy Sánchez, pastor of the church, declared at the funeral that the murder of Santos "awakened us to what our community is and helped us discover ourselves. Our leaders have come forth and they have been astounded at the response to their leadership when they asked for patience."[24] After Reverend Sánchez gave the eulogy, hundreds of mourners followed the procession to the Oakland Cemetery, where Santos was laid to rest.[25]

The same day, reports from the Dallas Police Department's internal investigation and Crime Scene Search unity (CSS) failed to link the Rodríguez brothers to the burglary.[26] The fingerprints taken from both the Rodríguez boys did not match with those from the scene of the crime. The news further enraged the community.

With the uproar that occurred in the city, surprisingly Dallas news outlets did not mention the 1971 slayings of the three police officers in West Dallas. The atrocity of a police officer murdering an unarmed and handcuffed child left an outright imprint of

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[23] Lynna Williams, "Santos Rodriguez: Friends, Family Prepare for Burial," *Dallas Morning News*, July 26, 1973, 3A.
[24] Larry Grove, "Santos Rodriguez Rites: 'Barrio' Says Farewell," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 27, 1973.
[25] Jim Lewis, "600 Attend Funeral: Mexican-Americans Mourn Santos," *Dallas Morning News*, July 27, 1973, 1A.
[26] Richard Mackenzie, "Grand Jury Gets Case: Indictment Sought in Youth's Slaying," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 26, 1973, 1A.

racial bias and police brutality existing within the Dallas police department. Both the *Dallas Times Herald* and *Dallas Morning News* paid close attention to the developing story.

Four days after the incident, on Friday, July 28, Dallas District Attorney, Henry Wade, and the Dallas County Grand Jury officially indicted Cain, a five-year veteran on the force, on the charge of murder by malice. Cain remained in custody at the Dallas County jail after a new judge raised the amount of his bond to $50,000. Concurrently, Cain's attorney attempted to request a writ to lower the bond. Cain's partner, Roy Arnold, remained free and under investigation. The Brown Berets and the Chicano Youth Organization (CYO), in alliance with numerous African American leaders that included, Al Lipscomb and Reverend Peter Johnson, demanded that city officials indict Arnold as well as a city employee who worked in the police department's Division of Internal Affairs.[27] Ricardo Medrano stated that, "What was happening [police brutality] in the Hispanic community was happening in the black community."[28] The recurring issue once again united both the black and brown communities. The indictment of Cain was the first ever indictment of an on-duty police officer in Dallas; it demonstrated city officials' concern for the image of the city as well as and reflected the mounting pressure from racial minorities.[29] The incident of the early hours of July 24, 1973 signaled a defining moment, as the racial minority population of Dallas demanded and won better treatment from local government officials.

¡*Ya Basta*!: The March of *Justicia* for Santos Rodríguez

[27] George Proctor, "Policeman Indicted: Cain Faces Trial for Shooting Death of Youth," *Dallas Morning News*, July 28, 1973, 1A.
[28] "Black, Police Brutality, Women Participation in Rallies," Ricardo Medrano interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 13 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Oral History Project* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/blacks-police-brutality-women-participation-in-rallies (accessed February 7, 2016).
[29] Ibid.

Although it was not the first case of police brutality, the magnitude of Santos Rodríguez's murder sparked unprecedented outrage in the Mexican American community and forced Dallas Police Chief Frank Dyson to launch a full investigation of the incident. Along with the department's internal affairs investigators, Dyson dispatched a task force from the Greater Dallas Community Relations Commission to probe into the shooting of Rodríguez as well as to reconsider other complaints of police abuse in Dallas.[30] Mexicano community leaders had debated whether to stage a march. Chicanos and Mexican American liberals supported the idea with conservative leaders strongly opposing the notion.[31] Robert and Ricardo Medrano, from the Dallas Brown Berets, along with other Mexican American civic leaders, requested and obtained permission from Chief Dyson for a march, scheduled for 1 p.m. on Saturday July 28, 1973 at the Dallas City Hall. John Zapata González of Los Barrios Unidos paid the fifty-dollar permit fee to hold the march.[32] Activists split the preparation work among themselves, with Chicanos organizing the communities and conservative and liberal leaders preparing speakers for the march.[33] The march marked the second time in the city's history that Mexican Americans had organized for such a cause. The ensuing events revealed the frustration and anger that Mexican Americans in Dallas had held throughout the years.

Almost twenty-four hours after the Dallas County Grand jury handed down Cain's special indictment, Chicano activists staged their march. At around 9 a.m. on Saturday July 28, 1973, the Brown Berets, René Martínez of the Tri-Ethnic Committee, and Reverend Rudy Sánchez , held a meeting with Dallas city officials to prepare for the

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[30] Richard McKenzie and Bob Dudney, "Jury Indicts Cain," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 27, 1973, 1A.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Dallas Mexican Historical League, *Justicia: The Struggle for Mexican-American Civil Rights in Dallas, Texas, 1920-2012* (Dallas, TX: DMAHL, 2013), 14.
[33] Jose Antonio González, "Chicano Leadership Unity Faulted in Study of Boy's Death," *Fort Worth-Star Telegram*, September 16, 1973, 26.

scheduled "March for Justice" in commemoration and in protest of Santos Rodríguez shooting.[34] At 10 a.m., marchers began to assemble at the Kennedy Memorial Plaza on Commerce Street, earlier than expected. Organizers of the march had informed the community that the scheduled time for the march was at one in the afternoon.[35] Chicano activists from Fort Worth, Waco, and other nearby cities arrived to join the protest. At 11 a.m. more protestors arrived at the plaza with people becoming restless. Shortly, the crowd—numbering four to five hundred—began to move from the Kennedy Plaza towards the Dallas City Hall. The Brown Berets, René Martínez, and Reverend Rudy Sánchez marched with the crowd. The swarm of protestors walked towards city hall chanting, "We want justice" and "We want Cain!" Protestors held signs that read "Viva La Raza," "Brown Power," and "Justice for Santos."[36]

Although it was a predominantly Chicano rally, African Americans as well as a number of Anglos were sprinkled throughout the crowd. The Medranos' experience prior to the protest and their network of contacts helped them create a cross-ethnic alliance that rallied the Black Panthers, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and other African American organizations and activists. Likewise, René Martínez's close relations with black city leaders helped in gathering the presence of African American protestors to the march.[37]

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[34] "Chicano, Officials Talk," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973, 1A.
[35] Ibid.
[36] "Signs in the Crowd During the March to Protest the Death of Santos Rodriguez," Photograph. *Dallas Times Herald Collection*. July 28, 1973. From the Dallas Public Library Digital Collection. http://catalog.dallaslibrary.org/polaris/search/title.aspx?ctx=1.1033.0.0.6&pos=14 (Accessed February 28, 2016).
[37] René Martínez, interview by W. Marvin Dulaney and Alfred L. Roberts, September 7, 2011, Dallas, Texas, *Documenting the History of the Civil Rights Movement in Dallas County, Texas* 33:21-34:00" (digital recording in author's possession).

The crowd numbered in the thousands. Families with children as well as *abuelitas* and *abuelitos* attended the protest.[38] Marchers stood with a large banner at the top of city hall's steps that read "The March of Justice for Santos." Councilmember Pedro Aguirre, Reverend Rudy Sánchez, and René Martínez all spoke at the rally.[39] The speakers affirmed to the marchers that they were working closely with police Chief Drank Dyson for developing the best solution in resolving the issue.[40] The crowd was frustrated with the content of the leaders' speeches. Beginning around 1:30 p.m., parade organizers began to shorten their speeches and initiated a march back to Kennedy Plaza.[41]

Meanwhile, delegates from La Raza Unida Party began preparing to lead another group to city hall, putting them on a collision course with the protestors who were starting to return from the first march. Although this group did not pay for a demonstration permit, the second group represented the confusion and the lack of organization, agreement, and leadership. Chicano and Mexican American leaders had not set a definite time for the march to start. When the second group of demonstrators arrived around 1 p.m. and began assembling at the Kennedy Plaza, there was mass confusion as to who was leading the general march. The leaders of the second march waited to hear additional instructions from the Medranos, who at that moment were located at City Hall. Word came back to the second group that people had already amassed at city hall. After a lengthy wait, the hundreds of marchers in the second group began to grow restless. The crowd received no instructions from the initial organizers and consequently decided on

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[38] *Abuelita/os* is grandparents, also used to denote the elderly.
[39] Robert Finklea and Mitch Lobrovich, "City March Dissolves Into Random Violence," *Dallas Morning News*, July 29, 1973, 1A.
[40] Martha Mann, "Chronology of Events: March Began in Peace, Ended in Violence," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973, 8A.; Ricardo Medrano, interview by Osmin Hernandez, Dallas, Texas, January 17, 2016, 35:05" (digital recording in author's possession).
[41] Ibid.

their own to march up Commerce Street toward city hall to join the first group at the rally.[42]

The second group arrived at city hall close to 2 p.m., right as the initial crowd was preparing to disperse. The second wave of protestors swelled the number in attendance and increased the agitation at the demonstration. People began to trickle in. Protestors upset by the tepid content of the speeches of city officials turned back from the crowd that was leaving to join the second protest. Representatives from the Brown Berets utilized bullhorns as an attempt to subdue the agitation and gain the crowd's attention, repeatedly shouting at the protestors, "Go home! Go home!"[43] The protestors ignored the shouting and began to chant angrily, "We Want Justice," and "We want Cain!"[44] As tension arose in the crowd, city councilmember Pedro Aguirre climbed on top a squad car to pacify the crowd, but the microphone sputtered, and protestors quickly shouted him down. At the same time, Assistant Police Chief Donald Steele struggled to clear people away from the squad car.[45] When the crowd yelled Aguirre down, State Representative Sam Hudson climbed up to speak. An unidentified African American woman mounted on the squad car, grabbed the microphone that now worked properly, and she yelled, "The police killed my son! Kill the pigs, kill the pigs!"[46] As the woman climbed down, the crowd promptly began to launch objects at the speakers, elected officials, and windows

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[42] Robbie Martínez, interview by Osmin Hernandez, October 3, 2015, Texas, 52:33-53:46" (digital recording in author's possession).
[43] "Boys Shooting Blamed: Violence Mars Downtown Protest," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973, 5A.
[44] Robert Finklea and Mitch Lobrovich, "City March Dissolves Into Random Violence," *Dallas Morning News*, July 29, 1973, 1A.
[45] "Crowd Swarmed Car: Aguirre Wasn't Heard," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973.
[46] "Boys Shooting Blamed: Violence Mars Downtown," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973, 5A.; "Saturday Disturbance: Woman Recounts Being Drunk, Lying to Crowd," *Dallas Times Herald*, August 1, 1973.

city halls. Moments later, an unknown assailant attacked Assistant Police Chief Steele.[47] Pandemonium broke loose.

After many years of tensions within the minority communities, the friction had reached its climax, igniting a fire. A peaceful march in memory of Santos Rodríguez, equal justice and civil rights ended in a full-blown riot in the All-American City. Protestors tipped over and jumped on top of two police motorcycles parked near city hall on Main Street. The marchers then set the motorcycles on fire. An *abuelita* beat one of the burning motorcycles with her purse, setting off a sense of pride and joy among demonstrators around her.[48] The towering flames shooting from the two burning motorcycles further stirred the crowd. Marchers broke a number of retail department store windows and looted merchandise.[49] Protestors smashed the windows of a police car and a local television station's broadcast van. Looting and vandalism spread throughout the city's downtown area. Black and brown protestors taunted and attacked law enforcement officials, launching bottles and rocks at officials. The *Times Herald* reported, "By 3 p.m., as the motorcycles burned and the intersection of Harwood and Commerce was a pool of broken glass, black smoke still billowed."[50] The violence injured more than two-dozen officers and several bystanders. In the aftermath, law enforcement officials arrested thirty-eight people, a group that included Chicanos and African Americans. The Dallas Police Department did not retaliate with violence. The

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[47] Ibid; Robert Finklea and Mitch Lobrovich, "City March Dissolves Into Random Violence," *Dallas Morning News*, July 29, 1973, 1A.
[48] Robbie Martínez, interview by Osmin Hernandez, October 3, 2015, DeSoto, TX, 1:44-1:50" (digital recording in author's possession).; René Martínez, Interview by W. Marvin Dulaney and Alfred L. Roberts, September 7, 2011, Dallas, Texas, *Documenting the History of the Civil Rights Movement in Dallas County, Texas* 33:21-34:00" (digital recording in author's possession, also available at the University of North Texas Special Collections).
[49] Linda Little, "Stores Reflect Vandalism: Windows Shattered, Many by Looted Objects," *Dallas Morning News*, July 29, 1973, 10A.
[50] Larry Grove, "Protest at First More Like Picnic or School Rally," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973, 2A.

Morning News reported that, "Helmeted officers moved down the sidewalks, herding the crowd along."[51] Protestors recalled that a large force of police officers in full-fledged riot gear were ready for deployment, as were officers on horseback, but they remained in place.[52] Police Chief Dyson stood atop City Hall watching the violence erupt in downtown. Finally, a company-sized unit of police officers, wearing full-fledged riot gear, gradually quelled the disturbance. After almost two and a half hours, law enforcement officials restrained the riot.

Regardless of political ideology, organizers of the march distanced themselves from the violence. Ricardo Medrano recalled, "I was there and saw what had happened, but I did not participate in the burning or kicking of these police motorcycles. But a photograph was taken and put in the newspaper and (you) clearly see that I was not participating."[53] Organizers of the march condemned the violence, but some, including Medrano, highlighted that the violence that broke out was "bound to happen sooner or later," adding that, "tensions have been building up for a long time."[54]

Aside from the hostility between the minority community and the establishment, the riot resulted from deeper factors. One particular aspect was the lack of cohesive leadership and organization that failed to control the marchers. Even so, the crowds' anger and passion made controlling the marchers a challenging task that created conflict between the organizers and the ordinary barrio residents. Chicano activist Ricardo Medrano blamed the police chief in failing to restrain vandals and looters.[55] Medrano stated that, "We had never intended for things to turn out as they did. We had agreed

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[51] Ibid.
[52] See Ricardo and Robert Medrano interviews.
[53] "Thomas V Berto Rodriguez Case," Ricardo Medrano interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/thomas-v-berto-rodriques-case (accessed February 12, 2016).
[54] Ibid.
[55] "Dyson Defends Strategy," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 30, 1973, 3B.

earlier in a meeting before the march that we would not shout slogans like Viva la Raza, or Brown Power or carry the Mexican flag. We wanted something that would be relevant to all of the community."[56] Several conservative Mexican American leaders insisted that the disturbance was "caused by outside elements," with the second crowd of marchers being "predominantly black."[57] As a result, confusion played a significant role in the march to getting out of hand. Many protestors were confused about the time of the rally and some were even confused about the purpose of the march. Even so, the leaders had one goal in mind, which was to present demands to the Dallas City Council and the Police Chief Dyson.

The July 28 riot garnered exposure for the unwarranted murder of Santos Rodríguez and helped local activists gain support for justice and against police brutality from civil rights activists and organizations nationwide. In California, the *Van Nuys News* wrote, "A Mexican-American group from the San Fernando Valley launched a letter writing campaign Friday joining the protests over the shooting death of 12-year old Santos Rodríguez by a Dallas police officer last month."[58] In San Jose, California, a group of 250 Mexican American protestors interrupted a city council meeting and pressured the council to pass a resolution condemning the killing of Santos Rodríguez.[59] Various national organizations condemned the murder of the Chicano youth. Holding a national conference in Chicago the weekend of the riots, LULAC leaders demanded an investigation from the U.S. Department of Justice and offered monetary and legal support for the Rodríguez family.[60] Leaders from the American Indian Movement (AIM)

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[56] Mitch Lobrovich, "Berets Wait, See: Medrano Says Protest Settled Nothing," *Dallas Morning News*, August 5, 1973, 9A.
[57] Jim Hardin, "Outbreak Laid to Outsiders," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 29, 1973, 1A.
[58] "Chicano Group Joins Protest Over Shooting," *Van Nuys News*, August 5, 1973, 12A.
[59] "San Jose: Council Bows to Protest," *Chicano*, September 6, 1973, 11.
[60] "LULAC Demanda Investigacion," *Latin Times*, August 3, 1973, 1.

denounced the actions taken by Dallas police and called the incident an act of "terrorism."[61]

The July 28 riot demonstrated the frustration that minorities in Dallas had felt throughout the years. Even so, it ultimately demonstrated the ongoing disunity within the Mexican community and the failure to organize effectively. The chaos that broke out, along with activists criticizing each other, further demonstrated the lack of cohesion and the myriad objectives that Dallas Mexicano activists obtained. Following the July 28 disturbance, progressive Chicanos continued to contest moderate conservative Mexican civic leaders.

"Some of us didn't consider ourselves Chicanos then": *Los* "Dirty Dozen"

Following the march-turned-riot, the City of Dallas took action to address issues pertaining to both the Mexican American and African American communities. On the night of Monday July 30, 1973, two days after the riot, city council members and more than one hundred Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Anglos crowded the city council chambers. Tensions left over from Saturday's protest and heavy security overwhelmed the environment in the night meeting. The *Dallas Morning News* recounted that, "More than 150 police tactical officers were stationed in the conference rooms adjacent to the City Council Chambers and many other plainclothes officers attended the session." During the meeting, the overarching demand that civic leaders addressed was to stamp out the double standards existing among Dallas law enforcement officials.[62] Reverend Rudy Sánchez, who served as the spokesperson for conservative and liberal faction of Mexican American leaders, declared that, "It happened in our community that

[61] "Slaying Denounced," *Dallas Morning News*, August 1, 1973, 3A.
[62] David House, "Dual Standards: Council Acts to Stem Bias," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 31, 1973, 1A.; Henry Tatum, "Council to Study Death of Santos," *Dallas Morning News*, July 31, 1973, 1A.

has seen prejudice and ignorance so often before. All segments of the government must end this undue harassment caused by some police officers, harassment caused by officers who are full of prejudice towards those they are supposed to be serving."[63] Council members listened to the demands and quickly drew up a resolution that Aguirre read in Spanish, which promised to investigate and revise the local law enforcement and judicial policies regarding complaints by, and treatment of, the minority community. In the resolution, council members went on record stating that "the entire community is deploring and condemning the unwarranted, illegal and unjustified abuse of two Mexican-American youths, and its result, the tragic death of one, Santos Rodríguez."[64]

The Santos Rodríguez affair became the catalyst for the political awakening of Mexican American civic activism. Although many Mexican Americans leaders had already been involved in community organizing, following the affair, the establishment finally began to recognize their efforts. *Dallas Morning News* writer Carolyn Barta dubbed twelve prominent Mexican American leaders as the "Dirty Dozen."[65] Twelve to fifteen liberal and conservative Mexican American members composed the Dirty Dozen, including figures who were active in grassroots organizing as well as local businesses. Unlike the Pike Park Committee, which had let the participation of a Chicano, the Dirty Dozen left out the voice of the Brown Berets and Raza Unida Party.

A month after the Santos's murder, on August 24, 1973, Reverend Rudy Sánchez, chairperson of the "Dirty Dozen," drew up multiple demands to Chief Dyson and the council. Reverend Sánchez called for the elimination of the dual system of law in the city and a review of the city's court system as well as the police reassignment process that had

[63] Z. Joe Thornton. "Dual Justice, Slaying Condemned in Dallas," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, July 31, 1973, 4A.
[64] Ibid, 1A.
[65] Carolyn Barta, "New Brown Leaders Emerge," Dallas Morning News, August 19, 1973. 32A.

allowed Cain to police another minority community after incidents earlier in his career.[66] They probed the failure of the Dallas County Grand Jury to indict former police officer Arnold and questioned the promotion of an officer who led the raid in the 1971 Tomás Rodríguez shooting, Robert Dixson, to deputy chief. Last, the committee demanded more hiring of minority police officers and a revision of internal investigative policies. It noted the percentage of Chicano police officers on the force and the number carrying full-rank status and their assignments. African American civil rights activists Albert Lipscomb reiterated to the council how in 1970 the black community had brought complaints about a "sick man on the force with a gun."[67]

Although the Pike Park Committee represented much of the Mexican American community of Dallas, many Mexicanos did not agree with their strategies and procedures. Internal frictions among conservative Mexican American leaders and Chicano activists ensued. Representatives from the Dallas Brown Berets did not hold a position within the Dirty Dozen or the committee. Consequently, the Berets disagreed with the negotiation process that the committee undertook with city officials. Ricardo Medrano and the Berets contended that although they had organized the march coordinating with African American leaders in the SCLC, the "Tio Tacos" (Uncle Toms) wanted to claim the demonstration as their own and brush off the militant Chicano elements as well as the support from the black community.[68] Alfonso Cortez, Sr., businessperson and member of the Pike Park Committee, resented the Berets' militant tactics and remarked, "They [Brown Berets] are creating a new race that hasn't existed—a brown race. I'm not brown.

[66] "Comite Chicano Presenta Demandas," *El Sol de Texas*, August 24, 1973, 1.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Mitch Lobrovich, "Berets Wait, See: Medrano Says Protest Settled Nothing," *Dallas Morning News*. August 5, 1973, 11A.

I belong to the white race."[69] The divide represented the internal divisions within and relationship complexities of the Mexican American leadership.

Changes Steadily Come to Dallas

Dyson's failure to restrain the rioters placed him under heavy scrutiny from the Dallas Police Association (DPA or the officers' union), as well as conservative members of the City Council. The DPA, along with officers in its ranks, strongly condemned his strategy and called it "inaction" that failed to control the rioters.[70] Chief Dyson explained to media outlets that he had two choices that Saturday afternoon: to either make an enormous show of force, with a high visibility of police officers and the chances of the actions further infuriating the minority community, or reducing the demagogic image of the police and letting Mexican Americans carry on with their demonstration.[71] Accordingly, the police chief stood by his decision to prevent law enforcement officials from contributing to further bloodshed, and he believed that his approach protected the safety of both citizens and officers.[72] Certain council members, including Lucy Patterson—the only African American woman on the council—praised Dyson's actions and added that his plan avoided the disturbance in escalating into a large-scale rebellion such as the August 1965 Watts Riots.[73] Dallas City Manager George Schrader, Mayor Wes Wise, and the chamber of commerce all praised Chief Dyson and his staff for not

[69] Barta, "New Brown Leaders Emerge," *Dallas Morning News*.
[70] Richard Mackenzie, "Police Security Guards Against Disturbance Repeat," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 30, 1973, 2B.
[71] Ernie Markovy, "Dyson Defends His Restraint Strategy," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 30, 1973, 1B.
[72] Ibid.; Charles Bates, "Downtown Area Guarded: Dyson Reaffirms His Reaction to Disturbance," *Dallas Morning News*, July 21, 1973, 1A.
[73] Doug Domeier, "DPA Charges: Report by Dyson Urged by Murr," *Dallas Times Herald*, August 6, 1973.

elevating the disturbance into an explosive situation.[74] Regardless, the DPA mounted pressure and criticism on Dyson, resulting in his resignation in October 1973.

The city gradually undertook measures to meet the demands of the Mexican American community. With the death of a twelve-year old Chicano youth, the Anglo establishment could no longer conceal the racial prejudice that existed within the city's power structures. Accordingly, the establishment proceeded to reform the city's law enforcement, city politics, and the judicial system.

Three monumental developments following the protest and riots resulted in new law enforcement policies that benefitted the Mexican American and African American population of Dallas. First, in August 1973, the Dallas Police Department finally took provisions to increase minority representation within the force. Accordingly, the police department's Personnel Division adopted the U.S. Department of Justice's standards in hiring police officers of diverse backgrounds.[75] The new recruiting program sought to hire candidates on a "one-on-one" basis, which officials saw as effective in better representation of ethnic minorities in the police department. Although the program commenced with great fanfare, by 1976, after struggling years in recruiting underrepresented candidates, the police department ended the minority-hiring plan.[76]Secondly, the department also placed demanding job qualifications on law enforcement applicants requiring them to obtain at least sixty college credits or a bachelor's degree in order for consideration. Finally, Chief Dyson implemented a

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[74] "Praise Continues For Police Action: Professional Response to Difficult Challenge'," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 31, 1973.
[75] "Police Initiate New Method of Recruiting: Minorities, Whites Will Be Hired on One-to-One Basis," *Dallas Morning News*, August 20, 1973, 1A.
[76] James Ewell and Henry Tatum, "Police End Minority Hiring Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, June 13, 1976, 1A.; John Cranfill, "Dallas Alliance Urged To Help Police Force Recruiting Drive," *Dallas Morning News*, January 15, 1976, 11B.

"minority awareness" training program aimed for new and veteran officers on the force.[77] The program's objective aimed for officers to become culturally sensitive toward the minority communities they patrolled.[78]

Another transformation that occurred was the bolstering of Mexican Americans' political careers. Within a few months, many Mexican Americans began to grasp important positions within the rungs of municipal, county, and state politics. More Mexicanos became involved in civic affairs in the city. Even so, for many Mexican American leaders, the incorporation into significant public office positions took years. In 1974, constituents elected former Chicano militant and director of the West Dallas Neighborhood Center, Robert Medrano, to the Dallas Independent School District School Board.[79] Medrano became the first Mexican American elected under the single-member district elections the first independently elected Chicano representative.[80] Nevertheless, it was not until 1979 that Dallas voters elected Ricardo Medrano, former Brown Beret leader, as a city councilmember.[81]

The city steadily undertook measures to increase minority representation in appointed judicial and city staff positions. Following the Rodríguez incident and the municipal court judge's arrangement of a $5,000 bond for Cain, Mexican American leaders demanded that the city council fire and replace the municipal judge and create new positions for minority judges. In response to the demands for the incorporation of

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[77] Henry Tatum, "Minority Awareness Plan Aired: Program to Help Officers Deal With Subcultures, Dyson Believes," *Dallas Morning News*, September 5, 1973, 1D.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Lea Donosky, "Hunter Upsets Ray; Medrano Elected," *Dallas Morning News*, April 4, 1974, 1A.
[80] "The First Truly Elected Hispanic," Robert Medrano interview by Moíses Acuna Agurrola, Dallas, Texas, June 10, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Oral History Project* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/the-first-truly-elected-hispanic (accessed February 3, 2016).
[81] "My Run For City Council," Ricardo Medrano interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Oral History Project* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/my-run-for-city-council (accessed February 3, 2016): "Projects Organized During My Term," Ricardo Medrano interview by Katherine Bynum, Dallas, Texas, June 13, 2015, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Oral History Project* https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/projects-organized-during-my-term (accessed February 3, 2016).

more minorities in the criminal justice system, in April 1974 the city council's Municipal Courts Committee finally appointed two minority judges. The appointments were the first of an African American and Mexican American for the position of municipal judge in the city's history.[82] Dallas Mayor Pro Term George Allen, who was African American, declared, "It is very important the makeup of our municipal judges reflect the overall makeup of the city." The city also embarked on heavy recruitment of both African American and Mexican candidates for city staff positions. In October 1974, City Manager George Schrader implemented new hiring guidelines aimed at recruiting more women and minorities in the city government. The plan did away with the practice of interviewing only the top 5 percent of applicants who scored high on the Civil Service examinations for a city job. Instead, the new guidelines opened up the opportunity for everyone who passed the test, to be eligible for an interview and subsequently a position in a given city department.[83] Likewise, the city manager also instigated intense recruiting for more women and minorities in city management positions. The city manager implemented an affirmative action plan that included a special employee trainee program for minority workers who expected to qualify for management positions.[84]

Cain Goes to Trial: Justice for Santos in the Courtroom

While officials began implementing changes on the municipal level, the quest for justice for Santos Rodríguez continued in the criminal court. Mexican American leaders continued to call for the prosecution of Officer Roy Arnold and asserted that his failure to stop the atrocity made him as guilty as former officer Cain. Reverend Sánchez sought the Dallas County Commissioners' Court's support in asking District Attorney Henry Wade

[82] Henry Tatum, "Ethnic Judges to Take Office In City Courts," *Dallas Morning News*, April 3, 1974, 1D.
[83] Henry Tatum, "Hiring Policy Change Expected to Get OK," *Dallas Morning News*, October 7, 1974, 1D.
[84] Ibid.

to take the case before a grand jury. The Dallas County Grand Jury continued to ignore the supplication for indicting Arnold and repeatedly asked for further evidence. The police department terminated both Cain and Arnold in August 1973. Although Arnold was not charged as an accessory to the murder, on August 4, 1973, Chief Dyson fired him for failure to file a full report on the night that Cain fatally shot Rodríguez.[85] Nevertheless, Dyson informed the *Dallas Times Herald* that Arnold "cannot be held responsible for a charge of murder as an accomplice, principle or accessory," leaving the prospect for indictment up in the air.[86]

Meanwhile, Dallas County Criminal Court Judge Ed Gosset scheduled Cain for trial on August 21, 1973, but given the high emotions running throughout the minority communities and the alleged unfavorable publicity, he moved the location and date of the trial to Austin.[87] The Brown Berets of Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas, along with other Mexican American civil rights organizations, continued to protest throughout Cain's trial in Austin. Not a single Mexican American served on the jury. In October 1973, Judge Gosset—who presided over the trial in Austin—reduced Cain's bond to $20,000, allowing him to post bail.[88] The Dallas City Council, along with leaders from the Mexicano community criticized Judge Gosset for lowering Cain's bond.[89]

In November 1973, testimony for Darrel Cain's trial began with the prosecution asserting that the slaying was intentional and the defense calling it accidental. G. L. Duarte, staff writer for *El Sol de Texas,* commented on November 9, 1973 that the community was anticipating an "injustice" in the sentence and predicted that the all-

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[85] James Ewell, "Police Disclose Arnold Removal," *Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1973, 1A.
[86] "Death Case Officer Fired: Unreported Gunshot Incident Disclosed," *Dallas Times Herald*, August 4, 1973, 1A.
[87] "For Cain Trial Sheriff Orders Tight Security," *Denton Record-Chronicle*, November 13, 1973, 3A.
[88] "Cain Out on Bond in Killing," *Dallas Morning News*, October 13, 1973, 18A.
[89] G. L. Duarte, "Cain Salio Libre," *El Sol de Texas*, October 19, 1973, 1, 13.

Anglo jury would acquit the murder charges.[90] Judge Gosset temporarily barred the media from the courtroom as hostilities ran high.[91] During his trial, Cain maintained his innocence and asserted that he assumed that his weapon was empty of any bullets.[92] However, he admitted that he did aim his .357 Magnum pistol at Santos's head in order to coerce information from him about the burglary.[93] Assistant District Attorney Doug Mulder cross-examined Cain in the court and asked Cain, "Is it normal police procedure to interrogate a young boy at the end of a .357 Magnum?" Cain concurred that his actions were not ethical and that during the interrogation process, Santos repeatedly denied any involvement in the burglary.[94]

While an all-Anglo jury began deliberating Cain's verdict, security at the court tightened as tensions began to rise among protestors and the fear of large demonstrations grew.[95] On November 15, 1973, the jury found Cain guilty of "murder with malice," a charge that carried a sentence of between two years and life in prison. Promptly, Cain's attorneys sought a probated sentence.[96] Frances Arredondo, of the Mexican American Coalition Council, attempted to organize for the indictment of Roy Arnold. Yet District Attorney Henry Wade repeatedly denied requests for Arnold's indictment, noting that the DPD's Internal Affairs Division had closed the investigation.[97] On November 17, 1973,

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[90] G. L. Duarte, "Mexicoamericanos Esperan Injusticia en el Juicio de Cain," *El Sol de Texas*, November 9, 1973, 1.
[91] "Anglo Jury Picked: Testimony Begins in Ex-Officer's Trial," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 13, 1973, 1A.
[92] George Proctor, "Thought Pistol Was Unloaded, Cain Tells Jury," *Dallas Morning News*, November 13, 1973, 1A.
[93] George Proctor, "Jury Finds Cain Guilty Of Murder," *Dallas Morning News*, November 16, 1973, 1A.
[94] Ibid.
[95] "Cain Trial Law Forces Beefed Up," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 13, 1973, 5A.
[96] Dave Montgomery, "Attorney Seek Cain Probation," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 16, 1973, 1A and 24A.
[97] Bill Ahrens, "In Cain Case: Community Unhappy With 'Light' Sentence," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 18, 1973, 1B, 5B.

the jury sentenced Cain five years.[98] Assistant Dallas district attorney, John Sparling, was disappointed with the outcome and stated, "What would you do if Santos Rodríguez had killed Darrell Cain under the exact same circumstances? You would have thrown the book at Santos, locked him up and bent the key."[99] Cain remained free on bond, as the jury did not set a set an definite date for the start of his sentence.

The quest for justice was not over for the Dallas Mexican community. Immediately following the verdict, the city's Mexicano community contended that the sentence was too lenient for a police officer whom the law should hold to higher standards. Trini Garza, representing the Mexican American Coalition Council, called the sentence an example of the "dual justice" that existed throughout many years.[100] Chicano organizers decided to file for an appeal with federal officials. Likewise, Darrell Cain and his attorney filed for an appeal with the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in order to have the murder charge dropped and avoid the prison sentence.[101] He continued to remain free on a $20,000 bond, working as deliveryman outside of Dallas, until 1976 when he began doing time at the Huntsville State Prison.[102]

Within the next few years following the initial 1973 verdict, two cases continued to work their way through the legal system: an appeal with the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals and a federal civil rights case. In 1975, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals heard arguments for either granting Cain a new trial or requiring him to serve his five-

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[98] Dave Montgomery, "Cain Draws 5-Year Term: Jury Rules Murder With Malice in Rodriguez Case," *Dallas Times Herald*, November 17, 1973, 1A.; "Asesino de Santos Sentenciado a 5 Años," *El Chicano*, December 6, 1973, 1.
[99] George Proctor, "Murder With Malice: Cain Given Five Years," *Dallas Morning News*, November 17, 1973, 1A.
[100] Henry Tatum, "Council Hears Warning: Mexican American Anger High on Cain Matter," *Dallas Morning News*, November 20, 1973, 1A.
[101] "High Appeals Court to Hear Cain Sentence Arguments," *Dallas Morning News*, October 24, 1976, 4A.
[102] "Santos Rodriguez Story: Brother Keeps Hatred Alive, Ex-Policeman Can't Forget," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 24, 1974, 1A.

year sentence.[103] In 1977, the Court of Criminal Appeals upheld the original conviction and five-year prison sentence and refused to review the case.[104] The same year, Mexican American community organizers and other attorneys worked with the U.S. Department of Justice to draw up a prosecution under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Activists sought to persuade federal prosecuting attorneys that Cain violated Santos Rodríguez's civil rights because of his ethnicity.[105] In December 1977, after four years, Mexican American leaders Joe Landin and Brownie Trevino of the Committee for Justice finally received notice from federal officials for a consideration to prosecute both Cain and Arnold.[106] Accordingly, the Department of Justice decided to reevaluate the case for civil rights violations.[107] In May 1978, after months of delaying a probe in the Rodríguez case, the department notified activists and attorneys that the statute of limitations was drawing close.

On June 1978, U.S. President Jimmy Carter met with Mexican American leaders from Texas, along with Democratic State Representative Ben Reyes from Houston. The *Dallas Times Herald* reported that in the meeting with Chicano leaders, President Carter supported the proposal and highlighted the importance for a federal prosecution of the Rodríguez case. Further, he told the group that he had personally called and instructed U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell to "take personal interest" in the case and to review it before the statute of limitations ran out on July 24, 1978.[108] Yet, the following month, Attorney General Bell decided against a civil rights prosecution of Darrell Cain. Bell

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[103] "Murder Appeal Pending," *Dallas Morning News*, October 30, 1975, 11D.
[104] "'73 Slaying of Dallas Youth: Ex-officer's Conviction Upheld," *Dallas Morning News*, October 4, 1977, 20A.
[105] "A Lesson in Justice," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 16, 1978.
[106] Doug Domeier, "Panel To Push for Prosecution of Darrell Cain," *Dallas Morning News*, December 15, 1977, 7A.
[107] "Boy's Shooting Stirred Area Disturbances," *Dallas Times Herald*, December 11, 1977, 1A, 22A.
[108] Robert Montemayor, "Rodriguez Case Open, Carter Says," *Dallas Times Herald*, June 24, 1978, 1B.

contended that the state's "vigorous" prosecution, and legal problems caused by the age of the case, convinced him of no need for further legal action.[109] Following the Department of Justice's decision, State Representative Ben Reyes explained to media outlets that President Carter had called and apologized about the embarrassing decision, and that he was doing everything in his power to fix it.[110] Nevertheless, Carter quickly backed off, denying that he had told Chicano leaders and officials that he supported Cain's prosecution. In addition, he indicated that he had neither the authority nor the inclination to direct the Justice Department to reverse its decision to forego prosecution.[111] Attorney Ruben Sandoval indicated that he was "extremely saddened by it only because it confirms my conviction that if, in fact, there is a human rights policy being fostered by this administration it is foreign to the Hispanic people."[112] In a matter of days following the decision, three Texas state representatives attempted in vain to get the case heard by a federal grand jury in Dallas.[113]

Mexican American activists organized one final rally to protest the federal government's refusal to pursue the Rodríguez case. Both progressive and conservative Mexicano leaders united one last time to march in memory of Santos. Yet, organizing for the march did not go smoothly. A rift developed between liberal leader Joe Landin of the Committee for Justice and two other members in the organization, Olga Sepulveda and Perfecto Delgado. Landin did not agree with organizing a protest. Despite this, both Sepulveda and Delgado went on with planning of the rally. Delgado noted that, "If he

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[109] Bob Dudney, "U.S. Won't Prosecute Rodriguez Case," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 15, 1978, 1B.; Roy E. Bode, "Bell Defends His Decision in Rodriguez Case," *Dallas Times Herald*, August 5, 1978, 3A.
[110] Barbara Strong and Bonnie Bradshaw, "President 'Closes' Rodriguez Issue," *Dallas Morning News*, July 21, 1978, 1A.
[111] Ibid.
[112] "Chicanos Dismayed by Rodriguez Case," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 15, 1978, 9A.
[113] Robert Montemayor, "Legislators Ask Judge for Rodriguez Hearing," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 20, 1978, 4B.

[Landin] doesn't support us on this, then he isn't a member of the committee as far as we're concerned."[114]

During the evening hours of Sunday, July 17, 1978—five years after the murder—a crowd of over six hundred Mexican Americans, blacks, and Anglos united for a protest against the Carter administration and the dual justice system.[115] The Committee for Justice and the Dallas Brown Berets organized a march that started at Reverchon Park, went down Maple Avenue, and ended at the shooting site off Cedar Springs.[116] The rally at the park included talks from the Berets, the Socialist Workers Party, and Pancho Medrano of the United Auto Workers, who all called for an end to police violence. The rally's organizer, Perfecto Delgado, yelled through a bullhorn, "The Justice Department thinks we will forget. We will never forget Santos Rodríguez."[117] Protestors holding lighted candles clenched their fists and shouted "Viva Santos!" Juan Perez, prime minister of the Eagle Ford/Ledbetter Brown Berets, stated, "The [Justice Department's] decision told those youngsters with the bottles that their life isn't worth any more than five years and that racism is going to determine justice from now on."[118] Perez added that, "Santos will continue to be a unifying element, though I don't think we can do anything about that anymore."[119] Near the end of the march, frustrated demonstrators launched bottles and trashcans at police officers and passing cars. While the protest was

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[114] Steve Kenny, "Dallas Mexican-American Group Split Over Plans for Park Protest," *Dallas Morning News*, July 16, 1978, 29A.
[115] Dough Domeier, James Ewell, Don Fisher, "Marchers Shout 'Viva Santos'," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 17, 1978, 1A, 5A.: Steve Kenny and Maria Newman, "Rally, March 'A Start for La Raza'," *Dallas Morning News*, July 17, 1978, 5A.
[116] Ibid.; "Police Tactical Units Alerted for Civil Rights Marches," *Dallas Morning News*, July 15, 1978, 38A.
[117] "Three Arrested During Chicano Protest Rally," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 17, 1978, 2A.
[118] Steve Kenny, "Mexican Americans Praise March's Unifying Effect," *Dallas Morning News*, July 18, 1978, 35A.
[119] Ibid.

not as substantial as the July 28, 1973 march, it marked the end for the quest of justice for Santos in Dallas.

Although for Dallas activists the door for the pursuit of justice was virtually shut, state and national leaders attempted one last time to convince government officials to indict Cain a few days before the statute of limitations ran out. On Monday July 18, 1978, State Representative Ben Reyes, along with three other state legislators, and Ruben Sandoval a LULAC attorney from San Antonio, requested the Dallas federal grand jury—as a last-minute move—conduct an investigation and a hearing on the Rodríguez case. However, Dallas Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Stephens indicated, "there is nothing in the rules which allow any special consideration for a legislator's request for a grand jury investigation. It would be handled in the same manner as any other citizen's request."[120] The same week, Representative Reyes, along with other Mexican American leaders from LULAC and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), held a meeting with U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale. In the meeting, Vice President Mondale agreed to schedule a meeting on July 21 with Deputy Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti, as a final effort to bring charges against Cain.[121] The last attempt to convince the Department of Justice was a disappointment for Mexican American leaders, as Civilleti refused to reverse the initial decision to not pursue the Cain case.[122] On Monday July 25, 1978, the statute of limitations expired, closing the chapter on Santos Rodríguez.[123] After years of fighting in court, the quest for justice for Santos Rodríguez perished with the U.S. Department's refusal to review the case.

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[120] "Four Legislators Hope to Reopen Rodriguez Case," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 18, 1978, 5A.
[121] Bob Dudney, "Mexican-Americans Win Mondale Support for Rodriguez Case Appeal," *Dallas Times Herald*, July 21, 1978.
[122] Barbara Strong, "Rodriguez Decision Stands," *Dallas Morning News*, July 22, 1978, 1A.
[123] Peter Applebome, "A Last Look at Santos Case: Slaying Becomes History as Statue Runs Out," *Dallas Morning News*, July 25, 1978, 38A.

In September 1979, Cain left his Huntsville prison cell after having served only three years of his five-year sentence. Ruben Bonilla, a Corpus Christi attorney and LULAC national president, remarked that Cain's early release underlined the "original need for federal prosecution and proves the state judicial system has failed miserably in ensuring equal protection under the law for Hispanic Americans. The years 1977-79 will always be remembered as a catastrophic period for the civil rights of Hispanic Americans."[124] The failure for a justifiable prosecution of Cain, as well as Arnold, left the city of Dallas with wound that would never heal.

[124] Lloyd Grove, "Santos Rodriguez' Killer Released From Prison," *Dallas Morning News*, September 12, 1979, 1A.

Conclusion: "A Wound That Never Heals"

This case study of Dallas demonstrates new insights in the post-war Mexican American struggle for civil rights. The mid-1960s and early 1970s gave rise to many of the organizations involved in organizing the Mexican community of Dallas. The study determines that the movement itself was not a unified entity, but composed of many specific organizations that focused on particular barrio issues. Organizations and activists worked separately but at times came together around broad goals and agreement on community-based issues such as police brutality.

The study illustrates the rise of a new Mexican American generation in Dallas. The activism and organizing of Dallas's "Mexican American generation" of leaders show that assimilation was less important than scholars have commonly assumed. Mexican American civic leaders and Chicano activists united for recognition as a distinct ethnic minority and for the goals such as the implementation of a bilingual education program. In addition, while these leaders diverged methodologically in their tactics, they were not necessarily conservative but moderate in their political agenda, as evidenced by how they continually collaborated with Chicano progressives. There was also a less pronounced generational divide than scholars have presumed amongst the Mexican American and Chicano generation, as many leaders overcame their differences in order to fight noteworthy battles that included school desegregation and bilingual education, the battle of independent representation, and, most importantly, police brutality. Like David Montejano's study in San Antonio, this exploration of Dallas demonstrates that a complex relationship existed with established leaders and militant-minded activists that did not necessarily fall under the banner of generational division. Although the more aggressive Chicano activists believed that the older Mexican American generation had

not done enough, established Mexicano leaders joined Chicano progressives in pushing for reforms and better conditions throughout schools and barrios.

This study also points to new insights on the Chicano Movement in Dallas. Chicano organizations in Dallas contended with multifaceted visions and goals for their respective neighborhoods, especially seen with the Brown Berets. Dallas Chicano activists were less radical and militant than the broader Chicano movement in the Southwest. The degree of militancy and radicalism that the Brown Berets, and even Raza Unida Party, exhibited greatly diverged from the more radical cases in San Antonio and Los Angeles. The barrio youth were not at the vanguard of the movement, but instead older and college-educated Chicanos led the movement in the city. Chicano activists in Dallas developed a pragmatic version of cultural nationalism, further illustrating how *chicanismo* was not as important for them. Activists—especially the Medranos—instead saw the significance in organizing the broader community and collaborating with African Americans and sympathetic Anglos. Further, the Medrano family illustrates the significance of Mexican and African American coalitions and conflict that occurred in Dallas. As this thesis illustrates, black and brown leaders united in the struggle against police brutality in the cases of Tomás Rodríguez and Santos Rodríguez. They saw the importance in the electoral system for obtaining recognition for Chicana/os and other ethnic groups in the area.

The Santos Rodríguez Affair pushed—for a brief moment—unification between younger militant activists and older established leaders for the struggle and recognition of justice for Santos, making consensus not triumphant and heroic. Even so, unity came at a cost, as divisions continued to fracture both sides of the activism. Nevertheless, throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Chicano progressives, and liberal and

moderate Mexican American activists maintained a complex relationship that at times pushed for conflict and agreement between both groups. Following the historic march that turned into a riot, activists both traditional and progressive, maintained complex relations, yet united one last time with fighting to prosecute Cain and Arnold in a federal civil rights case.

Before July 1973, activists' demands fell on the deaf ears of the establishment. Subsequently, the magnitude of the unwarranted murder pushed city officials began to take into consideration the demands these groups brought to the table. The Mexican American community in Dallas achieved an unprecedented degree of integration into the local government, politics, judicial system, and the police force.

After the Rodríguez affair of 1973, the battle was not over in the struggle for equal rights. On January 1975, after four years in the courts, U.S. District Judge Eldon Mahon ruled that the at-large method of electing city council members was unconstitutional.[125] Judge Mahon ordered the city to draw a plan that adopted single-member districts before the April 1975 council elections. Before the elections, the council formulated an eight-three plan, with eight members being elected from single-member districts, and the other three, including the mayor being elected at-large.[126] Although it would take a few years for the election of a Mexican American as a single-member district councilmember, unquestionably, the April 1975 election results proved the power of operating the single-member system.

Nonetheless, as Dallas's white conservative majority began to lose power within municipal politics, by the late 1970s the metropolis's demographics began to change. As

[125] Rena Pederson, "Council Voting Plan Declared Illegal," *Dallas Morning News*, January 18, 1975, 1A.
[126] Payne, *Big D*, 359.

desegregation and political structures transformed, white flight surged.[127] The city's urban core population dropped dramatically, from 70,000 people living within a two-mile radius of city hall in 1960 to only 30,000 inhabitants in 1990.[128] The relocation of Anglos to the suburbs left minorities as the combined majority make-up of the urban population. In addition, the tax base plummeted, as minorities who lived in poverty could not fund the city through their property taxes. The inability to contribute to the tax base contributed to the collapse of real estate prices through areas near Dallas's downtown. As a result, throughout the 1980s and 90s, developers began to buy land at rock-bottom prices and redevelop historically Mexican American neighborhoods such as Little Mexico, and traditionally African American neighborhoods such as Deep Ellum and State-Thomas. Rezoning measures ultimately shifted neighborhood dynamics, and by the early 1990s, much of Little Mexico no longer existed. As the area converted to prime commercial real estate, long-time residents were unable to fight and preserve their community against wealthy investors and companies, and many ultimately sold their homes. Only a handful of homes endured the redevelopment under the shadows of urban high-rise apartments and office buildings. In contemporary times, minorities continue to face urban gentrification at an alarming rate in the Oak Cliff and West Dallas neighborhoods as affluent white professionals look into moving back into case urban areas.[129]

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[127] García y Griego and Calderon, *Más Alla Del Rio Bravo*, 73.; Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001* (Austin: University of Texas, 2006), 167.; David J. Armor, *Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 175.

[128] Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 171.

[129] Eric Nicholson, "There Goes The Neighborhood: The Ups and Downs of Gentrification in Dallas," *Dallas Observer*, October 28, 2015. http://www.dallasobserver.com/news/there-goes-the-neighborhood-the-ups-and-downs-of-gentrification-in-dallas-7723959 (accessed February 19, 2016)

In West Dallas, the fight against environmental pollution continued for the next thirty years. Luis Sepulveda, a resident of West Dallas, undertook decades fighting for an environmental cleanup and in accord with other environmental activists filed lawsuits against the smelting companies in the area. It was not until the mid-1980s that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) decided to close the smelting company and intervene with cleanup efforts that took over several years. [130] Environmental activists were disappointed with the inadequate cleaning efforts, and fought for the EPA's recognition of the area as a Superfund site. In May 1993, the EPA finally affirmed West Dallas as a Superfund site.[131] The effects of industrial-waste pollution in West Dallas continue as an ongoing issue for residents up to the contemporary day.[132]

Decades of white flight also contributed to continued school segregation. African Americans and Mexican Americans constituted the majority of Dallas Independent School District's (DISD) student body throughout the latter quarter of the twentieth century. In 2003, U.S. District Court Judge Barefoot Sanders declared DISD as "officially desegregated" as the judicial oversight over *Tasby v. Estes* ended that year. As of 2014, white students composed only four percent of the student body, while African Americans made up 38 and Latinos an overwhelming 68 percent of the student population.[133]

Although the Rodríguez Affair of 1973 led to a push for more Mexican American political participation, Mexicano political leaders have remained underrepresented in the

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[130] Valerie Wigglesworth, "The Burden of Lead: West Dallas Feels Ignored After Years of Despair," *Dallas Morning News*, December 16, 2012.
[131] Randy Lee Loftis and Craig Flournoy, "EPA Adds West Dallas to Clean-up List: Superfund Project Needs Budget Office Approval," *Dallas Morning News*, January 16, 1993, 1A.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Scott K. Parks, "Black Student Achievement Doesn't Look Any Better 10 years After a Federal Court Ended its Oversight of Dallas ISD's Desegregation Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, http://educationblog.dallasnews.com/tag/barefoot-sanders/

city of Dallas. Forty years after the incident, Dallas has not elected a Mexican American mayor, police chief, or county sheriff. The city's ethnic makeup as of the 2010 U.S. Census counted the Hispanic population near 50 percent, or the narrow majority of the city's population. The school board and the city council represent the city's constituents. Nevertheless, despite making up the majority of the population, the Latino community continues to lack representatives in city affairs.

Forty years after the murder of Santos Rodríguez, police brutality continues being a widespread issue among minority communities throughout the nation. In July 2014, Daniel Pantaleo (a New York City Police officer) strangled Eric Garner (an unarmed African American male) to death outside a bodega in Brooklyn, New York for selling loose cigarettes without proper license.[134] Civil rights leader Al Sharpton and other activists organized protests against excessive force and an unwarranted killing for a petty offense. The following month, Darren Wilson, a white police officer, fatally shot Michael Brown, an unarmed African American youth, in Ferguson, Missouri.[135] The shooting triggered protests and riots throughout the town and the demand from the African American community to indict Officer Wilson on murder charges. The murder of Michael Brown helped further the Black Lives Matter campaign—that initiated with the George Zimmerman trial in 2013—through social media in efforts to bring awareness of racism and police brutality with the African American community. On November 2014, a Ferguson grand jury declined to return charges on Wilson and is pending a Department of Justice review. In February 2015, a neophyte police officer in Grapevine, Texas, 23 miles

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[134] J. David Goodman and Vivian Yee. "Death of a Man in Custody Adds Fuel to a Dispute Over a Police Strategy."*The New York Times*. July 20, 2014.

[135] "What Happened in Ferguson?" *New York Times,* August 10, 2015.; Jack Healy, "Ferguson, Still Tense, Grows Calmer," *New York Times*, November 26, 2014.; "Memorandum: Department of Justice Report Regarding The Criminal Investigation Into The Shooting Death of Michael Brown By Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Darren Wilson," *U.S. Department of Justice Press Release* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015).

outside of Dallas, fatally shot an unarmed Mexican immigrant, Rubén García Villalpando during a traffic stop.[136] As Latino activists, as well as the Mexican government, called for the indictment of the law enforcement official for an unlawful killing, a Tarrant County grand jury declined to indict the officer with any charges.[137] In August 2015, another police officer shot and killed an unarmed nineteen-year-old African American male, Christian Taylor, at a car dealership in Arlington, Texas.[138] The Arlington Police Department immediately fired the police officer and in October send the case to the Tarrant County District Attorney's office.[139] The district attorney has not reached a decision on the case.

On July 23, 2013, at a commemoration of the forty-year anniversary of Santos' death, Albert Valtierra, president of the Dallas Mexican American Historical League (DMAHL) held an opening for an exhibition titled "Justicia" in partnership with the city of Dallas's Cultural Affairs Department's Latino Cultural Center.[140] The panel consisted of former barrio activists and leaders, along with city officials including Pedro Aguirre and Anita Martínez and KERA news reporter Bob Ray Sanders, who had covered the story.[141] The event helped create closure to the tragic incident of Santos. One month after the exhibition, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings apologized to the Rodríguez family, after forty years of silence. Latino leaders in Dallas have repeatedly advocated for a commemoration site for Santos. In 2015, Estela Ortega, a Mexican American activist in

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[136] Domingo Garcia, Jr., "Are You Going to Kill Me? Driver Asked Grapevine Police Officer," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 26, 2015.
[137] Mitch Mitchell and Monica Nagy, "Grapevine Officer Not Charged in Fatal Shooting of Mexican Immigrant," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 18, 2015.
[138] Patrick McGee and Manny Fernandez, "Arlington, Tex., Officer is Fired in Fatal Shooting of Christian Taylor," *The New York Times*, August 11, 2015.
[139] Claire Z. Cardona, "Arlington Police Turn Christian Taylor Case Over to District Attorney's Office," *Dallas Morning News*, October 1, 2015.
[140] Lauren Silverman, "Four Decades Later, Death of 12-Year-Old Santos Rodriguez Still Reverberates," *KERA News*, July 23, 2013.
[141] Dianne Solis, "40 Years After Santos Rodriguez Muder, Scars remain for Family, Neighbors in Dallas. *Dallas Morning News*, July 21, 2013.

Seattle, Washington built a monument in memorial of Santos.[142] The boy's murder impacted Ortega and other Chicano activists in Seattle, prompting them decades later to dedicate and name a park after Santos.[143] As a result, many leaders in the community questioned as to why another city and not Dallas, built a memorial.[144] For many, the Rodríguez affair brought the Mexicano community together and helped transform the city. The affair brought gradual change to the metropolis in the domains of law enforcement, city politics, and the judicial system.

[142] Dianne Solis, "Mother to Visit Seattle Park Named After her Son Killed by a Dallas Officer in 1973," *Dallas Morning News*, October 25, 2015.
[143] Dianne Solis, "Seattle Park Honors Dallas 12-year-old killed by Police," *Dallas Morning News*, August 30, 2015.
[144] Ibid.

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VITA

Osmín Rodrígo Hernández was born June 19, 1990, in Los Angeles, California. He is the son of Raquel Cortéz and Pedro “El Cachimbón” Hernández. A 2008 graduate of Lincoln North Star High School, in Lincoln, Nebraska he received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in History and minor in Latin American and Ethnic Studies from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, in December 2012. In August 2013, he enrolled in the History graduate program at Texas Christian University. While working on his Master of Arts degree in History, he held a Graduate Assistantship during the years 2013-2016.

ABSTRACT

¡*JUSTICIA* FOR SANTOS!: MEXICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE SANTOS RODRÍGUEZ AFFAIR IN DALLAS, TEXAS, 1969-1978

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On July 24, 1973, Santos Rodríguez, a twelve-year-old Mexican American boy, was fatally shot by a white Dallas Police officer, Darrel L. Cain, while interrogating him in the front seat of a squad car. Within a few days, Mexican American and Chicano activists coordinated and organized demonstrations at Dallas City Hall. The Rodríguez affair of 1973 occurred during period of Dallas' history when police brutality, widespread poverty, and city officials' neglect of minority communities defined race relations in the city. This thesis explores the roots of the Mexicano community in Dallas, and their quest for civil rights from the late 1960s to late 1970s, scrutinizing the factors that prompted for collaboration and division between Mexican Americans and Chicano activists. The study examines a handful of activists and organizations, and scrutinizes the objectives and triumphs that they attained in their pursuit towards equal rights, and how the Santos Rodríguez affair ultimately became a catalyst for unifying the Mexicano community.